NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN THEOCRITUS'S *IDYLL* 12

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Idyll 12 is one of the least studied poems in the Theocritean corpus. A detailed account of its narrative structure and technique will, however, reveal a particularly intriguing example of the Theocritean rôle poem, with a number of interesting resemblances to the pastoral *Idylls*. The *Idyll* is a monologue by an unnamed speaker expressing delight at the return of his "beloved boy" (12.1) after an absence of two days. The opening verses greet his beloved—"You have come, dear boy, after two days and nights you have come" (12.1–2)—in a way that recalls Sappho 48—"You have come, and I was longing for you"—and has its literary origin in Eumaeus's greeting of Telemachus at *Odyssey* 16.23–29: "You have come, Telemachus, sweet light."[1]

1 Attempts have been made to identify this opening with the kinds of welcoming speech outlined by Menander Rhetor in his second treatise. Thus Giangrande 1971.38 refers to it as an *epibaterios logos* (Menander 377.31–388.16), while Cairns 1972.18 calls it a *prosphonetikos logos* (Menander 414.32–418.4). For Menander, however, both are types of public political oratory, conducted in prose. The *epibaterios* is "either (i) an address to one's native city on return, or (ii) an address to a city one visits, or (iii) an address to a visiting governor," while the *prosphonetikos* is a small-scale encomium of a ruler (Russell and Wilson 1981.377.32–378.4 ad loc.). Thus while both types of speech may ultimately derive from poetic greetings such as those in Homer and Sappho, I accept the conclusion of Russell and Wilson 1981.xxxiii–xxxiv that the similarity of expression in *Idyll* 12 is better understood as imitation of a familiar poetic *topos* rather than "a clear generic announcement" (Cairns 1972.25). Cf. Wilamowitz 1924.2.141 on Lycidas's song in *Idyll* 7: "Es lehrt gar nichts und kann nur verwirren, wenn man das Lied ein προπεμπτικόν nennt; man läuft Gefahr, die Rhetorik heranzuziehen, die hier nichts zu suchen hat."

Arethusa 36 (2003) 37–48

This greeting is, however, followed by a series of comparisons that are lacking in Sappho and Homer (12.3–9):[2]

> 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 ἔδραμον ὥς τις.
>
> As spring is sweeter than winter, as the apple is sweeter than the sloe, as a ewe is woollier than its lamb, as a maiden is better than a thrice-married woman, as a fawn is friskier than a calf, as the clear-voiced nightingale is the most songful of all winged creatures, even so your appearance made me glad, and, like a traveler when the sun is scorching, I ran beneath a shady oak.[3]

The speaker begins his encomium with two unremarkable comparisons: "As spring is sweeter than winter, as the apple is sweeter than the sloe . . ." The next, however, appears to reverse the priority of youth over age that one would expect in the praise of an *eromenos* (Kelly 1979.58): "as a ewe is woollier than its lamb . . ." And while what follows—"as a maiden is better than a thrice-married woman"—appears to restore it, some questions are raised by the choice of epithet. Gow 1952 ad loc. points out that τρίγαμος in Stesichorus *PMG* 223 and τριάνωρ at Lycophron 851 refer to Helen. Whether or not one understands a specific allusion, "thrice-married" suggests a much more nuanced appreciation of the relative claims of innocence and experience than, for example, "riper than a pear," which is used of the fading *eromenos* at *Idyll* 7.120.[4] For while the virgin girl reflects the attractiveness of the "beloved boy," the suggestion of Helen in the older woman to

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2 Sappho 48 proceeds directly to the effect of the beloved's arrival ("You cooled my heart that was burning with desire"), and Eumaeus, having expressed his fear that he might not see Telemachus again, continues: "but come now, enter, dear child, so that I may delight my heart looking at you inside" (16.25–26).

3 The text used is that of Gow 1952. All translations are my own.

4 For its connection to the invective of Archilochus, see Henrichs 1980.

whom she is compared prevents the comparison from appearing entirely to the speaker's disadvantage. As in the previous assertion of the ewe's superiority to its lamb, the speaker appears sensitive to the ways in which the juxtaposition of young and old mirrors his own relationship with his youthful lover. Thus as if shying away from his own reflection in an image that pits youth against age, his next comparison effaces this difference entirely, and the two young animals are all but indistinguishable: "as a fawn is friskier than a calf . . ." In the final comparison, the speaker switches from comparatives to a superlative: "as the clear-voiced nightingale is the most songful of all winged creatures . . ." Here, too, there seems to be a hint of self-praise, given that the speaker himself is in the rôle of "clear-voiced singer" here, and his greeting as a whole suggests that it has been composed with one eye on its author all along.

The series of images has provoked considerable disagreement among the poem's commentators. Gow 1952.2.221 was offended by its "apparent lack of emotional restraint," while, for Giangrande 1971.43, it marks the vulgarity of an ignorant rustic with a tendency "to grotesquely overdo things, to overcompensate, as it were, for his lack of articulateness and genuine education." For Cairns 1972.25, the hyperbole marks the poem's generic affiliations, while Hunter 1996.189–90 emphasizes its dramatic function in conveying the speaker's emotional excitement. It will be helpful, therefore, to look at another occasion in the *Idylls* when a speaker employs a similar series of rustic images. Thus Polyphemus, conjuring up, if not Galateia herself, then at least her image, begins his song (11.19–23):

> ᾿Ω λευκὰ Γαλάτεια, τί τὸν φιλέοντ᾽ ἀποβάλλῃ,
> λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς ποτιδεῖν, ἁπαλωτέρα ἀρνός,
> μόσχω γαυροτέρα, φιαρωτέρα ὄμφακος ὠμᾶς;
>
> O white Galateia, why do you spurn one who loves you,
> whiter than cream cheese to look at, softer than a lamb,
> friskier than a calf, sleeker than an unripe grape?

When the two series are compared, their functions are clearly different. Polyphemus's hyperbole is an attempt to describe Galateia directly and is a spontaneous characterization of what he finds attractive in her. The speaker of *Idyll* 12, on the other hand, uses the comparisons not to praise or describe his beloved but to calculate his own feelings in response to his arrival: "As spring is sweeter than winter, etc. . . . even so your appearance made me

glad." Moreover, while the qualities in Galateia that stimulate desire (whiteness, softness, youthful sleekness) are compared to familiar objects of the Cyclops's world (dairy products, lambs, calves, grapes), these qualities in her so far transcend the objects to which she is compared that they suggest the limitations of comparison itself. Galateia is softer than the softest thing Polyphemus can imagine, sleeker than the sleekest, and even his initial epithet "white" is felt to be inadequate and in need of supplementation. One might also compare Bucaeus's song at *Idyll* 10.36–37, where the attempt to praise his beloved results in aphasia: "Lovely Bombyca, your feet are dice, your voice nightshade; your disposition I truly cannot speak of." Thus while the comparisons in *Idyll* 12 resemble the language of bucolic infatuation in their content (fruits, birds, baby animals), the speaker's use of them sets him apart from Polyphemus and Bucaeus; while they strain metaphor to the breaking point to express the intensity of their admiration, he offers a more self-conscious modulation of its laudatory powers: he never loses sight of his own reflection in his praise, and his final image is more about himself than his "beloved boy."

After the series of encomiastic metaphors, the poem changes course dramatically (12.10–11):

> εἴθ᾽ ὁμαλοὶ πνεύσειαν ἐπ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισιν Ἔρωτες
> νῶιν, ἐπεσσομένοις δὲ γενοίμεθα πᾶσιν ἀοιδή.
>
> If only equal loves breathed upon us both, and we might
> become a song for those who come after.

Who are these ἐπεσσόμενοι, and what kind of memorialization is craved here? Given the context, Gow 1952 ad loc. prefers to see a reference to Theognis 251 (Theognis and Kyrnos) rather than *Iliad* 6.354–58 (Helen and Paris), and the pathos of this allusion has been explored at length by Hunter 1996.190–92. Here I want merely to examine how the speaker of *Idyll* 12 has recourse to a voice other than his own when he approaches the topic of immortality. Theognis speaks of fame that he, as author, has already conferred upon his beloved (237): "I have given you wings." Moreover, the consequences of this immortality are expressed as a series of future indicatives that apply to the beloved alone and that culminate in the lines (251–52) to which *Idyll* 12.11 alludes: "You will be a song for those who come after." Theognis thus appears as a bestower of fame rather than in need of it himself, and his address to Kyrnos assumes a body of poetry in which the

speaker has already been immortalized as poet and his addressee as lover. The speaker of *Idyll* 12, on the other hand, cannot make promises about the future that derive their performative authority from references to his own work. He can only wish that he and his partner might be remembered by others for the quality of their affection: "If only equal loves breathed upon us both, and we might become a song for those who come after." Rather than reflecting on the power of his own speech to confer fame on his "beloved boy," he can merely imagine the kind of thing that people might say about them both in the future if their relationship were different (12.12–16):

> "δίω δή τινε τώδε μετὰ προτέροισι γενέσθην
> φῶθ', ὃ μὲν εἴσπνηλος, φαίη χὠμυκλαϊάζων,
> τὸν δ' ἕτερον πάλιν, ὥς κεν ὁ Θεσσαλὸς εἴποι, ἀίτην·
> ἀλλήλους δ' ἐφίλησαν ἴσῳ ζυγῷ. ἦ ῥα τότ' ἦσαν
> χρύσειοι πάλιν ἄνδρες, ὅτ' ἀντεφίλησ' ὁ φιληθείς."
>
> "These were two splendid men amongst our ancestors, the one 'inspirer,' as one speaking in the Amyclean dialect would say, the other what a Thessalian would call 'listener.' They loved one another with equal yoke. There were indeed then golden men again, when the beloved loved in return."

While Theognis 237–54 looks sideways, as it were, deriving its authority from the corpus of the *Theognidea*, the speaker of *Idyll* 12 moves vertically between past and future to give shape to his fantasy. He uses the archaic εἴσπνηλος ("inspirer") and ἀίτης ("listener") to reimagine himself and his lover, but sets these archaic terms in the mouth of a speaker from the future. Looking back to the present of *Idyll* 12, the latter will see, not the asymmetrical attraction of *erastes* and *eromenos,* but a relationship from which physical desire has been entirely effaced.

While the speaker cannot confer a future, he can reimagine the present, and the terms with which he chooses to do so find an interesting echo in *Idyll* 7. In the song that he performs for the narrator Simichidas, the goatherd Lycidas describes the torment of his desire for Ageanax (7.52–56), and then imagines a rustic symposium he will celebrate upon the latter's arrival in Mytilene (7.63f.). There he will hear songs on pastoral subjects, and these lead him to wish that he could share an ideal present with the singer Comatas (7.86–89):

> αἴθ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐμεῦ ζωοῖς ἐναρίθμιος ὤφελες ἦμεν,
> ὥς τοι ἐγὼν ἐνόμευον ἀν᾽ ὥρεα τὰς καλὰς αἶγας
> φωνᾶς εἰσαΐων, τὺ δ᾽ ὑπὸ δρυσὶν ἢ ὑπὸ πεύκαις
> ἁδὺ μελισδόμενος κατεκέκλισο, θεῖε Κομᾶτα.
>
> If only you were numbered among the living in my day, so that I, pasturing your lovely sheep among the hills, might listen to your voice, and you, lying under oaks or under pines, sing sweetly, divine Comatas.

The polarity of *erastes* and *eromenos* with which the song began has been transmuted into a relationship between singer and audience, and it is clear that, in this ideal world, Lycidas would prefer the rôle of listener. *Idyll* 12 uses the same imagery in its progression from desire to idealization. The speaker's prayer seemed initially to be a plea for reciprocity: "Would that equal loves breathed upon us both" (cf. "with equal yoke"). His lexical fantasy, on the other hand, imagines a relationship between an active "inspirer" and a passive "listener" similar to that between Lycidas and Comatas. However, while the lovers' rôles will be as distinct as the dialects in which they are preserved, the speaker of *Idyll* 12, as we shall see, imagines himself as the "inspirer" and his beloved as his "charming listener" (12.20).

In both *Idylls*, erotic dissatisfaction leads to literary invention, and this movement accounts for the structural similarity noted by Legrand 1925.80: "Entre elle [*Id.* 12] et les chansons de l'idylle VII, il existe une parenté. Ici et là, le thême sentimental est indiqué plutôt qu'il n'est traité, et sert de prétexte à toute sorte de développements parasites." Lycidas's song in *Idyll* 7 begins as an expression of his desire for Ageanax, but this desire is displaced by the embedded narratives of Tityrus, Daphnis, and Comatas. In *Idyll* 12, the speaker's response to his infatuation is to invent a song that will be sung about him by men of the future, and this brief fantasy derives its imaginative appeal from the distinct accents of Thessalian and Amyclean it contains. Lycidas and the speaker of *Idyll* 12 thus attempt to escape their present pain by inventing other voices, which they imagine themselves hearing even as they incorporate them into their own speech, and these fictions in both cases involve an idealized image of their composers.[5]

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5 De Jong 1987.77–78 observes a similar phenomenon in the *Iliad*. In a study of *tis*-speeches, she notes that, on two occasions, Hector imagines an anonymous future speaker,

Unlike Theognis, then, the speaker of *Idyll* 12 cannot confer immortality with his own voice, and so he prays for the kind of love that could give him an afterlife in song (12.17–21):

> εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο, πάτερ Κρονίδη, πέλοι, εἰ γάρ, ἀγήρῳ
> ἀθάνατοι, γενεῇς δὲ διηκοσίῃσιν ἔπειτα
> ἀγγείλειεν ἐμοί τις ἀνέξοδον εἰς ᾽Αχέροντα·
> "ἡ σὴ νῦν φιλότης καὶ τοῦ χαρίεντος ἀίτεω
> πᾶσι διὰ στόματος, μετὰ δ᾽ ἠιθέοισι μάλιστα."
>
> If only, father Zeus, if only, ageless gods, this might be, and someone, two hundred generations from now, might announce to me in inescapable Acheron: "The present love of you and your charming listener is upon everyone's lips, and especially those of unmarried youths."

The mention of the underworld seems once again to recall Theognis 237–54, where the poet promises Kyrnos that he will not be deprived of fame, "even when you go down into the much-lamenting house of Hades, under the depths of dark earth" (243–44). Here, however, there are characteristic changes. Firstly, the lover will not simply descend into Hades while the fame produced by the speaking voice remains upon earth. Instead, the speaker imagines himself in the underworld, where an anonymous messenger will deliver a report of his continuing fame in the world above. Moreover, this vivid future scene also belongs to the speaker's continuing attempt to reimagine his present. In verse 12, the ἐπεσσόμενος uses the demonstrative δίω . . . τώδε to refer to the lovers not as they actually are but as the

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whose potential speech is embedded in his own, speaking an "oral epitaph" for himself (6.460–61) and an opponent (7.89–90). In the first, he imagines the speaker looking at Andromache, who is still alive, and recalling that she was Hector's wife; in the second, looking at the tomb of a warrior and recalling that Hector was the man who killed him. The oral epitaph differs from an actual epitaph in that "it is spoken by passers-by, whereas real epitaphs are spoken by the stone and addressed to passers-by," and that "the content of the 'epitaph' reveals more about the character speaking than about the person it is supposed to talk about." The situation envisaged by the speaker of *Idyll* 12 is rather less concrete. Since the ἐπεσσόμενος speaks of the lovers in the past tense, he is not looking at them in person, as Hector's first speaker is looking at Andromache. On the other hand, neither does he refer to a memorial like the tomb that Hector's second speaker sees. The speaker of *Idyll* 12 has therefore put the "epitaphic demonstrative"—"these two [τώδε]" (12)—into the mouth of his future speaker without any indication of how it got there.

speaker of *Idyll* 12 would like them to become, and here, too, ἡ σὴ νῦν φιλότης, spoken by the visitor to Hades, refers to an affection that does not yet exist, since it is the object of the speaker's wish in verses 10–11. Formally, the speaker of the *Idyll* has again voiced his reconstruction of the present as embedded direct speech by an anonymous future speaker, and here, too, the invention expresses his desire to be, not the composer, but the theme of erotic song. Finally, it is obvious that, despite his plea for reciprocity, it is his own κλέος that concerns him most: the report to the underworld will be delivered ἐμοί (12.19), not ἡμῖν.

After the bookish fantasy of these embedded narratives, the speaker returns to reality with the observation that such matters are in the hands of the gods (12.22–23), and that, by reverting to erotic encomium, he will at least not be convicted of falsehood (12.23–24): "But in praising your beauty, I will not grow pimples on my slender nose" (ψεύδεα, or pimples, are the sign of a liar: Gow 1952 ad loc.). The bathetic image contrasts with the idealized lovers his archaizing imagination created, the εἴσπνηλος and ἀίτης, donor and recipient of a pure, disembodied breath. Unlike Lycidas, who is able to transmute his erotic yearning into the desire for pastoral song, the speaker's imagination is not yet strong enough to distract him from his lover entirely, and the fantasies of verses 12–21, which rework his present situation, do not offer lasting escape. So he lapses back into the emotional "arithmetic" (Walsh 1990.19) with which the poem began (12.25–26):

> ἦν γὰρ καί τι δάκῃς, τὸ μὲν ἀβλαβὲς εὐθὺς ἔθηκας,
> διπλάσιον δ' ὤνησας, ἔχων δ' ἐπίμετρον ἀπῆλθον.
>
> If you wound somewhat, too, you immediately set it right;
> you confer a double benefit, and I depart with a profit.

As with pimples on the nose, the language here is remarkably mundane: Gow 1952 ad loc. notes that ἐπίμετρον is elsewhere confined to prose. It is a measure of the speaker's ultimate imaginative success that his accounting imagery will appear transfigured in the poem's conclusion.

His final fantasy is a description of the Megarian Diocleia, which is appended to the hesitant strivings that precede it as an exultant address to the Megarians themselves, without any kind of transitional motif or syntactical connection. Just as in the series of images with which the poem begins, however, what starts off as the praise of an addressee soon begins to look very much like an encomium of the speaker himself (12.27–31):

> Νισαῖοι Μεγαρῆες, ἀριστεύοντες ἐρετμοῖς,
> ὄλβιοι οἰκείοιτε, τὸν Ἀττικὸν ὡς περίαλλα
> ξεῖνον ἐτιμήσασθε, Διοκλέα τὸν φιλόπαιδα.
> αἰεί οἱ περὶ τύμβον ἀολλέες εἴαρι πρώτῳ
> κοῦροι ἐριδμαίνουσι φιλήματος ἄκρα φέρεσθαι.
>
> Nisaean Megarians, excellent with the oar, may you dwell in good fortune, since you honored superlatively your Attic guest, boy-loving Diocles. Every year in early spring a host of youths compete around his tomb to win the prize for kissing.

No mention is made of Diocles having sacrificed his own life on the battlefield to save that of his lover (which is what the Diocleia commemorated), and he is honored simply as *erastes*.

Similarly, the speaker transfers the epinician μακαρισμός from the victor to the judge, and his reference to the Lydian stone, or βάσανος, marks a fantastic distance from the epinicia of Pindar and Bacchylides, where it is the touchstone of a mouth that is not kissing but singing (12.34–37):

> ὄλβιος ὅστις παισὶ φιλήματα κεῖνα διαιτᾷ.
> ἦ που τὸν χαροπὸν Γανυμήδεα πόλλ' ἐπιβῶται
> Λυδίῃ ἶσον ἔχειν πέτρῃ στόμα, χρυσὸν ὁποίῃ
> πεύθονται, μὴ φαῦλος, ἐτήτυμον ἀργυραμοιβοί.
>
> Blessed is he who judges those kisses for the boys. Surely he calls often upon bright-eyed Ganymede that he may have a mouth equal to the Lydian stone with which money-changers test true gold to see if it is false.

The speaker thus invests the festival with the same aura of unreality as pervades his embedded songs. However, while the account of the festival may be questionable from an antiquarian perspective, its erotic exuberance is undeniable. Ending the poem with an image whose sheer visual power takes the place of formal narrative closure may be compared with the end of *Idyll* 7, where the statue of Demeter provides an equally surprising yet effective resolution, and contrasts with the pastoral *Idylls'* tendency to close on a quiet or even bathetic note (*Idylls* 1, 3, 4, 11). By identifying in fantasy with the judge of the kissing competition, the speaker, at last, accepts the

rôle of agent rather than object of commemoration, and this acceptance yields his most successful composition, as attachment to his *eromenos* is effaced in an ecstasy of his own imagining. In the words of Legrand 1925.80: "il en vient à oublier lui-même son bien-aimé, à commettre envers lui une infidélité de pensée, puisqu'il envie l'arbitre qui, à Mégare, reçoit et apprécie les caresses des concurrents."

Earlier I cited the observation of Legrand 1925.80 regarding the similarity between *Idyll* 12 and the songs of *Idyll* 7: "le thême sentimental . . . sert de prétexte à toute sorte de développements parasites." These "parasitic developments" can now be seen as the means by which the composer is able to escape his "sentimental theme." For just as in *Idyll* 7, where the embedded narratives of Lycidas's song eventually involve an imaginative identification that frees him of his desire for Ageanax, so here, too, "infidelity of thought" leads the speaker away from his lover and into the world of his own imagination. Nevertheless, while *Idyll* 12 offers many points of resemblance to the pastoral poems in its themes, imagery, and narrative structure, one crucial question remains in determining its relationship to them: who speaks the poem? Is the voice purely textual, a persona of the poet himself like Theognis 237–54, or should we imagine a dramatic character? The rustic imagery of verses 3–9 associates the speaker with pastoral lovers like Bucaeus and Polyphemus and the pimples of verse 24 are found again at *Idyll* 9.30. Since this poem is a pastoral by someone other than Theocritus, the imitation would suggest that its writer thought *Idyll* 12 was also pastoral.

There are some difficulties, however, in assigning it to a fictional character, a Polyphemus or a Bucaeus. The first of these is the Ionic dialect in which it is written, since the other dramatic poems, both rural and urban, are in Doric. The second is that, in other *Idylls* that consist wholly or in part of character monologue, there are clear indications of the fictional identity of the speaker and of the poem's dramatic setting. Thus in *Idyll* 3, the goatherd identifies himself as such by his references to his flock and his companion (3.1–5), and his song is performed before the cave of Amaryllis (3.6). Similarly, in *Idyll* 11, Polyphemus is named in both the frame narration and his own self-address (11.8, 72, 80), and he sings on a high rock by the seashore (11.17–18). Moreover, in both these poems, it is clear that the addressee is absent—not simply because, as in *Idyll* 12, there is no reply, but because the speaker tells us so. The goatherd of *Idyll* 3 complains that the nymph will not leave her cave (3.6) and Polyphemus that Galateia will not leave the sea (11.42, 63). We are therefore given plenty of details with which to imagine the scene of the performance. In *Idyll* 12, by contrast, there is no

indication of a dramatic setting, no mention of the speaker's identity, and no sign as to whether or not the boy is present to hear the speech addressed to him. While one might imagine him as a κωφὸν πρόσωπον, like Simaetha's servant Thestylis in *Idyll* 2 or Tityrus in *Idyll* 3, the presence of these non-speaking characters is signaled by the speaker, and they offer opportunities for increased dramatization of the monologue.[6] Similarly, while no one expects a reply to songs like those in *Idylls* 3 and 11 (if the speaker were not separated from the object of his desire, he would have no reason to sing), an extended greeting without a response reads as a very peculiar kind of performance: it appears to be conducted for its own sake rather than for its natural function of greeting the new arrival.[7] While it is in keeping with the speaker's all too obvious concern for his own fame that we cannot tell whether his addressee is present or not, the absence of a direct reference by which we might understand his presence extends to the physical setting as well, and should not, I believe, be explained simply as the dramatic solipsism of the character Theocritus has created. Rather, the unique combination of formal features—a fictional first-person speaker in the Ionic dialect without a narrative frame and with no indications of a dramatic setting within the speech itself—points to an intriguing curiosity in the cabinet of *Idylls*. For *Idyll* 12 lies midway between the textual drama of the Aeolic poems, with their range of addressees—the distaff of *Idyll* 28, the faithless boy of *Idyll* 29, and the poet's own θυμός in *Idyll* 30—and the fully developed *mise en scène* of the dramatic poems.[8]

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6 On the use of the κωφὸν πρόσωπον in mime, see Wiemkin 1972.22 and Albert 1988.80–83.

7 For Walsh 1990.19–20, the poem departs from the rhetorical agenda signaled in its opening because it is spoken some time after the boy's arrival. As the speaker has already been relieved of his desire, he no longer has to conciliate or seduce, and his speech is free "to follow [his] unconstrained, autonomous thoughts." An interval between the speaker's gratification at the boy's return and the moment when the poem is delivered requires understanding the aorists in the opening—ἦλυθες (12.1), εὔφρηνας (12.8)—as simple past tenses. However, while Walsh 1990.19 n. 53 criticizes Gow for "unaccountably" translating them as perfects—"Thou art come . . . so hast thou gladdened me"—the latter was presumably thinking of Telemachus's return at *Od*. 16.23, where, since it is his first appearance, a perfect is required to render Eumaus's greeting ἦλθες. Given that *Idyll* 12 contains no indication of the occasion of its performance, I do not believe that one can decide between the different dramatic situations envisaged in these two versions.

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