

## Ekphrasis and the ontological problem of pastoral

1. καὶ βαθὺν κισσύβιον κεκλυσμένον ἀδεί κηρῶ,  
ἀμφῶες, νεοτευχές, ἔτι γλυφάνοιο ποτόσδον.

And [I will give you] a deep cup, washed over with sweet wax, two-handed, and newly fashioned, still fragrant from the knife.<sup>1</sup> (I. 27-8)

“These lines [describing the cup] are a major location of literary symbolism, the significance of which is enhanced by the fact that above all the cup together with its contents, milk, is a symbol of the idyll itself. ... All this means that what is said of the cup may also apply to the poetry of Theocritus ...” (Cairns 1984: 96-7)

2. “We are here in the world of the *pepaideuomenos*, the cultivated intellectual about town with his pals. Each epigram performs what Lucian, the second-century satirist, tells us is the mark of the cultured viewer. You should not stand and stare awestruck before art, waving your hands ineffectually; you should stand firm and speak. Art should produce commentary. That is how cultivation is displayed to an audience and regulated.” (Goldhill 2007: 17-18)
3. “What they [poems] always see [in pictures], confined by words within the inescapable meaningfulness of history, is the nature of reality unconditioned by intentional structures, entailing at once the death of self-consciousness and the corporeality of life.” (Fry 1995: 87)
4. “*Language* becomes opaque—it is noticeable as a *thing* apart from its referent—because it points at something it cannot make *visible*.” (Walsh 1985: 14. Emphases added.)

“We conclude, then, that the bucolic style on the whole frowns on animal comparisons. ... Animals are not ‘used’ to provide the raw material for similes that would redound to the greater glory, or at least to the *greater illumination*, of man.” (Rosenmeyer 1969: 143. Emphasis added.)

Rosenmeyer on:

- Music (134): “The most musical animal, because it is *pure music and little else*, and has none of the qualities associated with sex and strength, is the cicada”
  - Lack of allegorical riddles (251): “Theocritus, and indeed all ancient pastoralists, disdain such puzzles in their idylls. Even the scholiasts, constitutionally incapable of resisting the temptation to trace metaphor and allegory where a less preoccupied reader is unlikely to find them, are hard to it to discover instances in Theocritus.”
5. “When Alexander had laid the foundation for most of the city, he marked out the space and marked it with five letters, ΑΒΓΔΕ. The alpha for “Alexander” (*Alexandros*), the beta for “king” (*basileus*), the gamma for “descendant” (*genos*), and the delta for “of Zeus” (*Dios*), the epsilon for “founded” (*ektisen*)

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<sup>1</sup> Greek texts and translations of Theocritus are cited from Gow 1952.

the inimitable city.' Pseudo-Callisthenes reads the map of the city [synchrony] as an acronym of its own foundation [diachrony] ...” (Goldhill in Goldhill and Osborne 1994: 197, quoting Ps.-Call. I. 32.)

6. “The great quantity of pastoral that does not do this may be classified as weak pastoral, and metapastoral [strong pastoral] poetry traditionally fashions as its target a generalized image of weak pastoral.” (Berger 1984: 4)

“Pastoral achieves significance by oppositions, by the set of contrasts, expressed or implied, which the values embodied in its world create with other ways of life. The most traditional contrast is between the little world of natural simplicity and the great world of civilization, power, statecraft, ordered society, established codes of behavior, and artifice in general. ... A different kind of contrast equally intimate to pastoral's manner of representation is that between a confused or conflict-ridden reality and the artistic depiction of it as comprehensible, meaningful, or harmonious.” (Halperin 1983: 70-1)

7. ἄσει δ' ὡς ποκ' ἔδεκτο τὸν αἰπόλον εὐρέα λάρναξ  
ζῶν ἔοντα κακαῖσιν ἀτασθαλίαισιν ἀνακτος,  
ὡς τέ νιν αἰ σμαὶ λειμωνόθε φέρβον ἰῶσαι  
κέδρον ἐς ἀδείαν μαλακοῖς ἀνθεσσι μέλισσαι,  
οὐνεκά οἱ γλυκὴ Μοῖσα κατὰ στόματος χέει νέκταρ.  
ὦ μακαριστὲ Κομάτα, τύ θην τάδε τερπνὰ πεπόνθεις,  
καὶ τὸ κατεκλάσθης ἐς λάρνακα, καὶ τὸ μελισσᾶν  
κηρία φερβόμενος ἔτος ὄριον ἐξεπόναςας.

And he shall sing how once a wide coffer received the goatherd alive by the impious presumption of a king; and how the blunt-faced bees came from the meadows to the fragrant chest of cedar and fed him on tender flowers because the Muse had poured sweet nectar on his lips. Ah, blessed Comatas, yours is this sweet lot; you too were closed within the coffer; you too, on honeycomb fed, did endure with toil the springtime of the year.

8. πολλὰ δ' ἀμὺν ὑπερθε κατὰ κρατὸς δονέοντο  
αἴγειροι πτελέαι τε ...  
... τοὶ δ' ἐκέχυντο  
ὄρπακες βραβίλοισι καταβρίθοντες ἔραζε.

Many a poplar and elm murmured above our heads [ὑπερθε κατὰ κρατὸς] ... branches hung down [ἐκέχυντο] to the ground with their burden of sloes. (7. 135-6, 145-6)

Compare *Od.* xi. 588: “Trees with lofty branches over his head [ὑψιπέτηλα κατὰ κρήθην] poured [χέει] fruit, pear trees and pomegranate trees and apple trees with fruit shining ...” (δένδρεα δ' ὑψιπέτηλα κατὰ κρήθην χέει καρπὸν, ἰ ὄγχναι καὶ ροῖαι καὶ μηλέαι ἀγλαόκαρποι). (Text and translations of Homer from the OCT and Lattimore 1967.)

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9. I. *escape from signification*  
thought ---> \_\_\_\_\_

II. *objectification of non-signification*  
thought <--> object

III. *representation of objects*  
thought ---> objects

10. νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οὐ νέομαι γε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,  
οὐδέ τι Πατρόκλω γενόμεν φάος οὐδ' ἐτάροισι  
τοῖς ἄλλοις, οἳ δὴ πολέες δάμεν Ἴκτορι δίῳ,  
ἀλλ' ἦμαι παρὰ νηυσὶν ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης

Now, since I am not going back to the beloved land of my fathers, since I was no light of safety to Patroklos, nor to my other companions, who in their numbers went down before glorious Hektor, but sit here beside my ships, a useless burden on the good land ... (XVIII. 101-4)

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