Let Sleeping Eros Lie:

Erotobucolic Poetry in the Ancient Mediterranean

By

Lisa Feldkamp

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Classics)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2013

Date of final oral examination: 12/21/2012

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Patricia Rosenmeyer, Professor of Classics
Jeffrey Beneker, Associate Professor of Classics
Alexander Dressler, Assistant Professor of Classics
Grant Nelsestuen, Assistant Professor of Classics
Michael Fox, Professor Emeritus of Hebrew and Semitic Studies

for Crazy, my cat

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements iv
Let Sleeping Eros Lie: Introduction 1
Introduction 1
What is Erotobucolic? 2
Why the Idylls and Song of Songs? 4
Overview of Chapters 9
Conclusion 10
Chapter 1: Eros in Theocritus' Green Cabinet 12
Introduction 12
Locating Eros 18
Unexpected Eros 27
Plants, Poetics, and Passion 36
Poetic Plants 45
Animal Imagery 64
'Mixed' Metaphors 68
Conclusion 73
Chapter 2: Divinity, Danger, and Desire in the Idylls 74
Introduction 74
The Rustic and the Divine 74
Social Dangers 96
Psychological Dangers 105
Pastoral Pining 111
Conclusion 118
Chapter 3: Song of Songs: The Countryside 120
Introduction 120
A Note on Metaphor in Song of Songs 125
Love Blossoms 129
Sexy Beasts 158
Conclusion 167
Chapter 4: Song of Songs: Human and Divine 169
Introduction 169
The Dangers of Waking Eros 169
Social Dangers 171
Psychological Dangers 178
Searching and not Finding 185
Divine Love and the Beloved as Divine 192
Conclusion 195
Conclusion: Wreathing Garlands 197
Introduction 197
Plants and Animals 198
Run Through Your Wicked Garden 198
Hungry Eyes 204
Love your Peaches, Wanna Shake your Tree 206
Slow your Mustang Down 212

Run Like a Gazelle 215
Hungry like the Wolf 219
Conclusions 223
Where Do We Go from Here? 225
Select Bibliography 227

Acknowledgements

I could not have completed this dissertation without the support of people so numerous that I am sure I will not be able to list them all. I am first and foremost indebted to my advisor, Patricia Rosenmeyer, for her enduring patience with me and this project and her invaluable advice on the dissertation itself. I would also like to thank Jeff Beneker, Alex Dressler, and Grant Nelsestuen for their comments on my dissertation. A special thanks to Michael Fox who read my dissertation carefully and provided valuable insight even though he is retired and could have easily escaped the burden. Extra thanks are due to all of my committee members who made it to campus for my defense on the morning after a blizzard that had entirely shut down campus the previous day. I am indebted to the Department of Classics at UW-Madison for their financial support and guidance throughout my time as a student. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for a fellowship that allowed me to complete my dissertation.

I do not have words to express my gratitude to the above and to the friends and family who have helped me to improve my writing, kept me from burning out, and given me guidance during this process, specifically: Joy Reeber, Kerry LeFebvre, Jeannie Nguyen, Tara Welch, Anne Schonhardt, Katherine Wesenberg, Barbara Littlewood, Kris Ehrhardt, and Bridget Thomas. Particular thanks are due to my mother who is always available to lend an ear when I feel stuck. Finally, loving thanks to my fiancee, Ian Montgomery who endured the vicissitudes of my developing writing process and to my cats, Crazy and Galore, who kept me from losing my sanity.

Let Sleeping Eros Lie: Introduction

Introduction

Imagine a luxuriant meadow surrounded by whispering oaks. A slender brook runs in their midst. Shepherds and goatherds relax on a green hillock watering their flocks, playing panpipes, and singing. Can you guess what they are singing about? If you answered love, then you are already familiar with the genre often known as bucolic or pastoral and you are not alone. In one of the best known Greek descriptions of a *locus amoenus*, Plato's Socrates goes outside of the city walls with Phaedrus to discuss love in the perfect surroundings (*Phdr*. 229a-230c); the most detailed description of the surroundings is in 230b-c:

ΣΩ. Νὴ τὴν Ἥραν, καλή γε ἡ καταγωγή. ἥ τε γὰρ πλάτανος αὕτη μάλ' ἀμφιλαφής τε καὶ ὑψηλή, τοῦ τε ἄγνου τὸ ὕψος καὶ τὸ σύσκιον πάγκαλον, καὶ ὡς ἀκμὴν ἔχει τῆς ἄνθης, ὡς ἂν εὐωδέστατον παρέχοι τὸν τόπον· ἥ τε αὖ πηγὴ χαριεστάτη ὑπὸ τῆς πλατάνου ῥεῖ μάλα ψυχροῦ ὕδατος, ὥστε γε τῷ ποδὶ τεκμήρασθαι. Νυμφῶν τέ τινων καὶ Ἀχελῴου ἱερὸν ἀπὸ τῶν κορῶν τε καὶ ἀγαλμάτων ἔοικεν εἶναι. εἰ δ' αὖ βούλει, τὸ εὔπνουν τοῦ τόπου ὡς ἀγαπητὸν καὶ σφόδρα ἡδύ· θερινόν τε καὶ λιγυρὸν ὑπηχεῖ τῷ τῶν τεττίγων χορῷ. πάντων δὲ κομψότατον τὸ τῆς πόας, ὅτι ἐν ἠρέμα προσάντει ἱκανὴ πέφυκε κατακλινέντι τὴν κεφαλὴ

So. By Hera, it is a pretty resting place indeed. For the plane-tree itself is very thickly grown and tall, and the height and shade of the agnus are very pretty, and as it is at the peak of bloom, so the place has the best fragrance. Furthermore the spring is most pleasing it flows with especially cold water under the plane, as I judge by my foot. It seems to be a holy place for certain nymphs and Achelous from the statues and offerings. And if you wish, the airiness of the place - how desirable and very sweet. The summer-time and shrillness of the cicadas echo in the land. Most pleasant of all is the grass, that grows gently uphill sufficiently for reclining one's head.

By the first century this *topos* had become so trite that Plutarch needed only a nod toward the conventions in his *Amatorius* (749a):

Φ. Ἄφελε τοῦ λόγου τὸ νῦν ἔχον ἐποποιῶν τε λειμῶνας καὶ σκιὰς καὶ ἅμα κιττοῦ τε καὶ σμιλάκων διαδρομὰς καὶ ὅσ' ἄλλα τοιούτων τόπων ἐπιλαβόμενοι γλίχονται τὸν Πλάτωνος Ἰλισσὸν καὶ τὸν ἄγνον ἐκεῖνον καὶ τὴν ἠρέμα προσάντη πόαν πεφυκυῖαν προθυμότερον ἢ κάλλιον ἐπιγράφεσθαι.

F. Break off the speech now holding back the meadows and shadows of the epic poets together with the ivy and the passage through holm-oaks and whatever else of such topoi having taken up they strive to imitate the Ilissus of Plato [Phaedr. 229a-230c] and that holy [tree] and the gentle hill, growing grass with more eagerness than beauty.

Flavianus has asked Autobulus to speak about love and, in anticipation that Autobulus might

describe a *locus amoenus* at length, cuts him off, suggesting that this setting is now taken for granted in any speech or poem about love.

While Plato and Plutarch discuss the power of Eros in prose, my study will focus on poetic descriptions of love in a pastoral setting. I will argue that many ancient poems from the area around the Mediterranean associate love so closely with nature that they describe love or lovers using metaphors that conflate them with the natural world (whether landscape or animal). Furthermore, they all contain plant metaphors, animal metaphors, references to the danger of love, lovers who yearn for one another, and connections between the beloved and divinity. Many of the poems I will study use strikingly similar metaphors that suggest a closer relationship between these works than has previously been accepted. I will argue that works from the Mediterranean that share these features should be considered part of a genre that I have named the *erotobucolic*.

What is *Erotobucolic*?

The *erotobucolic* genre is not always marked by a specific meter like other ancient genres. Instead it is marked by the content features I have listed above. It often appears mixed in with other genres such as lyric or epic poetry.[1] In the same way that many elegiac texts contain a *recusatio*, or section in which the poet describes why he (or she) will not write epic, but ironically uses epic language within the elegy to accomplish this, they may also contain *erotobucolic* moments (these are frequent in the poetry of Tibullus).[2] Epic texts may also contain moments that are reminiscent of *erotobucolic* in the same way that they contain elegiac scenes.[3]

1 For a discussion of these elements in Greek epic, see Van Sickle 1975.
2 These passages and other epic-style passages, such as mythological references in elegy are discussed by Wiggers 1976, Greene 2000, and Mazurek 2006.
3 Tränkle 1963 discusses the ways that elegy shapes Ovid's epic the *Metamorphoses*. I will show in the concluding chapter that Homer and Ovid describe many *erotobucolic* scenes.

Many of the texts I will discuss in my concluding chapter are already considered part of a genre such as epic (e.g., Homer) or lyric (e.g., Horace) based on their formal features, but I will be discussing the *erotobucolic* moments in these texts. I will primarily focus on the *Idylls* of Theocritus and the *Song of Songs*.[4] Theocritus has often been named as the originator of the bucolic (or pastoral) genre and some have claimed that *SoS* also has bucolic properties.[5]

The primary element of *erotobucolic* literature is overlap between the descriptions of nature and the erotic descriptions (nature stands as a metaphor for the erotic and erotic relationships for the fertility of nature); this element alerts readers to look for other generic elements. The intertwining of love and nature is carried to extremes so there are always multiple levels of meaning in *erotobucolic* poetry (at the very least, a surface meaning in which the poet describes a landscape and a metaphorical understanding in which he describes the beloved). As Gutzwiller noted with respect to Theocritus, there is an invitation to the reader to be aware of pleasure and deception of the text;[6] the overlap in description between the beloved and nature is both pleasant (enjoyable language to describe the attractions of the beloved) and deceptive (the beloved is not exactly like a tree). Awareness of this semantic and symbolic range prepares the reader to look for multiple meanings in *erotobucolic* texts and individual poets often took advantage of this aspect, enhancing their works by adding further layers of religious, political, and/or literary meaning. It is true that all poetry arguably invites multiple interpretations. However, an elaborate scheme of metaphors in *erotobucolic* poetry reveals a consciousness of this invitation not present in other genres.

4 I will refer to *Song of Songs* as *SoS* from here on out.
5 See Van Sickle 1976 and Gutzwiller 1991, 3-19 for a detailed discussion of the elements of the genre and the problems of thinking about Theocritus as an originator. See Halperin 1979, Payne 2007, and Klooster 2011 for arguments that Theocritus consciously crafted the genre.
6 Gutzwiller 2006.

It is not only the natural imagery of the *erotobucolic* genre that sets it apart, but the themes examined through this imagery. *Erotobucolic* literature invariably draws attention to the social and psychological dangers of love, which is surprising given that the natural imagery nearly always has primarily pleasurable connotations. Furthermore, though methods vary, *erotobucolic* literature connects the beloved to the divine, revealing that strong feelings of love for a person can border on worship. Ultimately, love in the *erotobucolic* world is portrayed as an intense pleasure that entails a dangerous loss of self-control.

Why the *Idylls* and *Song of Songs*?

Space and a desire to be thorough in my description of the genre as it appears in these texts prevented me from including more authors. Having room for a thorough description of the work of only two authors, I narrowed it down to Theocritus and the author of *SoS*. *SoS* is a good example of the balance of pastoral and erotic elements from a non-Greek culture. Although it comes from a culture with different values and traditions, by reading it along with the *Idylls* we can discover the elements that are most essential to the *erotobucolic* genre. They are not the only ancient authors who wrote in the *erotobucolic* genre but they have defied generic categorization in the past and many scholars have already noted the connection between them, providing a basis for me to build a stronger argument.[7]

1. Problems with Previous Generic Categorization

The bucolic or pastoral genre has been considered problematic for some time. Evidence from as early as the 1st Century BCE refers to some or all of Theocritus' *Idylls* as τὰ βουκολικά[8] and this term was later used of the poetry of Moschus, Bion, and Vergil. Scholars disagree on

7 For mentions of similarity between *SoS* and Theocritus see Graetz 1871; Pope 1977; Fox 1985; Burton 2005; Hunter 2005; and Anagnostou-Laoutides and Konstan 2008.
8 Artemidorus *Anth. Pal*. 9.205.

how to define bucolic poetry. Three questions divide scholars – 1) Did Theocritus invent the genre? 2) Did Theocritus intend for the term bucolic to designate the genre? and 3) Should the genre be limited to songs about herding?[9] In an attempt to clarify the limits of the genre, Gutzwiller looks at the origins of the term 'bucolic' in the Greek verb βουκολέω. She describes four basic meanings for this verb: "(1) cowherd/herd/graze, (2) tend/guard, (3) soothe/beguile, and (4) cheat/deceive."[10] She discusses the intersection in meaning among these definitions and links them to the function of bucolic poetry as a sweet (i.e., soothing or beguiling) song that helps to manage (i.e., herd) life's cares by passing on (i.e., guarding) the wisdom of the past. However, the sense of soothing achieved through bucolic song may be deceptive as it misleads the audience into a temporary sense of calm without actually solving any problems. She argues that the *Idylls* present the full semantic range of the word and invite the reader to enjoy the pleasure while remaining aware that it is an illusion.[11]

As Pope notes, "The classification of the Canticle [*SoS*] as to literary genre, like almost every other aspect of the book, is a vexed question."[12] Many, beginning with Origen, have argued that *SoS* is a dramatic poem, though many concluded it was not meant for theatrical performance.[13] However, as Pope remarks, drama is otherwise unattested in early Semitic

9 For a discussion on the scholarly debate and an excellent bibliography see Gutzwiller 2006. Van Sickle 1975, 1976 and Halperin 1983 argue that Theocritus intended the term to include all of his hexameter poetry. This would include most of his remaining corpus, even poems that have often seen as belonging to other genres like mime (e.g., 14,15) and encomium (e.g., 16, 17). They are primarily defining the genre based on form; a brief poem, but longer than an epigram, written in dactylic hexameter. Halperin does incorporate style and Schmidt would only include herding poetry in the bucolic genre 1987. Nauta 1990 and Gutzwiller 1996 conclude that Theocritus uses the term for songs within his poetry and then later readers used it for Theocritus' poetry. Hunter argues that Theocritus is adapting Sicilian tradition 1999.
10 Gutzwiller 2006, 382.
11 Gutzwiller 2006.
12 Pope 1977, 34 and for a concise discussion of generic problems in *SoS* and the history of scholarship on them 34-7.
13 Origen *Commentary on Canticles*. Other notable proponents of the dramatic theory are Ibn Ezra (translation 1874), Ginsburg 1857, Delitzsch (translation 1891), and Waterman 1948, who translated *SoS* for stage performance.

literature and there is no agreement on the attribution of lines or number of characters in *SoS*.[14] Many scholars have also considered *SoS* not a single work but an anthology of short poems.[15] However, Fox has made a convincing argument based on repetends, associative sequences, and the narrative frame that *SoS* should be read as a unified poem.[16] Exum describes *SoS* as a lyric poem based on the beauty of the language and images and the lack of a continuous plot.[17] Beautiful language and imagery, however, are the mainstays of poetry and narrative discontinuity is neither unique to lyric nor always present in lyric. Therefore, 'lyric' here seems to be used as a marker for poetry that cannot be otherwise categorized. Others have described *SoS* as a pastoral or bucolic idyll, since it contains rustic characters and outdoor settings.[18] However, Pope considers this classification "far from satisfactory," since many of the scenes take place in royal chambers or city streets.

I suggest that the difficulties raised by describing the *Idylls* and *Song of Songs* as bucolic or as belonging to any other genre can be resolved by treating them as part of the *erotobucolic* genre. By describing this genre, I hope to show that many poems that formerly seemed to challenge the generic boundaries of bucolic because of their reference to urban settings, such as the urban mimes in the *Idylls* or *SoS*, fit comfortably into this expanded definition. Furthermore, my definition of *erotobucolic* will incorporate the themes and imagery that have caused people to assign these poems to various genres (e.g., bucolic, mime, lyric) as well as those that have made classifying them problematic.

14 Pope 1977, 35.
15 Gordis 1961, White 1978, and Longman 2001 are the most notable proponents of this theory. Fox 1985, 202-9, Murphy 1990, 62-91, and Exum 2005, 33-7 examine, but reject the arguments for seeing *SoS* as a series of poems.
16 Fox 1985, 209-22.
17 Exum 2005, 42-5. Fox 1985, xxii does not assign *SoS* to a genre, but suggests that the Egyptian love songs (often described as lyrics) provide a possible context for generic expectations in *SoS*.
18 Moulton 1930, viii classifies *SoS* as an idyll and Pope 1977, 36 admits that there is evidence for this. Gebhardt 1931 compared *SoS* not to Theocritus' bucolic idylls but to his urban mimes (21).

2. History of Scholarly Comparison

SoS contains many tropes that are familiar from other ancient literature and Theocritus more particularly.[19] In commentaries on *SoS*, scholars noticed similarities to the poetry of Theocritus as early as 1871.[20] Some recent work has gone more in depth, examining specific similarities between *SoS* and Theocritus. Burton focuses on the prominence of female desire in *SoS* and *Idylls* 2 and 15.[21] Similarly, Hunter compares sweet talk between lovers in Greek poetry from Homer to Theocritus to the lovers' dialogue in *SoS*.[22] Despite the recognition that *SoS* shares many themes with the poetry of Theocritus, there have been no book-length studies of the topic. The article by Hunter is the only study to my knowledge that considers comparable passages in *SoS* and works by Greek poets other than Theocritus.

There is a strong possibility that not only the *Idylls* but also *SoS* were composed in the Hellenistic (Second Temple) period in Alexandria among the same *milieu*. I do not think it is possible to ascertain whether or not there was direct influence, but the court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, Theocritus' patron, welcomed Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish intellectuals and they would have had the opportunity to share ideas.[23] Ptolemy was even credited with commissioning the *Septuagint*.[24] Though this attribution is uncertain, the idea that he commissioned the

---

19 Extended comparisons include Kramer's examinations of passages similar to Sumerian love songs (1962), White's 1978 dissertation, Fox's 1985 study of the relationship between *SoS* and Egyptian love songs, and Nissinen's discussion of *SoS* as a sacred marriage poem (2008).

20 Graetz 1871 was the first to comment on the similarity regarding the passage about foxes in the vineyard (2:15) and the fox looking to steal the boy's wallet in *Idyll* 1. Pope 1977 and Fox 1985 each contain occasional comments throughout about the similarities between the *Idylls* and *SoS*.

21 Burton 2005.

22 Hunter 2005.

23 In fact, they had means (shared knowledge of Greek language), motive (desire to 'tread a new path' is apparent at least in Greek literature of the time), and opportunity (upper-class men of all three origins were likely educated at Greek gymnasia). Therefore, I can build at least a circumstantial case to suggest that authors from all three cultural traditions interacted with one another.

24 *The Letter of Aristeas*; Barclay 1996, 138-50; Marcos 2000, 35-44; Collins 2000; Gruen 2002, 54-83. Honigman 2003 argues that the letter is not an accurate account, but acts as a foundation myth.

Septuagint came about because of his interest in all literature, which led him to patronize scholars and poets from many cultures, bring them to Alexandria, and collect their work in the library.[25]

Furthermore, as Barclay describes, there was a large Jewish population in Alexandria during this time period. He argues that at least one and probably two sections of the city were predominantly Jewish and there is evidence that some elite Jewish men were receiving an education in the gymnasia.[26] Additionally, strong cases have already been made to suggest that both Greek and Hebrew literature were influenced by Egyptian literature in this time period.[27] Therefore, it is reasonable to believe Greeks and Jews became more aware of one another's literary traditions as well.[28]

As a result of the aforementioned difficulty in attributing these works to a genre and the history of comparing them, I have limited myself primarily to discussion of *SoS* and Theocritus' *Idylls* in this study. My first two chapters will closely examine the *erotobucolic* themes and metaphors [and themes] that appear in Theocritus and my third and fourth chapters will look at the same elements in *SoS*. In my conclusion, I will focus on specific *erotobucolic* metaphors, but I will expand the range of literature that I study, describing their appearance in a variety of cultures (Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman) and authors (Homer, Sappho, Anacreon, Vergil, Horace, and Ovid). I will show that *erotobucolic* literature typically displays specific animal and plant imagery, an awareness of the danger of love despite its attractions, an interest in

25 Collins 2000; McKechnie and Guillaume 2008.
26 Barclay 1996; Gruen 2002, 54-83.
27 Fox 1985; Selden 1998; Stephens 2003.
28 Gruen 2004 argues for the influence of Hellenistic Greek culture on Jewish literature. Niehoff 2011 suggests that Jewish biblical exegesis was influenced by Alexandrian Homeric commentaries. The argument in this study relies on the work of Philo, a well known Jewish Alexandrian scholar in the 2nd century BCE. Since no works by named Jewish scholars working in Alexandria during the 3rd Century BCE survive, it is more difficult to argue for direct connections.

unfulfilled desire, and a depiction of the lover as a divine figure. Not every poem exhibits all of these elements, but they can all be found in the various texts that I will discuss. Throughout my chapters and conclusion, I will analyze each text with respect to these motifs as well as their unique historical and performance context.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 1, I analyze the plant and animal imagery of Theocritus. I open with a description of the *locus amoenus* that emphasizes the erotic connotations of the landscape. In the following section, I catalog the appearance of plant metaphors in the *Idylls* and discuss the way that they integrate the beloved into the landscape while encouraging multiple interpretations beyond the natural and erotic. Next, I apply the same strategy of cataloging and interpretation to the animal metaphors of the *Idylls*. This is followed by a section on 'mixed metaphors' that involve plants and animals and have typically caused difficulty for interpreters. I conclude by previewing the connections between these images and those that I will discuss in Chapter 3 on the imagery of *SoS*.

My second chapter focuses on the varieties of danger to be found in the *Idylls*. I begin by analyzing the presences of divinities in the *Idylls*, the relationship between the divine and descriptions of the beloved, and the danger inherent in human interactions with gods. In my next section, I discuss the various social dangers to be found throughout the *Idylls* and how they affect the portrayal of love. Next I focus on the psychological dangers of love portrayed in the *Idylls*, particularly the madness brought on by unrequited love. The final section discusses the related motif of yearning lovers and the ways in which men and women differ in their pursuit of love in the *Idylls*. The conclusion looks forward to similar themes of danger in *SoS*.

Chapter 3 looks at the plant and animal imagery of *SoS*, analyzing the deep overlap between love and nature. I open with a note on my understanding of metaphor, since many of the metaphors of *SoS* are often criticized for their difficulty. The first two sections catalog and analyze all instances of plant and animal metaphors in *SoS*. As in Chapter 1 on Theocritus, my focus is not only on the erotic connotations but also on the way that an awareness of the natural and erotic layers of meaning invites the audience to look for additional meanings in the text. In my conclusion, I explain the importance of these images and the way that they are portrayed in the *erotobucolic genre*.

In Chapter 4, I examine the roles of danger and divinity in *SoS* as they influence our understanding of love. I begin by examining the social context and the dangers that might face the lovers if they consummate their relationship and/or their relationship is made known to the woman's family. In the next section, I discuss psychological dangers of love seen in *SoS*, such as lovesickness, madness, and loss of self-control. The following section describes the role of divinity, primarily from allegorical interpretations, in *SoS* and how this differs from the dangerous roles of gods in Theocritus. I conclude by discussing how danger and divinity lurk beneath the eroticized landscape of *erotobucolic* poetry.

Conclusion

Having done a close reading of the *Idylls* and *SoS* in my main chapters to discover and describe the elements of the *erotobucolic* genre as it appears in those works and how the two relate, I turn in the conclusion to a wider variety of ancient Mediterranean poetry that describes love in a natural setting. I show that Sumerian, Ugaritic, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman poetry, despite differences in culture and tradition, nevertheless all contain a shared pool of

animal and plant imagery with the same or similar connotations. Strong correlations between these texts suggest that they are working within the same genre, the *erotobucolic*. I have chosen to focus on these cultures because they are the Mediterranean cultures with the most surviving poetry. Other scholars have paved the way, pointing to similarities between *SoS,* the *Idylls,* Egyptian love lyric,[29] and Sumerian poetry.[30]

After looking at the similar metaphors in these texts, I summarize the answers to the following questions. What are the consistent themes of the *erotobucoli*c genre? Does *erotobucolic* poetry have consistent formal features? What significant differences can be found in *erotobucolic* poetry from different cultures or by different authors? I then suggest directions for future scholarship, such as looking at poetry from more distant cultures to determine the universality of *erotobucolic* descriptions or looking more closely at similarities in language between the texts I have already described as *erotobucolic*.

29 Fox 1985.
30 Nissinen 2008.

Chapter 1: *Eros in Theocritus' Green Cabinet*

Introduction

Theocritus of Syracuse was a Hellenistic poet of the early 3rd century BCE. Around 270 BCE he migrated to Alexandria and joined the court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.[31] Hellenistic poetry is known for learned allusions to earlier works and a self-conscious relationship to the past; this can be seen in the *Idylls* and in the work of other Alexandrian court poets of the same time period, including Callimachus and Apollonius. Though Theocritus did not write an explicitly programmatic poem like the prologue to Callimachus' *Aetia* that lays out his allegiance to Hellenistic style, his poems display the qualities prized in this period (brevity, allusiveness, awareness of predecessors).[32]

Theocritus' legacy includes 30 idylls, 24 epigrams, and a few fragments.[33] The first seven idylls are considered the main bucolic sequence and usually feature shepherds as characters. Many of the later poems also incorporate bucolic elements, such as descriptions of a *locus amoenus* along with themes of love (e.g., *Idylls* 13, 15, 17, 22). Theocritus' poems were composed in writing and I agree with Hunter and others that they were designed primarily for a reading audience. There is disagreement as to whether or not written versions were supplemented by performance at court.[34] I believe that references to the beauty of voices in the *Idylls* (1, 7, 15) suggest that they were performed in some way, though that may have been simple recitation as Hunter suggests.[35] The question, however, cannot be answered definitively at this time and oral

31 Ptolemy from here on out.
32 For more information on the Hellenistic period see Hopkinson 1988, 2-11; Clauss and Cuypers 2010; and Gutzwiller 2007. Stephens 2010 focuses on the background and development of Hellenistic Alexandria. For an overview of literature in the Hellenistic period, see Fantuzzi and Hunter 2005.
33 Many of the epigrams and some of the idylls attributed to him are thought to be pseudonymous.
34 Stephens 2010, 54-6; Hunter 2003, 483-4.
35 Hunter 1999, 11.

performance is not necessary for my argument.

Theocritus wrote primarily in dactylic hexameter and used Doric dialect. Dactylic hexameter had previously been used for epic and many Theocritean characters and settings are reminiscent of epic vignettes such as the rustic scenes on the shield of Achilles (*Il*. 18.541-89), the garden of Alcinous (*Od*. 6.291-4), and Hesiod's description of the golden age (*Op*. 109-20). Theocritus' poems are short compared to earlier epic and tend to focus on rustic characters rather than heroes, though at times they focus on a rustic episode within a hero's life, such as Hercules' visit to the stables of Augeus (*Idyll* 25).[36]

Ancient scholia on the *Idylls* refer to all of Theocritus' poems as *eidyllia* or "little images."[37] From this we get the modern word idyll, describing short poems about pastoral scenes. However, they also spoke about the definition of the bucolic genre; a topic that was already controversial.[38] Instead of working as a generic marker, *eidyllia* likely indicated that these were (relatively) short poems that describe things vividly. It may have been intended to describe a genre similar to epyllion or "little epic" or it may have been a convenient, descriptive title for the collection. In any case, bucolic soon took over as a generic descriptor of Theocritus' work.

Theocritus is considered by many the inventor of the bucolic genre. Categorizing poetry as bucolic or pastoral has been problematic for some time because scholars disagree on how to define the genre. Three questions divide scholars – 1) did Theocritus invent the genre? 2) did Theocritus intend the term bucolic to designate the genre? and 3) should the genre be limited to

36 For more general information on Theocritus see Gutzwiller 2007, 84-96; and Payne 2010a, 224-37.
37 For an edition of and additional information about the scholia, see Wendel 1914. For the term *eidyllion* and its origins, see Fantuzzi 2012.
38 Gutzwiller 1991, 175-82.

songs about herding? Gutzwiller provides a discussion of the scholarly debate on these topics and an excellent bibliography.[39] Evidence from as early as the 1st century BCE refers to some or all of Theocritus' *Idylls* as τὰ βουκολικά ("bucolic things"), and the term bucolic was used later in antiquity of the poetry of Moschus, Bion, and Vergil. Modern scholars have generally used the term for poetry that in some way follows the traditions of these authors, especially works that contain the love songs of shepherds; but some use the term of any poem that focuses on rustic life. Gutzwiller divides the meanings of the Greek verb βουκολέω into four parts 1) herd/graze, 2) tend/guard, 3) soothe/beguile, and 4) cheat/deceive. She shows how "bucolic" songs incorporate all of these meanings so that it is a song about herding that 'guards' traditional information by teaching it to future generations. The song is used to soothe the cares of the listener, but it deceives them because the soothing effect is temporary. Though she shows that all meanings were in place by the time of Theocritus, she warns her readers that it does not mean that Theocritus used them intentionally to define the genre.[40]

Although I agree with Gutzwiller's characterization of bucolic poetry particularly with reference to Theocritus and his successors, I suggest that much of the poetry that has been described as bucolic can be more fully understood as part of the *erotobucolic* genre because of its focus on erotic topics within a natural, often bucolic, setting.[41] When passages that have been categorized as part of the bucolic genre are studied together with those that have bucolic elements but belong to other genres, patterns emerge. I have outlined these patterns in my introductory chapter and this and the next chapter will show that they appear in the *Idylls*. By describing this mode, I hope to show that many poems that formerly seemed to challenge the

39 Gutzwiller 2006a. For an earlier discussion of some of the same issues see Halperin 1983, 27-35.
40 Gutzwiller 2006a, 390.
41 See the Introduction for a more detailed description of the *erotobucolic* genre.

generic boundaries of bucolic because of their reference to urban settings, such as *Idyll* 2 or the *SoS*, fit comfortably into the patterns of *erotobucolic* poetry.

Among surviving Greek literature, poems of Theocritus have the clearest relationship to *erotobucolic* poetry from other cultures, such as *SoS* and Egyptian love songs.[42] Perhaps his association with Ptolemy and location in Alexandria gave Theocritus the opportunity to learn of other poetry. For instance, ancient Egyptian literature, to which Stephens has shown his poetry makes reference. Stephens focuses especially on *Idyll* 17, the encomium of Ptolemy, and *Idyll* 24, the *Heracliscus*, to show how the appropriate education and behavior of a ruler in Theocritus are modeled on the education and behavior of the legendary Egyptian ruler Sesoosis.[43] Fox, too, argues convincingly for a connection between Theocritus and Egyptian lyric, especially in the image of foxes from *Idyll* 1.48-50 and 5.112 which he compares to P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 4 and also to *SoS* 2:15.[44]

I suggest that Theocritus might also have had an opportunity to hear Hebrew poetry, since his patron Ptolemy is credited with having commissioned the Septuagint.[45] This commission was a part of the Ptolemaic interest in all literature, which led the Egyptian monarchs to patronize scholars and poets from many cultures, bring them to Alexandria, and collect their work in the library. For Greek poets of the time, reading their poems while in progress was a common feature of the writing process.[46] If it is true that Ptolemy brought in numerous Hebrew scholars to work

42 This explains why numerous scholars have noted a connection between Theocritus and *Song of Songs* (Graetz 1871; Pope 1977; Fox 1985; Burton 2005; Hunter 2005; Anagnostou-Laoutides and Konstan 2008).
43 Stephens 2003, 123-59.
44 Fox 1985, 114. In P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 4 a girl sings about her love for a boy whose name means Wolf, whom she will not leave even if she is assaulted. A close parallel can be found in *Idyll* 14, where Cynisca clings to her love for Lucas (also meaning wolf) even though Aeschinas beats her.
45 *The Letter of Aristeas*; Barclay 1996, 138-50; Marcos 2000, 35-44; Collins 2000; Gruen 2002, 54-83. Honigman 2003 argues that the letter is not an accurate account, but acts as a foundation myth.
46 Hopkinson 1988, 7.

together to translate the Torah, then they would have discussed their translations at least among themselves. In an atmosphere of cultural sharing and intellectual curiosity, they may also have consulted with Greek scholars and poets in order to improve their translations.[47]

Furthermore, as Barclay describes, there was a large Jewish population in Alexandria during this time period. Ptolemaic control of Syria from 301 to 198 BCE allowed Jewish people to migrate easily to Egypt, and many of them settled in Alexandria. At least one, probably two sections of the city were predominantly Jewish. Though evidence for the social status of Jewish people in this time period is patchy and at times unreliable, by the Roman period there is evidence for some elite Jewish men being educated in the gymnasia and even without this evidence it is clear that many Jewish men were receiving a Greek education.[48] As Gruen puts it,

> Jewish success reached even to the upper echelons of the Alexandrian intelligentsia during the reigns of the Ptolemies. Jewish authors adapted the Greek language and Greek literary genres to rewrite biblical stories, to produce historical narratives, and to create fictional fantasies. Names, fragments, and even whole works survive to exhibit the skill and inventiveness of Jewish intellectuals. For many or most of these writers, good reason exists to locate them in Alexandria. They include the translators of the Pentateuch; the historian Demetrius; the authors of historical fiction like the *Letter of Aristeas* and III Maccabees; the tragedian Ezekiel; Aristobulus, the philosophic writer and supposed teacher of Ptolemy VI; and the wildly inventive Artapanus, who recast tales from Genesis and Exodus in his own peculiar mold. The anticipated readership of these authors may have been largely Jewish. But the capacity to compose such works demonstrates that their composers had access to higher education and to the Hellenic cultural traditions available in Ptolemaic Alexandria.[49]

Elite men went to gymnasia not only to learn the basics but also to become a part of Greek elite society, a task that required a background in Greek literature.[50] During the course of their education in Greek literature, some young Jewish men may have spoken to their peers about their

---

47 It is a commonplace of modern writing instruction that professional writers are always seeking an audience for their work and finding ways to share works in progress with other writers. Stories of readings by later authors such as Vergil lead me to believe that this was the case for professional Hellenistic and Roman writers as well (Donat. *Vit. Verg*. 32). Those Hebrew scholars who agreed to come to Alexandria and work on the translation of their sacred texts into a foreign language must have had some interest in sharing their culture in order to undertake such a project.
48 Barclay 1996, 19-47. Like Barclay I use the term Jewish here as a cultural rather than a religious signifier. This is how the term was used in documents and so not all of those designated as Jewish may have been practicing religiously. There is, however, evidence that many Alexandrian Jews were actively practicing as Philo mentions many synagogues around the city and one great synagogue (*Legatio* 132, 134). Some of these religious sites have inscriptions that reveal an earlier, Hellenistic date (Barclay 1996, 31). See also on this topic Gruen 2002, 54-83.
49 Gruen 2002, 69.
50 Hadot 2012.

own literary tradition.[51]

It is not a stretch to imagine that some of the Hebrew scholars and elites gathered in Alexandria shared their traditions of literature and poetry with Greek scholars and poets like Theocritus, whether they were adults speaking in the library or young men at the gymnasia. Alexandria was culturally diverse and known for its scholarship, especially scholarship on obscure topics or involving recent research.[52] Poets were looking for ways to break new ground, but were aware of the "burden of the past." One way of breaking new ground in Greek literature while maintaining ties to the past would have been to draw on literary themes from other cultures.[53] I believe that Theocritus made use of this technique in writing his bucolic poetry. A direct connection between *SoS* and Theocritus, however, is not important to my argument, which rests on the similarities between poems and not on a specific lineage.[54]

Like other *erotobucolic* poetry, Theocritus' work closely associates nature with love, hints at the dangers of love and nature, and stresses the importance of divinity in the natural and erotic worlds. In other *erotobucolic* poetry, especially *SoS* and Egyptian lyrics, the poets layer the meaning of the poems by heavy use of metaphor so that the world of the lovers is seen through metaphors of natural beauty. Theocritus varies this technique; instead of using metaphor, he places his lovers in a world of great natural beauty and he allows for multiple meanings by

51 Gruen 2010, 415-6.
52 This is especially clear in the didactic poems of Aratus and Nicander, see Clauss and Cuypers 2010, 5-6.
53 That is not to say that these themes were completely new to Greek literature. Some stories from of Homer's work are similar to poetry from ancient Near East (Launderville 2003; Louden 2010, 1-15; Frolov and Wright 2011). Theocritus treads new ground by focusing on those *erotobucolic* elements that were tangential in the work of Homer. Halperin discusses the history of what he calls pastoral in the Near East and its relationship to Theocritus. He focuses on describing ancient Near Eastern texts as a way of showing that Theocritus did not invent pastoral poetry, but rather that he invented bucolic (1983, 85-117).
54 Those who would posit a direct connection will find themselves in a bind as to which culture influenced the other, as the date of *SoS* is difficult to ascertain.

inviting literal and ironic interpretations of the herdsmen's songs.[55]

In this chapter I will discuss the appearance of *erotobucolic* motifs in Theocritean poetry. I will set the scene by explaining the importance of the *locus amoenus* as the backdrop of many of the *Idylls*. Next I will take a closer look at specific instances of plant and animal imagery and their relationship to the erotic aspects of the poems. I will conclude by explaining how these images connect Theocritus to other *erotobucolic* literature with an emphasis on *SoS*. I will argue that the *erotobucolic* genre explains the cohesion between all of the collected *Idylls* better than the bucolic genre.

Locating Eros

Not all of the *Idylls* contain an extended description of the beloved and so the overlap between lovers and locations is not always pronounced. There is, however, nearly always some description of a beautiful natural setting, a poetic technique that came to be known in Latin as the *locus amoenus*, or pleasant location. Although the name *locus amoenus* for these settings did not exist until Vergil's time,[56] the beautiful meadow used as a place of seduction in *Il*. 14.153-351 was well known, Plato's Socrates described a beautiful location with a shade tree and running water as the perfect place to discuss love in the *Phaedrus* (230b-230c), and, by the time of Plutarch, the device had become a cliché (749a). Modern scholars picked up the phrase *locus*

55 Rosenmeyer 1969, 278 and Segal 1975, 115 describe this method as a kind of expansive metaphor. Gutzwiller, 1991, 89 rightly says in reference to *Idyll* 1 "Those who believe we are meant to enjoy the herdsmen's refreshing naiveté produce ironic readings, whereas those who allow the characters of the poem to serve as a guide into a world better than our own often create escapist or symbolic interpretations. While both of these responses are authorized by the poetry, the invitation many readers have felt to view it as a new generic form can only be understood in terms of the interrelationship of these two responses and the effect that interrelationship has, usually unconsciously, upon the reader." I would apply this statement to all the *erotobucolic* moments in the *Idylls*.

56 Curtius 1991, 192 explains that *amoenus* is Vergil's standard term for the beauty of nature and Servius pointed out its similarity to *amor* (love). *Locus amoenus* first appeared as a technical term for beautiful geographical locations in Book XIV of the *Etymologiae*, an encyclopedia written in the mid-6th century CE by St. Isidore of Seville. Horace (*Ars Poetica*, 17) and the early commentators of Vergil were the first to use it as a technical term for a rhetorical ekphrasis of such a location.

amoenus and have used it to describe idyllic locations in a variety of ancient literature.[57]

One of the earliest scholarly analyses of the Greek ideal landscape, that of Curtius, describes the prerequisites as shade, a tree or group of trees, a spring or brook for refreshment, and a grassy bank for a seat. Curtius adds that a grotto might also be present.[58] Similarly, in Theocritus the common elements of a *locus amoenus* include trees or caves for shade from the noonday sun, comfortable places to sit, water, and frequently birds or insects singing in the background. The noise of animals and flowing water is important in the Theocritean landscape because it mirrors the music of the shepherds.[59] Theocritus highlights the importance of nature's music by opening *Idyll* 1 with a whispering pine and a sweetly cascading waterfall that are explicitly compared to the music of the goatherd (1.1-4). The essential nature of an ideal place remains the same throughout *erotobucolic* literature – verdant, refreshing, comfortable, and musical.

I will argue that Theocritus uses the *locus amoenus* to create a realistic but idealized setting for the songs of his shepherds and romances of his lovers. Theocritus almost always specifies the kinds of plants and animals that are present in a given setting; as I will show below, rather than just say that there is a grove, he will list the elms, tamarisks, and oak trees. Furthermore, he locates the elements of his setting in relative space: for example, he might say that a rock is under an elm tree or that a pine tree is next to a waterfall. These detailed

57 Bonnafe 1984; Kossaifi 2005a. See Hunter 1999, 12-7 for a discussion of the *locus amoenus* in Greek literature and Theocritus' place in that tradition.
58 Curtius 1991, 186-7. Bonnafe 1984, 157 n.15 describes the same aspects of a *locus amoenus* in her discussion of Homer, "the shade of the trees, the freshness of the springs, the tender carpet of the greenery, the brightness of the sun, and the song of the birds." Kossaifi 2005a, 62 n. 2 also uses Bonnafe's definition of a Homeric *locus amoenus* as a starting point. Theocritus' use of Homer as a model in other respects (meter, language, characters) is well documented.
59 Kossaifi 2005b, 18-9.

descriptions allow the reader to envision the setting realistically.[60] However, the settings are too good to be true: the water is always fresh, the trees are always verdant, and the animals always provide background music. Thus nature parallels the activity of the shepherds; Theocritus describes the ideal parts of their days, the time that they are relaxing, never the difficult parts of their work.

Many scholars believe that the *Idylls* present a world where there is no work; the most recent arguments for this theory have been made by Payne.[61] He argues that the *Idylls* contain the first "fully fictional world in Western Literature."[62] According to Payne the herdsmen "come and go as they please, without masters to answer to or flocks with pressing needs. They spend their time singing and in love, and their surroundings are a pleasure zone of trees, streams, springs, and breezes."[63] This is the veneer of the world that Theocritus presents and like the herdsmen themselves, his readers are lured into the dangers of the *erotobucolic* world, believing that it will be a place of rest and beauty forever. I see evidence, however, that the herdsman are only at rest from their ordinary work. They hint that their lives are not always easy and within the poems the herd animals occasionally cause minor trouble, implying the real trouble they create at other times.[64] Furthermore, not all of the herdsmen are as free as they seem; Corydon must answer to his master (4.1-4), Lacon is a slave (5.5), and Comatas was once a slave (5.8). At midday, in a

60 Payne 2007, 49-91 talks about how Theocritus uses this technique to create a fictional world.
61 Payne 2007, *passim* and Payne 2010a, 224-37. Payne does admit that the world in Theocritean song is so ideal that even the shepherds are in some sense imagining or identifying with it though, from the reader's point of view, they are already part of this imaginary world (2007, 17).
62 Payne 2007, 1. I agree with Payne that the world of Theocritus differs from earlier Greek fiction because the herdsmen have exceptional literary skill, making them seem out of place in a rural landscape. As Payne shows, Theocritus uses metapoetic techniques to highlight the fictionality of the *Idylls* (2007, 2). My understanding of the nature of that fictional world differs because I imagine the lives of the characters continuing after the songs are over and look for hints at what their lives were like.
63 Payne 2010a, 224.
64 Any reference to milking, the birth of animals, or cheese will hint at the actual labor of shepherding (e.g., *Idylls* 1.25-6, 143-4; 4.3-4; 11.35-7). The animals sometimes act out by butting the herdsmen or eating the wrong plants (e.g., *Idylls* 1.151-2; 3.4-5; 4.44-9; 5.147-50).

beautiful setting, shepherds make music and complain about love. Both the shepherds and the natural world are resting in these poems, but this is the calm before the storm. Danger lurks just beneath the surface of the *locus amoenus*. As I will show, both love and nature threaten to overwhelm the shepherds once the idyllic moment has ended and their songs have been sung. The majority of the songs are like snapshots of the most pleasant moments in the lives of the herdsmen.

The most famous of these landscape descriptions in Theocritus appear in *Idylls* 1, 5, and 7. These are also among the poems that scholars consider the core of the bucolic genre. In Theocritus' work, the allure of the location is always made clear, but some of the typical elements of the *locus amoenus* (trees, shade, water, seating) may be implied rather than mentioned directly.[65] For instance, shade can be suggested by the inclusion of trees, and water by the health of the plants. The constant connections between poems are the adjectives that describe the plants as abundant, the water as fresh, and the area as attractive. Each setting acts as a 'real' topographical location within its poem rather than as a metaphor, but these locations are still treated as the ideal setting for love and therefore retain the connection between Eros and nature. An analysis of these three poems will show how Theocritus typically uses the *locus amoenus* in his poetry as a setting for *erotobucolic* interactions. A further look at four other poems, *Idylls* 3, 11, 13, and 15, will demonstrate Theocritus' ability to create a *locus amoenus* within poems that have affiliations with other genres (mime, epyllion, encomium) and to vary the pattern.[66]

65 He does, however, itemize the types or appearance of those items that he includes. This technique of leaving some features implied while others are described in great detail allows Theocritean landscapes to seem both 'real' and ideal. The specific lists give the appearance of reality but enough is left to the imagination that the reader can fill in the details with his or her own ideal landscape.

66 Portrayal of a *locus amoenus* is not limited to those poems typically considered bucolic or even to those that I discuss in this section; descriptions of beautiful natural settings appear frequently in unexpected places. These references vary in length from a few lines that recall the fertile holdings of Ptolemy (17.77-81) to an extended

My aim is to show that the *erotobucolic* genre is flexible and can be used in poems with various themes to draw attention to the connection between love and nature. The *locus amoenus* is one of the most recognizable tools that Theocritus uses to achieve this result. First I will summarize the three poems that contain typical Theocritean *loci amoeni* and then I will describe the elements of idyllic locations and analyze their use in those three poems. Next I will summarize and analyze the four idylls that contain a full description of a *locus amoenus* but do not completely fit into the bucolic genre.

Idyll 1 opens with a shepherd named Thyrsis and an unnamed goatherd each complimenting the other's musical ability. The goatherd offers Thyrsis an elaborately decorated cup and three milkings from a goat that bore twins as a reward if he will sing about the death of Daphnis. Thyrsis agrees to the arrangement and his song takes up a little over half of the poem. The song is divided into three parts by slight changes in the refrain. The first segment sets the scene in Sicily, blames the Muses for their absence, and lists the animals and gods that came to mourn Daphnis even before he died. In the second section, Aphrodite herself comes to taunt Daphnis for fighting Eros, but Daphnis threatens to get revenge on her even after he is dead. At the end Daphnis offers his pipe to Pan, calls upon the natural world to mourn his death, and goes into the river to die.

In contrast to the friendly exchange between Thyrsis and the unnamed goatherd, the goatherd Comatas and the shepherd Lacon goad each other into a bitter singing competition in

---

passage that describes the elaborate menagerie at the Adonis festival of Queen Arsinoe (15.111-134). Along with the regular mention of love in these poems, these beautiful landscapes show that Theocritus used the *erotobucolic* genre even in idylls that are normally considered a part of the urban mimes or court poetry. The *locus amoenus* is not the only thing that marks these poems as *erotobucolic* and I will discuss other aspects of the genre that appear in them throughout this chapter and the next.

Idyll 5. As the poem begins, each is accusing the other of stealing and each defends his own honor by suggesting that the other could not have owned the item in question because of his low social status. Comatas claims that Lacon was once his student and his lover, but Lacon denies this and challenges Comatas to a singing match. They argue over the prize, location, and judge of the competition. Once they settle on a place and announce Morson as a judge, they begin an exchange of brief couplets in which they boast of their own musical ability, love life, and herding skills while insulting those of the other. Comatas wins and calls on his animals to join in the celebration.

The competitive element of *Idyll* 5 and the friendly nature of *Idyll* 1 are combined in *Idyll* 7, also known as the *Thalysia* or *Harvest Festival*. A character named Simichidas narrates this poem. Simichidas, a city-dweller, is reminiscing about an encounter that he had with a mysterious goatherd named Lycidas. Simichidas sets the stage by telling us that he was traveling in Cos with three companions to a festival of Demeter when they came upon Lycidas, a goatherd renowned for his piping, on the road. Lycidas immediately recognizes Simichidas and teases him for his haste. Simichidas responds by bringing up Lycidas' reputation as a piper and challenging him to a singing match as they travel. Lycidas accepts and offers up the prize of a shepherd's staff regardless of the outcome. Instead of exchanging couplets, each of the contestants sings a longer passage – Lycidas sings a *propemptikon* (farewell before a voyage) for his lover Ageanax, and Simichidas sings about the love of his friend Aratus for a boy named Philinus. Lycidas hands over the promised staff and the competitors part on friendly terms and the poem ends with Simichidas describing the abundance at the harvest festival.

Now that the common themes of these poems (love, music, danger) have been laid out,

we can discuss the common elements of their settings. Trees are prominent in the *loci amoeni* of these three idylls. Their importance in the work of Theocritus is signaled by the mention of a pine (πίτυς) in the first line of *Idyll* 1. This is an especially important pine because it whispers sweetly, foreshadowing the music of the herdsmen.[67] Later in the poem it becomes clear that the men are surrounded by several trees when Thyrsis suggests that the goatherd pipe under some tamarisks (1.13) and the goatherd declines but encourages Thyrsis to sing under an elm near some oak trees (1.21-3). Similarly, each singer in *Idyll* 5 offers a possible location, each with different shade trees; Lacon recommends a spot under a wild olive tree and a grove (1.32), while Comatas proposes a spot with oaks and tamarisks that he claims will offer better shade (1.45-9). In *Idyll* 7 the *locus amoenus* is not reached until the singing match comes to a close, but when Simichidas finally arrives at the festival, the area is replete with aspens, elms, and even pear trees whose branches have broken from an overabundance of fruit (1.135-46). The abundant fertility of these locations makes them appropriate for singing about love.

The trees are important for shade because, as the goatherd of *Idyll* 1 mentions, it is midday, a hot and sunny time when gods rest from roaming the woods (1.15-18):[68]

οὐ θέμις, ὦ ποιμήν, τὸ μεσαμβρινὸν οὐ θέμις ἄμμιν
συρίσδεν. τὸν Πᾶνα δεδοίκαμες· ἢ γὰρ ἀπ᾽ ἄγρας
τανίκα κεκμακὼς ἀμπαύεται· ἔστι δὲ πικρός,
καί οἱ ἀεὶ δριμεῖα χολὰ ποτὶ ῥινὶ κάθηται.

It is not right, shepherd, not right for me to play pipes at midday.
Since I fear Pan, for at that time worn out
He rests from the hunt; and he is bitter,
And in addition sharp anger always drips from his nostrils.[69]

67 Kossaifi 2005b, 18-9 points out that the musicality of nature along with the singing of the herdsmen creates a sense of harmony between man and nature.
68 Potential for divine encounters is prominent in Theocritean landscapes as is appropriate for the *erotobucolic* mode, in which nature symbolizes love and lovers are treated as divine. Christoforidou makes an interesting argument that Theocritus mythologizes even the mortal shepherds and gives them heroic attributes (2005). Kossaifi 2005a emphasizes the presence of the sacred in the natural world of Theocritus.
69 For Theocritus and all other Greek authors, text is taken from the TLG. Translations are my own.

Midday is also mentioned in *Idyll* 7, when Lycidas gently teases Simichidas for rushing around in the heat of the sun (7.21-3):[70]

‘Σιμιχίδα, πᾷ δὴ τὺ μεσαμέριον πόδας ἕλκεις,
ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐν αἱμασιαῖσι καθεύδει,
οὐδ’ ἐπιτυμβίδιοι κορυδαλλίδες ἠλαίνοντι;

Simichidas, where do you drag your feet at midday,
When even the lizard rests in the walls,
And the tomb-loving larks don’t flit about?

Later, when the friends finally reach the *locus amoenus*, the narrator describes the shady (σκιαραῖς) foliage of the trees (7.137). In *Idyll* 5, one of the reasons that Comatas gives for the superiority of his proposed location is that it provides better shade (5.48-9). The fact that his location is chosen (5.60) suggests that shade is a key factor in selecting an ideal location. In these poems, trees are the primary providers of shade but we will see other examples where caves offer an alternate mode of protection from the sun.

Meadows and occasionally well-formed rocks provide the shepherds with a place in the landscape to sit down and relax. The goatherd in *Idyll* 1 says that there is a shepherd’s seat (θῶκος τῆνος ὁ ποιμενικὸς) under the trees (1.22-3).[71] These seats may be made more attractive by laying down soft animal skins, as seen in *Idyll* 5, where the herdsmen try to lure each other to their preferred spots by adding sheep (5.50-1) or goat skins (5.56-7) to the meadow grass that had been offered in the original description (5.33-4). The seat in *Idyll* 7 is more ambiguous, but it appears that the companions are lying down under fruit trees because there are pears under their feet and apples rolling about on either side of them (7.144-5).

70 This is a potentially divine encounter that I will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter.
71 Gow 1950, n. 22 says, “Whether T. means a rustic bench or a natural feature – rock or tree-trunk – on which shepherds sit is hardly to be determined.” I am inclined to think that it is a natural feature because man-made objects are uncommon in Theocritus’ pastoral landscapes.

Water, long associated with sexuality, adds another, erotic layer to the *locus amoenus*.[72] In Theocritus, this usually takes the shape of springs, rivers, and waterfalls; the sound of the running water contributes to the synaesthesia of the poetry and parallels the sweet singing of the shepherds.[73] The whispering pine of *Idyll* 1 is located near springs (παγαῖσι, 1.2) and springs (κρανίδων) appear again in the site proposed by the goatherd (1.22). Lacon of *Idyll* 5 proposes that they sing near a sweet waterfall (ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ τουτεὶ καταλείβεται, 5.33) and Comatas upstages him by offering a location with two sweet springs (ἔνθ' ὕδατος ψυχρῶ κρᾶναι δύο, 5.47). The sound of the water is particularly prominent toward the end of *Idyll* 7 (7.135-6):

. . . τὸ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἱερὸν ὕδωρ
Νυμφᾶν ἐξ ἄντροιο κατειβόμενον κελάρυζε.

And nearby holy water murmurs
Flowing down from the cave of the nymphs.

This passage combines the sound, divinity, and erotic nature of water.

Birds and singing insects in the background add to the realism, synaesthesia, and musicality of Theocritean landscapes. Locusts only appear in a simile in *Idyll* 1, where the goatherd compares the sound of Thyrsis' song to the chirping of locusts in the spring (τέττιγος ἐπεὶ τύγα φέρτερον ᾄδεις, 1.148). In *Idyll* 5 locusts are present chattering in the background of Lacon's preferred site (καὶ ἀκρίδες ὧδε λαλεῦντι, 5.34). Comatas outmatches him again by offering a place where both bees (μέλισσαι, 5.46) and birds chatter (ὄρνιχες λαλαγεῦντι, 5.48). Bees, though not known for their musicianship in contemporary authors like Callimachus, may outrank locusts in Theocritus because of their association with honey that would make them

72 Segal 1969, 10 points out the association of water with sex, noting the lasciviousness of most nymphs and river gods. Hunter 1999, 71 n.2 remarks that cool water is a necessity in the *locus amoenus*. In Theocritus the erotic importance of water becomes explicit in *Idyll* 13 when the water nymphs pull Hylas into their spring.
73 I am using the term synaesthesia not in its medical or most common literary critical sense that one sense is experienced or described as another, but going back to the greek syn 'together' and aesthesia 'senses', I use the term to mean a description that brings together many different sensory experiences in order to create a more realistic setting. For a similar use of the term see Rosenmeyer 2003, 113.

appropriate for the sweet quality of bucolic song.[74] As expected, the overabundant *locus amoenus* of *Idyll* 7 contains the greatest concentration of musical animals yet (7.137-41):

τοὶ δὲ ποτὶ σκιαραῖς ὀροδαμνίσιν αἰθαλίωνες
τέττιγες λαλαγεῦντες ἔχον πόνον· ἁ δ’ ὀλολυγών
τηλόθεν ἐν πυκιναῖσι βάτων τρύζεσκεν ἀκάνθαις·
ἄειδον κόρυδοι καὶ ἀκανθίδες, ἔστενε τρυγών,
πωτῶντο ξουθαὶ περὶ πίδακας ἀμφὶ μέλισσαι.

And amid the shady sprigs swarthy,
Chattering locusts do their work; and from afar
The croaking frogs murmur in the thick thorns of the bushes;
The larks and goldfinches sing, the turtledove sighs,
And tawny bees flit about the springs.

The noise from all of these animals would drown out a singing-match and at the end of this poem nature threatens to take back what man has cultivated.[75]

Unexpected Eros

The previous idylls are programmatic poems that set up the most common pattern for a Theocritean *locus amoenus*. The following idylls use this pattern with slight variations. *Idylls* 3 and 11 are considered by some to be a part of the bucolic genre, but both of them draw on the tradition of mime.[76] The only speaking characters in *Idylls* 3 and 11 are shepherds (typically characters in bucolic poetry). However, these poems as well as *Idyll* 15 are similar to Greek mimes written by Sophron (5th century BCE), and Herodas, a contemporary of Theocritus. Their mimes are brief sketches of middle- and low- class characters going about their daily life. Actors generally performed Greek mimes set to music for the entertainment of a crowd.[77] Ancient

74 See Hunter 1999, 70-1 n.1 on the importance of sweetness and sweet words in Theocritus and later pastoral poetry. Theocritus later links this to the mythic past by describing the story of the mythological Comatas, who was put to sea in a chest, but survived because the Muses sent bees to feed him honey (7.78-85). The Comatas of *Idyll* 5 may not be the same, but he sings sweetly like the mythic Comatas.
75 Cf. Rosenmeyer 1969, 67. Vergil will develop this threatening aspect of nature further in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*.
76 Hunter 1999, 4 would include *Idylls* 1 and 5 in the category of mime because they have characters speaking to each other, but not *Idyll* 7 despite its dialogue.
77 Cunningham 1971, 3-4.

literary critics usually ignored mime as a sub-literary genre, but since Sophron's and Herodas' mimes were written, they might have been aiming to raise the literary prestige of the genre.[78] *Idylls* 3 and 11 give a brief sketch of a low-class or, in the case of Polyphemus, subhuman character going about their daily business in a way that an audience might find humorous.

Idylls 11 and 13 might be considered epyllia, or short epic poems. An epyllion is typically a short poem that involves mythological characters, is written in dactylic hexameter, and often has some relationship to Homer.[79] *Idylls* 11 and 13 contain mythological characters drawn from (Polyphemus) or mentioned in (Heracles) the works of Homer. They are comparatively brief and, like the majority of the *Idylls*, are written in dactylic hexameter. Like other Hellenistic epyllia,[80] they focus not on battle or other major epic themes, but on 'everyday' episodes from the lives of these characters.

Theocritus combines genres in complicated ways in all of his poetry and a distinction between *Idylls* 1, 5, 7 and *Idylls* 3, 11, 13, and 15 is arbitrary in many ways. As Kroll first noted, combining genres was a feature of Hellenistic literary innovation.[81] I have described *Idylls* 1, 5, and 7 first because the patterns of landscape in Theocritus stand out most clearly in these programmatic poems. I am treating the following poems separately because their place in the bucolic tradition has been questioned. I, however, hope to show that, instead of displaying all of the characteristics of the bucolic genre throughout, most of Theocritus' work foregrounds characteristics of the *erotobucolic* genre while incorporating other genres. In some poems, other genres are foregrounded (16, 17), but even in these poems *erotobucolic* patterns provide a

78 Cunningham 1971, 4.
79 Gutzwiller 1991, 107.
80 Ambühl 2010 describes the characteristics of Hellenistic epyllia, problems of definition, and the controversy about the popularity of epyllion vs. epic.
81 Kroll 1924, 202-224.

common thread throughout his poetry that unifies the collection. *Idylls* 3, 11, 13, and 15 each contain a description of a *locus amoenus* and a story of love, suggesting that they belong in the *erotobucolic* genre and further elements of danger, longing, and divinity that I will discuss in the next chapter confirm this attribution.

In *Idyll* 3, a goatherd leaves his flock with another herdsman or perhaps the dominant male goat, Tityrus, while he goes off to serenade a nymph named Amaryllis.[82] He begs Amaryllis to come out of her cave, promising apples for her if she comes, and threatening suicide if she does not. This is a pastoral *paraclausithyron* (song in front of a locked door) with a twist. A natural setting like a cave is usually easy to enter, but the goatherd complains that he does not have access and begs her to come out. He then sings a short song of mythological examples of love, but chooses primarily stories that end poorly (Atalanta, Adonis, Endymion, and Iasion).[83] The goatherd ends by complaining that Amaryllis does not care for him, claiming that he will fall asleep outside the cave and she will be happy when wolves eat him.

The area surrounding Amaryllis' cave provides all the attractions of a *locus amoenus* with the possible exception of water.[84] The shepherd reclines under a pine tree (3.37), her cave offers inviting shade (3.5-6), and his wish to become a bee suggests the presence of insects humming

82 Gow 1950, 65 n.2 suggested this as a possibility, but put more emphasis on Tityrus as a human companion. For a more recent discussion of this interpretation that concludes Tityrus is likely a human friend see Gutzwiller 1991, 117.

83 The only story he mentions that does not end in death or punishment is that of Melampus, who successfully wins a bride for his brother Bias by giving her father cattle. The inclusion of this story may suggest that the shepherd chooses these stories not because of their unhappy endings, which would make them less convincing, but because of their relationship to rustic life, which makes them a better parallel to his own case (Atalanta was raised in the wilderness, Melampus was herding cattle, Adonis and Endymion were shepherds, and Iasion had sex with Demeter in a freshly plowed field). Gutzwiller points out that the goatherd may be saying he would accept such a punishment if he could have Amaryllis (1991, 121). Payne argues that the goatherd's song fails to be persuasive because the goatherd does not resemble the protagonists (2007, 65-6).

84 The goatherd mentions a watering place for his goats at first and later claims that he will throw himself from a rock and drown (3.4, 25), but it is uncertain whether either of these bodies of water is nearby. In any case, by mentioning these bodies of water, Theocritus calls to mind this aspect of a *locus amoenus*.

around the cave (3.12-14):

. . .αἴθε γενοίμαν
ἁ βομβεῦσα μέλισσα καὶ ἐς τεὸν ἄντρον ἰκοίμαν,
τὸν κισσὸν διαδὺς καὶ τὰν πτέριν ἅ τυ πυκάσδει.

Would that I might become
A humming bee and enter your cave,
Having slipped through the ivy and fern that hide you.

Even in this relatively short 54-line idyll, Theocritus devotes several lines to the setting (3.1-5, 12-4, and 38-9). The importance of location in this poem mirrors the importance of love. Immediately following his description of Amaryllis' cave, the goatherd describes the god Eros himself (3.15-17):

νῦν ἔγνων τὸν Ἔρωτα· βαρὺς θεός· ἦ ῥα λεαίνας
μαζὸν ἐθήλαζεν, δρυμῷ τέ νιν ἔτραφε μάτηρ,
ὅς με κατασμύχων καὶ ἐς ὀστίον ἄχρις ἰάπτει.

Now I know that Eros is a burdensome god; A lioness
Suckled him at her breast, and his mother raised him in a thicket.
He shoots me - burning me even into the depth of my bones.

To say that someone was born from a lioness was an idiomatic way of calling them hard-hearted in Greek literature.[85] By juxtaposing the image of Eros as born in wild nature and raised by a beast with the description of Amaryllis' ivy covered cave, Theocritus adds meaning to this phrase. He implies not only that Eros is hard-hearted but also that he belongs within the setting of the *locus amoenus* - a wild, beautiful, and dangerous place.

In *Idyll* 11, a poem that combines typical pastoral elements with a character well known from epic, a young Polyphemus sings about his love for the sea nymph Galatea. This lovelorn youth will grow up to be the Cyclops of Odyssean fame.[86] His song is framed with an address to Nicias, a doctor and friend of the author. The prologue describes the Cyclops' song as a

85 For earlier examples see Hunter 1999, 115 n.15.
86 For the importance of the story of Odysseus to this poem see Gutzwiller 1991, 107; Hunter, 1999, 219; and Prauscello 2007.

φάρμακον (drug/cure) for love. After eighteen lines, the Cyclops' song is quoted directly. He praises the beauty of Galatea in terms of plant and animal life, using metaphors similar to those seen in the *SoS*. He describes how they met and how she shuns his beastly appearance; then he brags of his pastoral holdings and begs her to join him. He explains that he is unable to join her in the sea because he was not born with gills and has never learned to swim (although his mother is a sea nymph and his father the god of the sea). At the end of the song he chides himself for loving an unwilling girl and says that he will go after one of the girls who flirt with him. The last two lines, addressing Nicias in the narrator's voice, claim that Polyphemus successfully shepherded (ἐποίμαινεν, 11.79) his love by singing – something that he could not have accomplished by paying a doctor.[87]

Polyphemus, singing by the barren seashore, describes his cave as a *locus amoenus* in order to attract Galatea (11.43-8):

ἄδιον ἐν τῶντρῳ παρ' ἐμὶν τὰν νύκτα διαξεῖς.
ἐντὶ δάφναι τηνεί, ἐντὶ ῥαδιναὶ κυπάρισσοι,
ἔστι μέλας κισσός, ἔστ' ἄμπελος ἀ γλυκύκαρπος,
ἔστι ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ, τό μοι ἀ πολυδένδρεος Αἴτνα
λευκᾶς ἐκ χιόνος ποτὸν ἀμβρόσιον προΐητι.

You will spend the night more sweetly with me in my cave.
There are laurels and slender cypresses,
There is dark ivy and a fruit-bearing vine,
There is sweet water, which Mt. Etna of the many trees
Sends down to me from the white snow, a celestial drink.

His cave offers shade and a place to lie down, is surrounded by trees, and has access to flowing water; it is a perfect place for love even if the Cyclops is not the ideal lover (11.29-32). Birds and insects are not mentioned in *Idyll* 11, but Polyphemus does mention that he can pipe better than

87 For an excellent discussion of the various meanings and significance of the term ἐποίμαινεν in this passage see Gutzwiller 2006a, 394. See the following chapter for a discussion of whether or not he truly cures his love.

any of his kinsmen (11.37), a dubious accomplishment.[88]

Many scholars argue that the Cyclops is naïve to think that Galatea would be attracted by his rustic offer either because they would not attract a nymph or because they are not enough to make up for his appearance. Some add that the girls Polyphemus believes are flirting with him (11.77-9), are truly mocking him.[89] I believe that these scholars malign Polyphemus unfairly.[90] In regard to the first, it seems generally accepted in earlier Greek literature that even deities like to go to a *locus amoenus*, especially for love.[91] This location is not so different from the cave of Amaryllis (3.5-37) or the lush spring where Hylas is abducted (13.39-42), and so one might expect nymphs (at least river nymphs) to enjoy it. As to his looks, traditionally women have been expected to overlook appearance in favor of financial security. Even in the divine world, Aphrodite is married to Hephaestus; the implication in Homer is that he got her by offering an impressive bride-price.[92] These precedents would give Polyphemus good reason to believe that a match with Galatea is within the realm of the possible.

Idyll 13 also places an epic character, Heracles, within a rustic setting. Again the frame addresses Nicias and discusses the nature of love; this time the narrator tells Nicias that immortals also fall in love and provides the story of Heracles and Hylas as an example. This poem differs from the pastoral idylls in that it is told entirely by the narrator and it involves a major mythological hero rather than shepherds; therefore it has typically been categorized as an

88 Gutzwiller 1991, 111 points out that Polyphemus was traditionally considered lacking in musical ability.
89 Cf. Gutzwiller 1991, 113-4; Hunter 1999, 242 n.77-8.
90 I generally disagree with the idea that learned audiences must necessarily be laughing at naïve rustics. I admit that there are comic elements in *Idyll* 11, as Gutzwiller shows (1991, 107-15), but I feel the focus on Polyphemus' laughable characteristics keeps scholars from exploring other, more sympathetic readings. If Polyphemus is somewhat naïve, perhaps it reminds learned readers of their own follies in love - after all many of them make a living singing about how unsuccessful 'their own' love lives are; see Gutzwiller 2007, 64-5 for a brief discussion of early Greek elegists.
91 Cf. Hom. *Il*. 14.153-351, *Hymn. Hom. Cer*. 6-22; Mosch. *Europa* 63-88.
92 Hom. *Od*. 8.317-320.

epyllion. After the address to Nicias, the narrator describes how Heracles took Hylas along on the voyage of the Argonauts. While they were setting up camp one evening, Hylas went to fetch water for Heracles and was abducted by water nymphs. Heracles, driven mad by love for the missing boy, wandered far away looking for him. The narrator closes by reporting that Hylas became a god and Heracles eventually made it to Colchis by foot.

The spring of the nymphs in *Idyll* 13 is briefly described with important features of a *locus amoenus*: water, a place to sit, implied shade, and abundant plant-life (13.39-42);

. . .τάχα δὲ κράναν ἐνόησεν
ἠμένῳ ἐν χώρῳ· περὶ δὲ θρύα πολλὰ πεφύκει,
κυάνεόν τε χελιδόνιον χλωρόν τ᾽ ἀδίαντον
καὶ θάλλοντα σέλινα καὶ εἰλιτενὴς ἄγρωστις.

Swiftly he [Hylas] spotted a spring
In a hidden area; and about it many rushes grew,
And dark swallowwort and green maidenhair
And thriving parsley and marshy field-grass.

Once the nymphs have pulled Hylas into the water, they place him on their knees to comfort him, which suggests that they are sitting perhaps on rocks under the water (13.53-4). By describing the location as 'hidden,' the narrator implies that it is dark and shady, most likely overshadowed by trees or rocks. The abundant marsh plants around the spring suggest the fertility of the area. This pleasant setting is appropriately both erotic and dangerous.[93] The nymphs fall in love with the boy but take him against his will. This danger is latent in all *erotobucolic* settings, as I will discuss it at greater length in the next chapter.

Idyll 15, sometimes known as the *Adoniazusae*, is mostly set up as a dialogue between two women, Gorgo and Praxinoa, who are headed to the festival of Adonis in the palace of

93 Payne 2007, 86-88 discusses first the revelation that Heracles' love is dangerous in the lion simile and then the danger of this *locus amoenus*. He, however, sees the danger as an aberration from the normal safety of the *locus amoenus*. I argue that both love and nature are always potentially dangerous in *erotobucolic* literature, but it is not always so explicitly revealed as in this poem.

Arsinoe. It also contains an inset song performed at that festival. It is generally considered an urban mime because of its setting in the city and primary format as a dialogue between relatively low-class characters (a trope of Greek mime).[94] Within the framework of an urban mime, however, the conversation of the women and the content of the song emphasize an abundant natural setting as they praise the love of Adonis and Aphrodite.[95] The setting, although indoor, contains all of the beautiful plants, attractive shade, and animal life of an outdoor *locus amoenus* (15.112-22):

πὰρ μέν οἱ ὥρια κεῖται, ὅσα δρυὸς ἄκρα φέροντι,
πὰρ δ' ἀπαλοὶ κᾶποι πεφυλαγμένοι ἐν ταλαρίσκοις
ἀργυρέοις, Συρίω δὲ μύρω χρύσει' ἀλάβαστρα,
εἴδατά θ' ὅσσα γυναῖκες ἐπὶ πλαθάνω πονέονται
ἄνθεα μίσγοισαι λευκῷ παντοῖα μαλεύρῳ,
ὅσσα τ' ἀπὸ γλυκερῶ μέλιτος τά τ' ἐν ὑγρῷ ἐλαίῳ.
πάντ' αὐτῷ πετεηνὰ καὶ ἑρπετὰ τεῖδε πάρεστι·
χλωραὶ δὲ σκιάδες μαλακῷ βρίθοισαι ἀνήθῳ
δέδμανθ'· οἱ δέ τε κῶροι ὑπερπωτῶνται Ἔρωτες,
οἷοι ἀηδονιδῆες ἀεξομενᾶν ἐπὶ δένδρῳ
πωτῶνται πτερύγων πειρώμενοι ὄζον ἀπ' ὄζω.

For in-season fruits are laid out, as many as the tops of a tree bear,
For tender gardens are kept in silver baskets,
And Syrian perfume in golden boxes,
And honey-cakes, as many as women prepare in a dish,
All sorts of blossoms mixed with flour,
And as many made from sweet honey and in moist olive oil.
All flying and crawling beasts are here for him.
And green canopies weighed down with anise
Have been constructed. And the young Erotes flying above,
Like nightingales fly in a tree
Testing their growing wings from branch to branch.

Such an abundance of plants and animals in an enclosed space might sound threatening, but the women at the festival are impressed rather than frightened (15.80-6).[96] I believe that these

94 Furley 2012.
95 See Griffiths 1981 and Burton 1995, 9-19 for the importance of this poem in understanding the relative freedom of Hellenistic women.
96 This line is often taken with the previous lines, giving the meaning that there are cakes baked in the shape of many animals; see Gow 1950, 296 n. 118. I agree with Gow that there should be a hard stop at the end of line 117, suggesting that the animals are real. Unlike Gow, I take the animals as a menagerie adding to the richness of the setting rather than as offerings.

animals and plants made up something similar to a modern botanical garden or zoo. Repeated mentions of the lavish nature of the festival put on by Queen Arsinoe (15.22-4, 80-6, 110-22), a patroness of Theocritus, imply that the queen has put on a truly spectacular show. Considering the wealth of the Ptolemies, the scope of their holdings, and the fantastic ceremony that Arsinoe's husband Ptolemy put on for Apollo,[97] I suggest that Berenice has created an indoor *locus amoenus* complete with a variety of animals, elaborate statues of the gods, and offerings. The only typical element of a *locus amoenus* not mentioned as a part of the spectacle is the water, but the singer reveals that Adonis will be carried out to the water and mourned (15.132-5). The story of Aphrodite and Adonis is a sacred marriage, like many of the Sumerian texts that I will discuss in my concluding chapter.[98] These were the first recorded stories to make a connection between erotic longing and an argument can be made for including them in the *erotobucolic* genre.

All the aspects of the *locus amoenus* add to the synaesthesia of Theocritus' poems. By specifying the type and location of each element in the setting, Theocritus enables the reader to picture the whole area. When he presents shade as a relief from the hot sun, Theocritus encourages the audience to imagine how it would feel to be in such a spot. Most of the animals mentioned as a part of the *locus amoenus* have musical associations in Greek literature; they chirp, buzz, and croak in a way that is pleasing to the ear, bringing to life the sound of an idyllic setting. Flowing water and breezes blowing through the trees can add to this musical effect. Each *locus amoenus* comes to life through its individual description and creates a realistic, if 'too good to be true,' scene for the musical shepherds. The number of items included in the description of a setting is sometimes overabundant, pointing to the threatening nature of the *locus amoenus*.

97 Callim. *Hymn* 2.
98 This is not stated but suggested by the frequency with which men fall in love upon entering a *locus amoenus*. *Idyll* 15.112-22 comes the closest to making a literal connection between the god and the *locus amoenus*.

Love, Eros as deity, lurks among the dense vegetation, threatening to drive the shepherds to madness.[99] The combination of this fertile, natural setting and the stories of love is the foundation of the *erotobucolic* genre.

Plants, Poetics, and Passion

As stated above, despite the ubiquity of the *locus amoenus* in Theocritus as the appropriate place for love, there are relatively few descriptions of lovers that use the kind of plant and spice imagery that is seen in other non-Theocritean *erotobucolic* poems. Nevertheless, there are some noteworthy examples of plant metaphors used of beauty or poetic qualities and some poems do exhibit the same kind of overlap between beloved and nature seen frequently in *SoS* and other *erotobucolic* texts.

Since the plants in Theocritean metaphors are primarily used to describe the beloved as beautiful or lacking beauty, it is important to keep context and cultural ideals in mind while discussing them. Scholars typically believe that the ideal of beauty for women in ancient Greece, from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period and beyond, involved pale skin and facial symmetry.[100] Many descriptions of ancient goddesses (who are always beautiful) include words to describe their skin as white or radiant.[101] The use of terms for fairness or radiance to describe mortal women carries into later periods; Hellenistic examples include Calllimachus' descriptions of Cydippe as a "beautiful star" (καλοὶ νησάων ἀστέρες ἀμφότεροι) or "appearing like the dawn" (ἠοῖ εἰδομένη) and the Cyclops' description of Galatea in *Idyll* 11 as "whiter than cream

99 A combination of abundant nature and maddening love can be seen in the death of Daphnis in *Idyll* 1, threats of suicide in *Idyll* 3, sexual violence in *Idyll* 5, Polyphemus' berating himself in *Idyll* 11, Hylas' abduction by love-struck nymphs in *Idyll* 13, and the death of Adonis in *Idyll* 15.
100 Dover 1971, 169 n. 27; Hopkinson 1988, 169 n. 26.
101 E. g. one of Hera's Homeric epithets is λευκώλενος (white-armed); Aphrodite's beauty is described as shining forth at *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 175; and Demeter's appearance in *Hymn. Hom. Cer*. 190 is described as a divine flame. The sheen of the skin seems to be more important than pallor for goddesses since Aphrodite's color is not explicitly described and Demeter's divine flame might suggest a red or orange tint to her skin.

cheese to look upon" (λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς ποτιδεῖν).[102] Most Greek vases also show women in a lighter color than men, suggesting that women were expected to be fair skinned.[103] Pallor caused by sickness, however, was considered unattractive. This kind of pallor appears in many Greek poems because love was often metaphorically described as an illness.[104] I will use the context of each poem and similar passages from other Greek literature as a guide to understanding whether plant metaphors describing lovers have a negative or positive valence.

Beautiful lovers are described using the imagery of flowers, vines, and trees. In *Idyll* 2, the performance of a love spell by a young woman named Simaetha and her silent servant, Simaetha describes her beloved Delphis and his friend coming back from the wrestling school (2.77-8):

τοῖς δ' ἧς ξανθοτέρα μὲν ἐλιχρύσοιο γενειάς,
στήθεα δὲ στίλβοντα πολὺ πλέον ἢ τύ, Σελάνα,

Their beards were blonder than gold-flower,
And their chests shone much brighter than you, Moon.

Simaetha describes two well-known aspects of Greek male beauty, youthful beards and bodies sculpted at gymnasia. She uses the images of a vine with golden flowers and the light reflecting from their well-oiled skin.[105] Though this encounter occurs in the city and not in a *locus amoenus*, Simaetha represents the beauty of Delphis using plants as *comparanda*. This vision of her beloved as a shining flower transports her to a metaphorical *locus amoenus* where she falls in

102 Callim. *fr*. 67.8, 13 P. and Theoc. *Id.* 11.19. The heroines of Greek novels are also extremely fair (e.g., Chariton 2.2.2; Achilles Tatius gave his heroine the name Leucippe (white-horse) to suggest her pallor; and Heliodorus' Chariclea is white even though she was born to black parents.
103 Stewart 1997, 58.
104 Archil. *SLG*, 478; Theognis 1305-10; etc. See Hunter 1999, 187-9 n. 120-1 for further discussion of this trope.
105 Olive oil was commonly used as a skin lubricant in the gymnasia and also more generally as a soap (Hornblower 2011, 130). The oil here is an enhancement rather than a metaphor for male beauty, but I have decided to include it because it contributes to the simile of their skin shining like the moon. Furthermore, Simaetha later uses a similar adjective to describe the appearance of the moon, suggesting that the metaphors are related (Segal 1985, 114-6; Burton 1995, 68-9). I have not included other uses of plants to enhance beauty such as garlands (2.120, 3.21-4, 7.62-3, etc.) though the erotic connotations of garlands go beyond their decorative function and may be tied to the association between nature and Eros.

love. The bright light shining from their chests and the context that they are coming from the wrestling school (76) imply that this meeting during the day, most likely midday when the sun would be at its brightest. That would match their meeting to the timing of most pastoral idylls; the most dangerous time to encounter a god. In a sense Simaetha does encounter a god because at first sight of Delphis she is struck by Eros.

During the amoebic exchange (i.e., a competitive repartee usually in song) of *Idyll* 5, Comatas uses plant imagery to compare his beloved Clearista favorably to Lacon's beloved Cratidas and Lacon responds in kind (5.92-5):[106]

ΚΟ. ἀλλ' οὐ συμβλήτ' ἐστὶ κυνόσβατος οὐδ' ἀνεμώνα
πρὸς ῥόδα, τῶν ἄνδηρα παρ' αἱμασιαῖσι πεφύκει.
ΛΑ. οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀκύλοις ὀρομαλίδες· αἳ μὲν ἔχοντι
λεπτὸν ἀπὸ πρίνοιο λεπύριον, αἳ δὲ μελιχραί.

CO. But neither the dog-thorn nor the anemone is comparable
To the rose, whose flower-bed grows by the wall.
LA. Nor acorns to wild apples; the former have
A slender husk from the holm-oak, but the latter are sweet as honey.

The choice of flowers in Comatas' couplet is revealing; both the dog-thorn and the anemone are attractive plants, but they are wild and they are not used as gifts for lovers like the cultivated rose.[107] He does not claim that Lacon's beloved is unattractive, only that he cannot compare to the cultivated allure of Clearista. Lacon takes the comparison in a new direction, choosing plants that are known not for their appearance or fragrance, but for their taste. His comparison aims to disparage Clearista while glorifying Cratidas. His attempt may backfire because he describes Clearista not as sharing the bitter taste of the acorn, but its slender husk (λεπτὸν . . . λεπύριον).

106 See Gutzwiller 1991, 142-7 for a discussion of the importance of similarity and variation between the songs of competitors in amoebic exchanges and *Idyll* 5 in particular.
107 The anemone is a strange choice for his comparison, because according to some traditions (most notably Ov. *Met*. 10.725-39), Aphrodite created these flowers from the blood of her beloved Adonis. Despite this erotic connection anemones are not commonly mentioned as love gifts (this is the only appearance of the flower in the Theocritean corpus), whereas roses appear elsewhere as love tokens (10.34, 11.10).

employing the adjective λεπτὸς. This adjective is used approvingly in Hellenistic poetry to describe well-polished literature and now it describes the fruit that stands in for Clearista, an unintentionally positive comparison.[108] Furthermore, although he does call the apples sweet as honey (μελιχραί) – honey terms are often used to describe the sweetness of Hellenistic poetry – he specifies that these are wild apples, not the cultivated apples that lovers typically give.[109] Comatas would suggest that cultivated plants are better than wild ones and Lacon's response involving only wild fruits does not negate his point.

It is not clear, however, to what extent readers are expected to keep the lover of each man in mind during these comparisons, or even how familiar they would be with the specific qualities of all of the flowers and fruits described. What is known is that the primary audience of Hellenistic literature was highly educated. They would be aware of the literary associations of the plants and perhaps their physical qualities - especially if they had been included in a botanical treatise.[110] Because of this, the literary connotations of the plants and adjectives used to describe them are likely more important in the metaphors than actual physical qualities of the plants that are not mentioned within the poem. As is typical in the *erotobucolic* genre, the beloved is identified with nature through metaphor but, in *Idyll* 5, he or she is also identified with the poem/song.

In *Idyll* 10, a singing exchange between Bucaeus and Milon who are working in the

108 Gow 1950, 109 n. 94 f. mentions that λεπτὸς has seemed an odd choice to some editors but adds that nobody has suggested an emendation that would clarify the text. I believe that the text is likely correct as it stands because λεπτὸς was an important programmatic term in Hellenistic literature (cf. Callimachus Aetia Fr. 1; Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2002).
109 Id. 2.120, 3.10, 6.7, etc. In Idyll 7 Simichidas even compares loves to apples: ὦ μάλοισιν Ἔρωτες ἐρευθομένοισιν ὁμοῖοι (Loves similar to reddening apples).
110 Theophr. *Caus. pl*., *Hist. pl*.

fields,[111] Bucaeus describes his love for a girl named Bombyca. He realizes that other people find her looks wanting, but uses plant imagery to explain his attraction (10.25-8):

Βομβύκα χαρίεσσα, Σύραν καλέοντί τυ πάντες,
ἰσχνάν, ἁλιόκαυστον, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος μελίχλωρον.
καὶ τὸ ἴον μέλαν ἐστί, καὶ ἀ γραπτὰ ὑάκινθος·
ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπας ἐν τοῖς στεφάνοις τὰ πρῶτα λέγονται.

Dearest Bombyca, everyone calls you Syrian,
Skinny, sunburnt, but I call you honey colored,
The violet is also dark, and the inscribed hyacinth:
But nonetheless those are chosen first for garlands.

This dark but beautiful theme also appears in *SoS* (1:5-6):

שְׁחוֹרָה אֲנִי֙ וְנָאוָ֔ה בְּנ֖וֹת יְרוּשָׁלָ֑͏ִם כְּאָהֳלֵ֣י קֵדָ֔ר כִּירִיעֹ֖ות שְׁלֹמֹֽה׃
אַל־תִּרְאֻ֨נִי֙ שֶׁאֲנִ֣י שְׁחַרְחֹ֔רֶת שֶׁשְּׁזָפַ֖תְנִי הַשָּׁ֑מֶשׁ בְּנֵ֤י אִמִּי֙ נִחֲרוּ־בִ֣י שָׂמֻ֔נִי נֹטֵרָ֖ה אֶת־הַכְּרָמִ֑ים כַּרְמִ֥י שֶׁלִּ֖י לֹ֥א נָטָֽרְתִּי׃

I am black but lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the drapes of Solomon.
Do not stare at me because I am dark since the sun has burned me. The sons of my mother were angry with me.
They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not cared for.[112]

This theme may have been a common feature of the *erotobucolic* genre because it would allow the author to vary the imagery typically used in a blazon, an extended description of the beloved's appearance, at the same time as establishing that the lover's feelings transcend cultural ideals of beauty.[113]

It would be possible to interpret lines 25-6 of *Idyll* 10 differently; one of the key terms, μελίχλωρος, is more commonly used as a synonym for μελίχρως (fair, sallow) than ἁλιόκαυστος

111 Since the herdsmen and reapers in Theocritus' songs seem to be laborers or subsistence farmers rather than wealthy land owners, the characters would likely be imagined to alternate between shepherding and raising crops as there was need; see Gutzwiller for a discussion of the real shepherding class of this time period (Gutzwiller 2006b). No texts and not all editors understand the name of the character as Bucaeus; they take the vocative Βουκαῖε in line first line as a direct reference to the character's occupation as a cattle herder. See Gow 1950, 193 n.1 for his reasons for taking this address as a name. I agree with his arguments and would add that this is an appropriate name for a Theocritean character because it means cowherd. Whether the character is named Cowherd or is known as a cowherd, Theocritus suggests a close relationship between herdsmen and harvesters. Other significant names used in Theocritus include Comatas and Daphnis (both names of legendary herdsmen), Thyrsis (suggesting a Bacchic connection), and Simichidas (snub-nosed, also used of goats).

112 For all quotations from *SoS*, I have drawn the text from the BHS (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia). All translations are my own.

113 See Chapter 3 for further discussion of this trope in *SoS*.

(sunburnt). This interpretation would suggest that Bucaeus believes that Bombyca is in fact fair skinned despite the insults of other men.[114] I agree with Dover that the problem arises because of different expectations for the appearance of male and female lovers; while it would be a compliment to refer to a boy's skin color as μελίχρως this skin-tone is not light enough for most men to consider it attractive for a woman.[115] Bucaeus' vocabulary choices also highlight his poetic and erotic program – μελίχλωρος is another honey word alluding to the sweetness of his song and he points out that the flowers are popular in garlands, the favored headgear of lovers.

Theocritus uses plant imagery to describe how lovers are unattractive as well as beautiful. Simaetha describes the physical ravages of love upon her body at *Idyll* 2.87-9:

καί μευ χρὼς μὲν ὁμοῖος ἐγίνετο πολλάκι θάψῳ,
ἔρρευν δ' ἐκ κεφαλᾶς πᾶσαι τρίχες, αὐτὰ δὲ λοιπά
ὀστί' ἔτ' ἦς καὶ δέρμα.

And my flesh often became just like saffron,
And all the hair fell from my head, and skin and bones
Were all that remained of me.

She compares her skin to θάψος, a plant that was used as a yellow dye.[116] Gow notes a stronger connection between this plant and illness, pointing out that scholia on Nicander's *Theriaca* 529 say that some people used this plant to yellow their skin in an attempt to exaggerate their illness. Therefore, I interpret Simaetha's description to mean that her beauty has been marred by unfulfilled desire; she has a sallow complexion, her hair is thinning, and she has lost an unhealthy amount of weight. Understanding that love can be portrayed as sickness leads us to the

114 Plat. *Rep*. 474d, Plut. *Mor*. 45a, etc. See Gow 1950, 199-200 n. 27. For another ambiguous use of this word that may also imply a red color, see Nic. *Ther*. 797-8 where this term is used to describe the color of a scorpion. The scholiast explains that this is because scorpions are a fiery red color but waxy in appearance (schol. Nic. *Ther*. 797). The meaning of color terms from ancient sources is notoriously difficult. Fair or even reddish skin will mean different things in different cultures. For a recent study on the subject of skin-tone in ancient Greek literature, see Dimakopoulou 2010. For a more general study of color terms, see Irwin 1974.
115 Dover 1971, 169 n.27.
116 *LSJ* s.v. "θάψος"; Gow 1950, 53 n. 88.

conclusion that sallow skin, thinning hair, and extreme thinness are considered unattractive to Theoccritus' audience.[117]

Simaetha subtly describes the fulfillment of her desire as the ripening of a plant (2.140-1):

καὶ ταχὺ χρὼς ἐπὶ χρωτὶ πεπαίνετο, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα
θερμότερ' ἦς ἢ πρόσθε, καὶ ἐψιθυρίσδομες ἀδύ.

And swiftly flesh grew ripe upon flesh, and my forehead
Grew warmer than before, and we whispered sweet nothings.

Two major commentaries take the verb πεπαίνω to mean "grew warm," perhaps as a variation on the warmth in the following line.[118] However, the more common meaning of πεπαίνω is "ripen" and the only instance of its use meaning "grew warm" given in the *LSJ* is this very passage from Theocritus.[119] Following the previous image of love-sick Simaetha as a sickly plant, I believe we should take πεπαίνω with its normal meaning ("ripen") in this passage. Without Delphis she withered away, but when they are together they both grow ripe. Thus the fruition of desire is similar to the fruition of a plant in *erotobucolic* literature.

In *Idyll* 7, Simichidas mentions that Philinus is aging and will not be attractive much longer (7.120-1):

καὶ δὴ μὰν ἀπίοιο πεπαίτερος, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες,
"αἰαῖ", φαντί, "Φιλῖνε, τό τοι καλὸν ἄνθος ἀπορρεῖ".

And after all he is riper than a pear,[120] and the women

117 Without this context it would be easy to misinterpret these lines. If one were to translate flow, instead of fall out for ἔρρευν and to understand the connotation of yellow to be golden-hued, then Simaetha might be describing herself as a twenty-first century supermodel (thin, flowing hair, tan skin). Despite the temptation to believe that ideals of beauty transcend time and space, we should not assume that Hellenistic Greek standards of beauty were the same as ours. As Aristotle pointed out, what seems beautiful to some people may seem ugly to others (Aristot. *Met*. 11.1062b). The same sentiment appears in *Idyll* 6, 19 in which Galatea has fallen for the Cyclops despite his appearance.
118 Gow 1950, 58 n. 140; Hopkinson 1988, 165 n. 140.
119 *LSJ* s.v. "πεπαίνω."
120 The sense of this comparison is somewhat difficult. I agree with Gow's suggestion that this is a reference to the speed with which this particular fruit goes from ripe to rotten (1950, 161 n.120).

Say "Alas Philinus, your beautiful blossom slips away.

It is a trope in Greek literature to compare the brevity of youth to the blossoming of a flower.[121] Lovers typically mention the brevity of youth either to urge youths to give in to the advances of lovers while they are still young or to describe the death of the youth. Here since Simichidas says that Philinus' fruit is already over-ripe, his goal is to convince his friend that Philinus is no longer worth pursuing and not to get Philinus to take a lover (it is already too late for that). As Hunter points out, this passage alludes to Archilochus' description of Neobule in the *Cologne Epode* (24-31), where he implies that her overripeness (πέπων) is a result of too much sexual activity.[122] Hunter suggests that this implication may carry over to Philinus, especially since he was introduced as soft (7.105). This interpretation would make sense in the context of trying to get Aratus to abandon his infatuation with the boy; not only is he getting old, he has given his sexual favors to others while withholding them from Aratus. Within the extant corpus of Theocritus this is the only use of this metaphor. This section of the idyll is remembered from an encounter in Simichidas' youth, when he was still honing his poetic skills, and so its appearance within his song may suggest that the image is trite or old fashioned.[123] If these types of metaphors were considered trite, then Theocritus may have chosen to keep the lovers and the setting more separate in his later *erotobucolic* poetry than they had been in Sumerian or Egyptian poems in order to avoid seeming old-fashioned. He keeps the *locus amoenus* in the background and seemingly separate and, instead of connecting them through overt metaphors, he suggests their

121 Hom. *Il*. 8.306-8; Theog. 994, 1348 West. Greene notes that flower metaphors for men tend toward pathos and refers to two of the same passages (1996, 149 n.10).
122 *SLG* 478.24-31; Hunter 1999, 187-8 n.118-20.
123 Lycidas is a mysterious figure whose perfect goatherd appearance (7.14-9), laughter (7.20, 42, 128), poetic skill (7.27-9) , and gift of a staff (7.43-4) mark him as a possibly divine source of inspiration. See Clauss 2003 for a recent discussion of the significance of these attributes and a bibliography of scholarly discussion on the identity of Lycidas. I agree with Clauss that Lycidas is most likely a divinity, though I do not believe that the divinity can be firmly identified, as he seems to have characteristics of Pan, Apollo, and even Aphrodite. I will discuss his relationship to this divine triad and the *erotobucolic* world in the following chapter.

relationship by analogy.

In one poem it is not the appearance of the beloved that is described with plant imagery, but her tears. *Idyll* 14 is a dialogue between Aeschinas, a young man whose love life went sour when his girlfriend Cynisca left him for another, and Thyonicus, a friend who encourages him to join Ptolemy's army.[124] Aeschinas recounts what he said to Cynisca when she cried for love (14.38):

τήνῳ τεὰ δάκρυα; μᾶλα ῥεόντω.

Are your tears for him? Let them flow like apples.[125]

According to Gow, the tears are like apples because of their size. I believe that his reading is influenced by knowledge of Moschus 4.56 in which the tears are explicitly described as larger than apples.[126] I would argue that, in the Theocritean passage, though there may be some implication of size, the apples carry additional significance as love tokens. Aeschinas believes that Cynisca is crying for her beloved and so sees her tears as a love-offering in place of apples. Other women throw apples at their beloveds such as Galatea in *Idyll* 6 and Clearista in *Idyll* 5; and the shepherd of *Idyll* 3 brings apples for his beloved Amaryllis; thus it makes sense for Aeschinas to expect that Cynisca would offer apples to Lucas.

Plants are primarily used to describe the appearance of the beloved, creating a temporary overlap between the natural world and the beloved. The more extended metaphors that are a closer parallel to Egyptian and Hebrew *erotobucolic* literature tend to include animals as well and will be discussed below. The relative scarcity of plant metaphors in Theocritus is likely

124 Burton 1995, 47 argues that losing Cynisca's love has driven Aeschinas to madness in part because her actions upset his understanding of traditional gender roles.
125 Gow 1950, 254 n. 38 defends this reading based on the grammatical structure of the previous lines and on Mosch. 4.56. Dover 1971, 193 n.38 similarly takes the metaphor to refer to the size or the amount of the tears.
126 Gow 1950, 254 n. 38.

related to his elaborate description of the plants in the *locus amoenus*. The plants around the lover are so varied and luxurious that only a few direct comparisons need be made to the beloved for a reader to understand the connection between love and nature.

Poetic Plants

The relationship between love and nature in Theocritus expands to include love poetry. As I discussed with regard to the *locus amoenus*, these natural settings are not only a place for love but also a place for poetic performance, especially when the poetry performed involves love. In the same way, because of their connection with love, plant metaphors are used to describe poetic performance. These descriptions include the use of plant-related metaphors to describe beautiful voices, the response of plants to poetry, and the use of plants in ekphrasis (an extended literary description of a physical object).

Two passages in Theocritus make comparisons between the beauty of a singer's voice and honey.[127] The first comes at the end of *Idyll* 1 (1.146-8):

πλῆρές τοι μέλιτος τὸ καλὸν στόμα, Θύρσι, γένοιτο,
πλῆρες δὲ σχαδόνων, καὶ ἀπ' Αἰγίλω ἰσχάδα τρώγοις
ἀδεῖαν,

May your lovely mouth be full of honey, Thyrsis,
And full of honeycomb, and may you eat the figs of sweet
Aegilus.

The goatherd compliments the voice of Thyrsis by suggesting that he eat only sweet foods like figs and honey that will be in harmony with his singing style. In *Idyll* 7, the story of Comatas also connects eating sweet flowers and honey with having a sweet singing voice (7.80-2):

127 I have decided to include metaphors about honey even though honey is not a plant or directly produced from a plant because of its relationship to nectar and literary association with spices and wine. The sweet taste of honey and its association with bees, a musical insect, make it a favorite literary metaphor of Theocritus. The connection between a beautiful singing voice and honey goes back at least to Pindar *Ol*. 11.4-6 and is used to describe him at Paus. 9.23.2. Honey is also mentioned as a food for poets at Ar. *fr*. 598 K-A; Philostr. *Im*. 415k; etc. See Gow 1950, 31 n. 146 and Hunter 1999, 106 n. 146-8 for further discussion.

ὥς τέ νιν αἱ σιμαὶ λειμωνόθε φέρβον ἰοῖσαι
κέδρον ἐς ἀδεῖαν μαλακοῖς ἄνθεσσι μέλισσαι,
οὕνεκά οἱ γλυκὺ Μοῖσα κατὰ στόματος χέε νέκταρ.

And how the snub-nosed bees coming from the meadow
Nourished him with soft blossoms in the cedar chest,
Because the Muse poured sweet nectar in his mouth.

It is appropriate for people like Thyrsis and Lycidas with sweet voices to eat sweet things because of the similarity between the effect of their music and the taste of these foods.[128] Words for sweetness run throughout this programmatic poem, emphasizing the importance of the pleasure derived from bucolic song. The idea that the mouths or words of lovers are sweet can be seen in a variety of *erotobucolic* poetry as I will show in my concluding chapter.

Another use of plant imagery to describe a singer's voice appears in *Idyll* 10 (10.36):

ἁ φωνὰ δὲ τρύχνος· τὸν μὰν τρόπον οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν.

And your voice is nightshade, but indeed I do not have the power to describe your ways.

Unlike honey, nightshade is not sweet and does not immediately seem to be associated with poetic qualities espoused by Theocritus. However, as Gow points out, the term τρύχνος is associated with three plants in antiquity; one is edible, another induces sleep, and the third induces insanity or death.[129] Given the connection between song, drugs, and love in other poems in the Theocritean corpus, especially *Idylls* 2 and 11, Bombyca's voice is likely similar to nightshade in its ability to madden Bucaeus with love and to soothe his cares with sleep.[130] The fine line between madness and pleasure is appropriate in *erotobucolic* poetry where love can be sweet and/or dangerous.

---

128 Gow 1950, 153, n. 81; Hunter 1999, 177 n.82. Payne 2007, 125-6 points out that the pain of being trapped in a chest and the sweetness of eating honey are appropriate for Comatas since they mimic the toil and pleasure of writing poetry that Lycidas emphasized at the beginning of the song.

129 Gow 1950, 203, n. 37. Alternately, the scholia consider the comparison to be between the softness of the plant and the tone of her voice. Hunter 1999, 210 n.36-7 suggests either a soft or an aphrodisiac quality to Bombyca's voice. Payne 2007, 75 understandably states that the metaphors in this line are "so subjective that they defy interpretation."

130 Gutzwiller (2006a and b) shows that herding came to be associated in literature both with soothing and with good rulership because of the relationship between herdsmen and their animals.

At times plants within the poetic scenery respond or are imagined as responding to the music of the shepherds or as making music of their own. The whispering pine at the beginning of *Idyll* 1 discussed above highlights the musicality of nature. Later in this same idyll, Daphnis imagines that after his death the plants will respond to the absence of his music (1.131-4):

νῦν ἴα μὲν φορέοιτε βάτοι, φορέοιτε δ' ἄκανθαι,
ἁ δὲ καλὰ νάρκισσος ἐπ' ἀρκεύθοισι κομάσαι,
πάντα δ' ἄναλλα γένοιτο, καὶ ἁ πίτυς ὄχνας ἐνείκαι,
Δάφνις ἐπεὶ θνάσκει,

Now let the thorn-bushes and the thistles bear violets.
And the beautiful narcissus plume the juniper,
And let all things be changed, and may pines grow pears,
Since Daphnis is dying,

Gow, basing his interpretation on Latin poetry (e.g., Verg. *Ecl*. 1.59; Hor. *Carm*. 1.33.7, *Epod*. 16.25) that may be imitating this passage, suggests that these lines mean that the death of Daphnis is so surprising that nothing thereafter will seem impossible.[131] However, though these Latin poems may allude or relate to Theocritus, they are also influenced by a Roman tradition of omens and prodigies that is different from the tradition of prophecy in Greek literature.[132] Gow suggests that it is possible, albeit less likely, that Daphnis means that nothing that happens after his death will matter to him.[133] This interpretation seems unlikely to me as well for two reasons: 1) Daphnis' claim that he will be a cause of pain to Eros even in Hades suggests that his concerns will remain the same after his death (1.102) and 2) the projected reversal in nature after his death parallels the mourning of animals while he is dying, continuing the pathetic fallacy (1.70-4). Rather than taking this as a suggestion that Daphnis' own death is shocking or that he will soon be dead and not care about the world, I argue that Daphnis has been maintaining the natural order

131 Gow 1950, 28 n.132-136; Hunter 1999, 102-3 n.132-6.
132 Distelrath 2012.
133 Gow 1950, 28 n.132-136.

by playing his music, and upon his death he predicts that nature itself will descend into chaos.[134] This interpretation works better because Daphnis still cares about what will happen in the world above after he has died, and just as the pathetic fallacy of mourning animals is reported as an actual occurrence, the projected change in nature after his death becomes a real possibility.

The same story of Daphnis is briefly recapped in *Idyll* 7, where it is one of the stories that Lycidas would like to have another musician sing to him, in what appears to be a *mise en abyme* of pastoral song. Here again the plants respond to the death of Daphnis (7.74-5):

χὠς ὄρος ἀμφεπονεῖτο καὶ ὡς δρύες αὐτὸν ἐθρήνευν
Ἰμέρα αἵτε φύοντι παρ' ὄχθαισιν ποταμοῖο,

How the hill around him suffered and the oaks
That grew along the bank of the river Himeros sang a dirge,

These lines depict the trees responding to the death of Daphnis not only with sadness as a part of the pathetic fallacy but also with music. Music and poetry are so important to the Theocritean landscape that if the poet dies, something must take over his role.[135] In this case, instead of Daphnis' death causing chaos (as suggested in *Idyll* 1), the trees take over his musical role and maintain order. In Theocritus, the natural world takes part not only in the emotions of the lovers but also in their poetic craft.

The ekphrasis of the cup at *Idyll* 1.27-56, long recognized as containing many metaphors

134 Vergil *Georg*. 4.453-527 and Ovid *Met*. 10.1-11.66 tell the story of Orpheus, a musician whose songs were so beautiful that he could control not only animals, a skill shared by many shepherds, but also plants, rocks, and the rest of the natural world. In *Idylls* 1 and 7, Theocritus may be suggesting that Daphnis had a similar power over nature.
135 This connection with maintaining the order of the natural world strengthens the argument that the story of Daphnis is related to 'sacred marriage' literature like the story of Adonis or Dumuzi. See Detienne 1977, 134 ff. for a discussion of the debate on the relationship between Adonis and Tammuz/Dumuzi up to his time. He argues that there is too little evidence from non-Greek authors to support a connection to Babylonian myth. See however, Nissinen and Uro 2008 for more discussion of sacred marriage texts throughout the Mediterranean, including many fragmentary texts in Sumerian and Babylonian languages. See also Anagnostou-Laoutides and Konstan 2008, who draw connections between Aphrodite, Ishtar and the woman in *SoS* as well as Adonis/Daphnis, Dumuzi, and the man in *SoS*. Although I take seriously Nissinen's warning that in using comparative material it is important not to overstate parallels (2008), I agree with Anagnostou-Laoutides that these parallels can be useful in interpreting Greek poetry (2008, 499). Just as with any allusion, the parallels between texts are used creatively: at the same time reminding the audience of the earlier text and using this subtext to send a new message.

for poetic craftsmanship and as a substitute for the goatherd's song,[136] includes many plant motifs. As with many literary ekphrases, it is difficult to imagine that a real wooden cup could be carved so elaborately; the spatial relationship of the images is not well described, making it difficult to reconstruct the physical object. This poetic technique creates the sense that the craftsman was supernaturally skilled, and showcases the ability of the poet to surpass craftsmen working in physical materials by the craftsmanship of his words.

Though the locations of plants on the cup are imprecise, it is certain that the craftsman included an ivy motif around the lip (1.29-31), a vineyard (1.45-54), and decorative acanthus (1.55-6). Both the ivy and the acanthus are described as delightful to behold (ἀγαλλομένα, θάημα), that is to say that they have the same effect on the beholder as a beautiful poem or song has on the listener. The poet references his own skill metapoetically through the skill of another craftsman.

The scene that includes the vineyard is more expanded and contains multiple suggestions of poetic skill (1.44-54):

περκναῖσι σταφυλαῖσι καλὸν βέβριθεν ἀλωά,
τὰν ὀλίγος τις κῶρος ἐφ' αἱμασιαῖσι φυλάσσει
ἥμενος· ἀμφὶ δέ νιν δύ' ἀλώπεκες, ἃ μὲν ἀν' ὄρχως
. . .
αὐτὰρ ὅγ' ἀνθερίκοισι καλὰν πλέκει ἀκριδοθήραν
σχοίνῳ ἐφαρμόσδων· μέλεται δέ οἱ οὔτε τι πήρας
οὔτε φυτῶν τοσσῆνον ὅσον περὶ πλέγματι γαθεῖ.

A lovely vineyard is weighed down with dappled grapes.
Some small boy sitting upon a wall is guarding it:
But there are two foxes around him, one along the rows
. . .
But he weaves a beautiful cricket-cage from asphodel
Fitted together with rushes. And he has no care either for his knapsack

136 See Gutzwiller 1986 for a detailed discussion of the ivy and helichryse decoration on the cup; Goldhill 1991, 240-7 for an examination of the relationship between Thyrsis' song and the goatherd's cup; and Payne 2007, 28-40 for a close reading of the ekphrasis.

Or for his vines, so much he delights in his weaving.

Vineyards are significant in *erotobucolic* poetry because of their connection with wine. Like love, wine can cause both pleasure and madness. Drunkenness is sometimes used as a metaphor for the effects of love, and wine is a favorite drink of lovers.[137] Although this vignette does not contain a love story, another segment of the cup portrays two suitors in pursuit of a young woman (1.32-8). As a whole, the cup is a microcosm of Theocritean poetry with the plants and the vineyard representing nature, the suitors representing love, and the image of an old fisherman hard at work representing the work that goes into crafting poetry.[138]

The boy crafting his cricket-cage has also been recognized as a model for the poet at work.[139] Weaving provides an apt metaphor for poetic composition and the poetic significance of the cage is increased because it is being created to house a cricket, one of the varieties of insects celebrated in Greek antiquity for its melodious voice.[140] Again just as in the case of the vineyard (i.e., wine, nature) and the love of the suitors, the boy's handiwork (i.e., poetry) brings pleasure but also danger because it causes him to neglect his duty. Previous *erotobucolic* songs had firmly established this overlap between nature and love, but Theocritus increased the complexity of the metaphor by showing that poetry, especially when it portrays nature and love, has the same both pleasing and potentially dangerous effects.

Sympathetic Herds, Melodious Insects, and Stalking Predators

Like plants, animals in the *Idylls* are usually 'real' creatures that inhabit the landscape of the poem; metaphors involving animals rarely appear. Nevertheless, the animals of the *Idylls* are

137 E. g. *SoS* 5.1; Pl. *Symp*.; Anac. 346 fr. 4, 357, 373. See Hunter 1999, 62 for the importance of Dionysus in this poem and tragedy as a model for bucolic.
138 Halperin 1983, 161-89; Goldhill 1991, 243.
139 Halperin 1983, 176-81; Goldhill 1987, 2-3; Hunter 1999, 62; Anagnostou-Laoutides 2008, 14 n. 42.
140 Cf. Hes. *Op*. 582-8; Pl. *Phdr*. 230c, 258e-259d; Callim. *Aetia fr*. 1.32-6 Pf.

more than props to complete the rustic setting. The insects that appear in the poems, as mentioned above, provide musical accompaniment to the shepherds' songs, but they can also be a source of destruction to the crops. Herd animals in Theocritus do not behave like real animals but consistently sympathize with the mood of the characters. While the herdsmen sing about what they wish they could do and how they feel, the flocks act on these emotions, fulfilling the beastly desires of the men. Domesticated flocks more often sympathize with men in the *Idylls*, but men themselves are in many ways like predatory animals. Men pursue women as animals pursue their prey. At times, men act as part of the herd, protecting their flocks from other predators and leading them to the best food. At other times, like predators, they exploit the vulnerability of the herd animals. It is not surprising therefore, that even predatory animals can show sympathy to herdsmen in the *Idylls*. They only do so, however, when dealing with legendary herdsmen.

Theocritus imagined such a complex world in the *Idylls* that it is difficult to discern whether the animals are "truly" responding to the feelings of humans or whether the herdsmen are projecting their own feelings onto their animals. The bond between humans and animals has recently become a topic of interest in a new field known as anthrozoology. One area of this field looks at human interest in the psychology of animals.[141] Although the study of this concept has only recently begun, people have had close relationships with domesticated animals for much longer. In the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus believes that his ram is slow because it is sorry that he lost his eye, but the audience knows that the ram is actually weighed down by Odysseus hanging on its belly (9.446-60). This story reveals an awareness in ancient literature that people sometimes

141 Angier, *New York Times*, March 15, 2011. Payne 2010b applies ideas from this theory to texts from the ancient world. See especially pages 22-4 in his introduction for an explanation of his choice of texts and their relationship to human curiosity about animal society.

project their own feelings onto animals. A reader focusing on realism in the *Idylls* might claim that the herdsmen are projecting feelings on their animals; a reader focused on the fictionality of the *Idylls* might assert that, in the idyllic pastoral world, animals actually do respond to the songs of their masters. Either reader will find some evidence to support his or her reading; I believe that the ambiguity is intended.

The typical pathetic fallacy[142] in which animals show human emotion only appears twice in the Theocritean corpus (*Idyll* 1.73-4; 4.12-26). *Idyll* 1 alerts the reader to the importance of animal behavior in the *Idylls* by showing animals mourning their master, Daphnis (1.73-4):

πολλαί οἱ πὰρ ποσσὶ βόες, πολλοὶ δέ τε ταῦροι,
πολλαὶ δὲ δαμάλαι καὶ πόρτιες ὠδύραντο.

Many cows by his feet and many bulls
And many heifers and calves mourned for him.

The spondaic verses mimic the mourning sounds of the animals.[143] At this point, Daphnis is still alive, and is wasting away from the effects of love (ἐτάκετο, 1.65). This is a form of the verb τήκω: to melt, dissolve, waste away, or pine.[144] This verb is used in the Theocritean corpus primarily to refer to those who are neglecting themselves because of unrequited love.[145] The herds sense that their master is suffering and respond by neglecting themselves, sitting at his feet and mourning instead of looking for food and water.

A few lines later in the same poem, Priapus notes the similarity between men and their herds, accusing Daphnis of being like a goatherd who has begun to wish that he could be one of the he-goats during mating season (1.86-8):

βούτας μὲν ἐλέγευ, νῦν δ’ αἰπόλῳ ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας.

142 Ruskin 1856 coined this term in a treatise on art but also discusses the application of the phenomenon in poetry.
143 Hunter 1999, 90 n.74-5.
144 LSJ, τήκω.
145 Cf. *Idylls* 1.66, 2.29, 5.12, and 6.27.

ᾠπόλος, ὅκκ’ ἐσορῇ τὰς μηκάδας οἷα βατεῦνται,
τάκεται ὀφθαλμὼς ὅτι οὐ τράγος αὐτὸς ἔγεντο.

You were called a cowherd, but now you are like a goatherding man.
The goatherd, when he looks upon his she-goats being mounted,
Is moved to tears, that he wasn’t born a he-goat.

Within this poem, the cause of Daphnis’ suffering is unclear. Priapus suggests that Daphnis pines for love even though a girl looks for him (1.80-4) and Aphrodite taunts Daphnis for wrestling with Eros (1.95-8), but Daphnis says that he will cause pain to Eros even after death (1.103).[146] One rational explanation might be a love triangle of some sort but scholars are not able to identify securely whom Daphnis pursues or who pursues him.[147] I would suggest that here Priapus is urging Daphnis to follow the example of his goats: do not chase after a single female but rather ‘mount’ whichever female is willing.[148] The he-goats are better able to satisfy an erotic desire that men in *erotobucolic* poetry only sing about.[149]

Idyll 1 closes with an image of animals acting out the emotions of the herdsmen (1.151-2):

. . . αἱ δὲ χίμαιραι,
οὐ μὴ σκιρτασῆτε, μὴ ὁ τράγος ὔμμιν ἀναστῇ.

. . . She-goats

146 Daphnis’ exact meaning in this line is unclear; it seems to suggest that by dying without giving in to his erotic desire Daphnis will have a lasting victory over Eros and Aphrodite. If Aphrodite herself was in love with Daphnis, it could also mean that his death will be a pain to her because of the separation, as happened with Adonis.
147 Gow 1950, 1-2 and Dover 1971, 83-6 n. 64-145 argue that Daphnis is suffering for a vow of chastity but are uncertain of the characters involved. Gutzwiller 1991, 95-101 claims that Daphnis is dying because of a vow of chastity to a nymph. See Hunter 1999, 63-8 for a selection of opinions up to that time - Hunter himself believes that the text is too ambiguous for determination, but he does draw a parallel to stories of Adonis and Dumuzi. Payne 2007, 40-8 argues that there is not enough evidence for a modern audience to piece the story together but that an ancient audience would have enjoyed fitting the pieces together from their knowledge of the Daphnis myth. Anagnostou-Laoutides 2008 argues on the basis of Near Eastern parallels that Daphnis is dying for the unrequited love of Aphrodite herself. Hunt 2011 does not try to recover the love story, but uses parallels from *Idylls* 15 and 17 to show that the story of Daphnis resonates with Ptolemaic apotheosis. I am inclined to agree with Gutzwiller that Daphnis has sworn an oath of fidelity, though I am not certain to whom. I am also convinced by Anagnostou-Laoutides that Aphrodite is a member of the love triangle, but I am inclined to believe that she is in love with Daphnis (hence her desire to resurrect him) and not the other way around.
148 Polyphemus gives himself this same advice more directly at *Idyll* 11.75-6.
149 In *Daphnis and Chloe*, a bucolic novel by Longus, the title characters even attempt to learn how to satisfy their erotic desire by watching goats mate (3.14.2-5). See Epstein 2002 for a look at the relationship between animals and man in *Daphnis and Chloe*.

Don't be so frisky or the he-goat will get (it) up for you

The song brought delight to the goatherd; he praises Thyrsis and gives him the promised rewards (1.46-8). After the song, the goats begin to skip around, seeming to enact their pleasure in the music. Female goats show their delight in the story of love, even unrequited love, by jumping around and moving 'suggestively.' The goatherd warns them to refrain from love, just as Daphnis refrained from love in the song. Though this is not a typical *erotobucolic* metaphor, it does display an overlap between man and nature; instead of men being described as goats, goats are described as acting like men.

Throughout *Idyll* 4 a herdsman named Battus harasses a cowherd named Corydon, most likely to provoke him into participating in a singing contest.[150] Corydon refuses to take the bait. Battus first attempts to provoke Corydon by commenting on how poorly he cares for Aegon's cows while Aegon attends a distant athletic competition.[151] Rather than getting angry, Corydon agrees that the cows miss Aegon but insists that he has cared well for them (4.12-26):

ΒΑ. τήνας μὲν δή τοι τᾶς πόρτιος αὐτὰ λέλειπται
τὠστία. μὴ πρῶκας σιτίζεται ὥσπερ ὁ τέττιξ;
ΚΟ. οὐ Δᾶν, ἀλλ' ὅκα μέν νιν ἐπ' Αἰσάροιο νομεύω
καὶ μαλακῶ χόρτοιο καλὰν κώμυθα δίδωμι,
ἄλλοκα δὲ σκαίρει τὸ βαθύσκιον ἀμφὶ Λάτυμνον.
ΒΑ. λεπτὸς μὰν χὠ ταῦρος ὁ πυρρίχος. αἴθε λάχοιεν
τοὶ τῶ Λαμπριάδα, τοὶ δαμόται ὅκκα θύωντι
τᾷ Ἥρᾳ, τοιόνδε· κακοχράσμων γὰρ ὁ δᾶμος.
ΚΟ. καὶ μὰν ἐς στομάλιμνον ἐλαύνεται ἔς τε τὰ Φύσκω,
καὶ ποτὶ τὸν Νήαιθον, ὅπᾳ καλὰ πάντα φύοντι,
αἰγίπυρος καὶ κνύζα καὶ εὐώδης μελίτεια.
ΒΑ. φεῦ φεῦ βασεῦνται καὶ ταὶ βόες, ὦ τάλαν Αἴγων,
εἰς Ἀίδαν, ὅκα καὶ τὺ κακᾶς ἠράσσαο νίκας,

CO. The heifers moan for desire of him.
BA. Indeed they are unfortunate, they have found a lousy cowherd.
CO. They are rather unfortunate indeed and they will no longer graze.
BA. The very bones are all that's left of that calf.
Don't tell me she's nourished on dewdrops like a cicada!

150 Hunter 1999, 5-9 and 129-30; Gutzwiller 1991, 134-57.
151 Gutzwiller argues that Battus fails to initiate an amoebic contest with Corydon because they are not equals; Corydon will not respond in kind because he is only a surrogate for Aegon (1991, 147-57).

CO. No by Zeus, but I sometimes pasture her on the Aesarus
And I give her a beautiful bundle of soft greenery,
And other times she skips about well-shaded Latymnus,
BA. That red bull is very slender. I wish that the Lampriads
Might be allotted one such as him when they sacrifice
To Hera, for they are a recalcitrant clan.
CO. And he is driven to the lagoon and to Physca,
And Neaethus, where all good things grow;
Goat-flower and fleabane and fragrant honeysuckle.
BA. Alas, wretched Aegon, your cattle will go to hell,
Since you lust after ill-gotten victories.

These cows are reminiscent of those in *Idyll* 1 that mourn Daphnis: their moos are similar to mourning cries and they do not eat (4.12-3). Battus tries to explain this behavior as the fault of an inferior herdsman, but Corydon insists that they refuse to enjoy themselves even though he has taken them to the finest pastures. The actions of the cows correspond to the feelings of their current herdsman, Corydon, whose description suggests that he pines for Aegon and looks up to him as a hero (4.8,10). He has also inherited Aegon's syrinx, which suggests that Aegon is his mentor and possibly his lover (4.29).[152]

Given that he refers specifically to the young female cows, Battus may be subtly implying that the young ladies of the area are longing for Aegon. As the conversation continues, it becomes clear that Battus is also mourning, not because Aegon is away but because his beloved Amaryllis is dead (4.38-40):

BA. ὦ χαρίεσσ’ Ἀμαρυλλί, μόνας σέθεν οὐδὲ θανοίσας
λασεύμεσθ’· ὅσον αἶγες ἐμὶν φίλαι, ὅσσον ἀπέσβης.
αἰαῖ τῶ σκληρῶ μάλα δαίμονος ὅς με λελόγχει.

BA. Dearest Amaryllis, we will not forget you though you have died;
My goats are dear to me, but you, though lost, are just as dear,
Alas, it was a very hard-hearted spirit that decided my fate.

Though Battus is not described as having a poor appetite, that particular condition accompanied

152 The significance of passing on a musical instrument will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. In a further interpretation that highlights poetic skill Aegon could act as a representation of a traditional epic poet and Corydon as a Hellenistic pastoral poet. Aegon is large and has taken an interest in athletics while Corydon stays home to sing and watch the herds. The cows are their poetry; they were large when herded by Aegon, but have grown slender now that Corydon has taken over. Gutzwiller 1991, 147-57 notes Corydon’s hero-worship of Aegon and, interestingly, reads Aegon’s Olympic competition as an unequal competition between earlier and contemporary poets. For a musical instruments as a gift to a lover, see *Idyll* 5.

unrequited love in Greek poetry, so a person mourning the death or absence of a lover might be expected to avoid food.[153] Theocritus shows the herdsmen speaking about the cows starving because they long for their beloved master, but it is likely that the herdsmen themselves have not eaten because they are yearning for those who are gone. As soon as the herdsmen recover from their melancholy, the cattle regain their appetites (4.44-5):

ΒΑ. θαρσέω. βάλλε κάτωθε τὰ μοσχία· τᾶς γὰρ ἐλαίας
τὸν θαλλὸν τρώγοντι, τὰ δύσσοα.

BA. I take heart. Get the calves away from there for
The scalawags are gnawing on the buds of the olives.

Their actions reinforce the harmony between man and nature in the *Idylls*. While the men show their renewed "appetite" for life through speech, the cattle respond by satisfying their physical appetite.[154]

In other poems, herd animals consistently display behaviors that correspond to their masters' mood. The goatherd in *Idyll* 3 ensures that his goats will have food and water by entrusting them to Tityrus before he goes to sing a song to his love (3.1-5):

Κωμάσδω ποτὶ τὰν Ἀμαρυλλίδα, ταὶ δέ μοι αἶγες
βόσκονται κατ' ὄρος, καὶ ὁ Τίτυρος αὐτὰς ἐλαύνει.
Τίτυρ', ἐμὶν τὸ καλὸν πεφιλημένε, βόσκε τὰς αἶγας,
καὶ ποτὶ τὰν κράναν ἄγε, Τίτυρε· καὶ τὸν ἐνόρχαν,
τὸν Λιβυκὸν κνάκωνα, φυλάσσεο μή τυ κορύψῃ.

I serenade Amaryllis, and my goats pasture
On the mountain, and Tityrus himself drives them,
Noble Tityrus, dear to me, pasture my goats,
And lead them to the spring: and watch out for
The he-goat, the tawny Libyan, or he will butt at you.

The unnamed singer of the idyll has Tityrus lead his goats to a *locus amoenus* with plenty of plants (implied by the pasture) and a spring. The goatherd himself goes to visit another *locus*

153 Cf. Sappho *fr*. 31; *Idylls* 3, 11, and 14; etc.
154 The cows in this poem never skip around and rejoice. Note that animals only dance at the end of *Idylls* 1 and 5 after a herdsman wins a prize for his singing (1.151-2 and 5.141-50).

amoenus where Amaryllis dwells. He is hesitant to enter the cave of Amaryllis, wishing that he were a bee so that he could see her. This is strange because she lives in a cave and he is only kept out by ivy, but he is unwilling to enter the cave and passively waits for her to come to him (3.11-3).[155] His goat, however, is not so shy about expressing his (possibly sexual) aggression toward Tityrus. Again the goats act on desires that their human counterparts can only express in words.

At the beginning of *Idyll* 5, Comatas and Lacon expect that their flocks will feel the same enmity that they profess for one another (5.1-4):

ΚΟ. Αἶγες ἐμαί, τῆνον τὸν ποιμένα, τὸν Συβαρίταν,
φεύγετε, τὸν Λάκωνα· τό μευ νάκος ἐχθὲς ἔκλεψεν.
ΛΑ. οὐκ ἀπὸ τᾶς κράνας; σίττ', ἀμνίδες· οὐκ ἐσορῆτε
τόν μευ τὰν σύριγγα πρόαν κλέψαντα Κομάταν;

CO. My she-goats, flee that shepherd, the Sybarite,
Lacon, who stole my fleece yesterday!
LA. Away from the spring! Off, ewe-lambs, don't look upon
Comatas who stole my syrinx earlier!

The herdsmen bring the animals into their fight, treating them like human counterparts. At this point neither the herdsmen nor Theocritus describes the behavior of the animals, but it is telling that the men ask their animals to take sides. In the pastoral world, the men have become accustomed to their herds taking part in their emotions.[156]

The theft in *Idyll* 5 is described in terms of material possessions, but could have sexual or poetic connotations. Comatas' accusation that his fleece was stolen hides some sexual innuendo as the theft of this article of clothing might leave him exposed. His later claim that in the past he

155 Gutzwiller 1991, 115-23 argues that the goatherd is characterized by an inability to distinguish imagination from reality and perhaps has fallen in love with a statue of a nymph. Thus he sees both cave and girl as stony and inaccessible. Payne 2007, 63-4 sees the goatherd's inability to enter as a sign that he does not belong in the bucolic world. Like the reader, the goatherd only wishes to gain access to the cave, the idyllic *locus amoenus*.
156 Gutzwiller 1991, 140 suggests that this is a conventional way of buying time, but given the ubiquitous presence of herd animals in Theocritean poetry, I believe that the connection between herdsmen and animals is more significant.

had a sexual relationship with Lacon (5.116-21) along with this accusation suggests that the stolen fleece is a mark that he has lost Lacon's love. Lacon's accusation, however, that Comatas has stolen his syrinx has poetic overtones. It suggests that Comatas, the elder and therefore presumably Lacon's teacher, has stolen his student's poetic work. Both the erotic and the poetic connotations of these thefts tie in to *erotobucolic* themes prevalent in the *Idylls*.

The end of *Idyll* 5 recaps many of the themes from the above passages (5.141-46):

ΚΟ. πεμψῶ, ναὶ τὸν Πᾶνα. φριμάσσεο, πᾶσα τραγίσκων
νῦν ἀγέλα· κὴγὼν γὰρ ἴδ' ὡς μέγα τοῦτο καχαξῶ
καττῶ Λάκωνος τῶ ποιμένος, ὅττι ποκ' ἤδη
ἀνυσάμαν τὰν ἀμνόν· ἐς ὠρανὸν ὔμμιν ἁλεῦμαι.
αἶγες ἐμαί, θαρσεῖτε, κερουχίδες· αὔριον ὔμμε
πάσας ἐγὼ λουσῶ Συβαρίτιδος ἔνδοθι λίμνας.

CO. I will send it, by Pan! Frolic now all my flock
Of he-goats. Did you see how great a laugh I had
At Lacon, the shepherd, since already
I have obtained the lamb. I will leap to the sky for you.
Celebrate, my horned she-goats! Tomorrow I will
Wash you all on the shore of Sybaris.

Just as at the beginning of the poem, Comatas expects that his flock will know how he feels and celebrate his victory. He even wishes to join them and leaps around just like a goat. In the following lines he warns the goats not take their joyful skipping to an erotic level (5.147-50):

οὗτος ὁ λευκίτας ὁ κορυπτίλος, εἴ τιν' ὀχευσεῖς
τᾶν αἰγῶν, φλασσῶ τυ, πρὶν ἢ ἐμὲ καλλιερῆσαι
ταῖς Νύμφαις τὰν ἀμνόν. ὃ δ' αὖ πάλιν. ἀλλὰ γενοίμαν,
αἰ μή τυ φλάσσαιμι, Μελάνθιος ἀντὶ Κομάτα.

This white one's a head-butter! If you couple with
Some she-goat before I have sacrificed the lamb well
To the Nymphs, I will flog you. There he goes again!
If I do not flog you, may I become a Melanthius!

His warning that the goat is a head-butter (κορυπτίλος) recalls the description of the he-goat at *Idyll* 3.5 (κορύψῃ). This passage clarifies the sexual connotations of goats head-butting since Comatas takes it as an indication that the he-goat is ready to mate. Dover points out that this

comment further humanizes the goats, by suggesting that, like humans, their sexual intercourse would vitiate a sacrifice by making the location 'impure.'[157]

Within the *Idylls,* even fame is something that a man might expect to share with his herd animals. In *Idyll* 16, an encomium of Hiero, Theocritus points out that wealth and herds alone will not make a man wealthy; a poet is needed to secure lasting fame.[158] Nevertheless, the suggestion is that animals are a significant factor in building a man's reputation (16.34-41):

πολλοὶ ἐν Ἀντιόχοιο δόμοις καὶ ἄνακτος Ἀλεύα
ἁρμαλιὴν ἔμμηνον ἐμετρήσαντο πενέσται·
πολλοὶ δὲ Σκοπάδαισιν ἐλαυνόμενοι ποτὶ σακούς
μόσχοι σὺν κεραῇσιν ἐμυκήσαντο βόεσσι·
μυρία δ' ἂμ πεδίον Κραννώνιον ἐνδιάασκον
ποιμένες ἔκκριτα μῆλα φιλοξείνοισι Κρεώνδαις·

Many serfs earned their monthly allowance
In the homes of Antiochus and lord Aleuas.
And many calves, driven to the pens of the Scopads
Lowed with the horned cattle.
And the shepherds drove ten thousand choice sheep
In the plain of Crannon for the gracious Creondae.

This emphasis on herds is appropriate in an encomium by a pastoral poet. Later in the same poem, Theocritus refers to Homer's role in making both heroes and their herdsmen famous (16.51-7). These lines explain the combination of rustic men and kings in the *Idylls* as a tradition passed down from Homer. Theocritus implies that he will likewise make Hiero and his men famous in "epic" song. *Idyll* 17, the encomium of Ptolemy, similarly emphasizes the importance of farmland and rustic workers in contributing to Ptolemy's fame (17.77-80).

Dogs are not generally considered a herd-animal in Greek literature, but the dogs in Theocritus are all herding dogs, helping the herdsmen to keep the flock in check. Therefore they fall into the category of animals that sympathize with a shepherd's mood. In *Idyll* 6, in which

157 Dover 1971, 140 n.148.
158 For an expanded discussion of this poem and its relationship to earlier Greek poetry see Hunter 1996, 77-109.

Daphnis and Damoetas imitate Galatea and the Cyclops, Daphnis as Polyphemus explains his dog's behavior toward Galatea (6.28-9):

σίξα δ' ὐλακτεῖν νιν καὶ τᾷ κυνί· καὶ γὰρ ὅκ' ἦρων,
αὐτᾶς ἐκνυζεῖτο ποτ' ἰσχία ῥύγχος ἔχοισα.

But I hissed at the dog to bark at her; for when I was still loving,
She would whimper, holding her muzzle in Galatea's lap.

When Polyphemus was in love, his dog behaved lovingly toward Galatea, but now that he has decided to feign animosity, his dog plays along. Like the flocks, the dog is more aggressive in performing the emotions of its master. It physically chases and barks at Galatea when Polyphemus says that he is not interested in her. When he was pining and singing on the shore, the dog was busy placing its head on Galatea's lap. Just like the herd animals, the dog intuits its master's mood and behaves accordingly.[159]

Dogs in *Idyll* 25, the story of Heracles and the Nemean lion, also act out the desires of their master. They protect the flock from strangers as the old man secretly wishes he could, though he outwardly disapproves of their behavior toward his guest (25.68-72):

τοὺς δὲ κύνες προσιόντας ἀπόπροθεν αἶψ' ἐνόησαν,
ἀμφότερον ὀδμῇ τε χροὸς δούπῳ τε ποδοῖιν·
θεσπέσιον δ' ὐλάοντες ἐπέδραμον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος
Ἀμφιτρυωνιάδῃ Ἡρακλέι· τὸν δὲ γέροντα
ἀχρεῖον κλάζον τε περίσσαινόν θ' ἑτέρωθεν.

And the dogs quickly knew that they were coming before they approached,
Both from the smell of their flesh and from the thud of their feet.
And barking dreadfully they ran from every side
At Heracles the son of Amphitryon; but at the old man
They howled needlessly and from the other side they fawned on him.

Out of fear and a sense of propriety the old man has refrained from asking Heracles about his heritage and his past adventures even though he longs to question him (25.62-7). The dogs,

159 Payne 2007, 99 notes the sympathy of the herds in this idyll as they dance in celebration at the end (6.42-46), but does not discuss the behavior of the dog.

however, do not hold back from ‘questioning’ Heracles in their own way, challenging his right to approach their territory by barking. The old man is secretly delighted at their response (25.76-7):

χαίρων ἐν φρεσὶν ἦσιν, ὀθούνεκεν αὖλιν ἔρυντο
αὐτοῦ γ’ οὐ παρεόντος·

Rejoicing in his mind because they defended the household
When he was not present.

In this passage, as with the goats at 1.86-8 and 3.1-5 above, the dogs act on the repressed desire of their master.

Predators occasionally join the flocks in sympathizing with a legendary herdsman. For instance, the cows are not the only animals to mourn the death of Daphnis (1.70-1):

τῆνον μὰν θῶες, τῆνον λύκοι ὠρύσαντο,
τῆνον χὠκ δρυμοῖο λέων ἔκλαυσε θανόντα.

Even the beasts and the wolves lament him,
And the lion of the thicket wailed for the dying man.

Later, Daphnis bids farewell to the predators as though they were his friends (1.114-6):

ὦ λύκοι, ὦ θῶες, ὦ ἀν’ ὤρεα φωλάδες ἄρκτοι,
χαίρεθ’· ὁ βουκόλος ὔμμιν ἐγὼ Δάφνις οὐκέτ’ ἀν’ ὕλαν,
οὐκέτ’ ἀνὰ δρυμώς, οὐκ ἄλσεα.

Farewell, you wolves, beasts, and bears lurking
On the mountain. I Daphnis, your cowherd no longer will be
In the wood, no longer in the thickets, nor in the groves.

Daphnis calls himself *their* cowherd suggesting that he had a relationship with these animals similar to that of other herdsman with their flocks. He did not actually herd them, but he spent time in their territory and perhaps, as with Orpheus (Verg. *G*. 4.453-527; Ovid *Met*. 10.1-11.66) they gather to hear his music. Daphnis’ special relationship with animals, in addition to his encounters with Olympian deities, show that he can be placed among heroes and demigods as easily as among shepherds.

At the *Adonia* in *Idyll* 15, the singer of the dirge claims that animals of all sorts are present at the festival (15.118):

πάντ' αὐτῷ πετεηνὰ καὶ ἑρπετὰ τεῖδε πάρεστι·

All winged and crawling things are present for him here.

By analogy with Daphnis, I suggest that the function of the animals at the festival is to serve as a reminder of the animals that mourned when Adonis died. Adonis, as both shepherd and hunter, had a close relationship with wild and domestic animals. The variety mentioned in the song suggests that Arsinoe has gathered both herd animals and predators.

In extant Theocritean pastoral, wild animals seldom threaten flocks directly, though they do threaten crops. The closest that the pastoral idylls come to a reference to animals attacking the flock is in *Idyll* 5, when Lacon boasts that he will give his beloved a herd-dog that kills wolves (5.106-7), implying that the flocks need protection from wolves. The appearance of threatening animals, even in metaphors, is a reminder that shepherds in Theocritus are not free from work and trouble, as some have argued.[160] Theocritus describes the moments of rest for herdsmen during midday when they sing songs. Other references to predators, milking, cheese making, and planting remind the reader that at other times these herdsmen lead a difficult life.[161]

The only legendary predator to appear in the *Idylls* is the Nemean lion and it appears in *Idyll* 25, which is not typically considered a pastoral poem, though it does contain *erotobucolic*

160 Payne 2010a, 224-37. See above for a more detailed discussion.
161 Any reference to milking, the birth of animals, or cheese will hint at the actual labor of shepherding (e.g., *Idylls* 1.25-6, 143-4; 4.3-4; 11.35-7). The animals sometimes act out by butting the herdsmen or eating the wrong plants (e.g., *Idylls* 1.151-2; 3.4-5; 4.44-9; 5.147-50).

elements. The lion had been devouring the flocks of the common people[162] and Heracles set out to destroy it (25.199-205). In this poem, the lion acts both as destroyer of flocks for the common man and as a foil to remind readers of the strength of the hero. The lion is of divine origin (25.199-200):

οἷον δ' ἀθανάτων τιν' ἐίσκομεν ἀνδράσι πῆμα
ἱρῶν μηνίσαντα Φορωνήεσσιν ἐφεῖναι.

We suppose that some one of the sacred gods, being angry,
Let him loose as a plague upon the Phoronean men.

The gods of the *erotobucolic* world can be an unpredictable source of danger.[163] The lion acts as a reminder to appease the gods just as other predators can remind lovers to be wary of competitors.

Foxes appear as the destroyers of vineyards twice in the *Idylls.* The first time it is a part of the description of the cup in *Idyll* 1 (1.48-51).[164] The foxes here, like the foxes of *SoS,* to which they have been compared,[165] are in part a metaphor for sexual predators who threaten to defile the purity of the beloved who is represented by the vineyard. The preoccupied boy is a reminder to lovers and beloveds alike to keep an eye out for 'predators.' On a more literal level, they are a reminder to herdsmen not to let music get in the way of work, and on the most basic level, they are a beautiful image on a cup. In *Idyll* 5, the foxes appear in the competition between Lacon and Comatas amidst the description of insects that destroy crops (5.112-3):

ΚΟ. μισέω τὰς δασυκέρκος ἀλώπεκας, αἳ τὰ Μίκωνος
αἰεὶ φοιτῶσαι τὰ ποθέσπερα ῥαγίζοντι.

CO. I hate the bushy-tailed foxes that always gather grapes
Roaming the vineyards of Micon in the evening.

---

162 Though this same poem contains a description of the legendary herds of Augeus, the lion is not menacing them. Heracles has already killed the lion elsewhere before reaching the stables. Augeus' son Phyleus mentions that the area does have bears, boars, and wolves (25.185). The condition of Augeus' flock, however, shows that these predators do not trouble them.
163 Cf. 1.15-8, 94-7.
164 See my comments above for a quotation of the passage and discussion of the significance of the cup.
165 E. g. Graetz 1871; Hunter 1999, n. 48; Fox 1985, 114.

This complaint and those about destructive insects come just after each herdsman describes his beloved and the gifts that he intends to give him or her (5.85-107). The proximity between passages suggests that these foxes also hint at the sexual predators who threaten to steal the beloved.

All of these animals are 'real' within the poems that they inhabit and yet their behaviors are impacted by the herdsman/poet/lover. This behavior connects them to the erotic and poetic elements of Theocritean *erotobucolic*. The he-goats often act on the erotic desires of the men, the herds dance to show their appreciation of poetry, and the predators act as a reminder of the dangers of nature and rivalry in love. In the following section, I will discuss Theocritus' use of animals in metaphor and other figurative speech.

Animal Imagery

I will now turn to animals that appear in figurative language. Unlike the figurative images of plants mentioned above, very few of the animal images are used to describe the appearance of lovers. Predators appear most frequently in metaphors of love as a hunt. Herd animals (and other prey) appear in these metaphors and also in similes for the strength of love or yearning. These figurative uses of animals in the *Idylls* are reminiscent of *erotobucolic* imagery from other cultures, such as *SoS* and Egyptian lyric, and similar metaphors will be discussed in Chapter 3 and the Conclusion.

Bucaeus of *Idyll* 10 uses a priamel of animals chasing after their food to describe his pursuit of Bombyca (10.29-30)[166]:

166 This an other metaphors comparing human erotic pursuit to an animal's predatory pursuit follow the tradition of archaic skolia, i.e., songs sung at symposia (*Scol*. 904). See Campbell 1982, 132-5 and 449-53 for more information on skolia.

ἁ αἰὲξ τὰν κύτισον, ὁ λύκος τὰν αἶγα διώκει,
ἁ γέρανος τῶροτρον· ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ τὶν μεμάνημαι.

The goat chases the clover; the wolf chases the goat;
The crane chases the plow; but I am mad for her [Bombyca].

His lust for Bombyca is as strong as the desire of predators and herd animals alike to eat.[167] Just as the herdsman are bashful in comparison to their animals above, however, he is mad for Bombyca, but does not claim to actively pursue her, while the animals that he describes chase down their meals. Bucaeus longs to chase and 'consume' Bombyca but instead he sings about her from a distance.

In *Idyll* 13, when the nymphs have abducted Hylas, the narrator describes Heracles searching for him as a lion pursuing a fawn (13.62-5):

νεβροῦ φθεγξαμένας τις ἐν οὔρεσιν ὠμοφάγος
λίς ἐξ εὐνᾶς ἔσπευσεν ἑτοιμοτάταν ἐπὶ δαῖτα·
Ἡρακλέης τοιοῦτος ἐν ἀτρίπτοισιν ἀκάνθαις
παῖδα ποθῶν δεδόνητο, πολὺν δ' ἐπελάμβανε χῶρον.

When some fawn calls out in the mountains, a flesh-eating lion
Hurries from his bed for such a ready meal.
Thus Heracles among the untrodden brambles
Wandered, desiring the boy, and took a long time.

Heracles is not the typical Theocritean lover; he actively pursues his beloved just like a beast in the wilderness. Heracles' bestial nature was a frequent theme of Greek literature; in other stories he is known as a lustful glutton.[168] This may seem like a paradox because Heracles is a demigod, but many of the Greek gods act on their whims more readily on their desires than men for, like animals, they do not usually worry about the repercussions of their actions.

In *Idyll* 14, the story of a symposium gone wrong, a proverb about a wolf appears without the straightforward hunting context (14.22-6):

167 See the concluding chapter for similar metaphors in other *erotobucolic* poems.
168 See, for example, depictions of Heracles in Euripides *Alcestis*; Aristophanes *Frogs*.

‘οὐ φθεγξῇ; λύκον εἶδες;’ ἔπαιξέ τις. ‘ὡς σοφός’ εἶπεν,
κἠφλέγετ’· εὐμαρέως κεν ἀπ’ αὐτᾶς καὶ λύχνον ἅψας.
ἔστι Λύκος, Λύκος ἐστί, Λάβα τῶ γείτονος υἱός,
εὐμάκης, ἁπαλός, πολλοῖς δοκέων καλὸς ἦμεν·

“Why haven’t you spoken? Did you see a wolf?”[169] Someone teased.
She said “How wise!” and blushed; you could easily have lit a lamp from her.
There is a wolf, it is Lucas (wolf), the son of the neighbor Laba,
Tall, delicate, even seeming handsome to many.

Aeschinas is upset because his girlfriend, Cynisca, has fallen for another man. Her change of heart comes out in a pun on the man’s name Lucas (Λύκος), which means wolf in Greek. This ‘Lucas’ is appropriately named since he is a rival ‘predator’ in the pursuit of Cynisca.[170] Wolf, jackal, and fox metaphors are common for lascivious men in *erotobucolic* poetry, as I will show in the concluding chapter.

Swift animals other than predators can be used to describe the frenzied pursuit of a lover. In *Idyll* 2, Simaetha hopes that Delphis will come after her not like a wolf or a lion, but like a mare (2.47-50):

ἱππομανὲς φυτόν ἐστι παρ’ Ἀρκάσι, τῷ δ’ ἔπι πᾶσαι
καὶ πῶλοι μαίνονται ἀν’ ὤρεα καὶ θοαὶ ἵπποι·
ὡς καὶ Δέλφιν ἴδοιμι, καὶ ἐς τόδε δῶμα περάσαι
μαινομένῳ ἴκελος λιπαρᾶς ἔκτοσθε παλαίστρας.

Horse-madness is a plant in Arcadia, and all the fillies
And the swift mares rave for it along the mountain.
May I behold Delphis thus, and may he come into this house
Like a lunatic straight from the oily gym.

It is appropriate that Simaetha does not choose a metaphor involving a predator for two reasons, 1) it would be strange for her to desire to be consumed and 2) she is truly the predator in this poem as evidenced by her account of courting Delphis (2.93-142) and her use of specifically female horses to describe Delphis.[171] The word πῶλος especially has feminine, erotic

169 According to Greek tradition, seeing a wolf took away your power of speech; Gow 1950, 252 n. 22.
170 He is also an appropriate mate for Cynisca, whose name means little-dog.
171 Females are generally considered the object of pursuit which is why the assertive women in the *erotobucolic* genre stand out

connotations in Greek literature; it is often used of women who need to be tamed like horses.[172] Simaetha's use of the term suggests that she believes her magic will not only bring Delphis too her, it will tame him and make him a willing object of Simaetha's erotic desires. My concluding chapter will discuss the frequent use of horses, especially mares in *erotobucolic* metaphors.

The focalization of the poem further places Delphis in the subordinate position. The poem is entirely in Simaetha's voice, but she does report one speech by Delphis (2.113-33). Though she lives in the city, she takes on the role of the typically male pastoral singer, telling the story of his love and perhaps reporting some of what the beloved has said (*Idylls* 5, 7, 11, etc.). Furthermore, she desires not only that Delphis might come to her, but also that she may look upon him (ἴδοιμι), i.e., she wishes to make him the object of her gaze.[173] This desire for control over Delphis is further emphasized by the use of drugs and magic in the poem. Appropriately for a 'witch' willing to use drugs and magic to make Delphis madly in love with her, she describes horses that have eaten a narcotic plant that they love madly.

Almost all of the figurative uses of animals in Theocritus describe the strength of a lover's yearning. Taken together they suggest that love is powerful enough to turn men into beasts. The herdsmen of the *Idylls* sing about this power, but they do not give in and chase down their lovers. In contrast to their animal companions, the herdsmen lovers of Theocritus show restraint, or even passivity, in love. They are aware of the dangers that love and nature pose, but, at least for the duration of their songs, they are able to enjoy the pleasant aspects of love and the bucolic landscape.

172 E. g. Anacr. 75.1; E. *Hec*. 142; E. *Hipp*. 546.
173 Mulvey 1975 was the first to use the phrase 'male gaze' to refer to an imbalance of power between the genders. Others have done extensive work using this concept to understand ancient authors; see especially Halperin et al. 1990; Goldhill 2004; and Bartsch 2006.

'Mixed' Metaphors

Three poems in the Theocritean corpus, *Idylls* 11, 12, and 18, have extended descriptions of the beloved that are remarkably similar to the style of ancient Hebrew and Egyptian love poetry that will be discussed in following chapters. In *Idyll* 11 the Cyclops describes Galatea with the same style of ambiguous comparisons seen throughout *SoS. Idylls* 12 and 18 blend the line between metaphor and reality so that it is difficult to tell where the landscape ends and the beloved begins. These three idylls foreground the connection between Theocritean and foreign *erotobucolic* that is subtly present in the other idylls.

The three elements of Theocritean *erotobucolic* poetry (nature, love, song) are linked in the Cyclops' love song for Galatea at *Idyll* 11.18-20:

ᾨ λευκὰ Γαλάτεια, τί τὸν φιλέοντ' ἀποβάλλῃ,
λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς ποτιδεῖν, ἁπαλωτέρα ἀρνός,
μόσχω γαυροτέρα, φιαρωτέρα ὄμφακος ὠμᾶς;

Fair Galatea, why do you reject the one who loves you,
Whiter than cream cheese to look upon, softer than a lamb,
More skittish than a calf, brighter than an unripe grape?

These lines contain a brief blazon similar to those found in *SoS* and part of a tradition in Arabic literature commonly known as a *wasf*.[174] These descriptions most often compare the beloved to plants and animals but sometimes also precious materials. Polyphemus uses only metaphors that come from nature to sing the beauty of his beloved Galatea.

The charms that the Cyclops attributes to Galatea fit those most often seen in Greek literature; she is pale and radiant.[175] Nevertheless, his comparisons stand out as unusual even within the poetry of Theocritus, whose characters are primarily shepherds who frequently use

174 For bibliography and discussion of this topic, see my remarks in the Chapter 3.
175 See comments on Bombyca in *Idyll* 10 above with regard to fair skin.

rustic similes. His comparison of Galatea to an unripe grape is similar to the metaphor comparing the teeth of the woman in *SoS* to sheep that have twinned (4:2) - in both, although the context suggests that it should be complimentary, it is not immediately clear in what way the tenor is like the vehicle. The Cyclops also uses animal metaphors to describe Galatea, calling her softer than a lamb and more skittish than a calf (11.19-20). These metaphors are unique in the extant work of Theocritus because they describes a person's beauty positively through comparison to animals. It may be surprising to those who are familiar with the number of animal references in Theocritus that none of the others are used to describe human beauty, but all of the rest with the exception of Milon's negative description of Bombyca (10.18), as I have shown, are used to describe vocal quality or the strength of love.

In *Idyll* 11, Polyphemus is marked as both 'same' and 'other.' Theocritus introduces him as a fellow-countryman (ὁ παρ' ἁμῖν, 11.7) and he consistently exhibits the same interests as other Theocritean shepherds; love, music, and caring for his animals. His appearance, however, immediately marks him as different. He remains monstrous in appearance, like the Cyclops of Homer's *Odyssey* (11.31-3):

οὕνεκά μοι λασία μὲν ὀφρὺς ἐπὶ παντὶ μετώπῳ
ἐξ ὠτὸς τέταται ποτὶ θώτερον ὥς μία μακρά,
εἷς δ' ὀφθαλμὸς ὕπεστι, πλατεῖα δὲ ῥὶς ἐπὶ χείλει.

Because there is a shaggy eyebrow across my entire forehead
It stretches from one ear to the other as one long brow.
And one eye is under it, and a wide nose on my lip.

I argue that his unusual similes for the beauty of Galatea also mark him as different and foreign. In this instance, I believe that Theocritus was influenced by the environment of Alexandria. Many people from different ethnic backgrounds lived there as fellow countrymen and yet many

chose to keep the clothing and customs that marked them as different. They also kept their national literary traditions as shown by the continued Egyptian interest in stories of the Pharaohs and translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek.[176] Theocritus, as a court poet, would have been exposed to some of this literature. The similarity between the similes used to describe Galatea and those used to describe women from other cultures suggests that the song of the Cyclops is an imitation or possibly a gentle parody of foreign poets. At the same time this song marks Theocritus' debt to foreign literature and highlights how, when these songs were not modified to fit Greek taste, they sounded strange to a Greek audience.

Idyll 12, a poem in the voice of an older man speaking to a beloved youth, opens with a series of unusual comparisons (12.3-9):

ὅσσον ἔαρ χειμῶνος, ὅσον μῆλον βραβίλοιο
ἥδιον, ὅσσον ὄις σφετέρης λασιωτέρη ἀρνός,
ὅσσον παρθενικὴ προφέρει τριγάμοιο γυναικός,
ὅσσον ἐλαφροτέρη μόσχου νεβρός, ὅσσον ἀηδών
συμπάντων λιγύφωνος ἀοιδοτάτη πετεηνῶν,
τόσσον ἔμ' εὔφρηνας σὺ φανείς, σκιερὴν δ' ὑπὸ φηγόν
ἠελίου φρύγοντος ὁδοιπόρος ἕδραμον ὥς τις.

As much as spring is sweeter than winter, and the apple than the
Plum, as much as a ewe is shaggier than her lamb,
As much as a maiden is more sought after than a thrice-wedded woman,
As much as a fawn is nimbler than a calf, as much as the clear-voiced
Nightingale is the best singer of all winged things,
So much do you cheer me with your arrival, and just as some traveler
Roasting in the sun I run under your oaken shade.

This sentence contains two plant similes. The first, which compares an apple to a plum is straightforward and connotes poetic and erotic quality by juxtaposing apples and sweetness, just as Bucaeus did in his description of Bombyca. Gow notes that the sentence is "oddly phrased" because the last simile is added to the others but does not express a degree of difference like the

176 Stephens 2003; Gruen 2010.

others.[177] I suggest that this hyperbaton mimics the lover's inability to express himself because he is overjoyed by the arrival of his beloved. This failure in attempting to express love was a feature of other works using the *erotobucolic* mode.[178]

In *Idyll* 18 an epithalamium or marriage poem for Helen and Menelaus, a chorus of women sing about their fondness for Helen. During their song, these women describe Helen as part of the landscape (18.29-31):

πιείρᾳ μεγάλα ἅτ' ἀνέδραμε κόσμος ἀρούρᾳ
ἢ κάπῳ κυπάρισσος, ἢ ἅρματι Θεσσαλὸς ἵππος,
ὥδε καὶ ἁ ῥοδόχρως Ἑλένα Λακεδαίμονι κόσμος·

Just as a lofty cypress springs up as an adornment
In a rich field or garden, or a Thessalian horse on a chariot,
So Helen is the rosy-skinned adornment of the Spartans.

Helen stands out from her peers just as a cypress among smaller plants, or a fine horse. Even her rosy-colored flesh belongs to the realm of plants and nature. These comparisons, especially the comparison to a horse, are reminiscent of Alcman's poem for a chorus of young Spartan girls.[179] This Spartan song is an appropriate model since Helen was worshipped as a goddess in Sparta and the chorus in *Idyll* 18 is made up of Spartan girls (18.4). It is thought that the worship of Helen might have had a close relationship to nature, especially trees.[180] This theory is in part based on the the following lines, which continue the *erotobucolic* imagery while describing a ritual dedication to Helen (18.43-48):[181]

πρᾶταί τοι στέφανον λωτῶ χαμαὶ αὐξομένοιο
πλέξασαι σκιερὰν καταθήσομεν ἐς πλατάνιστον
πρᾶται δ' ἀργυρέας ἐξ ὄλπιδος ὑγρὸν ἄλειφαρ

177 Gow 1950, 223 n.8f.
178 See especially 2:3 a similar image where the woman sits in the shade of a tree that is a simile for her beloved.
179 See Hunter 1996, 139-66 for details of this poem's relationship to earlier works by Stesichorus, Alcman, and Sappho.
180 Clader 1976, 63-80 discusses Helen's worship in Sparta and her relationship a generalized Mediterranean fertility goddess. She also looks at Helen's transition from divinity to epic hero, especially in the work of Homer and briefly discusses *Idyll* 18 and its relation to other stories of tree cults (Clader 1976, 70-1).
181 See Gow 1950, 358-9 n. 43-8 for further sources.

λαζύμεναι σταξεῦμες ὑπὸ σκιερὰν πλατάνιστον·
γράμματα δ' ἐν φλοιῷ γεγράψεται, ὡς παριών τις
ἀννείμῃ Δωριστί· ῾σέβευ μ'· ΄Ελένας φυτόν εἰμι.

First to you we will dedicate a braided garland of lotus,
Grown from the soil, upon the shady plane tree and
First receiving moist oil from a silver flask
We will let it drip under the shady plane tree.
And letters will be written in the bark, in Dorian
So that some passerby may read, "Worship me; I am the tree of Helen."

A plane tree becomes a proxy for Helen in these lines; it is decorated with garlands for her and sacrifices are made under it to please her. As an epithalamium, the poem naturally has an erotic element. While the song is sung, Helen and Menelaus are spending their first night together. In addition, at times the chorus themselves show an erotic interest in Helen (18.29-31)[182] This relationship allows Theocritus to emphasize the erotic element of the bucolic landscape in which the girls once played.

These images from *Idylls* 11, 12, and 18 stand out as unusual even in the Theocritean corpus. I argue that Theocritus intentionally marks his interest in foreign literature by using unusual metaphors in these poems. As discussed above, Hellenistic authors were aware of the "burden of the past"[183] and eager to find new styles. They often did this by alluding to earlier Greek authors while varying the content or style of their work in unexpected ways. I suggest that in these poems and others Theocritus alludes to foreign poetry.[184] The allusions to *erotobucolic* in the other *Idylls* might go unnoticed as a variation on epic, but the inclusion of passages such as those in *Idylls* 11,12, and 13 highlights his incorporation of foreign elements. These allusions would foreground the breadth of Theocritus' knowledge and also allow his learned audience to feel clever when they recognized the referents. At the same time, those readers who were not

182 In this, *Idyll* 18 follows Alcman *fr.* 1, in which the chorus shows an erotic interest in their leader, Hagesichora.
183 A phrase frequently used to describe Hellenistic literature, see Clauss and Cuypers 2010.
184 It has not yet been determined whether these are allusions to specific works or more generally allusions to a foreign style.

familiar with foreign poetry could enjoy the innovation and laugh at the strangeness in these poems.

Conclusion

As I have mentioned frequently throughout this chapter and will continue to show in the next chapter, several images and themes that are important in Theocritus' *Idylls* fit the description of the *erotobucolic* genre described in the Introduction. This chapter has focused on the plants and animals both 'real' and metaphorical to be found in the *Idylls* and the next chapter will describe themes of divinity, danger, and yearning. The chapters on *SoS* will show that these images and themes are not unique to the *Idylls*, but that they can be found in *SoS* as well. They share erotic vineyards with thieving foxes, women who are dark but beautiful, and lovers enjoying the shade of the beloved/tree.

Chapter 2: *Divinity, Danger, and Desire in the Idylls*

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I catalogued most of the mentions of plants and animals in Theocritus' *Idylls*. In my discussion of these images, I hinted that divinities play an important role in *erotobucolic* literature, danger lurks behind the beauty of the *erotobucolic* world, and desire overwhelms lovers who cannot be together. In this chapter I will concentrate on the danger from divinities, madness, and yearning. Divinities in the *Idylls* are easily angered and may even endanger those they care for, as is the case with Aphrodite and Adonis in *Idyll* 15. Lovers face social dangers when they break societal norms to be with their beloved or may be driven mad by yearning when their love is not returned. Madness is brought about by an excess of pining, but Theocritus suggests in *Idyll* 11 that the ill effects of desire can be alleviated by singing about the beloved.

The Rustic and the Divine

Theocritus created a world inhabited by a mix of divinities, humans, and animals. Recently, Payne has argued that Theocritus created the first fully-fictional world in Western literature because the scenes represented in the *Idylls* do not mimic reality or present the legendary world of myth. Instead, the poems offer a new fully-fictional, imaginary world. He rightly draws attention to Theocritus' innovation in the realm of fiction, since Theocritus is the first Greek author to write poems focusing only on a space that combines mythic and mimetic elements (e.g., 1, 3, 7, 11).[185] However, I disagree that Theocritus was the first to do this since scenes in *Odyssey* Books XIV-XXIV in which Odysseus speaks to the herdsman have a similar combination. The hero *Odysseus* and the goddess Athena are purely mythic characters.

185 Payne 2007 *passim*: 2010, 224-37.

Conversely, the rustic herdsmen act realistically (as realistically as Theocritean herdsmen, which is to say that they speak in hexameter and seem not to spend much time caring for animals). There is also a great deal of variety in Theocritus' work and some poems may be read as fully mimetic (e.g., 2, 4, 5, 10) while others remain in the world of myth (e.g., 13, 22, 24).[186]

I suggest that by showing both animals and gods behaving like the human characters, Theocritus draws attention to the nature of man, a mix of the divine and bestial.[187] Like the animals in the previous chapter could be usefully compared to their masters, so the divinities have much in common with the herdsmen. They share the concerns of humans; they are seen falling in love (Aphrodite/Eros, nymphs), taking part in music (Apollo, Muses, Pan), and caring for nature (Pan). Furthermore, the Ptolemies, as they are treated in the work of Theocritus, show that some humans have the potential to become divinities. Like the gods and goddesses, they show an interest in love, music, and nature (*Idylls* 15, 17). Love and nature, the mainstays of the *erotobucolic* world, are well-represented. Theocritus adds a third element; he frequently describes musical or poetic performance to create synaesthesia, placing a new metapoetic emphasis on a technique that is common in all *erotobucolic* literature.

My title "Let Sleeping Eros Lie" is inspired more by a line repeated with some variation in *Song of Songs* (2:7, 3:5, 8:4):

הַגִּידָה לִּי שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי אֵיכָה תִרְעֶה אֵיכָה תַּרְבִּיץ בַּצָּהֳרָיִם שַׁלָּמָה אֶהְיֶה כְּעֹטִיָּה עַל עֶדְרֵי חֲבֵרֶיךָ׃

I beg you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and the does of the field, do not arouse or awaken love until it pleases.

The idea that love is a dangerous emotion to arouse, or a personified love god is dangerous to

186 There is also a possibility that this mix of mythic and mimetic is in fact Theocritus' way of expressing the reality of country life. Perhaps superstitious shepherds did believe that Pan and the nymphs inhabited the woodlands and springs or even if they did not, perhaps city-dwellers believed that they did.
187 Aristotle *EN*.

meddle with, appears in Greek literature as well.[188] In Theocritus, lovers are aware that Eros is a dangerous god with the power to drive them mad and they often complain about his treachery. At times Eros and Aphrodite are treated almost as a unit (e.g., 1.97-101 and 2.130-4). Their awesome power to endanger shepherds and cause them pain is tempered by the experience they share with herdsmen; Aphrodite herself is prone to fall in love and suffer (1, 15) and Eros is sometimes treated as a helper in love affairs (7.96, 117-9). Aphrodite and Eros are more powerful and therefore tend to cause danger in the *erotobucolic* world, though Aphrodite sometimes suffers when she falls prey to her own power (1,15).[189] Nevertheless, like the shepherds, they are a part of the *erotobucolic* world; they are drawn to the *locus amoenus* and, of course, they are interested in love.[190]

Idyll 1 sets the tone for Theocritus' portrayal of Aphrodite and Eros as it has for other aspects of Theocritean *erotobucolic*. Within the song of Thyrsis, Aphrodite taunts Daphnis for trying to wrestle Eros (1.97-8):[191]

κεἶπε 'τύ θην τὸν Ἔρωτα κατεύχεο, Δάφνι, λυγιξεῖν·
ἦ ῥ' οὐκ αὐτὸς Ἔρωτος ὑπ' ἀργαλέω ἐλυγίχθης;'

And she said, "You truly swore to master Eros, Daphnis;
But were you not mastered by grievous Eros himself?'

Daphnis realizes the power of the love gods, as shown by his address to Aphrodite (1.100-1), but he still attempts to master Eros. He may attempt to conquer Eros by dying rather than giving in to his passion, as I suggested in the previous chapter. Daphnis, the goatherd of *Idyll* 3, and

188 The dangers of Eros come up frequently in the poems of Sappho and the Anacreontics.
189 Her suffering in these poems is reminiscent of her suffering in *Hom. Hymn Ven*. when Zeus causes her to fall in love with a mortal.
190 Aphrodite also played an important role in the apotheosis of Berenice and Arsinoe, as I will cover in more detail below.
191 For more on the background of this story, see the previous chapter.

Bucaeus in *Idyll* 10 all describe Eros and Aphrodite as grievous, onerous gods.[192] The lovers in other *Idylls* may not talk of Eros by name, but they recognize him as a powerful and dangerous god when they talk about the strength of their love. Nevertheless, they attempt to soothe themselves and Eros by celebrating his power in words or song rather than giving in to the blind pursuit of passion.

Aphrodite is one of the only Olympian deities to interact with the shepherds of the bucolic world.[193] She appears first in *Idyll* 1 as an influential figure in the love affair that causes Daphnis to choose death (1.94-112). Daphnis' address to Aphrodite reveals that she plays an important role and he blames her for his suffering (1.100-1):

τὰν δ' ἄρα χὠ Δάφνις ποταμείβετο· 'Κύπρι βαρεῖα,
Κύπρι νεμεσσατά, Κύπρι θνατοῖσιν ἀπεχθής . . .

And thus Daphnis responded, 'Onerous Aphrodite,
Vindictive Aphrodite, Aphrodite hateful to mortals . . .

Most of the *Idylls* show the pain that Eros and Aphrodite bring to people rather than the pleasure; shepherds talk about or dream of pleasure, but mostly experience pain. Perhaps the term "mortals" (θνητός) is significant, since most of the successful love stories told in the *Idylls* are between those who are at least semi-divine.[194] During their interaction, Daphnis reminds Aphrodite of her own previous, ill-fated interactions with mortal men (1.104-9):

ἔρπε ποτ' Ἀγχίσαν· τηνεὶ δρύες ἠδὲ κύπειρος,

192 1.100-1, 3.15-7, and 10.19-20.
193 Hermes makes a brief appearance in *Idyll* 1 and Apollo is mentioned as a patron of song, but does not appear as a character.
194 The relationship of Ptolemy and Arsinoe is celebrated in *Idylls* 15 and 17, and *Idyll* 18 is an epithalamium for Helen and Menelaus. Even these relationships are problematic since Theocritus could have gotten in trouble for suggesting that the royal couple's marriage was anything other than ideal, yet he compares them to Zeus and Hera (17.130-4) - hardly a happily married couple. As for *Idyll* 18, although it celebrates the marriage before anything has gone wrong, ancient audiences would be well aware of the outcome of Helen and Menelaus' marriage. The only mortals who claim to be happy in love are the herdsmen of *Idyll* 5, who may be fabricating stories in order to win the competition, and the narrator of *Idyll* 12, who may be the only mortal in the *Idylls* with a truly reciprocal relationship. *Idyll* 28 also suggests that Nicias and his wife are happily married, but again, Theocritus would hardly say otherwise of his friend.

αἱ δὲ καλὸν βομβεῦντι ποτὶ σμάνεσσι μέλισσαι.
ἄρχετε βουκολικᾶς, Μοῖσαι, πάλιν ἄρχετ' ἀοιδᾶς.
ὡραῖος χὠδωνις, ἐπεὶ καὶ μῆλα νομεύει
καὶ πτῶκας βάλλει καὶ θηρία πάντα διώκει.

Go to Anchises; There are oaks there and galingale,
And the bees are buzzing sweetly around the hives.
Begin the bucolic songs, Muses, begin them again.
Adonis is in bloom, since he pastures his flocks
And pelts birds and chases all the wild beasts.

Daphnis imagines Aphrodite in a *locus amoenus* with these other shepherds whom she had famously loved.[195] By recalling these stories, Daphnis reminds readers that Aphrodite's attention is dangerous to men; traditionally Anchises is punished with a thunderbolt and Adonis dies young during a hunt. In *Idyll* 3 the goatherd also sings of famous love affairs, including Adonis and another story that involved Aphrodite - Hippomenes and Atalanta (3.40-51). Aphrodite helped Hippomenes to obtain Atalanta as a bride, but at least in Apollodorus she punishes the newlyweds for failing to properly honor her.[196] Aphrodite even brings danger to those whom she loves or has helped to find love within the bucolic world.[197] She and her son personify the dangers of love in *erotobucolic* literature.

Simaetha reports that Delphis spoke about the power of Eros and Aphrodite in an attempt to convince her that he shared her feelings (2.130-4):

νῦν δὲ χάριν μὲν ἔφαν τᾷ Κύπριδι πρᾶτον ὀφείλειν,
καὶ μετὰ τὰν Κύπριν τύ με δευτέρα ἐκ πυρὸς εἴλευ,
ὦ γύναι, ἐσκαλέσασα τεὸν ποτὶ τοῦτο μέλαθρον
αὔτως ἠμίφλεκτον· Ἔρως δ' ἄρα καὶ Λιπαραίω

195 For Aphrodite's affair with Anchises, see especially the *Homeric Hymn to Venus,* and for her affair with Adonis see Apollod. 3.14.3-4, *Idyll* 15, and Ov. *Met*. 10.300-559, 708-39.
196 As Gow and Hunter note, Theocritus appears to be following the version of Hesiod from the *Catalogue of Women (*frr. 72-6) since he claims that this Atalanta is the daughter of Schoenus and that Hippomenes pursues her (Gow 1950, 73 n.40; Hunter 1999, 122-3 n.40-51). Apollodorus tells stories of two different women named Atalanta. In his work, the Atalanta who raced her suitors was the daughter of Iasus and was pursued by Melanion (3.9.2). Theocritus would have been familiar with the Hesiodic version and may have known a version in which the couple is punished (as they are punished in Apollodorus). Indeed, they may have been punished in Hesiod's version but the end of the story is lost.
197 Her affair with Adonis, the topic of the song in *Idyll* 15 is the most extended example of this dangerous love. See discussion of this idyll in the previous chapter for more detail and bibliography.

πολλάκις Ἀφαίστοιο σέλας φλογερώτερον αἴθει·

But now I gave first thanks due to Aphrodite,
And after Aphrodite you snatched me from the fire second,
Lady, having called me, even so half-burnt,
To your house, for they say that Eros
Often burns brighter than the flame of Liparian Hephaestus.

Delphis may have been lying about his love for Simaetha, but he is convincing because his portrayal of the effects of Aphrodite and Eros matches Simaetha's own experience of burning and wasting away (2.81-92). He also mentions giving thanks to Aphrodite first, a smart move since the goddess was known to punish those who shunned her completely and those who failed to be properly thankful for her gifts.[198] Delphis' speech is designed to convince Simaetha that he, too, has felt the power of the love gods and has an appropriate respect for the danger of ignoring them.

Other poems reveal a difference between the main deity Eros proper and the plural Erotes in Theocritus.[199] When the plural is used, and only when the plural is used, the Erotes act as friendly deities who help lovers. In *Idyll* 7, Simichidas says that the Erotes have blessed him in love (7.96-7):

Σιμιχίδᾳ μὲν Ἔρωτες ἐπέπταρον· ἦ γὰρ ὁ δειλός
τόσσον ἐρᾷ Μυρτοῦς ὅσον εἴαρος αἶγες ἔρανται.

The Erotes have sneezed on Simichidas; for the wretch
Loves Myrtle as much as the goats love spring.

Sneezing was seen as a good omen, suggesting that Simichidas is lucky in love even though he calls himself a wretch.[200] Later he calls on the Erotes to help his friend Aratus, who is not so lucky in love (7.117-9). The Erotes are also called upon by the lucky lover of *Idyll* 12 to make

198 Most famously Hippolytus in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Hippomenes, see above for versions of the story.
199 Dover 1971, 160 n.96 remarks that this pluralization linked Eros to deities like the Fates, Hours, and Graces. See Rosenmeyer 1951 for a more detailed discussion of the difference between Eros and the Erotes in Greek literature and art.
200 Cf. Gow 1950, 156 n.96; Dover 1971, 160 n.96; Hunter 1999, 180-1 n.96-7.

his good fortune continue (12.10-1):

εἴθ' ὁμαλοὶ πνεύσειαν ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροισιν Ἔρωτες
νῶιν, ἐπεσσομένοις δὲ γενοίμεθα πᾶσιν ἀοιδή·

May equal Erotes breathe on us both,
And may we become a song to all hereafter.

Multiple Erotes appear again as a part of the display in the Adonis festival (15.120-2). Here they mark the mutual love of Aphrodite and Adonis. The Erotes represent the positive side of love, helping lovers and perhaps even making their love a topic of song, for the first time in Theocritus suggesting a connection between Eros/Aphrodite and song/poetry. Just as a man might become famous for his wealth in herds or his might in battle, a man might become famous for the story of his love (e.g., Adonis, Daphnis, Paris).

In other literature, Demeter is not typically paired with Aphrodite, despite their mutual involvement in fertility. However, in the *erotobucolic* world their powers do overlap. Demeter's own love affair with a mortal is mentioned in the song of the goatherd along with stories about Aphrodite as he attempts to woo Amaryllis (3.50-1). This instance of lovemaking in a furrow reveals the literary/mythical connection between human fertility and agricultural fertility.[201] Demeter is again worshipped as the originator of fertile plant life in *Idyll* 7 as Simichidas participates in the Thalysia, a festival in her honor. It is at this festival that he and his friends recline in the overabundant *locus amoenus* (7.137-41), provided by Demeter, an ideal place to fall victim to Eros or Aphrodite. In *Idyll* 10, Milon points out that Bucaeus might more appropriately praise Demeter during the harvest than his beloved (10.42-58). Milon's introductory lines characterize him as a man who focuses on work and finds love foolish. He is, therefore, likely trying to set up a contrast between singing about agriculture and singing about

201 DuBois 1991.

love.[202] The audience, however, will note that it is appropriate to praise Demeter in this situation not only for her role in the harvest, but for her role in creating the setting appropriate to love in the *erotobucolic* world.

Dionysus, the god of wine, also takes an interest in fertility, both to propagate the harvest of grapes and because intoxication from wine is closely associated with human love. Hunter makes a strong case for seeing Dionysus as an influence on the character of Thyrsis and the mysterious nature of *Idyll* 7.[203] *Idyll* 26, which tells the story of Pentheus and the Bacchants, may not have been written by Theocritus, but its acceptance into the Theocritean collection suggests there may have been poems by Theocritus with similar content.[204] Dionysus is mentioned explicitly in *Idyll* 17; his festival is mentioned as a forum for singing contests supported by Ptolemy (17.112-4). This reference shows that Dionysus was an important patron deity not only for tragedy and comedy, but for other poetry as well. The thought of the god is also subtly present in the *Idylls* wherever wine or vineyards are mentioned because the god was associated very closely with wine.[205]

The nymphs, like Aphrodite and Eros, are a source of love and danger in the world imagined by Theocritus. They, too, were participants in the drama that led to the death of Daphnis (1.65-8). Like Aphrodite, they also sometimes fall in love with mortals and cause them harm, as in the case of Hylas who is kidnapped by nymphs (13.43-60). There is also a danger that shepherds will fall in love with nymphs who do not return their feelings; this is the case for the

202 See Hunter on the mocking tone of Milon and the poetic precedents for the difference in Milon and Bucaeus' content and style (Hunter 1999, 199-201).
203 Hunter 1999, 62.
204 Gow 1950 doubts the Theocritean authorship of *Idylls* 8-9, 19-21, 23, and 25-7. These remain the most disputed *Idylls* and I have avoided basing too much of my argument on them, though I do also discuss *Idyll* 25. Gow explains the reasons for accepting or doubting the 'authenticity' of these poems within each poem's introduction.
205 Hamdorf 1986.

goatherd of *Idyll* 3 who threatens to kill himself for love. Even where they are not a part of the love story, the nymphs can be an important part of the landscape since herdsmen often swear by them and worship them within the *loci amoeni* in which they sing.[206]

Some demigods also become involved in love affairs. Heracles in *Idyll* 13 and the Dioscuri in *Idyll* 22 pursue love and face danger like human shepherds. As one might expect from demigods, these heroes are bolder in their pursuit of love and more willing to face the danger head on; Heracles runs into the wilderness to find Hylas, and the Dioscuri abduct and fight for their brides. In Greek thought, men have some things in common with animals and some in common with divinities.[207] Thus it may be surprising that demigods, especially Heracles, despite their share in divinity, often behave more bestially than their human counterparts. Heracles is explicitly compared to a lion in his mad hunt for Hylas (13.61-5) and others have noted how savage the Dioscuri seem during their battle in *Idyll* 22.[208] However, as I have shown above, gods in the *erotobucolic* world often display greater cruelty and passion than humans. Thus, the demigods behave in accordance with their divine parentage.

Divinities who inspire music are mentioned frequently throughout the *Idylls*. Apollo and the Muses, are referenced most frequently. Singers brag about their patronage, plan offerings to them, and swear by them.[209] Through the inspiration of Apollo and the Muses, the shepherds are

206 E.G., 1.12, 4.29, 5.49-50, 5.139-49, 7.136-7.

207. Heath 2005 uses this hierarchy as a background for his argument that humans (specifically Greek men) in ancient Greek literature are marked as separate from animals by their capacity for speech and that gods are marked as better than men by their divine voices and formal speech.

208 Gow 1950, 383-5; Hunter 1996, 63-73; Sens 1997, 13-23.

209 The only overt references to Apollo by herdsman are by Lacon and Comatas (possibly the legendary Comatas) at 5.78-9 and 82-3. Compared to the numerous references to the Muses (e.g., 1.64-142; 5.80-1; 7.12, 37-8, 45-8, 80-2, 128-9; 10.24-5; 11.5-6) and Pan (see below), this scarcity reveals that rustic characters usually call on more 'rustic' deities rather than Olympians. Apollo is nevertheless an important figure in Theocritean poetry. Simichidas, not a herdsman but nevertheless a bucolic poet, refers to him as a patron of his friend Aristis (7.99-102) and some scholars have argued that the mysterious goatherd Lycidas of *Idyll* 7 is Apollo in disguise; Hunter 1999, 146-9; McKay 1975, 183; and Williams 1971, 137-45. Apollo also appears in *Idyll* 17 in a comparison to Ptolemy for the honor that they bring to the islands of their birth (17.66-70). This is an appropriate comparison since both Apollo

able to sing sweetly and fill the *locus amoenus* with the requisite pleasant sound. Surprisingly, few herdsmen claim Apollo, god of song, as a patron. When Lacon claims Apollo as a patron, he is trying to outdo Comatas' claim that the Muses love him. Lacon implies that Apollo is a more powerful patron than the Muses (5.82-3).[210] In *Idyll* 16 Theocritus introduces another source of musical inspiration, the Charites or Graces. The narrative voice speaks about these Charites as the source of his personal inspiration. They travel with him as he looks for a patron to support his work.

The Muses appear as a significant source of inspiration in *Idyll* 1. Early in the song the goatherd claims that Thyrsis deserves a prize equal to the Muses for his skill in song, though the Muses will get first choice (1.9-11):

αἴ κα ταὶ Μοῖσαι τὰν οἴδα δῶρον ἄγωνται,
ἄρνα τὺ σακίταν λαψῇ γέρας· αἰ δέ κ' ἀρέσκῃ
τήναις ἄρνα λαβεῖν, τὺ δὲ τὰν ὄιν ὕστερον ἀξῇ.

If the Muses take the ewe as a gift,
You will take the stall-fed lamb as a prize; and if it pleases
Them to take the lamb, afterward you will take the ewe.

This claim places bucolic music as a reworking of epic where the poet receives his skill from the Muses. It is significant that the Muses are taking a gift and Thyrsis a prize. The different terms show that Thyrsis would not be competing with the Muses, since it is a bad idea to compete with divinities.[211] I interpret these lines as meaning that after winning a competition, Thyrsis or his listeners would make a gift to the Muses for inspiring his song in addition to taking a prize for

---

and Ptolemy are important patrons of the arts.

210 Cf. Gutzwiller 1991, 139-40. In *Idyll* 7 Simichidas is granted a prize after associating his music with Apollo by way of his friend Aristis (7.99-102).

211 The most relevant competition occurs between Pan or Marsyas and Apollo. In Apollodorus' version Marsyas, a mortal, challenges Apollo to a musical contest, loses and is killed (Apollod. 1.4.2). Ovid tells a variation of this story in which Pan competes with Apollo while Midas listens. Although Midas himself does not compete, he favors the music of Pan, the lesser deity, and is punished for his poor taste (Ov. *Met*. 11.146-93). Both Apollodorus' *Library* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* contain many other stories of gods punishing mortals who had the audacity to challenge them.

himself.[212] The role of the Muses continues in this poem, as Thyrsis calls on specifically bucolic Muses to tell the story of Daphnis in his refrain (1.64-145). As in other places this combines ideas of song, music, and love since the song of Daphnis describes his tragic love in a bucolic setting.

Pan is typically thought of as a nature deity; half man, half goat, he haunts the mountains and woodlands of Greek-speaking areas. He protects the wild landscape and is a patron of flocks.[213] Theocritean shepherds swear by him often and sometimes mention their fear of running into him as he roams at noon.[214] He also has some traditional associations with music and love and these are emphasized in certain Theocritean poems.[215] The combination of these interests - nature, music, and love - makes him the perfect deity to appear in Greek *erotobucolic* literature. Three scenes from *Idyll* 1 and one from *Idyll* 7 best express the role of Pan in Theocritean poetry.

At the beginning for the first idyll Thyrsis compares the goatherd's skill at playing the pan-pipes to Pan himself (1.1-3):

Ἀδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἁ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα,
ἁ ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖσι, μελίσδεται, ἁδὺ δὲ καὶ τύ
συρίσδες· μετὰ Πᾶνα τὸ δεύτερον ἆθλον ἀποισῇ.

That pine is whispering something sweet, goatherd,
Which makes music by the springs, and you play the syrinx
Sweetly; after Pan you would take the second prize.

Placement early in a programmatic poem sets Pan up as an important deity. His skill with music

212 The herdsmen in *Idyll* 5 make a similar promise that they will sacrifice to Pan or the Muses in the *locus amoenus* (5.50-9).
213 Holzhausen 2012.
214 E. g. 1.15-8, 4.47, 5.14.
215 In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells a story of how Pan invented the syrinx; he was pursuing a nymph named Syrinx. She prayed to escape and was transformed into reeds, and he used the reeds to craft a musical instrument (1.691-711). Though Ovid's is the earliest extant version of this story, like many of the stories in the *Metamorphoses* it may have been adapted from a Greek version and the instrument had been associated with Pan at least since the *Homeric Hymn to Pan*. Therefore, any mention of the syrinx in Theocritus, especially in gift exchange, is likely to bring Pan to mind - especially after Daphnis mentions leaving his own syrinx/pan-pipes to Pan himself. Cf. Gow 1950, 3 n.3; Hunter 1999, 71 n.3).

is central to his role in the Theocritean world. These lines may also call to mind the contest between Pan and Apollo, which at least Midas believed Pan should have won (Ov. *Met*. 11.146-93). Taking both Pan and the Muses as the patrons of his music, Theocritus may hint that his work will be pleasing to both audiences who appreciate more rustic music (Pan) and those who look for a higher register (Muses).[216] He also signals that love, nature, and song will all be themes in his poetry.

Soon afterwards, the goatherd refuses to play because he fears it will upset Pan as he rests from hunting in the countryside (1.15-8):

οὐ θέμις, ὦ ποιμήν, τὸ μεσαμβρινὸν οὐ θέμις ἄμμιν
συρίσδεν. τὸν Πᾶνα δεδοίκαμες· ἢ γὰρ ἀπ' ἄγρας
τανίκα κεκμακὼς ἀμπαύεται· ἔστι δὲ πικρός,
καί οἱ ἀεὶ δριμεῖα χολὰ ποτὶ ῥινὶ κάθηται.

It is not right, shepherd, not right for me to play pipes at midday.
Since I fear Pan, for at that time worn out
He rests from the hunt; and he is bitter,
And in addition sharp anger always drips from his nostrils.

For this goatherd, at least as he imagines the world, Pan is a powerful and omnipresent deity who may be upset if his siesta is interrupted. Pan is one with the landscape; he may hear the music in the *locus amoenus* even though he is unseen.[217] As entering a wild *locus amoenus* may be dangerous, so it may be dangerous to rouse Pan.

Pan is mentioned later in the same idyll during the song of Thyrsis, a song in which gods interact directly with the shepherd Thyrsis. As Daphnis is dying, he laments that Pan is not present and imagines that he is roaming in another of his favorite landscapes (123-6):

ὦ Πὰν Πάν, εἴτ' ἐσσὶ κατ' ὤρεα μακρὰ Λυκαίω,

216 In this way, I see Theocritus as doing with Hellenistic poetry what Shakespeare did with Renaissance drama. Just as Shakespeare's double plots make a play accessible to lower-class audiences without losing the original high-class interest, Theocritus' many layers of meaning would appeal to a varied audience.
217 Cf. Gow 1950, 4 n.15ff; Dover 1971, 77 n.15; Hunter 1999, 74 n.15-8.

εἴτε τύγ' ἀμφιπολεῖς μέγα Μαίναλον, ἔνθ' ἐπὶ νᾶσον
τὰν Σικελάν, ῾Ελίκας δὲ λίπε ῥίον αἰπύ τε σᾶμα
τῆνο Λυκαονίδαο, τὸ καὶ μακάρεσσιν ἀγητόν.

Oh Pan, Pan, whether you are on the great mountains of Lycia,
Or you watch over great Maenalus, there on the island of
Sicily, leave the steep Helicean peak and the tomb
Of Lycaon's daughter, which is wondrous to the gods.

As in lines 1.15-8, Pan is imagined roaming the countryside, but in this song he is absent from the present scene. Daphnis would like Pan to return so he can bequeath or perhaps return pan-pipes to him (128-30):

ἔνθ', ὦναξ, καὶ τάνδε φέρευ πακτοῖο μελίπνουν
ἐκ κηρῶ σύριγγα καλὸν περὶ χείλος ἐλικτάν·
ἦ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑπ' ῞Ερωτος ἐς Ἄιδαν ἔλκομαι ἤδη.

Come, lord, and take this sweet-smelling syrinx
Bound with wax and well turned to the lip;
For I am even now being dragged into Hades by Eros.

The pan-pipes are a common gift between shepherds in the *Idylls,* as noted above. Thus, like Pan, the instrument itself brings together the major features of Theocritean *erotobucolic*; nature (crafted from reeds), music (used to play music), and love (product of a love affair gone wrong).

Mentions of Pan remind the audience that the god himself has often been a lover; at times he can be asked to help lovers in need. Simichidas demands that Pan help his friend Aratus win Philinus (7.102-3):

τόν μοι, Πάν, Ὁμόλας ἐρατὸν πέδον ὅστε λέλογχας,
ἄκλητον τήνοιο φίλας ἐς χεῖρας ἐρείσαις,

For me, Pan, you who hold the lovely plain of Homole,
Place the boy, unasked for, in loving hands,

Simichidas associates Pan with a beautiful landscape and then demands that he help in an unlucky love affair. He goes on to wish that Pan should not be harmed if he cooperates (7.105-7):

κεἰ μὲν ταῦτ' ἔρδοις, ὦ Πὰν φίλε, μήτι τυ παῖδες
Ἀρκαδικοὶ σκίλλαισιν ὑπὸ πλευράς τε καὶ ὤμως

τανίκα μαστίζοιεν, ὅτε κρέα τυτθὰ παρείη·

And if you should do this, dear Pan, may the boys
Of Arcadia not beat you on the ribs and back
With squills when the flesh is slight.

Rites involving Pan and squills are otherwise unattested, except as part of an explanation of this passage attributed to Munatius,[218] and so the exact nature of such a rite cannot be certain. The reference to slight flesh at the end suggests that the rite might be performed to end a famine (whether it is the flocks or the humans who are starving).[219] The point of beating Pan likely has to do with improving fertility, as Dover suggests, and ending the famine - again connecting nature and the erotic (plants and animals regenerating).[220] Simichidas also curses Pan if he fails to cooperate (7.108-14). These curses also involve Pan's role as patron of flocks, condemning Pan to wander in locations that are inhospitable for herding during each season.[221] Pan must either go against the norm of Greek divinities and help the lover or face the danger of the *erotobucolic* world himself.

In addition to the conventional Greek divinities, the *Idylls* contain some characters who have the traits of gods or the potential to become gods. The appearance of Lycidas, the mysterious goatherd of *Idyll* 7, is an unusual instance of divinity in the *Idylls* (7.13-9):

οὔνομα μὲν Λυκίδαν, ἦς δ' αἰπόλος, οὐδέ κέ τίς νιν
ἠγνοίησεν ἰδών, ἐπεὶ αἰπόλῳ ἔξοχ' ἐῴκει.
ἐκ μὲν γὰρ λασίοιο δασύτριχος εἶχε τράγοιο
κνακὸν δέρμ' ὤμοισι νέας ταμίσοιο ποτόσδον,
ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ στήθεσσι γέρων ἐσφίγγετο πέπλος
ζωστῆρι πλακερῷ, ῥοικὰν δ' ἔχεν ἀγριελαίῳ
δεξιτερᾷ κορύναν.

Lycidas by name, he was a goatherd, and seeing him,
Nobody would think otherwise, since he seemed exactly like a goatherd.

218 The text of Munatius does not survive, but his views are mentioned in the scholia on Theocritus. Gow 1950, 158 n.108 suggests that his statement may have been inferred from Theocritus.
219 See Gow 1950, 158 n.107-8; Dover 1971, 161 n.106 ff.; and Hunter 1999, 183 n.107-8 for information on similar rites involving squills or the punishment of a cult image in times of scarcity.
220 Dover 1971, 161 n.106 ff.
221 Hunter 1999, 185-6, n.111-4.

For he had the tawny pelt of a wooly, shaggy he-goat,
Smelling of new rennet, around his shoulders
And about his chest an old garment was girt
With a wide belt, and he held a crooked staff
Of wild olive in his right hand.

Scholars have argued for interpreting Lycidas as a stand-in for a variety of different gods and men, including Apollo, Pan, Philetas, Theocritus, and others.[222] I agree with those who see the Hesiodic setting, the parallels to a Homeric 'divine encounter,' and the enigmatic behavior of Lycidas as signs that he is divine.[223] Williams made a convincing argument that Lycidas shares many characteristics of Apollo and many scholars have agreed.[224] In response, Brown and more recently Clauss have argued that Lycidas should be identified with Pan.[225] Theocritus remains enigmatic and does not name the god; I argue that he does so because he wishes for Lycidas to stand in for more than one god. I suggest that Lycidas has marked characteristics of Apollo (poetry), Pan (nature), and Aphrodite (love) - the perfect *erotobucolic* triad.[226]

In identifying Lycidas with Apollo, Williams considers three main points - 1) the name Lycidas is equivalent to Apollo's cult name Lykios, 2) Lycidas is called a Cydonian man (7.12) and the most famous Cydonia, in Crete, is associated with Apollo, and 3) Lycidas is headed for Pyxa (7.130), a village with a shrine of Apollo. He goes on to add that the poem contains echoes

222 Non-divine suggestions include a variety of specific or uncertain poetic predecessors (van Groningen 1959; Puelma 1960; Schwinge 1974; Zagagi 1984; Bowie 1985; Williams 1987; Hubbard 1998, 24-6; Kossaifi 2005c), a symbol of Theocritus' creative capacity (Kühn 1958, 69; Dover 1971, 150; Segal 1981, 110-66; Gutzwiller 1991, 159-60), a satyr (Lawall 1967, 80-4), and the embodiment of the bucolic genre (Halperin 1983, 245; Payne 2007, 144). See Gow and Dover for more bibliography and theories on the identity of Lycidas (Gow 1950, 129-30; Dover 1971, 148-50).
223 On the similarities to Hesiod's divine encounter with the Muses and/or divine encounters in Homer, see van Groningen 1959; Puelma 1960; Lohse 1966; Giangrande 1968; Williams 1971; Ott 1972, 143-9; Williams 1987; Brown 1981; Zagagi 1984; Gutzwiller 1991, 158-71; Clauss 2003; Kossaifi 2005; and Payne 2007, 117-45. Those who suggest that Lycidas is a divinity include Luck 1966; Williams 1971; Brown 1981; Hunter 1999, 146-9; and Clauss 2003.
224 Williams 1971; Hunter is drawn to this interpretation but decides that Lycidas has Apolline characteristics instead of identifying him only with Apollo (Hunter 1999, 146-9).
225 Brown 1981; Clauss 2003.
226 I do not mean to argue that these are the only gods with whom Lycidas shares traits. As Hunter points out, he has traits of Hermes and Dionysus as well (Hunter 1999, 146-9). To some extent this may be because of the overlapping characteristics of the divinities themselves; Pan, Apollo, and Hermes are associated with herding and both Aphrodite and Dionysus smile enigmatically (Aphrodite: *Hom Hymn. Ven*; Dionysus: Eur. *Bacch.*).

of Callimachus' *Aetia* prologue, in which Callimachus speaks of meeting and learning from Apollo.[227] More obviously, both Lycidas and Apollo are skilled poets and herdsmen. All of these traits mark the Apolline nature of Lycidas. However, they fail to fully explain his sardonic smile and goat-like qualities.

Brown uses evidence similar to that of Williams to identify Lycidas but comes to a different conclusion. He argues that 1) Lycidas should be taken as equivalent to Lycaean Pan, 2) that Cydonian is a pun on Pan's dog-like (κυνικός) qualities, and 3) instead of taking Πύξας as the name of the town Pyxa, it should be translated as the accusative plural of boxwood, meaning that Lycidas left to the accompaniment of boxwoods (i.e., flutes made of boxwood). He adds that Pan is often portrayed with a toothy grin, Lycidas' goat-skin garment parallels the goat legs of Pan, and that Pan is often portrayed with a staff like that of Lycidas.[228] Clauss had originally argued that it was best to leave Lycidas unidentified, but was later convinced that Lycidas is Pan by Brown's arguments and his discovery of an acrostic of the name Pan at a critical point in the poem.[229] In addition to these traits shared by Lycidas and Pan, I add that they are both excellent syrinx players (7.27-9) and are both associated with herdsmen and herds but do not usually keep herds themselves (Lycidas is called a goatherd but his goats are completely absent from the idyll).[230] Where Williams and Brown have come to different conclusions based on the same evidence, I believe the evidence is intentionally ambiguous. Lycidas has numerous characteristics of both Pan and Apollo.

---

227 Williams 1971 makes many interesting observations on the effect of seeing Lycidas as Apollo on our understanding of the poem. For instance, at 7.100-1 Simichidas claims that not even Apollo would turn down listening to him singing and playing the lyre; there is a chance that the god would take this as an insult to his own musical skill.

228 Brown 1981.

229 Clauss 2003.

230 Apollo owns special herds of cattle in *Hom. Hymn Hermes*, but does not seem to tend them since Hermes is easily able to tend them. He only tends herds as part of his punishment when he must serve Admetus (Eur. *Alcestis*).

I am, as far as I have been able to determine, the first to suggest that Lycidas shows attributes of Aphrodite. Perhaps scholars have been led away from this possibility by Lycidas' gender. However, one of the Homeric scenes that has been cited as a precedent for this encounter has Athena meeting Odysseus in the guise of a shepherd (*Od*. 13.96-112). This proves that the god may appear to the hero as a person of any gender. Like Aphrodite, Lycidas smiles and laughs, is interested in love, and displays a mix of indulgence and superiority in his interactions with *erotobucolic* herdsmen.

As soon as he is introduced, Lycidas smiles and laughs at Simichidas (7.19-20):

. . . καί μ' ἀτρέμας εἶπε σεσαρώς
ὄμματι μειδιόωντι, γέλως δέ οἱ εἴχετο χείλευς·

. . . And grinning steadily, he spoke to me,
with smiling eyes, and his lip carried laughter.

Laughter is closely associated with Aphrodite in other Greek texts; one of her epithets is laughter-loving Aphrodite.[231] Though Brown makes a case for an association between Pan and grinning,[232] references to Aphrodite's laughter are more common in Greek literature. We have already seen that in Theocritus Pan is considered an angry, unfriendly deity (1.15-8, 7.103-14), whose toothy grin does not match up as well to Lycidas as does Aphrodite's inscrutable laughter (1.95-6). Therefore, I believe that Lycidas' laughter here would call Aphrodite to mind for an ancient audience.

In addition to his laughter, Lycidas shows an interest in love, something experienced by Apollo and Pan, but truly the domain of Aphrodite. His song tells of his love for Ageanax, a young boy who is about to go on a voyage (7.52-89). Unlike most Theocritean shepherds, his love is returned by the boy (like Adonis returns Aphrodite's love), a sign that Lycidas at least has

231 E.G., Homer *Il*. 3.425, *Hymn Hom. Ven*.; Sappho 1; *Idyll* 1.95-6.
232 Brown 1981.

the favor of the love goddess. Lycidas hopes for his safety of his boyfriend (7.59-62), just as Aphrodite hoped for the safety of Adonis when he hunted dangerous animals.[233] Furthermore he escapes his concern about Ageanax by imagining his participation in an idyllic *locus amoenus*, just as Aphrodite escapes her problems by traveling to the safety of Olympus.[234] These stories of Aphrodite are well-known and both are mentioned in *Idyll* 1, so that they are already a part of the *erotobucolic* tradition.

Lycidas' dialogue with Simichidas is reminiscent of Aphrodite's conversation with Daphnis in *Idyll* 1. Both Lycidas and Aphrodite treat their interlocutor with a mix of indulgence and disdain. Aphrodite is clearly fond of Daphnis, as the idyll suggests that she wishes she could save him from death (1.138-40). Nevertheless, she taunts him for struggling with Eros and laughs at his pain (1.95-8). Similarly, Lycidas shows fondness for Simichidas by rewarding him for his song (7.128-9), but some of his comments can be read as mocking barbs directed at Simichidas (e.g., 7.21-3 and 43-8). The similarity between the treatment of Lycidas and Aphrodite in the two most recognizably programmatic poems of Theocritus indicates that the two are related.

Arguments have already been made by others for characteristics shared between Pan, Apollo, and Lycidas. I believe I have shown he shares characteristics of Aphrodite as well. These three gods represent the three interests of Theocritean *erotobucolic* - nature, poetry, and love. By giving Lycidas traits of all three divinities, Theocritus was able to create, as Payne calls him, an embodiment of the bucolic genre.[235] Lycidas' divinity is hinted at through his similarities to other deities but never confirmed. His attitudes and interests reveal that he is a perfect patron for

233 Ovid *Met.* 10.503-59.
234 Homer *Il.* 5.360-9.
235 Payne 2007, 144.

Theocritean *erotobucolic* poetry.

In his search for a mortal patron to support his work, Theocritus attempts to portray the Ptolemaic rulers as concerned with these same things - nature, poetry, and love - implying that they are the perfect patrons and he is the best poet to praise their qualities. I will discuss members of the Ptolemaic dynasty along with divinities because Theocritus presents the living Ptolemaic rulers as pious mortals and closely associates them with important *erotobucolic* divinities, especially Aphrodite. When he references the apotheosized parents of the current Ptolemaic rulers, it is usually along with the traditional demigod or divinity that they serve, Heracles or Aphrodite.[236] The implication is that they have become divine not because of their status as rulers but because of their exceptional piety, and that the same will be the case for the current Ptolemies, Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his sister/wife Arsinoe.[237] The Ptolemies, like the other Theocritean deities, are presented as patrons of nature, music, and love.

The Ptolemies had vast land holdings both in Egypt and abroad, and Theocritus highlights the fertility of their land and flocks. In *Idyll* 15, the Adoniazusae, the singer describes all of the plant and animal life that Queen Arsinoe has imported for the occasion (15.110-8). This shows not only her wealth and piety but also the extent of the family's land-holdings. These holdings are more overtly praised in the panegyric of Ptolemy II (17.77-81):

Μυρίαι ἄπειροί τε καὶ ἔθνεα μυρία φωτῶν
λήιον ἀλδήσκουσιν ὀφελλόμεναι Διὸς ὄμβρῳ,
ἀλλ' οὔτις τόσα φύει ὅσα χθαμαλὰ Αἴγυπτος,
Νεῖλος ἀναβλύζων διερὰν ὅτε βώλακα θρύπτει,
οὐδέ τις ἄστεα τόσσα βροτῶν ἔχει ἔργα δαέντων.

236 At this point in the Hellenistic period, Egyptian monarchs had begun to claim some divine honors after death. This was a balance between the tradition of Egyptians treating pharaohs as living divinities and Greeks treating their monarchs as mortals. For a recent discussion of the significance of divinity for Hellenistic kingdoms, see Chaniotis 2003.

237 See Griffiths 1979, 73 for the idea that *Idyll* 17 represents Ptolemy's creation of a family cult as an act of piety rather than dynastic assertion.

Ten thousand are the lands and ten thousand the races of men
Who cause the crops to grow, augmented by the rain of Zeus,
But no other grows so much as low-lying Egypt,
When the Nile spurts up through the soil and breaks the clods,
Nor does any other hold so many cities of men skilled in crafts.

Ptolemy's power is described in terms of his land-holdings and the fertility of his crops, much like a Homeric hero or Augeus whose flocks are described in *Idyll* 24.[238] Thus, even though he dwells in the city, he can be associated with the natural world of *erotobucolic*.

Theocritus, as an Alexandrian poet, has a special interest in Ptolemy's patronage of the arts. Whether Theocritus' own poetry was ever performed orally is a matter of debate but there is evidence that Ptolemy supported musical competitions and it is certain that he supported many poets and scholars at the Library in Alexandria.[239] In *Idyll* 15 Arsinoe has hired a musician to perform a song in honor of Adonis. This song takes up 44 lines of the 149-line poem, revealing the importance of music in Ptolemaic religious festivals. *Idyll* 17 reinforces this patronage of the arts while speaking of how wisely Ptolemy uses his resources (17.112-4):

οὐδὲ Διωνύσου τις ἀνὴρ ἱεροὺς κατ' ἀγῶνας
ἵκετ' ἐπιστάμενος λιγυρὰν ἀναμέλψαι ἀοιδάν,
ᾧ οὐ δωτίναν ἀντάξιον ὥπασε τέχνας.

Nor does any man come knowing how to sing
A clear-toned song in the contest of holy Dionysus,
To whom [Ptolemy] does not give a a gift equal to his skill.

Ptolemy is a patron of the arts, especially in connection with sacred festivals. In this passage Theocritus highlights Ptolemy's interest in music, skill as a judge, and the piety that will one day make him worthy of divinity.

Ptolemy is presented as understanding lovers in *Idyll* 14. Thyonicus describes Ptolemy in order to urge Aeschines to become a soldier in Egypt (14.61-4):

ΑΙ. τἆλλα δ' ἀνὴρ ποῖός τις;

238 E.G., Hom. *Il.* 1.154-7, 9.154, 11.244-5, 15.547-8.
239 Stephens 2010, 54-6; Hunter 2003, 483-4.

ΘΥ. ... τοισιν ἄριστος·
εὐγνώμων, φιλόμουσος, ἐρωτικός, εἰς ἄκρον ἀδύς

AE. What sort of a man is [Ptolemy]?
TH. The best in these things;
Knowledgeable, a music lover, a lover, at the height of sweetness

Despite the fact that Aeschines is planning to become a soldier, Thyonicus' description does not focus on Ptolemy's prowess in war, though Thyonicus suggests that Aeschinas should be prepared for battle (14.65-8). Instead, he highlights qualities that would be important to a Hellenistic poet writing in the *erotobucolic* mode - knowledge, music, love, and sweetness.[240] Thus, the praise reveals that Ptolemy is a great patron of song and has experienced love, suggesting that Ptolemy is only a step removed from an *erotobucolic* lover. At the same time, Theocritus proves that he is a good 'soldier' for Ptolemy by incorporating *erotobucolic* motifs into encomiastic poetry, proving his ability to praise the monarch for the things that most interest him.

In *Idyll* 15 the singer at the Adonis festival describes the apotheosis of Berenice, mother of Ptolemy II (15.106-8):[241]

Κύπρι Διωναία, τὺ μὲν ἀθανάταν ἀπὸ θνατᾶς,
ἀνθρώπων ὡς μῦθος, ἐποίησας Βερενίκαν,
ἀμβροσίαν ἐς στῆθος ἀποστάξασα γυναικός·

Zeus-born Aphrodite, you made Berenice immortal
From mortal, as the story goes among men,
Letting ambrosia drip into the breast of the woman;

The passage goes on to praise Arsinoe for her piety toward Aphrodite in bringing together this festival, implying that she, too, may hope for divine transformation upon her death. Thus she is associated not only with divinity but also with love, and through the *locus amoenus* soon to

240 Cf. Griffiths 1979; Burton 1995.
241 By the time that Theocritus was wrote this *Idyll,* Ptolemy and Arsinoe's mother, Berenice, had already died and been apotheosized. When Arsinoe herself later died, she was associated with the cult of Aphrodite because of her devotion to that goddess in life (Stephens 2010, 52-3; Chaniotis 2003, 436-7).

follow (15.110-128) she will also be associated with nature. Theocritus describes her as a perfect *erotobucolic* patroness.

The importance of love for a royal couple is emphasized twice in *Idyll* 17, first in the description of Ptolemy I and his wife Berenice and then in the description of the current rulers, Ptolemy II and Arsinoe. The first passage focuses on the devotion of Berenice to her husband and the importance of love in ensuring legitimate children (17.34-52). This passage mentions Berenice's apotheosis again and adds that as a goddess she soothes those who are unsuccessful in love, a function well-suited to *erotobucolic* poetry.[242] The current rulers enjoy the same kind of love and share a sense of piety (17.126-30):

πολλὰ δὲ πιανθέντα βοῶν ὄγε μηρία καίει
μησὶ περιπλομένοισιν ἐρευθομένων ἐπὶ βωμῶν,
αὐτός τ' ἰφθίμα τ' ἄλοχος, τᾶς οὔτις ἀρείων
νυμφίον ἐν μεγάροισι γυνὰ περιβάλλετ' ἀγοστῷ,
ἐκ θυμοῦ στέργοισα κασίγνητόν τε πόσιν τε.

And many are the fattened thigh-bones of cattle that burn
In the months year-round on the blood-stained altars,
He himself and his stately wife, than whom no other better
Bride has embraced her husband in any home,
Loving her brother and husband from her heart.

Theocritus goes on to compare the couple to Zeus and Hera, which implies a relation to the divine and justifies the marriage between brother and sister.[243] This comparison may cast some doubt on the happiness of the relationship, since Hera is famously jealous of Zeus' many affairs, but Theocritus wards off any doubt by assuring us that the couple works together and enjoys a fond embrace.

Ptolemy and Arsinoe are unlike most Theocritean *erotobucolic* lovers because they have found mutual love and happiness. Their experience of love, however, makes them sympathetic to

242 See Gutzwiller 2006 and the definitions provided for bucolic in the previous chapter.
243 Cf. Griffiths 1979; Burton 1995.

the plight of lovers and interested in love poetry. Thus they are more like the gods of the *erotobucolic* world who have experienced love but who, even when their love is unrequited, can use their power to assuage their grief.

The *locus amoenus* is a wild place and in other Greek poetry one might expect to find Artemis in such a place. In Theocritus, however, chaste gods and goddesses are absent and only those who are sympathetic to lovers are praised. Within this limit, a wide range of divinities from Olympians to semi-divine kings appear in the *Idylls*. However, all of these deities share an interest in one or more of the central aspects of Theocritus' *erotobucolic* poetry - love, poetry, and nature. Divinities, especially those associated with love and wild nature (Aphrodite, Eros, Pan, and the nymphs), contribute to the danger of the Theocritean landscape. An unwary herdsman might be driven mad by Eros and Aphrodite, attacked by an angry Pan, or abducted by a lusty nymph. The herdsmen pay tribute to these deities in part because they recognize the danger of ignoring these gods.

Social Dangers

Though evidence varies by location and time period, most evidence implies that the social consequences of love could be harsh in Greek-speaking areas of the ancient world. For my discussion of Theocritus I will rely primarily on internal evidence within the poems and evidence of literary standards from earlier poets. As a poet who is very aware of tradition and uses dense allusions to earlier poets, Theocritus often transports the values of earlier times into his own poetry.[244] In a few instances, the mores of the Hellenistic period, and particularly Hellenistic Egypt where he enjoyed his greatest success as a poet, have influenced the social expectations of

244 For instance *Idylls* 16 and 17 hearken back to an earlier tradition encomiastic poetry. These two poems express similar values to Pindar's odes; they highlight the importance of wealthy kings/champions remaining humbly pious, using their power to help the community, and supporting the arts. *Idylls* 22 and 25 recall the values of Homeric epic, rewarding victory in battle and men of noble birth (Hunter 1996, 63-4; Sens 1997, 13-23).

his characters. This happens most often where his writing uses realistic, contemporary dialects and settings.[245] These sections also often refer to the greater social freedom of women in Hellenistic Alexandria. In these cases, I will take both literary precedents and contemporary social conditions into account.

The social repercussions for the beloved are more prominent than those of the lover in the work of Theocritus. For the lover, as I will discuss below, it is the psychological effects of love that are highlighted. Beloveds in Theocritus face insults, abduction, and even physical violence. Simaetha, as a woman pursuing a man, faces different consequences than other lovers - she laments the loss of her virginity and has turned to magic to solve her problems. Most lovers in the *Idylls* face no more than teasing for their futile love and careless appearance. However, there are epic moments that remind the audience that men are willing to fight to the death for "love." Theocritus shows characters from a wide range of social backgrounds: gods, kings, middle class men and women, shepherds, and slaves.

The most innocuous social consequence of love for beloveds comes from facing the insults of past and spurned lovers. In *Idyll* 5, during the exchange of insults, the singers each imply that the other has been the passive partner in a physical relationship (116-21):

ΚΟ. ἦ οὐ μέμνασ', ὅκ' ἐγώ τυ κατήλασα, καὶ τὺ σεσαρώς
εὖ ποτεκιγκλίζευ καὶ τὰς δρυὸς εἴχεο τήνας;
ΛΑ. τοῦτο μὲν οὐ μέμναμ'· ὅκα μάν ποκα τεῖδέ τυ δήσας
Εὐμάρας ἐκάθηρε, καλῶς μάλα τοῦτό γ' ἴσαμι.
ΚΟ. ἤδη τις, Μόρσων, πικραίνεται· ἢ οὐχὶ παρῄσθευ;
σκίλλας ἰὼν γραίας ἀπὸ σάματος αὐτίκα τίλλοις.

CO. Don't you remember, when I took you, and grinning
You were shaking your hips nimbly and holding that oak?
LA. I don't remember that at all, but when Eumaras once polished
You off, bound there - that I remember very well indeed.

245 This is especially true of the idylls that are influenced by urban mimes (*Idylls* 2, 3, 11, 14, and 15).

CO. Now someone is peeved; or do you not see it?
Going straightaway, pluck squills[246] from the old woman's grave.

Each tries to deny the implication that he has been the beloved in a relationship, but Comatas is happy to brag that he was once Lacon's lover.[247] One of the first things that Lacon and Comatas establish at the beginning of the poem is social status. Comatas points out that Lacon is a slave and Lacon addresses Comatas as a freedman (5-9). Thus it is established that Comatas has somewhat greater social status, although previously he, too, had been a slave.[248] These insults come near the end of the competition and may be an important factor in deciding the winner.[249] Winning such a competition has social benefits not only because of the immediate prize, but also because a man who wins consistently will gain a lasting reputation like Daphnis or Corydon. Therefore, what seems like a small inconvenience in the *erotobucolic* portrayal of love may eventually have greater social repercussions.

Another instance of a man insulting a beloved reveals that the beloved need not give in to gratifying the lover sexually in order to be mocked. In fact, the lover, or a friend, might slander the beloved because he or she does not give in. This is the situation for Philinus (7.119-20):

βάλλετ', ἐπεὶ τὸν ξεῖνον ὁ δύσμορος οὐκ ἐλεεῖ μευ.
καὶ δὴ μὰν ἀπίοιο πεπαίτερος . . .

Shoot him, since the wretch does not pity my friend.
And after all he is riper than a pear. . .

He has not given in to the desires of Aratus and yet Simichidas insults him by implying that he is overripe. Ripeness is associated with promiscuity, implying that Philinus has been promiscuous

246 See note on squills in *Idyll* 7 above.
247 Some may object to the use of the terms lover and beloved with reference to a sexual insult, but I am using lover in the restricted sense of a person who pursues another and beloved with the sense of the person who is pursued. Many of these 'lovers' are only interested in physical satisfaction and control of the 'beloved.'
248 Slaves could be used sexually by their masters with impunity (Pomeroy 1990, 125-47; DuBois 2010a, 78-94).
249 See Gutzwiller 1991, 134-7 for a close reading of this poem that looks to ethnographic studies of modern Greek herdsmen for a better understanding of the 'rules' that determine a good response.

with other lovers while denying Aratus.[250] Thus the danger of insults to a beloved exists whether or not he or she is actually promiscuous. Philinus may have had sex with others, but it is unlikely that Simichidas would know about that. It is more likely that he makes up this slander to comfort his friend and possibly also to punish the boy by sullying his reputation.[251]

Lovers may also be insulted for their appearance and behavior while in love, but these insults tend to take the form of light-hearted teasing. In *Idyll* 10 the other reaper, Milon, teases Bucaeus for his love. At first he mocks her appearance (10.17-8) and, after encouraging Bucaeus to sing a love song (10.21-3), mocks him for not singing a proper harvest song (10.56-8). In *Idyll* 14, Thyonicus taunts Aeschinas for his sickly appearance (14.3-6), and later Cynisca (beloved of Aeschinas, but lover of Lucas), is teased about her passion by Aeschinas' dinner guests (14.29-31). None of these lovers gets angry with those who are teasing him or her, showing that these comments are harmless banter expected by lovers, a minor inconvenience of the *erotobucolic* world.

Simaetha of *Idyll* 2 is the only character in Theocritus to express concern over her lost virginity, a consequence of love that, in other Greek literature, tends to be a concern of the beloved.[252] Though she pursued Delphis, she was not after a single conquest but a faithful lover, perhaps even a husband. Delphis led her to believe that he would be just that (2.112-42). Simaetha clearly states that she is upset by the loss of her virginity (2.39-40):

ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τήνῳ πᾶσα καταίθομαι ὅς με τάλαιναν
ἀντὶ γυναικὸς ἔθηκε κακὰν καὶ ἀπάρθενον ἦμεν.

250 Hunter 1999, 187-8 n.120-1 convincingly explains that, though these lines are related to poetic attempts to get the beloved to give in to love before he or she becomes unattractive, Theocritus is using the image slightly differently. These lines imply that it is already too late for Philinus and that he has already grown too old to be attractive.
251 Sexual slander was a common feature of Greek court speeches (Dem. 22; Aesch. 1; etc.). There was also a strong tradition in Greek literature of insulting one's enemies; iambic poets such as Archilochus, Semonides, Hipponax, and Callimachus wrote invective poems about their enemies.
252 E. g. *SLG* 478.24-31; Anacr. 75; and Plat. *Phdr.* Cf. Dover 1971; Burton 1995.

But I am all on fire for him who made wretched me
Instead of a wife both worthless and no virgin.

Line 40 uses hendiadys to express Simaetha's feeling that the loss of virginity has made her κακός (bad, wicked, worthless). Because she had been a maiden before her encounter with Delphis and she has a servant of her own, Simaetha is likely a citizen and not a courtesan or a slave. Given the company she keeps (a Thracian nurse 2.69, and the mother of a flute-girl 2.144-5) she may be lower-class. In Archaic and other Hellenistic Greek poetry, though narrators may beg women to give up their virginity, it is clear from the women's resistance that they are expected to remain virgins until marriage.[253] Despite the limited freedom of Hellenistic women to participate in social gatherings and legal proceedings, Simaetha has failed according to society's expectations and this may harm her future prospects of marriage.[254] In other *erotobucolic* literature such as *SoS* and Egyptian lyric, the women do not worry about loss of virginity, since not only the landscapes but also the relationships in those poems are often ideal. Theocritus, however, is more strongly focused on the negative aspects of the *erotobucolic* world that are only implied in the work of other poets.

Cynisca, the beloved of Aeschinas in *Idyll* 14, even faces physical violence when, rather than returning his affections, she reveals her love for another (14.34-6):

τᾶμος ἐγώ, τὸν ἴσαις τύ, Θυώνιχε, πὺξ ἐπὶ κόρρας
ἤλασα, κἄλλαν αὖθις. ἀνειρύσασα δὲ πέπλως
ἔξω ἀποίχετο θᾶσσον.

I, you know me, Thyonicus, struck a blow with my fist
At her temple, and another again. She hitched up her skirt
And was gone outside in a flash.

Aeschinas is not ashamed of having hit the girl; instead he describes it as a natural reaction for

253 E. g. *SLG* 478.24-31; Theog. 1303-4; *AP* 5.85; and *Idyll* 27. Burton 1995, 46 also notes the importance of this social expectation to Simaetha.
254 Pomeroy 1990.

someone of his temperament. He still longs for Cynisca and has had so much trouble getting over her that he is ready to try being a soldier overseas (14.44-56).[255] This scene occurred at a symposium in front of guests, but their reaction is not described and Thyonicus focuses his reaction on helping Aeschinas become a soldier. It is unusual in *erotobucolic* poetry for a lover to threaten his beloved with physical violence. Instead, violence is usually perpetrated by outside forces that are attempting to keep the lovers apart (*SoS* 5:7; P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 4). However, in this case Aeschinas behaves as the outside force, attempting to keep Cynisca away from her new lover, Lucas (wolf).

Cynisca's social status is somewhat ambiguous; in earlier times the only Greek women who had been at symposia were the flute-players, low-class entertainers. However, in the Hellenistic period women seem to have had more freedom and even upper-class women may have attended these social functions.[256] Given that none of the characters are upset with Aeschinas for his treatment of the girl, and since he implies that she has had at least two lovers (Aeschinas and Lucas), she is more likely of low status, perhaps a slave or a courtesan. Her freedom to leave the party and choose her own sexual partners suggests that she is a courtesan rather than a slave. It is not typical in poetry to see a courtesan treated this way. In epigram, men often complain that courtesans have ill-treated them and the wealthy courtesans sometimes brag about their many conquests.[257] Aeschinas' violence may be influenced by his role as the representative of disapproving society in *erotobucolic* literature.[258]

---

255 See Burton 1995, 25-40 for themes of social mobility in *Idyll* 14.
256 Griffiths 1981; Pomeroy 1990, 41-82; Burton 1995, see especially page 26 for the status of Cynisca; and Dubois 2010b, 91-113.
257 For example, men complain in *AP* 5.164, *AP* 5.150, and *AP* 5.7 and women boast in *AP* 5.162 and *AP* 5.203. See Gutzwiller 1998, 115-82 for a full discussion of Hellenistic erotic and sympotic epigrams.
258 Indeed, P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 4 contains another girl loves a "wolf" and would undergo violence to stay with him. It would not be surprising if Theocritus became familiar with this ancient Egyptian lyric during his time in Alexandria.

In *Idylls* 13 and 22 beloveds face the further physical danger of abduction.[259] In Homer, Hesiod, and Greek mythology abduction is a common way to acquire a bride and is not necessarily viewed negatively (as long as the woman was not currently married to another man). When men abduct women who are married, they are punished; for example, the abductions of Helen and Hippodamia, daughter of Butes, instigate battles (Hom. *Il*.; Ovid *Met*. 12.210-535). Men who take unmarried women are sometimes pursued, but if they can get away or win in single combat then the bride is theirs. Thus, Jason is able to marry Medea and Pelops was able to marry Hippodamia, the daughter of Oeneus (Apollon. Rh. *Argon*.; Pind. *Olymp*. 1). Stealing women is, in literature of the time period, like stealing animals: acceptable and even an honorable pursuit as long as it was successful.[260] Therefore, it tends to be more dangerous for the *erotobucolic* beloved than to the lover, though as *Idyll* 22 shows, if the pursuer caught up to the lover, it could become quite dangerous for him or her as well.

Hylas is taken from Heracles, who acts as his surrogate parent and lover. Hylas, though taken by divine nymphs, reacts to the abduction with tears and cries (13.53-4):

Νύμφαι μὲν σφετέροις ἐπὶ γούνασι κοῦρον ἔχοισαι
δακρυόεντ' ἀγανοῖσι παρεψύχοντ' ἐπέεσσιν·

But the nymphs holding the boy on their laps
Consoled him with gentle words.

After the initial abduction, the nymphs are friendly and try to comfort Hylas. They care about him and want to soothe him, but they do not let him go. Despite their attentions, he calls out to Heracles, wanting to be rescued (13.59-60):

τρὶς δ' ἄρ' ὁ παῖς ὑπάκουσεν, ἀραιὰ δ' ἵκετο φωνά

259 At least Lys. 3 suggests that this was a real possibility for some beloveds.
260 Hunter mentions this aspect of the Homeric ethos in his discussion of *Idyll* 22 (Hunter 1996, 63-4). See Gutzwiller for reference to this practice in Homer and in anthropological studies of modern herdsmen. She rightly points out that persuasion can be the intellectual analogy to theft and persuasion is one of the aims of Theocritean poetry (Gutzwiller 1991, 35-44).

ἐξ ὕδατος, παρεὼν δὲ μάλα σχεδὸν εἴδετο πόρρω.

And thrice the boy called back, but his voice reached [Heracles] muffled
From the water. and though it was very near, it seemed far away.

Even in stories where the reactions of abductees are glossed over as in *Idyll* 22, to be discussed below, it is likely that they are similarly upset to be taken away from their loved ones forcibly. Theocritean lovers, however, may be driven mad by the power of Eros and do not take the feelings of the beloved or the danger to themselves from vengeful relatives into consideration, as the next poem will corroborate.[261] Despite their desperation in love, the lovers of other *erotobucolic* literature more frequently try to cajole the beloved rather than abducting them; again Theocritus highlights the ugly side of the *erotobucolic* world.

Idyll 22, a hymn to the Dioscuri, follows Homeric tradition closely and the abduction of women by the young gods is similar to various stories from Homer and Greek mythology both in its values and language (136-47):[262]

Τὼ μὲν ἀναρπάξαντε δύω φερέτην Διὸς υἱώ
δοιὰς Λευκίπποιο κόρας· δισσὼ δ' ἄρα τώγε
ἐσσυμένως ἐδίωκον ἀδελφεὼ υἷ' Ἀφαρῆος,
γαμβρὼ μελλογάμω, Λυγκεὺς καὶ ὁ καρτερὸς Ἴδας

The two sons of Zeus were carrying them off, having seized
The two daughters of Leucippus; and the two brothers,
Sons of Aphareus, were chasing them eagerly,
The betrothed grooms, Lynceus and the rather mighty Idas.

The narrator lets us know that the women have been abducted by the Dioscuri and are present at the battle, but then they fade into the background. While this is in keeping with earlier poems, it comes as a surprise in the *Idylls* because other poems in this collection focus on the lives and feelings of women, slaves, and shepherds; those characters who appeared as a supporting cast in Homer become the stars of the *Idylls*. Therefore, when the women are abruptly set aside the

261 For an in depth discussion of metaphors describing love as a sickness or madness with examples from a variety of Greek authors, see Cyrino 1995. Calame 1999, 114-8 also notes the power of Eros to madden lovers.
262 Gow 1950, 383; Hunter 1996, 46-76; Sens 1997, 36-42; Zanker 1987, 87-8.

audience notices their absence - especially since the beautiful *locus amoenus* in the first half of the poem (22.34-43) would have raised the expectation of a love story. I would further argue that the audience remembers how other abductees have reacted; for instance they may recall Hylas' reaction in *Idyll* 13 when taken from his family and loved ones.[263]

In contrast to the nymphs taking Hylas by stealth and not having to fight Heracles for him, the Dioscuri are chased down by the betrothed grooms of their abducted brides and challenged to battle (22.136-80). The battle starts out between Castor (the twin who is not always considered divine by other authors) and Lynceus. Once Lynceus has died, his older brother, Idas, attacks Castor. He is punished for the offense and dies by Zeus' lightning.[264] The deaths of Lynceus and Idas and the danger faced by Castor reveal the greatest consequence that lovers might face because of love's madness, namely death. This death can come about through battle or suicide, and the lovers' willingness to face this greatest danger reveals the power that love has over lovers in the *erotobucolic* world (cf. *SoS* 8:6).

Despite his realism, Theocritus' characters rarely speak about the social consequences of their love. These consequences must be gleaned from incidental comments in their stories. The characters are more focused on their personal experience of love and how it affects them physically and psychologically, so, they speak of how Eros has made them sick or driven them mad. Just as death in battle was the worst possible social consequence of love, death by suicide is

263 Although it is uncertain whether these poems were originally published as a book and if so in what order, once they had been written and were both known as the work of Theocritus, a literary audience would be able to consider these two idylls together. Gutzwiller 1996b discusses the textual history and possibility of a collection arranged by the author.

264 In earlier versions of the story, the fight had been over cattle rather than brides and Castor had been killed by Idas (See Gow 1950, 383-4 for a reconstruction of the version in the *Cypria*). Gow 1950, 384-5 finds it troubling that Theocritus reworked a story in which Castor had originally died to celebrate the greatness of the god. However, I believe that the intended effect is to contradict earlier poets who had said that Castor died, and confirm his divinity by showing that not only does he live through this battle, but Zeus uses lightning to help him in battle, signifying his divine heritage. Gow also finds the change from the theft of cattle to the theft of women problematic. I suggest that Theocritus wished to include an erotic element in this poem, which also had a lovely *locus amoenus* in the first half.

the worst psychological consequence. Because Theocritus focuses more often on the inner turmoil of love, his characters are more likely to threaten suicide than to fear a death in battle. In the next section, I will discuss passages that show the dangers of madness for the lover in the *erotobucolic* mode.

Psychological Dangers

When it came to stories of love, threats to an individual's mental health were more frequently mentioned in the *Idylls* than the social dangers. As mentioned briefly above, love was often compared to a disease or a kind of madness. Lovers were thought to behave irrationally and even dangerously.[265] Poems that look for a love cure foreground the theory that love is a kind of sickness (11, 14). Many poems also contain images of people burning or wasting away because of desire.[266] When their love is unrequited they may become dangerous to themselves or others, as Simaetha who threatens to poison Delphis if he does not return to her (2) or Daphnis who dies from love-sickness (1).

Danger was already latent in the shade and (over)abundant growth of the *locus amoenus*. Both Eros and nature threaten to envelop the lover and overtake the civilized self. This danger lurks in those moments when nature threatens to take over what man has cultivated or in places where the plants and water are too dense to tame (see especially 7.130-57 and 13.39-42). Such dangerous spots will be picked up by Vergil at first in the *Eclogues* and then fully developed in the *Georgics*. The lovers out of control echo the growth of the plants and rushing of the water. This loss of control can be described as a sickness, a melting/burning, or a madness and it is closely related to the lover's yearning for the beloved, which will be discussed in the next

265 Cyrino 1995; Calame 1999, 114-8.
266 E. g. 1.66, 2.82-3, 7.102, and 11.13-5.

section.

The narrator of *Idyll* 11 describes Polyphemus' love as madness (11.11) and Polyphemus himself describes his love as a sickness while he cures himself with a pastoral song (11.67-71):

οὐδὲν πήποχ' ὅλως ποτὶ τὶν φίλον εἶπεν ὑπέρ μευ,
καὶ ταῦτ' ἦμαρ ἐπ' ἦμαρ ὁρεῦσά με λεπτύνοντα.
φασὼ τὰν κεφαλὰν καὶ τὼς πόδας ἀμφοτέρως μευ
σφύσδειν, ὡς ἀνιαθῇ, ἐπεὶ κἠγὼν ἀνιῶμαι.

[Mother] has never yet said anything at all to my dear on my behalf,
Even having seen me growing thinner day after day.
I will say that my head and feet both throb,
So that she may suffer, since I suffer.

Most of the symptoms of the Cyclops are psychological; refusal to eat, desire to make others experience his suffering, and inability to focus on his work. The only physical symptoms are a head- and foot-ache, both of which he may even be making up to get his mother's attention. These aches could also be taken as true symptoms of love that he has decided to emphasize in order to get her sympathy, but I agree with Hunter that the purpose clause implies he is faking these symptoms just to get his mother's attention.[267]

At first he desires to make his mother share in his suffering (11.69-70), but soon he calls himself back to reality (11.71):

ὦ Κύκλωψ Κύκλωψ, πᾷ τὰς φρένας ἐκπεπότασαι;

Oh Cyclops, Cyclops, where has your mind flown?

From that point on he focuses on his work and on finding a more practical solution to his problem. In the final lines the narrator claims that Polyphemus managed his cares with pastoral music (11.80-1). Scholars disagree about whether Cyclops is truly able to overcome his love by singing; some claim that he recovers, while others argue that he is fooling himself.[268] I agree with

267 Hunter 1999, 240 n.70-1.
268 For examples of the view that he is able to completely overcome his love see Holtsmark 1966; Cairns 1972,

Hunter and Payne that the song is not a complete cure, but a palliative that allows the Cyclops to come back from the edge of madness and get to work.[269] His words after the song remind him to do this very thing, getting back to watching his herds and taking up with a more available girl, necessary tasks that lovers find the most difficult. As a result of reflecting on love in his song, he is able to get back to work and his madness remains relatively benign. This shows that, despite its deceptive qualities, the soothing nature of *erotobucolic* song serves an important function in warding off danger.

The power of love to drive men mad finds its climax in the story of Heracles, driven mad by the force of love and raging through the woods searching for Hylas (13.64-71):

῾Ηρακλέης τοιοῦτος ἐν ἀτρίπτοισιν ἀκάνθαις
παῖδα ποθῶν δεδόνητο, πολὺν δ᾽ ἐπελάμβανε χῶρον.
σχέτλιοι οἱ φιλέοντες, ἀλώμενος ὅσσ᾽ ἐμόγησεν
. . . ὃ δ᾽ ᾗ πόδες ἄγον ἐχώρει
μαινόμενος· χαλεπὸς γὰρ ἔσω θεὸς ἦπαρ ἄμυσσεν.

Thus Heracles among the untrodden brambles
Wandered, desiring the boy, and took a long time.
Lovers are unwearying, so much he endured wandering
. . . and he went where his feet led,
Raging. For a difficult god tore at the heart within him.

As the narrator explains in the frame, this poem is an example of how Eros has power over everyone, including demigods and deities.[270] Divine and yet bestial as I discussed above, Heracles is unable to control his love through song or any other means; he must let the madness run its course. He does not sing about his love but gives in to the madness, wandering through the very wild places that may hide Pan or the love god himself. Even the mighty Heracles is

147; DuQuesnay 1979, 47; and Farr 1991. The opposing view, that singing cannot be both a symptom and a cure for love is supported by Gow 1950, 211 n.13; Spofford 1969, 22-35; Goldhill 1991, 249-60; and Schmiel 1993, 229-34;. Gutzwiller 1991, 107-16 does not address this question directly, but her discussion of the Cyclops as a doltish figure and a parody of the poet suggests that she does not think his song is a true cure for love.

269 Hunter 1999, 220-1; Payne 2007, 79-82 and 2010, 231-2.

270 13.1-6 shows this power over Heracles, and at 1.104-10 Daphnis reminds Aphrodite about her previous affairs. Outside of the Theocritean corpus *Hom. Hymn to Ven.* and Ovid's telling of Apollo and Daphne at *Met.* 1.438-73 are notable examples of the power of love over divinities.

susceptible to the madness of love when he enters the *erotobucolic* landscape.

The madness of love has also caused Aeschinas to neglect himself and like the Cyclops he seeks a cure; Thyonicus describes his appearance (14.3-6):

ΘΥ. ταῦτ' ἄρα λεπτός,
χὠ μύσταξ πολὺς οὗτος, ἀυσταλέοι δὲ κίκιννοι.
τοιοῦτος πρώαν τις ἀφίκετο Πυθαγορικτάς,
ὠχρὸς κἀνυπόδητος·Ἀθαναῖος δ' ἔφατ' ἦμεν.
ΑΙ. ἤρατο μὰν καὶ τῆνος;

TH. So that is why you are thin,
And your mustache so long, and your curls desiccated.
Just such a Pythagorean[271] arrived recently,
Pale and shoeless; he said he was an Athenian.
AE: And surely he was in love?

Aeschinas knows that love is the cause of his unkempt appearance and so assumes that anyone else who has fallen into such a state of neglect must also be in love. Like Polyphemus in *Idyll* 11, he is looking for a cure for his love, but instead of finding it in music, he hopes to be cured by becoming a soldier (14.52-6). This cure will put him in dangerous, possibly deadly situations but he is not actively suicidal. His friend came from his tour as a soldier alive and so it is safe to assume that Aeschinas hopes for the same fate - an escape from the *erotobucolic* world into epic.

Simaetha not only talks about her own love-sickness, but also hopes that Delphis will be driven mad by love (2.87-9, 47-50). After casting her spell, Simaetha accepts that it may not work and tells the Moon of her other plans for dealing with her love, including a threat of murder (158-61):

νῦν μὲν τοῖς φίλτροις καταδήσομαι· αἰ δ' ἔτι κά με
λυπῇ, τὰν Ἀίδαο πύλαν, ναὶ Μοίρας, ἀραξεῖ·
τοιά οἱ ἐν κίστᾳ κακὰ φάρμακα φαμὶ φυλάσσειν,
Ἀσσυρίω, δέσποινα, παρὰ ξείνοιο μαθοῖσα.

Now I have bound him with my philters; and if still he

271 Detienne 1977, 123-32 discusses stories of the Pythagoreans and their relationship to spices and love. He explains that the Pythagoreans were wary of love and sexual activity.

Should vex me, he will be knocking at the gate of Hades.
I tell you that I keep such drugs in a chest,
Having learned about them from an Assyrian foreigner, Lady.

Delphis was aware that Eros could drive people to break societal norms, such as having sex outside of marriage (2.132-7) but he did not take into account the passion that can drive lovers to harm themselves and the objects of their desire. Simaetha has fallen under the control of Eros and is so desperate to escape that she would do anything - even destroy the object of her desire.

In the final lines of the poem, however, we are given some intimation that this threat is empty and that rather than using her φάρμακα (drugs), Simaetha will find a φάρμακον (cure) for the madness of love in the performance of the ritual (2.164):

. . . ἐγὼ δ' οἰσῶ τὸν ἐμὸν πόθον ὥσπερ ὑπέσταν.

. . . I will bear my desire as before.

This remark is ambiguous, since Simaetha reports that she was dying from love-sickness before, and, therefore, scholars have disagreed on Simaetha's meaning.[272] Since these lines are spoken after the spell and at the end of Simaetha's story, I believe she means she will deal with her love as she did before the spell and not take any further drastic measures. Perhaps she will fall ill, as she was before Delphis came to her, but she has changed her mind about harming him.

Theocritean lovers who do not find another cure for their love often become desperate enough to threaten or commit suicide. Daphnis sets the tone in *Idyll* 1; after a period of pining he chooses to die by drowning in the river (137-40):

. . . τὸν δ' Ἀφροδίτα
ἤθελ' ἀνορθῶσαι· τά γε μὰν λίνα πάντα λελοίπει
ἐκ Μοιρᾶν, χὠ Δάφνις ἔβα ῥόον. ἔκλυσε δίνα

272 Dover 1971, 111-2 n.164 suggests that with this Simaetha is excusing the moon from sharing her burden any longer. Griffiths 1979, 87-8 notes that Simaetha describes her passion as πόθος rather than ἔρως and argues that her love has decreased and she has found momentary relief in the world of nature. Segal 1985, 116-7 notes a shift in Simaetha's perspective; she is able to learn from the past and endure love rather than be burned by it. Teijeiro 1999, 79 takes it as an indication that Simaetha does not think that her magic will be effective - Delphis will not return and nothing will change.

τὸν Μοίσαις φίλον ἄνδρα, τὸν οὐ Νύμφαισιν ἀπεχθῆ.

. . . and Aphrodite
Wished to restore him. But all the threads of the Fates
Had run out, and Daphnis stepped into the river. The whirlpool
Washed away the man dear to the Muses, not hateful to nymphs.

Daphnis chooses to die though both Priapus and Aphrodite had suggested there might be another way to manage his love sickness (1.90-1, 96-7). Aphrodite's words suggest that if he stays alive, Eros will conquer him; that is, he will be controlled by his erotic desires. Daphnis chooses death to escape the dangers of the *erotobucolic* world and maintain self-control in the face of Eros' power.[273]

Idyll 3 contains a lover who threatens to drown himself, though he does not carry out the deed within the timeframe of the poem. The goatherd complains early on about the internal pain of his heart (3.11) and later makes his suicide threat (3.23-6):

ὤμοι ἐγών, τί πάθω, τί ὁ δύσσοος; οὐχ ὑπακούεις.
τὰν βαίταν ἀποδὺς ἐς κύματα τηνῶ ἁλεῦμαι,
ὥπερ τὼς θύννως σκοπιάζεται Ὄλπις ὁ γριπεύς·
καΐ κα δὴ 'ποθάνω, τό γε μὲν τεὸν ἀδὺ τέτυκται.

Ah me, why do I suffer, why am I ruined? You do not hear me.
After taking off my shepherd's coat I will leap from that rock,
Where Olpis the fisherman watches for tunnies, into the water.
And truly if I should die, may it cause you pleasure indeed.

This lover is unstable and exhibits wild mood swings. At times he makes serious threats, but later suggests that instead he will court a more willing woman (3.34-6). His mental anguish leads him to neglect his personal safety. This neglect and the pleasure that he believes it would bring Amaryllis are highlighted again at the end of the poem (3.52-4):

Ἀλγέω τὰν κεφαλάν, τὶν δ' οὐ μέλει. οὐκέτ' ἀείδω,
κεισεῦμαι δὲ πεσών, καὶ τοὶ λύκοι ὥδέ μ' ἔδονται.

273 Like the land of Lotus Eaters (*Od*. 9.63-104), in the *erotobucolic* world life is relatively carefree and there are many pleasures. You must, however, give up control of yourself (in the *erotobucolic* world by surrendering to Eros and Pan) in order to remain and enjoy it. Hunter 1999, 96 n.103 implies that it is Daphnis' self-control that will be painful to Eros when he says, "Daphnis will continue after death to be a source of 'bitter pain' to Eros, because Eros (and Aphrodite) will always know that one man at least rejected their power."

ὡς μέλι τοι γλυκὺ τοῦτο κατὰ βρόχθοιο γένοιτο.

I have a headache, but you don't care. I will sing no more,
But I will lie where I have fallen, and thus the wolves will eat me.
May that be as sweet as honey in your throat.

The goatherd no longer cares what happens to him, nor does he attend to his duties now that he has fallen under the power of love. The reader may laugh as the lover reaches the point of bathos, but the reader may also recognize in the shepherd his or her own past folly when reaching the point of bathos in love. Lovers are prone to melodrama and those inhabiting the *erotobucolic* world are no exception, at times exaggerating the dangerous effects of their love.

In most *erotobucolic* literature - and Theocritus has only a few exceptions - lovers sing in the first person about their love. In doing so, they often speak about the psychological effects of love. Since most love in Theocritus is unrequited, rather than elation the lovers tend to sing about anguish, pain, and madness. The madness of love is reflected within (and reflects) the danger of the *erotobucolic* landscape. Just beyond, or in some cases within, the *locus amoenus* there are wild places inhabited by divinities like Pan and the nymphs, places where it is dangerous for men to tread. This wild place corresponds to the wild madness that may come upon lovers in the *erotobucolic* world.

Pastoral Pining

Yearning for the beloved is an important element in the *erotobucolic* genre, for lovers are more inclined to talk about love when apart and people are generally more inclined to desire what is absent.[274] Lovers in Theocritus are sometimes physically separated but more often the beloved is simply uninterested in the lover. Most of the male lovers in Theocritus take a passive approach, singing about their love or simply pining. Women appear infrequently as lovers in

274 Barthes 1978.

Theocritus, but when they do, they take an active role - sending for the beloved directly or pelting him with love tokens. In this section I focus on the yearning of human characters, as I have already covered the divinities above (Aphrodite in *Idyll* 1, Heracles and the Nymphs in *Idyll* 13, etc.). I will, however, include the Cyclops and Galatea, technically a demigod/divine monster and a nymph, of *Idyll* 6 among the humans because in this poem their love is described as a shepherd's romance. This poem does not use the heroic language seen in passages about other demigods or divinities like the Dioscuri and Heracles.

The categories of danger and yearning overlap in Theocritus because he frequently shows that pining for an absent or unwilling lover can lead to thoughts of suicide. The yearning of his *erotobucolic* characters is so strong that it becomes the burning, melting frenzy described in the passages above. Since I have already discussed those who are driven mad by their yearning in the above section, here I will focus more on those who experience mutual desire and those who have found a way to deal with their love.

In general, the herdsmen in Theocritus are not very active in the pursuit of their beloved. We have already seen this with some of the men in the idylls discussed above like Daphnis who refuses to pursue the nymph who is apparently chasing him, and the goatherd of *Idyll* 3 who only sings outside his beloved's cave although he is separated from her only by a veil of ivy. Even those who have not (yet) been driven mad by unrequited love rarely take a more active role in their pursuit than to sing about the beloved and have gifts at hand should the beloved choose to arrive and accept them. Like the Cyclops, they manage their love by singing about it and this allows them to continue loving and living without moving on to more forceful pursuit.[275]

275 Only *Idylls* 15 and 18 report songs sung by women; in 15, a mortal woman sings about the love of Aphrodite and Adonis and in 18 a chorus of women sings about the love of Helen and Menelaus.

As happens frequently throughout *SoS*, even in mutual relationships there are times when a lover might feel yearning for the beloved. In *Idyll* 7, Lycidas sings a propemptikon, a farewell song before a voyage, to his beloved, Ageanax. Though their love is mutual, Lycidas will pine for Ageanax while he is away, and he plans to soothe his cares with bucolic songs (7.70-88). Rather than swearing that he will cross the sea in pursuit of the boy, Lycidas plans to wait for his return. It is a paradox in Theocritus that though love is strong enough to drive a man to death, it almost never drives a man beyond his familiar fields or even across the doorstep of his beloved.[276]

Bucaeus, too, longs for Bombyca to come to him, but there is no indication that he has even made her aware of this desire (10). Like Polyphemus, he seems to be able to get back to work after singing about his love for Bombyca. Before singing the song he had not been so industrious; Bucaeus complains that he has not tended his fields since the sowing (10.14):

BO. τοιγὰρ τὰ πρὸ θυρᾶν μοι ἀπὸ σπόρω ἄσκαλα πάντα.

BU. For that reason [love], the fields in front of my door have all been unhoed since the sowing.

Nevertheless, he is present at the harvest and so is not completely neglecting his work. His reference to untended land may be a reference to unfulfilled sexual desires.[277] This would provide an explanation for the discrepancy between this claim at 10.14 and his statement that he has been in love for almost ten days (10.12):

BO. ἀλλ’ ἐγώ, ὦ Μίλων, ἔραμαι σχεδὸν ἐνδεκαταῖος.

BU. But I, Milon, have been in love for nearly ten days.

276 In *Idyll* 14, Aeschinas does plan a long journey but it is to get away from love rather than to pursue it. Like Daphnis, though he wastes away from love, he does show restraint. Rather than reveling in Eros, he seeks freedom from care.

277 Greek literature is rife with agricultural metaphors for sex and it would make sense for Bucaeus to refer to his unfulfilled desire as a lack of agricultural production. If this interpretation is correct, then the sense parallels *SoS* 1:6 where the female lover complains about her untended vineyard. See DuBois 1991 for a detailed discussion of the use of agricultural metaphors for women’s bodies in Greek literature.

How can 10 days of love have caused him to neglect his land since the sowing if it is now harvest time? Hunter provides a reasonable explanation that Bucaeus is talking about the time when he sowed vegetables near his home and not the sowing of the main harvest.[278] This makes sense of the passage and is an improvement on previous explanations.[279] However, it seems unlikely that Bucaeus would refer to this sowing without specifying since, in the context of the harvest, Milon would most quickly think of the major grain sowing season (as have most scholars). However, if we take Bucaeus' meaning metaphorically, that he has not hoed his plot would mean that he has not had sex (possibly with his wife or women for hire) since the metaphorical sowing of love which he referred to only a few lines earlier. He could expect Milon to pick up on this figure of speech because agricultural activity often acts as a metaphor for love in Greek literature[280] and because the main topic of discussion thus far has been his love affair. According to this reading, his longing for Bombyca has caused him to neglect not actual work but other sexual opportunities.

The narrator of *Idyll* 12 also complains about the ill-effects of longing during his lover's absence (12.1-2):

῞Ηλυθες, ὦ φίλε κοῦρε· τρίτῃ σὺν νυκτὶ καὶ ἠοῖ
ἦλυθες· οἱ δὲ ποθεῦντες ἐν ἤματι γηράσκουσιν.

You have come, my dear boy; with the third night and dawn
You have come; but even one day will gray yearning men

The lover pines for his beloved but waits for the boy to come to him. The yearning does not become unbearable because they are in a mutual relationship and the boy was with him only a

278 Hunter 1999, 203-4 n.14.
279 Gow 1950, 195-6 n.14 summarizes explanations that had been proposed up to that point and confesses that he has found no satisfactory solution. Hunter 1999, 203-4 n.14 mentions some other, more recent explanations of the lines, but I agree that all of them require too much deviation from the Greek.
280 See discussion above.

few nights ago. Even so, the lover complains that this was too long a time - a common theme of love poetry.[281]

Though not currently in a mutual relationship like that of the narrator above, Aeschinas of *Idyll* 14 implies that he once had a mutual relationship with Cynisca; she was at his symposium and used to sit in his lap and keep him warm (14.36-8). Now that she has left, however, he pines for her but does not attempt to pursue her. Instead, he looks to cure his love by becoming a soldier. It is surprising that his love is so strong that it is causing him to be ill and yet he does not (as far as we know) go to Cynisca to patch things up but waits to see if she will return to him. Aeschinas is not lazy; he is willing to cross the ocean and become a soldier in order to end his passion, yet he is unwilling to make the first move toward reconciliation with Cynisca. His behavior suggests that it is inappropriate for Theocritean men to be aggressive in their pursuit of the beloved. Though they may experience desire like that of a predator after its prey, as discussed in the previous chapter, they do not act on that passion unless the beloved comes to them. This is in sharp contrast to lovers in *SoS* and Egyptian lyric who are willing to travel great distances to get to their beloveds.

All of these men accept love when it comes to them and long for it when it is away, but they do not actively pursue it. I believe this ties in to the bucolic idea of soothing and managing one's cares as presented by Gutzwiller.[282] To pursue love too boldly would only lead to more madness, so men attempt to manage their love or escape it. Even those who die for love like Daphnis, do so not to find love or even because they could not attain it, but in order to avoid being overcome by Eros.

281 Barthes 1978.
282 Gutzwiller 2006a.

Female lovers appear less frequently in Theocritus. Where they do appear, they take a more active role. Simaetha, driven to madness by her love, searches out Delphis and when he leaves her she turns to magic in an attempt to force him back under her control (2). Even the women who are not driven mad by love take a more active role in pursuit, pelting their love interest with apples or inviting them to their chambers (see below). Theocritus may be influenced by the *erotobucolic* songs of other cultures, such as *SoS* and Egyptian lyric poetry, when he portrays women as active lovers. If this is the case, then it is surprising that Theocritus does not give women a central role in more of his poems. There are a myriad of possible explanations. The three that seem most plausible to me are that he did write more poems with central female characters and they are lost, that he thought a Greek audience would not like too many strong women, and that he thought his audience was already familiar with the *erotobucolic* standard and, in Hellenistic fashion, he wished to innovate.[283]

In *Idyll* 5 Comatas claims that his girlfriend pelts him with apples (5.88-9):

ΚΟ. βάλλει καὶ μάλοισι τὸν αἰπόλον ἁ Κλεαρίστα
τὰς αἶγας παρελᾶντα καὶ ἀδύ τι ποππυλιάσδει.

CO. Clearista pelts her goatherd [Comatas] with apples
When he drives his goats past and she whistles something sweet.

Galatea tries to attract Polyphemus' attention in the same way in *Idyll* 6, where the roles are reversed from *Idyll* 11 and she pursues him (6.6-7):

βάλλει τοι, Πολύφαμε, τὸ ποίμνιον ἁ Γαλάτεια
μάλοισιν, δυσέρωτα καὶ αἰπόλον ἄνδρα καλεῦσα·

283 I find options 1 and 3 most convincing. 1 because I can imagine poems with strong women not being recorded by monks during the Medieval period and getting lost (Simaetha may have stayed because she's a witch and therefore a negative example) and 3 because Theocritus reveals his desire to innovate in the programmatic poems and at least some erotobucolic elements would be familiar to his audience from Homer and Sappho. 2 I find less convincing, because if they couldn't handle it, why have any aggressive women? Furthermore, *SoS* is much more of a contrast to standard Hebrew literature than poems with dominant women would be in Greek literature.

Galatea pelts your flock, Polyphemus,
With apples, and calls you a stony-hearted goatherd.

Apples are a love token that male lovers offer as well, most notably the goatherd of *Idyll* 3 (9), but they do not throw them. Men only mention in song that they have apples or other gifts ready for their beloved to come and get. Women make sure that their love tokens are received.

Another woman besides Simaetha also reportedly found a way to get her love interest to visit her. In *Idyll* 14, Aeschinas complains that since she has left him, Cynisca has taken up with Lucas (14.47):

Λύκος νῦν πάντα, Λύκῳ καὶ νυκτὸς ἀνῷκται·

Now it is all Lucas, she even opens her doors at night for Lucas.

The open doors double as the real doors that Cynisca opens to let Lucas into her house and as a reference to her sexual openness with him during the night. Given that Cynisca had been pining for Lucas earlier in the poem and that Aeschinas focuses on her agency in opening the doors to Lucas, I believe that Cynisca has invited Lucas to her home in order to fulfill her desire. She has arranged mutual tryst rather than the *paraclausithyron* sometimes seen in *erotobucolic* literature (e.g., *Id*. 3; *SoS* 5:2-6).

Female lovers in Theocritus take a more active role in pursuit. It would be possible to argue that this suggests that they are closer to the animals in nature and are unable to control their desires. While this is a possibility given some of the views on women's libidinous ways expressed in earlier Greek literature,[284] I take a more favorable view of these active women. By introducing active women, Theocritus is able to bring new life to old tropes of male pursuit. Reinventing older traditions fits well with the Hellenistic aesthetic. I suggest that Theocritus was

284 Arist. *Lysistr*. suggests that it is an epic feat for women to overcome their erotic desires. Many epigrams also suggest that women were thought to have strong libidos (e.g., *AP* 5.203, *AP* 5.158, and *AP* 5.164).

influenced to show some active women in his poetry because he heard about active women in the literature of other cultures including Egyptian love lyric and possibly Hebrew or other poetry from the Near East.[285] As mentioned above, he was likely also influenced by the more active role of elite women in Hellenistic Alexandria.

Yearning is both integral to love poetry and dangerous to the lover. The men and women of Theocritus deal with this in different ways. Despite their intense desire, which leads to madness and even threats of suicide, Theocritean men do not aggressively pursue the objects of their affection (divinities excepted). Perhaps, as implied by the story of Daphnis, it is unseemly for a man to give in to the power of Eros. Instead the men either succumb to illness, find another outlet for their love (song, battle), or let the beloved come to them. Any successful escape will respect the power of love, whether one chooses the path of Daphnis for whom death is the only escape or Polyphemus who sings about the power of his love in order to soothe his cares. The women of the *Idylls* feel no such compulsion to restrain their desire. When they are in love, they pursue their beloved by any means at hand. They might, like Simaetha, send a servant to talk to him or try to recall him with magic or they might, like Clearista, pelt him with apples.

Conclusion

Themes of divinity, danger, and yearning appear in different ways throughout the *Idylls* and, as I will continue to show, throughout all *erotobucolic* literature. These themes and the common images used to portray them confirm that the poems under discussion should be looked at as part of a distinct genre. Though love and nature may make a convenient metaphorical pair and that overlap might lead to some similar metaphors, it would be unusual for so many such

285 Sappho was certainly influential in this respect as well, but though her poetry expresses desire in a female voice, she does not take as active a role in pursuit as Near Eastern and Theocritean women. She is more like the men who sing about their love and wait for the beloved to make the next move.

poems to contain a sense of divinity, the presence of danger, and the yearning of the lovers unless there were a generic expectation tying them together. I have shown the presence of these themes in Theocritus and hinted at their presence in other literature. The following chapters will detail the presence of all elements of the *erotobucolic* genre in *SoS*.

Chapter 3: *Song of Songs: The Countryside*

Introduction

Song of Songs is a 425 line poem traditionally broken down into 8 chapters and 117 verses. In recent years, many alternate arrangements have been suggested.[286] The original language was Hebrew, but ancient translations also exist in Greek (c.100 BCE), Syriac (c.200 CE), and Latin (398 CE).[287] Dialogue between two lovers who constantly search for and describe one another but rarely come together makes up the bulk of the text. Occasionally the female lover also speaks to a chorus known as the "daughters of Jerusalem" and they reply (5:9, 6:1, 7:1, 8:8-9). Through their dialogue, the characters examine the experience of love between two young people in an ancient society. The lovers are not usually named, but the woman is identified as the Shulamite at 7:1; it is unknown whether Shulamite is a name or a description. For the sake of differentiating between the lovers, I will henceforth refer to the female as the woman and the male as the man.

Both the date and the author of *SoS* are contested. Until the nineteenth century, *SoS* was traditionally ascribed to Solomon, the son of David (c.10th century BCE, First Temple Period) because of the superscription:[288]

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לִשְׁלֹמֹה׃

The song of songs which is Solomon's

286 It is not within the scope of this paper to include an exhaustive list. Some notable proposals include Waterman's dramatic arrangement of the poem, which takes *SoS* as a single work but arranges so that it makes sense chronologically (1948); Segal's suggestion that poem is a collection of fragments, some of only a few lines, that were compiled by an editor in three larger sections: introductory stanzas, main part of the *Song*, and concluding stanzas (1962, 470-8); and Fox who argues that *SoS* is unified and keeps it in the same order, but divides it into sections according to events that do not correspond with the traditional verses (1985, 202-26); see Exum for an interesting discussion of unity in *SoS* (2005, 33-7).

287 See Pope for more information on these versions (1977, 19-20).

288 All quotations of biblical Hebrew are taken from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

If the name of Solomon was attached as part of the pseudepigraphic tradition, *SoS* may have been written before the time of Solomon; some scholars have noted similarities between *SoS* and the sacred marriage literature of Mesopotamian literature.[289] This observation led Schmökel (1956), to suggest a pre-Israelite origin and a composition date as early as the third millennium BCE. Several modern biblical scholars argue that *SoS* was composed in the time of Solomon or not long after (First Temple Period), some arguing for Solomonic authorship and others for authorship by a court poet or even a detractor of Solomon.[290] Other biblical scholars, such as Fox, support a Hellenistic (Second Temple Period) date for the written version of *SoS* while acknowledging that there may have been earlier oral versions circulating.[291] I am convinced that the current form of *SoS* was transcribed in the Hellenistic period because the language of *SoS* uses many words characteristic of this period and contains close similarities to Egyptian love poetry. Therefore, the transcription most likely took place in Alexandria, which had a large Jewish population during the Hellenistic (Second Temple) Period, after an indeterminate period of oral performance.

The primary performance context of *SoS* has been as a sacred text in the Jewish and later also Christian and Islamic traditions. It has been read aloud in services and read in private by followers of these religions. However, a complaint frequently attributed to Rabbi Aqiba (c.50-135 CE) about *SoS* being sung as a secular song, "He who trills his voice in chanting the *Song of Songs* in the banquet house, and treats it as a sort of song has no part in the world to

289 E. g. Meek 1922; Wittekindt 1925; Kramer 1969; Pritchard 1969; Pope 1977; Carr 1979; and Nissinen 2008.
290 Tur-Sinai 1950-51 suggests that *SoS* is the work of court poets; Segal 1962 and Gerleman 1965 argue for a Solomonic context but does not suggest a particular author; Waterman 1948 interpreted the poem as a polemic originating in the North Kingdom against the South Kingdom after Solomon's death. See Pope 1977, 22-33 for a discussion of views up to 1977.
291 Fox 1985, 186-90.

come," suggests that it might also have enjoyed popularity in secular settings.[292] Segal takes the phrase "houses of banqueting" (בית המשתאות) from Rabbi Aqiba as a reference to singing *SoS* at wedding festivities,[293] and argues that this was actually the primary performance context in the time before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. He bases his argument on the disagreement between rabbis about whether or not *SoS* is sacred.[294] I argue that if the performance of *SoS* had been secular up to that time, it would be unlikely that rabbis would succeed in bringing it into the canon. The content of *SoS* is too easily read as secular, so that if it had traditionally been sung mainly at social gatherings and weddings, it would have been difficult to enforce an allegorical reading at a later date. I do not mean to argue that *SoS* was not sung at wedding festivities or on other social occasions, but only that these performances were secondary to religious recitation. In most cases the audience would be a congregation, but when the song was sung in secular settings, it may have reached a broader audience that would include merchants or traveling bards who had learned some Hebrew for their business. The story and associated imagery of young love would have appealed to visitors from other Mediterranean cultures because of the familiar themes from love songs in their own language.

Another, related point of contention in studying *SoS* is the number and identification of the characters. The agreed upon speakers are the woman, at least one man, and the daughters of Jerusalem (even among these speakers the distribution of lines is distributed. Some scholars, particularly those who interpret the play dramatically, argue that there are two male lovers

---

292 Quoted in Pope 1977, 19; originally in the Talmud, a text that preserves discussions of rabbis on Jewish law and ethics; it is made up of two parts the Mishnah, a written version of traditional oral law, and the Gemara, a commentary on the Mishnah and the Hebrew Bible.

293 I am hesitant to agree with his interpretation in this context, although he does provide one parallel use of the term from Qohelet 2:2, because weddings have a strong religious element. Rabbi Aqiba seems to be talking about singing a sacred text at an inappropriate time, so I understand these banquets as purely secular gatherings.

294 Segal 1962, 484-8.

speaking, a king and a shepherd.[295] Some, such as Fox, attribute some lines to the woman's brothers.[296] Many lines in the poem do not contain gender markers that would clarify the speaker. As I will discuss, readers understand these lines differently depending on whom they believe to be speaking.

Words, phrases, and images are repeated throughout *SoS*, a variation of the parallelism that is thought by many to be the dominant feature of biblical poetry. And yet, as the biblical expert Alter points out, *SoS* differs from the majority of biblical poetry in its manner of deploying parallel lines. Parallel lines are scattered freely throughout the poem instead of occurring in regular patterns.[297] Arguments have also been made that *SoS* is written in meter, although there is little agreement on how that meter is structured. Pope, following Meek's commentary, claims that the predominant meter is the *qinah*. This meter is made up of two lines, the first with three stressed syllables and the second with two stressed syllables.[298] Alter, however, notes that the original sound and stress of biblical poetry is unknown and unrecoverable, making it difficult to determine whether or not passages were written in meter.[299] I

295 Waterman (1948) is the most famous scholar to support this theory. Most scholars explain the references to shepherd and king as descriptions of the same man. Some, like Segal (1962), argue that the man is a king (usually Solomon) and that shepherding is a hobby, metaphor, or term of affection. Others, like Fox (1985) and Exum (2005), argue that the man is a shepherd, but that the lovers compare each other favorably to royalty because their love makes them feel wealthy and unique.
296 Fox 1985, 171-2 taking the description of a "sister" (אחות) in 8:8 literally, attributes 8:8-9 to the brothers. The attribution of some lines to the brothers would clarify some sections of *SoS*; I am certainly tempted by Fox's attribution of 2:15 to the brothers. Nevertheless, I am not certain that there is enough internal evidence to support this reading. For instance, the word "sister" in 8:8 could be spoken by the man, who has frequently called the woman "sister" throughout the poem (e.g., 4:9, 4:10, 4:12), in this case, the plural subject of 8:8 would refer to himself and the Daughters of Jerusalem. Verse 8:8 may also be spoken by the Daughters of Jerusalem, who have spoken the only two lines in the poem with a plural speaker that can be clearly attributed (5:9, 6:1). They might use "sister" as a term of endearment for their friend. Women don't use sister as a term of endearment for one another elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, but the term is used figuratively for a close connection at Proverbs 7:4; Brown-Driver-Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (BDB from here on out) אחות. and texts from Greece show that women might sing about the attractions of one of their cohort who was prepared for marriage (Alcman *Partheneia* 1 and Theocr. *Id*. 18).
297 Fox 1985, 186.
298 Meek 1956, 97-8; Pope 1977, 37-40.
299 Alter and Kermode 1987, 4.

am convinced by Alter's argument that there can be no certainty about the existence of meter in biblical poetry, and so I will focus instead on the figurative language and imagery.

There is no continuous narrative in *SoS*. Frequent jumps in time and space give the song a dreamlike, disconnected feeling. This has led some to break the poem up into a number of smaller poems[300] and others to argue that it is a dream or at least that it has dreamlike qualities.[301] I agree that *SoS* is dreamlike without being an actual dream. Throughout my discussion of *SoS*, I will refer to the disjointed passages that create this effect and the way that they suggest the power of desire. *SoS* is unique among ancient *erotobucolic* in that it is not a continuous narrative. However, it uses these breaks in continuity to reveal the power of desire, a common *erotobucolic* theme.

Traditional Jewish interpretation of *SoS* reads the poem as an allegory of the relationship between God, the male beloved, and Israel, his bride. Early Christian interpretation similarly understood the poem as an allegory, interpreting the man as Christ and the woman as the Christian church.[302] The length of the tradition placing *SoS* among sacred scriptures, and the numerous parallels to Mesopotamian texts about sacred marriages support an allegorical reading.[303] On the other hand, there are no overt references to religion or divinity in *SoS*. Therefore, the poem can also be read literally as a secular story about two young lovers, a reading that has become popular with modern critics.[304]

---

300 See the first footnote of this chapter for an overview of possibilities for dealing with this disjunction.
301 Von Hug 1813, was the first to argue that *SoS* was a dream and, more recently Freehoff 1949 argued for this theory. Many scholars, while not arguing that *SoS* is a dream, accept that it has dreamlike qualities or contains dream sequences (e.g., Fox 1985; Tanner 1997; Exum 2005, 122-6 talks about these dreamlike changes as the result of the woman "conjuring" her beloved).
302 Pope 1977, 89-90. It is not in the purview of this project to discuss previous religious allegorical interpretations in detail; for this, see Pope 1977, *passim*. Instead, I will make a general argument that the text invites allegorical interpretation.
303 For a history of scholarship on *SoS* and sacred marriage texts see Nissinen 2008. I will expand on the relationship between these texts and *Song of Songs* in the concluding chapter.
304 Segal 1962; Alter 1985.

I argue that the text invites both readings, a layering of meaning common in the *erotobucolic* mode. A reader may choose to read the text allegorically, literally, or to hold both meanings in mind. As I have shown in previous chapters, the *Idylls* too can be read as extended metaphors, literal stories, or both. Furthermore, both works contain plant and animal imagery, themes of divinity, hints of danger, and lovers who speak about yearning. I have found these features in numerous Mediterranean works that were previously difficult to categorize. Based on these features, I argue that these works belong to the same genre, which I have named the *erotobucolic*.

A Note on Metaphor in *Song of Songs*

Black, an expert on *SoS*, compares the effect of *SoS* on a reader to the effect of a provocative lover. She points out the personal connection that even many, including scholars feel to *SoS* and the tendency to be swept away by its beauty (305-6).[305] As with a coy lover who teases but does not reveal herself, the metaphors of the text provoke reactions almost as numerous and varied as the readers. Black herself argues that, despite her affection for the text, not all of the imagery is beautiful and in fact the descriptions of the bodies are often ridiculous if not grotesque.[306] On the other end of the spectrum, Segal claims as part of an argument about the origin of *SoS* that it "cannot" have been intended for public performance because some passages are "of too personal and intimate a nature to have been originally composed for declamation in public. These are the natural outpourings of love from a poets heart, and not the artificial lucubrations of a bard for public entertainment."[307] Fox is representative of a middle path, taking

305 Black 2000. She was inspired in this article by the insights on love and reading found in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* and *Pleasure of the Text* by Barthes (she sites the 1973 French edition of *Le Plaisir du texte* as well as English editions of each text from 1990 translated by Richard Howard and Richard Miller respectively). She effectively applies ideas of the text as lover and the duplicities of bodies and voices to *SoS*.
306 Black 2000 and 2009.
307 Segal 1962, 489.

most of the metaphors as complimentary but at times admitting the possibility of reading the metaphors in uncomplimentary ways. Nevertheless, he argues against the literalistic interpretations that Black labels grotesque, in particular the comparison of the woman's belly to a heap of wheat (7:3), which he argues does not imply corpulence.[308]

These differences in approach are partly due to the provocative nature of the text and partly due to changes in beauty ideals and literary conventions over time. One of Black's primary arguments for reading bodies in *SoS* as grotesque is that the longer groups of metaphors (often known as *auṣaf*, singular *waṣf*, because of their similarity to Arabic love poetry)[309] combine plant, animal, and material images to describe the same body. This use of different types of metaphors in describing a single subject, however, is too common a feature of ancient poetic descriptions of lovers to be taken as grotesque.[310] I understand the urge to read imagery in *SoS* almost literally, particularly because of the blurred lines between metaphor and reality in the poem. Nevertheless, because of the strong laudatory tendency of love poetry, I am inclined to take any metaphor as complimentary that can be read that way. There have likely always been some readers who read against the grain of the text and saw the possibility of reading the metaphors grotesquely, but most readers will assume that the metaphors are complimentary since this is a love song.

Even so, I do not agree with Segal that the metaphors of *SoS* must be true and private declarations of love because they are complimentary and realistic. Many poets capture the experience of love and portray it as personal experience, perhaps drawing from their own lives

308 Fox 1985, 159; Brenner 1997, 46-7 singles out the same metaphor with the addition of the turbulent eyes at 5:5 as humorous and says that they "can hardly constitute a beauty ideal, although the desire is apparent in the description and explicitly stated at its end." Fox uses Egyptian art as evidence that slender women were considered attractive, but rules out fertility figurines as evidence of an alternate beauty ideal (1985).
309 Soulen 1967, 183.
310 See Hopkins 2007 for a discussion of poems that contain extended descriptions similar to those in *SoS*.

but often demonstrably from reading earlier love poetry.[311] In some cases there is internal evidence that they intended their work for public performance (i.e., Sappho, Alcman, Anacreon)[312] or to be published and read (i.e., Callimachus, Catullus, Propertius).[313] The author of *SoS* follows a similar tradition (more likely drawn from Sumeria and Egypt than from Greece directly), perhaps drawing on experience, but certainly also aware of and referring to previous love songs.

As for Fox's criticism of reading metaphors in ways that are not complimentary, I agree with his point that metaphors and similes require readers to decide in which ways the vehicle is similar to the tenor. Take 4:1 (repeated with minor variation at 6:5) as an example:

שַׂעְרֵךְ כְּעֵדֶר הָעִזִּים שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מֵהַר גִּלְעָד׃

Your hair is like a flock of goats that is rushing down Mount Gilead.

The image is striking and perhaps confusing at first, but it is possible to think of many ways that hair might be compared to a flock of goats. Biblical scholars have made many comparisons, for instance, Munro suggests that they are like her "vivacious curls" and Brenner takes this to mean that she has "long, curly or wavy dark hair." [314] However, hair is clearly not like goats on a mountainside in every way. Soulen, another biblical scholar, points out that goats on a mountainside would likely appear patchy and Black adds that her hair can't be both the color of goats and the color of purple thread (7:6).[315] As Leidl points out in a general discussion of metaphor, ". . . metaphor entails a certain risk in its application. Since the structural relations

311 Allusions or intertextual references to earlier poetry in many authors prove that other poetry has affected their work. For examples and a well written discussion see Hinds 1998. The ability of male poets like Theocritus and Ovid to realistically portray the feelings of female lovers (*Idyll* 2, *Heroides*) is also a warning against taking the use of the first person in any poem as firm evidence that the author is narrating personal experience.
312 Robbins 2012; Calame 2012.
313 Lehnus 2012; Wiseman 2012; and Neumeister 2012.
314 Munro 1995, 88; Brenner 1997, 46.
315 Soulen 1967, 185; Black 2000, 311.

between the source- [tenor] and target- [vehicle] domain associated can never be entirely determined, a certain ambiguity can arise which may give opportunity for creative development as well as polemical distortion."[316] Because of this ambiguity, I doubt that it is possible to create a simile or metaphor that, when taken literally, has no grotesque aspects.

In any metaphor a reader might consider a variety of possible interpretations for the comparison. Therefore modern readers encounter more problems reading ancient metaphors, since they can not know which elements an ancient audience would have thought were appropriate and attractive. As Brenner has shown, there is very little biblical evidence outside of *SoS* to provide a concrete picture of what was considered beautiful for a woman in ancient Jewish society.[317] She discusses Sarah who is called beautiful by Abraham and whose beauty is confirmed by the actions of the pharaohs, and yet no description is given of her physical appearance (Genesis 12:11-20). She also mentions other beautiful biblical figures (male and female), such as Tamar (2 Sam 13:1), Rebekah (Genesis 26:7), David (1 Samuel 16.12, 17.42), Joseph (Genesis 39.6), Esther (Esther 2.7). These characters are not described physically; instead the Hebrew Bible simply states that they are beautiful and tells stories that illustrate the effect of their beauty on others. Furthermore, evidence from Greece shows that ideals and norms of beauty vary by time and culture. For instance the Aphrodite of Knidos, while not what I would call corpulent , is certainly chubbier than the beauty icons of 21st century America and yet there is literary evidence suggesting that ancient Greek men considered her beautiful.[318] Therefore, although modern American standards of beauty tend to favor slender women with smaller

316 Leidl 2003, 47. See also Cohen 2008, 1-11 for a thorough discussion of this aspect of metaphor.
317 Brenner 1997, 45-9; this section includes a brief synopsis of Hebrew terms for beauty.
318 According to Athenaeus (13.590f-91a) the famous courtesan Phryne posed for the statue.

noses,[319] without further evidence it is impossible to determine exactly what ancient Jewish society found appealing in hair like goats, a belly like wheat, or a nose like a tower.

Each of the images in the *SoS* has been interpreted in various ways by many scholars. I will do my best to mention the breadth of possibilities suggested. While I believe that some interpretations would come to mind for more readers and I will make arguments for these and for some fresh interpretations, I argue that one of the most important and appealing qualities of *erotobucolic* literature is that it overtly engages readers in a game of looking for multiple interpretations. Some readers will push the metaphors to the extreme literal possibilities, others will be satisfied with a more abstract interpretation, some will read the poem as allegory, and still others will see multiple possibilities for any given metaphor. This has been true of both ancient and modern readers, and recent work in cognitive linguistic theory has shown that metaphors are inherently polysemic.[320] Since the *erotobucolic* genre makes heavy use of metaphor and allegory, this polysemy is everywhere. That is to say that many other genres contain metaphors, but *erotobucolic* poems contain metaphors within metaphors.

Love Blossoms

As stated above, one of the elements that makes *SoS* stand out as poetry, despite the lack of markers such as meter or rhyme that are familiar from Greek, Roman, and English poetry, is the concentration of metaphors; *SoS* is remarkable among biblical texts for having a concentration of innovative similes and metaphors.[321] As is typical of the *erotobucolic* genre, images drawn from nature predominate in descriptions of the lovers. These metaphors, as Alter

319 There are notable exceptions to this rule, such as Barbara Streisand, Sarah-Jessica Parker, and Uma Thurman. I do not mean to say that these women have abnormally large noses, only that they are larger than those of most other contemporary actresses and models.
320 Freeman 2000; Bartsch 2009.
321 Alter 1984, 193 - in this respect, it is paralleled only by Job.

notes, are treated differently from others in the Bible in that the lines between the tenor and the vehicle blur, so that it is often hard to tell where the metaphor ends and poem returns to the literal realm.[322] This overlap between imagery and reality is an essential feature of *erotobucolic* literature, where nature and love are always standing in for one another, alternating between tenor and vehicle until the demarcation between lovers and landscape is obscured.

Both lovers in *SoS* are compared to flowers, trees, natural areas, spices, and other edible plant products. Descriptions of both lovers with the same kinds of images suggest their mutual desire and their equality within the realm of love. As Exum shows, however, this equality does not extend to other areas of society; for instance, the woman endangers herself by roaming the city at night, while the man has greater freedom of movement.[323] The author creates a vivid image of the lovers and their experiences by using metaphors that evoke many senses for the reader, a literary technique known as synaesthesia.[324] The look, sound, taste, smell and feel of love are revealed through these images drawn from nature, revealing the intricate connections between erotic love and the natural world.

Flowers appear both in the idyllic landscape of *SoS* and in the lovers' descriptions of one another. According to Munro, flowers in *SoS* are used to describe the delicacy and beauty of the lovers.[325] I would add that flowers call attention to the fragility and beauty of the love relationship itself, which will either fall apart because of society's disapproval or lose its intensity when (if)

322 Alter 1984, 192-203. Richards (1965, originally published in 1936) was the first to use the terms tenor and vehicle to describe different aspects of metaphor.
323 Exum 2005, 25-8.
324 I am using the term synaesthesia not in its medical or most common literary critical sense that one sense is experienced or described as another, but going back to the greek syn 'together' and aesthesia 'senses', I use the term to mean a description that brings together many different sensory experiences in order to create a more realistic setting. For a similar use of the term see Rosenmeyer 2003, 113.
325 Munro 1995, 86.

the lovers get married and remain together.[326] Despite the element of fragility in images of flowers. In fact, the first flower image in *SoS* describes the man (1:14):

אֶשְׁכֹּל הַכֹּפֶר דּוֹדִי לִי בְּכַרְמֵי עֵין גֶּדִי

To me my love is a cluster of henna in the vineyards of Ein-Gedi.

Here the man is a flowering plant, protected within the vineyards, which are associated here and elsewhere with the body of the woman.[327] Ein-Gedi, a spring near the western shore of the Dead Sea, calls to mind a fertile oasis amidst the desert, suggesting that the vineyards are both fertile and rare. The woman's body becomes a *locus amoenus*, providing shelter for the beautiful, but delicate (i.e., mortal) man.[328] Though beauty and delicacy are likely connotations of the henna metaphor, it may carry other meanings as well. For instance, henna is known for having a pleasing fragrance so that his presence would bring both visual and olfactory pleasure to the woman.

As the poem continues, the connotations of flowers expand. The woman compares herself to a rose or lily, and the man agrees, adding that her flower-like qualities cause her to stand out among her companions (2:1-2):

אֲנִי חֲבַצֶּלֶת הַשָּׁרוֹן שׁוֹשַׁנַּת הָעֲמָקִים׃
כְּשׁוֹשַׁנָּה בֵּין הַחוֹחִים כֵּן רַעְיָתִי בֵּין הַבָּנוֹת׃

W: I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys
M: Like a lily among thorns, so is my companion among the daughters [of Jerusalem]

The woman uses these flower metaphors, but leaves the interpretation open. She could be

326 In real life, young people who fall in love for the first time tend to view their beloved as ideal and their love as unique. Adults learn through practical responsibilities and social interaction that the world is not ideal and their experience of love is not completely unique or definitely permanent (Fischer 1987). Thus, even if a couple stays together, their infatuation with one another is likely to wax and wane at various times throughout their relationship. In literature, love stories often end either with the marriage or death of the young couple and so do not deal with the post-infatuation stage of the relationship.

327 See discussion of vineyards below.

328 Pope 1977, Fox1985 and many others have noted the association of the woman's body and the vineyards of Ein-Gedi. Many men in Greek and Roman literature are also associated with flowers, but only at the moment of their death as their ultimately fragile, mortal nature becomes apparent (e.g., Ajax, Adonis, Hyacinthus, Narcissus).

referring to her delicacy, beauty, fragrance, rarity, color, or any number of possible similarities a woman might share with a flower. The man also leaves numerous possibilities open as lilies differ from thorns in many ways. He adds to the complexity of the metaphor by pointing out that the way(s) in which she is like a flower cause her to stand out from other young women. Since the poet never clarifies the similarity intended to be expressed by the metaphor, the overlap between the woman and the flowers is sustained. The reader is allowed to imagine all of the ways in which she resembles a flower until the images of flower and woman become superimposed on one another.[329] In fact, the image of the flower may dominate, for the ancient readers and listeners presumably knew exactly what a rose of Sharon or a lily of the valley looked like, but the woman's appearance is only described through metaphor, leaving it vague and mysterious.

Not long after describing herself as a lily, the woman describes her beloved thus (2:16, repeated at 6:3):

דּוֹדִי לִי֙ וַאֲנִ֣י לֹ֔ו הָרֹעֶ֖ה בַּשֹּׁושַׁנִּֽים׃

My beloved is mine and I am his, [he] who feeds among the lilies.

Pope points out that the verb here, "to feed" or "to pasture" (רעה) is ambiguous because it can be used either for eating or causing another to eat. Furthermore, he notes, it is unclear whether the lilies are being eaten or if they provide a description of the area in which he or his animals eat.[330] Coming after the convergence of woman and lily, this has often been read as sexually suggestive.[331] I agree that there is a scarcely veiled sexual reference here, but again the metaphor

329 In Greek myth, as the stories come to us through Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, beloveds who die frequently become flowers (e.g., Narcissus 3.474-510, Hyacinthus 10.162-219, Adonis 10.708-39). The transformation of those known primarily for their involvement in a love relationship suggests that the analogy between lovers and flowers was strong in ancient Greek literature as well. An Egyptian lyric known as the *Flower Song* (P. Harris 500, Group C: Nos. 17-9) also closely associates flowers and lovers.

330 Pope 1977, 405-6.

331 Pope 1977, 406-7 reviews previous interpretations, discusses the multiple meanings of the verb, and rightly concludes that a strong case can be made for either sexual or allegorical interpretations. He remarks, "in the final analysis, the choice is determined by predilection." Bringing in comparative material, he adds that in Sanskrit

is open to multiple interpretations - not all of them physical. Feeding on lilies could suggest the sweetness of words, as both lovers speak beautiful poetry. In Greek legends of poets, most notably Comatas, poets often eat sweet things like honey or nectar.[332] In the Hebrew Bible too, pleasant words are elsewhere associated with honey and sweetness (Proverbs 16:24). Since the flowers are external to the man and nourish him, they may be the poetic words of the woman that feed his love for her. It may also be that feeding on flowers has caused the man to give sweet kisses (as many have noted, his lips too are compared to lilies at 5:3)[333] or that he tastes the flowery kisses of the woman. Both the man and the woman refer to the pleasure of each other's kisses in other metaphors that I will discuss later in this section.

Feeding among lilies appears again in a different context at 4:5:

שְׁנֵי שָׁדַיִךְ כִּשְׁנֵי עֳפָרִים תְּאוֹמֵי צְבִיָּה הָרוֹעִים בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים׃

Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, feeders among the lilies.

The image of breasts as gazelles has caused many interpretive problems, and scholars have devised a variety of readings (see below). The lilies at the end of the line are so distant syntactically from the breast that they may not be intended as part of the metaphor. Instead, as Fox implies, the author may have decided to expand the description of the gazelles beyond their relation to the woman.[334] I will save my discussion of the various arguments about gazelles for

---

literature the lotus is an attribute of the goddess of fertility and that eating lotus is used metaphorically of cunnilingus. Fox 1985, 115 and Exum 2005, 130-1 are examples of scholars who take the verb transitively and argue for interpreting this passage as a reference to kissing or lovemaking. Both Munro 1995, 97-8 and Landy 1983, 73-92 discuss some of the possibilities suggested by the imagery. Black 2009, 145 n.40 points out that, because similar language of gazelles feeding on lilies is used to describe the woman's breasts at 4:5, the man, the breast, and feeding merge together in a strange analogy.

332 See the discussion of this trope as it relates to Theocritus in Chapter 2.

333 E. g. Pope 1977, Fox 1985, and Exum 2005.

334 Homeric similes frequently include of details that do (or may) not contribute to the comparison (see Shorey 1922 for a thorough discussion). Fox 1985, 131 offers five interpretations for this line, two of which would fit with the idea that the lilies are an extension of the metaphor not meant to directly impact the impression of the woman's breasts, but rather intended to highlight the delicacy of the gazelles themselves. Pope 1977, 470 argues that the image of breasts feeding on lilies does not make sense and that the end of the line was mistakenly added here because of the frequency with which the man as gazelle feeds on lilies. This is possible, but the repetition of partial lines with variation is a common feature of *SoS* and many of the other metaphors do not make immediate sense, so I

the section on animal imagery. If the lilies in this line are taken as part of the metaphor for the woman's breasts, then they are closely associated, but not necessarily synonymous with the female body. They could suggest the the flower-like nature of the rest of the woman's body, surrounding her breasts. Since her breasts feed on or among the lilies, just as the line discussed above may suggest a sweet voice, this line may suggest that her breasts taste sweet. It is also possible to imagine that the woman is lying in a field of lilies or that the lilies are the man's lips (Cf. 5:3) and the terminology of feeding has been transferred from the man to the woman.[335] I prefer the reading that the breast gazelles are "feeding on" the lily lips as the vehicle once again dominates the tenor, causing a metaphorical reversal of the "real" action. This reading has the further benefit of entangling the lovers bodies not only with nature but even with one another, perhaps signifying their erotic entanglement. In any case, the landscape, the female body, and the metaphor are difficult to untangle.

In chapter 5, a mix of floral and spice imagery is again used of the male body (5:13):

לְחָיָו֙ כַּֽעֲרוּגַ֣ת הַבֹּ֔שֶׂם מִגְדְּלוֹת֙ מֶ֣רְקָחִ֔ים שִׂפְתוֹתָ֖יו שׁוֹשַׁנִּ֑ים נֹטְפ֖וֹת מֹ֥ור עֹבֵֽר׃

His cheeks are like terraces of balsam, beds of fragrant herbs, his lips are lilies dripping liquid myrrh.

The images call to mind not only the smells and sights that the woman associates with her lover, but also the taste as she describes myrrh dripping from his lips - sweet kisses or sweet words.[336] This creates synaesthesia for the readers, helping them to imagine the vivid sights, smells, and tastes in the lovers' world. Despite their vividness, however, the sensations remain jumbled. The man's lily lips drip myrrh, not a part of the flower but the product of a tree. Despite its unexpected presence in a lily, myrrh is appropriate to the context of love. In Greek legend, the

do not find the evidence against this half-line strong enough to remove it.

335 Fox 1985, 131 may be getting at this when he says, "The phrase. . . gains special erotic significance when later on she compares her beloved's lips to lilies."

336 Fox 1985, 137 in his note on 4:11 notes the possibility that sweetness associated with the mouth might refer to speech as well as kisses.

myrrh tree is particularly associated with love. Myrrha had fallen in love with her own father and was turned into a tree; that tree, the first myrrh tree, gave birth to Adonis, the beloved of Aphrodite.[337] Just as in the case of the woman at 2:1-2 above, the plants are easier to imagine than the man. The metaphor gives a sense of the pleasure that she takes in his company but provides only a vague image of his appearance.

In addition to the floral images that show the delicacy, beauty, and fragility of love in bloom, *SoS* contains a few significant depictions of the lovers as trees. Like the descriptions of flowers, these may suggest the fertility and vitality of love. Unlike the floral images, the trees might also symbolize the strength and longevity of love as experienced by the lovers of *SoS*. As with other natural imagery in *SoS*, trees are an important part of the landscape described within the poem. For instance, trees and greenery figure prominently in the description of the lovers' "bedroom" (1:16-7):

הִנְךָ יָפָה דוֹדִי אַף נָעִים אַף־עַרְשֵׂנוּ רַעֲנָנָה׃
קֹרוֹת בָּתֵּינוּ אֲרָזִים רַחִיטֵנוּ בְּרוֹתִים׃

Behold, you are handsome[338] my beloved, pleasant indeed; moreover our bed is verdant
The beams of our house are cedars and our rafters are cypresses.

The outdoor bower of the lovers becomes a chamber in a luxurious palace. Additionally, the lovers visit orchards or vineyards (2:15; 6.11; 7.13-4). Through the persistent juxtaposition of natural metaphors such as trees for the lovers and the same types of objects in the verdant landscape that surrounds them, the lovers become inseparable from nature.

337 See Detienne 1977, 60-71 for more on significance of myrrh and the various stories of Myrrha/Smyrna the mother of Adonis. The story of Myrrha is most famously recorded in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (10.298-502). The eastern origin of Adonis is apparent in his name, which derives from the semitic אדני, meaning lord. Therefore the connection of the myrrh tree to the consort of the love goddess may have originated in the ancient Mesopotamian as well. There is, however, no evidence for the story of Myrrha outside of Greco-Roman literature. Myrrh is mentioned frequently in *SoS* and Egyptian love songs, so, in any case, it has erotic connotations in those cultures.

338 The same word (יפה) meaning beautiful, handsome, or pretty is used of both lovers in *SoS*. I tend to translate it as 'beautiful' for the woman and 'handsome' for the man because it appears to have a stronger connotation than 'attractive' or even 'good looking' but there are not many words for attractiveness that can be used of both genders in the English language without some change in valence.

This overlap between erotic partners and fruitful landscape is foregrounded in the woman's comparison of her lover to an apple tree (2:3):

כְּתַפּוּחַ בַּעֲצֵי הַיַּעַר כֵּן דוֹדִי בֵּין הַבָּנִים בְּצִלּוֹ חִמַּדְתִּי וְיָשַׁבְתִּי וּפִרְיוֹ מָתוֹק לְחִכִּי׃

For my beloved among the youths is like an apple among the trees of the forest; I take pleasure and sit in his shade and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

Many scholars have already noted the sexual connotations of this metaphor.[339] Again the equality and similarity of male and female in *SoS* is highlighted since the fertility of the male is described in terms of his ability to bear fruit (an image more frequently associated with women).[340] The line between landscape and metaphor becomes blurred in this verse. At first the man is only described as like a tree, but suddenly the woman is sitting in his shade as though there were a 'real' tree. The changeability of space in *SoS* is related to the dreamlike quality that I will discuss in more detail below. Though it is possible that the author has jumped from describing the man to describing the landscape, if taken as an extension of the metaphor, the shade could symbolize the protection and pleasure that the man provides for the woman. Nevertheless, the metaphoric landscape takes on aspects of a 'real' landscape as the woman describes her position within the metaphorical space.[341]

The woman describes her beloved as a tree again but this time with more emphasis on his physicality (5:15):

שׁוֹקָיו עַמּוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מְיֻסָּדִים עַל־אַדְנֵי־פָז מַרְאֵהוּ כַּלְּבָנוֹן בָּחוּר כָּאֲרָזִים׃

His legs are columns of marble set on foundations of pure gold; his appearance is like Lebanon, preferred, like the cedars.

339 Pope 1977, 371-4 makes comparisons to Sumerian sacred marriage poems and discusses both erotic and divine interpretations of the apple (possibly apricot) tree. Fox 1985, 107-8 points out the similarity between the protection offered by the tree in this metaphor and the protection of the woman's breasts at 1:13.
340 This connection between plant reproduction and sexual fertility is prominent in sacred marriage literature (Nissinen 2008) and in Greek agricultural metaphors for sex (DuBois 1991). Fox 1985, 108 also points out that this image balances the image of the woman as protector in 1:13.
341 See Chapter 2 for a similar poem in Theocritus and the Conclusion for a discussion of these and other poems with similar imagery.

The woman clarifies that she has likened the man to Lebanon because of his resemblance to the cedars there.[342] The term "preferred" (בחר) implies that others share her opinion; they would prefer or choose him from the crowd just as they would choose the best (tallest, strongest) cedars, i.e., those from Lebanon. Taken together, the entire line suggests the strength, size, and grandeur of the man. The effect of viewing him can only be compared to viewing a large building, magnificent vista, or enormous tree. It is not surprising that many see the man in this poem as an allegory for God.[343] Whether or not this meaning was intended by the author, the frequent use of metaphor for description encourages the reader to keep an open mind about the implications of the text. The devotion and awe that the woman feels in the presence of her lover (and his similar feelings in her presence) are analogous to the piety of a worshipper - an analogy that I will discuss in more detail below.

Just as flowers symbolized both lovers, the man makes his own comparison of the woman to a tree (7:9):

אָמַ֣רְתִּי׀ אֶֽעֱלֶ֣ה בְתָמָ֗ר אֹֽחֲזָ֥ה בְסַנְסִנָּ֑יו וְיִהְי֤וּ־נָא֙ שָׁדַ֣יִךְ כְּאֶשְׁכְּלֹ֣ות הַגֶּ֔פֶן וְרֵ֥יחַ אַפֵּ֖ךְ כַּתַּפּוּחִֽים׃

I said "I will climb the palm tree, and I will grasp the date-clusters; may your breasts be like clusters of the vine and may the scent of your breath be like apples."

This metaphor is very similar to the comparison of the man to an apple tree above; the man interacts with the tree of the metaphor as though it were a physical space. In this instance the language leaves open the possibility that there is a real date palm that the man plans to climb and that this activity reminds him of the woman's body. The second half of the verse focuses on the

342 Lebanon is mentioned frequently in *SoS* (e.g., 3:9, 4:8-15, 7:5). Segal 1962 uses the mention of various geographical references in *SoS* to support his argument that the poem was composed in the time of Solomon (when international trade was flourishing).

343 Pope 1977, 547-8 discusses the statue-like presentation of the lover in this *wasf* and argues that this description suggests that the lover is Baal, the consort of Ishtar. He notes that Jewish and Christian interpreters have related the description to the splendor of the temple and the word of God. I do not think that the description of the beloved is specific enough to suggest a particular divinity, but it is certainly reminiscent of the lavish statues of divinities used in a variety of Mediterranean religions. I will discuss the implications of this similarity in greater detail below.

fertility of the woman by bringing in the image of grape-clusters and the fragrance of apples. Nature blooms and produces fruit, inspiring people to love. Nevertheless, in the *erotobucolic* genre the fertility of people is usually only implied by analogy with nature. The focus is not on human reproduction, but on the relatively consequence-free enjoyment of love within a fertile natural setting.[344]

Sometimes rather than a comparison to a single plant, one of the lovers (usually the woman) is compared to a larger, cultivated area of plants such as a vineyard, orchard, or garden. These similes highlight the variety of pleasures that each lover finds in the other. At times the lovers also speak of the vineyards in the landscape (2:15):

אֶחֱזוּ־לָנוּ שֻׁועָלִים שֻׁועָלִים קְטַנִּים מְחַבְּלִים כְּרָמִים וּכְרָמֵינוּ סְמָדַר׃

Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that are destroying the vineyards; for our vineyards are blooming.

Similarly, the lovers plan to visit their vineyards together (7:13-4):

נַשְׁכִּימָה לַכְּרָמִים נִרְאֶה אִם פָּרְחָה הַגֶּפֶן פִּתַּח הַסְּמָדַר הֵנֵצוּ הָרִמֹּונִים שָׁם אֶתֵּן אֶת־דֹּדַי לָךְ׃
הַדּוּדָאִים נָתְנוּ־רֵיחַ וְעַל־פְּתָחֵינוּ כָּל־מְגָדִים חֲדָשִׁים גַּם־יְשָׁנִים דּוֹדִי צָפַנְתִּי לָךְ׃

Let us go early to the vineyards and see whether the vines flourish, the grape-blossoms have opened, and the pomegranates have put forth buds; there I will give my love to you.
The mandrakes have given off their fragrance and over our doors are all preferred fruits, new and also old, my beloved, I have saved for you.

Vineyards in these sections, when taken literally, suggest that the lovers are surrounded by the same plant life that they use to describe one another. Still, a further layer of metaphorical interpretation remains available; the vineyards may be read as the bodies of the lovers that need to be protected from 'predators.' Each takes delight in the fragrances and contours of the other's

344 Brenner 1997, 87-9 points out that many of the plants mentioned in *SoS* (pomegranates, honey, dates, fir tree products, wine, oil, myrrh, spikenard, and cinnamon) are known to have been used as contraceptives and abortifacients in the ancient world. She argues that the plants may be included in part as a reminder that birth control is readily available in the garden and any sexual interaction will not lead to pregnancy. I find this an attractive suggestion, and it is possible that some ancient audiences of *SoS* would have thought about this while reading the poem. However, since these plants are also sweet, fragrant, luxurious, and/or sensual, it is likely that most ancient readers did not consider their use in birth control.

body; the additional fruits and plants mentioned as part of the vineyard might suggest the many parts of the body.[345]

Near the beginning of the poem, the woman overtly compares her body to a vineyard as she complains that her brothers treat her poorly (1:5-6):

שְׁחוֹרָה אֲנִי֙ וְנָאוָ֔ה בְּנ֖וֹת יְרוּשָׁלָ֑͏ִם כְּאָהֳלֵ֣י קֵדָ֔ר כִּירִיעֹ֖ות שְׁלֹמֹֽה׃
אַל־תִּרְאֻ֨נִי֙ שֶׁאֲנִ֣י שְׁחַרְחֹ֔רֶת שֶׁשְּׁזָפַ֖תְנִי הַשָּׁ֑מֶשׁ בְּנֵ֤י אִמִּי֙ נִחֲרוּ־בִ֣י שָׂמֻ֔נִי נֹטֵרָ֖ה אֶת־הַכְּרָמִ֑ים כַּרְמִ֥י שֶׁלִּ֖י לֹ֥א נָטָֽרְתִּי׃

I am dusky but I am lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar,[346] like the tent-curtains of Solomon. Do not stare at me - because I am swarthy,[347] for the sun burned me; my mother's sons were raging at me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; my vineyard I have not kept.

Opinions vary on the translation of 1:5 because the connective ו in Hebrew can mean either "and" or "but."[348] Therefore, the woman could either be saying that she is dark and (as everyone knows) that is lovely, or that she is dark but (even though you would not expect it) she is lovely. I have chosen to take it as "but" because the woman continues to explain her beauty by way of other things that are both dark and beautiful. In a poem with so many metaphors, this would not be enough reason to take her declaration as an apology on its own, but the following line explaining how she came to be dark reads like an excuse rather than a boast.[349] If she were boastful of her darkness, then she would be more likely to invite staring and unlikely to complain that she has not been able to tend her "vineyard." The woman realizes that her blackness is beautiful and her lover does as well, but she is aware that others may shun her for her blackness and so she explains it to them.

The language of 1:6 is rich in meaning. The verb used for the sun (שזף) means not only

345 I will discuss the foxes and their connection to danger in the idyllic landscape later in this chapter.
346 This is the name of a son of Ishmael that was later applied to his descendants. The root of his name, קדר, is also used to form words associated with darkness and mourning (Pope 1977).
347 For a good parallel to the dark and/but beautiful theme, see Theocritus *Idyll* 10.
348 Pope 1977, 307-321 discusses the history of this verse's interpretation in detail and discusses the worship of black goddesses from Isis to black depictions of the Virgin Mary.
349 Fox 1985, 101 also reads these verses as a complaint. He points out that this is the darkness of sunburn and not the darkness of race; the woman is worried that others will think that she is of low social status because she has worked in the sun, not that they would find people who are racially black unattractive.

that she was burned by the sun, but that the sun was looking upon her.[350] In stories from Greece and Rome, the sun is able to see all things and habitually falls in love with mortal men and women.[351] The woman could be suggesting that her original beauty drew the attention of the sun, but has now been marred in some part because of his attention.[352] Thus she begs people not to look not only because her beauty is marred but also because she fears that their attention, too, will spoil her beauty.[353] The verb used of her brother's anger (חרר) can mean both being angry and scorching,[354] thus continuing the theme of the sun's heat and the idea that attention from others (i.e., anyone besides lover) is damaging. Within one line the woman talks about the 'real' vineyards of her brothers that she has been forced to tend and her own vineyard, likely a metaphor for her body that she has been too busy to care for or her sexual needs that have gone unfulfilled.[355]

---

350 Cf. Fox 1985, 102.

351 Helios, later identified with Apollo, had an affair with a human woman that lead to the birth of Phaethon (Ovid *Met*. 1.747-64). The sun's ability to see all things is important in the story of the abduction of Persephone (*Hom. Hymn Dem.)* and in Hephaestus' discovery of the affair between Aphrodite and Ares (*Od*. 8.267-366). Though these are not stories of the sun in love, they do associate his ability to see all with spying on lovers. Another relevant story is that of Selene who fell in love with Endymion while looking down on him from the sky. It is known from a scholion on Apollonius' *Argonautica* (4.57) that Sappho had a poem on the love of Selene and Endymion, but the poem itself does not survive. There are no extant stories of Shamash, the sun god of Sumerian mythology, falling in love with mortals. However, his special favor for Gilgamesh in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* may suggest either an erotic infatuation or an ancestral connection.

352 In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Apollo is particularly unlucky in love and his attentions tend to be disastrous for the women as well (e.g., Daphne, Coronis, Hyacinthus). Zeus' destruction of Danae may also be related, though he is not a sun god, he did first appear to her as a golden ray of light and later destroyed her when he appeared to her as lightning.

353 At 1:7 the woman was afraid to go veiled among the shepherds, perhaps because this would draw their attention and make them think that she was a prostitute. Pope 1977, 330-1 makes a convincing argument for reading 1:7 as a reference to the veiling of a prostitute based on the story of Tamar (Genesis 38:14). At first this seems like an unusual interpretation, since veiling is usually considered an act of modesty (i.e., covering oneself and averting attention). However, as Pope points out, it can also be an act of disguise. Furthermore, the story of Tamar shows that prostitutes both veil themselves and sit at the wayside (i.e., go out into a public, male dominated area). The woman in the story would also be going veiled into a public, male dominated area. These circumstances and the woman's concern about visiting her lover in this way suggest that she is concerned, if not about being taken for a prostitute, then at least about committing an immodest act. Though modern American audiences tend to think of veils as a sign of modesty, biblical references to women covering their faces with veils seem to be erotic; it is associated with weddings at Genesis 24:65 and 29:23 and with prostitution or shameful worldliness at Ruth 3:15 and Isaiah 3:16-23. See Exum 2005, 161 for a discussion of modesty and veiling in regard to *SoS* 5:12.

354 Cf. Fox 1985, 102.

355 Pope 1977, 323-7 takes the references to tending vineyards as explicitly sexual and compares them to agricultural metaphors for sex from other Mediterranean poems. I am more inclined, along with Fox, to take the

Again, near the end of *SoS*, one of the lovers speaks of his/her vineyard and compares it to the vineyards of Solomon (8:11-2):

כֶּרֶם הָיָה לִשְׁלֹמֹה בְּבַעַל הָמוֹן נָתַן אֶת־הַכֶּרֶם לַנֹּטְרִים אִישׁ יָבֵא בְּפִרְיוֹ אֶלֶף כָּסֶף׃
כַּרְמִי שֶׁלִּי לְפָנָי הָאֶלֶף לְךָ שְׁלֹמֹה וּמָאתַיִם לְנֹטְרִים אֶת־פִּרְיוֹ׃

Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-hamon, he entrusted the vineyard to keepers; each man brought [him(self)] a thousand silver for the fruit.
My vineyard, which is mine, is before me; the thousand is for you, Solomon, and two hundred for the keepers of its fruit.

I have attempted to capture the ambiguity of the original Hebrew in my translation. For instance, it is unclear to whom the keepers are bringing the thousand pieces of silver in 8:11 and at 8:12, whether it is Solomon or the keepers themselves is controversial and, perhaps, impossible to answer definitively. Furthermore, most have taken the thousand in 8:12 as a reference to the silver in 8:11, but it could also be a thousand that is earned from the lover's vineyard and that he or she will give to Solomon. The keepers mentioned at the end of 8:12 could be guarding either vineyard; the lover's since his or her vineyard was mentioned explicitly in the same line or possibly Solomon's because his name later in the verse could signal that the speaker is now referring to his vineyard again.[356] The strong emphasis on the lover's sole possession of the vineyard at the beginning of verse 8:12 implies a contrast with the previous verse in which Solomon rented his vineyard to keepers. Therefore, any mention of keepers is better understood as a reference to the keepers of Solomon's vineyard. The vineyard that the lovers share is private (no hired keepers allowed) and, if the vineyard is taken metaphorically, they are faithful to one another. I am inclined to read the woman as talking here because the vineyard in 1:6 was hers,

brothers' vineyard literally and the woman's vineyard figuratively, though not necessarily as a reference to intercourse (1985, 102). The author of *SoS* plays with the audience, letting each person decide how far he or she thinks that the lovers have taken their sexual play. I will speak more about this passage and the possibility that, contrary to Pope, it suggests the woman has not been having sex, in the concluding chapter.

356 Pope 1977, 688-91 summarizes some of the various interpretations of this financial transaction; most modern scholars have considered the passage as evidence for the wages of a tenant farmer in the time of Solomon or as a moral lesson about the value of the woman over worldly wealth, the importance of rewarding faithful work, or the importance of diligent work.

but Fox has made a good argument for reading these lines in the voice of the male.[357] Whichever lover is speaking, the vineyard, like the garden of 4:12-5:1, belongs to both of them. The fidelity of the lovers contrasts famous stories of Solomon's many wives.[358]

In his first comparison of his beloved to a garden, the man focuses on this same theme of fidelity (4:12-5:1):

גַּן נָעוּל אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה גַּל נָעוּל מַעְיָן חָתוּם׃
שְׁלָחַיִךְ פַּרְדֵּס רִמּוֹנִים עִם פְּרִי מְגָדִים כְּפָרִים עִם־נְרָדִים׃
נֵרְדְּ וְכַרְכֹּם קָנֶה וְקִנָּמוֹן עִם כָּל־עֲצֵי לְבוֹנָה מָר וַאֲהָלוֹת עִם כָּל־רָאשֵׁי בְשָׂמִים׃
מַעְיַן גַּנִּים בְּאֵר מָיִם חַיִּים וְנֹזְלִים מִן־לְבָנוֹן׃
עוּרִי צָפוֹן וּבוֹאִי תֵימָן הָפִיחִי גַנִּי יִזְּלוּ בְשָׂמָיו יָבֹא דוֹדִי לְגַנּוֹ וְיֹאכַל פְּרִי מְגָדָיו׃
בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה אָרִיתִי מוֹרִי עִם־בְּשָׂמִי אָכַלְתִּי יַעְרִי עִם־דִּבְשִׁי שָׁתִיתִי יֵינִי עִם־חֲלָבִי אִכְלוּ רֵעִים שְׁתוּ וְשִׁכְרוּ דוֹדִים׃

M: An enclosed garden is my sister, my bride, an enclosed spring, a sealed fountain.
Your sprouts are an orchard of pomegranates with preferred fruits, henna with nard.
Nard and a saffron stalk and cinnamon with all trees of frankincense myrrh, and aloes with all the choice spices.
A fountain of gardens, a well of living water and currents from Lebanon.
W: Wake North wind and come South wind and breathe upon my garden so that its spices may flow out, let my beloved come to his garden and eat the preferred fruits.
M: I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride, I have plucked my myrrh with spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with honey; I have drunk my wine with milk; Eat, friends, drink and get drunk, lovers!

Many have taken the reference to enclosure, locking, and/or sealing in 4:12 as a metaphor for the woman's fidelity or celibacy.[359] Of the two, I prefer fidelity because the man is already able to describe the interior of this garden, and in 4:16 the woman invites him to enter, calling it his garden (לְגַנּוֹ). If the locked garden is a metaphor for virginity, then the text about the man's entry suggests that woman does not plan to stay a virgin for long. However, the enclosed garden may simply highlight the privacy of the space and the emotional intimacy of their love. After all, though readers tend to associate the vineyard with the woman's body, the aspect of the woman to which the metaphor refers is unclear so that it could be her mind, heart, and/or sexual favors that

357 Fox 1985, 174.
358 Wittekindt 1925; Falk 1982, 133; and Fox 1985, 175 have also noted that Solomon's vineyard could represent his harem or perhaps temple prostitutes and that this contrasts with the monogamous lovers.
359 Pope 1977, 488; Fox 1985, 137. I have found no commentators who do not interpret this verse as a reference to either virginity or fidelity.

are closed to all others except the man.

The metaphorical garden contains luxurious plants and spices, many of which are used in metaphors for the lovers throughout *SoS*. The plants brought together in these verses have a variety of sensory associations that create synaesthesia for the reader.[360] There are plants known for their smell (nard, frankincense myrrh, henna); plants known for their taste (pomegranates, saffron, cinnamon); and plants known for their appearance (aloe). The inclusion of water and wind in the metaphor encourages the reader to imagine the sound of flowing water and the feel of the breeze, completing the picture so that the reader can imagine every sensory aspect of being in the garden. This metaphor adds little to the reader's understanding of the woman's physical appearance ('real' or as she appears to the man), but it does express vividly the way that her lover feels when he is with her. Both lovers talk about "preferred fruits" and the woman invites the man to eat these fruits, suggesting some sort of sexual gratification without going into the kind of graphic details that audiences might have found distasteful.[361]

Garden imagery appears again when, after having searched for her beloved in verses 5:6-16, the woman tells the daughters of Jerusalem that her beloved is visiting his garden (6:2):

דּוֹדִי יָרַד לְגַנּוֹ לַעֲרוּגֹת הַבֹּשֶׂם לִרְעוֹת בַּגַּנִּים וְלִלְקֹט שֽׁוֹשַׁנִּים׃

My beloved has gone down to his garden to the beds of spices to graze in the gardens and to pick lilies.

Later in the same chapter, the woman also visits her garden (6:11):

אֶל־גִּנַּת אֱגוֹז יָרַדְתִּי לִרְאוֹת בְּאִבֵּי הַנָּחַל לִרְאוֹת הֲפָרְחָה הַגֶּפֶן הֵנֵצוּ הָרִמֹּנִים׃

Into the walnut garden I have gone down to see the blossoms of the valley, to see the garden flourish and the pomegranates sprout.

---

360 See note above on my use of this term.

361 Modesty (both sexual and social) is encouraged for both men and women in the Hebrew Bible. Though this is an ideal quality and individual men and women would react to it differently, it would likely have an effect on self-presentation, for instance the frequent use of euphemisms for sex even when describing procreation in the Hebrew Bible (ידע "to know" is used frequently in Genesis). *SoS* toys with this sensibility, using metaphors that are read as sexual by many, but always allowing a literal reading that does not break with expectations of polite discourse.

The garden(s) in these verses are open to a variety of interpretations. The garden could be a real garden that the lovers visit together; it could be the woman's body since the garden in 4:12 is explicitly identified as the woman; and/or, in 6.11, it could be the body of the man since it is now the woman who visits the garden and enjoys the fruit. As Pope has shown, the walnut (אגנז), a term introduced for the first time in this verse, has erotic and feminine associations. There was a shrine of Adonis, a famous consort of the love goddess, surrounded by a walnut grove.[362] In addition, nuts were considered a symbol of female genitalia and were sometimes mentioned in a ritual formula to a virgin birde or strewn about the bridal pair at weddings.[363] Therefore, I think that the primary reading is still that the garden is the woman's body. She is likely accompanied by the man since she uses some of the same language that has been used to describe his visits to her garden, such as "go down" (6:2 ירד) and "pomegranates" (4:13 רמון).

At times the lovers either compare one another to spices or describe the spices and perfumes with which their bodies are anointed without the context of a garden or a vineyard. Spices are one way that the lovers remain in touch with the natural, bucolic world even when they are in the city. Most of the spices and ointments mentioned were frequently used as perfumes in the ancient Mediterranean and were considered appropriate to an erotic context. Detienne describes the erotic uses of spices such as myrrh, incense, and perfumed ointments. His main focus is on ancient Greece, but he considers other parts of the Mediterranean as well, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia.[364] He demonstrates that in all of these countries spices were used both in religious ceremonies and in erotic contexts. Therefore he argues that these expensive,

362 Wittekindt 1925, 178; Pope 1977, 577. See the chapters on Theocritus, especially discussion of *Idyll* 15 for more information on Adonis.
363 Pope 1977, 578. Nuts were also thrown at the married couple as a part of the Greek wedding ceremony, suggesting that they had similar connotations of abundance and fertility (Oswald and Haase 2012).
364 Detienne argues convincingly that the use of these products in both divine ceremonies and sexual encounters makes sense because spices are seen as a conduit for bringing together the distant. They allow men to commune with gods spiritually and men to connect with women erotically (1977, 5-36).

often imported plants were thought to bring together opposites (e.g., divine/human, male/female). Often these spices are closely associated with fertility deities and sacred marriages (bringing together the divine/female with the human/male). For instance, at least in Ovid's version of the tale, Adonis, the future consort of the love goddess, was born to Myrrha after she had been turned into a myrrh tree (*Met*. 10.431-559).

Spices and ointments are introduced early in *SoS* and their significance in creating desire between the lovers is foregrounded as the woman describes her beloved (1:3):

לְרֵיחַ֙ שְׁמָנֶ֣יךָ טוֹבִ֔ים שֶׁ֥מֶן תּוּרַ֖ק שִׁמְךָ֑ עַל־כֵּ֥ן עֲלָמ֖וֹת אֲהֵבֽוּךָ׃

The scent of your ointments is good; your name is an ointment poured out, and for that the maidens love you.

In her first use of the word "ointment" (שמן), the woman may suggest that the man wears ointments that give him a pleasing aroma. She may also be indirectly referring to his virility as this root can also be used to mean "fat" and at Isaiah 5:1 this meaning is metaphorically to suggest the fertility of a field.[365] Her next use of the word is figurative, comparing the man's name to an ointment. If the were written about famous lovers, then this could be a hint that his name was similar to the name of a fragrant ointment. However, this would require a pair of lovers famous enough that this hint and the term Shulamite would be enough to identify them to the audience. I find it unlikely that the names of such a famous pair would be lost while the poem was remembered. This phrase may suggest that hearing the man's name calls his presence to mind and makes her think of his fragrance.[366] Another possibility is that the sound of the man's name has a quality that is pleasing and desirable to the woman (and she assumes or knows that it is pleasing to other women) in the same way that the fragrance of ointment is desirable.[367]

365 BDB שמן.
366 Exum 2005, 94-5 mentions the synaesthesia of using a scent to describe a name. She argues that the comparison implies that the man's presence is overwhelming, like the scent of a strong perfume.
367 See the Conclusion for a discussion of this and other *erotobucolic* images that conflate multiple senses.

Near the end of the first chapter, the woman speaks of her own fragrance (1:12):

עַד־שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בִּמְסִבּוֹ נִרְדִּי נָתַן רֵיחוֹ׃

While the king was at his table my spikenard sent forth its fragrance.

The connection between the woman's fragrance and the king's table is mysterious. Interpretation of this line depends partially on whether or not the reader believes that the king is the beloved.[368] If he is a rival of the beloved, then perhaps the woman releases her fragrance for the beloved while the king is away at the table. If he is the beloved, then perhaps her spikenard sent forth its fragrance in order to attract his attention. As discussed above, fragrant spices can arouse desire. Conversely, it may be that the spikenard, which must be rubbed to emit a fragrance, stands in for the genitalia (of either lover); a variant metaphor for sexual arousal.[369] If, as I discuss above, the woman uses the term king for her beloved as a compliment and the spikenard is a reference to genitalia, then perhaps the table is another metaphor. As I have shown elsewhere the lovers' bodies are frequently described using edible plants (grapes, pomegranates, apples, choice fruits) and later I will show that other edible things are used to describe them (wine, honey, milk). The king's table could stand in for the gathered fruits of the woman's body that he has come to "eat," similar to his claim in 5:1 to have eaten the fruits of his garden. The erotic connotations of spices and eating are present in all of these interpretations.

In the next verse the woman returns to a description of the beloved as an aromatic plant (1:13):

צְרֹור הַמֹּר דֹּודִי לִי בֵּין שָׁדַי יָלִין׃

A kernel of myrrh is my beloved to me, he spends the night between my breasts.

Similar to the next verse (1:14), which I discussed above as the first flower metaphor in *SoS*, the

368 See the discussion of possible characters above.
369 Fox 1985, 106 notes this possibility based on Origen's remark that spikenard only emits a fragrance when rubbed.

man is portrayed as something delicate and pleasing that is sheltered by the woman's body. These images work closely together to portray the woman as protector.[370] When he is with her, the man is able to rest in a paradise between her breasts, at the oasis of Ein-Gedi (1:14), or in a secure garden (4:12). The man may also be a protector in other metaphors, but in these images he is small and she envelops him - yet he is like an expensive perfume that pleases her and makes her more attractive.

Three times in *SoS* it is mentioned that the man goes to "the mountain of spices." The image first appears early in the poem (2:17):

עַד שֶׁיָּפוּחַ הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצְּלָלִים סֹב דְּמֵה־לְךָ דוֹדִי לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים עַל־הָרֵי בָתֶר׃

Until the cool of the day and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young deer on the mountains of spices.

The second occurrence of the image begins the same, but the end is varied and expanded (4:6):

עַד שֶׁיָּפוּחַ הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצְּלָלִים אֵלֵךְ לִי אֶל־הַר הַמֹּור וְאֶל־גִּבְעַת הַלְּבוֹנָה׃

Until the cool of the day and the shadows flee, I will take myself to the mountain of spices and the hill of frankincense.

In the final line of the poem, usually a point of marked importance, the image occurs again. This time the beginning of the line is shortened but the ending is nearly the same as in verse 2:17 (8:14):

בְּרַח׀ דּוֹדִי וּדְמֵה־לְךָ לִצְבִי אֹו לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים עַל הָרֵי בְשָׂמִים׃

Flee my beloved and be like a gazelle or a young deer on the mountains of spices.

Each time the word used to describe the spices is varied, in 2:17 it is Bether (בָּתֶר), an otherwise unattested word that most take as a reference to spices based on the other two passages; in 4:6 the mountain is of myrrh (אֶל־הַר הַמֹּור) and in 8:14 it is of balsam (הָרֵי בְשָׂמִים). The mountain

370 Fox 1985.

of spices is often taken as a metaphor for the woman's *mons pubis* or breasts.[371] I agree that either of these interpretations is possible and more specifically I agree with Fox, who argues that, even where there may be reference to the *mons pubis,* it need not imply penetration. As Fox and others have argued, *SoS* teases and frequently alludes to sexual acts, but it always leaves the reader uncertain about the exact tenor of the metaphor and unsure whether or not the lovers have "gone all the way."It is also possible, since the lovers seem to be together when this line is spoken and it asks the man to flee, that the mountain of spices is a place that is separate from the woman, perhaps the spices do or are thought to have some effect on the gazelles, in the same way that certain herbs, notably jimsonweed, affect other livestock (Cf. Theoc. *Id*. 2). Then the importance of the mountain of spices would be to more specifically describe the way in which the man should behave like a gazelle.

During an extended comparison between the lovers and the bridal procession of Solomon, an unusual spice image is used to describe one or both of the lovers (3:6):

מִי זֹאת עֹלָה֙ מִן־הַמִּדְבָּ֔ר כִּתְימֲרוֹת֙ עָשָׁ֣ן מְקֻטֶּ֔רֶת מֹ֥ר וּלְבוֹנָ֖ה מִכֹּ֣ל אַבְקַ֥ת רוֹכֵֽל׃

Who is this coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke burning myrrh and frankincense with all the powders of a merchant?

The pronoun for this (זאת) used here is feminine singular, perhaps suggesting that this is a description of the woman. However, the next line (3:7) will answer the question with an object, a

371 Pope 1977, 409-11 summarizes various interpretations of 2:17, including the possibility that בֶּ֫תֶר means "cleft," specifically the cleft between the woman's breasts or pudenda. Fox 1985, 116 has a list of six possible interpretations of 2.17, but argues that Bether is primarily a reference to a place (most likely Beiter near Jerusalem). He takes 4:6 and 8:14 as descriptions of the girls breasts (132, 177). Since the mountains are plural, he argues that breasts are the more likely tenor. However, parts of the body that are considered singular in one language may be plural in another, especially when they can be split into two symmetrical halves. For instance, in Greek, the plural "φρένες" is frequently used where English would use the singular "chest." Exum 2005, 132 argues that בֶּ֫תֶר should be translated as "cleft." Furthermore, she discusses the difficulty of translating directions in these passages, since the words for "turn" and "flee" seem to suggest that the man should leave the woman, but the "mountains of spices" suggest that he should come to the woman. I agree with her explanation that here the poet plays with our expectations, suggesting on the literal level that the lover should turn away, but on the figurative level that he should approach the woman.

couch or bed (מתה), a singular feminine word. Though the question "who" (מי) implies that the speaker is talking about a person, the feminine singular may have been chosen in anticipation of the answer, a couch. Pope combines these two possibilities, stating that the bed "would thus be or include his intended bride."[372] The beginning of this line, "Who is this coming up from the wilderness," is repeated again at 8:5 and this time the answer is clearly the woman (now she is leaning upon her beloved).[373] Though many interpretations are possible, I agree with Fox, who argues that all three instances of מי זאת are rhetorical questions (3:6, 6:10, 8:5) expressing surprise and admiration. He notes that these questions seem to respond to adjurations from or descriptions of the woman rather than beginning new sections. Thus, the mention of the couch in 3:7 is not a response, but the beginning of a new section and the columns are a description of the woman.[374]

Most scholars assign 3:6-7 to the daughters of Jerusalem, who were addressed in the previous line. Just as earlier in the text (1:3-4), the woman let us know that she was not the only one who found the man attractive, this passage confirms that other people are attracted to the woman. Whether the woman is one column of myrrh and one column of frankincense or columns of both spices combined, she is both impressive and pleasing. If the daughters of Jerusalem are responding to this line, then their description provides an independent verification of the man's assessment of the woman. She has the same overwhelming effect on the daughters of Jerusalem as she has on her beloved. Even her female friends can only describe her with grand metaphors that provide more of a sense of her effect on others than an understanding of her own appearance (just as the woman described the man using grand metaphors at 5:15, discussed above). The

372 Pope 1977, 661 notes the similarity between these three lines and asserts that all three refer to the woman.
373 Verse 6:10 also begins similarly (מִי זֹאת) and seems to refer to the woman (it comes at the end of a description of her beauty).
374 Fox 1985, 119.

daughters of Jerusalem also identify the woman with nature; they describe her as coming from the wilderness and associate her with plant-derived spices.[375] Thus, even the daughters of Jerusalem (i.e., the city girls), drawn into the world of the lovers, are shown to see them in *erotobucolic* terms.

Even the *erotobucolic* identification of beloved with plant does not satisfy the man and in 4:10 he claims that his beloved is better than the natural world:

מַה־יָּפוּ דֹדַיִךְ אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה מַה־טֹּבוּ דֹדַיִךְ מִיַּיִן וְרֵיחַ שְׁמָנַיִךְ מִכָּל־בְּשָׂמִים׃

How beautiful your love is my sister, my bride; how much better your love is than wine and the fragrance of your oils than all spices.

In accordance with the failure of language to describe the beloved, the man even becomes dissatisfied with his earlier comparisons.[376] Rather than comparing the woman to something else, for all words are ultimately dissatisfying in the attempt to describe love,[377] the man says that she is better than anything that he has compared her to earlier. She is better than all of the spices, which, as I have shown, were considered luxurious and erotic, even bordering on the divine.[378] I argue that here the man implies that his love is like worship for the woman or that being close to her allows him to commune with the divine. He claims that the natural oils of her body are better than all spices; this would include any spices that were commonly used in sacrifices, such as frankincense and myrrh.

Many of the verses that I have discussed above use myrrh either to adorn the lovers or as a metaphor for their qualities. In addition, myrrh is frequently present at those moments when

375 Both myrrh and frankincense are luxurious perfumes derived from the resin of trees.
376 Barthes 1978, 18-21; Kristeva 1987, 1-2.
377 Kristeva 1987 suggests that metaphor is the final attempt of language to described the beloved before the lover becomes fatigued. The lover cannot express the effect of the beloved with simple words and so attempts to describe them by comparison to other overwhelming concepts. Ultimately, as here, even the metaphors fail to capture the "ipseity," to use Barthes' term, of the beloved.
378 Detienne has shown that spices were associated with the divine Greece (1977, 5-36), but they were also important in Jewish religious rituals (e.g., Exodus 30:23-36; Leviticus 2:1-2, 2:15-6, 5:11, 6:15, 24:7; Numbers 5:15; I Chronicles 9:29).

there may be an oblique reference to sexual activity (e.g., 1:13, 4:14, 5:1). The passage in *SoS* most often interpreted as a description of sexual intercourse prominently features myrrh (5:4-5):

דּוֹדִי שָׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן־הַחֹר וּמֵעַי הָמְּוּ עָלָיו׃
קַמְתִּי אֲנִי לִפְתֹּחַ לְדוֹדִי וְיָדַי נָטְפוּ־מֹור וְאֶצְבְּעֹתַי מֹור עֹבֵר עַל כַּפּוֹת הַמַּנְעוּל׃

My beloved stretched his hand through the opening and my viscera were aroused because of him.
I arose to open to my beloved and my hands dripped myrrh and my fingers dripped sweet-smelling myrrh on the handles of the bolt.

In the surrounding passage, the woman describes how the man tried to visit her at her home in the city, but she did not open the door until he had already gone. Pope argues that the lovers consummate their relationship in this scene. He interprets "hand" (יד) in 5:4 as a euphemism for penis.[379] Fox admits that the phrase does call intercourse to mind, but does not think that sexual activity would fit the narrative of the poem.[380] I too accept that there is enough sexual imagery in this passage to make the reader think about penetration. Nevertheless, I believe that the language of the passage and the separation of the lovers in the surrounding narrative encourage a milder reading.[381] Though the woman is aroused by the approach and *attempted* entry of the man, when she is ready to let him in, he is already gone. It is not until he is gone that the woman describes her hands as "dripping myrrh" (נטפו-מור). The myrrh here is closely connected to the woman's desire (she begins to drip myrrh only after her viscera are aroused) and suggests her readiness to let the man in. However, the passage suggests that they do not actually come together and in the following lines the woman must search for her beloved.

Wine and honey are closely related to the spices and vineyards of *SoS*. Both substances

379 Pope 1977, 517-9. Exum 2005, 195-6 and Black 2009, 149-50 mention Pope's interpretation and agree that this creates a *double entendre* in the passage.
380 Fox 1985, 144.
381 It is impossible to be certain of authorial intent, but it is possible that this passage was written purposefully so that most readers would think of intercourse before/while realizing that a less explicit encounter was more likely. In this way, the author might play a joke on the readers, making them aware of their own sexualized reading of the text as Goldhill suggests happens to those who read *Daphnis and Chloe* from a 'sophisticated' perspective (Goldhill 1995, 1-45). Whether it was intended by the author or not, I can attest that this is the effect that the passage had on at least one reader.

are derived from plants (grapes and nectar) with the intervention of humans or bees. The association between wine, honey, and spices makes sense, because, as 8:2 shows, sometimes people added spices or honey to their wine to make medicines or to improve the flavor.[382] Like spices, wine has long been considered an aphrodisiac and in many Mediterranean cultures it has connections to the divine.[383] The Hebrew Bible records the use of wine as part of the daily sacrifice (Exodus 29:40-1) and in other sacrifices (Numbers 15:5-10). Like spices and vineyards, wine and honey are used in *SoS* as metaphors for love and the attractions of the lovers.

At the beginning of *SoS*, the woman describes her beloved, comparing his love twice to wine (1:2-4):

יִשָּׁקֵנִי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ כִּי־טוֹבִים דֹּדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן׃
לְרֵיחַ שְׁמָנֶיךָ טוֹבִים שֶׁמֶן תּוּרַק שְׁמֶךָ עַל־כֵּן עֲלָמוֹת אֲהֵבוּךָ׃
מָשְׁכֵנִי אַחֲרֶיךָ נָרוּצָה הֱבִיאַנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲדָרָיו נָגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בָּךְ נַזְכִּירָה דֹדֶיךָ מִיַּיִן מֵישָׁרִים אֲהֵבוּךָ׃

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine.
The scent of your ointments is good; your name is an ointment poured out, and for that the maidens love you.
Take me away! We will run after you! The king has brought me to his bedroom; we will be happy and rejoice in you; we will remember your love better than wine; virtuous people love you.

In 1:2, the woman first speaks of the man in the third person and then addresses him as though he has appeared. This is one of the subtle ways that *SoS* enacts the experience of being in love. As with Barthes' composite lover, in *SoS* love is primarily an emotion of yearning, requiring that the love object be absent, and yet, the lovers' power to imagine one another is so great that at times the lover seems to be present before them.[384] In *SoS* it is often difficult to differentiate between

382 See Plin. *Nat*. 14 for information on a variety of Greek, Roman and some other Mediterranean wines both mixed and unmixed. He attributes the first mixture of wine and honey to the Greeks (14.6). For more specific information on mixed wine in Egypt, see McGovern 2009.
383 Dionysus/Bacchus is the god of wine in Greece and Rome and is so closely associated with wine itself that the drink is sometimes called Bacchus. As stories of the Maenads show, see especially Eur. *Ba.*, the consumption of wine could lead to divine madness. In Greece, wine was associated with love at the symposium (Plat. *Sym*.) and in Greek and Roman poetry (e.g., Anacreon and the Anacreontic authors, Theocritus, Propertius, Ovid).
384 Barthes 1978, 13-8 describes this aspect of love in life and literature generally. Black 2009, 204-19 has shown the benefit of reading *SoS* with Barthes in mind. Exum 2005, 3-7 explains the "illusion of immediacy" in *SoS* specifically.

the times when the lovers are portrayed as together and the times when they are merely imagining one another. This uncertainty adds an element of tension for the reader, who tries to keep up with lovers that can be together in one line and unable to find one another in the next, as if in a dream.[385] This dreamlike quality is enhanced by the ambiguity of space, as seen in 1:4, where the woman is at one moment waiting to go with the man, the next already in the king's bedroom, and finally with other people remembering his love. The narrators of *SoS* often leave the reader to wonder how much of the *erotobucolic* description is a landscape and how much is a metaphor or even if some images might be both.

Later in the poem, the man describes the woman in similar terms (4:10-1):

מַה־יָּפוּ דֹדַיִךְ אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה מַה־טֹּבוּ דֹדַיִךְ מִיַּיִן וְרֵיחַ שְׁמָנַיִךְ מִכָּל־בְּשָׂמִים׃
נֹפֶת תִּטֹּפְנָה שִׂפְתוֹתַיִךְ כַּלָּה דְּבַשׁ וְחָלָב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנֵךְ וְרֵיחַ שַׂלְמֹתַיִךְ כְּרֵיחַ לְבָנוֹן׃

How beautiful your love is my sister, my bride; how much better your love is than wine and the fragrance of your oils than all spices.
Honey drips from your lips, my bride, honey and milk are under your tongue and the fragrance of your clothing is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

I have already discussed the end of 4:10 with regard to spices above and, just as before, the comparison between love and wine shows the man's dissatisfaction with simply equating the woman to the natural world. The best things in nature come as close as possible to describing her and yet she is better even than those. In 4:11, he goes back to describing his beloved in terms of bucolic produce, but this time he uses two of the most famously pleasing substances in biblical tradition, honey and milk.[386] The refreshments under her tongue suggest that the woman's kisses are both sweet and nourishing. Just as in 5:13 above, any reference to sweetness in the mouth might also suggest the sweetness of the lover's words. Furthermore, as Exum has argued, the

385 See above, Pope 1977, 132-40 and Exum 2005, 45-7 for discussions of the dreamlike quality of *SoS*.
386 "A land flowing with milk and honey" (אֶרֶץ זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבָשׁ) becomes proverbial for desirable land in Exodus (3:8, 3:17, 13:5, 33:3). The man uses these same terms for milk (חלב) and honey (דבש). Pope 1977, 486 notes the similarity of the phrases but does not provide an interpretation.

presence of milk and honey dripping from the woman's mouth suggests that her body is like the promised land.[387] The promised land like the *locus amoenus* is an idyllic land of plenty, suggesting the pleasure of being with the woman and perhaps her fertility.

Spices are brought in again at the end in the comparison between the fragrance of her garden and Lebanon (לבנון); a comparison that makes sense because of the similarity in Hebrew between the word for Lebanon and the word for frankincense (לבונה). The fragrance of Lebanon may also include the fragrance of cedar, which was primarily imported from Lebanon (cf. 5:15); thus her garments would smell of expensive spices and luxurious wood so that she is twice doubly redolent of nature and the exotic.

Wine and flower imagery are combined later in *SoS* to describe the woman's body (7:3):

שָׁרְרֵךְ אַגַּן הַסַּהַר אַל־יֶחְסָר הַמָּזֶג בִּטְנֵךְ עֲרֵמַת חִטִּים סוּגָה בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים׃

Your navel, a round bowl, does not lack mixed wine; your belly is a heap of wheat fenced in lilies.

Scholars have suggested a variety of interpretations for this rich verse, revealing the multiplicity of meaning that can be found in just one segment of *erotobucolic* poetry.[388] As with the honey and

387 Exum 2005, 172-3.

388 Pope 1977, 617-24 summarizes interpretations of this verse up to his time. Pope himself argues that (סהר), usually "navel" or "umbilical cord," should here be translated as vulva based on a similar Arabic word and points out that, since the blazon moves from the woman's feet upward, "the locus of the evermoist receptacle between the thighs and the belly would seem to favor the lower aperture" (617). The text supports a wide range of interpretations; those who consider the sexual possibilities of the text are likely to read it this way, while others will read only a literal navel, and yet others will look to a religious interpretation. Fox 1985, 159 notes that the blazon does not continue in perfect top to bottom order (the eyes come before the nose) and argues that the wine in the metaphor may be restricted to the bowl. Exum 2005, 233 agrees that this need not be a reference to the vulva based on the order of the blazon, but feels that the mixed wine is an important part of the comparison. She suggests that the mixing of the wine may stand in for the mixing of male and female bodily fluids. As for the second half of the line, most scholarly debate focuses on the size of the belly. For recent opinions for and against corpulence, see Black 2009, Exum 2005, 234. Ainsworth 1623 is the only commentator that I know of to have suggested that the woman is pregnant. This interpretation is unlikely given the playful way in which the text teases readers, never revealing whether or not the lovers have physically consummated their relationship. Pope cites earlier interpreters on the practice of encircling wheat with a fence or hedge to protect it from wind and birds. He is also reminded of Mesopotamian and Indian terracottas of goddesses wearing elaborate girdles. These images taken together provide a unique and convincing explanation of the metaphor. Exum points out that the comparison to wheat signifies that the woman's belly is soft. Black 2009, 150-3 argues that this entire verse is a part of a series of food-body metaphors that suggest the cannibalistic consumption of the woman. It is a creative interpretation, but one that applies the consumption metaphors of the text too literally to the body of the woman (eating is often a metaphor for sex because they are both sensual pleasures, but few readers will see this sexual "consumption" as cannibalism).

milk under the woman's tongue in 4:11, the wine in her navel suggests the pleasure of her body - being near her or being intimate with her is intoxicating. The comparison of her belly to a heap of wheat has caused much discussion between scholars about the weight of the woman. As I have stated above, with so little evidence from early Hebrew texts and because the injunction against graven images in the Hebrew Bible has traditionally been understood to forbid sculpture (Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 5:8), it is impossible to tell what ancient Hebrew men found attractive in a woman. Furthermore, there is little information on the size of a heap of wheat that an ancient reader would most likely imagine. It could be a reference to large heaps during the harvest, a smaller heap as part of a grain offering, or something in between. As Fox points out, the golden color and fertility of the wheat are likely an important part of this comparison.[389]

The appeal of the woman's mouth is described by comparison to wine at 7:10:

וְחִכֵּךְ כְּיֵין הַטּוֹב הוֹלֵךְ לְדוֹדִי לְמֵישָׁרִים דּוֹבֵב שִׂפְתֵי יְשֵׁנִים

And the roof of your mouth is like good wine; it goes down smoothly for my beloved; it flows over the lips of the sleeping.

As in any passage that refers to wine, honey, or a spice in the mouth of a lover (1:2-4, 4:10, 5:13), the comparison can be taken to mean both that their kisses are sweet or intoxicating and that they speak sweet or intoxicating words. The shift from "your mouth" (חכך) to "my beloved" (דודי) is the kind of sudden shift in perspective that the audience has learned to expect from the lovers at this point. The final segment of this line is more difficult to understand and has led to a variety of interpretations and emendations.[390] Since the entire poem is dreamlike, the

389 Fox 1985, 159.

390 Pope 1977, 640, Exum 2005, 239-40, and Black 2009, 152 argue along with earlier biblical scholars that this line should be slightly modified to read "lips and teeth" rather than "lips of the sleeping." From 641-3 Pope summarizes earlier interpretations, many early Jewish and Christian interpretations take the lips of sleepers as the lips of the dead that speak prophecy (either through their writings or through some sort of resurrection). Fox 1985, 163 too argues that the line should be modified, but he prefers the reading "scarlet lips" as a parallel to the lips like a scarlet thread mentioned in 4:3. Fox and Exum both mention the possibility of a change in speaker mid-sentence. I am inclined to believe that the entire line is spoken by the man, but I am more interested in the image itself than the

world is ideal, and there are sudden changes of location, I am inclined to interpret the mention of sleep as a reference to dreaming. Thus, the male lover declares that he dreams about the pleasure of the woman's kisses - indeed, by using the plural (ישנם), he reveals a belief that multiple men (or people) dream of kissing her. At the beginning of the poem, the woman made a similar assumption that others were attracted to her beloved (1:3-4). The awareness that others are attracted to the beloved does not make the lovers of *SoS* jealous, for they are confident in one another's love (2:16, 6:3, 7:11).

In the last chapter of *SoS*, the woman plans to (or wishes that she might) bring the man to her house so that he could drink her wine (8:2):

אֶנְהָגֲךָ֨ אֲבִיאֲךָ֜ אֶל־בֵּ֣ית אִמִּ֗י תְּלַמְּדֵ֙נִי֙ אֲשֶׁקְךָ֣ מְיַ֔יִן הָרֹ֖קַח מֵעֲסִ֣יס רִמֹּנִֽי׃

I will lead you and bring you to the house of my mother; she [you?] will teach me to give you a drink from the spiced wine, from the juice of my pomegranate.

In this passage, the wine could be real and/or metaphorical. On a literal level, she wishes that she could invite him over to drink wine, that is, she wishes that her family and society would accept their relationship.[391] On a metaphorical level, the wine and pomegranate juice are the juices of her body. I have taken the Hebrew (תְּלַמְּדֵ֙נִי֙) as a third person rather than a second, along with most interpreters.[392] I think it improbable that she means her mother would be there to teach her

---

speaker.

391 Exum 2005, 246 points out how wishing in 8:1-4 quickly becomes anticipation or even fulfillment of the wish, since what began written in the form of a wish in 8:1, moves here to the future tense, and 8:3 is written in the present.

392 Pope 1977, 659 describes the reasons for taking the verb as a second person (especially those who interpret the poem allegorically and see the man as God, Wisdom, or the Messiah, i.e., a figure who would teach the people). Pope himself favors a minor emendation introduced by Kuhn (1926) that changes the meaning to "she who bore me." Fox 1985, 166 and Exum 2005, 247 follow the Septuagint (LXX) and the Syriac version of the *SoS*, both of which have "to the house of her who conceived" rather than "she will teach me." As Exum points out, it seems unlikely that the lovers would be in need of instruction and as Fox points out the line as it stands is not a complete stich. See Exum 2005, 247 for recent interpretations of this difficult line. The alteration accepted by Exum and Fox is a strong possibility, but I have chosen to keep the line as it stands because it follows the difficult image of the beloved man suckling the breasts of the woman's mother in 8:1. Thus, I am inclined to keep this as an area of familial images mingling with the erotic in ways that might not be accessible to a modern audience.

if this is a sexual metaphor. However, just as the woman's mother and father must have once had intercourse in the house, the woman will learn from the example of her mother to share the delights of her body with her beloved in a socially appropriate setting.

The lovers are frequently compared to fertile plants (fruits and flowers above) and like the plants and animals of spring-time, they are at their prime. However, there is no direct mention of their potential fertility. Several times the possibility of marriage is raised (bride 4:8, 9, 4:10, 4:11, 4:12, 5:1; wedding procession 3:7-11; feast 5:1), but there is no discussion of a future with children. Reference to potential children would make the physical and societal dangers of love explicit.[393] Throughout the poem, danger is kept in the background.[394] Some readers will make the connection between the fertility of nature and the potential pregnancy facing the woman if the relationship should be or has been consummated. Nevertheless, by limiting fertility to the level of metaphor, the author keeps the fear of danger just beneath the joyful surface of the poem.

Plants, both real and metaphorical, in *SoS* unite the lovers with the *erotobucolic* landscape. The lovers are fertile, beautiful, pleasant, sweet, and intoxicating just like the most luxurious parts of the natural world. They delight at the same time in one another and in the produce of the gardens and vineyards that surround them. Though words always fail to describe feelings of love, they come closest to explaining the effect of the beloved by analogy to an idyllic landscape. Though danger sometimes lurks beneath the surface of this landscape, they feel secure

393 French 1986, 69, retrojecting the highest mortality rates of the modern world, estimates for the Greco-Roman world that 5% of all babies born alive would die before they were 1 month old and that for every 20,000 women giving birth, 5 would die. Numbers for other ancient societies were likely similar. Greek literature shows that ancient people were aware of the danger of giving birth, Medea famously implies that it is more dangerous than warfare (Eur. *Med*. 250-1). I discuss the social danger that the lovers would face if their affair were consummated and discovered, as would likely happen if the woman became pregnant, in the next chapter.

394 In accordance with this trend, if childbirth is mentioned at all, it is only as a possible implication in metaphor (4:2, 6:6, 7:4).

in the almost divine perfection of one another's bodies.

Sexy Beasts

Drawing from the natural world for comparisons, the lovers use not only the best of the plant life surrounding them but also the most impressive animals that they encounter to explain the magnificence of the beloved. Birds and mammals are the only animals used in these comparisons; the two most frequent are the gazelle, known for its grace and frequently used to describe the beloved in Arabic poetry, and the dove, often associated with a love goddess in other Mediterranean cultures.[395] These animals are thus closely associated with love/eros and the natural/bucolic world, making them appropriate for use in *erotobucolic* poetry.

Twice in *SoS*, the man uses the same language to describe the woman's eyes as doves (1:15, 4:1):[396]

הִנָּךְ יָפָה רַעְיָתִי הִנָּךְ יָפָה עֵינַיִךְ יוֹנִים

Behold, you are beautiful my beloved, behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves.

Many possibilities have been suggested to explain this comparison; for instance, the woman's eyes might be like doves in color, movement, softness, or rarity.[397] In Homer, one of Athena's epithets is (γλαυκῶπις), which the major Greek dictionaries translate as "bright-eyed" or "gray-eyed" from γλαυκός (bright) or γλαῦκος (gray),[398] but which may alternately be rendered as "owl-eyed" from γλαύξ (owl). Since the majority of adjectives starting in "γλαυκ" describe

395 On the gazelle as a standard comparison for the beloved in Arabic poetry, see Sumi 2004, 73. Both doves and sparrows are associated with Aphrodite/Venus in Greco-Roman mythology (e.g., Aelian *NA* 10.34; Ovid *Met*. 13.673, 14.597). Keel 1998, 323-49 shows that the dove was a symbol of love in the iconography of the ancient Near East and argues that, by the late second century BCE, the dove had become a symbol of love throughout the Mediterranean.

396 Verse 4:1 is longer and continues with a comparison of the woman's hair to goats that I will discuss below.

397 Pope 1977, 356; Fox 1985, 106 (Fox also quotes the 14th century commentary on *SoS* by Tamakh on the seductive power of doves); Munro 1995, 90; Brenner 1997, 45-9; Exum 2005, 112. Black 2009, 169-72 reminds readers that even though there are many plausible explanations for the comparison of eyes to doves, the comparison is initially strange and disturbing.

398 LSJ and Autenrieth s.v. "γλαυκῶπις."

color, the dictionaries are likely correct that the word primarily refers to color. However, since the owl was Athena's sacred bird, many Greek readers would have connected the word both to color and to the bird. Similarly, in *SoS*, readers likely thought of the color of the dove, its movement, their own sacred associations for the bird, and/or associations with which would have been familiar from nearby cultures.[399] The idea that the movement of eyes could be attractive is also found in Homer, who often uses the term "quick-glancing" (ἑλικοβλεφαρος) of beautiful women. These similar descriptions of eyes in Homer, whose poetry also has passages that I would characterize as *erotobucolic*,[400] provide support for interpreting this comparison in *SoS* in various ways; color, movement, and/or godlikeness.

Reinforcing the sexual symmetry of *SoS*, the woman uses a similar, but expanded metaphor to describe the man's eyes (5:12):

עֵינָ֡יו כְּיוֹנִים עַל־אֲפִיקֵי מָ֨יִם רֹֽחֲצוֹת֮ בֶּחָלָב֒ יֹשְׁבֹ֣ת עַל־מִלֵּֽאת׃

His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside the bank.

As above, the eyes could be dove-like because of their color or resemblance to a love deity. Movement is less likely this time, since the doves have stopped moving and are sitting behind the bank. However, some have suggested that authors continue to describe the subject of a metaphor beyond the point that the description of the vehicle is significant for the tenor.[401] It may

399 See above for doves and goddesses. The dove is important as the first omen that the land is drying in the story of Noah (Genesis 8:11). In Jewish tradition, the dove is a symbol of "Israel's sacrificial and praiseworthy obedience to the divine will" (Pope 1977, 357).

400 In particular, the images on the shield of Achilles Hom. *Od.* 18.478-608 and the garden of Alcinous *Od.* 7.81-135 have already been recognized as influences on Theocritus' pastoral poetry (e.g., Gow 1950, Hopkinson 1999).

401 Shipp 1953, 208, discussing Homeric similes calls this "The typically Homeric simile, in which the picture used as illustration is developed for its own sake, details being added which are no longer applicable in the comparison." Fox 1985 notes in reference to certain metaphors, including this one, in *SoS* that not every element describing the vehicle have a direct analogy in the tenor (e.g., 147, 159). Munro 1995, 125-6 talks about this aspect of the imagery in *SoS* more generally. Whatever the author intended, some readers (perhaps most) will read in this way, choosing the part of the simile or metaphor that makes sense and enjoying the rest as a description of the vehicle only. Others (and these are well represented in academic books and commentaries because when writing about a text academics continually look for meaning and seek to understand), will seek to find a correlate between the tenor and each described element of the vehicle.

be that the woman is making a simple comparison between the man's eyes and doves, just as he has with her eyes. The rest of the line may be meant to clarify which doves she intends to use in her comparison or may be a digression on the beauty and behavior of doves. This would not be inappropriate for the dreamlike, wandering state that the lovers display in this poem.

It is also possible to read the entire line as a comparison to eyes. Many scholars, have suggested that "bathed in milk" might be a reference to the purity of the whites of the man's eyes, in which his dove-like irises or pupils are sitting.[402] The fact that the doves are sitting next to water, probably flowing water, might suggest that the man is crying, that his eyes are moist, or that his body is in some way like water. Water is an important feature of the *erotobucolic* landscape, since ancient people were well aware that you could not have abundant plant life without plentiful water. Therefore, water has long been associated with fertility and the erotic.[403]

The man uses a different dove metaphor to represent the inaccessibility of the woman (2:14):

יוֹנָתִי בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֶּלַע בְּסֵתֶר הַמַּדְרֵגָה הַרְאִינִי אֶת־מַרְאַיִךְ הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי אֶת־קוֹלֵךְ כִּי־קוֹלֵךְ עָרֵב וּמַרְאֵיךְ נָאוֶה׃

My dove in the crannies of the cliff, in the secret places of the steep; let me see your appearance, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and your appearance is lovely.

This passage shows the effect of the beloved's absence on the male lover; he assumes that she is intentionally hiding from him and he remembers her allure.[404] I will examine the place of yearning in the *erotobucolic* genre in more detail in the next chapter. As Exum has noted, words associated with seeing and hearing (ראה, מראה, שמע, קול) abound in this verse.[405] These terms bring the sensory experience of the man to the forefront, allowing the reader to imagine his

402 Pope 1977, 538; Fox 1985, 147-8 mentions this possibility, though his primary argument is that only the doves are important to the description of the eyes; Munro 1995, 91.
403 Segal 1969, 24-33 details the erotic qualities of water.
404 Pope 1977, 400; Fox 1985, 113; and Exum 2005, 127-8 all draw attention to the erotic connotations of doves and their reluctance to be seen when they feel threatened.
405 Exum 2005, 128.

experience. The woman as dove is like a mirage; he can almost see and hear her, but she is out of reach.

The only other bird to appear in *SoS* is the raven; the woman uses it in a description of the man's hair (5:11):

רֹאשׁוֹ כֶּתֶם פָּז קְוֻצּוֹתָיו תַּלְתַּלִּים שְׁחֹרוֹת כָּעוֹרֵב׃

His head is like pure gold, his locks are clusters of dates, black like a raven.

This verse is part of a longer passage that describes the beauty of the man in detail (5:10-6). The passage describes the man with a combination of natural and man-made objects. The woman clarifies that the raven metaphor has been added to describe the color of his hair. The addition of a color metaphor may be made necessary by the comparison of his hair to date clusters.[406] Pope notes that black hair was associated with youth and health, desirable qualities of an ideal lover. He adds that in the Hebrew Bible the raven is not usually mentioned positively, but that it is often used to describe blackness, especially black hair, in Arabic poetry.[407] The lack of other references in ancient Hebrew literature to raven's as a simile for blackness may be a matter of genre. *SoS* is the only extended erotic poem from the biblical period and so it is difficult to know whether this would have been an unusual connotation of the raven in this context.

The first description of the beloved as a (non-human) mammal features a horse, a luxury to own in most areas of the Mediterranean (1:9):

לְסֵסָתִי בִּרְכְבֵי פַרְעֹה דִּמִּיתִיךְ רַעְיָתִי׃

My mare on the chariots of Pharaoh resembles you, my darling.

The possessive (praenominal) ending on the word for mare (סוסה) is strange; why does the man

406 Date-palm fruit is only black or dark brown in its final stage of development and so when for most of the time that people saw clusters on the tree, they would vary from green to red to light brown (Yin et. al. 2012).
407 Pope 1977, 536.

have a horse on the chariots of Pharaoh?[408] It could be that the "my" ending is anticipating the identity of the horse with the woman. In this case the mare would be less specific, any ideal mare that people would have seen or could imagine pulling the chariots of the Pharaoh. The "my" anticipates the woman as does the gender of the horse, since stallions were usually used to pull Egyptian chariots.[409] Alternately, Pope offers a different explanation of the horse's gender. He argues that the mare among the chariots is a mare in heat released to upset the war horses, as happened during a battle between Thutmose III and Qadesh.[410]

Though horses and chariots often have a negative connotation in the Hebrew Bible,[411] in the time of Solomon (First Temple Period), Israel was prosperous and had many horses (1 Kings 5:6). Thus horses may be associated with the luxury and prosperity of that time, a time to which *SoS* hearkens back.[412] I argue that the man may also compare the woman to a horse because she makes him feel that he lives in royal luxury, like Solomon. This luxurious aspect of the woman (qua horse?) is emphasized by verses 1:10-1:

נָאווּ לְחָיַיִךְ בַּתֹּרִים צַוָּארֵךְ בַּחֲרוּזִים׃
תּוֹרֵי זָהָב נַעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ עִם נְקֻדּוֹת הַכָּסֶף׃

Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with strings of beads.
We will make ornaments of gold for you with drops of silver.

---

408 Most commentators take the ending not as possessive but as archaizing (e.g., Pope 1977, 105; Exum 2005, 108), but I agree with Bloch and Bloch 2006, 144, who argue that it is possessive. Bloch and Bloch 2006, 144 explain that horses are associated with "worldly riches and high living" in other parts of the Hebrew Bible. Horses were also considered a luxury in Greece and were raised only by the wealthy (Aristoph. *Cl.* contains the story of a boy who quickly runs through the family fortune by raising horses). Even in Greek poetry, where horses are often a complimentary comparison, Semonides' horse woman reveals that horses could be used negatively to denote expense. For those who see the man as a king (see above), this line could be interpreted either as suggesting that the man is Pharaoh or that he has given the gift of a horse to Pharaoh and so compares the woman to this specific horse.
409 Cf. Exum 2005, 109 on the gender of the horse as anticipatory. Pope 1977, 338-9 on the use of stallions for war chariots. Fox 1985, 105 argues against Pope, suggesting that the mare might be on a chariot used for purposes other than war.
410 Pope 1977, 338-9.
411 See above.
412 See Pope 1977, 22-33 on the reasons for and against dating the text to the time of Solomon, the First Temple Period. Even those, myself included, who argue for a different date, typically agree that there is enough evidence to suggest a First Temple setting, even if that setting only exists in the dream-world of the lovers.

Fox and others have argued that these ornaments, especially ornaments for cheeks, are similar to those used on royal chariot horses.[413] Thus, the portrayal of the woman's luxurious decoration continues to recall her resemblance to a royal mare. Furthermore, these lines could suggest that the woman was not wealthy; she does not already have ornaments of silver or gold. The man may be wealthy and actually promising to have fine jewelry made to augment the natural beauty of the woman, or he might be speaking of what she deserves though it is beyond his means to provide.

Three times in *SoS*, the woman compares her beloved to a gazelle or a young deer. The first time she describes his movements as gazelle-like (2:8-9):

קוֹל דּוֹדִי הִנֵּה־זֶה בָּא מְדַלֵּג עַל־הֶהָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת׃
דּוֹמֶה דוֹדִי לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים הִנֵּה־זֶה עוֹמֵד אַחַר כָּתְלֵנוּ מַשְׁגִּיחַ מִן־הַחַלֹּנוֹת מֵצִיץ מִן־הַחֲרַכִּים׃

The voice of my beloved; behold he is coming, climbing on the mountains, leaping on the hills.
My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag, behold he is standing behind our wall, gazing from the windows, glancing from the lattices.

As I mentioned briefly above, gazelles are a traditional symbol of beauty and grace in Arabic love poetry. The woman shows her desire for the man by using this metaphor.[414] These verses also exhibit other elements that occur frequently in *erotobucolic* poetry, such as overlap between metaphor and poetic reality; it is hard to tell at what point the man stops overlapping with the gazelle and returns to 'reality.' Furthermore, the man appears to be on his way from a distance (he is seen leaping on mountains and hills) but then he is suddenly present by the woman's wall.[415] As before in *SoS*, the lovers are apart one moment and together the next. He covers the terrain quickly, faster than would be possible for a human and perhaps even faster than a gazelle

413 Fox 1985, 105.
414 Fox 1985, 112 adds that the gazelle might also suggest sexual arousal since in spring the gazelles on the mountains seek mates.
415 Exum 2005, 122-6 focuses on the ways that the woman conjures her lover as he comes and goes quickly in these verses.

(he manages to cross multiple mountains and hills in the space of one verse!). His supernatural ability to be present has been taken as a suggestion of his connection to God by those who interpret the passage as a spiritual allegory.[416]

The next two times that the woman refers to the man as a gazelle coincide with her call to him to come to the "mountains of spices" discussed above (2:17, 8:14). Her desire for him to be like a gazelle in these verses is again connected to a need to pass over terrain quickly. In 4:5, she commands him to 'come', 'go,' or , 'flee' (סבב), a verb with the basic meaning 'turn' that usually connotes movement over a greater distance when used in the imperative as in this verse and, in 8:14, she uses the imperative of ברח, a verb that usually means to 'go' or 'flee' but that can mean simply to 'hurry.'[417] These terms have been interpreted variously, but I agree with those who take them as suggesting motion toward the woman, since the mountains of spices could suggest her body parts, which are described as spicy and/or mountainous elsewhere.[418] As in the line above, the gazelle points to the desirability of the man's body. The inclusion of a gazelle simile for the man and a spice simile for the woman in the same verse emphasizes the symmetry of the lovers, showing their mutual desire and desirability.

In accordance with this symmetry, the man also uses gazelles to describe the body of the woman. Twice in *SoS* he uses the same phrase to describe her breasts (4:5, 7:4):[419]

שְׁנֵי שָׁדַיִךְ כִּשְׁנֵי עֳפָרִים תְּאוֹמֵי צְבִיָּה הָרוֹעִים בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים׃

416 Pope 1977, 390 briefly summarizes the interpretations of Christian expositors who see interpret this passage as the bounds that Christ has made and will make during the Advent.

417 BDB ברח

418 Pope 1977, 408-9 and 697-8 discusses various translations of these terms, but favors interpretations that imply motion toward the woman. Fox 1985, 115-6 notes that meanings related either to coming or going are available for סבב, but argues that fleeing (away from the woman) is the primary meaning. Regarding ברה, he argues that it always means to move away or flee, but suggests that he is being asked to flee the companions and come to the woman. Exum 2005, 262-3 offers an intriguing interpretation that relies on the ambiguity of these verses. She suggests that the injunction to flee (from the woman?) to the mountains of spices (to the woman?) is a microcosm for the constant finding and seeking represented in *SoS* as a whole.

419 The first use of this line at 4:5 is more expanded. Verse 7:4 ends with "twins of a gazelle."

Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies.

As I mentioned briefly in my earlier discussion of plants, this line has invited a variety of interpretations from scholars. Since the man does not specify in what way the woman's breasts are like gazelles, people have suggested movement, symmetry, color, and gentleness.[420] Part of what makes this line difficult to interpret is that the man compares the woman's breasts not just to some part of the gazelles, but to two entire gazelles. Thus there is no immediate resemblance in shape or size, which overturns the expectations of many modern readers who are accustomed to hear breasts described in terms of size and shape.[421] The man highlights the importance of symmetry by specifying that the gazelles are twins. Thus symmetry is likely to be the main point of comparison. Since the man also points out the youth of the gazelles, the tenderness or cuteness of her breasts may be important. The significance of these aspects, however, does not prevent the other qualities mentioned above that breasts might share with gazelles from coming to mind for many readers.

I briefly discussed verses 4:1 and 6:5, which describe the woman's hair in comparison to a flock of goats, in my note on metaphor above (4:1, 6:5):

שַׂעְרֵךְ כְּעֵדֶר הָעִזִּים שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מֵהַר גִּלְעָד׃

Your hair is like a flock of goats that is rushing down Mount Gilead.

In that section I focused mostly on interpretations offered by others; in this section I will offer my own interpretation. I agree with Munro and Brenner that the movement of the goats down a mountain is suggestive of the movement, curliness, and length of the woman's hair. I am, however, less certain that goats would suggest a dark color. Since these are goats on a mountain

420 Pope 1977, 470; Fox 1985, 131; Munro 1995, 89; Brenner 1997, 45-9; Exum 2005, 165-6.
421 It seems strange that so many scholars and people have a problem with comparing breasts to gazelles but have no problem comparing people to flowers, which are neither the size nor shape of a human.

in Israel or Jordan, the most likely species is the Nubian ibex (*Capra nubiana*).[422] These goats are actually a light tan color to blend in with their desert environment. While it is possible that at night their silhouettes on a mountain would appear dark, during the daytime a flock would appear as a light tan wave moving down the mountain. The similarity between the color of the goats and the color of the terrain would emphasize their movement, as all the goats would blend into one wave, and it may be that the metaphor would not call color to mind at all for most ancient readers. To the extent that some thought of color, however, they would likely think of the light tan color of the goats and infer that the woman had light hair.[423]

Following shortly after both appearances of the goat simile, the man compares the woman's teeth to sheep (4:2, 6:6):

שִׁנַּיִךְ כְּעֵדֶר הַקְּצוּבׇּות שֶׁעָלׇוּ מִן־הָרַחְצָה שֶׁכֻּלָּם מַתְאִימׇּות וְשַׁכֻּלָה אֵין בָּהֶם

Your teeth are like flocks of ewes that ascend from a washing, that are all paired and there is nothing barren among them.

Scholars agree that the first half of the line describes the whiteness of the woman's teeth since sheep are known for their color and they would be at their whitest after a fresh washing.[424] The second half of the line has, however, caused much disagreement.[425] Difficulty has arisen primarily because of the words תאם (to bear twins, be double) and שכול (to be barren). The presence of a word for barrenness later in the line has led most to translate תאם as "to bear twins," which would leave sheep in sets of threes, i.e., a ewe with two lambs. This does not work as a direct

422 Though there were domestic goats of various colors kept in ancient Israel (Genesis 30:25-31:16), goats streaming down a mountain together are more likely to be unattended, wild, mountain goats.
423 Light hair would make sense on a woman who spent too much time in the sun; it has burned her skin and bleached her hair.
424 Though it is unlikely that all sheep were white (in fact Genesis 30:25-31:16 suggests that they were not), they are proverbially white, as can be seen in Isaiah 1:18.
425 Pope 1977, 461-2 notes that both symmetry and whiteness are integral parts of the metaphor. Fox argues that the twin sheep suggest health and fertility (1985, 129), but Black argues that even the mention of washing and miscarriage suggest filth, hardship, and the danger of childbirth (2009, 134). Bloch and Bloch mention the whiteness, symmetry, and fertility of the image.

parallel to teeth. Conversely, translating this term as "to be double" or as I have rendered it "to be in pairs" works very well for teeth, each of which might be considered a pair either with the tooth across from it inside the mouth or with the tooth that it touches when the mouth is closed.[426] The mention that nothing is barren among them means, as has been suggested before,[427] that the woman is not missing any teeth. My translation leaves out the bearing of twins and de-emphasizes the reproductive meaning of barren in order to clarify one way that this simile can be read as closely describing teeth. Nevertheless, I believe that the suggestion of fertility in the line is intentional, and that readers would see these words as something of a double entendre, portraying the perfection of the woman's teeth and implying her potential fertility.

As with plants, the animals used in *SoS* reveal the unity of the lovers and love itself with nature. The lovers draw on the beauty of the animals in their world to describe the attraction that they feel for one another. Many of the animals that they describe are in pairs or groups (1:15, 4:1, 4:5, 5:12, 6:5, 6:6, 7:4) and many are described in ways that suggest youth or fertility (2:9, 2:14, 4:2, 4:5, 6:6, 7:4, 8:14). Thus the animals are shown having the same desire as the lovers to "multiply," though, even when portraying animals, direct mention of sexual intercourse is avoided and the process of birth is kept in the background. Two other mentions of animals in *SoS* do not describe the lovers, but may provide a metaphor for those who would get in the way of their love. These involve foxes spoiling the vineyard (2:15) and wild predators lurking in the mountains (4:8). I will discuss both of these passages in the next section since they reveal the danger of *erotobucolic* love.

Conclusion

426 Bloch and Bloch 2006, 169 render this verb "to be identical in shape," another possible translation that clarifies a further connection between tenor and vehicle in this passage.
427 Fox 1985, 129; Bloch and Bloch 2006, 170.

Imagery drawn from nature and applied to the beloved is the foundation of *erotobucolic* poetry. As this chapter has shown, *SoS* is replete with images drawn largely from the plant and animal worlds.[428] The *erotobucolic* genre is tied together not by a specific meter or format, but by the way that authors deploy this imagery so that the beloved and the best of nature become entwined. Furthermore, as the next chapter will show for *SoS*, *erotobucolic* poems use nature imagery to explore themes that are important to love such as the dangers of love (both social and psychological), yearning for an absent beloved, and the resemblance of love and worship.

428 There are also many images drawn from art, architecture, and weaponry. I will discuss many of these in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: *Song of Songs: Human and Divine*

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the use of plant and animal imagery to describe the lovers in *SoS*. This chapter will focus on the common themes and imagery of *erotobucolic* poetry that deal with human behavior and the relationship between the human and the divine. I will begin with the dangerous social and psychological possibilities of love as they are portrayed through the personification of love, the comparison of love to illness or madness, and the references to the disapproval of society. Then I will discuss how descriptions of the beloved often parallel descriptions of the divine and how the lovers' devotion can be read as a form of worship. By showing that the same themes seen in Theocritus appear in *SoS* and against the same kind of backdrop, I lay a foundation for understanding the *erotobucolic* as a genre that transcends national boundaries.

The Dangers of Waking Eros

In the introduction to her *Song of Songs* commentary, Exum compares the tone of *SoS* to that of Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn* and finds that *SoS* lacks the element of sadness found in Keats' poem and many other love poems. She concedes that the lovers do not live in a "completely idyllic" world, but remarks that they are too overcome with love to let the worries of the world bother them. She later points out that the lovers of the *SoS* seem to be young because they are courting and surprised by the power of their own feelings despite their ability to describe and converse about love.[429] Courtship and overwhelming feelings might suggest youth, but they may also suggest a new relationship between people of any age. I would argue that the

429 Exum 2005, 4-9.

impression of youth comes primarily from the lovers' naïve certainty that they are loved, that this love will last, and that the future is secure.[430] This certainty is best expressed at 2:16 (repeated at 3:6, and with slight variation at 7:11):

דֹּדִי לִי וַאֲנִי לוֹ

My beloved is mine and I am his.

This degree of confidence belongs to youth and often to first love, since a person who has loved and lost has first-hand knowledge of the way that relationships can change over time.[431] The lovers in *SoS* frequently refer to the attraction that their peer groups feel for the beloved (e.g., 1:3-4, 3:11, 6:9) without any hint of jealousy or fear of losing the beloved.

It is this naiveté that allows the lovers to discount the dangers of love, but their unconcern does not mean that these dangers do not appear in *SoS*. Rather, the lovers either present dangers as easily overcome or mention them elliptically. The poet is aware of the social and psychological dangers of love and has the lovers allude to them regularly; at least one line in each chapter implies danger.[432] The woman faces the social dangers of being treated as a prostitute or attacked by sexual predators. The man, likewise, faces the disapproval of the community, though the consequences differ for him. Nevertheless, he avoids being seen with the woman in the city - likely because if he did take her virginity and it were found out, he would

430 I do not mean to suggest that this will not happen, only that it is by no means certain.
431 See Fischer and Alapack 1987 for a phenomenological study of first love that finds adolescents experience their first love in absolutes, believe that it is unique, believe that the beloved is perfect, see the world as ideal, are innocent about sexual expression (though they may engage in it), communicate constantly, feel a strong emotional connection, are reciprocally involved, focus on the future, and typically choose a beloved who has a similar family background and values. All of these elements with the possible exception of the last are present in *SoS,* and the tension between the woman's family and her chosen beloved creates a dramatic reason for the lovers to sneak around. This study focused on the reported experiences of people from North America and there are cultural differences in the experience of love (Coates 1999), but the text of *SoS* may show that the experience of first love was similar or was imagined similarly for at least some ancient Jewish people.
432 E. g. 1:7, 2:5, 3:5, 4:9, 5:7, 6:4-5, 7:5, 8:6.

bear the legal consequences.[433] Both lovers face the psychological consequences of love that they describe as a sickness or an overwhelming force.[434]

Social Dangers

Social dangers for the woman revolve around the possibility that she will be treated by society (not including her lover) as a prostitute. She reveals her awareness of this problem early on at 1:7:

שַׁלָּמָה אֶהְיֶה כְּעֹטִיָּה עַל עֶדְרֵי חֲבֵרֶיךָ

For why should I be like a woman who veils herself (i.e., a prostitute) in front of the flocks of your companions?

The woman is unwilling to visit her lover while his male friends are around for fear that they will misunderstand her reason for approaching them. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the Hebrew Bible, women who go veiled among men usually have erotic intensions.[435] In order to spare the woman from this misapprehension, the man comes to the her (e.g., 1:4, 2:4, 2:10). Once they are together, he may take her out into the natural world.

Her concerns about traveling without an escort are borne out by her encounters with the watchmen at 3:3-4 and 5:6-7:

מְצָאֻנִי הַשֹּׁמְרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בָּעִיר אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי רְאִיתֶם:
כִּמְעַט שֶׁעָבַרְתִּי מֵהֶם עַד שֶׁמָּצָאתִי אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי אֲחַזְתִּיו וְלֹא אַרְפֶּנּוּ עַד־שֶׁהֲבֵיאתִיו אֶל־בֵּית אִמִּי וְאֶל־חֶדֶר הוֹרָתִי:

The watchmen who go about the city found me - "Did you see him whom my soul loves?"
I had scarcely fled them when I found him whom my soul loves; I caught him and I did not let him go until I had brought him into the house of my mother and into the room of the woman who carried me.

פָּתַחְתִּי אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי חָמַק עָבָר נַפְשִׁי יָצְאָה בְדַבְּרוֹ בִּקַּשְׁתִּיהוּ וְלֹא מְצָאתִיהוּ קְרָאתִיו וְלֹא עָנָנִי:
מְצָאֻנִי הַשֹּׁמְרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בָּעִיר הִכּוּנִי פְצָעוּנִי נָשְׂאוּ אֶת־רְדִידִי מָעָלַי שֹׁמְרֵי הַחֹמוֹת:

433 See below for details.
434 See Exum 2005, 15-7 for a brief discussion of lovesickness in *SoS*.
435 Veiled women are either associated with marriage (Genesis 24:65, 29:23) or prostitution (Genesis 38:14; Ruth 3:15; Isaiah 3:16-23). See Pope 1977, 330-1 and the previous chapter for understanding veiling in 1:7 as a reference to prostitution.

I opened to my beloved but my beloved had gone and turned away; my soul flew out when he spoke; I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not hear me.
The watchmen marching around the city found me, they struck me, they bruised me; the watchmen of the walls took my veil from around me.

The first encounter (3:3-4) seems to happen during the day, after she has risen from searching for him at night in her bed - perhaps in her dreams or restless sleep (3:1-2). She finds her lover immediately after passing the guards (3:4), perhaps implying that there could have been a violent encounter had her beloved not appeared in time. In 5:6-7, when the woman goes out into male territory alone looking for her lover, she is assaulted, perhaps sexually.[436] We are told that she was wearing a veil in a male dominated space, just as she had refused to do earlier. This episode occurs at night; her beloved came to her in her sleep and she got up to follow but he had already left (5:2-6). The woman is left alone in the streets, unprotected, at night when there would be fewer people around. Furthermore, her lover is not nearby to prevent an attack.

An important word in both passages that may imply an attack or at least the fear of one is 'flee' or 'fly away' (עבר), which has a wide semantic range and can be used for any transition or movement toward or away from a place. This verb is one of many verbal reminiscences that ties the passages together. Someone who is reading *SoS* for the first time might simply translate it as 'leave,' not thinking about the possibility for violence in 3:3-4. However, having read 5:6-7 and looking back, they will remember how it was used in 5:6 of the soul leaving the body (a disturbing prospect)[437] and the violence that follows swiftly upon this image.

436 Black 2009, 161 n. 77 gives a quick summary of earlier views on 5:6-7, highlighting the discomfort of scholars with the violence. For an in-depth discussion of the passage and the possibility of sexual assault, see Black 2001. I agree that sexual assault is implied in the situation, especially since her garment is taken, but, as Black notes, no sexual violence is reported explicitly in the text and the woman returns immediately to speaking about her feelings for the man in the next verse.
437 Fox 1985, 146 points out that the exact meaning of this phrase is difficult to determine but provides a few possibilities, all of them unpleasant for the woman (death, fainting, and her soul following the man through longing).

Twice in the poem the lovers express the danger of the *erotobucolic* landscape metaphorically by talking about predatory animals. This first happens at 2:15 where a speaker or group of speakers uses the first person plural to speak of foxes in their vineyard (2:15):

אֶחֱזוּ־לָנוּ שֻׁועָלִים שֻׁועָלִים קְטַנִּים מְחַבְּלִים כְּרָמִים וּכְרָמֵינוּ סְמָדָר׃

Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that are destroying the vineyards; for our vineyards are blooming.

On a literal level, the speaker(s) could be talking about real foxes eating the produce of a vineyard. Such foxes would spoil the beauty of the atmosphere as well as the future crops. However, I believe that context encourages the reader to take these foxes also as a metaphor. The preceding verse, spoken by the man, likens the woman to a dove in the rocks (2:14) and the next verse, spoken by the woman, compares him to a gazelle on the mountains of spices (2:16). Thus the foxes in the vineyard are sandwiched between two animal similes that describe the lovers. As Fox has shown, foxes and other wild canids are often used metaphorically in love poetry for lascivious men.[438] Wolves or foxes usually have a negative connotation that will be present despite the speaker.[439] However, readers interpret this line somewhat differently depending on the perceived speaker.[440]

Verse 2:15 may be spoken by the daughters of Jerusalem, who speak elsewhere, or the girl's brothers, whom Fox argues may speak at 8:8-9, or the lovers themselves.[441] If either the daughters of Jerusalem or the girl's brothers are speaking, then the lovers themselves could be

438 Fox 1985, 114.

439 Pope 1977, 402-5 avoids attributing the lines to a specific speaker, but mentions several commentators who have attributed the lines to the woman, one of whom (Ginsburg 1857, 147) suggests that the woman is quoting what her brothers said when they asked her to keep their vineyard. Fox 1985, 114 attributes these lines to the woman. Exum 1973, 54-5 had suggested that the lines might either be spoken by the daughters of Jerusalem, since they are the only speakers to whom lines in the plural are clearly attributed elsewhere in the poem, or by the woman in response to her beloved's wish to hear her voice (2:14). However, her 2005 commentary firmly attributes the lines to the woman, and interprets them as a call to the daughters of Jerusalem that they should each catch a fox (a man) and catch (i.e., keep) him (Exum 2005, 130).

440 In the concluding chapter, I will analyze some instances where wolves may be used positively, though retaining their lascivious character.

441 Fox 1985, 171-2 is the only commentator that I know of who attributes any lines to the brothers.

the foxes spoiling the vineyards. The daughters of Jerusalem, who are sympathetic to the lovers, might use this image playfully to let the lovers know that it is time to stop "spoiling the vineyard" (i.e., eating its fruit or being sensual together) before they are caught. If the brothers are speaking, then they would be angry - they did charge the woman to keep their vineyard and if she is spending time with the man instead, then indeed they are like two lascivious foxes who destroy a vineyard. However, with one lover speaking before, the other after, and no nearby indication of another speaker, I find it more likely that the lovers are speaking together (and addressing themselves) or that one is speaking but encouraging the other to join them.[442] In this context, the foxes are more likely to be people who want to separate the lovers (thus spoiling their metaphorical vineyard). As foxes, they would most likely be read as lascivious men who want to defile the vineyard (i.e., the woman's body).[443]

Another possible mention of threatening predators occurs at 4:8:

אִתִּי מִלְּבָנוֹן כַּלָּה אִתִּי מִלְּבָנוֹן תָּבוֹאִי תָּשׁוּרִי מֵרֹאשׁ אֲמָנָה מֵרֹאשׁ שְׂנִיר וְחֶרְמוֹן מִמְעֹנוֹת אֲרָיוֹת מֵהַרְרֵי נְמֵרִים׃

Come with me from Lebanon, bride, come with me from Lebanon; look from the cap of Amana, from the cap of Senir and Hermon, from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards.

This verse comes near the beginning of a *wasf* describing the perfection and beauty of the woman. In this context, the line contributes to the description of the woman and her effect on the man. He invites her to look from the mountaintops with him and points out the dangerous animals that live there. If the mountains and big cats are taken as literal obstacles, then this verse suggests that she makes him feel fearless, as though he could overcome any obstacle.[444]

442 Pope 1977, 402 points out that the imperative here (אֲחֻזוּ) is a masculine plural, i.e., it is commanding a masculine plural group (at least two people, one of whom is male) to catch the foxes.
443 Fox 1985, 114 reads this verse similarly as the woman playfully encouraging her beloved to beware of his rivals.
444 Graetz 1871, Fox 1985, 135 and Exum 2005, 168-70 have also argued in different ways that this verse is about the sense of awe that the man feels for the woman and her power. Graetz takes the mountains literally and argues that the man feels powerful with the woman around. Fox, following Gerleman 1965, interprets the verse as a metaphor for the effect of being in love (1985, 135). Exum takes the mountains as another metaphor for the woman

However, reading allegorically, the predatory animals may be understood as the people who object to their relationship. Similarly, he feels that together they will overcome these threats. Reading both the surface and subtexts together connotes that when he is with the woman, all dangers (physical and social) seem easily surmountable. This verse reveals that the lovers of *SoS* are aware that dangers exist in the *erotobucolic* world, but their love makes them feel that they have the power to overcome anything. Many commentators have seen connections between this verse and Mesopotamian sacred marriage literature and the cult of Adonis in particular.[445] While *SoS* may not be directly portraying the woman as a love goddess, descriptions of her have clear parallels in descriptions of ancient Mediterranean love goddesses.[446] If this passage called to mind stories of Adonis for ancient readers, then the sense of danger would be heightened since Adonis was killed by a wild beast. The author of the *SoS* may either undercut the man's sense of invincibility with this subtle suggestion of his mortality or suggest that this woman's power is truly enough to overcome the danger.

The lovers of *SoS* are comfortable speaking about their love to the daughters of Jerusalem and to the friends mentioned at 6:1, but the woman's injunctions to the man that he should come to her at night (2:17, 8:14) imply that she does not want to be caught with him during the daytime. She confirms that they would be in trouble if they were to openly show affection at 8:1:

מִי יִתֶּנְךָ כְּאָח לִי יוֹנֵק שְׁדֵי אִמִּי אֶמְצָאֲךָ בַחוּץ אֶשָּׁקְךָּ גַּם לֹא־יָבֻזוּ לִי׃

(like the mountains of spices) and understands the size of these mountains and presence of dangerous animals as marks that the man is now overwhelmed by the goddess-like attributes of the woman.

445 Pope, 1977, 476-7 summarizes the various interpretations of this verse as related to the cult of Adonis and the love goddess and agrees that this verse makes the most sense when the woman is seen as a love goddess, since the love goddesses are often associated with war, mountains, and beasts. Exum 2005, 169 also mentions the similarity to Ishtar as a goddess associated with lions and leopards. The audience of *SoS* may not have worshipped Adonis, but they were aware of other neighboring gods like Baal and so may have been aware of Ishtar/Inanna and Adonis/ Dumuzi.

446 It could also be said that love goddesses are described like human women, however, ancient texts often reveal an attempt to maintain a difference in the degree of beauty ascribed to mortal women (e.g., Hom. *Od*. 5.215-24; Charit.; Apul. *Met*.) to avoid arousing the jealousy of the goddess.

Would that you were considered like my brother, having sucked the breast of my mother; when I found you outside I would kiss you and still they would not despise me.

As many have argued, it is unlikely that the woman literally wishes that the man were her brother, since that would only make their relationship more taboo.[447] Instead, the woman uses the brother-sister relationship as an example of a relationship in which two people of similar age and opposite gender may show affection in public without reproach.[448] She uses a verb (נתן) that has a variety of meanings, including "to consider," and the prefix כ, which is used in Hebrew to introduce a simile; this language distances the declaration from any idea of incest.

According to Fox, the brother-sister relationship is frequently used as a mark of intimacy between lovers in Egyptian poetry.[449] In both *SoS* and ancient Egyptian love lyrics, "sister" is often used as a term of endearment for the beloved, but that does not necessarily mean that the poems are speaking literally of brother-sister relationships.[450] The description of the man as a brother suckling at her mother's breast is striking, but it fits the imagery of the poem in which women are represented as fertile and nourishing. Furthermore, the imagined suckling of the mother's breast provides a parallel to the kiss that he would be able to give her if society approved.

Since the lovers are unmarried, it is likely that the man would actually face greater social consequences if they were found to have consummated their relationship. I look to the Hebrew Bible for cultural context because, it is the most likely text to have shared an audience with

447 Pope 1977, 655 argues for keeping the particle כ that indicates a simile here. He goes on to summarize various commentator's ways of dealing with the seemingly incestuous wish (655-7). Brenner 1997, 100-1 entertains the possibility of an incestuous relationship in *SoS*.
448 Fox 1985, 166 and Bloch and Bloch 2006, 209 agree that this is a wish for social acceptance of the lovers' affection. Her explanation in the second half of the line confirms this interpretation, yet this verse has made many commentators uncomfortable.
449 Fox 1985, 8.
450 According to Shaw 1992, in the Roman period, brother-sister marriage was common in Egypt. However, he argues that sibling marriage was typically considered taboo in Greek city-states and was strictly forbidden in Rome.

SoS.[451] *SoS* was preserved as part of the same biblical tradition and so many people would have read it along with other biblical texts.[452] According to Exodus 22:16-17, if an unmarried man entices a virgin to have sex with him, then he must marry her. Furthermore, her father has the power to refuse the marriage, but the man is still forced to pay the more expensive bride-price for a virgin.

The man in *SoS* may be concerned that the woman's father, or legal guardians (since brothers are mentioned frequently in the poem) would not permit the marriage. At *SoS* 1:6 the woman mentions that her brothers were angry at her and made her keep their literal vineyards rather than tending to her own metaphorical vineyard. Toward the end of the poem the brothers may argue that she is not sexually mature (*SoS* 8:8-9). These two passages imply that her brothers do not approve of her relationship with the beloved, perhaps not any man if the assignment of 8:8-9 to the brothers is correct. If caught, the man might have to pay a bride price for the woman and yet not be allowed to marry her (Exodus 22:16-17). However, Exodus does not mention any punishment for the woman caught in a premarital relationship, implying that her role is considered secondary and the consequences are minimal (she marries the man with whom she had intercourse, presumably an outcome that she would desire).

A hint of danger (social or psychological) surfaces in the midst of the description of Solomon's bed (3:7-8):

הִנֵּה מִטָּתוֹ שֶׁלִּשְׁלֹמֹה שִׁשִּׁים גִּבֹּרִים סָבִיב לָהּ מִגִּבֹּרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃
כֻּלָּם אֲחֲזֵי חֶרֶב מְלֻמְּדֵי מִלְחָמָה אֵישׁ חַרְבּוֹ עַל־יְרֵכוֹ מִפַּחַד בַּלֵּילוֹת׃

451 All of the earliest Hebrew surviving Hebrew poetry is found in the Hebrew Bible. The eventual inclusion of *SoS* in the cannon suggests either an original sense that it was a religious text or a desire on the part of religious organization to incorporate and reinterpret a text that had already become popular with their people. I am indebted to Michael Fox for suggesting the possibility that *SoS* was brought into the cannon so that the religious leaders could allegorize it and give it a more acceptable meaning.

452 I say preserved rather than composed because it is possible that an early oral version of the Song predates the biblical tradition. The audience of the earlier oral version may have understood the role of the man differently. However, since we cannot be sure of such a version and we can be certain that the version that we have was written and passed down as part of the Hebrew Bible, I will interpret it as a part of the same socio-cultural context.

Behold, the bed of Solomon; sixty mighty men are around it from the mighty men of Israel.
All wielders of the sword trained in war, each man has a sword at his side from dread in the night.

This danger is associated with love because these are the men who protect Solomon's bed, which is "inlaid with the love of the daughters of Jerusalem" (3:10). The dangers of the night remain vague; the poem clarifies neither who is afraid (the men, Solomon, his beloved?) nor what they fear. Many commentators have made convincing arguments that these night terrors should be associated with demons.[453] Because the source of the fear is ambiguous, this might be social danger, such as a physical attack, or psychological danger, such as a nightmare. If we accept that the warriors guard against demons, then they fit somewhere between the social and psychological realm, since they are both a threat that is considered real and dealt with by society and a supernatural threat to the sanity and life of the individual.

In any case, amid the beauty and extravagance of Solomon's bed, there is a reminder that lovers are not safe and are considered especially under attack on their wedding night.[454] They may face the physical dangers of the wilderness, the psychological dangers of nightmares, or the many dangers of demons. Any of these interpretations can be taken metaphorically as well; the wilderness might stand in for the strangeness of society as the newly married lovers would negotiate a new place for themselves, the nightmares could symbolize the madness sometimes brought on by love, and, demons are most closely associated with death on the night that a wedding is consummated.[455]

Psychological Dangers

453 Pope 1977, 435-6 summarizes the arguments of those, especially Krauss (1936), who argue that the night-time terrors are demons. In many cultures, including ancient Jewish culture, demons were thought to be especially prone to attack newlyweds (Trachtenberg 2004, 47-8). Pope himself argues that these verses are best understood as a reference to the *kurgarru* priests of the Ishtar cult who danced with swords, fumigated the temple, and warded off evil with counter-charms (437-40). Fox 1985, 124 and Exum 2005, 47-8 agree with Krauss but remind readers that there are real dangers on any night. Furthermore, Exum highlights the ambiguity of the danger and the extreme preparedness, suggesting that the danger is serious.
454 Trachtenberg 2004, 47-8 and 172-4.
455 Trachtenberg 2004, 47-8 and 172-4.

Above I discussed the attacks on the woman by the guards with respect to its social consequences, now I will look at the psychological consequences of the attack. Though the woman reports the attack by the guards to her friends, she does not worry about the possible recurrence of the incident nor does it change her desire to find her beloved. She only expresses concern about finding her beloved and making sure that he understands her condition. She enlists her friends to find him and explain (5:8):

הִשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם אִם־תִּמְצְאוּ אֶת־דּוֹדִי מַה־תַּגִּידוּ לוֹ שֶׁחוֹלַת אַהֲבָה אָנִי׃

I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, what will you tell him - that I am love-sick.

The quick change in focus shows that the emotional dangers of love trump the physical danger that the woman has just faced. I agree with Fox that this verse makes the most sense in context if it is taken as an attempt by the woman to explain why she had been wandering out in the city alone - her love-sickness is a kind of madness that caused her to behave irrationally.[456] Sickness and madness are frequently described as a dangerous result of giving in to love or, paradoxically, of having love withheld in *erotobucolic* poetry (e.g., Theocr. *Id*. 1, 2, 3; P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 6; P. Harris 5000, Group B: No. 12; *Enki and Ninhursag*).

The woman had also mentioned love-sickness earlier in the poem in the second chapter when she described being with her beloved (2:5):

סַמְּכוּנִי בָּאֲשִׁישׁוֹת רַפְּדוּנִי בַּתַּפּוּחִים כִּי־חוֹלַת אַהֲבָה אָנִי׃

Sustain me with raisin-cakes; refresh me with apples for I am love-sick.

The three final words of the sentence are nearly identical to those of 5:8, though this line appears

456 Fox 1985, 146-7. However, I believe that this meaning can be present whether מַה is taken as a question (with other commentators), or as a negative (Fox). If it is a simple question, then she is asking them to tell her beloved that she is lovesick in order to explain her behavior to the beloved. If it is a negative, she is asking them not to tell her beloved about the episode, but excuses her behavior to them by describing it as lovesickness. Exum 2005, 201 makes a good argument against taking מַה as a negative, pointing out that the woman in *SoS* often behaves irrationally and seems proud of rather than embarrassed by the strength of her love.

in a more positive context; verse 2:5 appears only two verses after the woman described her beloved as an apple-tree, and herself sitting in his shade. If the apple metaphor carries down to this line, then he is paradoxically both the cause of her sickness and the cure.[457] This paradox is foregrounded in many *erotobucolic* poems; love has the power to make people sick (usually this is because unrequited or unfulfilled love becomes overwhelming) and love has the power to make them well (at least lovers believe that union with the beloved will make them well). This verse can also be read literally as the woman asking for food because she is feeling faint. She asks for sweet foods, associated with love (apples) and feasts after important sacrifices (raisin-cakes).[458] Thus, she highlights the mixture of the erotic (pleasant foods) and the divine (sacrifice) in her experience of the beloved.

The refrain of *SoS* that inspired my title warns the daughters of Jerusalem about the danger of Eros, again showing that the lovers are aware of the danger even while they feel confident that they will personally overcome it (2:7, 3:5, 8:4):[459]

הִשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם בִּצְבָאוֹת אוֹ בְּאַיְלוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה אִם־תָּעִירוּ וְאִם־תְּעוֹרְרוּ אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה עַד שֶׁתֶּחְפָּץ׃

I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field; never arouse or awaken love until it pleases.

Some have interpreted this phrase so that 'love' would refer specifically to one of the lovers or that the woman is commanding the daughters of Jerusalem not to interrupt her lovemaking.[460] However, the noun for love (אהבה) does not have a possessive marking or predicate noun that

457 Exum has already noted the paradox that the beloved both causes and cures lovesickness (2005, 116, 201).
458 Exum 2005, 116 points out that these foods are sweets for pleasure, not staples that would satisfy real hunger. There are not many mentions of "apples" (or whatever this fruit may be) in the Hebrew Bible, but fruits are erotic in much other Mediterranean work, seemingly throughout *SoS*, and there is a seductive element to the "apple" in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-19). Raisin cakes (also possibly flagons of wine) appear 3 other times in the Bible - twice in association with sacrifices made by David (2 Sam 6:19, 1 Chronicles 16:3) and once in association with the worship of other gods (Hosea 3:1).
459 The line is shortened at 8:4 by leaving out the animal imagery.
460 Pope 1977, 387 summarizes and addresses the theories of those who see 'love' as one of the lovers. Fox 1985, 109 is among those who argue that the woman asks her friends not to disturb her lovemaking. However, I am convinced by Exum's arguments that this is a less likely reading of the line (2005, 117-8).

would signal one of the lovers, suggesting that it is love in the abstract or love personified that should not be awakened.[461] As Exum argues, for the woman it is too late; she has fallen in love and has been taken over by her desire for the beloved (2:5, 5:8). Though she enjoys time with her beloved (1:1-4, 2:3, 4:16), she has discovered that love is not an experience for the faint of heart (6:10, 8:6) and she warns her friends not to rush into love, but to wait until love decides to come to them.[462] This phrase evokes the idea of love as a latent force that it is dangerous to rouse without fully personifying a love deity.

The man, too, has found that the effects of love can be overwhelming (4:9):

לִבַּבְתָּנִי אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה לִבַּבְתִּינִי בְּאַחַד מֵעֵינָיִךְ בְּאַחֲד עֲנָק מִצַּוְרֹנָיִךְ׃

You have ravished me, my sister, my bride, you have ravished me with one of your eyes, with one ornament from your neck.

Looking upon the smallest part of the woman or even just a small part of an object associated with her is enough to make the man feel overcome with love.[463]The verb לבב, often translated as 'ravish' shares the root of the word for heart.[464] Thus, it has been taken both as 'ravish' or 'capture the heart' and as 'encourage' or 'hearten.'[465] Though Exum notes that the man is overwhelmed, she differentiates the ways in which the man and the woman speak of love, arguing that the woman speaks of her emotions (lovesick) and the man of power relationships

461 Pope 1977, 387 notes that "Words for love are virtually personified in many poetic uses and love certainly has a will of its own, fickle as it may be." Parallels in Greek poetry show that an injunction against arousing love could be taken more literally. For instance, in the Anacreontic poems, Eros is often portrayed as a mischievous boy who is best left alone (e.g., 28, 30, 31, 33, 35) and a Hellenistic or Augustan bronze statue of a sleeping Eros (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art) may also suggest the dangers of waking the love god.

462 Exum 2005, 117-8 provides the arguments of commentators who have seen this as an adjuration that the women not disturb the lovemaking of the lovers and those who have seen it as an adjuration that the women not fall in love before they are ready. She favors the interpretation that it is a didactic statement to warn the daughters of Jerusalem.

463 Fox 1985, 136 points out that a bead on a necklace was sometimes called an 'eye' (עין) and that the word צור can mean both 'neck' and 'necklace', creating a double pun in this line.

464 BDB לבב.

465 Pope 1977, 478-80 provides the arguments for both sides. He adds that 'heart' in Mesopotamian literature is frequently associated with sexual passion and so, even when translated as ravish, the verse implies the man's arousal. Furthermore, he points out that the power of beauty to ravish is a common trope of love poetry. Exum 2005, 170-1 points out that the two interpretations are not very different because when lovers say that their hearts have been ravished or captured, they mean that they are inflamed with passion.

(ravished).[466] However, I read lovesickness and being ravished as very similar things, both suggest a loss of control on the part of the person who experiences them.

The intense effect of the woman's eyes on the man is emphasized again in verse 6:5:

הָסֵּבִי עֵינַיִךְ מִנֶּגְדִּי שֶׁהֵם הִרְהִיבֻנִי שַׂעְרֵךְ כְּעֵדֶר הָעִזִּים שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מִן־הַגִּלְעָד׃

Turn your eyes away for they have overcome me; your hair is like a flock of goats that is rushing down Mount Gilead.

Though the description of the woman is generally positive, as Pope remarks, her eyes arouse love that is too intense for the man to bear.[467] Love even when requited, can be overwhelming as well as pleasing.[468] Just as in 4:9, the overwhelming love that is associated with the eyes, causes a lover to lose self-control, an important virtue in many Mediterranean cultures.[469] The loss of self-control occasioned by love is a source of anxiety for *erotobucolic* lovers like the man here, who asks the woman to look away so that he can restore his composure. Alternately, he may comment on her gaze in order to compliment the woman by exaggerating the effect of her look in a playful way.[470]

This power of love to overwhelm is not dependent on social status, though it may be culturally determined. Many love poems speak of the "universal" nature of love within their own society; at least in poetry, a king and a beggar or even a god and a mortal will experience love in the same way.[471] Whether *SoS* is interpreted as the story of a king and a shepherd who love the same woman, a shepherd who feels like a king in the presence of his beloved, or a king who acts like a shepherd to spend time with his beloved in nature, it reveals the equalizing power of love

466 Exum 2005, 172.
467 Pope 1977, 564.
468 Barthes 1978, 10-2.
469 Rabbinic writings show that self-restraint was an important ideal, through to be achievable only by men, in ancient Judaism (Satlow 1996). Davidson 1999 explains the importance of self-restraint in Classical Athens by discussing diversions from the ideal. Romans similarly found self-control important as can be seen in Cicero's *De Officiis* and the writings of Stoics like Seneca (e.g., *On Self-Control*).
470 I am indebted to Fox for pointing out this possibility.
471 E. g. *Hom. Hymn. Ven.*, Theoc. *Id.* 14, Ovid *Met.* 1.473-524.

For instance, though the man may not actually be a king, he argues that the effect of the woman would be the same if he were (7:6):

רֹאשֵׁךְ עָלַיִךְ כַּכַּרְמֶל וְדַלַּת רֹאשֵׁךְ כָּאַרְגָּמָן מֶלֶךְ אָסוּר בָּרְהָטִים׃

Your head upon you is like Carmel and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is imprisoned in [your] tresses.

Social status will not save a man or woman from being overtaken by love. Love and nature are forces beyond the control of men.[472] Like Fox and Exum, I find it most likely that the lover is describing himself as a king (probably metaphorically) who has been captured by her love.[473] However, it is also possible to take the king literally; either meaning that the man is a king or that he believes another king is interested in the woman. Any interpretation will reveal the overwhelming power of love that transcends social boundaries.

The man also implies his trepidation in the presence of the woman at 6:10:

מִי־זֹאת הַנִּשְׁקָפָה כְּמוֹ־שָׁחַר יָפָה כַלְּבָנָה בָּרָה כַּחַמָּה אֲיֻמָּה כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת׃

Who is that looking down like the dawn, beautiful like moon, pure like the sun, as dreadful as an army.

All of the comparisons to heavenly events or bodies in this line might imply the overwhelming nature of the woman's love. Many commentators have noted that comparisons to the moon and sun imply that she is connected to love goddesses such as Ishtar and Aphrodite.[474] The final image of the line clarifies that her impact on the beloved can be read negatively. Though the meaning of דגל in this verse is not completely clear, I have translated it 'army' based on the verb אים, which can mean simply 'awesome', but usually has a negative connotation like 'terrible' or

472 Remember that for ancient peoples nature was a true threat. I don't think that ancient people could have imagined that men would ever have the kind of control over farmland that we do now; we have killed off many natural predators, created pesticides for bugs, and use herbicides for weeds. Ancient men did cause some animals to become extinct, but at a much slower pace (Barnosky et al. 2011). Wild nature was beautiful, but there was real fear for farmers that it would encroach on their property and even city dwellers were aware of the food shortages that could be caused by a drought or a plague. I will discuss this aspect of nature in *erotobucolic* poetry in more detail in the concluding chapter.

473 Fox 1985, 161; Exum 2005, 237.

474 Pope 1977, 573.

'dreadful.'[475] An army can be beautiful when it prepares for battle because of the large force and their exquisite gear.[476] These same attributes cause the army to strike fear into its opponents. In the same way, the woman is beautiful to the man that she loves and terrifying because, like an army, she can overwhelm and rule him.

Near the end of *SoS*, the woman makes a general statement about the nature of love (8:6-7):

שִׂימֵנִי כָחוֹתָם עַל־לִבֶּךָ כָּחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעֶךָ כִּי־עַזָּה כַמָּוֶת אַהֲבָה קָשָׁה כִשְׁאוֹל קִנְאָה רְשָׁפֶיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ שַׁלְהֶבֶתְיָה׃
מַיִם רַבִּים לָא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה וּנְהָרוֹת לָא יִשְׁטְפוּהָ אִם־יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶת־כָּל־הׇוֹן בֵּיתוֹ בָּאַהֲבָה בּוֹז יָבוּזוּ לוֹ׃

Place me like a seal on your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy is as harsh as the underworld; its flashes are flashes of fire, a flame.
Many waters are not able to quench love nor can floods wash it away; if a man would give all the wealth of his house it would be utterly despised.

The overpowering strength of love in these verses can be read positively or negatively. If read positively, love gives the lovers power that equals death and will withstand any attempts to destroy it. The equality of love and death in 8:6 might relate to *Inanna's Descent to the Nether World*, in which Inanna seems to make a deal with her sister that Dumuzi will stay in the underworld for 6 months and live with Inanna for 6 months each year.[477] Thus death and love are given equal weight, perhaps suggesting for lovers like those in *SoS* that while death cannot be completely overcome, its harshness can be softened by love. If read negatively, then love overcomes the lovers; its effect on them is stronger than death and no matter what they do they will not be able to escape it. I believe that the ambiguity of these lines is intentional and that the author emphasizes the duality of love - that it is simultaneously a blessing and a curse, a sickness

475 BDB אים; דגל. Other commentators including Pope 1977, 573; Fox 1985, 150; and Exum 2005, 211 take אים as 'awesome' and דגל as 'eminent' or, in Pope's case, 'trophies.'
476 Sappho *Fr.* 16 contains a similar description of the beauty of an army.
477 Alster 1996. This is similar to Demeter's deal with Hades that Persephone will stay in the underworld with her husband for 3 months and aboveground with her mother for 9 months (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 445-9).

and a cure.[478]

While the dangers of love are usually only a subtext in *SoS*, there are enough passages that contain an awareness of social and psychological dangers to show their overall importance to the text. The verses that I have discussed show that not only the author of *SoS*, but also the lovers themselves are aware of the dangers brought about by love; sickness, loss of control, and social reprimand. The presence of danger for lovers in an idyllic natural setting is a common feature of *erotobucolic* poetry, as I have shown in my discussion of Theocritus in the second chapter.

Searching and not Finding

Time after time in *SoS* the lovers search for each other and seem to come together, but soon after they are looking for one another once more without any clear narrative description of how they were separated.[479] Though love may be fulfilled in the *erotobucolic* mode, the focus is always on desire and absence. Authors use two strategies to maintain the sense of longing; they can either write about unrequited love which will always involve longing for the unwilling beloved, or they can have lovers with mutual feelings who are kept apart by societal or familial expectations.[480] The author of *SoS* uses the second strategy, portraying a couple whose love is mutual, but is obstructed by the pressures of society and a disapproving family.[481]

---

478 Theocritus' *Idyll* 11 similarly emphasizes the dual nature of love, as I discussed in Chapter 1.

479 Exum stresses this aspect of *SoS* (2005, 6-7, 9-13).At least once in each chapter, except for 7, one of the lovers searches for the other. In between these searches, they are often together, but the frequent and sudden departures remind the audience that they can be separated at any time.

480 Greek and Roman authors usually write about unrequited love (e.g., Sappho, Anacreon, Theocritus), Egyptian Lyric poetry uses both strategies (see Fox 1985, 7-81 for examples), Sumerian sacred marriage literature usually involves a specific variation of mutual love in which the lovers are separated by the divide between divinity and mortality; they may come together for a time, but the mortal partner is doomed to die (see Nissinen and Uro 2008).

481 This is not unique in the *erotobucolic* mode, but it is uncommon. Later *Daphnis and Chloe*, a Greek novel with strong ties to the *erotobucolic* mode, contains lovers who are constantly together and yet are unable to find out how to fulfill their sexual desire. See above for a discussion of the age of the lovers and details of the societal difficulties that they face.

After the opening lines, in which the woman appears to be with the man as he brings her to his chambers (1:1-6), the woman suddenly asks where she can find the man, and he responds (1:7-8):

הַגִּידָה לִּי שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי אֵיכָה תִרְעֶה אֵיכָה תַּרְבִּיץ בַּצָּהֳרָיִם שַׁלָּמָה אֶהְיֶה כְּעֹטִיָּה עַל עֶדְרֵי חֲבֵרֶיךָ׃
אִם־לָא תֵדְעִי לָךְ הַיָּפָה בַּנָּשִׁים צְאִי־לָךְ בְּעִקְבֵי הַצֹּאן וּרְעִי אֶת־גְּדִיֹּתַיִךְ עַל מִשְׁכְּנוֹת הָרֹעִים׃

W: Tell me, whom my soul loves, where do you pasture and where do you rest [your flocks] at noon; for why should I become like a woman who wraps herself up beside the flocks of your companions?
M: If you do not know for yourself, beautiful among women, make your way in the tracks of the flocks and pasture your kids in the dwelling places of the shepherds.

Both lovers wish to be together, but the woman is anxious about approaching the entire group of male shepherds as they rest.[482] In *erotobucolic* poetry, the heat of noon is often the time of day that people seek shelter in a *locus amoenus* where, in turn, they become susceptible to the dangers of love.[483] The woman may ask where her beloved will be at noon because she would like to be with him alone during this erotically charged time, Pope notes the erotic nature of words for pasturing.[484]

After another series in which they seem to be together, the woman describes the beloved approaching from a distance (2:8-9):

קוֹל דּוֹדִי הִנֵּה־זֶה בָּא מְדַלֵּג עַל־הֶהָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת׃
דּוֹמֶה דּוֹדִי לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים הִנֵּה־זֶה עוֹמֵד אַחַר כָּתְלֵנוּ מַשְׁגִּיחַ מִן־הַחַלֹּנוֹת מֵצִיץ מִן־הַחֲרַכִּים׃

The voice of my beloved; behold he is coming, climbing on the mountains, leaping on the hills.
My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag, behold he is standing behind our wall, gazing from the windows, glancing from the lattices.

The woman watches for her lover, attuned to the sound of his voice and his movements as he approaches from a distance. The man does not speak, but shows his desire by traveling to visit

482 See above for the reasons.
483 That noon is a time for erotic encounters is especially true in the *Idylls* of Theocritus. Pope 1977, 329 addresses the importance of the noon hour in *SoS*.
484 Pope 1977, 328.

the woman and peering in, trying to catch sight of her.[485] Exum provides a close reading of these lines with respect to the searching and finding of the lovers. She discusses how the woman plays with verb tenses to make it seem like the action is unfolding at that very moment as well as how the man is at one moment present and the next has disappeared again. She compares his 'search' for the woman in 2:8-17 to the woman's search for him at 3:1-5.[486] I agree that these stories are closely related and told in sequence so as to highlight the importance of searching, desire, and finding in the poem.

After the initial lines in which the man approached the woman's house (2:8-9), the changes in the location of the man come rapidly. For instance, see 2:9-13 where the man asks the woman to come with him, but it is not clear how or if they are together yet; there has been no mention of him entering the house. The lovers are apart again at 2:14,[487] the man speaks of his desire to see the woman and hear her voice:

יוֹנָתִי בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֶּלַע בְּסֵתֶר הַמַּדְרֵגָה הַרְאִינִי אֶת־מַרְאַיִךְ הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי אֶת־קוֹלֵךְ כִּי־קוֹלֵךְ עָרֵב וּמַרְאֵיךְ נָאוֶה׃

My dove in the crannies of the cliff, in the secret places of the steep; let me see your appearance, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and your appearance is lovely.

Each lover at different times expresses the desire to see the other and hear his or her voice, and yet it appears in the text as a dialogue, as though they were already together. This sameness highlights the equality and mutual desire of the lovers. Furthermore, by playing with the presence or absence of the lovers, the author maintains the sense of desire and longing even while the lovers are able speak to one another.

Her first search for the beloved in the city makes the yearning of the woman explicit (3:1-3):

485 In Arabic tradition, a look from a gazelle can make a man sick even to death (Sumi 2004, 153). The gazelle may be important to the power of the man's gaze over the woman as well.
486 Exum 2005, 122-3.
487 See the previous chapter for a discussion of the dove as a symbol of inaccessibility in this verse.

עַל־מִשְׁכָּבִי בַּלֵּילוֹת בִּקַּשְׁתִּי אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי בִּקַּשְׁתִּיו וְלֹא מְצָאתִיו׃
אָקוּמָה נָּא וַאֲסוֹבְבָה בָעִיר בַּשְׁוָקִים וּבָרְחֹבוֹת אֲבַקְשָׁה אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי בִּקַּשְׁתִּיו וְלֹא מְצָאתִיו׃
מְצָאוּנִי הַשֹּׁמְרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בָּעִיר אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי רְאִיתֶם׃

On my bed in the night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him but I did not find him.
I will get up now and go to the city in the streets and the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves; I sought him but I did not find him.
The watchmen who go about the city found me - "Did you see him whom my soul loves?"

The absence of the beloved creates dramatic tension within the poem. Many commentators have understood this passage as a dream sequence.[488] Fox points out that the verb tenses in these and the following verses add to the ambiguity of the passage (are the lovers together or not? what is the sequence of events?).[489] Conversely, Exum sees the verbs in the future tense as quotations of words that were spoken at the time and therefore adding to the immediacy of a narrative about a past event.[490] Searches for a physically or emotionally unavailable beloveds appear in various ways in the *erotobucolic* genre; here the search is made literal as the woman goes out into the streets to find the beloved.[491]

At the end of this search, the woman finds her beloved (3:4), but before long they are apart again (4:16):

עוּרִי צָפוֹן וּבוֹאִי תֵימָן הָפִיחִי גַּנִּי יִזְּלוּ בְשָׂמָיו יָבֹא דוֹדִי לְגַנּוֹ וְיֹאכַל פְּרִי מִגְדָּנָיו׃

Wake North wind and come South wind and breathe upon my garden so that its spices may flow out, let my beloved come to his garden and eat the preferred fruits.

The woman needs to invite her beloved to the garden, suggesting that he has been away. Nevertheless, in the next verse, the man claims that he has already come to his garden (5:1). As in the previous passages, the tenses of 4:16-5:1 are varied so that, as Exum puts it, "sexual union

488 Pope 1977, 414-6 discusses this possibility and a variety of others, but argues that this search is 'real' and is related to the searches of Mesopotamian goddesses for their beloveds. Fox 1985, 117-8 also discusses the dream interpretation but ultimately dismisses it.
489 Fox 1985, 118.
490 Exum 2005, 133-4.
491 Theocritus' *Idylls* 2 and 12 also make this search literal.

is simultaneously anticipated, deferred, and enjoyed."[492] For a brief time they are together again, enjoying the pleasure of the garden.[493]

Again the possibility that much of *SoS* takes place in a dream is suggested, for, in the next verse, the woman is roused from her sleep as the beloved comes to her door (5:2-4):

אֲנִי֙ יְשֵׁנָ֔ה וְלִבִּ֖י עֵ֑ר קֹ֚ול ׀ דּוֹדִ֣י דוֹפֵ֔ק פִּתְחִי־לִ֥י אֲחֹתִ֖י רַעְיָתִ֑י יונָתִ֥י תַמָּתִ֖י שֶׁרֹּאשִׁ֣י נִמְלָא־טָ֔ל קְוֻצֹּותַ֖י רְסִיסֵ֥י לָֽיְלָה׃
פָּשַׁ֣טְתִּי אֶת־כֻּתָּנְתִּ֔י אֵיכָכָ֖ה אֶלְבָּשֶׁ֑נָּה רָחַ֣צְתִּי אֶת־רַגְלַ֔י אֵיכָכָ֖ה אֲטַנְּפֵֽם׃
דּוֹדִ֣י שָׁלַ֤ח יָדֹו֙ מִן־הַחֹ֔ר וּמֵעַ֖י הָמ֥וּ עָלָֽיו׃

I am asleep but my soul is awake - the voice of my beloved pounds - "Open to me my sister, my companion, my dove, my perfect one; my head is full of dew, my locks with the drops of the night."
I have taken off my garment; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet: how will I make them dirty?
My beloved stretched his hand through the opening and my viscera were aroused because of him.

Though the woman is reluctant at first, in the end it is she who ends up searching for the man, once again placing herself in the danger of the streets (5:6-8)

פָּתַ֤חְתִּי אֲנִי֙ לְדוֹדִ֔י וְדוֹדִ֖י חָמַ֣ק עָבָ֑ר נַפְשִׁ֣י יָצְאָ֔ה בְּדַבְּרֹ֖ו בִּקַּשְׁתִּיהוּ֙ וְלֹ֣א מְצָאתִ֔יהוּ קְרָאתִ֖יו וְלֹ֥א עָנָֽנִי׃
מְצָאַ֨נִי֙ הַשֹּׁמְרִ֔ים הַסֹּבְבִ֖ים בָּעִ֑יר הִכּ֥וּנִי פְצָעֻ֛וּנִי נָשְׂא֥וּ אֶת־רְדִידִ֖י מָעָלַ֑י שֹׁמְרֵ֖י הַחֹמֹֽות׃
קַמְתִּי֙ אֲנִ֣י לִפְתֹּ֔חַ לְדוֹדִ֖י וְיָדַ֣י נָטְפ֣וּ־מֹ֔ור וְאֶצְבְּעֹתַ֖י מֹ֣ור עֹבֵ֑ר עַ֚ל כַּפֹּ֣ות הַמַּנְעֻֽול׃

I arose to open to my beloved and my hands dripped myrrh and my fingers dripped sweet-smelling myrrh on the handles of the bolt.
I opened to my beloved but my beloved had gone and turned away; my soul flew out when he spoke; I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not hear me.
The watchmen marching around the city found me, they struck me, they bruised me; the watchmen of the walls took my veil from around me.

I have discussed the similarities between this passage and 3:1-5 with regard to the social dangers above. It is also similar, as Exum has discussed at greatest length, in the tense changes and constant comings and goings of the lovers.[494] At times like 5:8, it seems as though the lovers search in vain. Though *erotobucolic* works are about attempts to bring opposites together (human and divine, men and women, young and old), the process is difficult, dangerous, and frequently fails; *SoS* hints at the possibility that love will fail without ever indicating that the lovers in this

492 Exum 2005, 162.
493 See the previous chapter for the symbolism of the garden and its contents.
494 Exum 2005, 186-201.

particular story have failed.

Throughout the rest of chapter 5 the lovers are apart and the woman describes her beloved to the daughters of Jerusalem (5:8-16). At the beginning of chapter 6, they ask her where her beloved can be found (6:1):

אָנָה הָלַךְ דּוֹדֵךְ הַיָּפָה בַּנָּשִׁים אָנָה פָּנָה דּוֹדֵךְ וּנְבַקְשֶׁנּוּ עִמָּךְ׃

Where has your beloved gone, beautiful among women; where has your beloved turned? We will seek him with you.

Earlier in *SoS*, the woman said that other women were interested in the man (1:3-4). This offer by the daughters of Jerusalem to help find him after hearing her description of his beauty reinforces the idea that he is attractive to many. Not only the one woman, but all women long to see him.[495] Lovers in *erotobucolic* literature often describe the effect of their beloved on others, and sometimes compliment them by describing their love as irresistibly drawing multiple suitors.[496]

As quickly as they had lost one another, the lovers are back together and the woman says that he is in his garden at 6:2:

דּוֹדִי יָרַד לְגַנּוֹ לַעֲרוּגֹת הַבֹּשֶׂם לִרְעוֹת בַּגַּנִּים וְלִלְקֹט שׁוֹשַׁנִּים׃

My beloved has gone down to his garden to the beds of spices to graze in the gardens and to pick lilies.

The despair that was hinted at in 5:2, gives way to another erotic encounter. The abundance of a garden in bloom is an apt metaphor for what the lovers wish to share, but love, like a garden, will flourish only in certain conditions and may require careful tending. The lovers of *SoS* may have their difficulties, but they always return to the abundance of the garden, suggesting that their love is a success.

---

495 Exum 2005, 209-10 argues that this is a rhetorical question and that the women have already helped the woman to find her lover by giving her the opportunity to praise him. While it is true that the woman has already found the beloved, it is not clear whether or not the other women know this until she reveals it in the next verse and so I am not certain that it is a rhetorical question. In either case, the line can still be seen to reveal their interest in the man.
496 See concluding chapter for examples and comparisons.

At the beginning of chapter 8, the woman's words imply that the lovers are apart or, in any case, remind the audience that it is difficult for them to be together (8:1-2):

מִי יִתֶּנְךָ כְּאָח לִי יוֹנֵק שְׁדֵי אִמִּי אֶמְצָאֲךָ בַחוּץ אֶשָּׁקְךָ גַּם לֹא־יָבֻזוּ לִי׃
אֶנְהָגְךָ אֲבִיאֲךָ אֶל־בֵּית אִמִּי תְּלַמְּדֵנִי אַשְׁקְךָ מִיַּיִן הָרֹקֵחַ מֵעֲסִיס רִמֹּנִי׃

Would that you were considered like my brother, having sucked the breast of my mother; when I found you outside I would kiss you and still they would not despise me.
I want to lead you and bring you to the house of my mother; she would teach me to give you a drink from the spiced wine, from the juice of my pomegranate.

Society has kept them apart, but the woman longs to be with the man and to legitimize their relationship (see above). *Erotobucolic* poetry often idealizes, but rarely realizes the dream of a lasting and accepted relationship. In many *erotobucolic* poems, the lovers may use the promise of a legitimate relationship to trick a beloved into a temporary liaison.[497] The poem ends without any certain indication of consummation or marriage, and so it is left to the reader to imagine whether or not the lovers will have a lasting happy ending.

As I mentioned in my introduction, love poetry tends to be written from the perspective of lovers who cannot be together for one reason or another. If they were together, then they would be too busy enjoying one another's company to speak about it. *SoS* gives the lovers an interesting motive for speaking about their love and desire despite their mutual longing. Their love is not approved by society or the woman's family, but they are able to escape and be together at times. During the times that they are apart, they compensate by remembering and describing the beloved. Memory and "conjuring," to use Exum's term, are woven together throughout the poem along with times that the lovers appear to be together and speaking to one another directly. Overall, this creates an ambiguous narrative that leaves the reader uncertain of

497 Cf. Theocritus *Idyll* 2; Archilochus *Cologne Epode*. See the concluding chapter for more details. The lovers in *SoS* strike me as sincere, perhaps because they each voice their desire in similar terms; if one is trying to trick the other, it is impossible to say which.

when events take place and whether or not they are 'real.' *Erotobucolic* literature invites polysemy because it begins with the ambiguity between 'real' and metaphorical landscapes.

Divine Love and the Beloved as Divine

As I briefly mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, both Judaism and Christianity have long traditions of reading *SoS* as an allegory for divine love. In Judaism, the woman has usually been taken as a symbol of Israel and the man taken as representative of God. In Christianity, the woman has typically been understood as an allegory for the church and the man as an allegory for Jesus. There have since ancient times been those from both religions who read the text literally, but they have been in the minority. Each verse of the text can be interpreted in various ways based on these allegorical understandings. An in-depth analysis of these interpretations is outside the scope of my project, but I will discuss some of the major trends.[498]

In Judaism, though the interpretation of individual passages varies, the broad allegory of Israel and God can be found in the Talmud, the Targum, Midrash Rabbah, and some medieval commentators (notably Saadia, translation 1926; Rashi, translation 1958; and Ibn Ezra, translation 1874). In the Targum, the allegory is tied to biblical events from Exodus to the anticipated coming of the Messiah. Some Jewish intellectuals in the medieval period offered an alternate interpretation with the man and woman representing the active and passive aspects of the intellect. In the late sixteenth century Don Isaac Abravanel (translation 1995) was the first to propose that *SoS* was Solomon's song about his love of wisdom. Thus, Solomon speaks as himself and only the bride is allegorical. Since the eighteenth century, many Jewish interpretations have diverged from the allegorical reading of *SoS*.

498 For a closer look at the allegorical tradition from the ancient to the modern period, see Pope 1977, 89-229.

Early Christian commentators also vary in their interpretation of specific parts but generally agree that *SoS* is an allegory for the love between Christ and the church or Christ and the individual believer.[499] This interpretation continued to dominate until the twelfth century. In the twelfth century, as the worship of Mary developed, some identified the woman of *SoS* as the Virgin Mary; these interpretations tended to describe Mary as similar to other great fertility goddesses. This interpretation competed with the traditional allegorical interpretation for some time. Like Jewish intellectuals, some Christian intellectuals ascribed to the understanding that *SoS* was about the active and passive aspects of the human mind. Brightman, perhaps following the Targum, related the *SoS* to the history of the Church up to the second coming. Others continued to follow the Targum more closely and interpreted the text according to the history of Israel. Few varied from these interpretations until the nineteenth century, when Johann Leonhard von Hug (1813), suggested that *SoS* described a dream (even when understood as a dream, *SoS* is still often interpreted as an allegory about the love between God and Israel or the Church).[500]

This tradition of reading the poem as a love affair between the divine and the human ties *SoS* to sacred marriage literature from other parts of the Mediterranean.[501] In other sacred marriage texts there is typically a "wedding" between a divinity and a human that brings fertility to the earth. In most cultures a sacred marriage describes a fertility goddess, such as Inanna, Ishtar, or Aphrodite taking on a mortal man as consort.[502] Some Greek stories of Zeus' affairs with mortal women, such as Io and Europa (Ovid *Met*. 1.568-746; 2.833-3.2), may also be understood as sacred marriages since these women give birth to sons that found entire nations of

499 E. g. Origen, an Alexandrian scholar of the early to mid 3rd Century CE; Gregory of Nyssa, Bishop of Nyssa in the late 4th Century CE; Philo of Carpasia, a 4th Century bishop; Jerome, a christian scholar of the 4th and 5th Century CE; and Theodoret of Cyrus, a bishop of the mid 5th Century CE.
500 This and the previous paragraph rely primarily on information from Pope 1977, 89-229.
501 This connection has been made by many twentieth century scholars, for example Kramer 1969, Pope 1977, 145-53; Carr 1979; and Nissinen 2008.
502 See Nissinen 2008 for examples from various cultures and time periods.

people. Allegorical interpretation of *SoS* is more abstract (i.e., it is not traditionally read as indicating that this love between God/Jesus and the human causes crops to grow or leads to human fertility), but the poem incorporates similar images of abundance, fertility, and luxury to describe the coming together of human and divine partners.

The numerous nature metaphors in *SoS* were discussed in the previous chapter, but there are also many metaphors in the *SoS* that describe the lovers in terms of precious materials. It has often been noted that these segments make the lovers sound like statues,[503] especially the description of the man at (5:10-6):

דּוֹדִי צַח וְאָדוֹם דָּגוּל מֵרְבָבָה׃
רֹאשׁוֹ כֶּתֶם פָּז קְוֻצּוֹתָיו תַּלְתַּלִּים שְׁחֹרוֹת כָּעוֹרֵב׃
עֵינָיו כְּיוֹנִים עַל־אֲפִיקֵי מָיִם רֹחֲצוֹת בֶּחָלָב יֹשְׁבוֹת עַל־מִלֵּאת׃
לְחָיָו כַּעֲרוּגַת הַבֹּשֶׂם מִגְדְּלוֹת מֶרְקָחִים שִׂפְתוֹתָיו שֽׁוֹשַׁנִּים נֹטְפוֹת מֹר עֹבֵר׃
יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב מְמֻלָּאִים בַּתַּרְשִׁישׁ מֵעָיו עֶשֶׁת שֵׁן מְעֻלֶּפֶת סַפִּירִים׃
שׁוֹקָיו עַמּוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מְיֻסָּדִים עַל־אַדְנֵי־פָז מַרְאֵהוּ כַּלְּבָנוֹן בָּחוּר כָּאֲרָזִים׃
חִכּוֹ מַמְתַקִּים וְכֻלּוֹ מַחֲמַדִּים זֶה דוֹדִי וְזֶה רֵעִי בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִָם׃

My beloved is shining and rosy, conspicuous among thousands.
His head is pure gold; his gathered locks are as black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves washed in milk and set along the rim beside the channels of water.
His cheeks are like a garden of balsam, a tower of spices; his lips are lilies dripping with flowing myrrh.
His hands are rings of gold set with beryls; his body is carved from ivory inlaid with sapphires.
His legs are pillars of marble set upon pedestals of refined gold; his form is like Lebanon, choicest like the cedars.
His mouth is sweetness and he is desirable in every way. This is my beloved and this is my companion, daughters of Jerusalem.

The woman verbally crafts the image of her lover from ivory, gold, precious stones, valuable woods, and marble. These are the same materials used in other cultures around the Mediterranean to create images of the gods.[504] Biblical law forbade the creation of such cult

503 Pope 1977, 535 discusses the relationship between the description, particularly the golden head at 5:11, to other descriptions and findings of cult statues. Exum 2005, 202-3 understands the precious materials as metaphorical references to the man's value to the woman instead of to his similarity to statues. I argue that the description would carry both the implication that he is valuable and that he is similar to a cult-statue, if not truly in his appearance, then in his importance and suitability for worship. That is to say that even if the woman is practicing the Jewish religion, she would be tempted to worship the man just as in many instances throughout the Hebrew Bible the Jewish people were tempted to worship idols from other cultures, see citation below.

504 In Greece and Rome many cult statues were chryselephantine, that is, made from ivory and gold; examples include the cult statues of Athena Parthenos and Olympian Zeus. Other statues were akrolithic, that is made of wood and stone, usually marble; the cult image of Apollo Bassitas and the colossal statue of Constantine are examples. Pope 1977, 538-9 highlights the word meaning "to set" (מלאת), which is related to a term used for the setting of gems (מלא) and remarks on the practice of making statues with eyes of jewel inlay. I agree that this description calls to mind the eyes of statues more than real eyes. Even where statues survive the eyes have often been removed, but for a surviving example see the Riace Bronzes. I give examples only from Greece and Rome because I am most

images,[505] but many stories in the Hebrew Bible show that the people were familiar with these images and even sometimes turned to them. The woman's description of her lover as a statue implies that his beauty is nearly divine.[506] The spices in description are expensive perfumes that were sometimes used as offerings or to anoint cult statues.[507]

The images of man-made crafts here are interlaced with a few natural metaphors like those discussed above. Descriptions of the woman also contain both types of metaphors but the balance is reversed so that she is more associated with nature and the man is more associated with material wealth. In the Hebrew Bible, God is depicted as the craftsman of the earth and the creator of the animals. Therefore, when the lovers are described as plants or animals they are associated not with the handiwork of man but with the craftsmanship of god – an even closer connection to the divine.

Conclusion

SoS follows the same patterns that I discussed in the first two chapters regarding Theocritus; it contains natural metaphors for love, social and psychological danger, yearning, and a connection between love and the divine. In some places there are even more striking parallels between Theocritus and *SoS* such as the foxes in the vineyards (the first connection to be widely recognized), the description of a woman as dark but beautiful, the comparison of a woman to a lovely horse, and the desire of one lover to sit in the shade of their beloved as a tree. All of these are elements and images that reappear in *erotobucolic* literature. I will show in the conclusion

---

familiar with literature from those areas, but Greek statuary was influenced at various times by Egypt and the East (e.g., the Orientalizing Period) and so it is likely that cult statues from other parts of the Mediterranean were similar. Most cult statues made of precious materials were later destroyed and the materials were reused, so surviving literary descriptions are important for understanding the appearance and construction of ancient cult images.

505 Exodus 20:4.

506 Cf. Anacreontic "paintings" 16, 17; see concluding chapter for more examples and comparisons.

507 Detienne 1977, 5-36.

that they are to be found not only in Theocritus and *SoS*, but also in other *erotobucolic* works written around the Mediterranean throughout antiquity.

Conclusion: *Wreathing Garlands*

Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I hope to have shown that there are enough similar themes in *SoS* and the poems of Theocritus to support the theory that they are part of the same genre, which I have named the *erotobucolic*. I have used *SoS* and Theocritus to provide a basic definition of this genre. These chapters have likely raised some questions: for instance, how widespread was *erotobucolic* poetry? Though I have limited the discussion to *SoS* and Theocritus for the sake of brevity, *erotobucolic* poetry, like epic, can be found in many cultures. In this chapter, I will show that the same elements seen in *SoS* and Theocritus (plant imagery, animal imagery, danger, yearning, and divinity) can be found also in other Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian poetry. Since the similarities that I have discussed thus far are broad, readers may wonder if they are coincidental rather than part of a distinct genre with its own traditions. Specific examples in this chapter will show more than a coincidental relationship and will suggest that a poetic conversation about the nature of love was being carried out across the ancient Mediterranean.

In this chapter, I will consider a few specific types of plant and animal imagery, since to explore all of the striking parallels connecting the Mediterranean *erotobucolic* texts would entail yet another book. As I analyze this imagery, I will speak more theoretically about the themes rather than cataloging all of the examples. In order to keep this task to a manageable limit, I am discussing only a few Greek and Roman authors (primarily Homer, Sappho, Anacreon, Vergil, Ovid, and Horace). In addition, I will examine those Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels, available in English translation, that stand out to me as the most similar. By descrbing at these examples I hope to show that the *erotobucolic* elements that I pointed out in earlier chapters are not limited to Theocritus and *SoS*. Furthermore, by looking at a greater number of examples, I

can determine which elements of an image are basic to the genre and which are unique to a specific culture or poet.

At the end of my conclusion, I will briefly look beyond the Mediterranean to see if *erotobucolic* elements appear in other cultures. I will not be able to definitively determine the scope of the *erotobucolic* or all of its implications in one monograph. Nevertheless, I believe that my attempts encourage others to compare texts that would otherwise have been studied separately and create useful terminology and criteria for talking about this genre.

Plants and Animals

As Barthes has described, language fails the lover when he or she attempts to describe the beloved.[508] There is no language unique to Eros;[509] love poets face this aporia of erotic language by borrowing from the language of other topics, such as war (Archilochus, Sappho, Propertius, Ovid)[510] and scholarship (Callimachus, Catullus, Ovid).[511] *Erotobucolic* poets mainly borrow their language from nature, creating erotic metaphors and similes based on the natural world. As I have argued in previous chapters, the overarching trait of the *erotobucolic* genre is the extent of the overlap between love/the lovers and nature that is created when the poet describes the lovers with metaphors drawn from their setting. My section titles, drawn from modern song lyrics, show that these metaphors have made a powerful and lasting effect on depictions of love in the West.

Run Through Your Wicked Garden

---

508 Barthes 1978, 18-21; Kristeva 1987, 1-2.
509 Kennedy 1993; Rosenmeyer 1999.
510 See Rissman 1983 for a seminal work on erotic war imagery in Sappho. Many books and articles have been written on militia amoris or the soldiery of love in the Latin elegists (e.g., Baker 1968; Murgatroyd 1975; Stahl 1985; Cahoon 1988; and Gale 1997)
511 There are already hints that the beloved woman is (metaphorically) the text in Callimachus Aetia Fr. 1.9-12, Propertius writes of a scripta puella at 2.10.8, and Ovid 3.12 closely associates Corinna with the books that describe her.

One of the most influential metaphors in *erotobucolic* poetry is the description of a beautiful, often cultivated natural setting. In all *erotobucolic* literature, the garden (or *locus amoenus*) appears as the setting for love. I have already discussed the extended passage in *SoS* (4:12-5:1) in which the beloved woman is compared to a cultivated garden.[512] The poet used the garden to describe the beauty, sophistication, pleasant variety, and nourishing effect of the beloved. Similar passages can be found in Egyptian literature, but the other literatures that I have studied do not compare women to entire gardens (though, as I will discuss below, they do compare them to parts of gardens). In Mesopotamian literature, the garden may also be the result of lovemaking. A brief look at passages from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Homer, Anacreon, and Ovid will serve to establish the "universals" and variations of the garden motif in ancient *erotobucolic* and their implications.

One Egyptian lyric, similar to but more succinct than the *SoS* passage at 4:12-5-1, describes a woman: "I am yours like the field/ planted with flowers/ with all sorts of fragrant plants./ Pleasant is the canal within it, which your hand scooped out."[513] Rather than listing the contents of the garden, the woman simply lets the audience know that there are many kinds of plants and that they are fragrant. The man "owns" this garden and has even created the canal, but it is not locked and so the emphasis on fidelity is absent. Like the field, she is his for now, but she leaves open the possibility that some day she may belong to another. In another Egyptian lyric, a woman declares, "I am headed to the 'Love Garden,'/ my bosom full of persea (branches),/ my hair laden with balm."[514] In the second poem, the woman travels to the garden, perhaps

512 See Chapters 1 and 3.
513 P. Harris 500, Group C: No. 18. All translations of Egyptian love poems are from Fox 1985.
514 P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 8.

suggesting that the man is the garden in this case, though more likely the "Love Garden" is a metaphor for the two of them together.[515]

In a Sumerian poem, King Shulgi (a consort of the goddess) encourages Inanna to go to a garden with him to make it fertile: "My sister, I would go with you to my garden,/ My fair sister, I would go with you to my garden,/ My sister, I would go with you to my garden,/ My sister, do you [fructify?] my garden?"[516] Here, as in the *loci amoeni* of Theocritus, the garden is primarily a place where the lovers can go and only subtly a metaphor for their bodies. In another Sumerian poem that combines narrative with the words of Inanna and Dumuzi, Inanna says to him, "Plow my vulva man of my heart!" In the following line, the poet describes: "At the king's lap stood the rising cedar,/ plants rose high by his side, grains rose high by his side, . . . [and] gardens flourished luxuriantly by his side."[517] Here, as in some Greek literature, the act of intercourse is described as plowing (i.e., cultivating nature).

The primary example of a *locus amoenus* in Greek literature is Hera's seduction of Zeus in a magical bed of flowers in Homer's *Iliad* (14.346-51):

Ἦ ῥα καὶ ἀγκὰς ἔμαρπτε Κρόνου παῖς ἣν παράκοιτιν·
τοῖσι δ' ὑπὸ χθὼν δῖα φύεν νεοθηλέα ποίην,
λωτόν θ' ἑρσήεντα ἰδὲ κρόκον ἠδ' ὑάκινθον
πυκνὸν καὶ μαλακόν, ὃς ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὑψόσ' ἔεργε.
τῷ ἔνι λεξάσθην, ἐπὶ δὲ νεφέλην ἕσσαντο
καλὴν χρυσείην· στιλπναὶ δ' ἀπέπιπτον ἔερσαι.

Then the son of Chronus took his wife in his arms
And under them the ground sent forth fresh-budding grass,
Dewy lotus and crocus and hyacinth
Thick and soft, which kept them aloft from the ground.

515 Note that the woman has more freedom to move than human women in most of the erotobucolic poetry of other literature; she departs without an escort and with no fear of being seen as a social inferior; contrast the woman of SoS and Simaetha of Theocritus' Idyll 2, who move about the city but worry about the social implications. The only other human female in ancient erotobucolic poetry that I'm aware of moving this freely without negative consequences is Nausicaa in the Odyssey, a princess from a suspiciously magical land, whose behavior seems exceptional in comparison to other Homeric women like Penelope, Helen, and Andromache.
516 Kramer 1969, 100.
517 Kramer 1969, 59.

They lay on it, and they were shrouded in a cloud,
Beautiful and golden, and sparkling dew fell from it.[518]

This garden springs up magically during the lovemaking of the gods, similar to the plants that are born from the unions of the Sumerian gods. The garden is not a metaphor for the gods, but it is such an appropriate place for lovemaking that it sprang into existence for the occasion. Furthermore, the garden is like the gods in that it is beautiful, luminous, and sprung from the earth.

In a later example, one of the Anacreontic poets writes of enjoying love in an exotic garden (32.1-6, 13-5):

᾽Επὶ μυρσίναις τερείναις
ἐπὶ λωτίναις τε ποίαις
στορέσας θέλω προπίνειν·
ὁ δ᾽ ῞Ερως χιτῶνα δήσας
ὑπὲρ αὐχένος παπύρωι
μέθυ μοι διακονείτω.
. . .
ἐμὲ μᾶλλον, ὡς ἔτι ζῶ,
μύρισον, ῥόδοις δὲ κρᾶτα
πύκασον, κάλει δ᾽ ἑταίρην·

On tender myrtles
On lotus and grass
Having lain down I want to drink deeply.
And Eros having bound his cloak
Around his neck with papyrus
Will serve me wine.
. . .
For me rather, while I still live,
Myrrh, and a head thick
With roses, and call a courtesan.

The Anacreontic garden is not as explicitly linked to the bodies of the lovers as are the gardens of some other *erotobucolic* literature, but it contains some of the same fragrant plants and relies on the same sense that such a spot is appropriate for sexual encounters.

In Roman literature, the works of Vergil and Ovid, especially the *Eclogues* and

518 All translations of Greek and Latin texts are my own; Greek text is from the TLG.

Metamorphoses, contain some of the best known examples of the *locus amoenus* in ancient literature. For brevity, I will limit myself to one typical example of from each. *Eclogue* 10, a poem about the death of Gallus, contains a *locus amoenus* full of trees, meadows, flowers, and springs. As Gallus pines away in this beautiful place, he sings about his love for Lycoris. Gallus cannot have Lycoris, who pursues another (10.22-3). Likewise, he cannot stay in the *locus amoenus* as he is called to war (10.44-5), a parallel that suggests the connection between beloved and landscape seen in other *erotobucolic* poetry. The *Metamorphoses* is a poem of epic length, made up of many vignettes and correspondingly many *loci amoeni*. One such location is the grove near the sea in which Peleus rapes Thetis (11.229-236):

myrtea silua subest bicoloribus obsita bacis;
est specus in medio (natura factus an arte
ambiguum, magis arte tamen), . . .[519]

A myrtle grove is nearby covered with bicolored fruits;
There is a cave in the middle (made by nature or art
It is uncertain, more likely art however) . . .

The backdrop for the affair contains all of the elements of a Theocritean landscape: trees, water, shade, and a place for repose. Unlike Theocritean and Vergilian *loci amoeni* (but in accordance with Homer, Anacreon, and much of non-Latin *erotobucolic*), this location becomes the backdrop for a sexual encounter. Ovid draws attention to the competition between art and nature in craftsmanship. Though one might expect that this remote grove, the resting place of a goddess, would be the product of nature, the narrator suggests that it was more likely created by art. The insistence on art reminds the reader that the mythic grove only exists through Ovid's description and is therefore a product of art.

The passages discussed above and those from Theocritus and *SoS* all have in common

519 All text of Ovid is from Tarrant's 1945 edition.

that a beautiful natural setting is the ideal place for love, or, in the absence of a beloved, for singing about love. Furthermore, they all expand on the particular plants and features that make a setting pleasant. Though only Egyptian and Hebrew poetry compare a person to an entire garden, as we will see, all of the poets discussed draw on the same plants from the setting as metaphors for the human body. Thus they all represent human love as an inextricable part of nature.

Nevertheless, each culture or poet provides a unique perspective on the relationship between human love and abundant nature. The poet of *SoS* uses the idea of a locked garden belonging to the lover to stress the importance of fidelity. Sumerian poems tend to be sexually explicit and to show the fertility of nature as a direct result of lovemaking of anthropomorphic divinities. In the two passages above, the gardens are either made fertile by this process or are birthed by the goddess after lovemaking.[520] Homer and most other Greek *erotobucolic* describe sexual intercourse as taking place in the *locus amoenus* or shortly after a woman is taken from such a place (Mosch. *Eur.*), but Theocritus' shepherds typically reject or are rejected by their beloveds and so they sing about love rather than participating in it despite their ideal location. Thus, the focus shifts from the beauty of love to the beauty of poetry.[521] Like Theocritus' shepherds, Vergil's are more likely to sing in and about the *locus amoenus* than to actually make love in it. Additionally, they are far more likely to sing of politics along with love.[522] Ovid's

520 These songs were performed during rituals to improve the fertility of the land (Kramer 1969, 59-66; Nissinen and Uro 2008, 1-6). Though I am focusing on the fertility aspect of the rite here, I do not mean to deny the political component of the sacred marriage in legitimating the king. Furthermore, the fact that the king's reign was legitimated through a ritual that highlighted his ability to bring fertility to the land shows that fertility was a major concern of the populace. The explicit nature of the poetry likely exists to ensure the effectiveness of the ritual. A similar phenomenon exists in ancient prayers and magic tablets, as these are often extremely specific in order to ensure the gods' attention and cooperation. For instance, see Greek magic tablets (Faraone and Obbink 1997) and Cato the Elder's record of a Roman prayer (Agr. 141).

521 This metapoetic tendency existed in the erotobucolic poetry of other nations and in other Greek poets, as my discussion below will show, but it was emphasized in the Idylls.

522 The political had been mixed with the erotic and natural in some works of Theocritus (see especially Id. 14-7), but, while these political moments seem the exception in Theocritus' Idylls, it is difficult to find an Eclogue that does not contain references to the political situation in Rome.

Metamorphoses shifts away from singing and back toward sex or (since this is a story about transformations) attempted sexual intercourse in the *locus amoenus*. I do not mean to suggest that there is an evolution of the garden image starting with Sumerian literature and ending in Ovid, but rather that each poet, drawing on various influences (often unknown to us), worked with the garden image to create a poem about love and the natural world that resonated with the people of his or her culture and time period.

Hungry Eyes

An *erotobucolic* motif that is closely related to the garden is the description of the lover as an analogue or replacement for food and drink; just as nature and the gardens discussed above satisfy these needs, the beloved becomes a source of or even a replacement for these necessities. In many cases, love is compared to alcohol or other intoxicants that, like love, can change a person's state of mind in addition to providing nourishment. Alternately, they may be compared to something sweet, such as honey (a metapoetic reference to the sweetness of the poetry or song). I have already discussed passages in Theocritus (1.146-8; 7.78-85; 10.36) and *SoS* (1.2, 4; 2:14; 5.1) that describe the beloved as food or drink, but variations on this theme can be found in other cultures as well.

In one of the Sumerian sacred marriage poems, the bride says to the groom, "Goodly is your pleasure, honey-sweet."[523] Later in the same poem, she speaks to him of her own sweetness: "My god, sweet is the drink of the wine-maid./ Like her drink sweet is her vulva, sweet is her drink,/ Like her lips is her vulva, sweet is her drink."[524] Different images are used to describe the sweetness of the man and the woman, but love is pleasantly sweet for both of them. In the

523 Kramer 1969, 92. Some translations of Sumerian texts are Kramer's and other are Pritchard's, they are differentiated in the footnotes.
524 Kramer 1969, 94.

description of the woman's kisses and vulva, the poet combines the pleasure of sweetness with a hint of intoxication, since her drink is wine.

In an Egyptian lyric, a woman says of her beloved "Your liquor is your lovemaking,"[525] while a young man declares elsewhere, "I'll kiss her/ her lips are parted-/ I'm happy without beer."[526] A woman in yet another Egyptian lyric says, "To hear your voice is pomegranate wine (to me):/ I draw life from hearing it."[527] At first glance, it seems strange that the woman compares his incorporeal voice to a physical substance, wine. However, like wine, a voice can mesmerize. Furthermore, to a lover, the sound of the beloved's voice seems like a "basic need." The similarity between these passages, two spoken by women and one by a man, show that in Egyptian lyric, as in other *erotobucolic*, the effects of love are not gendered. Love nourishes and intoxicates people of both sexes. These Egyptian passages highlight the intoxication of love and do not mention its sweetness.

At other times, as in Horace *Ode* 1.13, only the sweet or pleasant aspect of the mouth is mentioned (1.13.15-6):

. . . oscula, quae Venus
quinta parte sui nectaris imbuit.[528]

. . . mouth, which Venus
imbued with a fifth part of her own nectar.

525 P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 4C. I am relying on Fox's translation of the Egyptian lyrics.
526 Cairo Love Songs, Group A: No. 20G
527 P. Harris 500, Group C: No. 18.
528 All text of Horace is from Wickham's 1963 edition.

Her sweet mouth can again suggest kisses and, at the same time, poetry like that of Horace.[529] Though Horace wrote in lyric instead of elegiac meters, he may be influenced by the Roman (and possibly Hellenistic Greek) elegiac tradition that closely associated the beloved woman with the poetic corpus.[530] Kisses not only nourish the erotic needs of the author, but also provide the fodder for his poetic material.

All of the passages studied have in common that they add to the nourishing aspect of love by suggesting that love is either particularly sweet or intoxicating. Since food is associated with the mouth, poets naturally tend to associate this power of love with kisses. Voices, since they issue from the mouth, also become associated with the sweet, intoxicating ability of the beloved. Description of a voice makes sense in performed poetry, since by describing these qualities in a beloved's voice, the poet metapoetically suggests his or her own skill in using a voice to seduce and "feed" the audience. Some authors, such as Theocritus, describe the connection between sweet mouths and poetry more overtly, but this interpretation is plausible even for the passages that do not explicitly mention song.

Love your Peaches, Wanna Shake your Tree

A specific image, drawn from the orchard motif, that appears in several *erotobucolic* poems is that of the beloved as a tree. The beloved male is usually a fruit tree, often translated as

529 Horace's extended description of the sweetness has caused some to wonder why her mouth should only be one fifth (quinta parte) as sweet as Venus' nectar. Some suggest that it could be related to an ancient debate about the sweetness of honey as compared to nectar, and others that her mouth is the "quintessence" (i.e., the perfect embodiment) of sweetness. Macleane and Chase 1866, 260 mention only the honey; Smith 1895, 46 and Shorey and Laing 1906, 185-6 mention both possibilities. Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 consider these possibilities with still another — that there is some relationship to Aristotle's fifth element or to the five parts of love mentioned in early commentaries. They come down decidedly in favor of the interpretation that Lydia's kisses are sweeter than honey but not so sweet as nectar. I suggest a more metapoetic, playful interpretation. Horace's praenomen is Quintus, the feminine of which would be Quinta; here I think that Horace is punning on his name. Venus has given Lydia's mouth Horatian, poetic sweetness. Perhaps this poetic sweetness even passed to her when she was kissed by the poet himself. This pun would imply that Lydia's sweet mouth rightly belongs with Horace, which accords with the theme of the poem, an attempt to convince Lydia to leave a younger lover and rejoin the poet.

530 For a discussion of the elegiac puella as a metaphor for the author's writing rather than a real woman, see Wyke 2002.

'apple,' though the ancient fruit is often unknown.[531] Beloved females are frequently, described as palm trees. As I have previously argued regarding the tree motif in Theocritus (12.8-9) and *SoS*(2:3; 7:9), this image blends metaphor with 'real' poetic landscape (lovers frequently describe spending time together in gardens and orchards).

An excerpt from a Sumerian composition about Inanna shows what I read as an explicit use of the tree to refer to male genitalia: "At the lap of the king, the high-standing cedar . . ./ The plants stood high by (his) side, the grain stood high by (his) side,/ The garden flourished luxuriantly by his side."[532] Other plants may be at his side, but the cedar, the tallest of those plants mentioned, in his lap is sexually suggestive. This passage is preceded by Inanna's question as to who will plow her vulva, Dumuzi's affirmative response, and Inanna bathing in preparation for a sexual encounter. In this context, the tree is almost certainly a symbol of the phallus. The tree makes an apt metaphor for the phallus not only because of its height, shape, and strength but also because it is associated with the fertility of nature.

Another passage highlights the generative power of the man as apple tree. In one passage from a Sumerian sacred marriage hymn, the woman primarily describes the man as lettuce.[533] Nevertheless, she also says, "My apple tree that bears fruit up to (its) top."[534] As I mentioned in Chapter 1 during my discussion of the similar apple tree metaphor of *SoS* 2:3, the attribution of fruit-bearing, seemingly the analogue of giving birth, to the male is unusual and may hint at the divine origins of *erotobucolic* lovers. In ancient myth, early gods both male and female bear

531 Several possible fruits are suggested by commentaries on SoS and a similar variety of fruits would have been available in other parts of the ancient Mediterranean (Pope 1977, 37; Fox 1985 107).

532 Prosperity in the Palace, Pritchard 1969, 643.

533 See Detienne 1977, 60-71 for a discussion of the symbolism of lettuce; in most of his sources, lettuce is an anaphrodisiac and may also be associated with death.

534 The Honey-man, Pritchard 1969, 645.

children either through a sexual encounter or asexually.[535] Alternately, the apples may suggest not the man's offspring, but his procreative organs.[536] In keeping with the sexual symmetry of *erotobucolic* poetry, women too are commonly described as trees. However, they more frequently appear as palm trees, perhaps because these had been associated with the cult of Ishtar/Inanna.[537] One ancient text describes Ishtar herself as a palm tree,[538] and another is fragmentary but associates Inanna with the date-palm.[539]

One Egyptian lyric, known as *The Orchard*, livens up the comparison by having the tree itself speak and describe its similarity to the beloved (Turin Love Song: No. 28):

The persea tree moves his mouth and says:
"My pits resemble her teeth,
my fruit resembles her breasts."

Later in the same song, the poet again reverses expectations, this time by describing a sycamore tree like a beautiful young woman (No. 30B):[540]

The drops (?) in her mouth -
they're bees' honey.
She is beautiful, her leaves [lovely]
[She is (?)] verdant and (?) flourishing (?).

The poet maintains the *erotobucolic* convention of associating beloved and tree to the point that, without context, it would be impossible to guess whether a woman or a tree is described. At the same time, the poet enlivens his or her work by imagining trees that speak and take an active interest in the lives of the lovers who spend time in the orchard.

535 Hesiod relates that Aphrodite herself was born from sea foam and Ouranus' genitals, and though Athena was conceived by Metis, she was born from Zeus' head (Theogony 190-204, 886-900). For an in-depth discussion of male pregnancy in Greek literature, see Leitao 2012.
536 With regard to SoS 2:3 and 8:5 Black suggests, playing on an interpretation of 8:5 by Goulder (1986, 7, 18-9), that the apple tree might stand in for the male genitalia — the trunk would be the shaft and the apples the testicles. The same interpretation could be argued for this passage.
537 Wittekindt 1925; Teppo 2008.
538 Lambert 1960, 11.18-20.
539 Love in the Gipar, Pritchard 1969, 638.
540 For the sake of space, I am only excerpting the first few lines, as the comparison is 12 lines long.

In Greek literature, the motif of a woman as a tree first appears in Homer, during Odysseus' journey to a paradisal land called Phaeacia (Book 6). The idyllic nature of Phaeacia lends itself to the inclusion of *erotobucolic* passages in this epic poem. Odysseus describes Nausicaa (*Od*. 6.160-3):

οὐ γάρ πω τοιοῦτον ἴδον βροτὸν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,
οὔτ' ἄνδρ' οὔτε γυναῖκα· σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα.
Δήλῳ δή ποτε τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῷ
φοίνικος νέον ἔρνος ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα·

For I have not seen such a mortal with my eyes,
Neither man nor woman. Awe holds me looking upon [you].
Once in Delos by the altar of Apollo
I observed such a new sapling of a date-palm growing.

Though Odysseus and Nausicaa are not lovers, Odysseus flatters her with the language of love.[541] Just like a lover, he claims that words fail him when he looks upon her, but then he draws upon nature to find a comparison. The comparison to this tree is made more complimentary by placing the tree near the altar of Apollo, associating it and therefore the woman with divinity.

A fragment by Sappho compares a woman not to a palm or apple tree, but to an apple itself (*Fr.* 105a):

οἷον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρωι ἐπ' ὔσδωι,
ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτωι, λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπηες,
οὐ μὰν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐπίκεσθαι

Just like the sweet-apple reddens on the top of the bough,
The top of the very top, and the apple-pickers forgot it,
Rather they did not forget it, but they were not able to reach it.

The gender of the comparison would be unknown since the Greek is neuter to match the apple, but Himerius reports that these lines were part of an *epithalamium* or marriage hymn in which Sappho compared the bride to an apple and the groom to Achilles (*Or.* 1.16). Presumably, if the

541 Pope 1977, 633 notes this as an example of the tendency to compare women to date-palms. The story of Nausicaa and Odysseus makes many references to marriage, and though Odysseus knows that he wants to return to Ithaka, at times Nausicaa and her family hope that she might marry him (Od. 6-7).

woman is the apple that was inaccessible to most apple-pickers, then her groom is the apple-picker who was finally able to reach it. Like other *erotobucolic* comparisons, this image highlights the compatibility of the lovers; she has kept herself unattainable for most men, but gives herself to one outstanding man.[542]

The tree need not always be a fruit-bearing tree; in two Greek passages (*Id*. 12.8-9 and *Anac*. 18.8-15), an image of the lover desiring to sit under the beloved/tree appears, but the pleasure is found in the shade, comfort, and support of the beloved rather than in the taste of fruit. One of the Anacreontic poets desires to sit in the shade of the famed beloved of Anacreon, Bathyllus (18.8-15):

τὸ δὲ καῦμα τῶν ἐρώτων,
κραδίη, τίνι σκεπάζω;
παρὰ τὴν σκιὴν Βαθύλλου
καθίσω· καλὸν τὸ δένδρον,
ἁπαλὰς δ' ἔσεισε χαίτας
μαλακωτάτωι κλαδίσκωι·
παρὰ δ' αὐτὸ νέρθε ῥοιζεῖ
πηγὴ ῥέουσα Πειθοῦς.

How do I escape
The burning heat of loves, heart?
By the shade of Bathyllus
I sit. The tree is beautiful,
And it shakes delicate hair
With the softest little branches.
And right under it flows
A running stream of Persuasion.

Each of these passages suggests the pleasure of the *locus amoenus*, the heat of the sun, and shade. The Anacreontic passage adds the presence of running water.[543]

542 Campbell (1982, 282) suggests that the simile is elaborated for its own sake, frequently a possibility for similes in erotobucolic poetry (cf. SoS, Homer, Theocritus). In this case, however, I prefer Himerius' suggestion that the continuation of the simile is an elaboration of the relationship between man and woman. It shows that she was not forgotten or neglected by others, but that she was "out of their reach."
543 It is perhaps significant that fruit is left out of these two passages that are both about homosexual relationships (no chance of offspring), but, without more examples or ancient commentary, I hesitate to read too much into the choice of trees in these passages.

The desire to interact erotically with a human described as a tree recurs in Ovid's telling of Apollo's love for Daphne, a nymph who rejects him and is changed into a laurel tree. The passage contains many *erotobucolic* motifs (*locus amoenus*, love, divinity, use of simile) and ends with the god fondling the transformed nymph (*Met*. 553-6):

hanc quoque Phoebus amat, positaque in stipite dextra,
sentit adhuc trepidare nouo sub cortice pectus,
complexus suis ramos ut membra lacertis,
oscula dat ligno; refugit tamen oscula lignum.

Apollo even loves this [tree] , and with his right hand placed on the trunk,
He senses the breast still trembling under the new bark,
Having embraced her branches as arms with his own arms,
He gives kisses to the wood; still the wood rejects the kisses.

What once was metaphor becomes, in Ovid, a 'reality' — the woman has transformed into a tree. Ovid parodies the tradition by showing what would actually happen if a person were to love a tree in the way that the traditional metaphors of the beloved as tree suggest.[544]

Regardless of the tree chosen, the beloved and nature become one in the *erotobucolic* passages that describe people as trees (and trees as people!). Like the descriptions of people as gardens discussed above, one of the primary effects of these passages is to further associate the lovers with the natural world. Specifically, most of the passages show that both trees and the beloved provide a lover with pleasure (fruit or kisses/sex) and/or an escape from manual labor (shade or dalliance).

Within this tradition, there is latitude for cultures or authors to put their own 'spin' on the beloved as tree motif. As before, the Sumerian passages are the most overtly sexual. The passage about Inanna even continues to describe reproduction in a way that suggests the fertility of humans and nature. The Egyptian lyrics, or at least the author of *The Orchard*, use tree

544 Anacreontic 60 briefly tells the story of Daphne and Apollo as well. It contains a similar moment in which Apollo plucks the leaves off of the trees in place of sex, but the poet does not carry on the metaphor for as long. I am inclined to read Ovid as a parody, but opinions vary on the valence of his work. See especially Richlin 1992, 158-79.

metaphors more playfully, showing that the metaphor works just as well when reversed so that the tree becomes the tenor and the person the vehicle. Homer foregrounds the impossibility to aptly describe the "beloved" and the recourse to the most wondrous things in nature - so unique as to recall the divine - in order to capture the effect of the beloved. Sappho likewise highlights the remarkable nature of the beloved. The Anacreontic, like Theocritus, focuses on the basic pleasures to be offered by the beloved, and mutual love that relieves the pain of Eros. Ovid makes the overlap between woman and tree literal and complete, showing that the metaphor becomes laughable when the lines between man and nature are completely erased rather than blurred.

Slow your Mustang Down

Women in *erotobucolic* poetry, especially those just coming into sexual maturity, are frequently compared to horses.[545] As my previous discussions of Theocritus (*Id*. 2.48-51, 18.29-31) and *SoS* (1.9) mention, horses were a luxury in the ancient Mediterranean. Their speed made them useful in sport and war, but they were rarely used in daily travel because they require more pasture and are able to carry less than donkeys or camels. Their luxury status and use in battle meant that they were often wore expensive armor and trappings. Thus, they were considered beautiful and desirable (not in an erotic way, per se, but just as the desire for food can be metaphorically transferred to lust, so can the desire for luxury goods). Furthermore, a horse must be tamed before it can be safely ridden or used to pull a chariot, and in societies that considered men dominant, this could be taken up as a simile for the sexual "taming" of young girl that transitioned her into full womanhood.

545 It may seem strange to a modern, western audience that horses were primarily used to describe women, since we more often consider horses virile (stud, stallion). It is impossible to know with certainty why erotobucolic poets chose to feminize horses, but I think it likely that they did not usually want to characterize men as tame; the primary animals used as analogs to men are gazelles and wolves, both wild creatures.

I was unable to find any translations of surviving Mesopotamian texts that compared a woman to a horse in an erotic context, but one Ugaritic text has been translated that describes a horse goddess.[546] Pope mentions this text in his discussion of *SoS* 1:9 but does not argue for influence from this text or an identification of the woman in *SoS* with the mare goddess.[547] While neither direct influence nor identification is likely, the presence of an early mare goddess may have affected the development of erotic horse imagery used to describe women in *erotobucolic* literature.

Egyptian literature separates itself from the general trend of horse imagery in other *erotobucolic* by using horses to describe virile men.[548] A woman in one lyric says to her lover, "Hasten to see your sister, like a horse (dashing) [onto a battle]field."[549] In another poem, *Three Wishes*, a woman expands the comparison of man to horse:

If only you would come (to your sister swiftly,)
  like a royal horse,
the choicest of a thousand among all the steeds,
  the foremost of the stables.
As his provender so his (stride) —
  for his master knows his pace.
If he hears the sound of the whip
  he cannot (be restrained).
There is no captain among the foreign troops(?)
  who can overtake him.[550]

Like the horse images in *erotobucolic* poetry from other cultures, these passages portray the desirability and luxury of the beloved, but unlike surviving *erotobucolic* from other cultures, they highlight the strength, speed, and indomitable nature of the war-horse.

Perhaps the most famous erotic comparison of a woman to a horse in ancient Greek

546 Ugaritica 5.7.
547 Pope 1977, 340-1.
548 Theocritus 2.48-51 does compare Delphis to a horse, but as I discussed in Chapter 1, the image is feminizing. Vergil loosely translating Idyll 2 in Eclogue 8 changes the metaphor so that instead of a mare, Daphnis (replacing the name Delphis) becomes a lovelorn heifer looking for a steer (8.85-9).
549 P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 2.
550 P. Chester Beatty I, Group B: No. 39.

literature is Anacreon's *Thracian Filly* poem. The short poem focuses on the narrators desire to tame a young woman (417):

πῶλε Θρηικίη, τί δή με λοξὸν ὄμμασι βλέπουσα
νηλέως φεύγεις, δοκεῖς δέ μ' οὐδὲν εἰδέναι σοφόν;
ἴσθι τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἄν τοι τὸν χαλινὸν ἐμβάλοιμι,
ἡνίας δ' ἔχων στρέφοιμί σ' ἀμφὶ τέρματα δρόμου·
νῦν δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκεαι κοῦφά τε σκιρτῶσα παίζεις,
δεξιὸν γὰρ ἱπποπείρην οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην.

Thracian filly, why indeed looking askance with your eyes
Do you stubbornly flee me? Do you think that I have no wisdom?
Know this, I would throw the bit on you well,
And, holding the reins, I would turn you about the boundaries of the track.
Now may you feed on meadows and play at nimble leaps,
For you do not have a skillful horse-tamer mounted (on you).

The beauty and desirability of the "Thracian filly" is only contained in the subtext of the poem. Other than her glance and her playful leaps, the narrator mentions nothing of her attractions. The audience knows that the horse metaphor is intended as a compliment to her beauty only because of the narrator's desire to tame her.

Anacreon's *Thracian Filly* was very influential on the Roman use of horse metaphors in *erotobucolic* settings; Horace alludes to this poem twice in the *Odes* and Ovid briefly refers to taming women like horses in the *Ars Amatoria* (1.1, 12). In *Ode* 1.23, Horace reworks the image so that the girl, Chloe, is compared to a skittish fawn, whom the narrator pursues, though he claims that his intent is not destructive (see discussion below).[551] Later, in *Ode* 3.11 he includes a brief description of Lyde as a horse (3.11.9-11):

quae uelut latis equa trima campis
ludit exultim metuitque tangi,
nuptiarum expers et adhuc proteruo
cruda marito.

Who just like a three-year-old mare plays in broad fields
Skittishly and fears to be touched,

551 Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 compare these two poems.

Inexperienced of marriages and still unready
For a reckless husband.

Similar to the Anacreontic poem, the Horatian metaphors describe the attitude of the woman rather than her appearance. The sexual allure is in the thought of "taming" such a woman just on the verge of sexual maturity.

The essence of the horse metaphor throughout *erotobucolic* literature is the overwhelming sexual allure of the woman or man who is compared to a horse. According to cultural and/or authorial preferences, this desire may be evoked by the beautiful trappings of horses (*SoS* 1.9, Theoc. *Id*. 18), their speed and stamina (Egyptian lyric), or the burgeoning sexuality of the beloved (Anacr. 417, Horace 3.11). Typically the horse is looked upon as a tame or soon to be tamed creature and therefore associated with the feminine. The Egyptian lyric (P. Chester Beatty I, Group B: No. 39), however, shows that the speed of the horse and its ability to travel could make it appropriate as a comparison for a man running to see his beloved. Nevertheless, while mentioning that the horse in the metaphor has a master, the woman points out that he cannot be restrained — perhaps showing some anxiety on the part of the author about using a tame animal in a complimentary simile for a man.

Run Like a Gazelle

The role of the gazelle or deer in ancient *erotobucolic* is either as an analogue to men, i.e., those who are free to travel or as a description of a frightened woman, i.e., the prey. Like the horse, the gazelle was considered a beautiful and graceful animal. Comparisons to gazelles and wild deer, thus, compliment the appearance, athleticism, and freedom of men (Cf. *SoS* 1:9). Furthermore, in extant examples they are typically compared to the adult gazelle as it roams free through the wilderness; only once, in Egyptian literature, is the gazelle in the metaphor pursued by a hunter. In contrast, the frightened deer, usually a fawn, is used to parallel the trembling,

hesitant woman who has been or will be sexually initiated.[552]

Gazelles and deer do not appear in any of the extant metaphors or similes from ancient Sumerian or Ugaritic texts that I was able to access in translation. These poems do, however, use bulls in a similar way to express the mobility and potency of male deities. "Bull" is a regular epithet of El, the father of the gods.[553] In a Sumerian sacred marriage poem titled *Dumuzi and Inanna: Prayer for Water and Bread*, Inanna says to Dumuzi, "Oh wild bull, 'eye' of the land,/ I would *fulfill* all its *needs*." The meaning of this passage is obscure, but the response from Dumuzi: "Oh lady, your breast is your field,/ Inanna, your breast is your field,/ Your wide field which 'pours out' plants," suggests that there are sexual undertones.[554] Though the imagery of bulls here focuses more on power and sexual potency than gazelles and deer in other *erotobucolic* poetry, their wildness (i.e., freedom) is still an important aspect when comparing them to men.

In an Egyptian poem titled *Three Wishes*, after the description of the male beloved as a horse (see above), the woman compares him to a gazelle:

> If only you would come to (your) sister swiftly,
> like a gazelle bounding over the desert,
> whose legs are shaky, whose body is weary,
> for fear has entered his body.
> A hunter, dog with him, pursues him,
> but they can't even see his dust.[555]

Fox notes this as a parallel to *SoS* 2:8-9, but observes that the presence of the hunter changes the valence of the poem; instead of approaching the beloved of his own free will, this lover seems to be driven by fear.[556] I would add that, though the fear and pursuit may cause the reader to

552 I hesitate to write "assaulted"because the woman in most cases grudgingly consents.
553 See especially the Baal and Anat poems from Ugaritic myth (Pritchard 1969, 129-142).
554 Pritchard 1969, 642.
555 P. Chester Beatty I, Group B: No. 40.
556 Fox 1985, 112.

question the motives and freedom of the beloved, the poet through the voice of the woman adds that the gazelle/beloved is far ahead of the hunter. This detail allays the readers suspicion that the man is prey and therefore weak, since, even when tired, he can easily outrun his pursuers. Furthermore, if he has left his predators far behind, he need no longer run, implying that he chooses to continue running toward the woman rather than happening upon her while running out of fear.

Not many erotic deer metaphors survive in the extant poems of the Greek authors that I have chosen as most famously *erotobucolic*.[557] However, Archilochus, an early Greek lyric poet, whose surviving poetry covers a range of topics in a variety of meters, uses such a metaphor in one poem. This fragment is the most *erotobucolic* of Archilochus' surviving work, containing lovers who both speak, a *locus amoenus* (28-30), an animal metaphor (31), and a plant metaphor (35). This poem, known as the *Cologne Epode*, contains a comparison of the young girl to a deer (196A.31):[558]

δείματι παυσαμένην τὼς ὥστε νέβρον εἰλομην

I seized her, [she was] yielding to fear thus like a fawn

The frightened young woman yields not only to fear, but to the advances of the man. Like a fawn trapped by a predator, it is too late for the young woman to get away. The analogy of a baby animal reveals the woman's youth and virginity. However, the subtle comparison of her sexual initiation to the death of the fawn (though we are not told that the fawn is hunted, we know that it is frightened) does not bode well for the young woman.

---

557 Homer does include a simile in the Odyssey that compares Odysseus to a lion and the young women with Nausicaa as frightened deer (Od. 6.130-4). It would work as an example, but the Anacreon example is in a more overtly erotic passage and contains an actual sexual encounter. In the example from the Odyssey, though the girls fear that Odysseus is a sexual predator, it turns out that he is not interested in sex.

558 I have mentioned this poem as one that shows the danger of the locus amoenus in previous chapters. I am using West's edition.

In *Ode* 1.23, Horace may have been influenced by the *Cologne Epode* as well as Anacreon's *Thracian Filly*. Horace extends the comparison between the young woman and the fawn to run for the first eight lines of the poem. She fears the narrator, seeks her mother, and flees through the mountain paths (1-8). In the final four lines, the narrator insists that he is not a predator and tries to persuade her to intimacy by saying that she is ripe for a man and ready to leave her mother (9-12). The narrator's choice of a fawn as a metaphor belies his claim that his intentions are innocent. He may not be "like a harsh tiger or Gaetulian lion" (*tigris ut aspera Gaetulusue leo* 9-10), but his final exhortation that she seek out a man (for sex) reveals that he is a "predator."

Deer and gazelle metaphors are used in two ways in *erotobucolic* literature. In Hebrew and Egyptian literature, gazelles primarily appear as an analog to male speed and ability to travel. The men are eager to see the women and so they rush to them across the land as quickly and gracefully as the gazelles that women, ideally stationary, see at a distance, hopping across the mountains. In Greek and Roman poetry, fawns metaphorically describe the frightened woman who is about to be initiated into sexual maturity, particularly if the woman is uncertain about this course of action. In both types of gazelle/deer metaphor, the beloved is described in a way that accords with their social standing and freedom to travel or to make their own choices. The adult male gazelle is free to come and go as he pleases, but the female fawn trembles and gives in to the desires of an older man.

The two kinds of gazelle/deer metaphors break down along cultural lines (Egyptian/ Hebrew male gazelle, Greek/Roman female fawn), with the bull fulfilling a similar role to these animals in extant Sumerian or Ugaritic literature.[559] I hypothesize that these differences have to

559 As always, new findings could change our understanding of these works.

do with the uses of each animal in the time period and location in which each appears. If not in the time that they were written down, then in the time that they were orally composed, the Ugaritic and Sumerian authors knew of or could imagine wild bulls. By the time that other works were being composed or written, the cattle of those areas had been thoroughly domesticated, making them an inappropriate comparison for the free men.[560] In ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, there were wild gazelles roaming over mountains and plains. The metaphors used by these cultures reflect the familiar sight of the running gazelle's speed and grace. *SoS* contains some metaphors that fall between the two typical *erotobucolic* metaphors. The woman's breasts are twice described as gazelle fawns (4:5, 7:4). Like the examples for men, the gazelles are unafraid. However, they are stationary, grazing on lilies. Like the Greek and Roman examples, the gazelles are still fawns and are used in a metaphor for the woman. Greece had no gazelle population, but did have red deer, a species that is adapted to woodland dwelling. Though they are fast, their speed may make less of an impression as they both run and hide in the forest. These deer, especially the young, were likely most often seen by men who had gone to the forest specifically to hunt them.[561] The Greek and Roman metaphors reflect their experience with deer as prey — quick, graceful, and skittish, but eventually to be overcome.

Hungry like the Wolf

Wolves, foxes, and jackals were among the most dangerous predators for the flocks and crops of the ancient Mediterranean (Cf. *Idyll* 14 and *SoS* 2:15). As I have discussed, consumption

560 Brewer et. al. 1994; McInerney 2010. In Greek myth, bulls are sometimes erotic (Zeus and Europa, Pasiphae), but these are special, divine bulls who behave like wild animals even though in most Greek literature, bulls and cows are domestic. Vergil's Georgics contain an amorous bull that cannot be restrained in love, much like the royal Egyptian horse above (Georg. 3.209-28; P. Chester Beatty I, Group B: No. 39). Furthermore, Vergil's works contain frequent questioning of how free men are under the empire, perhaps making the bull a particularly appropriate image (and a good parallel to the Latin love poets, like Propertius, who refused to be restrained by Augustan marriage laws).

561 Women were encouraged to stay home in ancient Greek society and, even when out of the home, would have had little reason to visit the dangerous forests. Even male life as described in ancient Greek and Roman literature takes place mostly in civic centers and cultivated fields rather than the wild forests.

easily becomes a metaphor for sex, and predation likewise easily transfers to illicit, unwanted, or excessive sexual desire. Since wolves and foxes were always "stealing" the flocks and crops, *erotobucolic* poetry frequently uses them as similes for men who "steal" another man's (female) beloved. Furthermore, their perceived greed for taking these things was considered analogous to the sexual greed of a lascivious man,[562] with the result that these men are sometimes described as wolves or jackals.

The fox (or jackal) plays an important but somewhat obscure role in a Sumerian poem known as *Enki and Ninhursag: A Paradise Myth*.[563] In this poem, Enki impregnates a few generations of women beginning with an earth mother goddess named Ninhursag. However, after Ninhursag bears a variety of plants sprouted from Enki's semen, Enki eats them; she becomes angry and vows not to look upon him anymore. At this point the fox, possibly an animal sacred to Enlil (to whose temple Enki goes when sick), offers to bring the Ninhursag back to Enki. A recent article by Dickson on this poem hypothesizes that the fox is a parallel to Enki himself, since they are both trickster figures and both "woo" Ninhursag.[564] The most relevant lines for the fox's association with sex describe his preparations as he sets out to fetch Ninhursag: "The fox, as one [oile]d his skin,/ As one, loosened his. . ./ As one, painted his face" (225-7). The fox beautifies himself for his visit to Ninhursag. After he sucessfully brings her back to Enlil's temple, gods known as the Anunnaki strip her, and she makes love to Enki again. Thus the fox is closely associated not only with their reunion but also with sexual activity. His parallel with Enki, who has just had sex with Ninhursag, then his daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter suggests that the sexual activity of Enki/the fox is excessive.

562 In the extant erotobucolic examples, lascivious wolves and foxes, when they have an overt tenor, almost always describe men.
563 Pritchard 1969, 37-41.
564 Dickson 2007.

In an Egyptian lyric, a woman playfully describes her lover as a wolf cub: "My heart is not yet done with your lovemaking,/ my little wolf cub!"[565] In the rest of the poem, the woman explains that she will not give up her lover even if she is beaten, implying someone would like for her to leave him. In this case, the wolf cub is portrayed positively by a female partner who is herself lascivious. Their relationship is both illicit and characterized by lovemaking. Another woman speaking in Egyptian lyric says, "He is the love-wolf, . . . eating(?) (in the?) cave."[566] Thus the wolves of Egyptian lyric are presented positively by the women who love them. However, as the former passage shows, they are likely frowned upon by society (those who would beat the girl to get her to leave the wolf cub).

As in Theocritus's *Idyll* 14 and possibly *SoS*, Horace presents the wolf not as one of the lovers, but as a threatening rival. In *Ode* 1.22 he reveals the power of his love for Lalage (1.22.9-12):

Namque me silua lupus in Sabina,
dum meam canto Lalagem et ultra
terminum curis uagor expeditis,
fugit inermem.

For a wolf in the sabine forests,
when I sing about my Lalage and beyond
The boundaries I wander with cares unloosed,
flees me though unarmed.

In the erotic, musical context, escape from the wolf is more than escape from a wild beast.[567] The wolf is also a rival for Lalage's affections whom Horace has frightened away with his love song. Wolves appear again in *Ode* 1.33 as part of Horace's description of a love triangle (1.33.6-9):

565 P. Harris 500, Group A: No. 4. Fox 1985, 11 compares the wolf in this verse to the foxes in SoS 2:15 and Theocritus Idylls 1 and 5, but a closer parallel can be found in Idyll 14, where a girl named Cynisca (little-dog) takes a man named Lucas (Wolf) as a lover (see Chapter 1 for more detailed discussion).
566 Source V: Miscellanea: No. 49.
567 Of course on a literal level, it is also an escape from a wild beast and even this musical escape from the savage animal has literary parallels in stories of Orpheus and more specifically, as Nisbet and Hubbard mention, an epigram about a priest of Cybele who frightened away a lion with his tambourine (1970, 262; Dioscorides 6.220).

. . . Cyrus in asperam
declinat Pholoen: sed prius Apulis
iungentur capreae lupis
quam turpi Pholoe peccet adultero.

Cyrus inclines toward
harsh Pholoe: but she-goats
would sooner mate with Apulian wolves
than Pholoe would sin in disgraceful adultery.

Wolves are a part of a figurative expression of an impossible situation (ἀδύνατον/*adunaton* in Greek) that is said to be more likely than Pholoe committing adultery. Horace has chosen apt animals to include in the *adunaton*, both goats and wolves were infamously libidinous in ancient literature.[568] Furthermore, looking at the *adunaton* as an analogy (i.e., Pholoe refuses an illicit relationship with the rival just like goats refuse an unnatural relationship with wolves), then the wolves parallel the place of Cyrus, a man who would like to be an adulterous love — just like the other wolf men of *erotobucolic* literature.

Throughout *erotobucolic* poetry metaphors for foxes, wolves, and jackals regularly describe men whose sexual desire is considered transgressive by the speaker of the poem.[569] Portrayal of the wolf or fox depends more on the focalization of the poem than on the culture. If the poem is focalized through the viewpoint of the woman who loves the wolf, as in Egyptian literature or the parts of Theocritus' *Idyll* 14 that express Cynisca's feelings, then the wolf will be portrayed as desirable, if lascivious. If the poem is focalized through the viewpoint of a male lover, then the wolf is described negatively as a threat to the woman's integrity and the love relationship. The woman may celebrate and join in his transgressive sexuality, but she runs the risk that society will reject her for this behavior.

568 For more on the sexual proclivities of poetic goats, see Chapter 1 on Theocritus.
569 Later, in Longus' bucolic (I would argue *erotobucolic*) novel *Daphnis and Chloe*, this trope is slightly shifted so that the "wolf" is a woman. Her name Lycanion (little she-wolf) and her role as sexual instructor to Daphnis (though she is married to another man) associate her with this tradition.

Conclusions

In my Introduction, I outlined the elements of the *erotobucolic* genre and the body chapters show how these elements appear in *SoS* and the *Idylls*. The primary aspect of the genre discussed here is that all of the examined texts show nature and the beloved as overlapping, almost united images. My discussion of specific images above also reveals that nature and the lovers become superimposed upon one another. The variety of languages, authors, and formats seen in the poems that I have discussed reveal that *erotobucolic* poetry does not have a set meter like many other Greek and Roman genres. Nevertheless, the author often draws attention to the music of the poem either by directly referencing song, drawing attention to the voices of the lovers, or including a refrain.[570]

Throughout the *erotobucolic* poems, society does not approve of the lover's relationships, so they typically spend time together at midday, under the shade of trees and away from civilization. This provides a reason for the lovers to talk about their desire, since they are rarely able to be together. It also explains the reason that they meet in glades and gardens (trysting spots) rather than in locations within the city. Lovers may dream of but rarely find ways to spend the entire night together. Night time is dangerous for traveling outdoors, and indoors the disapproving family members are nearby and might catch the lovers.

My chapters on Theocritus, when contrasted to those on *SoS* and the Conclusion, reveals that Greek *erotobucolic* is markedly competitive. The only non-Greek *erotobucolic* poems that is similarly competitive are some of the poems in the *Eclogues* that rework Theocritus. The competitions of the herdsmen highlight the anxiety over rival lovers in a way not seen in other *erotobucolic* poetry. They stage their erotic anxiety in song competitions; the rival musician

570 Many of the *Idylls* are frames for songs of shepherds or other characters (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 5), and both *SoS* 2:14 and 8:13 express the desire of one lover to hear the other's voice.

becomes a stand in for the rival lover.[571] *Idyll* 5 hints at this with the sexual tension between singers and their bragging contest about their beloveds.

The chapters on *SoS,* in contrast to Theocritus and the Conclusion, show that Hebrew *erotobucolic* (if we can assume that *SoS* is representative) is disjointed and dreamlike. Unlike the other *erotobucolic* poems discussed, it does not provide a straightforward narrative of events. There are unexpected jumps in time and place that are unique to *SoS*. For instance, the lovers frequently seem to be apart, then suddenly together again, as though a period of time has elapsed; after the shift, the speaker is often in a new location (e.g., 1:11-2, 3:5-6, 5:1-2). None of the other poems under discussion change the time or the scene without a narrative explanation.

After reading the Theocritus chapters and the Conclusion it becomes apparent that Greek and Roman *erotobucolic* have a darker tone: unwilling or uncertain women may be raped, love is not usually returned, and the vague threats found in other *erotobucolic* poems sometimes become reality. For instance, wishes to die end in actual suicide (*Idyll* 1; *Ecl*. 5) and nature threatens to overwhelm the lovers (*Idylls* 7, 13). In Roman poetry, war threatens to take away the *loci amoeni* from their rightful owners (*Ecl*. 1, 9).

The Roman *erotobucolic* poems seen in the conclusion are more overtly political than those of other cultures. Sumerian and Ugaritic may fulfill a political function in legitimizing the king, but they do not refer to this internally.[572] Theocritus began to combine the political and the *erotobucolic,* but it is done briefly and only in a small number of his poems (*Idylls* 14-17). Vergil, Ovid, and Horace frequently find ways to reference Augustus, other politicians, and the recent land confiscations in Italy.

From just a brief look at the poetry of other cultures discussed in the Conclusion it

571 The image of rival lovers on the cup in a singing competition in *Idyll* 1 implies this connection (1.32-8).
572 Lapinkivi 2008.

becomes clear that Sumerian *erotobucolic* poems are more sexually explicit. They use direct language for genitalia, rather than the natural metaphors used in the other poems. As I stated above, this likely relates to their function and a desire to make sure that the gods understand the intent of the ritual. Egyptian *erotobucolic*, like *SoS*, is typically optimistic. Though both Egyptian lyric poems and *SoS* hint at dangers, lovers usually end up happy and together or at least certain that they will be together soon.

The Conclusion also examines closely related natural images that appear in all or most Mediterranean *erotobucolic* poetry and that may be rethought or repurposed to suit the aesthetics of a particular culture or author. These include similar images of gardens, love as food, beloveds as trees, lovers as horses or gazelles, and rivals or lovers as wolves. Other images that appear in multiple poems but that did not fit into the structure of the conclusion include the dark but beautiful theme and the blazon that describes a beloved such that they seem to be describing a cult-statue. The similarities between the manners in which these metaphors are deployed in different cultures and authors are too great for their appearance to be a coincidence. The authors must have been familiar with works that were part of the *erotobucolic* tradition, whether they were some of the Sumerian or Egyptian poems discussed here or other poems that have not survived.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Limits on time, space, and my knowledge of languages have confined this discussion in a number of ways. Future studies could expand on this work by reviewing more authors in the same cultures, authors from different cultures, some of the translated texts in the original language, and/or works from more recent time periods. By considering cultures outside of the Mediterranean, one could begin to argue for the relative universality of this way of speaking

about love. My work has focused only on works that are part of the Western tradition; a comparison to works from Eastern cultures would be an interesting next step. Some work has already been done comparing *SoS* to the poetry of the Tamil in India.[573] In part because I have used many translated texts, I have not spent as much time looking at similarities of language as would be possible when dealing with original texts. The Greek and Roman works often known as *bucolic* have influenced many works in the Western canon over time. Looking at these with the elements of *erotobucolic* in mind might reveal new readings.

573 Pope 1995, unicorn.

Select Bibliography

Abravanel, I. 1995. *Hagadah shel Pesah*. Jerusalem.

Acosta-Hughes, B. and Stephens, S.A. 2002. "Rereading Callimachus' Aetia Fragment 1." *Classical Philology* 97.3:238-55.

Ainsworth, H. 1623. *Solomon's Song of Songs In English Metre: With Annotations and References to Other Scriptures, for the Easier Understanding of It*. Amsterdam.

Alster, B. 1996. "Inanna Repenting. The Conclusion of Inanna's Descent." *Acta Sumerologica* 18:1–8.

Alter, R. 1985. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York.

Alter, R. and F. Kermode. 1987. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge.

Ambühl, S. A. 2010. "Narrative Hexameter Poetry" in Clauss, J.J. and Cupers, M., eds., *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (Malden), 151–165.

Anagnostou-Laoutides, E. and Konstan, D. 2008. "Daphnis and Aphrodite: A Love Affair in Theocritus Idyll 1." *American Journal of Philology* 129.4:497–527.

Angier, N. 2011. "Humans and Animals: An Ancient and Complex Bond" in *The New York Times*, March 14, sec. Science. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/science/15why.html.

Baker, R. 1968. "Miles Annosus: The Military Motif in Propertius." *Latomus* 27:322–349.

Barclay, J.M.G. 1996. *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)*. Edinburgh.

Barnosky, A.D., Matzke, N., Tomiya, S., Wogan, G.O.U., Swartz, B., Quental, T. B., Marshall, C. et al. 2011. "Has the Earth's Sixth Mass Extinction Already Arrived?" *Nature* 471.7336: 51–57.

Barthes, R. 1978. *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. New York.

Bartsch, S. 2009. "Senecan Metaphor and Stoic Self-Instruction." in Bartsch S. and Wray D., eds., *Seneca and the Self* (Cambridge), 188–220.

———. 2006. *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire*. Chicago.

Black, F.C. 2009. *The Artifice of Love: Grotesque Bodies in the Song of Songs*. New York.

———. 2000. "Beauty or the Beast? The Grotesque Body in the Song of Songs." *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches* 8.3:302–323.

Bloch, A.A. and Bloch, C. 2006. *The Song of Songs: The World's First Great Love Poem*. New York.

Bonnafé, A. 1984. *Poésie, Nature et Sacré*. Lyon.

Bowie, E.L. 1985. "Theocritus' Seventh Idyll, Philetas and Longus." *Classical Quarterly* 35.1:67–91.

Brenner, Athalya. 1997. *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*. Sheffield.

Brewer, D.J., Redford, D.B., and Redford, S. 1994. *Domestic Plants and Animals: The Egyptian Origins*. Warminster.

Brown, E.L. 1981. "The Lycidas of Theocritus' Idyll 7." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 85:59.

Burton, J. 2005. "Themes of Female Desire and Self-Assertion in the Song of Songs and Hellenistic Poetry." in Hagedorn, A.C., ed., *Perpectives on the Song of Songs = Perpektiven Der Hoheliedauslegung* (Berlin), 180–205.

———. 1995. *Theocritus's Urban Mimes: Mobility, Gender, and Patronage*. Berkeley.

Cahoon, L. 1988. "The Bed as Battlefield: Erotic Conquest and Military Metaphor in Ovid's Amores." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118:293–307.

Cairns, F. 1972. *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry*. Edinburgh.

Calame, C. 1999. *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece*. Princeton.

———. 2012. “Alcman.” in *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Campbell, D.A. 1982. *Greek Lyric Poetry: A Selection of Early Greek Lyric, Elegiac and Iambic Poetry*. Bristol.

Carr, L. 1979. “Is The Song Of Songs A ‘Sacred Marriage’ Drama?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 22.2:103–14.

Christoforidou, M. 2005. “Mythological Figures in the Bucolic Idylls of Theocritus.” *Materiali e Discussioni Per l’Analisi Dei Testi Classici* 55:31–60.

Clader, L.L. 1976. *Helen: The Evolution from Divine to Heroic in Greek Epic Tradition*. Lugduni Batavorum.

Clauss, J.J. 2003. “Once Upon a Time on Cos: A Banquet with Pan on the Side in Theocritus Idyll 7.” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 101:289–302.

Clauss, J.J. and Cuypers, M., eds. 2010. *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*. Chichester.

Coates, D. 1999. “The Cultured and Culturing Aspects of Romantic Experience in Adolescence.” in Furman, W. B., Brown, B., and Feiring, C., eds., *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence* (New York), 330–363.

Cohen, T. 2008. *Thinking of Others: On the Talent for Metaphor*. Princeton.

Collins, N.L. 2000. *The Library in Alexandria and the Bible in Greek*. Leiden.

Curtius, E.R. 1991. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Princeton.

Cyrino, M.S. 1995. *In Pandora’s Jar: Lovesickness in Early Greek Poetry*. Lanham.

Davidson, J.N. 1998. *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*. New York.

Delitzsch, F. 1891. *Commentary on the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes*. Edinburgh.

Detienne, M. 1977. *The Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology*. Atlantic Highlands.

Dimakopoulou, A. 2010. *Chloreis Aedon: Pâle Rossignol: Une Etude Sémantique*. Paris.

Distelrath, G. 2012. “Prodigium.” In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Dover, K.J., ed. 1971. *Theocritus: Select Poems*. Basingstoke.

DuBois, P. 2010a. *Slavery: Antiquity and Its Legacy*. Oxford.

———. 2010b. *Out of Athens: The New Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge.

———. 1991. *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women*. Chicago.

DuQuesnay, I. 1979. “From Polyphemus to Corydon: Virgil, Eclogue 2 and the Idylls of Theocritus.” in West, D.A. and Woodman, A.J., eds., *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge), 35-69 and 206-21.

Erskine, A., ed. 2003. *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*. Malden.

Exum, J.C. 2005. *Song of Songs: A Commentary*. Westminster.

Falk, M. 1982. *Love Lyrics from the Bible: A Translation and Literary Study of the Song of Songs*. Sheffield.

Fantuzzi, M. 2012. “Eidyllion.” In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Fantuzzi, M. and Hunter, R. 2005. *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry.* Cambridge.

Fantuzzi, M. and Papanghelis, T.D., eds. 2006. *Brill’s Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral*. Brill.

Faraone, C.A. and Obbink, D. 1997. *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*. New York.

Farr, J. 1991. “Theocritus: Idyll 11.” *Hermes* 119.4:477–484.

Fischer, C. and Alapack, R. 1987. “A Phenomenological Approach to Adolescence.” in Van

Hasselt, V. B. and Hersen, M., eds., *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (New York), 91–107.

Fox, M.V. 1985. *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*. Madison.

Freehof, S.B. 1949. "The Song of Songs: A General Suggestion." *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 39.4:397–402.

Freeman, M. 2003. "Poetry and the Scope of Metaphor: Toward a Cognitive Theory of Literature." in Barcelona, A., ed., *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* (Berlin), 253–82.

French, V. 1987. "Midwives and Maternity Care in the Graeco-Roman World." in Skinner, M.B., ed., *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity* (Lubbock), 69–84.

Frolov, S. and Wright, A. 2011. "Homeric and Ancient Near Eastern Intertextuality in 1 Samuel 17." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130.3:451–471.

Furley, W. 2012. "Mime." In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Gale, M.R. 1997. "Propertius 2.7: Militia Amoris and the Ironies of Elegy." *Journal of Roman Studies* 87:77–91.

Gebhardt, C. 1931. *Das Lied der Lieder: Ubertragen mit Einführung und Kommentar*. Berlin.

Gerleman, G. 1965. *Ruth. Das Hohelied*. Neukirchen-Vluyn.

Giangrande, G. 1968. "Théocrite, Simichidas Et Les Thalysies." *Antiquité Classique* 37:491–533.

Ginsburg, C.D. 1857. *The Song of Songs: Translated From the Original Hebrew*. Ithaca.

Goldhill, S. 2004. *Love, Sex & Tragedy: How the Ancient World Shapes our Lives*. Chicago.

———. 1995. *Foucault's Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality*. Cambridge.

———. 1991. *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature*. Cambridge.

———. 1987. “An Unnoticed Allusion in Theocritus and Callimachus.” *Illinois Classical Studies* 12:1–6.

Gordis, R. 1961. *The Song of Songs; A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary*. New York.

Goulder, M.D. 1986. *The Song of Fourteen Songs*. Sheffield.

Gow, A.S.F., ed. 1950. *Theocritus*. Cambridge.

Graetz, H. 1871. *Schir ha-Schirim*. Wien.

Greene, E. 2000. “Gender Identity and the Elegiac Hero in Propertius 2.1.” *Arethusa* 33.2:241–261.

———. 1996. *Reading Sappho: Contemporary approaches*. Berkeley.

Griffiths, F. 1981. “Home Before Lunch: The Emancipated Woman in Theocritus.” in Foley, H., ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York), 247–273.

———. 1979. *Theocritus at Court*. Leiden.

Gruen, E.S. 2002. *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*. Cambridge.

Gutzwiller, K. 2007. *A Guide to Hellenistic Literature*. Malden.

———. 2006a. “The Bucolic Problem.” *Classical Philology* 101.4:380–404.

———. 2006b. “The Herdsman in Greek Thought.” in Fantuzzi, M. and Papanghelis, T.D., eds., *Brill’s Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral* (Leiden), 1–24.

———. 1998. *Poetic Garlands: Hellenistic Epigrams in Context*. Berkeley.

———. 1996. “The Evidence for Theocritean Poetry Books.” in Harder, A., Regtuit, R., and Wakker, G., eds., *Theocritus* (Groningen), 2:119–148.

———. 1991. *Theocritus’ Pastoral Analogies: The Formation of a Genre*. Madison.

———. 1986. “The Plant Decoration on Theocritus’ Ivy-Cup.” *The American Journal of Philology* 107.2:253.

Hadot, P. 2012. “The Hellenistic Gymnasium.” In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Hagedorn, A.C., ed. 2005. *Perspectives on the Song of Songs = Perspektiven Der Hohelidauslegung*. Berlin.

Halperin, D.M., Winkler, J.J., and Zeitlin, F.I. 1990. *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*. Princeton.

Halperin, D.M. 1983. *Before Pastoral: Theocritus and the Ancient Tradition of Bucolic Poetry*. New Haven.

Hamdorf, F.W. 1986. *Dionysos, Bacchus: Kult und Wandlungen des Weingottes*. München.

Heath, J. 2005. *The Talking Greeks: Speech, Animals, and the Other in Homer, Aeschylus, and Plato*. Cambridge.

Hinds, S. 1998. *Allusion and Intertext Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*. New York.

Holtsmark, E.B. 1966. “Poetry as Self-Enlightenment: Theocritus 11.” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 97:253–259.

Holzhausen, J. 2012. “Pan.” In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Honigman, S. 2003. *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria a Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas*. London.

Hopkins, S.P. 2007. “Extravagant Beholding: Love, Ideal Bodies, and Particularity.” *History of Religions* 47.1:1–50.

Hopkinson, N. 1988. *A Hellenistic Anthology*. Cambridge.

Hornblower, S. 2011. *The Greek World: 479-323 BC*. Abingdon.

Hubbard, T.K. 1998. *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocritus to Milton*. Ann Arbor.

Von Hug, J. L. 1813. *Das Hohe Lied in Einer noch Unversuchten Deutung*. Freyburg.

Hunt, J.M. 2011. “The Politics of Death in Theocritus’ First Idyll.” *American Journal of Philology* 132.3:379–396.

Hunter, R. 2005. “‘Sweet Talk’ Song of Songs and the Traditions of Greek Poetry.” in Hagedorn, A.C., ed., *Perpectives on the Song of Songs = Perpektiven Der Hoheliedauslegung* (Berlin), 228–244.

———, ed. 2003. *Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus*. Berkeley.

———. 1996. *Theocritus and the Archaeology of Greek Poetry*. Cambridge.

———, ed. 1999. *Theocritus: A Selection*. Cambridge.

Ibn Ezra, A.b.M. 1874. *Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Commentary on the Canticles, After the First Recension*. London.

Irwin, E. 1974. *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry*. Toronto.

Keel, O., and Uehlinger, C. 1998. *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis.

Kennedy, D.F. 1993. *The Arts of Love: Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy*. Cambridge.

Klooster, Jacqueline. 2011. *Poetry as Window and Mirror: Positioning the Poet in Hellenistic Poetry*. Mnemosyne Supplements. Monographs on Greek and Latin Language and Literature 330. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Kossaifi, C. 2005a. “Un Temple Aux Vivants Piliers: La Nature Dans Les Idylles Bucoliques De Théocrite I.” *Connaissance Hellenique* 103:61–71.

———. 2005b. “Un Temple Aux Vivants Piliers: La Nature Dans Les Idylles Bucoliques De Théocrite II.” *Connaissance Hellenique* 104:18–31.

———. 2005c. “Un Temple Aux Vivants Piliers: La Nature Dans Les Idylles Bucoliques De

Théocrite III." *Connaissance Hellenique* 105:61–73.

Kramer, S.N. 1962. *The Biblical "Song of Songs" and the Sumerian Love Songs*. Philadelphia.

Krauss, S. 1936. "Der Richtige Sinn von 'Schrecken in der Nacht'." in Gaster, M. and Schindler, B., eds., *Occident and Orient* (London), 323–330.

Kristeva, J. 1987. *Tales of Love*. New York.

Kroll, W. 1924. "Die Kreuzung der Gattungen." in *Studien zum Verständnis der Römischen Literatur*. Stuttgart.

Kühn, J-H. 1958. "Die Thalysien Theokrits." *Hermes* 86.1:40–79.

Lambert, W.G., ed. 1960. *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford.

Landy, F. 1983. *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs*. Sheffield.

Lapinkivi, P. 2008. "The Sumerian Sacred Marriage and Its Aftermath in Later Sources." in Nissinen, M. and Uro, R., eds., *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake), 7–42.

Launderville, D. 2003. *Piety and Politics: The Dynamics of Royal Authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical Israel, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia*. Grand Rapids.

Lawall, G. 1967. *Theocritus' Coan Pastorals: A Poetry Book*. Washington.

Lehnus, L. 2012. "Callimachus." in *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Leidl, Christoph. 2003. "The Harlot's Art: Metaphor and Literary Criticism." in Boys-Stones, G.R., ed., *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions* (Oxford), 31–54.

Leitao, D.D. 2012. *The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature*. New York.

Lohse, G. 1966. "Die Kunstauffassung im VII. Idyll Theokrits und das Programm des Kallimachos." *Hermes* 94.4:413–425.

Longman, T. 2001. *Song of Songs*. Grand Rapids.

Louden, B. 2010. *Homer's Odyssey and the Near East*. Leiden.

Macleane, A. and Chase, R., eds. 1866. *The Works of Horace: With English Notes*. Cambridge.

Marcos, N.F. 2000. *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*. Leiden.

Mazurek, E.F. 2006. "Elegy and Epic and the Recognition of Paris: Ovid Heroides 16." *Arethusa* 39.1:47–70.

McGovern, P.E. 2009. *Uncorking the Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer, and Other Alcoholic Beverages*. Berkeley.

McInerney, J. 2010. *The Cattle of the Sun: Cows and Culture in the World of the Ancient Greeks*. Princeton.

McKay, K. 1975. "Pomp and Pastoralia in Theokritos' Idyll 7." *AUMLA* 44:181–188.

McKechnie, P. and Guillaume, P. 2008. *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*. Leiden.

Meek, T.J. 1956. "The Song of Songs." *Interpreter's Bible* 5:89-148.

———. 1922. "Canticles and the Tammuz Cult." *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 39.1:1–14.

Moulton, R.G. 1930. *The Modern Reader's Bible*. New York.

Mulvey, L. 1975. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16.3:6–18.

Munro, J.M. 1995. *Spikenard and Saffron: the Imagery of the Song of Songs*. Sheffield.

Murgatroyd, P. "Militia Amoris and the Roman Elegists." *Latomus* 34:59–79.

Murphy, R.E. and McBride, S.D. 1990. *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs*. Minneapolis.

Nauta, R. 1990. “Gattungsgeschichte Als Rezeptionsgeschichte Am Beispiel Der Entstehung Der Bukolik.” *Antike Und Abendland* 36:116–137.

Neumeister, C. 2012. “Propertius.” In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Niehoff, M. 2011. *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*. Cambridge.

Nisbet, R.G.M. and Hubbard, M. 1970. *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book 1*. Oxford.

Nissinen, M. 2008. “Song of Songs and Sacred Marriage.” in Nissinen, M. and Uro, R., eds., *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake), 173–218.

Nissinen, M. and Uro, R. 2008. “Sacred Marriages, or the Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor: Introducing the Project.” in Nissinen, M. and Uro, R., eds., *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake), 1–6.

———, eds. 2008. *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*. Winona Lake.

Oswald, R. and Haase, M. 2012. “Wedding Customs and Rituals.” in *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Ott, U. 1969. “Theokrits ‘Thalysien’ Und Ihre Literarischen Vorbilder.” *Rheinisches Museum* 115:134–149.

Payne, M. 2010a. “The Bucolic Fiction of Theocritus.” in Clauss, J.J. and Cuypers, M., eds., *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (Chichester), 224–237.

———. 2010b. *The Animal Part: Human and Other Animals in the Poetic Imagination*. Chicago.

———. 2007. *Theocritus and the Invention of Fiction*. Cambridge.

Pomeroy, S.B. 1990. *Women in Hellenistic Egypt: From Alexander to Cleopatra*. New York.

Pope, Marvin H. 1995. *Song of Songs*. Garden City.

Prauscello, L. 2007. “A Homeric Echo in Theocritus’ Idyll 11.25–7: The Cyclops, Nausicaa and the Hyacinths.” *Classical Quarterly* 57.1:90–96.

Pritchard, J.B. 1978. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton.

Puelma, M. 1960. “Die Dichterbegegnung in Theokrits ‘Thalysien’.” *Museum Helveticum* 17:144–164.

Rashi. 1958. *The commentary of Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi) on Song of Songs*. New York.

Richards, I.A. 1965. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Oxford.

Richlin, A. 1992. *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*. New York.

Rissman, L. 1983. *Love as War: Homeric Allusion in the Poetry of Sappho*. Königstein.

Robbins, E. 2012a. “Sappho.” In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

———. 2012b. “Anacreon.” In *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Rosenmeyer, P. 2003. “Locating Love: Erotic Space in Cavafy and the Hellenic Tradition.” *Classical and Modern Literature* 23.2:111–126.

———. 1999. “Tracing Medulla as a Locus Eroticus.” *Arethusa* 32.1:19.

Rosenmeyer, T.G. 1969. *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric*. Berkeley.

———. 1951. “Eros: Erotes.” *The Phoenix* 5.1:11–22.

Ruskin, J. 1987. “Of the Pathetic Fallacy.” in *Modern Painters*. Vol. 3. London.

Satlow, M. 1996. “‘Try to Be a Man’: The Rabbinic Construction of Masculinity.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 89.1:19–40.

Schmidt, E.A. 1987. *Bukolische Leidenschaft, oder, Über Antike Hirtenpoesie*. New York.

Schmiel, R. 1993. “Structure and Meaning in Theocritus 11.” *Mnemosyne* 46.2:229–234.

Schwinge, E. 1974. “Theokrits ‘Dichterweihe’ (Id. 7).” *Philologus* 118:40–58.

Segal, C. 1985. “Space, Time, and Imagination in Theocritus’ Second Idyll.” *Classical Antiquity* 4.1:103–119.

———. 1981. *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral: Essays on Theocritus and Virgil*. Princeton.

———. 1975. “Landscape into Myth: Theocritus’ Bucolic Poetry.” *Ramus* 4:115–139.

———. 1969. *Landscape in Ovid’s Metamorphoses. A Study in the Transformations of a Literary Symbol*. Wiesbaden.

Segal, M.H. 1962. “The Song of Songs.” *Vetus Testamentum* 12.1:470–490.

Selden, D. 1998. “Alibis.” *Classical Antiquity* 17:289–412.

Sens, A. 1997. *Theocritus, Dioscuri (Idyll 22): Introduction, Text, and Commentary*. Göttingen.

Shaw, B.D. 1992. “Explaining Incest: Brother-Sister Marriage in Graeco-Roman Egypt.” *Man* 27.2:267–299.

Shipp, G.P. 1953. *Studies in the Language of Homer*. Cambridge.

Shorey, P. 1922. “The Logic of the Homeric Simile.” *Classical Philology* 17.3:240–259.

Shorey, P. and Laing, G.J., eds. 1906. *Horace: Odes and Epodes*. Boston.

Smith, C.L., ed. 1895. *The Odes and Epodes of Horace*. Boston.

Soulen, R.N. 1967. “The Wasfs of the Song of Songs and Hermeneutic.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86.2:183–190.

Spofford, E.W. 1969. “Theocritus and Polyphemus.” *American Journal of Philology* 90.1:22–35.

Stahl, H-P. 1985. *Propertius: “Love” and “War”: Individual and State under Augustus*. Berkeley.

Stephens, S.A. 2003. *Seeing Double Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria*. Berkeley.

———. 2010. “Ptolemaic Alexandria.” in Clauss, J.J. and Cuypers, M., eds., *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (Chichester), 46–61.

Stewart, A.F. 1997. *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge.

Sumi, A.M. 2004. *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry Wasf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory*. Leiden.

Tanner, J. 1997. “The History of Interpretation of the Song of Songs.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154:23–46.

Teijeiro, M.G.. 1999. “Il Secondo ‘Idillio’ di Teocrito.” *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 61.1:71–86.

Teppo, S. 2008. “Sacred Marriage and the Devotees of Istar.” in Nissinen, M. and Uro, R., eds., *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake), 75–92.

Trachtenberg, J. 2004. *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion*. Philadelphia.

Tränkle, H. 1963. “Elegisches in Ovids Metamorphosen.” *Hermes* 91:459–476.

Tur-Sinai, N. 1950. *Ha-Lashon veha-Sefer, ba‘Ayot Yesod be-Mada‘ ha-Lashon uva-Meḳorotehah ba-Sifrut*. Jerusalem.

Van Groningen, B. 1959. “Quelques Problèmes De La Poésie Bucolique Grecque.” *Mnemosyne* 12:24–53.

Van Sickle, J. 1975. “Epic and Bucolic (Theocritus, Id. VII; Virgil Ecl. I).” *Quaderni Urbinati Di Cultura Classica* 19:45–72.

———. 1976. “Theocritus and the Development of the Conception of the Bucolic Genre.” *Ramus* 5:18–44.

Waterman, L. 1948. *The Song of Songs*. Ann Arbor.

Wendel, C. 1914. *Scholia in Theocritum Vetera*. Stuttgart.

White, J.B. 1978. *A Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Poetry*. Missoula.

Wiggers, N. 1976. “Epic Themes in Propertius II.9.” *Phoenix* 30.4:367–374.

Wiles, J.P. 1926. *The Song of Saadiah: An Illustration of Jewish Fidelity to the Text of the Hebrew Scriptures*. London.

Williams, F. 1971. “A Theophany in Theocritus.” *Classical Quarterly* 21.1:137–145.

Williams, G. 1987. “A Look at Theocritus Idyll 7 Through Virgil’s Eyes.” *Hermathena* 143:107–120.

Wiseman, T. 2012. “Catullus.” in *New Pauly Online*. Leiden.

Wittekindt, W. 1925. *Das Hohe Lied und Seine Beziehungen zum Istarkult*. Hannover.

Wyke, M. 2012. “Written Women: Propertius’ Scripta Puella.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 77:47-61.

Yin, Y., Zhang, X., Fang, Y., Pan, L., Sun, G., Xin, C., Abdullah, M.B., et al. 2012. “High-throughput Sequencing-based Gene Profiling on Multi-staged Fruit Development of Date Palm.” *Plant Molecular Biology* 78.6:617–626.

Zagagi, N. 1984. “Self-Recognition in Theocritus’ Seventh Idyll.” *Hermes* 112.4:427–438.

Zanker, G. 1987. *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry: A Literature and its Audience*. London.