

THE ROMAN ELEGISTS, SICK GIRLS, AND THE *SOTERIA*

In his very valuable study of generic patterns in ancient poetry Francis Cairns assigns Propertius 2.28, [Tib.] 3.10 (4.4), and (tentatively) Ovid *Am.* 2.13 to the genre *Soteria*,¹ that is works of congratulation and thanksgiving on the recovery from illness (or rescue from danger) of a friend, and he sees the resemblances between the poems as due to the elegists' attempts to produce 'dramatized' examples of the genre, with the situation developing from the girl's illness at the beginning of the poem to her recovery at the end (Francis Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1972), pp.153–7). Cairns's arguments and interpretation of the poems should, I feel, be scrutinized carefully, especially since his classification of the poems has been accepted recently without demur by at least one scholar (Jennifer Moore-Blunt 'Catullus XXXI and Ancient Generic Composition', *Erano* 72 (1974), 118 and n.50).

That the poems are remarkably similar nobody would deny. All three poets represent the girls as seriously ill, close to death, and offer prayers for their recovery. Apart from this basic similarity of situation a number of smaller motives recur, as we shall see, in the three poems. What is at issue here is the reason for the close resemblances between the poems. Are the three poets conforming, more or less independently of each other, to a generic pattern, as Cairns implies, or are Ovid and the author of [Tib.] 3.10 (4.4) directly indebted to Propertius for the theme and their treatment of it? I propose to examine briefly each of the poems concerned and then turn to this important question which Cairns's discussion has raised.

The first poem, chronologically, is Propertius 2.28; it is also the most complex. Commentators have argued whether it is a single poem, or a number of poems, because Book 2 is fraught with textual problems and the situation depicted by 2.28 appears to change at various points.² Now, however, it is generally agreed (despite Barber's division of it into three parts) that it is a single poem employing the internal dramatic development of which Propertius was so fond. The degree of dramatic development is, it is true, much greater than elsewhere in Propertius, involving as it does three time changes, but Margaret Hubbard, following Godolphin,³ has correctly noted that Propertius' readers, acquainted with the many dramatic developments of the *Mime*, would 'not be overperplexed if an elegiac poet presented them with different phases of a single situation'.⁴ So at

¹ As the *Soteria* necessarily presupposes recovery from the illness, Ovid, *Am.* 2.13, will not properly conform, since Corinna is still ill at the poem's conclusion. Cairns therefore argues that 'the concluding cure [is] omitted in accordance with the principles of omission (sc. of one or more of the genre's primary elements)' (Cairns, p.157).

² On the textual problems of Book 2, see now Margaret Hubbard, *Propertius* (London, 1974), pp.41 ff. For an excellent discussion of 2.28 from a 'unitarian' viewpoint see Hubbard, pp.47 ff.: see also F. R. B. Godolphin, 'The Unity of Certain

Elegies of Propertius', *AJP* 55 (1934), 62–6, R. E. White, 'The Structure of Propertius 2.28. Dramatic Unity', *TAPA* 89 (1958), 245–61. For the 'separatists' viewpoint, see Karl Barwick, 'Catullus c. 68 und eine Kompositionsform der römischen Elegie', *WJA* 2 (1947), 8–9, U. Knoche, 'Gedanken zur Interpretation von Propertius Gedicht 2.28', *Miscellanea Properziana* (Assisi, 1957), 49–70.

³ Op. cit. (previous note), pp.65–6.

⁴ Margaret Hubbard, op. cit., p.53. The further argument put forward by Knoche (op. cit., p.54) that Propertius would

35 we must suppose some time has elapsed, for in 35–46 the sick Cynthia's condition has apparently worsened and the distraught poet avows that he will either live or die with her.¹ At 47 we are to assume another time-lapse, for Propertius is now addressing Persephone. In 47–58 Cynthia is no better, but still alive. Finally, in 59–64, she is healed, and Propertius bids her repay her vows to Diana and Isis.²

The poem is perhaps not as serious as many scholars have assumed. The switch from the weather to Cynthia's broken oaths as the reason for the illness (3–8) is surely not to be taken seriously (*aphrodisioi borkoi* are, traditionally, not binding³), nor is the pompous address to *formosae* in 13–14; and perhaps in 27 f. a hint is given of a more plausible (though not seriously stated) reason for the illness, namely Juno's anger over Jupiter's love for Cynthia.⁴ At 45–6 the picture of Cynthia sitting before Jupiter's feet is, as Margaret Hubbard suggests (op. cit., p. 56), meant to recall Homer's description of Thetis' imprecations to Zeus (*Iliad* 1.500 ff.), and this is at variance with the notion of a serious poem. The humour of the last two lines, moreover, is unmistakable: Cynthia is to repay her vows to Isis (now a goddess, once a cow) and this, the poet complains, will keep Cynthia from him again. 'The result of these successful appeals to various deities', Margaret Hubbard comments (p. 57), 'is to exclude the poet ten nights more from his mistress's bed'.⁵

not, in a prayer to Jupiter, go on to address, as he does, Persephone and Hades (47–8) is circular in that it assumes that the poem is *in toto* a prayer to Jupiter.

¹ In 35–8 Propertius is apparently resorting to magic as a cure for Cynthia. However, H. J. Rose ('On Propertius 2.28.35–8', *Ut pictura poesis: Studia Latina P. J. Enk Oblata* (Leiden, 1955), pp. 167–73) has argued that the magic used here always has erotic purposes and is never associated with healing. He may well be right in his suggestion that the lines do not belong to the poem. Margaret Hubbard's suggestion that Propertius' magic is intended to cure Jupiter of his love for Cynthia (the real reason for her sickness) is ingenious but perhaps somewhat far-fetched (Hubbard, op. cit., p. 55).

² This is the structure suggested by R. E. White, who rightly argues that Cynthia is not represented as cured until 59–60 since '47–58 throughout gives the appearance of a plea for something unattained rather than of thanks for something granted' (White, op. cit., p. 257).

³ Cf. A.P. 5.6.3–4 (Callim.), Plato, *Symp.* 183 B, *Philebus* 65 c, Ovid, *Ars.* 1.631–6, *Am.* 1.8.85–6, Tib. 1.4.21–6. The theme goes back at least to Hesiod; cf. Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 2.5.

⁴ This has been suggested by Margaret Hubbard (op. cit., p. 54), who wishes to see the transition to this new 'diagnosis' made in the *exempla* of 177 ff. The difficulty

with this is that while Io (17–18), Callisto (23–4), and Semele (27) (who, according to Hubbard, though 'not formally in the list of *exempla* of course belongs to it') are examples of women with whom Zeus had affairs, Ino (19–20) and Andromeda (21–2) are not. Rather than doctor the text, it seems better to assume, with Camps (Vol. 2, p. 188), that 'the point being made in all this passage is that the heroines received, after much suffering, rich recompense.' The suggestion of Zeus' love for Cynthia as a cause of the illness then begins at 27–8 'narrabis Semelae, quo sis formosa periclo/credet et illa, suo docta puella malo', the association of Cynthia's plight with that of Semele being made clear not only by the suggestion that Semele will believe Cynthia because of her own experiences but also by the expression 'suo docta puella malo' (for by 2.28 we have become accustomed to the idea of Cynthia as a *docta puella*: cf. 1.7.11, 2.11.6, 2.13.22; also 2.3.20). It could, however, be argued that the new 'diagnosis' is to be thought of as arising from the last of the preceding *exempla*, Callisto (23–4).

⁵ Reading *ei mihi* with Damsté (accepted by Barber). Cairns argues that the ending of [Tib.] 3.10 (4.4) is 'an excellent argument for retaining the *et mihi* of the *mss.* . . . with its erotic implications' (Cairns, p. 156). However, as we shall see, the end of [Tib.] 3.10 (4.4) is addressed to Apollo, not Cerinthus (as Cairns believes), and is not erotic. Hubbard seems to me to be right in

The author of [Tib.] 3.10 (4.4) varies the theme by 'objectivizing' the situation. Instead of praying for his own girl's recovery, he represents himself as a spectator, a third person, observing the relationship of Cerinthus and Sulpicia, who is now sick.¹ The technique is a clear borrowing from Tib. 1.8.49 ff. where Tibullus is the spectator in the Marathus-Pholoe affair (in particular note the parallelism between Tibullus' request to Pholoe 'neu Marathum torque: puero quae gloria victo est?' (Tib. 1.8.49) and Pseudo-Tibullus' request to Apollo 'neu iuvenem torque, metuit qui fata puellae' ([Tib.] 3.10 (4.4). 11)).² The poem opens with an address to Phoebus, and in the first ten lines conforms closely to the conventions of the prayer.³ At 11 Cerinthus is introduced. Apollo is asked not to 'torture' him, and Tibullus informs the god that the young man is making innumerable vows on his girl's behalf, though in his desperation these sometimes turn to *aspera verba* against the gods (13–14). Since the interpretation of the rest of the poem depends upon the transposition of a couplet, I quote the remainder of the poem, in full, as it stands in the manuscripts:

- 15 pone metum, Cerinthe: deus non laedit amantes.
 tu modo semper ama: salva puella tibi est.
 at nunc tota tua est, te solum candida secum
 cogitat et frustra credula turba sedet.
 Phoebe, fave: laus magna tibi tribuetur in uno
 20 corpore servato restituisse duos.
 nil opus est fletu: lacrimis erit aptius uti,
 si quando fuerit tristior illa tibi.
 iam celeberrime, iam laetus eris, cum debita reddet
 certatim sanctis laetus uterque focus.
 25 tunc te felicem dicet pia turba deorum,
 optabunt artes et sibi quisque tuas.

Most editors have followed the *deteriores* in placing 21–2 after 17,⁴ but Cairns has deemed such a transposition unnecessary. He argues (p.155) that at line 15 there occurs, as in Propertius 2.28, a time-lapse, for in the following line we see the reason for the poet's assurance to Cerinthus that the god does not harm lovers—Sulpicia is now well again ('salva puella tibi est'). In 19–20 Phoebus is addressed again and asked to favour the lovers, and in 21 ff. the poet turns yet again to Cerinthus, telling him to save his tears for some future occasion when

claiming that 'the rueful *diminuendo* [sc. of 61–2] restores the mood of the opening lines' (Hubbard, p.57).

¹ Constance Carrière (*The Poems of Tibullus* (Indiana, 1968), p.101) sees it as a 'first-person' poem, with Sulpicia praying, in the third person, to Apollo for herself ('Come near, Apollo, come and make me well' she translates the first line). Nothing in the poem suggests that it should be so interpreted.

² On Pseudo-Tibullus' verbal parallels with the other elegiac poets in [Tib.] 3.8–12 (4.2–6) see Esther Bréguet, *Le Roman de Sulpicia: Elegies IV.2–12 du Corpus Tibullianum* (Geneva, 1946),

pp.267–75. This particular example, however, is overlooked by Bréguet.

³ The prayer-formulae of the opening lines require no comment, but as far as I am aware it has not been observed that the wish for the trouble to be directed elsewhere in 7–8 ('et quodcumque Mali est et quidquid triste timeamus/in pelagus rapidis evehat amnis equis') is paralleled in other prayers: see Nisbet and Hubbard on *Odes* 1.28.27 and note especially *Orph. H.* 36.16 (quoted by Nisbet and Hubbard) πέμποις δ' εἰς ὀρέων κεφαλὰς νοῦσους τε καὶ ἄλγη.

⁴ On the transposition see J. J. Hartman, 'De Tibullo Poeta', *Mnemosyne* 39 (1911), 381–3.

he will be rejected by Sulpicia. 'His immediate prospects', Cairns (p.156) comments, 'are joyful (23–26): the pair will pay their *soteria* to the gods and Cerinthus will be envied for his fortune in love by the crowds at the temple'. This interpretation of the poem is crucial for Cairns's argument about the nature of the sickness theme in elegy (discussed below) and should be scrutinized carefully.

Cairns's interpretation, and his argument for retaining 21–2 in their original position, depends upon his interpretation of 'salva puella tibi est' (16). This, he maintains, reveals that Sulpicia, ill at the start of the poem, is now healed. But the words are surely an assurance to Cerinthus by the poet that his girl is safe from death, or that she will be healed (with the present used, as often, of an action about to be started¹). That the poet is not saying that Sulpicia is already healed seems clear from 19–20 where the poet asks Apollo to be propitious,² assuring him that great praise will accrue to him if the two lovers are saved by the rescue of Sulpicia. In 15–16 the poet has, like a good friend, been assuring Cerinthus of his girl's recovery even though he is not convinced himself that she will recover.

That being so, the transition from 16 to 17 is extremely awkward. After saying 'Just keep on loving her—she's going to be all right' the poet would hardly add 'but now she's all yours.' However, the transposition of 21–2 to follow 15–16 produces excellent sense. After assuring Cerinthus that his girl will recover (15–16), the poet goes on to say: 'Don't cry: save your tears for the time when she rejects you (21–2),³ but at the moment she is completely yours and it is your rivals who are rejected (17–18)⁴ (so, the clear implication is, you need not cry now).' Then (19) Apollo is addressed again (with the formulaic *fave*⁵), and remains the addressee till the end of the poem. Accordingly the last four lines (23–6) are addressed to the deity and not, as Cairns suggests, to Cerinthus (whom the gods will consider *felix*⁶). Apollo is told by the poet that he will be famous and happy ('iam celeber, iam laetus eris' (23)) when the lovers try to outdo each other (*certatim* (24), in repaying their vows, he will be the envy of heaven, where all the other gods will wish to possess his healing powers (*artes* (26))).

Thus the poem does not, as Cairns maintains, develop dramatically. It is a prayer made by Pseudo-Tibullus on Cerinthus' behalf to Apollo at a particular point during Sulpicia's illness. Lines 1–14 are an address, using the conventional formulae of the prayer, to Apollo; 15–16, 21–2, 17–18 (in that order) are a six-line aside to Cerinthus; 19–26 resume and complete the prayer to Apollo.

Once again the poem is possibly less serious than has been believed (see, e.g., Bréguet, op. cit., pp.305 ff.). The highly stylized and formal address to Apollo

¹ See Kühner-Stegman 1.119.7.

² 'Phoebe, fave.' For *fave* in identical circumstances (i.e. while the girl is still ill) cf. Ovid, *Am.* 2.13.21.

³ For *tristis* in this erotic sense, cf. Prop. 1.6.9, 1.10.21, Tib. 1.8.28. See also René Pichon, *Index Verborum Amatoriorum* (Paris, 1902), s.v. *triste* (p.283).

⁴ 'Frustra credula turba sedet' clearly refers to the rivals of Cerinthus who are now *exclusi amatores*: see Hartman, op. cit., p.382, who comments. 'nihil unquam legi festivius: adsidet Sulpiciae

foribus amatorum turba, sed frustra credunt miseri unquam sibi apertum iri ianuam'. For *credula turba* cf. Ovid, *Rem. Am.* 686.

⁵ For *fave* in prayers, see G. Appel *De Romanorum Precationibus* (Giessen, 1909), p.125.

⁶ *Felix*, Cairns notes (p.252 n.31), sometimes has an erotic meaning; cf. Pichon op. cit., s.v. *felix*, to which Cairns refers. The point is, however, that *felix* only takes its erotic colouring from the context and will not impart an erotic flavour to an otherwise non-erotic context.

(1–2) is followed by a humorous reason for his epiphany—he'll not find putting his hands on a beautiful girl unpleasant—and after the second urgent request for the god's presence (9) the picture of Apollo, the healing god, coming with his bag of medicines¹ and magic spells may be intentionally humorous (9–10).² Surely we are not to take seriously the race to repay the vows in 23–4 or the jealousy of the gods who, after seeing this flurry of devotion, will all want Apollo's *artes* themselves (25–6).

In Ovid's sickness poem (*Am.* 2.13) Corinna is seriously ill after attempting an abortion (1–2). Ovid's anger at her action takes second place to his fear for her safety, for which he feels a special concern since he was—or, at least he believes he was—responsible for her pregnancy (3–6). The prayer begins at 7: Ovid begs Isis to spare Corinna, and by doing so to spare himself as well (7–16). Corinna has, the poet assures the goddess, been a loyal devotee (17–18). At 19 he turns to Ilithyia³ to ask for help, promising votive offerings with a *titulus* in return (19–26). Finally, Ovid warns his girl to make sure this be her last attempt at such action.

The poem is different from Propertius' and Pseudo-Tibullus' in that Ovid alone specifies the nature of his girl's illness, and in choosing an abortion as the cause of the malady Ovid provides himself with the opportunity of new approaches to the theme. He is able to represent himself in a dilemma, torn between fear for Corinna's safety and moral indignation at her action (1–6), and he can even in this situation add a touch of humour ('sed tamen aut ex me conceperat—aut ego credo; /est mihi pro facto saepe quod esse potest' (5–6)). He can also devote the following poem (*Am.* 2.14) to a discussion of the moral aspects of abortion,⁴ returning to the 'personal' situation (that is, Corinna's illness) at the end (41–4). Max Heinemann may have been right in his conclusion that Ovid is here developing a stock rhetorical theme.⁵ We find the theme of abortion—with arguments against the practice—in two late Greek prose-authors. In Theophylactus, *Ep.* 30, Rhodine upbraids Calliope for her πανουργία in doing away with her unborn children. What is particularly interesting about this letter is that Rhodine, like Ovid, uses the example of Medea, claiming (again like Ovid) that Medea's crime was less heinous than Calliope's since Medea was driven to it by her husband:

τῆς Κολχικῆς Μηδείας ἀπηνεστέρους ἀπεργάζη τοὺς φόνους. παιδοκτονεῖν ἐκείνην ἐδίδασκεν ἀγνωμονῶν ὁ ὁμόυγος τὴν εὐεργέτω καὶ τῶν ἀγώνων τὴν σύμμαχον, σὺ δὲ διὰ τὴν τοῦ κάλλους εὐπρέπειαν μυρίας συμφορὰς ἀπεργάζη, πορνίδιον.
(Theophylactus *Ep.* 30.7–12)

¹ On *sapores*, see Bréguet, op. cit., p.186 n.1, who rightly states 'ce qu'il [Apollo] apporte avec lui, ce sont des moyens de guérir: son pouvoir personnel (*medicæ manus*), des remèdes (*sapores*) et des formules magiques (*cantus*).'

² It is, however, true, as Bréguet notes (p.309), that Apollo is similarly equipped in the *Soteria Rutili Gallici* (Statius, *Silvæ* 1.4.60 ff.).

³ Both Isis and Ilithyia are, of course, particularly appropriate in the circumstances, Isis for her associations with the demi-monde and Ilithyia as a goddess of childbirth.

⁴ On this see W. J. Watts, 'Ovid, the Law

and Roman Society on Abortion', *Acta Classica* 16 (1973), 89–101. Watts concludes that the poems are 'neither effective as pamphlets . . . nor readable as literature . . . but they are interesting as documents in the history of ideas.' This seems rather hard on Ovid. Watts, moreover, seems unaware of the parallels for Ovid's anti-abortion stance in Theophylactus and Chariton, which may well suggest that this was a rhetorical theme and that Ovid's arguments were perhaps derived therefrom.

⁵ Max Heinemann, *Epistulae Amatoriae quomodo cobaereant cum Elegiis Alexandrinis* (Diss. Berlin, 1919), p.70.

Cf. Ovid, *Am.* 2.14.29–31:

Colchida respersam puerorum sanguine culpant,
atque sua caesum matre queruntur Ityn:
utraque saeva parens, sed tristibus utraque causis
iactura socii sanguinis ulta virum.

Furthermore, in Chariton's romance, Callirhoe uses the same argument when she is deliberating whether or not to abort the child she is carrying:

πάλιν δὲ μετενόει καὶ πως ἔλεος αὐτὴν τοῦ κατὰ γαστρὸς εἰσῆει. βουλευή
τεκτοτονήσαι, πασῶν ἀσεβεστάτη, καὶ Μηδείας λαμβάνεις λογισμούς. ἀλλὰ καὶ
τῆς Σκυθίδος ἀγριωτέρα δόξεις. ἐκείνη μὲν γὰρ ἐχθρόν εἶχε τὸν ἄνδρα, σὺ δὲ
τὸ Χαιρέου τέκνον θέλεις ἀποκτεῖναι . . . (Chariton 2.9.15–20)

The three poems, then, are essentially different. Propertius' is a dramatic representation of the different stages in Cynthia's illness; Pseudo-Tibullus' is a prayer made by the poet, during the girl's illness, as a 'third party' on the lover's behalf; Ovid's is a combination of a rhetorical theme and a prayer to save the sick girl. And yet there are some striking internal similarities between the poems, beyond the fact that all three poets pray for sick girls:

(1) Both Pseudo-Tibullus and Propertius claim that the girl's beauty is a recommendation for her restitution to health by the deity: 'tam formosa tuum mortua crimen erit' (Prop. 2.28.2); 'nec te iam, Phoebe, pigebit/formosae medicas applicuisse manus' ([Tib.] 3.10 (4.4).4). Ovid only claims on Corinna's behalf that she 'digna est quam iubeas muneris esse tui' (*Am.* 2.13.22).

(2) All three poets make the observation that the preservation of the girl's life is actually the preservation of two lives, the girl's and the lover's.¹

si non unius, quaeso, miserere duorum!
vivam si vivet; si cadet illa cadam.
(Prop. 2.28.41–2)

Phoebe, fave: laus magna tibi tribuetur in uno
corpore servato restituisse duos.
([Tib.] 3.10 (4.4).19–20)

Huc adhibe vultus, et in una parce duobus.²
(Ovid, *Am.* 2.13.15)

(3) Both Propertius and Ovid claim that, on the recovery of the girls, they will offer poetry to the deities concerned:

pro quibus optatis sacro me carmine damno:
scribam ego 'per magnum est salva puella Iovem.'
(Prop. 2.28.43–4)

¹ On this theme see Esther Bréguet, 'In una parce duobus: thème et clichés,' *Hommages à L. Herrman* (Collection Latomus 44 (1960)), 205–14. Bréguet traces the theme back to the speech of

Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*.

² Ovid was obviously taken by the theme; cf. also *Her.* 11.60, 20. 233–4; *Met.* 9.780, 11.388, and especially 3.473 (an ingenious application of it to

adiciam titulum: 'servata Naso Corinna.'

tu modo fac titulo muneribusque Iocum.

(Ovid, *Am.* 2.13.25–6)

(It is noticeable, however, that Ovid's 'servata Naso Corinna' is a *titulus* which is to accompany the real votive offerings ('numera vota' (24)), whereas Propertius' offering actually consists of verse. Presumably Ovid felt that poetry alone was not a sufficiently enticing *munus* for Isis.). Pseudo-Tibullus, since he is a spectator, simply says that Cerinthus offers 'vota . . . vix numeranda' for Sulpicia's recovery ([Tib.] 3.10 (4.4).12).

Cairns maintains that 'it is more than possible that Ovid meant [*Am.* 2.13] to be understood as a dramatized *Soteria* of the same sort as those of Propertius and Pseudo-Tibullus' (Cairns, p.157). Were that so, the similarities between the three poems could be explained, presumably, in generic terms. But are the poems 'dramatized *Soteria*'? The answer, I think, must be no.

We have, as Cairns himself states, no established rhetorical formula for the *Soteria*, and we have, moreover, only one clear example of the *Soteria* in poetry, Statius' *Soteria Rutili Gallici* (*Silvae* 1.4). Cairns does, it is true, assign to the genre Catullus 44, Horace, *Odes* 2.17 and 3.8, and Himerius, *Orat.* 45 (α λαλιὰ εἰς τὸ ὑγιαίνειν τὸν ἐταῖρον),¹ but these are so very different in form and content that the attribution of them to the genre does not help at all our understanding of them (indeed, even a comparison of Himerius, *Orat.* 45 with Statius, *Silvae* 1.4—for both are 'confessed' *Soteria*—will fail to produce any generic pattern or common *topoi* which will help us understand the elegiac poems²). Now a comparison of Propertius 2.28 with Statius, *Silvae* 1.4 will reveal one fundamental difference. Statius' poem is from the start a celebration of Gallicus' cure (1–37), and the description of the concern and prayers for Gallicus while he was ill is seen as a past event later in the poem (38–57).³ Propertius' poem is of a very different structure, being almost a 'running commentary' on the course of Cynthia's illness, with recovery attained only in the last four lines (59–62). Cairns comments (p.154):

'The fact that the *Soteria* is eucharistic and presupposes a cure implies that the illness and cure will normally be narrated in examples of the genre as past occurrences. Thus the logic of the *Soteria* guarantees that the dramatic representation of illness, prayer and recovery found in Propertius 2.28 is an abnormal and sophisticated mode of handling the generic material.'

Cairns seems to be arguing that Propertius' poem belongs to the genre *Soteria* because it involves not only Cynthia's illness but also her recovery from it: we realize when we reach the final four lines that what we have been reading all along is a *Soteria*. This seems to me unacceptable. If we must apply the term *Soteria* to 2.28 we would more accurately describe the poem as a dramatic monologue with (to meet Cairns halfway) a hint of the *Soteria* in its last four lines. Furthermore, Propertius' poem is the only one which by any stretch of the

the story of Narcissus).

¹ Cairns, pp.73–4.

² The only *topos* I have been able to find occurring in the elegiac poems and any one of the *Soteria* listed by Cairns is the 'in una parce duobus' theme, which appears (albeit in a rather different form) at Himerius, *Orat.* 45.2: μετεῖχον γάρ, ὡ φίλοι, τῶν πάθους

καὶ πρὸς τὴν νόσον ἐμεριζόμεν τῷ πόθῳ, καὶ μὴ καμνόντος τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν ἤλγουν δευρότερον.

³ So also Himerius 45.2 οὐκ οὐκ ἀπεικός καὶ ἡμᾶς τάξω πληρῶσαι τὴν πρέπουσαν καὶ μετὰ τὴν νόσον τοὺς ἔρωτας αὐθις διὰ μέλους ἀσπάσασθαι . . .

imagination can be regarded as related to the *Soteria*. Cairns's assignment of [Tib.] 3.10 (4.4) to the genre is dependent on his interpretation of 'salva puella tibi est' (16) as indicating a time lapse during which Sulpicia has recovered, and this, as we have seen, is not the case: when the poem ends, Sulpicia is still ill. The same is true of Ovid, *Am.* 2.13, and to claim that in this case 'the concluding cure [is] omitted in accordance with the principles of omission' (Cairns, p.157) is to beg the question.

That the coincidences between the poems are the result of the poets' conforming to the rules of a genre seems, in fact, less likely than the view that both the later poems are in large measure indebted to Propertius', that the theme and treatment of 2.28 were imitated both by Ovid and Pseudo-Tibullus. The source from which Propertius derived the idea of his mistress's illness and his own anxiety for her we do not know. Perhaps after using sick-visiting as a *Freundschaftsdienst* in 2.9,¹ Propertius decided to expand the theme into a whole poem. It is possible, too, and perhaps even likely, that the theme was suggested to him by Callimachus. The girl's illness and her lover's anxiety over it occur also in Aristaenetus (*Ep.* 1.10) and Ovid (*Her.* 20 and 21), both of whom are indebted to Callimachus' version of the story of Acontius and Cydippe in the third book of the *Aetia*.² This section of the *Aetia* appears to have enjoyed a special popularity (cf. Ovid, *Rem. Am.* 381–2) and to have provided the inspiration not only for Ovid *Her.* 20 and 21 and Aristaenetus *Ep.* 1.10 but also for the 'subjective' Propertius 1.18.³ It is to be noticed that both Propertius on the one hand and Ovid and Aristaenetus on the other emphasize the girl's broken oath and resulting divine vengeance as the cause of the illness: cf. Prop. 2.28.5 ff.; Ovid, *Her.* 20.107 ff.; Aristaenetus 1.10.71 ff. Cydippe has unwittingly sworn to marry Acontius and her inability to fulfil the oath aroused the wrath of Artemis who visited her with her illness. Cynthia, too, has not fulfilled her oath and is accordingly afflicted, the poet surmises, with a heaven-sent illness (5–8). This story in Callimachus' most famous work may well have influenced Propertius' treatment of the theme, if it did not suggest the theme to him, and Ovid and Pseudo-Tibullus followed Propertius.

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¹ See J. C. Yardley, 'Sick-Visiting in Roman Elegy', *Phoenix* 27 (1973), 283–8.

² For the remains of the story, see frs. 67–75 Pf. Fr. 74 Pf. seems to be from a soliloquy of Acontius on the subject of Cydippe's illness (λιμὸς ἐγὼ, τί δέ σοι

τόνδ' ἐπέθηκα φόβον;) See Pfeiffer ad loc. (1.76).

³ See Francis Cairns, 'Propertius 1.18 and Callimachus *Acontius and Cydippe*', *CR* N.S. 19 (1969), 131–4.