

THE HEALING EFFECT OF SONG IN THE POETRY OF PINDAR AND THEOCRITUS

by

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(Under the Direction of Charles Platter)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of medical metaphors which compare song to medicine and poet to physician in the poetry of Pindar and Theocritus. The first chapter examines this theme in early Greek poetry, specifically in the early hexameter of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Hesiod's *Theogony*. The second chapter focuses on Pindar's explicit medical comparisons as they define his role as a poet in his victory odes. Finally, a close reading of Theocritus' *Idyll* 11 demonstrates that healing songs are a continuous feature which permeates the Greek poetic tradition, spanning time and genre.

INDEX WORDS: Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Theocritus, *Pythian* 1, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Theogony*, *Pythian* 3, *Nemean* 4, *Idyll* 11, Greek poetry, Memory, Healing, Soothing, Medical metaphor, Ancient medicine

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## INTRODUCTION

In ancient Greece, healers and poets alike recognized the close relationship between poetic song and medical treatment. Thus, in the Greek magical papyri verses of Homer are designated as incantations which heal physical ailments.<sup>1</sup> The close connection between song and medicine might seem completely foreign to the world of the poet. Nevertheless, my thesis examines the soothing effect Greek poets attribute to their poetry as evidenced by the language of the poems. Often my analyses will consider diction common to both poets and medical writers, in particular the authors of the works within the Hippocratic corpus. By tracing the medical metaphor which likens the poet to a doctor and his listener to a patient in the Greek poetic tradition, it is possible to see how poets adapt this metaphor to their respective genres.

The first chapter will explore the analgesic effect of song in Homeric epic and in Hesiod's *Theogony*. In all three works, song primarily elicits a strong emotional response from its audience by affecting the θυμός, the νόος, or the φρήν. By considering passages which indicate that the verb τέρπειν carries a healing sense and means "to soothe," I will demonstrate that song soothes its audiences in the *Iliad*. Once the medical color of τέρπειν has been established, an analysis of song in the *Odyssey* will reveal that professional bards sing with the intent to soothe the minds of their audiences. Finally, the discussion will focus on the song

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Betz, 260. Quotations from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are used in incantations to heal "bloody flux" (*Iliad* 1.75; *Iliad* 1.96), "pain in the breasts and uterus" (*Iliad* 2.548; *Odyssey* 8.486; *Odyssey* 7.332), and "elephantiasis" (*Iliad* 4.141) and to function as a contraceptive.

of the Muses in Hesiod's *Theogony*, in which the narrator clearly tells us his poetry removes the cares (κίδηα) of a troubled man (ὁ δυσσπονέων) by singing.

Chapter two will show that Pindar adopts the traditional notion of analgesic song from earlier writers and adapts this concept to his genre of epinician. Pindar's odes reintegrate the victor into his community and Pindar reflects this function as he appropriates medical language to describe his own art. The first section of this chapter will analyze the opening of *Pythian* 1 in which Pindar invokes the lyre and will demonstrate that Pindar's song calms and disarms Zeus and Ares, gods who threaten harmony in the community. A second section will show that Pindar marks his poetry as soothing by using mythological figures and medical metaphors in *Pythian* 1, *Nemean* 4, and *Pythian* 3. Taken together, these sections suggest that Pindar attributes to his victory an ameliorative power over the listener.

Finally, chapter three will establish that the association between song and cure discussed in the first two chapters is a feature of the Greek poetic tradition which spans time and genre. This chapter will examine Theocritus' *Idyll* 11, written some 200 years after Pindar's time, in which the poet preserves a close connection between medicine and poetry but refashions the medical metaphor by locating the doctor and patient in the same character, Polyphemus. In this poem, Theocritus uses language of physical recovery to indicate that the Cyclops eases his lovesickness by singing. Though this chapter will be unable to consider the entire bucolic genre, the recurrence of the analgesic song in *Idyll* 11 reveals that the correspondence between song and healing is pervasive in the Greek poetic tradition and offers suggestive possibilities for further study.



## CHAPTER 1

### HOMER, HESIOD, AND THE HEALING EFFECT OF EPIC SONG

In the poetry of Homer and Hesiod epic song, granted by the Muses, strongly affects the minds of listeners depicted in these works. The effects of song vary from producing delight (τέρψις) in the Homeric poems to taking away the cares (κίδηα) of men by replacing their worries with more pleasant memories in Hesiod's *Theogony*. These poets describe the influence of epic song on their audiences differently in accordance with the subject matter of their work. For that reason, the poet narrating the *Odyssey*, a poem which centers around Odysseus' homecoming (νόστος) attained by cunning, addresses the impact of song more directly than the poet of the *Iliad*, which focuses on heroes at war who win glory (κλέος) in battle. The soothing power of song emerges most clearly in Hesiod's *Theogony*, a poem which focuses on the birth of the divinities and a description of their powers and, especially, on the supremacy of Zeus.<sup>2</sup> The pain-relieving property of song is more visible in Hesiod's poem since the bard, as therapon of the Muses, describes the process through which he removes cares as he delineates the power of the gods whose origin he narrates. While the analgesic nature of song surfaces more clearly in the *Theogony* than in the two Homeric epics, song in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* also has the power to delight and to make men weep. This chapter will reveal that song soothes the mind in

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<sup>2</sup> Thalmann points out that the focus of the *Theogony* is the "ultimate supremacy of Zeus" (14). See also Thalmann p. 41 for the idea that the structure of the poem emphasizes this theme. M.L. West places Hesiod's *Theogony* in a category of "theogonic literature" which encompasses "the origin of the world and the gods, and the events which led to the establishment of the present order" (1). West also cites Herodotus 2.53.2 where Herodotus tells that Homer and Hesiod wrote a theogony for the Greeks describing their honors and crafts and points out their forms (τιμάς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες καὶ εἶδα αὐτῶν σημήναντες) (3).

the Homeric epics and then will demonstrate that the poet directly articulates the healing result of song in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

### 1.1 The Healing Sense of the Verb *τέρπειν* in the *Iliad*

The narrators of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* attribute to the storyteller the power to delight (*τέρπειν*) the mind of his audience as well as the power to turn it toward weeping and lamentation. Of the many words in early hexameter poetry which may refer to the “heart” or “mind,”<sup>3</sup> this chapter will focus on three which are regularly associated with the emotional center:<sup>4</sup> the *φρήν*,<sup>5</sup> the *θυμός*,<sup>6</sup> and the *νόος*.<sup>7</sup> Several scholars have examined Homeric terms for the “mind” or the “heart” in attempts to determine the physical location and the definition of these and other terms for the “mind.”<sup>8</sup> The distinction between these terms is of less consequence for this chapter than is the fact that song affects, and more specifically delights or soothes (*τέρπειν*), all three of these body parts in which an individual's emotional condition

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<sup>3</sup> See Caswell on the difficulties of translating these terms into English (1-4). She identifies as “functional synonyms” of *θυμός*: *ψυχή*, *μένος*, *φρήν*, *ἦτορ*, and *κραδίη* (2-3). See also Sullivan who identifies the Homeric words that “indicate psychological activity carried on within a person” as: “*noos, phrên, thumos, kradiê, êtor, kêr, prapis, and psychê*” (2).

<sup>4</sup> For the *φρήν*, the *θυμός*, and the *νόος* as associated with the emotional center, see Redfield, 173-177. Also see Caswell, 3.

<sup>5</sup> See *Odyssey* 8.541 where grief (*ἄχος*) runs around the “mind” (*φρένας*) of Odysseus. Odysseus' grief is contrasted with the mental state of the Phaeacians for whom the song is pleasing (*χαριζόμενος*). Also see *Iliad* 1.474 where Apollo delights his “mind” as he listens to the song of the young Achaeans (*φρένα τέρπετ'*). For the *φρήν* as the emotional seat of the individual see Sullivan, 72-74.

<sup>6</sup> See *Theogony* 98. The newly pained heart (*νεοκηδός θυμός*) is the seat of suffering (*πένθος*). See also *Iliad* 1.192 and 1.429 where Achilles is angry in his *θυμός*.

<sup>7</sup> See *Theogony* 37. When the Muses sing to Zeus they delight his mind (*τέρπουσι μέγαν νόον*).

<sup>8</sup> See Redfield, 173-177 for the connection of these three body parts as the emotional seat. Also see Sullivan on *φρήν*, Caswell on *θυμός*.

resides. Delight in Homer and Hesiod is expressed variously,<sup>9</sup> but the poet regularly describes the result of song using the verb, *τέρπω*,<sup>10</sup> “to delight.” The following analysis of passages in the *Iliad* in which *τέρπω* appears with the *φρήν*, the *θυμός*, or the *νόος* will indicate that this verb means not only “to delight,” but also “to soothe.”

The soothing result of song, including both epic song and other types of song described, may be observed in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad*, song is often followed by a description of its emotional effect on its hearers, and the regular emotional response to song is “delight” or “solace” (*τέρψις*). According to Cunliffe, the verb *τέρπειν* may be translated as “to solace,” “to delight,” “to comfort,” or “to indulge oneself in” [in the context of lamentation].<sup>11</sup> The verb in some instances contains overtones of healing. In *Iliad* 15, for example, Patroclus “soothes” Eurypylos at the same time as he bandages his wound:

392 τόφρ' ὃ γ' ἐνὶ κλισίῃ ἀγαπήνορος Εὐρυπύλοιο  
ἦστό τε καὶ τὸν **ἔτερπε λόγοις**, ἐπὶ δ' ἔλκει λυγρῶ  
φάρμακ' ἀκέσματ' ἔπασσε μελαινάων ὀδυνάων.

392 For this long in the hut of courteous Eurypylos  
He [Patroklos] sat and **soothed him with words**, and to his painful  
wound  
he applied drugs which were remedies of black pains.

In this passage, words soothe the patient mentally and calm him so that the surgeon may perform his physical treatment of the wound (*ἔλκος*).<sup>12</sup> The physician’s words function as the

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<sup>9</sup> Delight is often expressed by the verb *τέρπω* or its noun form, *τέρψις*. The verb *χαρίζομαι*, and its related forms, also means “to be pleasing to,” though *τέρπω* is much more common for the description of song. *χαρίζομαι* describes the song of Demodocus at *Odyssey* 8.541, on which see note 5.

<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed discussion of *τέρπω* and its definition, see below.

<sup>11</sup> Cunliffe, s.v. *τέρπω*.

<sup>12</sup> Entralgo, 23-25.

mind's counterpart to the drugs (φάρμακα) which the physician applies to the physical wound.<sup>13</sup>

The same verb (τέρπειν) which describes the physician's words in the above passage also characterizes the singer's song. In *Iliad* 1, for example, when the young Achaeans (κοῦροι) have finished eating, they appease the god by singing:

472 οἱ δὲ πανημέριοι μολπῇ θεὸν ἰλάσκοντο,  
καλὸν αἰείδοντες παιήονα<sup>14</sup> κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν  
μέλποντες ἐκάεργον· ὃ δὲ **φρένα τέρπειτ'** ἀκούων.

472 All day the younger men of the Achaeans  
Propitiated the god with song, singing a lovely hymn  
to the farworker; and he **delighted in his heart** as he listened.

While τέρπειν may be translated as “to delight” in the above passage, context indicates that this verb should most accurately be translated as “to solace” when Achilles sings to himself in *Iliad* 9. As early as *Iliad* 1, Achilles' anger is connected to his θυμός when he realizes that it is better to obey the goddesses, Athena and Hera, than to yield to his anger (χρὴ μὲν σφωίτερόν γε θεὰ ἔπος εἰρύσσασθαι / καὶ μάλα περ θυμῷ κεχολωμένον, 216-217).<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the narrator locates Achilles' anger in his θυμός when Agamemnon infuriates him with words to the extent that Athena must restrain him from attacking the king:

ὡς φάτο· Πηλεΐεني δ' ἄχος γένετ', ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ  
στήθεσσι λασίοισι διάνδιχα μερμήριξεν,

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the role of the physician in the *Iliad* also see Martin, especially Chapters 1 and 3. Martin focuses on ἀμηχανία, suggesting that in Homeric and Hesiodic poetry “one wards off ἀμηχανία by fighting, healing, and sacrificing; the poet, θεράπων of the Muses, works against it through his poetry, and this, in turn may be cast into the language of war, medicine, or religion” (10). He argues that Homeric language reveals a connection between healing and battle, by demonstrating that μῆχος can mean “remedy” and is at times synonymous with ἄκος (27-31) and that sickness represents a “helplessness, for which the solution is healing” (43). Martin addresses *physical* illness and sickness. I will suggest that poetry also, and primarily, heals psychological pain.

<sup>14</sup> Willcock and Kirk both interpret παιήονα as referring to the type of hymn, rather than to the god (Paeon) propitiated (Willcock, 195; Kirk, 103).

<sup>15</sup> Achilles is also angry in his θυμός at *Iliad* 1.429.

190 ἦ ὃ γε φάσγανον ὄξυ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ  
 τοὺς μὲν ἀναστήσειεν, ὃ δ' Ἀτρεΐδην ἐναρίζοι,  
 ἦε χόλον παύσειεν ἐρητύσειέ τε θυμόν.  
 ἦος δ' ταῦθ' ὤρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν,  
 195 ἔλκετο δ' ἐκ κολεοῖο μέγα ξίφος, ἦλθε δ' Ἀθήνη  
 οὐρανόθεν

Thus he spoke. And **grief** came upon the son of Peleus, the heart in his shaggy chest split in two ways was pondering  
 190 whether having drawn his sharp sword from his thigh  
 he should break up the assembly and slay the son of Atreus  
 or he should leave off from his anger and restrain his heart.  
 As he pondered these things in his mind and in his heart,  
 and he drew the great sword from its scabbard, Athena came  
 195 down from heaven.

As this passage demonstrates, Achilles' anger (χόλος) rests in his φρήν and his θυμός.

Similarly, his grief is connected to his φρένες when Thetis inquires about the cause of his woes:

(τέκνον τί κλαίεις; τί δέ σε **φρένας** ἵκετο **πένθος**).<sup>16</sup> In *Iliad* 1 we see that anger and suffering affect Achilles primarily in the φρήν and the θυμός.

By *Iliad* 9, the Achaeans send an embassy to attempt to convince Achilles to return to battle. When Odysseus addresses Achilles to plead for the Achaean cause, he asks him not to forget the advice Peleus gave him before he left Phthia:

255 τέκνον ἐμὸν κάρτος μὲν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη  
 δώσουσ' αἶ κ' ἐθέλωσι, σὺ δὲ **μεγαλήτορα θυμόν**  
 ἴσχειν ἐν στήθεσσι· **φιλοφροσύνη** γὰρ ἀμείνων·  
 ληγέμεναι δ' ἔριδος κακομηχάνου, ὄφρα σε μᾶλλον  
 τίωσ' Ἀργείων ἡμὲν νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες.  
 260 ὣς ἐπέτελλ' ὃ γέρων, σὺ δὲ λήθεται· ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν  
 παύε', **ἔα δὲ χόλον θυμαλγέα**· σοὶ δ' Ἀγαμέμνων  
 ἄξια δῶρα δίδωσι μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο.

My son, strength Athena and Hera  
 255 will give to you if they should wish to, but you restrain  
**the proud heart** in your chest; **friendliness** is better.  
 Leave off from evil-contriving strife, in order that the young  
 And the old men of the Argives may honor you more.

<sup>16</sup> *Iliad* 1.362.

260 So the old man ordered, but you have forgotten. But even still now  
stop, **lay aside heart-paining anger**; and Agamemnon  
would offer you worthy gifts if you leave off from your anger.

Here again, the φρήν and the θυμός appear together to express Achilles' emotional state.

Odysseus reminds Achilles that Peleus told him friendship (φιλοφροσύνη, literally “a φρήν that is friendly”), was better than strife (ἔρις). In addition to instructing Achilles to maintain a friendly mind, Peleus describes χόλος as heart-paining (θυμαλγέα). Peleus reaffirms that Achilles' anger and his grief are connected closely to both his φρήν and his θυμός.

When Achilles sings to himself on the shore in *Iliad* 9, his song similarly affects both his φρήν and his θυμός. At line 185, when the Achaean embassy approaches his hut:

185 Μυρμιδόνων δ' ἐπὶ τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκεσθην,  
τὸν δ' εὖρον **φρένα τερπόμενον** φόρμιγγι λιγείη,  
καλῆ δαιδαλέη, ἐπὶ δ' ἀργύρεον ζυγὸν ἦεν ·  
τὴν ἄρετ' ἐξ ἐνάρων, πόλιν Ἡετίωνος ὀλέσσας ·  
τῇ ὅ γε **θυμὸν ἔτερπεν**, ἄειδε δ' ἄρα **κλέα ἀνδρῶν** ·

185 They came to the huts and the ships of the Myrmidons,  
and they found him **solacing his heart** with a light-tuned phorminx,  
which was beautifully wrought, and had a silver cross piece.  
Which he took up from the spoils after sacking the city of Aetionor.  
With this he **solaced his heart**, and sang **the glories of men**.

In this passage, Achilles solaces (τερπόμενον, ἔτερπεν) his own heart (φρήν, θυμός) by singing epic song (κλέα ἀνδρῶν)<sup>17</sup> to the accompaniment of the lyre. As in other passages which locate Achilles' grief and anger in the φρήν and the θυμός, this passage situates relief from that anger and grief in the same places. Even if τέρω were to be translated as “to delight” in this passage, the established anger that precedes and follows Achilles' performance strongly suggests that Achilles sings to comfort himself.

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<sup>17</sup> cf. Nagy, 1979.18ff.

The same verb, *τέρπω*, with which the poet depicts the effect of Achilles' song on both his *φρήν* and his *θυμός* also occurs in one of the scenes Hephaistos has crafted on Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 18:

τοῖσι δ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε δύω σκοποὶ εἶατο λαῶν  
δέγμενοι, ὀππότε μῆλα ἰδοῖατο καὶ ἔλικας βοῦς.  
525 οἱ δὲ τάχα προγένοντο, δύω δ' ἄμ' ἔποντο νομῆες  
**τερπόμενοι** σύριγξι· δόλον δ' οὔ τι προνόησαν.

Behind these [soldiers] two men looking out for the people  
Were stationed, until the time when they might see the sheep and the  
sleek cattle.

525 But they came quickly, and two shepherds followed along with them,  
**Delighting** in the syrinx; and they did not perceive any trick.

These shepherds delight in the syrinx while they herd their sheep, just as Apollo delights in the song of the *κοῦροι* in *Iliad* 1 and Achilles delights in his own singing in *Iliad* 9. In the *Iliad* songs delight their audience. The narrator of the *Iliad* describes the result of the singer's song as delight (*τέρψις*), whether or not the singer is a professional bard. As Thalmann points out, performances appear in epic poetry in various settings, ranging from the most ceremonious to the most informal.<sup>18</sup> Scenes depicting the performance of song in the *Iliad* vary from formal, such as performance of the *κοῦροι* in *Iliad* 1, to casual scenes, such as Achilles singing to himself on the shore in *Iliad* 9. What all of these scenes have in common, regardless of their degree of formality, is that they depict singers who are not professional bards.<sup>19</sup> For this reason, the intention of the singer to soothe his audience is less visible in the *Iliad* in which the

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<sup>18</sup> Thalmann, 117.

<sup>19</sup> This excludes the invocations of the Muses by the narrator, which are the only places in the *Iliad* where the activity of the professional bard is directly addressed. Achilles performs the *κλέα ἀνδρῶν*, the term that designates epic song, and he solaces his *θυμός* and his *φρήν*. Nonetheless, the Greek does not suggest that his mind urged/incited him to solace (*τέρπειν*) as speakers will say of bards in the *Odyssey* (cf. *Odyssey* 1.347, 8.45; also see Section 2 below).

narrator is the only professional bard presented to the audience than in the *Odyssey* in which Phemius and Demodocus are depicted in addition to the narrator of the epic itself.

### 1.2 The Soothing Effect of Song in the *Odyssey*

In the *Odyssey* storytelling and the performance of epic are recurring themes, and two professional bards, Phemius and Demodocus, are characterized. Speakers attribute to both professional bards the intent to delight. In *Odyssey* 1, Telemachus replies as follows after Penelope asks Phemius to stop singing songs about the homecoming of the Achaeans: μήτερ ἐμή, τί τ' ἄρα φθονέεις ἐρήηρον ἀοιδόν / **τέρπειν ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται**; (Mother, why do you begrudge the trusty singer / **to delight in whatever way his mind incites him?**) (*Od.* 1.346-7). Telemachus implies that the singer will delight by singing, and he uses the verb *τέρπειν*, “to delight”, almost as a synonym for *αἰεῖδεν*, “to sing.” Telemachus furthermore suggests that Phemius’ mind (*νόος*) incites him to delight (*τέρπειν*), indicating that Phemius *intends* to produce *τέρψις*.<sup>20</sup>

Once again *τέρψις* is the result of song when the next professional bard, Demodocus, appears in *Odyssey* 8. Alcinous, the king of the Phaeacians, indicates that the god gives song to the bard so that he may delight the minds of men:

Καλέσσασθε δὲ θεῖον ἀοιδόν,  
Δημόδοκον· τῷ γάρ ῥα θεὸς πέρι δῶκεν ἀοιδὴν  
45 **τέρπειν, ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν αἰεῖδεν.**

Summon the holy bard

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<sup>20</sup> Depending on which definition of *τέρψις* is used, *τέρπειν* applies to Penelope just as well as to the suitors who enjoy Phemius’ song. Later in the epic, Penelope indulges herself, or perhaps consoles herself, in weeping: ἢ δ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν τάρφθη πολυδακρύτοιο γόοιο (Then she delighted in the many-teared lament) (*Od.* 19.213, 19.251). Similarly, at *Odyssey* 19.513 Penelope tells Odysseus, who is disguised as a beggar: ἡματα μὲν γὰρ τέρπομ’ ὀδυρομένη, γοώωσα (During the days I delight [or console?] myself grieving and mourning). *τέρπειν* may also describe the emotion of the suitors, who regularly delight in song: οἱ δ’ εἰς ὄρχηστὺν τε καὶ ἡμερόεσσαν ἀοιδὴν / τρεψάμενοι τέρποντο (They having turned to dance and pleasing song / took delight) (*Od.* 1.421-422).



Demodocus; for to him the god has given song beyond others  
45 **To delight, however his heart urges him to sing.**

Just as Telemachus says that the mind (νόος) of Phemius incites him to sing (ὄρνυται) so here Demodocus' heart (θυμός) urges (ἐποτρύνησιν) him to sing. Alcinous, again, strongly links τέρπειν and αἰεΐδεν and the two verbs are nearly synonymous. Alcinous and Telemachus both indicate that the professional bards, Phemius and Demodocus, sing for the purpose of delighting their audiences.<sup>21</sup>

In the *Odyssey* well-told stories have strong effects on their listeners. Songs not only have the ability to soothe or disturb their minds, but they *should* soothe and not disturb. After Demodocus sings the story of the Trojan Horse, for example, Odysseus weeps, although he himself requested the song.<sup>22</sup> In *Odyssey* 8 Alcinous addresses the bard and reemphasizes that the bard should delight his audience:

536 Κέκλυτε, Φαιήκων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες,  
Δημόδοκος δ' ἤδη σχεθέτω φόρμιγγα λίγειαν·  
**οὐ γὰρ πῶς πάντεσσι χαριζόμενος τὰδ' αἰεΐδει.**

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<sup>21</sup> Odysseus also essentially discusses epic song in the same way. After Alcinous asks Demodocus to stop singing, Odysseus describes the effect of the bard's song on its audience:

Ἄλκινόε κρεῖον, πάντων ἀριδείκετε λαῶν,  
ἦ τοι μὲν τόδε καλὸν ἀκουέμεν ἔστιν ἀοιδῶ  
τοιούδ', οἷος ὄδ' ἔστι, θεοῖσ' ἐναλίγκιος αὐδήν.  
5 οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ γέ τί φημι τέλος **χαριέστερον** εἶναι  
ἢ ὅτ' **εὐφροσύνη** μὲν ἔχη κατά δήμον ἅπαντα,  
δαιτυμόνες δ' ἀνά δώματ' ἀκουάζωνται ἀοιδῶ

Lord Alcinous, distinguished among all the people,  
Surely indeed it is good to listen to a bard  
Such as this one here is, like to the gods with respect to his voice.  
5 For I say there is not a result more **pleasant**  
Than when there is **joy** throughout all of the community,  
And guests throughout the halls listen to the bard.

Odysseus does not specifically designate delight (τέρψις) as the result of the bard's song. Nonetheless, he indicates that the bard's song is pleasant (χαρίεις) and that it produces joy (εὐφροσύνη) for its audience.

<sup>22</sup> Odysseus asks Demodocus to sing the story of the Trojan horse at *Odyssey* 8.492-298. He weeps while listening to this story at *Odyssey* 8.521-534.

- 540 ἔξ οὗ δορπέομέν τε καὶ ὄρορε θεῖος ἀοιδός,  
 ἔκ τοῦδ' οὗ πω παύσατ' ὀϊζυροῖο γόοιο  
 ὁ ξεῖνος· μάλα πού μιν ἄχος φρένας ἀμφιβέβηκεν.  
 ἀλλ' ἄγ' ὁ μὲν σχεθέτω, ἴν' ὁμῶς **τερπόμεθα πάντες**  
 ξωινοδόκοι καὶ ξεῖνος, ἐπεὶ πολὺ κάλλιον οὕτως.
- 536 Listen, rulers and counselors of the Phaeacians,  
 And let Demodocus hold back from the light phorminx:  
**For he does not sing these things delighting all.**  
 From the time when we took dinner and the godlike bard rose up,  
 540 From that time the guest has not yet left off from sharp  
 Lament: Grief runs around his heart especially.  
 But come let him hold back in order that **we might all delight**,  
 Guestfriendship-givers and guestfriend, since it is much better this way.

Alcinous' speech reveals that the expected and sought-after effect of Demodocus' song is delight and enjoyment. While singing delights or soothes the other audience members by singing about deeds of past heroes, the song of the Trojan horse, as part of the unresolved narrative of Odysseus' adventures, makes Odysseus weep.<sup>23</sup> Odysseus' reaction is unexpected to the Phaeacians, and it agitates his host to the degree that he brings the singing to an end altogether when he perceives that it is upsetting his guest. Alcinous' command to stop the

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<sup>23</sup> Like Penelope in *Odyssey* 1 and Telemachus at Menelaus' court in *Odyssey* 4, Odysseus weeps when he hears stories about himself. This may be because his fate is as yet undetermined. Although epic song is requisite for one's heroic deeds to turn into κλέος, Odysseus' fate, as well as that of his wife and son whose fates depend on his, will remain indeterminate until he has accomplished his νόστος. Walsh argues that Odysseus "construes what he hears in relation to some present trouble, that his present unquiet condition, more than the topic of song, determines his response as an audience" (17). Referring to reports in general, Nagy similarly argues that "the factor of personal involvement or noninvolvement decides whether an epic situation calls for **pénthos** or **kléos**" (1979.98). The Phaeacians, who have no emotional connection to the tales sung by Demodocus, simply delight when Odysseus weeps. Odysseus reacts in the manner of a typical audience member later in *Odyssey* 8 when Demodocus sings the lay recounting the affair between Ares and Aphrodite:

- 367 Ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἀοιδὸς αἶειδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς  
**τέρπετ' ἐνὶ φρεσίν** ἧσιν ἀκούων ἠδὲ καὶ ἄλλοι  
 Φαίκες δολιχίρητοι, ναυσὶ κλυτοὶ ἄνδρες.
- 367 The very famous bard sang these things; and Odysseus  
**delighted in his heart** hearing them as did the other  
 long-oared Phaeacians, men famous for sailing.

Goldhill points out that Odysseus, Telemachus, and Penelope all grieve when they hear songs about wandering and that the "tearful reactions to stories relevant to the wandering Odysseus link together the family in a shared emotional response" (61).

song when he sees Odysseus weeping implies that song at a feast ideally soothes or delights. By stopping the activity that causes grief for his guest, all may delight (τερπόμεθα πάντες) and the proper atmosphere may be restored.

Telemachus and Alcinoos reveal that the bard's song should result in delight (τέρψις) for his audiences. The narrator of the *Odyssey* likewise suggests that song regularly elicits delight. In *Odyssey* 8 the narrator again contrasts the response of Odysseus to Demodocus' song with the reactions of the Phaeacians:

85 Ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἀοιδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς  
πορφύρεον μέγα φᾶρος ἔλων χερσὶ στιβαρῆσι  
κὰκ κεφαλῆς εἴρυσσε, κάλυψε δὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα·  
αἶδετο γὰρ Φαίηκας ὑπ' ὄφρῦσι δάκρυα λείβων.  
ἦ τοι ὅτε λήξειεν ἀείδων θεῖος ἀοιδός,  
δάκρυ' ὁμορξάμενος κεφαλῆς ἄπο φᾶρος ἔλεσκε  
καὶ δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον ἔλων σπείσασκε θεοῖσιν·  
90 αὐτὰρ ὄτ' ἄψ ἄρχοιτο καὶ ὀτρυνεῖαν ἀείδειν  
Φαιήκων οἱ ἄριστοι, ἐπεὶ **τέρποντ' ἐπέεσσιν**,  
ἄψ Ὀδυσσεὺς κατὰ κράτα καλυψάμενος γοάασκεν.

85 And the famous bard sang these things; but Odysseus  
Pulling his great purple cloak with his sturdy hands  
And he dragged it from his head and covered his beautiful face;  
For he revered the Phaeacians as he shed tears under his eyebrows.  
And yet when the godlike bard left off,  
After he wiped his tears, he kept pulling the cloak away from his head  
And taking up the double handled cup, he kept pouring a libation to the  
          gods;  
90 But whenever he began again and the best of the Phaeacians  
Urged him to sing, since **they were delighted by words**,  
Again Odysseus, having covered over his head, kept lamenting.

While Odysseus weeps as Demodocus sings the story of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles, the best of the Phaeacians take delight (τέρποντ') in the words of the bard. Odysseus, who weeps as he listens to an epic song about *his own* heroic deeds,<sup>24</sup> is the exception and the

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<sup>24</sup> See note 23.

Phaeacians display the normal response to the bard's song.<sup>25</sup>

As in the *Iliad*, the intent to delight by telling stories is not limited to professional bards in the *Odyssey*. The stories of non-professional singers may also consciously stir the emotions of listeners. When Telemachus visits Menelaus to inquire after his father in *Odyssey* 4, Menelaus and Helen share stories about Odysseus. These stories are distinct from the songs of Phemius and Demodocus, but they are nonetheless *like* song in their effect on the listener. After Menelaus' speech brings Telemachus to tears,<sup>26</sup> Helen puts a drug (φάρμακον) into the wine:

220 αὐτίκ' ἄρ' ἐς οἶνον βάλε φάρμακον, ἔνθεν ἔπινον,  
**νηπενθές τ' ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθον ἀπάντων.**  
ὃς τὸ καταβρόξειεν, ἐπεὶ κρητῆρι μιγείη,  
οὐ κεν ἐφημέριός γε βάλοι κατὰ δάκρυ παρειῶν,  
οὐδ' εἴ οἱ κατατεθναίῃ μήτηρ τε πατήρ τε,  
225 οὐδ' εἴ οἱ προπάροιθεν ἀδελφεὸν ἢ φίλον υἱὸν  
χαλκῷ δηϊόωεν, ὃ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρῶτο.

220 Straightaway she threw a drug into the wine they were drinking,  
**Banishing grief and taking away anger, bringing  
forgetfulness of all evils,**  
Whoever drank it, when it is mixed in the jar,  
Would not pour tears down his cheeks for the entire day  
Not even if his mother or father had died,  
225 Not even if his brother or his son, right in front of him,  
Has been slain with bronze, and he looked upon it with his own eyes.

Helen recognizes that her story will exacerbate the grief of those already in pain, and she therefore chooses a drug which makes men forget their troubles. In Helen's case, her words alone will not banish grief, and she requires the assistance of the drug. Bergren notes that

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<sup>25</sup> Although the Phaeacians differ from other audiences because they live in a near godlike state of prosperity, the narrator similarly suggests that the suitors delight when they dance and listen to epic song (ἀοιδὴν): οἱ δ' εἰς ὀρχηστὺν τε καὶ ἱμερόεσσαν ἀοιδὴν / τρεψάμενοι **τέρποντο** (*Odyssey* 1.422-423). The Phaeacians and the suitors together indicate the expected audience response while Odysseus reacts unusually.

<sup>26</sup> *Od.* 4.183-188.

Helen’s song takes on the property of the drug she adds to the wine: “just as Helen adds a ‘good drug’ with the power of *kleos*, so she will now add a speech with the properties of her *pharmakon*.”<sup>27</sup> Regardless of whether Helen’s story subsumes the properties of her φάρμακον, or the drug simply dulls the harmful effect of her unaltered, painful words, what is essential to my argument is that Helen must add her φάρμακον to the wine before she is able to delight her audience.<sup>28</sup> After preemptively guarding against sorrow by adding the drug, Helen orders the group to delight in words when she tells her tale in *Odyssey* 4:

ἦ τοι νῦν δαίνυσθε καθήμενοι ἐν μεγάροισι  
καὶ μύθοις **τέρπεσθε**: εἰκότα γὰρ καταλέξω.  
240 πάντα μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ’ ὀνομήνω,  
ὄσσοι Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονός εἰσιν ἄεθλοι.

Now take your dinner as you sit in the hall  
And **delight** in words; I will tell you fitting things.  
240 I would not be able to tell all things nor would I be able to name  
As many deeds as there are belonging to stout-hearted Odysseus.

When she tells the story of the Trojan Horse to Telemachus, Helen temporarily steps into the role of a bard of sorts who turns her own actions into stories in the same way that Odysseus sings about his own adventures in *Odyssey* 9-12.<sup>29</sup> Though she is not a bard, Helen behaves *like* a bard because she hopes to delight her audience as they listen to her tale.

<sup>27</sup> Bergren, 207. She also points out that Plutarch and Macrobius identified Helen’s μῦθος with her φάρμακον (207n13).

<sup>28</sup> By contrast, the Hesiodic Muses delight through song alone, and their song *itself* makes men forget and replaces a bad memory with a better one. See below pp. 17-23.

<sup>29</sup> Also see *Odyssey* 23.300-309 where Odysseus and Penelope delight in lovemaking and in stories (μῦθοι):

300 τὼ δ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν **φιλότητος ἐταρπήτην ἐρατεινῆς,**  
**τερπέσθην μύθοισι,** πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐνέποντες,  
ἢ μὲν ὅσ’ ἐν μεγάροισιν ἀνέσχετο διὰ γυναικῶν  
ἀνδρῶν μνηστήρων ἐσορῶσ’ ἀΐδηλον ὄμιλον,  
οἳ ἔθεν εἵνεκα πολλά, βόας καὶ ἴφια μῆλα,  
305 ἔσφαζον, πολλὸς δὲ πίθων ἠφύσσετο οἶνος  
αὐτὰρ διογενῆς Ὀδυσσεύς, ὅσα κήδε’ ἔθηκεν  
ἀνθρώποις ὅσα τ’ αὐτὸς οἴζυσας ἐμόγησε,

The *Odyssey* specifically presents τέρψις as the aim of the singer, and, as in the case of Helen, of the storyteller. Although song rarely is connected to a specifically medical context in the *Odyssey*, there are two notable passages which closely link song and healing. In *Odyssey* 19 the narrator describes the origin of Odysseus' scar which he received in his youth. While slaying a wild boar, the boar gored his leg, wounding him. He successfully killed the boar, and afterwards his kinsmen attended to his wound:

455 τὸν μὲν ἄρ' Αὐτολύκου παῖδες φίλοι ἀμφιπένοντο,  
 ὠτειλήν δ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀμύμονος ἀντιθέοιο  
 δῆσαν ἐπισταμένως, **ἐπαιοιδῆ** δ' αἶμα κελαινὸν  
 ἔσχεθον, αἶψα δ' ἴκοντο φίλου πρὸς δῶματα πατρός.

455 The dear sons of Autolycus attended him,  
 And they knowingly bound the wound of  
 Godlike Odysseus, and they held back the black blood  
**With an incantation**, and soon they came back to their father's  
 house.

The magical incantation (ἐπαιοιδή) which the men sing over Odysseus' wound is the treatment the men expertly (ἐπισταμένως) use to stop the blood. The performance of the ἐπαιοιδή as part

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πάντ' ἔλεγ' ἢ δ' ἄρα τέρπετ' ἀκούουσα', οὐδέ οἱ ὕπνος  
 πῖπτεν ἐπὶ βλεφάροισι πάρος καταλέξει ἅπαντα.

Then when **they had taken delight in lovely love-making**  
**They took delight in stories**, each one telling a story to the other  
 She, shining among women, told of as many things as she had suffered in the halls  
 Looking upon the destructive throng of suitors  
 Who, on her account, slaughtered many oxen and fat sheep  
 And drew much wine from the jars.  
 But god-born Odysseus, as many pains as he had sent  
 To men and as many as he himself had toiled through, suffering,  
 He told all of them; And she **took delight as she listened to him**, and sleep  
 Did not fall on her eyelids until he had narrated everything.

Listeners delight in words, or are asked to delight in words, only three times in the *Odyssey*: when Helen asks her audience to delight at 4.239; when Telemachus describes his reaction to Helen's song at 4.597-598 (αἰνῶς γὰρ **μύθοισιν** ἔπεσσί τε σοῖσιν ἀκούων / **τέρπομαι**); and when Odysseus and Penelope delight in words at 23.301.

For the correspondence between lovemaking and storytelling see Felson, 140-141.

of a medical treatment demonstrates a fundamental connection between song and physical healing, although this type of song does not refer specifically to epic poetry.<sup>30</sup>

The other significant occurrence of song in a medical context appears in *Odyssey* 17. After the suitor Antinous criticizes the swineherd, Eumaeus, for bringing the beggar to the palace of Odysseus, Eumaeus replies to him:

- 381 Ἄντινο', οὐ μὲν καλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὸς ἐὼν ἀγορεύεις·  
τίς γὰρ δὴ ξεῖνον καλεῖ ἄλλοθεν αὐτὸς ἐπελθῶν  
ἄλλον γ', εἰ μὴ τῶν οἱ δημοεργοὶ ἔασι,  
μάντιν ἢ ἰητῆρα κακῶν ἢ τέκτονα δούρων  
385 ἢ καὶ θέσπιν ἀοιδόν, ὃ κεν τέρπῃσιν αἰείδων;
- 381 Antinous, although you are noble you do not speak beautifully;  
For who coming in from another place calls another stranger  
Unless they are from the ones who work for the people,  
A seer or a healer of ills or a builder of wood  
385 Or a holy bard, who delights by singing?

Eumaeus connects the activity of the seer, the carpenter, the doctor, and the bard, suggesting that these four activities are useful to the community and performed for the public good.

Perhaps as importantly, the epic persistently makes connections between the construction of a poem and the construction of buildings, linking these two activities.<sup>31</sup> In this passage, the

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<sup>30</sup> The noun, ἐπαιοιδή, appears infrequently in Greek literature: once in Homer, three times in Pindar (*Pythian* 3.51, *Pythian* 4.217, and *Nemean* 8.49), once in Aeschylus (*Prometheus* 173), once in Herodotus (1.132.15), once in Aristophanes (fragment 29.2), and three times in the Hippocratic corpus (*De morbo sacro* 1.8, 1.30, 1.93). Van Leeuwen connects this passage to Pindar's *Pythian* 3.51; Sophocles' *Ajax* 582; Virgil's *Aeneid* 7.757; and Pliny's *Natural History* 28.2. Guido Majno points out that nothing is done to stop the bleeding of the 147 wounds in the *Iliad*. When the doctor, Machaon, son of Asklepios, is wounded in *Iliad* 11, "the first attentions that he received in the *klisia* were a seat, lots of storytelling, and a cup of Pramnian wine sprinkled with grated goat cheese and barley meal, served by a beautiful woman" (underlining added for emphasis) (Majno 142). While nothing is done medically to help Machaon, this is another case where poetry may be used to aid a physical ailment. Majno notes the uniqueness within the Homeric corpus of the ἐπαιοιδή sung over Odysseus after he has been wounded by the boar: "the one and only type of hemostasis mentioned in Homer is an *epaoidē*, which means that somebody sang a song or recited a charm over the wound" (142).

<sup>31</sup> Nagy presents connections between the poet and the carpenter in the Indo-European poetic tradition that persist from the *Rig-Veda* up to Homer (1979.298-300). He specifically points to Pindar's *Pythian* 3.112-114, where Pindar again links the poet and carpenter by referring to "famed words / such as skilled carpenters fitted together" (trans. Nagy). The doctor appears both in the *Odyssey* passage above and in the mythological figure of

doctor is grouped with the seer, the bard, and the carpenter, marking his healing activity as analogous to epic poetry. The other three trades each describe an element of the bard's activity. The seer suggests the bard's link to divine knowledge.<sup>32</sup> The carpenter, as Nagy demonstrates, parallels the compositional technique of the bard.<sup>33</sup> The connection between the poet and the doctor, similarly, clarifies the range of the bard's power by underlining the healing sphere in which he operates. The likening of the activity of the bard to that of the doctor in this passage reinforces the soothing effect of the bard's song on his audience members (as long as they are not emotionally connected to the subject matter of his song), which is presented throughout the *Odyssey*.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* show beginnings of the notion that song is a palliative for the mind by suggesting that song produces *τέρψις*. As this section has demonstrated, the verb *τέρπω* often means "to solace" in passages which describe singing. In the *Iliad*, *τέρψις* appears as the result of song and in the *Odyssey* Telemachus and Alcinous reveal *τέρψις* as the goal of the singer's song. Although *τέρψις* may be defined as "soothing," the Homeric bard does not directly imply that the song actually removes pain. Song alters the emotional state of the audience, but it does not definitively have a healing function that is clearly spelled out.

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Asclepius in *Pythian* 3, suggesting a persistent linking of these three artisans (the doctor, the carpenter, and the bard).

<sup>32</sup> On the connection between the Homeric bard and divine knowledge, see Detienne, 39-52. He demonstrates that "the poet's speech . . . is inseparable from two complementary concepts: the Muse and memory" (39). According to Detienne, the bard took up "a religious power that gave poetic pronouncements their status of magicoreligious speech" due to this divine connection (43).

<sup>33</sup> Nagy, 1979.298-300.



### 1.3 Memory, Forgetfulness, and the Healing Effect of Song in Hesiod's *Theogony*

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the narrator directly addresses the power of the Muses' song and its effect on the minds of its audience members, clarifying and defining the scope of their powers in the same way that he does for the other gods whose origins he describes. Whereas storytelling is a major theme in the *Odyssey*, the *Theogony* treats the birth and the sphere of influence of each god, making it natural to clarify the nature of the Muses' song, which is the manifestation of their powers. The narrator first suggests that the Muses themselves delight the mind of Zeus as they sing:

36 Τύνη, Μουσάων ἀρχώμεθα, ταὶ Διὶ πατρὶ  
ὕμνεῦσαι **τέρπουσι μέγαν νόον** ἐντὸς Ὀλύμπου,  
εἰρεῦσαι τὰ τ' ἔόντα τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ' ἔόντα,  
φωνῆ ὁμηρεῦσα

36 Come then, let me begin with the Muses, who by singing  
To Zeus, their father, **delight his great mind** in Olympus,  
Telling the things that are, the things that will be, and the things that  
were before,  
Agreeing in voice

The Muses, in this instance, function like professional bards in the *Odyssey*, who delight their audiences. The effect of Muses' song in Hesiod's *Theogony* differs from that of the Homeric bard. The Muses of the *Theogony* delight Zeus as the bards of the *Odyssey* do their audiences, but instead of delighting mortal audiences the Muses' song, delivered by the bard, removes pain by inducing forgetfulness. The result of the Hesiodic bard's Muse-granted song is unambiguous: it explicitly mitigates pain.

Even in their origin the Muses are associated with the forgetting of ills. When the narrator recounts the birth of the Muses, he describes their mother, *Mnemosyne*:

55 Τὰς ἐν Πιερίῃ Κρονίδῃ τέκε πατρὶ μιγεῖσα  
Μνημοσύνη, γουνοῖσιν Ἐλευθῆρος μεδέουσα,  
ληημοσύνην τε κακῶν ἄμπαυμά τε μερμηράων.

Mingling with their father, son of Kronus, on Pieria Mnemosyne  
bore them, the guardian of Eleutheria, on her knees,  
55 a forgetfulness of evils and a rest from cares.

Mnemosyne (Memory) bears her daughters (who have an ἀκηδέα θυμόν, a heart free from cares, [60]) as “a forgetfulness of evils and a rest from cares.” This passage reveals that in the *Theogony* the pain-relieving power of song clearly originates with the Muses themselves.

Pucci notes that the juxtaposition of μνημοσύνη and λησμοσύνη “is conscious and powerful” on the part of the poet.<sup>34</sup> This juxtaposition also demonstrates the pattern in archaic Greek thought that “each thing must have its polar opposite in order to be complete, and sometimes even in order to be understood, because its place and function are thereby defined.”<sup>35</sup> In the *Theogony* μνημοσύνη and λησμοσύνη exist and are defined in relation to one another and the Muses are thus able to soothe painful “memory” with “forgetfulness.”

Thalman points out that this opposition between memory and forgetfulness also appears in the *Odyssey* when Odysseus arrives at the court of the Phaeacians.<sup>36</sup> He laments that a hungry man’s belly (γαστήρ) makes him forget his other woes in *Odyssey* 7:

ὥς καὶ ἐγὼ **πένθος μὲν ἔχω φρεσίν**, ἢ δὲ μάλ’ αἰεὶ  
220 ἐσθέμεναι κέλεται καὶ πινέμεν, ἐκ δέ με πάντων  
ληθάνει ὅσσ’ ἔπαθον, καὶ ἐνιπλησθῆναι ἀνώγει.

Even as **I have suffering in my heart**, it [my belly, γαστήρ] still  
always  
220 Orders me to eat and drink, and removes me from (lit. makes me forget)  
all things  
As many as I have suffered, and orders me to fill it.

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<sup>34</sup> Pucci, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Thalman, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Thalman, 88.

Whereas in the *Odyssey* one thought is replaced by the more present, painful reminder of an empty belly, Hesiod assigns to the song of the Muses the power to replace a painful memory with a pleasant one by inducing forgetfulness (λησιμοσύνη).

The narrator clarifies the process by which he soothes the mind of his audiences: as he performs his divinely inspired song, the bard, the agent of the Muses, eases the cares and the minds of men who listen to him:

100 εἰ γάρ τις καὶ **πένθος ἔχων νεοκηδέι θυμῷ**  
ἄζηται κραδίην ἀκαχήμενος, αὐτὰρ ἀοιδὸς  
Μουσῶν θεράπων κλεῖα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων  
ὕμνησει μάκαράς τε θεοῦς οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,  
**αἴψ' ὃ γε δυσφροσυνέων ἐπιλήθεται οὐδέ τι κηδέων**  
**μémνηται**· ταχέως δὲ παρέτραπε δῶρα θεάων.

100 For if anyone **having suffering in his newly pained heart**  
Dries up his heart in grieving, when the bard,  
The servant of the Muses, hymns the glories of earlier men  
And the blessed gods who live on Olympus,  
**Quickly he forgets his anxieties and does not remember**  
**Anything at all of his cares;** swiftly the gifts of the goddesses  
distract his mind.

When the Muses sing to Zeus, they delight his mind, but when a bard performs their song for human audiences, this song takes away cares from the minds of men.<sup>37</sup> Epic song in Hesiod results in delight only when the Muses sing to Zeus, who never has cares that must be forgotten. Unlike the bard in the Homeric poems who delights his audiences, the bard in the *Theogony* soothes his audiences by helping them to forget their anxieties and cares.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> As Pucci argues, “the text might even suggest that the poet, singing to an audience tormented by griefs, is as free from cares as are the Muses” (29, 29n48). He further points out that the poet is the Muses’ vehicle for the divine and that “the divine gift is granted by the gods to the poet to be administered by him as their agent” (29).

<sup>38</sup> For this view see also Thalmann, who suggests that “song provides mortals with a means of offsetting the woe that is an inevitable part of their condition” (130).

The song that the Muses sing to delight Zeus also differs in its subject matter from the song that their agent sings to remove cares from his human audiences.<sup>39</sup> When the Muses sing to Zeus, they delight his mind by singing of the past, present, and future (εἰρεῦσαι τά τ' ἔόντα τά τ' ἔσσόμενα πρό τ' ἔόντα) (*Theogony* 38). In contrast, when Hesiod invokes the Muses, he suggests that he will sing only the past and the future (ἐνέπνευσάν δέ μοι αὐδὴν / θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τά τ' ἔσσόμενα πρό τ' ἔόντα) (32). For men, then, memories of events in the past and the anticipation future events which are more remote soothe the ills of the present. For mortals in the *Theogony*, memory and forgetfulness work together and they “govern different objects, the first what is far away, the second, something personal and painful. One effect requires the other, and song fails if the wrong sort of memory is awakened.”<sup>40</sup> The Muses specifically instruct Hesiod to sing about distant events, which do not pain his audience. This places Hesiod in a separate category from singers like Phemius in the *Odyssey* who, according to Telemachus, may delight his audience in whatever way his mind urges him.<sup>41</sup> In their own song on Mt. Olympus, however, the Muses may sing about present events because Zeus is immune to the pain mortals would experience.

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<sup>39</sup> Walsh argues that “the god’s pleasure suggests that his response to song is governed by rules wholly different from those governing the response of human audiences in both Homer and Hesiod.” Walsh sees Zeus in the *Theogony* as like Odysseus in the *Odyssey* in that both characters have unique access to truth about the events being narrated, and thus cannot be deceived as can the other members of the audience. Whereas Odysseus weeps when he hears songs that personally affect him, Zeus delights (Walsh, 25-26).

Thalmann views the subject matter of the Muses’ song and of Hesiod’s as the same (though he acknowledges that Hesiod is copying the original divine song), not taking into consideration that Hesiod does not sing about the present: “Thus, as the content of these corresponding groups of lines indicates, the song that the Muses enable Hesiod to sing is the same as the one with which they delight Zeus (ll. 32, 38); and this means that Hesiod’s performance, which will turn out to be the *Theogony* itself, is a human copy of the often-repeated divine archetype” (Thalmann 136). Thalmann fails to consider the import of Hesiod leaving out the present in his own song, suggesting that events in the present are outside of the range of possible topics for the song of the bard. West similarly calls line 32 “a shorter equivalent of the full phrase seen in 38” (West s.v. 32). He does, however, point out the essential fact that Hesiod focuses mainly on the past and occasionally on the future, and thereby implies that Hesiod does not sing about the present.

<sup>40</sup> Walsh, 23-24.

<sup>41</sup> *Odyssey* 1.347.

If the definition of *τέρψις* includes the notion of soothing or comforting in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, then Homer and Hesiod share the notion that the bard comforts his audiences. More distinct in Hesiod is the idea that the bard specifically causes his listeners to forget and replaces cares with more pleasant memories, whereas Homer's bard merely soothes or delights his audiences without any description of the means by which he does so. While Homer leaves the method by which his bard delights listeners as ambiguous, Hesiod articulates the bard's replacement of painful memories with pleasant ones. The poetry of Homer and Hesiod, taken together, suggests both that the archaic poet considers his poetry capable of soothing pain and that he intends to take away pain from his audience.

Hesiod's *Theogony* presents the bard who receives his song from the Muses as easing the cares and anxieties of his audiences. Hesiod's bard sings songs about past and future happenings, and *not* the things of the present as the Muses do, and his songs make every man, without qualification or specification, forget his cares. Hesiod's description of the Muses' song praises both the Muses and his own special relationship to them and, thus, emphasizes the beneficial power of this song for men.

Hesiod's description of the song of the Muses reflects to the theogonic genre<sup>42</sup> of the poem he is writing, one primarily concerned with describing the origin of the gods and their respective spheres of influence. The effect of song in the *Theogony*, like that in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, soothes the mind of its listeners. While the *Iliad* addresses the power of song tangentially due to its focus on battle, as poems more concerned with theme of song and its performance the *Odyssey* and the *Theogony* highlight different powers of song. The *Odyssey*, as it follows the tumultuous homecoming of *Odysseus*, presents songs that both soothe and disturb

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<sup>42</sup> West, 1.

the minds of their audiences. Concerned more with describing and praising the song of the Muses, the *Theogony* highlights the analgesic attributes of song, which is the gift, δόσις,<sup>43</sup> of the Muses. In either case, song certainly alters the mental state of its listener, and is able to soothe. It is this ability to effect relief from mental woes which Pindar and Theocritus adopt and develop by comparing the poet to mythological figures.

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<sup>43</sup> *Theogony* 93.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ANALGESIC EFFECT OF PINDAR'S VICTORY ODES

The last chapter demonstrated that the bard's song in early Greek poetry soothes the minds of his listeners. This chapter will examine Pindar's description of song as an analgesic for the mortal mind (φρήν). Pindar strengthens and articulates the connection between song and cure already present in earlier poetry by using medical language and medical metaphors to describe epinician song. Pindar's identification of the doctor with both the poet and the poet's song underscores the integrating function of the epinician genre which reunites the victor with the community.<sup>44</sup>

The first part of this chapter examines the hymn to the lyre at the beginning of *Pythian* 1 in which Pindar reveals the powerful impact of song, in particular epinician poetry, on its immortal listeners. A close reading of this hymn will reveal how Pindar has specifically reframed the effect of song on Zeus to meet the demands of his genre. Instead of simply delighting the mind of Zeus, as the bard's song delights the minds of the gods in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, song in Pindar's odes places him in a peaceful and disarmed state. After the influence of song on immortals has been examined, the second section of this chapter explores medical metaphors which designate song as a supplier of good cheer, or a healthy mental

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<sup>44</sup> Crotty, 120-1. Crotty demonstrates that "Both epinician song and ritual, therefore, are rooted in the community and devoted to maintaining it; both are prompted by situations when the ties binding members of a *koinônia* are obscured or threatened" (120). See also Kurke, 6-7.

state<sup>45</sup> (εὐφροσύνα), for the mortal addressee. The connection between song and good cheer is evident in several odes, but it becomes particularly apparent in the analysis of *Pythian 3*, an ode anomalous because Pindar composes it to console Hieron, whose health is failing, rather than to celebrate a victorious occasion. In this ode, Pindar likens the process of physical healing to that of mental healing by connecting the art of Asclepius with his own. By doing so he presents the poet as a doctor who brings mental health to his patient and underscores the integrating objective of the epinician poet.

As demonstrated in Chapter One, Homer depicts epic song as able to soothe and to stir up the emotions of the listener. Epic song, as presented in the *Odyssey*, has a different effect on some listeners than on others. Thus, when Phemius sings the homecoming of the Achaeans (Ἀχαιῶν νόστον) in *Odyssey 1*, the suitors, who have no personal stake in the outcome of the song, delight while Penelope weeps.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, Odysseus and Telemachus weep when they hear stories about Odysseus because his outcome, his successful νόστος, has not yet been determined.<sup>47</sup> As Nagy puts it, “the factor of personal involvement or noninvolvement decides whether an epic situation calls for **pénthos** or **kléos**.”<sup>48</sup> Song disturbs the minds of characters whose outcomes have not been determined and thus may not yet be immortalized in song, while it delights the minds of other listeners. In Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the bard’s song delights the mind of Zeus and it allows a sorrowful man to forget his cares. As song has a powerful impact

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<sup>45</sup> For this definition of εὐφροσύνα see below, pp. 33-34. Also see Chapter One, Section 1 for the φρήν as the emotional seat of the individual in Homer.

<sup>46</sup> *Odyssey* 1.325-371. See also Chapter 1 above.

<sup>47</sup> *Odyssey* 4.113-119 and 8.83-103.

<sup>48</sup> Nagy, 1979.98.



on the mortal mind in the *Odyssey*, song in the *Theogony* is able to turn the mind away from sorrow as it celebrates the holy race of immortals.<sup>49</sup>

It is not surprising that Pindar, who writes in the same tradition as Homer and Hesiod, presents the epinician ode as a song that has a profound effect on the mental state of the listener. As an epinician poet, Pindar describes this effect differently from the epic poets who are his precursors. In his investigation of κλέος, which comes from κλύω, “to hear,” Nagy has demonstrated that epic “confers glory” on the hero.<sup>50</sup> The epic hero ultimately obtains κλέος when he is celebrated in song by the epic poet.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century world in which Pindar composes, to attain the height of success the athletic victor needs to be celebrated in song and “to have the victory completed by others’ acknowledgment of it.”<sup>52</sup> But this is not the only, or even necessarily the primary, purpose of the epinician ode. As Crotty points out, victory odes were often commissioned by aristocrats and tyrants who saw the arts as a channel through which to increase their political influence and they thus focus not only on the victor, but on the commissioner of the poem and on the community as a whole.<sup>53</sup> The victory ode, while celebrating the victor, simultaneously reintegrates him back into “his

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<sup>49</sup> The poet invokes the children of Zeus asking them to celebrate the holy race of immortal gods:

Χαίρετε, τέκνα Διός, δότε δ’ ἡμερόεσσαν ἀοιδίην.  
κλείετε δ’ ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἔόντων  
(*Theogony* 104-105)

<sup>50</sup> Nagy, 1979.16-17.

<sup>51</sup> Nagy, 1979.17.

<sup>52</sup> Crotty, 121.

<sup>53</sup> Crotty, 120-1.

house, his class, *and* his city, and it is the task of Pindar's poem in performance to accomplish this reintegration."<sup>54</sup>

If the primary function of epic poetry is to generate κλέος for the hero, and the object of the epinician is both to celebrate the individual *and* to integrate him back into the community, then it is not surprising that the effects of the two genres on their listeners differ.<sup>55</sup> In the *Odyssey*, the response of the listener is delight when a bard sings to an audience that is personally remote from the subject matter of the song and the response is weeping when the bard sings the same song to a listener who has an ongoing personal interest in the events narrated in song.<sup>56</sup> In the case of Pindar's odes, the response of the listener is not dependant upon distance from the subject matter of an ode, for the victor has by definition already secured his athletic victory. It is not painful for him, or for those who benefit from his win, to hear about this triumph.<sup>57</sup> And yet, the epinician lyre does not evoke the same response from all listeners described in the odes. The invocation of the lyre at the beginning of *Pythian 1* will demonstrate that the peaceful epinician lyre which effects the reintegration of the victor into his community actually disarms and weakens powerful immortals as they listen to its

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<sup>54</sup> Kurke, 6. See also Nagy, 1990.142 where he emphasizes that the victory is incomplete without the reintegration of the victor. He asserts that "a formal realization of reintegration at home is the epinician or victory ode itself, performed at the victory's home city by a chorus of men or boys who are themselves natives of the city" (142).

<sup>55</sup> I do not mean to overlook the importance of the νόστος for the epic hero. Achilles must make a difficult choice between κλέος and νόστος, and Odysseus cannot enjoy true κλέος until his νόστος has been completed. For the argument at hand, the essential difference between epic and epinician with respect to the νόστος lies in the *purpose* of the song. Epic celebrates the hero and generates κλέος, but it does not facilitate the νόστος. Epinician, on the other hand, reaffirms the glory of the victor while also acting as an essential element in welcoming the victor back into the community. Crotty suggests that "Penelope's role in the *Odyssey* seems analogous to that of the epinician poet, since each one plays a crucial role in securing a happy *nostos* for the returning victor/hero by receiving and welcoming him" (110).

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter One and pp. 24-25 above. Also see Walsh, 17 and Nagy, 1979.98.

<sup>57</sup> In fact, the victor or his family often offer the commission to the epinician poet to celebrate a particular victory, whereas in the *Odyssey* the bard sings in whatever way the god incites him and subsequently is rewarded according to his skill.

strains. By contrast, the epinician lyre offers to mortals a state of mental health (εὐδαιμονία or εὐφροσύνα), as opposed to the restraining and disarming effect it has on immortals, a poetic effect which will be examined in Section 2 of this chapter.

## 2.1 The Epinician Lyre and the Immortal *Phren*

Keeping in mind the twofold goal of epinician song, to celebrate a victory and to reintegrate the victor into his community, we will now be able to examine Pindar's description of the effect of his odes. The opening of *Pythian* 1, an invocation of the lyre, reveals the broad-ranging effect of the lyre on its listeners:

χρυσέα φόρμιγξ, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ ἰοπλοκάμων  
σύνδικον Μοισᾶν κτέανον: τᾶς ἀκούει  
    μὲν βάσις, ἀγλαΐας ἀρχά,  
    πείθονται δ' αἰδοὶ σάμασιν,  
    ἀγησιχόρων ὅποταν προοιμίῳ  
    ἄμβολὰς τεύχῃς ἐλελιζομένα.  
5 καὶ τὸν αἰχματὰν κεραυνὸν σβεννύεις  
    ἀενάου πυρός. εὐδὲι δ' ἀνὰ σκά-  
    πτω Διὸς αἰετός, ὠκεῖ-  
    αν πτέρυγ' ἀμφοτέρωθεν χαλάξαις,  
    ἀρχὸς οἰωνῶν, κελαινῶπιν δ' ἐπὶ οἱ νεφέλαν  
    ἀγκύλῳ κρατί, γλεφάρων ἀδὺ κλαΐ-  
    θρον, κατέχευας: ὁ δὲ κνώσσων  
    ὕγρον νῶτον αἰωρεῖ, τεαῖς  
10 ῥιπαῖσι κατασχόμενος. καὶ γὰρ βια-  
    τὰς Ἄρης, τραχεῖαν ἄνευθε λιπῶν  
    ἐγχείων ἀκμάν, ἰαίνει καρδίαν  
    κώματι, κῆλα δὲ καὶ δαιμόνων θέλ-  
    γει φρένας, ἀμφί τε Λατοί-  
    δα σοφία βαθυκόλπων τε Μοισᾶν.  
    ὄσσα δὲ μὴ πεφίληκε Ζεὺς, ἀτύζονται βοᾶν  
    Περιδῶν ἄϊοντα, γᾶν τε καὶ πόν-  
    τον κατ' ἀμαιμάκετον,

Golden lyre, rightful possession of Apollo  
and the purple-locked Muses, to whom the step  
listens, the beginning of the celebration,  
and whose signs the singers obey,

whenever you, vibrating, strike up  
 beginnings of chorus-leading preludes.  
 5 You quench even the warring thunderbolt  
 of eternal fire. And the eagle on the scepter  
 of Zeus sleeps, having relaxed his swift  
 wings on both sides,  
  
 the ruler of birds, a black-faced cloud you have poured  
 over his curved head, a sweet seal  
 for his eyelids; and as he slumbers he makes his  
 supple back rise and fall, held back  
 10 by your onslaught [of notes]. For even powerful  
 Ares, after leaving the sharp point of his spear  
 far away, delights his heart  
 in sleep, and your arrows charm the minds  
 of divinities through the wisdom  
 of Leto's son and the deep-girdled Muses.  
  
 As many creatures as Zeus does not love, are terrified  
 When they hear the voice, on the land and  
 In the unyielding sea.<sup>58</sup>

From the first line of *Pythian* 1, Pindar departs from earlier Homeric descriptions of the lyre when he addresses it directly, endowing it with its own divine properties. He immediately connects the instrument to the divinities to whom it belongs in earlier poetry—Apollo and the Muses—and frames his description of its power by mentioning them (lines 1-2, line 12). Pindar maintains this tension between innovating and following a poetic tradition throughout the hymn. As in the *Hymn to Hermes*, where Hermes invents the lyre and gives it to Apollo as a gift, the lyre in Pindar's ode is the "rightful possession" of Apollo and the Muses.<sup>59</sup> The lyre, similarly, is connected to Apollo, who plays it for the assembled gods while the Muses sing to his accompaniment at *Iliad* 1.603-4. Pindar assigns the lyre to Apollo and the Muses, as he

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<sup>58</sup> All translations of Greek are mine unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>59</sup> Hermes invents the lyre at 25-38; he plays the lyre to calm Apollo's anger at 417-433; and he gives the lyre to Apollo as a gift at 465-495. The tradition of connecting Apollo and the Muses to the lyre appears in Homer and the Homeric Hymns and in the earliest remaining lyric fragments of Alcman. See Campbell, 153ff.

consistently does throughout his victory odes, but he continues to address it in the second person, attributing its power to the instrument itself rather than to the deities who possess it.

Lines 2-4 of the hymn describe the effects of the lyre on the performers of the ode:<sup>60</sup> the step (the beginning of the celebration) hears (or possibly “obeys”)<sup>61</sup> the lyre; the singers obey its signs (i.e. directions); and the lyre strikes up the beginning of the chorus-leading preludes. These three lines indicate that the beginning (ἀρχά) of action, the quickening of the pace,<sup>62</sup> and the attention of the mortal listeners<sup>63</sup> are all driven by the command of the lyre.

In contrast to the increase in activity on the part of mortals, the next lines describe its opposite effect on immortal listeners. In the *Hymn to Hermes*, Apollo, impressed by Hermes’ new invention, envisions its usefulness at feasts because it is possible to enjoy these three things at the same time: good mental health,<sup>64</sup> love, and sweet sleep (ἀτρεκέως γὰρ ἅμα τρία πάντα πάρεστιν / **εὐφροσύνην καὶ ἔρωτα καὶ ἡδυμον ὕπνον** ἐλέσθαι) (*Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 448-9). Pindar, in his description of the lyre’s effect on the immortals, describes only the last of these three benefits listed by Apollo, sleep. Furthermore, he emphasizes the ability of the lyre to enervate its divine listeners: the lyre devitalizes the thunderbolt by quenching it (line 5) and relaxes the eagle of Zeus by pouring a sweet seal over its eyelids (line 8). The quenching of the thunderbolt of Zeus disarms the king of Olympus, and the verb Pindar uses, σβέννυμι, strongly

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<sup>60</sup> While some scholars interpret this passage as a reference to the divine dance and song of Apollo and the Muses (cf. Walsh, 51), these references to song and dance more likely refer to the song and dance performed along with an epinician ode, perhaps even *Pythian 1*. Both Burton (94) and Skulsky (9n5) view this line as a contrast between the mortal and immortal response to the lyre’s song. Nagy also cites the beginning of *Pythian 1* as an explicit reference to singing and dancing, the activity of the chorus performing the victory ode (1990.142n34).

<sup>61</sup> Skulsky, 9.

<sup>62</sup> Skulsky, 9n5.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. note 60 above for lines 2-4 as a depiction of the performance of *Pythian 1*.

<sup>64</sup> See pp. 34-35 for this definition of εὐφροσύνη.

emphasizes the removal of strength. In the *Iliad*, the metaphor often appears when someone quenches, or threatens to quench, a warrior's life-force (μένος).<sup>65</sup> While the lyre quenches only Zeus' thunderbolt rather than his life-force (μένος), the verb, nevertheless, implies the removal of force.<sup>66</sup>

Pindar further demonstrates the restriction that the lyre imposes on Zeus when he describes the eagle, lulled to sleep, being held back (κατασχόμενος, 8). The eagle, a representative of Zeus' power because he sits on the end of his scepter (ἀνὰ σκάπτω), is held by the blasts (ρίπαῖσι) of the lyre. Skulsky argues that the blasts (ρίπαι) refer to "the force of a missile" rather than to the rippling of song, as many have translated it.<sup>67</sup> She points out that the lyre, a stringed instrument, may be compared to a bow from which an arrow is shot. In addition to the fact that Pindar uses blasts (ρίπαι) to refer to arrows in other odes and later in *Pythian 1* at line 44, Skulsky cites the shafts (κῆλα) in line 12 as evidence that the lyre is shooting arrows that restrain its immortal listeners.<sup>68</sup> The lyre, thus, checks Zeus' power by attacking with its song.

Just as it nullifies the thunderbolt of Zeus, the lyre causes the war god, Ares, to put

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Iliad* 16.621 where Meriones tells Aeneas that it would be difficult for him to quench the force of every man who comes against him:

621 Αἰνεία, χαλεπόν σε καὶ ἴφθιμόν περ ἔόντα  
πάντων ἀνθρώπων **σβέσσαι μένος**, ὅς κέ σευ ἄντα  
ἔλθη ἀμυνόμενος· θνητὸς δέ νυ καὶ σὺ τέτυξαι

Here, Meriones addresses Aeneas after Aeneas has attempted to kill him, and "to quench the force" is the equivalent of "to kill."

<sup>66</sup> Skulsky reminds us that "the lyre can work miracles, but only while it is heard: if the music stops, the eternal fire will be rekindled and the eagle will awaken" (10).

<sup>67</sup> Skulsky, 10-11.

<sup>68</sup> Skulsky, 11.

down his sharp spears (τραχεῖαν ἄνευθε λιπῶν ἐγγέων ἀκμάν) and delight his heart<sup>69</sup> in sleep (ἰαίνει καρδίαν κώματι) (lines 10-11). In the case of Zeus, the eagle on his scepter relaxes and sleeps instead of Zeus himself, but this eagle metonymically represents the god himself whose power is being, albeit temporarily, weakened by song. The lyre thus disables the weapons of Zeus and Ares, but its own shafts (κῆλα) are still potent. These shafts charm (θέλγει) the minds (φρένας) of the divinities (δαιμόνες), clearly demonstrating their ability to overpower them. Pindar's depiction of the lyre's power does not contradict either the powers Apollo ascribes to it in the *Hymn to Hermes* or the descriptions in Homer and Hesiod of the power of song, but his focus is different. He emphasizes that the lyre *which is performing an epinician ode* overcomes the martial inclinations of Zeus and Ares by calming hostility and promoting peace.<sup>70</sup> The lyre thus works with the epinician poet, who, especially in *Pythian 1*, an ode commissioned to commemorate the founding of Aitna by Hieron and the coronation of his son,<sup>71</sup> prays for peace for the city.

Although the lyre quenches the thunderbolts of Zeus and deprives Ares of his weapons, it produces a pleasing effect when Ares delights (ἰαίνει) in sleep. Pindar contrasts the pleasant effect of the lyre on the thunderbolts and scepter of Zeus with the reaction of the immortal creatures whom Zeus does not love. As Skulsky observes, they threaten peace by disturbing

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<sup>69</sup> Nisetich translates ἰαίνει as “soothe.” Does this perhaps point to an ameliorative power of song for the gods? He presents an intriguing possibility which potentially suggests a semantic equivalent for the Homeric τέρπουσι νόον. ἰαίνει καρδίαν does not appear together elsewhere in Pindar, but when ἰαίνει occurs its subject is often an immortal (cf. *Olympian 2.13*, *Olympian 7.43*). For ἰαίνει, Slater offers “cheer, delight” (s.v. ἰαίνει).

<sup>70</sup> Skulsky refers to the lyre itself as a warrior that is “conquering warriors,” i.e. Zeus and Ares. She believes that this presents a “paradox when translated into the metaphorical language of the poem: peace is a more powerful warrior than war itself” (10).

<sup>71</sup> Burton, 91.

the divine balance, and by terrifying them the lyre stabilizes and restores the divine order.<sup>72</sup> The focus of the victory ode centers on the mortal world which thrives on this stability. Pindar's lyre functions as an agent for peace which benefits the polis, whether the lyre is stripping the gods of their weapons, preventing an upset of the divine order, or, as the next section of this chapter will demonstrate, sending joy (εὐφροσύνα) or consolation to mortal minds.

## 2.2 Epinician Song and the Mortal *Phren*

If Pindar reworks the effect of song on the mortal mind found in Homer and Hesiod to fit the demands of the epinician genre, how, in particular, does he incorporate medical resonance into his poetry? The following examination of *Pythian* 1, *Nemean* 4, and *Pythian* 3 will indicate different ways in which he incorporates mythological figures associated with disease and healing and medical metaphor to designate his odes as palliative for mortal listeners.

In the opening of *Pythian* 1, as we have seen, Pindar presents the lyre as a force that disarms and pacifies Zeus and Ares. In this ode, Pindar does not use medical metaphor to suggest that his song heals Hieron, his addressee. He does, however, compare Hieron's action in battle to that of the mythological figure famous for his wound, Philoktetes, and he uses this comparison to acknowledge Hieron's physical illness. Moreover his descriptions of epinician song in *Pythian* 3 and *Nemean* 4 reveal that, in contrast to Zeus and Ares who are weakened and lulled by epinician song, mortals who listen to the victory ode experience εὐδαιμονία or εὐφροσύνα, "joy,"<sup>73</sup> characterized by Machemer as "the fundamental notion of the φρήν that is

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<sup>72</sup> Skulsky, 12.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. especially *Pythian* 3.98; and *Nemean* 4.1. For εὐφροσύνα as the result of song in these lines, see pp. 38-39 below and Machemer, 114f. For the definition εὐφροσύνα as "joy" see Slater, s.v. εὐφροσύνα.



doing well.”<sup>74</sup> In these odes Pindar uses medical metaphors that endow both the epinician poet and his song with healing power, indicating that the effect of the victory ode on the listener’s mind and, by extension, on the community made up of these listeners is analogous to a medical cure for a physical ailment.

As demonstrated in the last section, epinician song pacifies the gods in the opening of *Pythian* 1, and later in this same ode Pindar addresses the impact which he hopes his song will have on Hieron, his patron. In line 45, he hopes to surpass his competitors like an athlete who casts his javelin far and wins the contest. He then prays for Hieron’s future happiness, which includes the forgetfulness of troubles:

46 εἰ γὰρ ὁ πᾶς χρόνος ὄλβον μὲν οὔτω  
καὶ κτεάνων δόσιν εὐθύ-  
νοι, καμάτων δ’ ἐπίλασιν παράσχοι

ἢ κεν ἀμνάσειεν, οἷαις ἐν πολέμοισι μάχαις  
τλάμονι ψυχᾷ παρέμειν’

May all time continue to bring in this way  
**happiness** and **the gift of possessions**  
and provide **forgetfulness of his troubles**.<sup>75</sup>

Surely [time] **would remind** him in what sort of battles  
He stood fast with his enduring soul

Pindar designates time (χρόνος) as the force that will help Hieron look back upon past battles because it induces forgetfulness (ἐπίλασιν) of troubles and memory (cf. ἀμνάσειεν) of past victories. As Walsh argues that Pindar’s ode, by soothing his addressee as he presents the addressee’s accomplishments, provides a way for his addressee to look back upon his personal

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<sup>74</sup> Machemer, 120.

<sup>75</sup> καμάτων refers to both Hieron’s physical illness (see below) and to the struggle for material wealth, as it appears in contrast to ὄλβον and κτεάνων δόσιν. Slater defines ὄλβος as “prosperity *esp. material prosperity*” (s.v. ὄλβος). LSJ indicates that κάματος can mean I.1. “toil, trouble,” 2. “the effect of toil, weariness,” 3. “illness,” II. “the product of toil.” Slater defines κάματος as “effort, trouble *esp. in attaining an object*,” (s.v. κάματος).

experience without feeling pain.<sup>76</sup> In comparing Hieron to Odysseus who weeps when he hears of his toils sung by Demodocus, and to Eumaeus who remembers his *resolved* toils with pleasure, Walsh explores the psychological effect of remembering past troubles and concludes that Pindar’s poetry allows his addressee to experience pleasure when he hears about his own toils. Walsh interprets troubles (καμάτων) as referring to the battles (μάχαις) in line 47, suggesting that, without Pindar’s ode, it would be painful for Hieron to ponder past battles. However, Walsh does not sufficiently take into consideration lines 50-57, in which Pindar introduces the mythological figure, Philoktetes, to signal that these “troubles” also refer to Hieron’s ongoing physical illness.

Once Philoktetes is mentioned, these lines acquire new significance. The wounded Philoktetes places the entire passage in a medical context, engaging the medical sense of troubles (καμάτων, 46).<sup>77</sup> Just after the passage in which Pindar hopes that time will provide a forgetfulness of troubles, he likens Hieron to Philoktetes, who was abandoned on Lemnos by the Achaean soldiers on their way to Troy because of his wounds:

50                            νῦν γε μὰν  
                                  τὰν **ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΑΟ** δίκαν ἐφέπων  
                                  ἐστρατεύθη· σὺν δ’ ἀνάγκῃ νιν φίλον  
                                  καὶ τις ἐὼν μεγάλανωρ ἔσανεν.  
                                  Φαντὶ δὲ Λαμνόθεν **ἔλκει**  
                                  **ΤΕΙΡÓΜΕΝΟΝ** μεταβάσσοντας ἐλθεῖν  
  
                                  ἥροας ἀντιθέους Ποϊάντος υἰὸν τοξόταν·  
                                  ὃς Πριάμοιο πόλιν πέρσεν, **ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑ-**  
                                  **σέν τε πόνους Δαναοῖς,**  
55 **ἀσθενεῖ μὲν χρωτὶ βαινῶν,** ἀλλὰ μοιρίδιον ἦν.  
                                  οὔτω δ’ Ἰέρωνι θεὸς ὀρθωτῆρ πέλοι

<sup>76</sup> Walsh, 49-50.

<sup>77</sup> Machemer similarly argues that the use of ἰατρός evokes a medical context at the beginning of *Nemean 4* (Machemer, 125). Also see below on *Nemean 4*.

τὸν προσέρποντα χρόνον, ὧν ἔραται καιρὸν  
διδούς.

50 And just now he led his army forth  
like a second **Philoktetes**:  
a man proud of heart  
felt compelled to beg his friendship.  
So legends say  
the heroes came, seeking  
Poias' archer son, **worn**  
**by his festering sore**

in Lemnos: Philoktetes, who stretched  
Priam's city in the dust and **put an end**  
55 **to the pains of the Danaans**, though he walked  
**with broken strength**—  
there was fate in it.  
So may the god watch over Hieron through coming time  
and give him due season for reaping his desires.<sup>78</sup>

In reference to forgetfulness of troubles (καμάτων δ' ἐπίλασιν) at line 46, a scholiast mentions that Hieron may have suffered from kidney stones (λιθουρία) and that he consequently was carried into battle.<sup>79</sup> The scholiast clearly refers to a tradition that identifies these troubles (καμάτων) with Hieron's physical illness rather than with past battles.<sup>80</sup> In addition to this comment, *Pythian* 3, composed around the time of *Pythian* 1, testifies to Hieron's failing health.<sup>81</sup> The comparison between Hieron and Philoktetes in lines 50-57 further indicates that Pindar here refers to Hieron's physical illness. Pindar, then, in line 46, hopes that time will help Hieron forget his illness *and* his toils in battle. If, as Walsh proposes, "the poet's art enhances a natural tendency" of time to dull the pain of past toils, here Pindar may also

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<sup>78</sup> Trans. Nisetich.

<sup>79</sup> Drachmann, 89a-b.

<sup>80</sup> καμάτων φησὶ τῶν συνεχόντων τὸν Ἱέρωνα ἐκ τοῦ νοσήματος τῆς λιθουρίας (He says that of those who suffered from diseases Hieron [suffered] from the illness of kidney stones) (Drachmann, 89a).

<sup>81</sup> Race marks the date of composition of *Pythian* 3 between 476 when Hieron founded Aitna and 467 when Hieron died (242). *Pythian* 1 was composed for a chariot victory in 470 (210).

suggest that his poetry is able to help Hieron cope with the inevitable outcome of his physical condition, which may never improve.<sup>82</sup> The comparison between Hieron and the wounded Philoktetes makes this interpretation plausible and, as Gantz suggests,<sup>83</sup> Pindar may even specifically omit the mention of Philoktetes' cure, which appears in other versions of the myth,<sup>84</sup> to liken him more closely to the ailing king. Hieron, then, may take comfort in Pindar's words because, like Philoktetes and Croesus, he has the hope of being remembered favorably in song, provided that he acts nobly and rules benevolently.<sup>85</sup>

The comparison between Hieron and the Philoktetes in *Pythian* 1 emphasizes the ameliorative effect of Pindar's poetry on Hieron. This effect is limited to the mind; Pindar does not suggest that he, or that any mortal, can cure Hieron's physical illness. He uses Philoktetes to establish a parallel between the poet and the doctor, but he does not specifically compare himself or his song to a medical doctor or to a medicinal cure.

In other odes, by contrast, Pindar makes the connection between poet and doctor quite explicit. For instance, he opens *Nemean* 4 by linking mental health (εὐφροσύνα) and medicine:

ἄριστος εὐφροσύνα πόνων κεκριμένων  
 ἰατρός: αἱ δὲ σοφαὶ  
 Μοισᾶν θύγατρεις ἀοιδαὶ θέλξαν νιν ἀπτόμεναι.  
 οὐδὲ θερμὸν ὕδωρ τόσον γε μαλθακὰ τεύχει  
 5 γυῖα, τόσον εὐλογία φόρμιγγι συνάορος,  
 ῥῆμα δ' ἔργμάτων χρονιώτερον βιοτεύει,  
 ὅτι κε σὺν Χαρίτων τύχα

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<sup>82</sup> Walsh, 50.

<sup>83</sup> Gantz, 146-7.

<sup>84</sup> Gantz cites Proklos' summary of the *Little Iliad* and also writes that Philoktetes' cure would have been part of the epic cycles of the *Cypria* and *Iliou Persis*. Philoktetes' cure is also recounted in Aeschylus and Euripides. See also Dickson, 20.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. *Pythian* 1.87-100. Pindar also implies a warning for Hieron that if he does not behave as benevolent ruler he will end up as Phalaris, whom no lyres welcome in banquet halls (97-98).

γλῶσσα φρενὸς ἐξέλοι βαθείας.

**Joy** is the **best healer** of pains that have passed the crisis:<sup>86</sup>

and the wise

daughters of the Muses, songs, charm it with their touch.

Not even does hot water make the limbs soft so much,

5 as **praise** accompanying the lyre.

A saying lives longer than deeds

which, with the fortune of the Graces,

the tongue draws from the depths of the mind.

Pindar claims that joy, or a healthy mind (εὐφροσύνα) is the best healer, or doctor, of pains and the daughters of the Muses charm the personified εὐφροσύνα, the “doctor of pains,” with their touch.<sup>87</sup> This touching (ἀπτόμεναι) recalls the healing hands of Asclepius, whose hands “are his primary curative instruments.”<sup>88</sup> Here songs influence even the best of healers.

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<sup>86</sup> For this medical definition of κεκριμένων see Slater, s.v. κρίνω, and van Brock, 214.

<sup>87</sup> The meaning of these first lines of the ode has been disputed since antiquity when the scholiasts first commented on the ode. The main dispute has centered on the antecedent of the pronoun νιν in line 3. The scholiasts, Aristarchus and Didymus, disagree, the former suggesting that νιν refers to εὐφροσύνα (line 1), and the latter believing that νιν refers to πόνοι (line 1). Modern scholars have not come to a consensus, and it has also been proposed that νιν could refer to the unexpressed victor in the poet’s mind instead of either of the options presented Aristarchus and Didymus. Race cites this possibility (Race, *Nemean* 4.3n1), and Machemer attributes this opinion to August Boeckh (115n5). Willcock identifies νιν with the unexpressed victor (*Nemean* 4.1-5). Bundy defines εὐφροσύνα here as “a poetic word for a victory revel,” best in the *immediate* present in contrast with the αἰδοῖαι in line 2 which refer to songs which are better as time passes. However, he does not take a stance on the antecedent of νιν.

Machemer has presented convincing grammatical and comparative evidence in support of Aristarchus’ interpretation, and this chapter will proceed by taking εὐφροσύνα as the antecedent of νιν, as the above translation reflects. Her three main arguments which support this argument are: 1) Although not impossible, it is very rare for Doric νιν to take a plural antecedent. Here we have a singular antecedent and it is more logical to accept this singular antecedent when there is no basis for an exception to the rule and when εὐφροσύνα is the subject of the poet’s thought (115-116); 2) In pre-Classical and Classical usage, θέλγειν “regularly takes as its object either the person or animate being in whom a desired change or deceit is wrought” and nowhere does it take “as its object the thing or state removed by the act of charming” (117); and 3) Pindar’s theme at the beginning of *Nemean* 4 echoes Hesiod’s *Theogony* in which εὐφροσύνα is personified (*Theogony* 909). It seems likely that Pindar similarly addresses the effect of song on the hearts of his audience (118).

Machemer understands εὐφροσύνα as a personified goddess, which is convincing to me particularly because Pindar compares the “goddess” to a doctor in the next line, a word designating a person rather than a thing. This interpretation also allows for the most plausible explanation of νιν because personified εὐφροσύνα is a reasonable object of θέλγειν because it “accommodates the form of each of these three natural objects [of θέλγειν], the person affected taken as a whole, the ‘psychic’ part of the person directly affected – ὄμματα, θυμός, νόος, etc.– and, finally, the effect wrought by the change in the *psyche*, as expressed in an abstract noun” (Machemer, 117).

<sup>88</sup> Machemer, 133.

Machemer argues that Pindar, by calling εὐφροσύνα a doctor, places the concept of “joy,” or perhaps “grace,” in a medical context, which then:

suffuses the surrounding discourse and, in so doing, not only confirms retrospectively the dissolution of εὐφροσύνα into a healthy state of the *phrên*, but also sustains the argumentation which is at the center of Pindar’s thought, namely, the superiority of the healing power of music over the powers of other healers.<sup>89</sup>

In this context, κρίνω in the first line is likely to resonate medically as well as poetically.<sup>90</sup> As Machemer demonstrates, the introduction of the doctor (ἰατρός), or as she terms it, the “iatrification” of εὐφροσύνα, also places θέλγειν within a medical context in which it means “to soothe physical pain.”<sup>91</sup> Lines 4-5 address physical healing (the softening of the limbs), and reiterate the superiority of music over a physical means of healing. Praise (εὐλογία), like joy (εὐφροσύνα), “charms” the mind (φρήν) into health, “and it is by means of this grace—εὐφροσύνα—that the limbs themselves are restored.”<sup>92</sup> Taken together, the first five lines of *Nemean* 4 reveal that songs (ᾠδαί), and specifically praise which accompanies the lyre (εὐλογία φόρμιγγι συνάρορος), are the most effective healers, even for physical ailments.

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<sup>89</sup> Machemer, 125.

<sup>90</sup> Slater, s.v. κρίνω. He cites van Brock’s lexicon to support a medical definition of κρίνω in this instance.

<sup>91</sup> Machemer, 131-3. She also argues that Plato uses εὐλογία “refer to the contents (*logoi*) of poems when they are morally elevating and truthful (*Rep.* 377 Bff.)” (124). She suggests that some of these ideas were “circulating a century earlier,” and thus may be noticed in Pindar’s treatment of praise (εὐλογία) as a “*phrên*-shaping power” (124).

<sup>92</sup> Machemer, 125. As Machemer points out, the unexpressed object of praise (εὐλογία) leaves this question open; praise (εὐλογία) could soften the mind (φρήν), the limbs (γυῖα), or both.

After the eight opening lines, Pindar does not use the medical theme that introduced the poem again until the final lines.<sup>93</sup> Yet even here, the connection between poetry and medicine returns. Pindar compares a praiser of Melesias to a wrestler:

- οἶον αἰνέων κε Μελησίαν ἔριδα στρέφοι,  
 ῥήματα πλέκων, ἀπάλαιστος ἐν λόγῳ ἔλκειν,  
 95 **μαλακά** μὲν φρονέων ἐσλοῖς,  
 τραχὺς δὲ παλιγκότοις ἔφεδρος.
- How one praising Melesias would struggle,  
 Weaving words, unbeatable in the pull of speech,  
 95 Thinking **soft thoughts** for good men  
 But a harsh backup for adversaries.

The main comparison in this passage is clearly of a poet who writes a song of praise to a wrestler who struggles in a contest.<sup>94</sup> However, Pindar also reintroduces the healer from the beginning of his ode in these last lines by calling the thoughts of the poet “μαλακά.”<sup>95</sup> Just as εὐλογία that accompanies song is more effective than even hot water for making limbs (γυῖα) soft (μαλθακά) at the beginning of the poem (lines 4-5), at its close, the poet sends soft thoughts (μαλακά) to good men (line 95). By using a word that sounds similar, is semantically

<sup>93</sup> Although Cheiron briefly appears in *Nemean* 4 when he saves Peleus from the designs of Hippolyta, in this instance he saves Peleus by supplying him with the sword of Daidalos, rather than by helping him medically (lines 59-61).

<sup>94</sup> Each of the three main thoughts begins by describing the activity of the poet and end with the activity of the wrestler:

<u>Poet</u>	<u>Wrestler</u>
1) οἶον αἰνέων κε Μελησίαν “how one praising Melesias”	ἔριδα στρέφοι “would twist in strife”
2) ῥήματα πλέκων “weaving words”	ἀπάλαιστος ἐν λόγῳ ἔλκειν “unbeatable in the pull (of speech)”
3) <b>μαλακά</b> μὲν φρονέων ἐσλοῖς “thinking soft thoughts for good men”	τραχὺς δὲ παλιγκότοις ἔφεδρος “a harsh backup for adversaries”

<sup>95</sup> The codices actually have μαλθακά rather than μαλακά. The accepted text is an emendation by Schmid in 1616 (Gerber, 110). Pindar also uses the adjective, μαλακός, to refer to song at *Pythian* 3.51 where he describes Asclepius’ incantations as gentle (μαλακαῖς ἐπαιδαῖς).

equivalent, and is possibly etymologically related,<sup>96</sup> Pindar recalls the limbs made soft by praise in the opening. He thus reminds the listener of the power of his ode, which, in addition to being the instrument of praise for good men (ἔσλοϊς) and a “harsh backup for adversaries,” is able to affect even the “best healer of pains,” joy (εὐφροσύνα).

In *Nemean 4*, Pindar links music and medicine through a metaphor that likens the result of song, joy (εὐφροσύνα), to a healer. Pindar does not address his own role in the poem until line 9, and he departs from the medical metaphor in the middle of the ode. Nonetheless, by the end his mention of soft thoughts recalls the softening of limbs by praise in the opening and reiterates the soothing effect that the poet has on his listeners. The opening of the poem, which is couched in medical language and metaphor, is thus reawakened, reminding the listener that the epinician poet sings to soothe his audience.

As in *Pythian 1*, in *Pythian 3* Pindar situates his song in a medical context by incorporating mythological figures associated with healing. However, he adopts a different strategy: by comparing the mythological healer, Asclepius, to the poet rather than identifying the mythological wounded figure, Philoktetes, with his patron as he does in *Pythian 1* and by appropriating the diction of Asclepius’ medical treatments for his own art, Pindar likens himself to the healer.

Pindar most assertively presents himself as a healer who soothes with his poetry in *Pythian 3*, which he composed to comfort Hieron whose health was failing. The unique occasion of this ode, Hieron’s physical illness, easily lends itself to a medical framework, and Pindar

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<sup>96</sup> Chantraine cites μαλακός under the entry for μαλθακός, and vice versa. He defines both adjectives as “doux, mou.” He addresses the relation between the two adjectives under the entry for μαλθακός: “On se demande quels rapports établir entre μαλακός et μαλθακός qui ont pu influencer l’un sur l’autre. On rapproche μαλακός de βλάξ, ἀμαλός” (s.v. μαλθακός). Also see Machemer, 128-129. She connects μαλάσσω and μαλθακός and assumes that they are related to one another.



exploits this context to suggest that his ode will uplift the troubled mind of his addressee just as the medical treatments of Asclepius heal the ailing bodies of *his* patients. While physical and mental cures alike are accomplished through song in *Nemean* 4, in *Pythian* 3 Pindar laments the inability of a healer to restore Hieron’s body and offers, instead, his ode to soothe Hieron’s mind with the hope of immortality through verse.

Pindar begins the ode with the wish that he could resurrect the famous healer, Cheiron, who could restore Hieron’s health:

Ἦθελον Χείρωνά κε Φιλλυρίδαν,  
 εἰ χρεῶν τοῦθ’ ἀμετέρας ἀπὸ γλώσσας  
 κοινὸν εὖξασθαι ἔπος,  
 ζῶειν τὸν ἀποιχόμενον,  
 Οὐρανίδα γόνον εὐρυμέδοντα Κρόνου,  
 Βάσσαισί τ’ ἄρχειν Παλίου φῆρ’ ἀγρότερον  
 5 νόον ἔχοντ’ ἀνδρῶν φίλον· οἶος ἐὼν θρέψεν ποτέ  
τέκτονα νωδυνίας  
ἥμερον γυιαρκέος Ἀσκλαπιόν,  
ἦροα παντοδαπᾶν ἀλκτῆρα νούσων.

If only Cheiron, son of Phillyra—  
 If it is right to pray this common word  
 from my tongue—  
 Were living, though he has died,  
 And (son of) the widely ruling offspring of Kronos, son of Ouranos,  
 and ruled over the glades of Pelia, a wild beast  
 5 Having a mind friendly to men; just as he was  
When he raised the gentle craftsman of limb-strengthening  
relief from pain, Asclepius  
The hero-protector from all sorts of diseases.

Pindar wishes in a “common” prayer, or one hoped for by all, that he could resurrect Cheiron to provide a healer who could provide relief from pain for Hieron. As Pelliccia points out, Pindar’s grammatical structure, the “unattainable” wish, immediately signals to the reader that this wish will not come to be.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Pelliccia, (following Turner, Sandys, Gildersleeve, Lefkowitz, as cited in Young, 28-31), argues that this is an “unattainable” wish, while Young believes it is a complete condition (Pelliccia, 40ff.). This particular point has no

By using the unattainable wish, Pindar shields himself from making a wish that is not proper, namely resurrecting a mortal creature who has died. He illustrates the folly of seeking things which are improper, or far away, instead of things that are proper and close at hand. More specifically, by narrating the myth of the healer, Asclepius, he warns against the folly of wishing to raise a man (or a centaur) from the dead. As an illustration of this warning to his audience, Pindar presents Koronis who disregarded the anger of Apollo (ἅ δ' ἀποφλαυρίζαισά νιν / ἀμπλακίαισι φρενῶν, 12-13) by sleeping with another man although she was bearing Apollo's son. Pindar tells the myth of Koronis partly because she is the mother of Asclepius, whose story he narrates next, but also because she represents folly and delusion that Pindar and his listeners must avoid.

The myth of Koronis also introduces the central metaphor which likens the healer, Asclepius, to the poet. Asclepius, who survives his mother, Koronis, when she is killed by Apollo's wrath, is taught by Cheiron to heal diseases that bring pain for men (πολυπήμονας ἀνθρώποισιν ἰᾶσθαι νόσους, 46). Pindar describes the sorts of illnesses Asclepius treats and the remedies he uses to cure them:

50      τοὺς μὲν ὦν, ὅσσοι μόλον αὐτοφύτων  
           ἐλκῆων ξυνάονες, ἢ πολιῶ χαλκῶ μέλη τετρωμένοι  
           ἢ χερμάδι τηλεβόλω,  
           ἢ θερινῶ πυρὶ περθόμενοι δέμας ἢ  
           χειμῶνι, λύσαις ἄλλον ἀλλοίων ἀχέων  
           **ἔξαγεν**, τοὺς μὲν μαλακαῖς ἐπαιδαῖς ἀμφέπων,  
           τοὺς δὲ προσανέα πί-  
           νοντας, ἢ γυίοις περάπτων πάντοθεν  
           φάρμακα, τοὺς δὲ τομαῖς **ἔστασεν ὀρθούς**.

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impact on the comparison between poet and healer, as discussed in this chapter. If the wish is “unattainable” and line 2 is an aside, Pindar signals to his audience that the wish will not come to be. If line 1 is the apodosis and line 2 the protasis of a counterfactual condition (if it were right to speak a common word from my tongue, I would wish...), the wish will, likewise, not come true. In any event, Pindar emphasizes that the wish is improper and that he, thus, cannot make it. For the “unattainable” wish as purely rhetorical, see Pelliccia, 49.

As many as came afflicted with  
 self-generating wounds, their limbs either wounded by gray bronze  
 or by a far-thrown stone,  
 50 or bodies ravaged by summer heat  
 or by the cold of winter, releasing one from one affliction  
 and another from another **he restored them**,  
 attending to some with gentle incantations  
 while others drank soothing draughts,  
 or fastening remedies of all sorts to their limbs,  
 others **he stood upright** with cuttings.

Pindar divides Asclepius' patients into different categories based upon type of illness and upon the treatment required. Some wounds arise of their own accord (αὐτοφύτων ἐλκείων, 47), while the cause of others is given—they were inflicted by gray bronze or a far-thrown stone. Some wounds, then, may be explained and even anticipated, for instance, when a soldier heads off to battle. Others that are self-generated have no clear origin.

Asclepius exploits a wide range of treatments to tend to different wounds and diseases, which Pindar later appropriates and uses to describe his own actions. Pindar fully narrates Asclepius' treatments using only two finite verbs: he restored [them] (ἔξαγεν, 51) and he set them upright (ἔστασεν ὀρθούς, 53). The verb ἐξάγω appears only once in Pindar's corpus. By contrast, the concept of setting something upright (ιστήμι ὀρθός) appears commonly and usually not in medical contexts. It often actually refers to an upright or correct mental state.<sup>98</sup> As the ode proceeds, Pindar reiterates the contrast between ills that one brings upon oneself and those that have no tangible explanation, and he also repeats the concept of standing a person upright (ιστήμι ὀρθός, 96). By using similar language to describe both the medical practices of Asclepius and his own craft, Pindar tightens the connection between himself and the mythical healer.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *Olympian* 2.75 (βουλαῖς ἐν ὀρθαῖσι Ῥαδαμάνθυος), *Olympian* 7.91 (πατέρων ὀρθαὶ φρένες ἐξ ἀγαθῶν), *Olympian* 8.24 (ὀρθᾶ . . . φρενὶ), *Pythian* 3.80 (see below), *Pythian* 6.19 (ὀρθὰν ἄγεις ἐφημοσύναν), *Pythian* 10.68 (πειρῶντι δὲ καὶ χρυσὸς ἐν βασάνῳ πρέπει καὶ νόος ὀρθός).

Asclepius skillfully treats the wounded, but ultimately he errs by raising a man from the dead. As he describes Asclepius, Pindar revisits the theme introduced earlier in the ode of knowing what is proper and what is beyond human limits:

60            χρὴ τὰ εὐοικότα παρ  
              δαιμόνων μαστευέμεν θναταῖς φρασίν  
              γνόντα τὸ παρ ποδός, οἷας εἰμὲν αἴσας.

μή, φίλα ψυχά, βίον ἀθάνατον  
σπεῦδε, τὰν δ' ἔμπρακτον ἄντλει μαχανάν.

60            It is necessary to seek things fitting  
              For mortal minds from the gods,  
              Perceiving what is at our feet and of what sort of fate we are.

Do not, my soul, hasten after an immortal life,  
But make the most of the practical means available.

Mortals must seek what is present rather than things far off. Pindar recapitulates the theme he has raised earlier in the ode as he begins to transition<sup>99</sup> from myth to address his relationship with Hieron, beginning with the address to his soul in line 61.<sup>100</sup>

When Pindar describes what he wishes he could do to help Hieron, the actions he would have taken on Hieron's behalf recall the treatments of Asclepius:

65            εἰ δὲ σὺφρων ἄντρον ἔναι' ἔτι Χείρων, καί τί οἱ  
              φίλτρον <έν> θυμῷ μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι  
              ἀμέτεροι τίθεν, ἰατῆρά τοί κέν νιν πίθον  
              καί νυν ἐσλοῖσι παρασχεῖν ἀνδράσιν θερμᾶν νόσων  
              ἢ τινα Λατοῖδα κεκλημένον ἢ πατέρος.  
              καί κεν ἐν ναυσὶν μόλον Ἴονίαν τάμνων θάλασσαν  
              Ἄρέθοισαν ἐπὶ κράναν παρ' Αἰτναῖον ξένον

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<sup>99</sup> Lefkowitz argues that the ἀλλά in line 54 signals this transition (53).

<sup>100</sup> For Pindar's use of the first person, see Lefkowitz. Her main thesis is that "all Pindar's first personal statements, choral, epinician, and personal, have the same basic functions, serving both as introductions to new themes and also as statements about who is speaking" (55). She further distinguishes between a "choral I," which is descriptive, and a "personal I," which "deals with the poet's official duties and with the powers of his art" (56). In *Pythian* 3, Pindar uses the first person to address his role as a poet and his relationship with Hieron, his patron. On *Pythian* 3 in particular, see Lefkowitz, 50-55.

65 But if sagacious Cheiron were still living in his cave, and if  
**my sweet-voiced songs had placed a charm in his heart,**  
 I would have persuaded him to provide a healer  
 Even now for good men, a healer of hot diseases,  
 Someone called a son of Apollo or of Zeus.  
 And I would have gone in a ship, **cutting the Ionian Sea**  
 To the Arethusian spring to the house of my Aitnaian host

Pindar would have convinced Cheiron to train another healer by placing a charm in his heart (φίλτρον <έν> θυμῷ μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι / ἀμέτεροι τίθεν). The φίλτρον recalls the φάρμακα that Asclepius applies to the limbs of his patients (53).<sup>101</sup> A φίλτρον appears in only one ode apart from this line in *Pythian* 3. In *Olympian* 13, Pallas calls the bridle that charms the horse of Bellerophon a φίλτρον ἵππειον (horse charm, 68). Pindar refers to the same bridle just a few lines later as a φάρμακον πραῦ (soothing charm,<sup>102</sup> 85).<sup>103</sup> The φίλτρον and the φάρμακον are thus roughly equivalent in *Olympian* 13. It is possible that Pindar’s audience would recognize a similarity between the two, and Pindar’s wish to use a φίλτρον would therefore link Pindar’s hypothetical effect on Hieron to the effect of Asclepius’ treatments on his patients.

Pindar continues with counterfactuals which express unattainable wishes. Were it possible he would sail in a ship, cutting (τάμνων) the Sicilian sea. Here Pindar uses the verb τάμνειν to express several meanings. Duchemin suggests that in this passage cutting the sea

<sup>101</sup> Duchemin does not connect the φίλτρον to Asclepius’ incantations, but she comments that φίλτρον suggests that “la poésie est une incantation” (50).

<sup>102</sup> Slater cross-references these passages in *Olympian* 13 under both φίλτρον and φάρμακον. He translates both instances as “charm” (s.v. φίλτρον, φάρμακον). *Pythian* 3 was composed not before the founding of Aitna (476) and not after the death of Hieron (467) (Race, 242). *Olympian* 13 celebrates a victory which took place in 464, and thus must have been written after that date. Although Pindar composed *Olympian* 13 after *Pythian* 3, his interchangeable use of φίλτρον and φάρμακον in the former indicates that φάρμακον could also carry this meaning in *Pythian* 3.

<sup>103</sup> A φίλτρον is often a love charm (Winkler, 218). However, it does not seem to have this meaning in either *Olympian* 13 or *Pythian* 3. The word first appears in Pindar (twice, in *Pythian* 3 and *Olympian* 13), Aeschylus (once, at *Choephoroe* 1029), and Simonides (once, in *Epigrammata* 16.204.3). The word seems to acquire the meaning of “love charm” later. When it appears in Theocritus’ *Idyll* 2.1 and 2.159, it certainly has this sense. LSJ defines φίλτρον as 1. love-charm; 2. generally charm, spell (s.v. φίλτρον).

means to mark out a path.<sup>104</sup> The verb also regularly refers to the action of a ship cutting the waves as it passes through the water, both in Pindar and in earlier poetry.<sup>105</sup> Another of its common meanings further links Pindar to Asclepius: as early as Homer’s *Iliad* and continuing up through the fifth century τάμνειν often appears in medical contexts to refer to the activity of a surgeon.<sup>106</sup> Thus τάμνειν is the appropriate word to describe a sea journey but it simultaneously recalls the medical sense in line 53 where Asclepius stood men upright with cuttings or surgeries (τομαῖς). In his counterfactual at lines 64-69, Pindar neatly equates the healing treatment of Asclepius, which is unavailable to Hieron, with his own equally impossible voyage across the sea that would deliver the healer to the patient. Even though Pindar cannot actually make this voyage, he compares himself to a healer, suggesting that his current song may have an analgesic result.

At this point in the ode, Pindar has made only impossible wishes for Hieron’s health as he has forged a connection between himself and Asclepius. He takes a new direction in line 77, making a genuine wish and a statement of what he actually hopes to do for Hieron:

77 ἄλλ’ ἐπεύχασθαι μὲν ἐγὼν ἐθέλω  
 Ματρί, τὰν κοῦραι παρ’ ἐμὸν πρόθυρον σὺν  
 Πανὶ μέλπονται θαμὰ  
 σεμνὰν θεὸν ἐννύχιαι.

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<sup>104</sup> Duchemin, 50. She compares this passage to *Olympian* 13.57 (τάμνειν τέλος) and *Isthmian* 6.22 (τέτμανθ’ ἐκατόμπεδοι ἐν σχερῶ κέλευθοι) where τάμνειν also has this sense.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. *Olympian* 12.6. LSJ cites both *Pythian* 3.68 and *Olympian* 12.6 as examples where τέμνω means “of ships, cut through the waves, plough the sea” (s.v. τέμνω (A)VI.3). Other examples cited by LSJ for this sense include *Odyssey* 3.175 and *Odyssey* 13.88.

<sup>106</sup> The verb refers to operations that involve cutting and blood-letting (LSJ, s.v. τέμνω(A)I.3). It describes the activity of the surgeon in *Iliad* 11.844, in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* 849, in Galen 16.810, and in Xenophon’s *Anabasis* 5.8.18, and in several passages in Plato’s *Gorgias* (LSJ). τέμνω appears consistently in a medical context from the time of Homeric epic through the fifth century. Also see van Brock’s discussion of cutting a cure (τέμνειν ἀκός) in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* (80-81). She argues that passages that contain this phrase, or related phrases, may have a medical nuance but they primarily refer to “bonne santé’ de l’esprit” when τέμνειν ἀκός appears (80).

77 But I wish to pray to  
the Mother, to whom the maidens often sing  
in front of my door at night together with Pan,  
a holy goddess.

Pindar will help Hieron with words by praying to the Mother. He consoles Hieron in his current misfortune by reminding him that he has a share of prosperity: τὴν δὲ μοῖρ' εὐδαιμονίας ἔπεται (a share of prosperity follows you, 84). He then compares Hieron to other kings, demonstrating that even men who experience the utmost happiness (ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον, 89), like Peleus and Kadmos, also experience hardship in turn.

When Pindar returns to the theme of setting a man upright (ιστήμι ὀρθός) to describe the shifting fortune of Kadmos and Peleus, he echoes language previously used to describe one of Asclepius' treatments in line 53. He tells how Peleus and Kadmos heard the song of the Muses at their wedding celebrations:

λέγονται μὰν Βροτῶν  
90 **ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον** οἷ σχεῖν, οἶτε καὶ χρυσαμπύκων  
**μελοπομενᾶν** ἐν ὄρει **Μοισᾶν** καὶ ἐν ἑπταπύλοισι  
**ἄϊον** Θήβαις, ὀπόθ' Ἄρμονίαν γᾶμεν βοῶπιν,  
ὁ δὲ Νηρέος εὐβούλου θέτιν παῖδα κλυτάν,

They are said to have held  
The **highest prosperity**, for **they even heard**  
**the golden-crowned Muses singing**  
On the mountain and in seven gated Thebes, when one married  
Cow-eyed Harmonia and the other married Thetis  
Famous daughter of the good counselor Nereus.

The privilege of hearing the Muses sing explains why Peleus and Kadmos had the highest prosperity,<sup>107</sup> for these songs are usually transmitted to men through a singer who is inspired

<sup>107</sup> Slater defines ὄλβος as “prosperity” (Slater, s.v. ὄλβος). Chantraine specifies that ὄλβος is used to describe material prosperity given to men by the gods. Its adjectival form, ὄλβιος, describes men to whom the gods accord prosperity as opposed to the adjective μάκαρ which describes gods who live a life without worry (Chantraine, s.v. ὄλβος). This opposition appears in *Pythian* 3 where Pindar uses ὄλβος to refer to temporary human prosperity (lines 89, 105) and μάκαρ to refer to the gods (line 103).

by the Muses rather than by the Muses themselves who normally sing only for the gods.<sup>108</sup>

Pindar, rather than the Muses, celebrates Hieron, a king only slightly less fortunate than Peleus and Kadmos, who both marry goddesses.

Pindar mentions Peleus and Kadmos as examples of men who experience vast changes of fortune in their lifetimes. Their marriages to Harmonia and Thetis, respectively, relieve them from their earlier hardships:

95 Διὸς δὲ χάριν  
ἐκ **προτέρων** μεταμειψάμενοι **καμάτων**  
**ἔστασαν ὀρθὰν καρδίαν.**

95 By the grace of Zeus  
Having changed out of **earlier hardships**  
They **stood their hearts upright.**

Peleus and Kadmos, then, by their marriages to goddesses have done away with hardships<sup>109</sup> (καμάτων) and replaced them with prosperity (ὄλβος, 89). The song of the Muses illustrates that Peleus and Kadmos have overcome their hardships and have attained happiness by standing their hearts upright. As demonstrated in the discussion of *Pythian* 1 above, καμάτων may refer to Hieron's illness in that ode. While the trouble of Peleus and Kadmos was exile

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Also cf. the passage in Herodotus Book 1.32 where Solon describes the characteristics of a man who is ὄλβιος:

ἄτην μὲν καὶ ἐπιθυμίην οὐκ ὁμοίως δυνατὸς ἐκείνῳ ἐνεῖκαι, ταῦτα δὲ ἢ  
εὐτυχίη οἱ ἀπερύκει, **ἄπηρος** δὲ ἐστί, **ἄνουσος**, **ἀπαθῆς κακῶν**, εὖπαις,  
εὐειδής.

He [the ὄλβιος man] is not able to bear misfortune and desire alike to that man [the ἀνόλβιος man], but good fortune wards these things off from him, and he is **unharmed, free from sickness, doesn't suffer from ills**, is blessed with children, and is attractive.

Solon indicates that the meaning of ὄλβος may also indicate a lack of suffering and physical illness in addition to owning material possessions. Herodotus, like Pindar, juxtaposes ὄλβος (prosperity) and the suffering of ills (κακῶν or καμάτων, respectively).

<sup>108</sup> For the Muses singing for the gods, cf. *Iliad* 1.603-4, *Theogony* 36-52.

<sup>109</sup> Slater defines κάματος as “effort, trouble esp. in attaining an object” (s.v. κάματος).



rather than physical illness, κάματος implies effort towards attaining an object.<sup>110</sup> Pindar thus indicates that Hieron must accept and work through his illness as Peleus and Kadmos worked to overcome exile and obtain prosperity (ὄλβος).

These lines, moreover, recall the surgery of Asclepius. Peleus and Kadmos stood their hearts upright (ἔστασαν ὀρθὰν καρδίαν, 96), just as Asclepius stood upright some of his patients by cuttings (τοὺς δὲ τομαῖς ἔστασεν ὀρθούς, 53). The repetition of ἰστήμι with ὀρθός is striking. The anguish suffered by Peleus and Kadmos was largely emotional or mental. Pindar nonetheless indicates that because Peleus and Kadmos undergo the same healing process as the patients of Asclepius, their anguish is healed in the manner of physical disease.

Nevertheless, the prosperity (ὄλβος) of Peleus and Kadmos is fleeting. Just as Hieron has his share of good fortune (εὐδαιμονία, 84) which cannot last indefinitely, so Peleus and Kadmos only have the highest prosperity (ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον) for a brief time. Pindar describes Kadmos' loss of his prosperity (ὄλβος) as follows:

97 ἔν δ' αὖτε χρόνῳ  
τὸν μὲν ὀξείαισι θύγατρ' **ἐρήμωσαν** πάθαις  
**εὐφροσύνας μέρος** αἰ  
τρεις·

97 But again in time  
His three daughters **deprived him of a share of Joy** [*euphrosuna*] by their sharp sufferings.

Here Pindar contrasts Kadmos' former joy with the suffering of his daughters which has stripped him of this joy. As Duchemin suggests in her commentary to *Pythian 3*, Kadmos' loss of a portion of εὐφροσύνα in line 98 recalls Hieron's share of εὐδαιμονία which Pindar mentions

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

in line 84. In fact, Duchemin translates the two phrases, μοῖρ' εὐδαιμονίας and εὐφροσύνας μέρος, identically as “part de bonheur,” or “a share of happiness.”<sup>111</sup>

The similar meanings of εὐδαιμονία and εὐφροσύνα invite a comparison between the happiness of Hieron and the happiness of Kadmos.<sup>112</sup> Kadmos, significantly, has joy (εὐφροσύνα), or prosperity (ὄλβος), when the Muses sing to him at his wedding, and loses it later as a result of his daughters' suffering. The significance of this for Hieron is that Kadmos' joy (εὐφροσύνα), as well as his prosperity (ὄλβος), since they accompany one another, is at its height when he listens to the Muses. As in the opening of *Nemean* 4, the song of the Muses generates joy (εὐφροσύνα) for the mortal listener.

In the final lines of *Pythian* 3, Pindar again addresses the shifting nature of prosperity (ὄλβος) and introduces fame (κλέος) as a component of fortune:

106      **ὄλβος** οὐκ ἔς μακρὸν ἀνδρῶν ἔρχεται  
          σάος, πολὺς εὖτ' ἂν ἐπιβρίσαις ἔπηται.

          σμικρὸς ἐν σμικροῖς, μέγας ἐν μεγάλοις  
          ἔσσομαι, τὸν δ' ἀμφέποντ' αἰεὶ φρασίν  
          δαίμον' ἀσκήσω κατ' ἐμὰν θεραπεύων μαχανάν.

Great **prosperity** of men is not safe for a long time  
when it follows with its full weight.

I will be small in small times and great in great times,  
And I will honor the *daimôn* attending my thoughts  
on each occasion serving it according to my means.

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<sup>111</sup> Duchemin, 53-54.

<sup>112</sup> These two terms also recall the two types of healing incantation distinguished by Entralgo, one charming the δαίμων and the other calming the φρήν of the patient so that the surgeon may accurately perform his surgery. Entralgo categorizes four ways of thinking about and interpreting illness: “the traumatic, the punitive, the environmental, and the demonic” (4). Punitive or demonic illnesses may be cured by charming the δαίμων who sent the illness.

Pindar gives advice to Hieron in these last lines, providing himself as an exemplum.<sup>113</sup> The ode urges Hieron to accept his destiny, but it also offers itself as consolation because Hieron, like Pindar, has hope of lasting fame: ἐλπίδ' ἔχω κλέος εὐρέσθαι κεν ὑψηλὸν πρόσω (I have hope that I will discover lofty fame in the future, 111). Unlike prosperity, which does not endure, κλέος and the excellence or virtue that inspires it, ἀρετά, endure for a long time in glorious songs (114-115). Pindar ultimately offers the hope of enduring fame in song (κλέος) to Hieron instead of a physical cure not only because it would be improper to seek out a student of Cheiron to heal his disease, but also because fame (κλέος) which endures is superior to prosperity (ὄλβος) which is temporary and fleeting. In *Pythian* 3, as in *Pythian* 1, Pindar reiterates for Hieron that the most he can rely on is the hope of future fame (κλέος). Hieron must rule nobly to attain this fame, which nonetheless cannot be guaranteed.

Thus Pindar uses medical diction and mythological figures associated with wounds and healing to designate himself and his poetry as healers and his listener as a patient. In *Pythian* 3 Pindar applies the medical diction of Asclepius' treatments to his own poetry to indicate that epinician poetry soothes the mind of the listener. As in *Pythian* 1, where Pindar suggests that noble kings are remembered in song, at the end of *Pythian* 3 Pindar indicates that memory in song (κλέος) is lasting compared to material prosperity (ὄλβος) which is not. Pindar's odes relieve the pain of his mortal audience, as he suggests in the opening of *Nemean* 4 where the product of song, joy (εὐφροσύνα), is the best healer of ills. In the three odes examined in Section 2, Pindar depicts his poetry as a medicinal cure for the ills of his mortal listeners.

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<sup>113</sup> Duchemin, 55.

### 2.3 Conclusion

Taken together, Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter reveal that Pindar uses medical metaphors to describe his epinician poetry as consistently calming the mind of the listener, whether mortal or immortal. Along with these metaphors, Pindar adopts the Homeric and Hesiodic notion that song soothes the mind and dispels pain. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* immortal audiences regularly delight when they listen to epic song. As argued in Chapter One, the healing power of the epic poet is more clearly articulated in Hesiod's *Theogony*, a poem which describes the origin of the gods and their respective spheres of influence, than in Homeric epic. Hesiod suggests that the bard can help a troubled man to forget his anxieties and his cares, but he does not go so far as to specifically compare the bard to a healer.<sup>114</sup>

Pindar departs from the Homeric and Hesiodic descriptions of the effect of song as he adapts this healing property of poetry to his own genre of epinician. The opening of *Pythian* 1 presents epinician poetry which sends immortals into a soporific state, disarming and pacifying them as it promotes harmony in the community and reintegration of the victor while simultaneously celebrating a recent victory. While the immortals in Homer and Hesiod who listen to song mirror the mortals who “delight” in epic song, immortals have no parallel setting in which to listen to epinician poetry. Instead they become peaceful, falling asleep and relinquishing their weapons.<sup>115</sup>

The effect of Pindar's poetry on mortals further extends the soothing potential of song found in Homer and Hesiod. Where Homer describes epic as “soothing” by using the verb *τέρπω* to describe the effect of poetry, and Hesiod indicates that his poetry provides a

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<sup>114</sup> *Theogony* 102-103.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *Pythian* 1.

forgetfulness of cares,<sup>116</sup> Pindar explicitly compares himself to a doctor to underscore the healing power of his poetry. This medicinal effect of poetry, in turn, corresponds to the epinician genre in which Pindar writes and accentuates the underlying objective of the epinician poet to integrate the victor back into his community. Chapter Three will argue that Theocritus similarly appropriates this underlying therapeutic function of song and tailors it to meet the demands of bucolic poetry.

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<sup>116</sup> *Theogony* 102-103.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE HEALING EFFECT OF BUCOLIC SONG IN THEOCRITUS' *IDYLL* 11

The last two chapters have examined the soothing function of the poet's song in the poetry of Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar. In each case, the poet attributes medicinal elements to his poetry in accordance with the demands of his genre. In Homeric epic, the bard's song elicits a strong emotional response from his audiences and in Hesiod's *Theogony*, a poem concerned with defining the powers of deities, poetry has the power to remove the cares from the troubled man's mind. In Pindar's victory odes, the poet compares himself to a mythical healer and calls the result of song (εὐφροσύνα) a doctor (ἰατρός), thereby underscoring the therapeutic purpose of his poetry.

The curative effect of song demonstrated in the first two chapters is not unique to hexameter and epinician genres. Rather, song works as a restorative for the mind across genres and time periods in the Greek poetic tradition.<sup>117</sup> This thesis does not attempt to make an exhaustive study of healing songs across all genres and periods of Greek poetry.<sup>118</sup> Nonetheless, an example removed in both time and genre from the authors already discussed will reveal that the notion of song as an analgesic for mental anguish endures through time. To demonstrate the persistence of the comparison, this chapter examines connections between

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<sup>117</sup> Rosenmeyer, 146.

<sup>118</sup> Most notably, this thesis must pass over the 5<sup>th</sup> century tragedians and Aristophanes, all of whom treat medical themes in their works.

song and healing in the *Idylls* of Theocritus, who composed his *Idylls* about two hundred years after Pindar began to write his epinician odes.

As in the preceding chapters, a consideration of the restraints and the definition of genre is essential to an analysis of Theocritus' poetry. In this case, the matter of classification is complicated by the fact that Theocritus is generally considered to be the first writer, or even the founder, of bucolic poetry.<sup>119</sup> As such Theocritus combines and parodies many types of poetry that come before him; he works from no single established generic model. According to Hunter:

the Theocritean corpus is in fact peculiarly resistant to scholastic and formalist approaches to 'genre': no poem is quite like any other, but the impression is rather of the constant rearrangement and fresh patterning of elements drawn from a repertoire which seems familiar, but is in fact being created before our eyes.<sup>120</sup>

Whereas it was possible to make general statements about the heroic and theogonic hexameter of Homer and Hesiod and about epinician poetry of Pindar, it is more difficult to articulate the effect of Theocritus' *Idylls* as a group of poems.<sup>121</sup> The protean nature of the *Idylls*, while perplexing to the scholar who attempts to categorize them, actually makes them ideal for demonstrating that the depiction of song as an analgesic endures as a part of the Greek poetic tradition in Theocritus' time. This chapter does not undertake a comprehensive analysis

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<sup>119</sup> Gutzwiller, 3. Hunter, 11-12. It is also possible that there were earlier bucolic writers but their works are no longer extant (Gutzwiller, 5-6).

<sup>120</sup> Hunter, 5.

<sup>121</sup> This does not mean that scholars do not attempt to identify an underlying purpose of the *Idylls*. Rosenmeyer compares Theocritus' "pastoral" poetry to epinician poetry, and notes that for pastoral, "praise is too pale a thing to satisfy, not only the beneficiary but also the donor. For this reason the idea that a song may be given as a gift or prize is absent from Theocritus' pastoral poetry" (166). He further points out that the herdsman is not a professional singer hired by a patron. When he sings, "the herdsman is not doing anyone a favor; he is pleasing himself" (166). Also see Segal for a discussion of the "unified poetic vision" in what he refers to as the genuine bucolic *Idylls* (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11) (176).

of the Theocritean corpus. Instead, the discussion centers solely on *Idyll* 11, a poem in which Theocritus describes the song of the Muses as restorative. *Idyll* 11 is further germane to a discussion of Theocritus' medical comparisons because the poet both frames the *Idyll* with an address to his friend, Nicias, who is both a poet and a doctor, and states that the song of the Muses is a treatment (φάρμακον) for love.

Before the discussion of *Idyll* 11, a brief note on the performance of Theocritus' *Idylls* is necessary. As Rosenmeyer suggests, Theocritus' poems were recited rather than sung to instrumental accompaniment.<sup>122</sup> This spoken performance changes the poet's relationship to song considerably because, as Rosenmeyer puts it, Theocritus "suggests the music instead of putting it on the boards."<sup>123</sup> Thus, only the singers described by Theocritus (usually piping goatherds), and not the poet himself, actually create music.

This changed performance context affects the way in which Theocritus expresses the therapeutic effects of song. The audiences who listen to the poetry of Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar are soothed by the poet's song.<sup>124</sup> When these earlier poets describe this soothing effect of song, they implicitly attribute an ameliorative effect to their own poetry which is performed to musical accompaniment. Theocritus' recited (or possibly even read) poetry does not automatically present the same type of relief. When Theocritus examines the medicinal effect of songs performed by others, his commentary lacks the self-reflexive quality found in Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, and other earlier poets whose works are performed to music. Since Theocritus

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<sup>122</sup> Rosenmeyer, 147. Hunter even suggests that the *Idylls* were meant to be *read*, though he acknowledges the possibility that they were recited (11). Either way, Theocritus' poetry was not performed to musical accompaniment.

<sup>123</sup> Rosenmeyer, 147.

<sup>124</sup> Sappho, Euripides, and other earlier Greek poets may also be added to the list of Theocritus' influences.



does not *sing* his poetry, he is able to maintain a distance from his characters who perform, and his description of their song does not invite a comparison with his own work the way, for instance, critics compare the poet of the *Odyssey* and the fictional bard, Demodocus, in *Odyssey* 8. As my reading of *Idyll* 11 will reveal, this distance from song leaves Theocritus more space to comment on the soothing effect of song on its audience.

In *Idyll* 11 Theocritus uses compositional techniques familiar to the Greek poetic tradition to liken song to medicine. As we saw in Chapter 2, Pindar uses both medical metaphor<sup>125</sup> and mythological figures associated with wounds<sup>126</sup> and healing<sup>127</sup> to connect himself, and his poetry, to a healer and his listener to a patient. In like fashion, Theocritus opens his poem with a medical metaphor in which he calls the Muses a “drug” (φάρμακον) for love. Theocritus writes this *Idyll* about Polyphemus, a mythical character whose eye Odysseus wounds in the *Odyssey*, and who is known for his uncivilized behavior, as well as his lack of musical skill, in Euripides’ *Cyclops*.<sup>128</sup> Where Pindar narrates the myth of Asclepius as an exemplum in *Pythian* 3 and that of Philoktetes in *Pythian* 1 to suggest medical comparisons, Theocritus makes literal the connection between poetry and medicine by addressing his poem to a poet/doctor, his friend, Nicias.<sup>129</sup> Unlike earlier poets who use mythology to supply a medical context, Theocritus uses a living example to connect song to medicine.

Theocritus’ comparisons allow him to challenge the traditional association between the poet’s song and his listener’s cure by portraying the same character as both healer and patient.

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<sup>125</sup> Cf. the opening of Pindar’s *Nemean* 4 where he calls the result of song (εὐφροσύνα) a doctor (ἰατρός).

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Philoktetes in *Pythian* 1.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Cheiron and Asclepius in *Pythian* 3.

<sup>128</sup> Euripides, *Cyclops* 426.

<sup>129</sup> Goldhill, 258.

As he combines with the hexameter form a traditional theme of Greek love poetry, poetry of unrequited love recited by despairing lovers,<sup>130</sup> Theocritus places his poetry against a medical backdrop to reevaluate the traditional healing effect of song<sup>131</sup> in a case where the singer can no longer rely on the generosity of his listener or patron but instead sings for his own benefit.<sup>132</sup> Theocritus locates in a single individual the traditional medical comparison in which the poet is linked to doctor and the listener to a patient to situate the singer and the listener (and so also the doctor and the patient). He thus questions the dependence implicit in earlier poetry of the listener on the poet for healing treatment. The following reading of *Idyll* 11 will demonstrate that Theocritus uses both medical metaphor and mythology to reveal the new means of healing available to the bucolic singer. Rather than using the myth of Polyphemus to supply the medical context, Theocritus portrays Polyphemus, who, in spite of the humorous overtones, demonstrates the healing effect of bucolic song, as a comic version of the bucolic singers we find elsewhere in the Theocritean corpus. By inverting the traditional characterization, Theocritus' manipulation of the medical metaphor establishes the self-sufficiency of the bucolic singer, and his use of heroic language to describe Polyphemus illuminates the therapeutic effect of bucolic poetry, even when sung by a singer who, in the literary tradition, is "without the Muse" (ἄμουσος).<sup>133</sup>

From the first line of the poem Theocritus establishes a medical context for *Idyll* 11 by attributing medicinal power to the Pierian Muses:

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<sup>130</sup> Goldhill, 252.

<sup>131</sup> Rosenmeyer, 146; Also see Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>132</sup> I refer to the *singer* within the song and *not* to Theocritus, who did sing for patrons as is evidenced by *Idyll* 16 written in honor of Hieron II and *Idyll* 17 composed for Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

<sup>133</sup> Euripides, *Cyclops* 426.

1 Οὐδὲν ποττὸν ἔρωτα πεφύκει **φάρμακον** ἄλλο,  
**Νικία**, οὔτ' ἔγχριστον, ἐμὶν δοκεῖ, οὔτ' **ἐπίπαστον**,  
 ἢ ταὶ **Πιερίδες**·

1 There is no other **drug** for love,  
**Nicias**, neither an **unguent**, nor a **paste**,  
 than the **Pierian** (Muses)

Theocritus calls the Muses the only drug<sup>134</sup> (φάρμακον) for love. He follows earlier poets, attributing to the Muses the power to affect the emotions of their audiences. At the moment that Theocritus introduces the conventional and unexceptional link between the Muses and relief from mental anguish,<sup>135</sup> however, in the very first line of the poem his description of this treatment together with his focus on medicine and medical terminology also reserves space for reinterpretation and various shades of meaning because a φάρμακον may be helpful or harmful.<sup>136</sup>

The word φάρμακον always has the potential to refer either to a drug that is beneficial or to one that is damaging<sup>137</sup> and the sense must be determined from context. Some scholars believe that Theocritus extends the equivocal meaning of φάρμακον in line 2 by suggesting that the Pierians are more effective than both an ἔγχριστον (unguent) and an ἐπίπαστον

<sup>134</sup> I have translated φάρμακον as “drug” rather than as “remedy” or “cure” because, as Goldhill argues, “*pharmakon* means not merely remedy but also poison; not merely cure but also harmful drug, dangerous spell” (255). Cf. below note 137.

<sup>135</sup> See Chapters 1 and 2 and Rosenmeyer, 146.

<sup>136</sup> Contrast this ambiguity with Pindar’s description of song which produces joy (εὐφροσύνα) and takes away pains (πόνους, καμάτους).

<sup>137</sup> In Homer, for instance, φάρμακον often appears with an adjective modifying it which designates the drug as healing medicine or as poison. For examples of harmful drugs: at *Odyssey* 1.261 Odysseus smears a *πάρμακον* *ἀνδροφόνον* (“man-slaying drug”) on the tips of his arrows, and at *Iliad* 22.94 Hector is compared a snake that teems with *κακά φάρμακα* (“bad drugs,” or “poison”). For examples of healing drugs: at *Odyssey* 10.292 Hermes gives Odysseus a φάρμακον ἐσθλόν (“good drug”) to protect him from Circe’s harmful drug. Hermes drug is consistently described as ἐσθλόν (“good”) (see also *Odyssey* 10.287, 10.302) and Circe’s as *κακά* (see *Odyssey* 10.213, 10.236, 10.290, 10.317, 10.326, 10.327, 10.394). Cf. Bergren, 206, where she outlines two “genres” of φάρμακον, the “good” and the “wretched,” in the *Odyssey*.

(paste).<sup>138</sup> However, both terms and their related verbs refer to healing treatments mentioned in the Hippocratic Corpus.<sup>139</sup> It is therefore more likely that Theocritus includes them to emphasize that the ability of the Muses' song to treat lovesickness is analogous to the medical treatment of a wound, following descriptions of the Muses' song found in earlier poetry.

Theocritus deepens the medical resonance of the poem's frame by addressing *Idyll* 11 to his friend, Nicias. He expects that Nicias will know the power of the Muses because Nicias himself is a doctor (ἰατρὸν ἐόντα, 5) and at the same time he is loved by these divinities: καὶ ταῖς ἐννέα δὴ πεφιλημένον ἔξοχα Μοῖσαις (6). The line bears a secondary set of associations as well, for they evoke the description of Demodocus in *Odyssey* 8, who is also loved by the Muse.<sup>140</sup> Nicias is authoritative because of his double role as healer and poet, which accords with their close association in earlier Greek poetry. Theocritus, who is only a poet and not a physician, playfully jests with his friend by suggesting that poetry, too, is medicine and more importantly that it is the only type of drug that works for love.

Prior to mentioning the Cyclops, Theocritus situates Polyphemus in a medical context in lines 1-6:

7 οὕτω γοῦν **ῥάιστα διαῖγ'** ὁ Κύκλωψ ὁ παρ' ἀμῖν,  
ὠρχαῖος Πολύφαμος, ὄκ' ἤρατο τᾶς Γαλατείας,  
ἄρτι γενειάσδων περὶ τὸ στόμα τὼς κροτάφως τε.

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<sup>138</sup> Gow points out that the first, ἔγχριστον, carries a harmful overtone because it appears in Homer only as a verb (χρίειν) which describes the smearing of poison on arrowheads at *Odyssey* 1.262 (II.210). The second term, on the other hand, also appears as a verb (πάσσειν) in Homer describes the dusting or sprinkling involved in dressing a wound at *Iliad* 4.219, 5.401, 11.515, 830, 15.394 (II.210). Gow does not take into account changes in medical terminology from the time of Homer to the time of Theocritus, and the uses of these terms in the Hippocratic Corpus reveal that by the third century both terms were used to describe healing treatments. Also see Goldhill, 255.

<sup>139</sup> For χρίω used for the application of a healing treatment in the Hippocratic Corpus, see *Places in Man* 13.3, 13.6, 13.10; *Diseases* II.28.5, II.36.6; *Fistulas* 7.23.

<sup>140</sup> Hunter indicates that this line “teasingly exaggerates *Od.* 8.63 (Demodokos) τὸν πέρι Μοῦσ’ ἐφίλησε” (226).

7 In this way the Cyclops **fares as easily as possible** the one  
among us  
Polyphemus of old, when he was in love with Galatea  
Just having sprouted a beard around his mouth and his temples.

I have translated ῥάιστα δι᾿γ’ literally as “fares as easily as possible,” but the English translation misses some of the medical resonance of this phrase. As Gow points out in his commentary, this phrase applies to invalids recovering from diseases.<sup>141</sup> It, similarly, refers to the recovery of alcoholics in Dio Chrysostom’s discussion of the effects of heavy drinking,<sup>142</sup> and Xenophon’s Socrates also uses this phrase twice in the *Symposium* when he argues that the guests at the drinking party would fare better with less elaborate entertainment.<sup>143</sup> Gow and

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<sup>141</sup> Gow, II.210. Gow cites Dio Chrysostom 6.31 as an example of this sense of ῥαδίως. Here, Dio discusses the tyrant who:

would choose localities that were healthful in preference to the unhealthy, and those that were adapted to the different seasons, and he took care to have a sufficient supply of food and moderate clothing, but from public affairs, lawsuits, rivalries, wars, and factions he kept himself clear. He tried especially to imitate the life of the gods, for they alone, as Homer asserts, live at ease (ἐκείνους γὰρ μόνους φησὶν Ὅμηρος **ῥαδίως ζῆν**)

For a more relevant passage in Dio, where the adverb is in the comparative and appears with διάγειν (cf. Theoc., *Idyll* 11.81), see note 142.

<sup>142</sup> The following is the most directly related passage from Dio:

πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἐξεμοῦσιν ὑπὸ πλησμονῆς γίνεταί δὲ μετὰ σπαραγμοῦ τε καὶ λύπης τῆς ἐσχάτης τὸ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἐκβάλλειν. ὅστις δ’ ἂν ἰσχύσῃ, κουφίζεται καὶ **ῥᾶον διάγει** τὸ λοιπόν.

Many too vomit from surfeit, and it is accompanied by retching and the severest pain—this casting out of the pleasure. But whoever persists is relieved and **gets on better** in the future.

(Dio Chrys. 30.40, Trans. J.W. Cohoon)

See also Dio 6.55 where ῥᾶον διάγειν describes Tantalus who “fares better” than the aging tyrant.

<sup>143</sup> At Xenophon, *Symposium* 7.2, Socrates addresses Philip who is about to bring in a dancing-girl who juggles to entertain his guests:

νῦν γοῦν σκοπῶ ὅπως ἂν ὁ μὲν παῖς ὅδε ὁ σὸς καὶ ἡ παῖς ἡδε ὡς **ῥᾶστα διάγοιεν**, ἡμεῖς δ’ ἂν μάλιστα εὐφραϊνοίμεθα θεώμενοι αὐτούς

“at any rate, I am now considering how it might be possible for this lad of yours and this maid **to exert as little effort as may be**, and at the same time give us the greatest possible amount of pleasure in watching them.”

LSJ both cite the Hippocratic Treatise, *Places in Man* 34 as a passage in which ῥάων (here with εἶναι) signifies an improvement in a patient’s condition. Furthermore, the adverb, ῥάων, appears regularly throughout the Hippocratic Corpus with existential verbs (εἶναι and γίγνομαι) signifying the state of the patient.<sup>144</sup> In addition to the medical terms used in line 2 to suggest that song removes rather than aggravates love, this phrase, ῥάιστα διαῶγ’, further reveals that Polyphemus improves his condition by engaging the Pierian Muses.

The medical context is developed further in the lines that follow. Polyphemus suffers from a “wound” (ἔλκος, 15) in his heart, and the audience knows he will also suffer from a physical wound in his poetic future.<sup>145</sup> Theocritus presents a mythological character who

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(Trans. O.J. Todd)

A few lines later, Socrates again refers to the girl and boy as ῥάων διάγειν, the same phrase which Theocritus uses to describe Polyphemus at line 80, which again carries the sense of not being overly tired (Xen. *Symp.* 7.5). These passages from the *Symposium* do not specifically indicate a medical context, but they strongly suggest that the “drug” is beneficial to Polyphemus.

<sup>144</sup> ῥάων and διάγειν appear together once in the Hippocratic Corpus at *Internal Affections* 28.37 to describe the cauterization of a liver to treat a patient with advanced liver disease:

ἦν γὰρ τύχης καύσας, **ὕγιέα ποιήσεις**, καὶ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον **ῥάων διάξει**.  
ἦν δὲ μὴ τύχη καυθεὶς ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων λοιπὸν ὕγιής μὴ γενόμενος, τὸ λοιπὸν  
φθειρόμενος χρόνῳ ἀποθνήσκει.

For, if your cautery succeeds, **you will make the patient well, and he will pass the time from then on more easily**. But if he is neither cauterized successfully nor brought to health by any of the other treatments, he wastes away after that, and in time dies.

(Trans. Paul Potter)

For the ῥάων/ῥάων with εἶναι and γίγνομαι in the Hippocratic Corpus, see *Affections* 19.2; *Affections of Women* 63.41, 125.3, 174.11; *Diseases* I.19.25, I.19.30, II.25.8, II.47.51, II.55.8, II.64.3, II.66.4, II.69.3, II.69.5, II.71.5, II.73.7; *Internal Affections* 6.15, 6.24, 21.6, 23.19, 28.9; *Nature of Women* 12.10; *Places in Man* 24.11, 34.2-3; and *Popular Diseases* 7.1.29, 7.1.43, 7.1.57.

<sup>145</sup> Theocritus also describes Polyphemus’ sickness in traditional terms when he suggests that he “melted away” (κατετάκετο). Cf. *Idyll* 2 where Simaetha’s beauty melts away due to her lovesickness: τὸ δὲ κάλλος **ἐτάκετο**. Also see Callimachus, *Action* 1.8, where he describes the Telchines as a race who know how to waste away their hearts (**τήκειν** ἤπαρ ἐπιστάμενον).

In the *Odyssey*, the narrator uses this verb (κατατήκω) only to describe the melting of snow (19.205, 19.206), but the grieving Penelope uses it to characterize her longing for her absent husband in Book 19:

136 ἄλλ’ Ὀδυσῆ ποθέουσα φίλον **κατατήκομαι** ἤτορ.

suffers physically to liken his addressee to a patient. In this case, Polyphemus also suffers from lovesickness and Nicias is connected to him in this respect.<sup>146</sup> Nonetheless, this mythological exemplum breaks with earlier models immediately because Nicias is a physician. The doctor/poet, Nicias, has become the patient, and the lovesick Cyclops has become a poet. By likening Polyphemus to both the doctor *and* the patient, Theocritus breaks down the alignment of the poet with the doctor and the listener with the patient that we have seen in the previous chapters. Nicias thus informs our reading of Polyphemus, likening him to a doctor, as much as the Cyclops provides a model of the patient for Nicias.

Theocritus' diction aligns Polyphemus with Nicias as the poet/doctor because he sings (ἀείδων, 13; ἄειδε, 18) and by doing so discovers a “drug” (ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον εὔρε, 17). Polyphemus, whom Euripides depicts as ἄμουσος, literally “without the Muses,”<sup>147</sup> discovers the song of the Muses, which, as Theocritus points out in line 4, is not easy to find (εὐρεῖν δ' οὐ ῥᾶδιόν ἐστι). By portraying Polyphemus as both the physician and the patient, Theocritus suggests that the lover, and in this case even a singer who is known to be “without the Muses,”

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οἱ δὲ γάμον σπεύδουσιν· ἐγὼ δὲ δόλους τολυπεύω.

136 But longing for Odysseus **I waste away** in my dear heart.  
They are eager for a marriage; but I carry out cunning plans.

Theocritus links Polyphemus to Penelope, emphasizing the strength of his love for Galatea.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. *Idyll* 13 where Theocritus addresses Nicias again in the context of lovesickness.

<sup>147</sup> After Odysseus returns from the Cyclops' cave, he describes the events that took place in the cave to the chorus of satyrs :

425 ἄιδει δὲ παρὰ κλαίουσι συνναύταις ἑμοῖς  
**ἄμουσ'**, ἐπηχεῖ δ' ἄντρον

425 He sings beside my weeping shipmates  
**without the Muses**, and the cave echoes.

I translated ἄμουσος literally as “without the Muses” (LSJ, s.v. ἄμουσος) to emphasize the humor in Theocritus' suggestion that the character who is traditionally “without the Muses,” or unrefined, inelegant, is able to find the song of the Muses as a treatment for ἔρωσ.

can personally access the healing song of the Muses without relying on the poet as an intermediary. Theocritus attributes medical language to Polyphemus in the frame to liken him to Nicias and to underscore the salutary effect of his song.

When Polyphemus begins to sing, medical language is less prominent as he attempts to lure Galatea out of the sea by professing his love and by describing the life he could offer her in his cave. Nevertheless, it is not altogether absent after the Cyclops has exhausted his list of reasons why Galatea should leave the sea for him and after he imagines visiting her under the sea, he uses medical language to describe his anguish. He blames his mother, the sea-nymph, Thoosa, for Galatea's indifference:

70 ἄ μήτηρ ἀδικεῖ με μόνα, καὶ μέμφομαι αὐτᾶ·  
οὐδὲν πῆποχ' ὅλως ποτὶ τὴν φίλον εἶπεν ὑπέρ μευ,  
καὶ ταῦτ' ἄμαρ ἐπ' ἄμαρ ὀρεῦσά με **λεπτύνοντα**.  
φασῶ τὰν κεφαλὰν καὶ τῶς πόδας ἀμφοτέρως μευ  
σφύσδειν, ὡς ἀνιαθῆ, ἐπεὶ κήγῶν ἀνιώμαι.

my mother alone harms me, and I blame her  
for not ever saying a word to you, my beloved, on my behalf  
even though day by day she sees me **wasting away**.  
I will tell her that my head and both my feet  
Throb, in order that she might suffer, since I also suffer.

Polyphemus' mother harms him by not speaking to Galatea, but he quickly makes the leap from emotional pain to physical pain. His mother looks upon him wasting away (λεπτύνοντα). λεπτύνειν, and its adjectival form, λεπτός, regularly appears in the Hippocratic Corpus to refer to a body that has wasted away because of illness.<sup>148</sup> Polyphemus wishes to make his mother

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<sup>148</sup> Hunter points out that this verb is “at home in medical contexts” and also indicates that the lover is conventionally thin (240). Cf. Hippoc. *Aphorisms* 2.7. The author suggests that bodies that have wasted away (λεπτονόμενα σώματα) slowly should be restored slowly, and those that have wasted away quickly restored quickly. Polyphemus may also liken himself, here, to the Hellenistic Muse, whom Callimachus at *Aetion* I.24 tells us, should be slender (λεπταλέην):

“.....] ἀοιδέ, τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι **πάχιστον**  
θρέψαι, τῆ]ν Μοῦσαν δ' ὠγαθὲ **λεπταλέην**·



suffer by seeing his physical pain because she does not respond to the emotional anguish of his lovesickness.<sup>149</sup>

At the close of his song, Polyphemus returns to a consideration of his mental state. He reminds himself that his mind would fare better if he were to attend to his present chores rather than to chase a love that flees:

ὦ Κύκλωψ Κύκλωψ, πᾶ τὰς φρένας ἐκπεπότασαι;  
αἶ κ' ἐνθὼν ταλάρως τε πλέκοις καὶ θαλλὸν ἀμάσας  
ταῖς ἄρνεσσι φέροις, τάχα κα πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔχοις νῶν.  
75 τὰν παρεοῖσαν ἄμελγε· τί τὸν φεύγοντα διώκει;

Oh Cyclops, Cyclops, where have you flown **in your mind**?  
If you should plait the baskets here and having gathered in the rushes  
Bear them to the lambs, you would have much more **sense**.  
75 **Milk the one present**; Why pursue the one who flees?

As the Cyclops addresses himself, he suggests that he is not in his right mind.<sup>150</sup> His description is not unlike descriptions of love found in earlier lyric poets, for whom Eros has wings.<sup>151</sup>

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..... poet, nourish the victim to be **as fat as possible**  
but the Muse, good man, to be **slender**.

<sup>149</sup> Polyphemus also aligns himself with other Theocritean lovers who waste away from their lovesickness. Hunter cites *Idyll* 2.89-90 where Simaetha describes the symptoms of her lovesickness:

ἔρρευν δ' ἐκ κεφαλᾶς πᾶσαι τρίχες, αὐτὰ δὲ λοιπά  
ὅστι' ἔτ' ἦς καὶ δέρμα.

All the hair fell out of my head, and only the bones  
Were left and skin.

The image of the lover wasting away may also recall Calypso's address to Odysseus in *Odyssey* 5:

160 Κάμμορε, μή μοι ἔτ' ἐνθάδ' ὀδύρεο, μηδέ τοι αἰῶν  
**φθινέτω**· ἤδη γάρ σε μάλα πρόφρασσ' ἀποπέμψω.

160 Ill fated man, do not more here with me any longer, may your life  
**not waste away**; for I will send you away now very willingly.

<sup>150</sup> The witch, Simaetha, uses the exact words to ask her servant, Thestylis, if she is in her right mind: δειλαία, πᾶ τὰς φρένας ἐκπεπότασαι; (2.19). Gow translates this line as: "Poor fool, whither have thy wits taken wing?" (Gow, I.17).

<sup>151</sup> Hunter, 241.

Polyphemus recognizes that must regain control over his φρήν (72) and his νόος (74) to overcome his pain. This recalls line 11 of the opening frame in which Theocritus suggests that Polyphemus loved Galatea with true mania (ὀρθαῖς μανίαις), and marks the point in the poem where Polyphemus' song offers him potential relief from this μανία.

The medical theme reemerges at the conclusion of the poem, although some of the details are disputed. Since Gow published his translation and commentary in the 1960s, scholars have debated the efficacy of Polyphemus' song based on the last two lines. These lines, like the first 18 lines, are part of the framing address to Nicias:

80 Οὕτω τοι Πολύφαμος **ἐποίμαινεν** τὸν ἔρωτα  
μουσίσδων, **ῥᾶον δὲ διαῖγ'** ἢ εἰ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν.

80 In this way Polyphemus **used to shepherd** his love  
By singing, and he **fared more easily** than if he had paid gold.

Gow rejects the entire medical frame of the *Idyll* as a late add-on to the original poem, which he believes includes only lines 8-16 and 19-79,<sup>152</sup> arguing that the content of the song “shows Polyphemus very far from cured.”<sup>153</sup> Cairns believes that Polyphemus was obviously cured and cites the last two framing lines of the poem as evidence of recovery.<sup>154</sup> Other scholars reject the notion that Polyphemus cures himself, and see Polyphemus' attempt to cure his lovesickness as a failure.<sup>155</sup> In contrast, Erbse and Holtsmark argue that Polyphemus cures himself by

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<sup>152</sup> Gow, II.211.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Cairns suggests that “at the end of the song (80-1) we are told again that by singing it Polyphemus cured himself. Theocritus must therefore show the cure occurring within the song” (147).

<sup>155</sup> Schmiel, 36. Overlooking the possible intertextual reference to the Pindaric notion that it is better to look to things at one's feet than to things that are far away (see Gow, II.220), Schmiel calls Polyphemus an “insensitive materialist” because he tells himself he would be better off if he milked the one who was present (35). This self-address, Schmiel argues, marks Polyphemus as “no insightful poet-physician but a rather mundane and comical disciple of the Muses” (35). Schmiel entirely misses the point of the self-address, which, as Goldhill points out (see note 159 below), is a hypothetical situation which represents what *would* be more sensible, but which does not take place in the poem.

achieving a state of self-enlightenment by the end of the poem which allows him to see the futility of his love for Galatea.<sup>156</sup>

More recently Goldhill's study of these lines argues that Polyphemus may or may not be cured by the end of the poem. Instead of revealing the Cyclops' cure to his audience, Goldhill suggests, Theocritus maintains a level of ambiguity that leaves open the possibility that Polyphemus actually keeps his unrequited love alive by nourishing it with song.<sup>157</sup> Goldhill convincingly points out that Polyphemus' self-address does not indicate a cure. The Cyclops' question, "where have your wits flown?," is more likely to be a "rhetorical expression of misery" than a sign that Polyphemus has recovered.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, the Cyclops uses a future-less-vivid condition to indicate that "he *would* be more sensible *if he were* to go and plait cheese-baskets," but there is no promise that he will. Polyphemus also qualifies his chances of finding another Galatea by adding the adverb "perhaps" (ἴσως).<sup>159</sup> Polyphemus' self-address, therefore, does not, as Cairns suggests, reveal that he has changed his mind about Galatea and has cured himself in this way.

Although Goldhill demonstrates that Polyphemus has not definitively *cured* his love by singing, this does not mean that his song is not therapeutic. In his discussion of ποιμαίνειν, Goldhill points out that "Theocritus' witty final use of *poimainein*, 'to shepherd', scarcely resolves any uncertainty whether the love poem really demonstrates the shepherd's cure."<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Erbse *passim*. Holtsmark 258-259.

<sup>157</sup> Goldhill, 254-259. He argues that ἐποιμαίνειν may take the sense of "'tend', 'care for', 'nourish'" in this passage, pointing out that the verb does not imply "the removal, the destruction or even the cure of desire" (254).

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Goldhill, 252.

<sup>160</sup> Goldhill, 254.

Goldhill believes that the doubleness of the last two lines lies in ποιμαίνειν, a verb which elsewhere implies “‘tend’, ‘care for’, ‘nourish,’” in metaphorical contexts.<sup>161</sup> This meaning *could* be operative here, but even if we use this metaphorical definition for ποιμαίνειν, the phrase does not imply, as Goldhill later suggests, that Polyphemus is “maintaining, even creating, his love.”<sup>162</sup> When a shepherd tends his flock, he guides it in the right direction, and it is most likely this sort of benevolent control that Polyphemus exerts upon his ἔρωσ by singing the song of the Muses (μουσείδων).

To demonstrate that Polyphemus has not definitely been cured by the poem’s end, Goldhill has underemphasized the last line of the poem. This line reveals that Polyphemus’ song, while not necessarily curing him, *eases* his lovesickness rather than compounding it. Theocritus tells us that Polyphemus “fared more easily” (ῥᾶον δὲ διᾶγ’) by singing than if he had paid gold, presumably to a doctor.<sup>163</sup> This phrase repeats his description of Polyphemus’ song in line 7, where he suggests that the Cyclops “fared most easily” (ῥαίιστα διᾶγ’) by discovering the song of the Muses. While other terms may carry possible double meanings, it is hard to imagine that “faring more easily” could refer to anything but the easing of Polyphemus’ sickness, especially given the large number of passages in the Hippocratic corpus which use ῥᾶον to indicate an improvement in the patient’s condition.<sup>164</sup>

Theocritus’ repetition of the imperfect tense further supports the idea that Polyphemus directs his love in the proper direction over time. Polyphemus “fared more easily

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> Goldhill, 258.

<sup>163</sup> Gow, II.220; Hunter, 243.

<sup>164</sup> See note 144 above for instances of ῥᾶον in the Hippocratic Corpus.

(ῥάιστα διᾶγ', 81), not in a single, completed performance, but in the imperfect which allows the possibility of repeated action. Similarly, Theocritus uses the imperfect tense of the verb ἔποιμαίνω (80) in conjunction with a present participle (μουσίσδων, 81) indicating habitual behavior rather than an isolated instance of song. Theocritus likewise has used the imperfect tense and present participles in lines 13 and 18 when he describes Polyphemus singing (ἄειδών, ἄειδε). Theocritus, thus, may suggest that Polyphemus fared more easily by *repeatedly* singing this song, or one like it, to himself.<sup>165</sup>

The language of closing frame of *Idyll* 11 reveals that Polyphemus improves his condition by singing even if he does not fully “cure” himself. Theocritus compares the singer to a doctor, demonstrating that Polyphemus can “shepherd,” or perhaps “direct,” his own love. Goldhill rejects the conclusion that Polyphemus has “cured” his love, instead arguing for the doubleness of the song.<sup>166</sup> However, the diction of the last line makes it unlikely that Polyphemus worsens his sickness; the “drug” of the Muses need not *cure* but it almost certainly *eases* lovesickness. As Theocritus creates a humorous image for his audience by “making a bestial monster the example of the curing power of poetry,”<sup>167</sup> he affirms the ameliorative effect of song on the mind (φρένας, 72).

In *Idyll* 11, Theocritus’ depiction of Polyphemus singing to ease his lovesickness demonstrates that the beneficial effect of song on the mind of the listener spans the Greek

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<sup>165</sup> Holtsmark and Erbse suggest that Polyphemus eventually cured himself by attaining self-enlightenment over time (see note 156). Unlike Holtsmark and Erbse I am not arguing that Polyphemus’ question to himself at line 72 demonstrates that Polyphemus’ song “brings the singer to self-awareness” (Holtsmark, 253). Rather, I follow Goldhill who points out that Polyphemus does not necessarily “change his mind” (Goldhill, 252). Polyphemus may, nonetheless, improve his condition by directing his love, as a shepherd directs his sheep, in the proper direction.

<sup>166</sup> Goldhill, 258.

<sup>167</sup> Goldhill, 258.

poetic tradition. The Cyclops need not cure himself with song by the end of *Idyll* 11 to correspond to a tradition which attributes to song the power to soothe the mind. In fact, earlier models for Polyphemus such as Achilles do not “cure” their minds, but rather use song as a temporary relief.<sup>168</sup> Theocritus adapts the traditional portrayal of song as therapy to his developing genre of bucolic. Polyphemus “shepherds”/“soothes” (ποιμαίνειν) his love and describes his love in terms which reinforce his position as a rustic singer when he tells Galatea she is “whiter than cream cheese” (19) and “more skittish than a calf” (20). These rustic comparisons mark the Cyclops as boorish and unrefined, which makes it all the more striking that his song eases his mind, just as the songs of earlier poets soothe the minds of their audiences.

Though it does not necessarily represent the entire genre, *Idyll* 11 reveals that song serves as a palliative for the mind in bucolic poetry in some instances. Theocritus thus reveals that song continues to appear as a treatment for the troubled mind throughout the Greek poetic tradition. While the nature of the pain and the genre of song may vary, poets consistently use medical metaphor and medical comparisons to elucidate the therapeutic effect of song.

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<sup>168</sup> Achilles “soothes” his mind at *Iliad* 9.186 and 9.189, but after this performance he rage and grief still prevent him from returning to battle (see Chapter 1). Cf. also Pindar *Pythian* 3 in which Pindar does not *cure* Hieron with song, but offers him consolation and advice (see Chapter 2).

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

As I began my research, I set out to explore how Pindar and Theocritus use medical metaphors to support a metaphorical structure within which song is regarded as having the ability to “cure” emotional anguish. After taking the effects of song in Homer and Hesiod into consideration, it was necessary to adjust this initial question. As we have seen in the past three chapters, songs in Greek poetry are imagined to have a therapeutic effect on the mind of an audience, but to say that they are “curative” implies that there is, in fact, a cure for emotional distress. Instead it is more useful to think of songs as “soothing” in the sense that they lessen anxiety, rather than fully and permanently eliminating emotional troubles.

The claims I have made about the Greek poetic tradition are based on only four authors and three genres of poetry: early hexameter (heroic and theogonic), epinician, and bucolic. We have seen that Pindar and Theocritus use medical metaphor differently—the one reaffirming the victor’s place in his community, the other playfully mocking his friend, the physician Nicias, while simultaneously revealing the persistence of a trope in Greek poetry. This sampling demonstrates the continuity of the analgesic song through the centuries, but several genres, most notably tragedy and comedy, have been overlooked due to the scope of this study. The persistence of the conventional soothing song from epic to bucolic nevertheless opens many questions for further investigation. For instance, do the tragic and the comic poets use medical language to describe song and performance? Do soothing songs lessen

different types of pain or social conflict as political climates change? Considering Pindar's self-association with Asclepius, do the tragedians and comedians also portray themselves, or perhaps their singing characters, as healers of the community, the city, the league of cities, the Greek people (in the fourth century during the struggle with King Philip for instance)?

Particularly in Chapter Three, but also to an extent in the first two chapters, this thesis has considered Greek medical practices and medical treatises as comparative sources which reveal that poets use technical medical language to describe song. While the similarity between poetic language and medical language suggests borrowing of medical language for use in poetry, it would also be worth investigating the extent to which medical writings evolve out of a poetic tradition and thus share their origins with the literary tradition. In other words, how are Hippocrates and his followers influenced by earlier and by contemporary works of literature which use the medical metaphor to describe song? This would be particularly illuminating for further study of Theocritus, a poet who negotiates not only the changing literary tradition but who also makes use of medical terminology which is itself evolving in the early third century when Theocritus wrote. At that time the medical center on Cos, where men like Nicias, at once a poet and a doctor, were educated, was thriving.<sup>169</sup> During this period men studied medicine as well as philosophy and literature at the Lyceum in Athens and the Museum at Alexandria was an intellectual center for philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers, artists, poets, and physicians.<sup>170</sup> The passages from the Hippocratic corpus cited in Chapter Three evidence medical language that would likely have been standard by the time Theocritus wrote. Nonetheless, medical techniques were continuously advancing alongside

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<sup>169</sup> Longrigg, 177-180.

<sup>170</sup> Longrigg, *ibid.*



literary innovations in centers like the Lyceum and the Museum at Alexandria and a consideration of contemporary medical thought and writings would be revealing for the study of poetry by later authors.<sup>171</sup>

The above questions raised by this thesis have emerged from its central argument that both Pindar and Theocritus, like Homer and Hesiod before them, reveal the ability to alleviate emotional distress through song. Pindar and Theocritus depart from their predecessors specifically by comparing song to medicine, poet to doctor, and listener to patient, but they maintain the basic notion that song *soothes* rather than *cures*. Pindar's epinician odes, thus, promise no certain cure, but instead calm audiences with the hope of future κλέος. Listeners may heed the poet's palliative counsel that each man should live moderately according to his means, but their future still depends on fate and the will of the gods. Theocritus similarly marks poetry as a salve rather than an antidote for lovesickness or a final solution to the problem. Thus, the question debated by scholars for decades—"has Polyphemus been cured?"—may be misguided. Instead, it may be more fruitful to ask: how does Polyphemus' song fit into the tradition of healing songs that come before him? As this thesis has attempted to demonstrate, Theocritus places Polyphemus in a tradition of listeners who never expect to be fully "cured" by song. Song offers Polyphemus, like Hieron in *Pythian* 1 and *Pythian* 3 and Achilles in the *Iliad*, no promise of a cure but it provides temporary relief from pain and lessening of emotional anguish.

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<sup>171</sup> Unfortunately we only have fragments of the two most eminent Alexandrian physicians of the time, Herophilus of Chalcedon and Erasistratus of Ceos. Nonetheless, much of their work has been preserved by later authors so a study would be possible (Longrigg, 181-182).

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