

MATTERS OF RECEPTION IN PASTORAL AMOEBAEAN CONTESTS

by

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(Under the Direction of Sarah Spence)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is chiefly concerned with a particular mode, or subgenre, of ancient pastoral poetry: the amoebaeon contest. Throughout this thesis, I explore the inherent tensions between competing herdsmen (young vs. old, student vs. teacher, or just poets of opposing aesthetics), and how judgments of victory and defeat affect the reading process. Through close readings of three contests – Theocritus’ *Idyll 5*, Vergil’s *Eclogue 7*, and Calpurnius’ *Eclogue 6* – I will explore how the songs of shepherds (and the traditions they represent) are transmitted or received within the imagined literary landscape of the *locus amoenus*.

INDEX WORDS: Pastoral, Bucolic, Amoebaeon Contest, Theocritus, Vergil, Calpurnius Siculus, Reception

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO GENRE, CONTESTS, AND *LOCUS***I. A Brief Definition of the Pastoral Genre**

The most rudimentary definition of pastoral poetry is any work that depicts herdsmen and “their activities in a country setting,” which is commonly referred to as the *locus amoenus* or “pleasant place.”¹ These “activities” are generally the care of livestock, singing, music playing, and contesting with one another.² The songs of herdsmen usually contain one of three themes: “the beauties and comforts of the countryside, the pleasures of music, and the joys and sorrows of love.”³ Further, insert first name at first occurrence Halperin states that the pastoral genre is typified “by oppositions, by the set of contrasts, express or implied” between the pastoral world and “other ways of life.”⁴ The chief opposition in pastoral poetry is to be found in the split between rustic and city life. The *locus* in which pastoral herdsmen reside is described as simple and pure; the landscape and all the plants and animals within it share in a highly stylized harmony. The glory of the pastoral *locus*, then, has as its antithesis in the urban landscape. Where the pastoral *locus* is tranquil, the urban *locus* is disruptive. Where pastoral love is painful but manageable, urban love -- as described in elegiac poetry -- is cruel and ruinous. That is not to say that the pastoral genre is without strife and conflict. In fact, one common mode of pastoral poetry is the amoebaeian contest that, as a rule, can only take place between two struggling herdsmen.

¹ Halperin (1983) 61. For the fully detailed definition, see Halperin (1983) 61-72.

² Halperin (1983) 61.

³ Coleman (1977) 8-9.

⁴ Halperin (1983) 65.

II. A Brief Definition of the Amoebaeian Contest

Amoebaeian contests take the form of an alternating “exchange of couplets” or lines between two feuding herdsmen.⁵ After a topic – usually a rustic or erotic one – is chosen, both singers contribute to it, trying to outdo one another in the process. The burden usually rests upon the second singer, who is obligated to “follow and try to cap the themes set by the first.”⁶ Before the contest can transpire, however, a judge may be appointed, and wagers are laid out by each singer. These wagers are typically humble, rustic items such as plants, livestock, or musical instruments. These items help to quell whatever strife arose both before and during the contest and to reintegrate the singers into their tranquil *locus*, turning them from competitors back into herdsmen. At the end of this “exchange of couplets,” one singer is appointed the victor, and he receives the gift promised to him.⁷

III. A Brief Definition of *Locus (Amoenus)*

Works of a single given genre can be said to *inhabit* a space common to them all. Since texts written under the rubric of a particular genre are constructed, in part, from other similar texts, the space common to them all results from interwoven tropes, meters (if poetic), and the arrangement of particular words or even phrases (to name but a few linking features). The bucolic / pastoral genre is a particularly fascinating genre because it depicts a singular and highly realized space for its speakers – the so-called *locus amoenus* (or “pleasant place”) which is

⁵ Hunter (1999) 6.

⁶ Hunter (1999) 6.

⁷ Hunter (1999) 6.

generally characterized by “shady rocks and leafy trees”⁸ and “the sound of cicadas and bees among the shrubs, a cool spring and a stream”⁹ as well as a variety of countrymen. Whether this *locus* is called Sicily or Arcadia, it is a *mise en scène* that is common to the herdsmen in Theocritus, Vergil, and Calpurnius Siculus. Not only do these three poets share a genre, and so are in dialogue with one another, their rustic poets, too, are in dialogue as they too share a common space in the *locus amoenus*. The spatial *locus* of bucolic / pastoral poetry thus is tied to the generic *locus*.

Theocritus’ poetry in the *Idylls* can be said to have an influence on the *Eclogues* of both Vergil and Calpurnius; furthermore, the poetry written by Theocritus’ herdsmen can be said to have a clear line of influence upon the herdsmen that populate the collections of Vergil and Calpurnius. Just as Theocritus, Vergil, and Calpurnius are avid readers of their literary forebears, so it would seem that their herdsmen are just as able readers (and critics) of the literary past. Over the course of this thesis, I employ the term *locus* less as a marker of the “pleasant landscape” than as an indication of this doubled literary world in the bucolic / pastoral genre – one that is common to the poets themselves and one that is common to the herdsmen in their works.

⁸ Coleman (1977) 7.

⁹ Coleman (1977) 7.

CHAPTER 2

RECEPTION IN THEOCRITUS' FIFTH *IDYLL*

Regardless of outcome, bucolic contests rarely, as a rule, begin peacefully. When we turn to Theocritus' fifth *Idyll*, the first proper contest in the pastoral tradition, we discover a *locus amoenus* fraught with strife. *Idyll 5* is the first poem in the collection to harness the dramatic power of an otherwise lowly dispute and turn it into the impetus for song.¹ Komatas and Lakon, goatherd and shepherd, come together (through circumstances unknown to the reader) and immediately make accusations of theft: Komatas accuses Lakon of stealing his goatskin (τό μευνάκος έχθές έκλεψεν, 2) and Lakon claims that Komatas stole his pipe (τόν μευ τάν σύριγγα πρόαν κλέψαντα Κομάταν, 4).

Theft is a crime that, from a literary standpoint, is rightful grounds for violence. In Homer, whose influence is palpable in the *Idylls*, this point is made clear in *Iliad* 1. Achilles states that he does not find the Trojans blameworthy (οὐ τί μοι αίτιοι είσιν) because οὐ γάρ πώποτ' έμάς βοῦς ήλασαν οὐδέ μεν ίππους (“they have not yet taken my cattle nor my horses,” 153-154).² Hesiod too, in *Works and Days* 161-165, describes the fourth generation of men going to war over the flocks of Oedipus (ώλεσε μαρναμένος μήλων ένεκ' Οίδιπόδαο) and for the sake of Helen (ές Τροίην άγαγών 'Ελένης ένεκ' ήυκόμοιο); the first example pertains to a Theban epic cycle lost to us, and the second example is quite clear.

¹ Exchange of insults is relatively common in Theocritus' mimetic *Idylls* (e.g. 4, 10, 14, and 15) but appears only once in his bucolic *Idylls*.

² In the same book, Achilles contemplates murdering Agamemnon at an assembly due to the imminent loss of Briseis. His decision to match property loss with physical violence is checked only by the sudden appearance of Athena: 188-200.

Livestock and women are important types of possessions “whose protection is paramount” and “whose loss, threatened or actual, most undermines any claim to distinction and prestige.”³ In the early epic tradition, then, theft of property is suitable grounds for full-scale warfare, untimely death, and long tracts of poetic narrative. Yet the Theocritean *locus*, vestiges of Homeric poetry notwithstanding, is anything but a venue for the violence or poetry belonging to the heroic tradition. Instead of physical violence, which has its place elsewhere, Komatas and Lakon turn to insults and then to an amoebaeon contest (in the presence of a judge, Morson), a non-heroic duel, which resolves the matter. However, the stolen items in question – a goatskin (*νάκος*) and a pipe (*σύριγγα*) – are never retrieved. In fact, the accusations of theft matter little to the outcome of the poem. They are relevant only because they drive the herdsmen to argue and then sing.

Homer cannot prepare us for Theocritus’ non-heroic depiction of loss (the mutual thefts), orderly dispute (singing contest under a judge’s supervision), and gain (prize awarded to the victor). However, the connection between theft, herding, and song can be found in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*. The initial description of the newborn Hermes runs:

καὶ τότε ἔγεινατο παῖδα πολύτροπον, αἰμυλομήτην,
ληιστῆρ’, ἐλατῆρα βοῶν
 (“then she [Maia] bore a child, of many turns, cunning, a thief, driver of cattle,” 13-14).

These lines show Hermes as the prototypical model of Theocritean bucolic singers.⁴ He is at once mischievous thief and simple herdsman: a trespasser of respectable behavior and a keeper of rustic tradition. This may help explain the behavior of Komatas and Lakon and other bucolic actors in the tradition, but what of the emphasis placed on words and their impact in the *locus amoenus*? When we look back to line 13, the first adjective to modify Hermes, our bucolic

³ Walcot (1979) 328.

⁴ Hermes is also the ruler of “flock-rich Arkadia” (*Ἀρκαδίας πολυμήλου*, 2) – an eventual non-Sicilian *locus* of Vergil’s *Eclogues*.

prototype, is *πολύτροπον* – an adjective that indicates intellectual cunning over physical prowess.⁵ Just how one *thinks* is only half of *πολύτροπος*; just how one *speaks* is the other half.⁶

The poet informs us at line 17 that Hermes, shortly after his birth, will eventually play the role of rustic musician and singer: *μέσῳ ἡματι ἐγκιθάριζεν* (“at mid-day he played the lyre”).⁷ Hermes will go on to steal the cattle of his brother Apollo in the evening (*ἑσπέριος*, 18). Where these temporal markers set up the narrative progression in the *Hymn*, they serve as a chronological prescription for action in the bucolic *locus*. Hermes creates a template for bucolic song *μέσῳ ἡματι*, when the sun is at its peak, when its heat is most evident: thus, perhaps, the importance of seeking shade (typically found under trees) in the bucolic tradition.⁸ The bucolic landscape (and, by extension, genre) is one that exists solely during the day. Daylight can then be seen figuratively as the only poetic space available to the poet. In *Idyll 5*, we read the daytime contest between Komatas and Lakon first hand; their acts of theft, however, are alleged, receiving no extensive narrative treatment from the poet. Depictions of theft, the Homeric *Hymn*

⁵ Heubeck et al. (1988) 69: *πολύτροπον* has a troubled definition in antiquity but is generally taken to mean “turning many ways, of many devices, ingenious” or even “much wandering.” After Homer, “writers evidently understood it to mean ‘ingenious’ (e.g. *h. Merc.* 13, 439 . . .).”

⁶ The literary figure that truly exhibits such mental and rhetorical skill is, of course, Odysseus. Examples of the hero’s rhetorical successes abound in the *Odyssey*. In the Latin tradition, the proof of Odysseus’ cunning generally lies in his victory over Ajax for the armor of Achilles. Cf. *Armorum Iudicium* by Pacuvius and Accius respectively; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.1-398.

⁷ *ἐγκιθαρίζω* translates, more literally, as “to play the harp *among*.” This, of course, implies an audience for Hermes’ performance. It is likely that the implied audience consists of the gods mentioned in the previous line. Whether or not this is a satisfactory answer, the verb suggests that Hermes’ action (the performative precursor of bucolic song) is dialogic instead of monologic. (One does not sing in the manner of Hermes, bandying about insults like young men, without an audience or addressee.)

⁸ Papaghelis (1989) 54-61 for a reading of Ovid *Amores* 1.5 that takes note of the various dangers and delights of midday in Greek and Roman literature.

reminds us, are fit for *ἑσπέριος*, in the very moments that precede night itself when light is fleeting⁹; the bucolic genre deals solely with the aftermath and repercussions of theft.

Before we return to *Idyll 5*, let us briefly take stock of Hermes' musical performance (52-61). When he first plucks the newly created lyre at line 53, he is, for the first time, ushering song into a rustic *locus*, one that serves as a backdrop to Theocritus' bucolic setting. We are not so much concerned with the thematic content of Hermes' song (the honors of his parentage, Zeus and Maia) but with the manner of his performance. Hermes sings

. . . ἤύτε κοῦροι
 ἤβηται ἑσπέριος παραιβόλα κερτομέουσιν
 (“just as young men cast about taunts at festivals,” 55-56).

At this moment, Hermes is “engaged in a kind of exchange with his instrument”, sorting out just what “his new lyre [is] capable of.”¹⁰ It should be noted that the Hermes lacks a proper audience unlike the *κοῦροι* who perform before “an audience of equals.”¹¹ The young men (*κοῦροι*) in the simile are depicted participating in “a custom that converts insults into a quasi-musical activity, something with its own . . . amoebean rules of form”¹²; or, with an eye towards *Idyll 5*, the *κοῦροι* resemble the bucolic actors Komatas and Lakon before the onset of a proper amoebaean contest. Though there are no festivities in *Idyll 5*, Komatas and Lakon spend the better part of their pre-contest interaction (lines 1-79) bandying about accusations and taunts. In the bucolic *locus*, structured song (song bound to a particular topic) is preceded by this youthful mockery.

⁹ Perhaps this is why Vergil at *Eclogue 10.77* evocatively bids *ite domum saturae, venit Hesperos, ite capellae* (“go home, my sated goats, go home, Hesperos approaches”). The Roman *Hesperos*, surely the personification of the Greek *ἑσπέριος*, brings about the poem's close and also the threat of theft.

¹⁰ Halliwell (2008) 101.

¹¹ Vergados (2007) 70.

¹² Halliwell (2008) 101-102.

Idyll 5 begins with mutual accusations of theft – a transgression that is, as the epic tradition informs us, subject to violent action. Yet Theocritus rules out the possibility of outright violence in his bucolic setting. Within the first four lines, the reader glimpses a moment of contention, never on the brink of chaos, but one that is delivered in a highly stylized and formulaic manner. From the poem’s onset, Komatas’ and Lakon’s dispute takes on an amoebaeian form: Komatas’ apostrophe to his goats (*Αἴγες ἐμαί*, 1) and accusation of theft are, in turn, matched respectively by Lakon, who addresses his lambs (*σίττ’ ἀμνίδες*, 3) before mentioning his own personal loss. By this strategy, Theocritus presents a balanced form of strife: one already bound by the parameters of bucolic song, and one less likely to resort to epic expectations of brutality.

The lost items – Komatas’ goatskin (*νάκος*) and Lakon’s pipe (*σύριγγα*) – are given further qualification as gifts received from bucolic actors, Krokylos and Lykon respectively, outside the narrative framework of *Idyll 5* (8-12). The circumstances of this gift-giving are never revealed to the reader. The physical economy of the bucolic *locus* is one that operates under the parameters of amoebaeian contests. That is to say, bucolic possessions are important since they serve as the stakes offered up by individual singers prior to a contest; the victor receives what has been promised to him. In the bucolic *locus*, material gain is sharply marked by material loss: mutual exchange is exceptionally rare. *Idyll 6*, where Daphnis and Damoitas end their apparent contest by exchanging gifts, is an exception: *χώ μὲν τῷ σύριγγ’, ὁ δὲ τῷ καλὸν ἀύλῶν ἔδωκεν* (“he gave to him a pipe, and he gave him a lovely flute”, 43). The operative verb here *ἔδωκεν*, which typically functions as a one-way transaction (since to give is to lose), is likewise applied to Lykon (*τάν μοι ἔδωκε Λύκων*, 8) and to Krokylos (*τὸ Κροκύλος μοι ἔδωκε*, 11)

in *Idyll* 5. We can comfortably speculate that Komatas and Lakon won the goatskin and pipe in previous bucolic contests.

Komatas and Lakon then affirm their innocence in, again, a balanced and competitive manner (14-15). Lakon swears by Pan (14) and Komatas by the Nymphs (17). Following the rules of an amoebaeian contest, where the primary speaker sets the theme and the secondary speaker plays upon and develops this theme, Komatas, like Lakon before him, invokes a rustic deity (his *Νύμφας* matching Lakon's *Πᾶνα*) and swears off any culpability of theft. Their language at this moment, as balanced as it is, anticipates an immediate contest. Lakon steers Komatas in this direction when he suggests that if Komatas will wager a goat (*ἀλλ' ὦν αἴκα λῆς ἔριφον θέμεν*, 21), he will participate in a singing contest (*τοι διαείσομαι*, 22). At the very suggestion of a structured contest, both singers begin to dispute the quality of their stakes (23-30), and their contentious language quickly slips away from the measured rhetoric of lines 1-19. The possibility of resolution slips even further away when Komatas, in a strangely preemptive move, attempts to begin the contest without the supervision of a judge with the blunt imperative *ἔρισδε* ("Contend", 30).

Komatas' insistence, and apparent flouting of the rules (as the bucolic *locus* and its inhabitants understand them) is even stranger when we find that he is older than Lakon (35-38). Lakon's understanding of the protocol for amoebaeian contests is made clear at this moment by his immediate response to Komatas' command: *μὴ σπεῦδ* ("Do not hasten," 31). It is not haste that spurns Komatas on, he claims, but rather a sense of unexpected callousness from one of his former students: *ὄν ποκ' ἑόντα παῖδ' ἔτ' ἐγὼν ἐδίδασκον* ("whom I once taught when [you] were a child," 36-37). Komatas, it seems, is not only Lakon's senior, but is also his former teacher; he is responsible for Lakon's knowledge of the contest procedures and his ability to

contend in the first place. Komatas' haste and clear bungling of the contest procedures is, perhaps, a reflection of his lingering sense of comradeship with his former student. In *Idyll* 6, Daphnis and Damoetas contend without the presence of a judge; their interaction, at poem's end, is one of mutual exchange (both poetic and material) and appreciation. Komatas, hoping there is room for such a fair exchange between himself and Lakon, edges toward an amoebaeon contest without a third-party judge. Lakon, however, does not wish to settle a dispute over pilfered property. Lakon wishes to test himself against his former teacher - *ἀλλά γε τοι διαείσομαι, ἔστέ κ' ἀπείπηγς* ("yet I will contend with you, until you say stop," 22) – settling a far more personal matter than reparation. He makes this hostility obvious when, at line 44, he suggests that this will be Komatas' last bucolic singing contest. His participation and presumed victory in this contest will displace Komatas as a bucolic poet.

The tension in *Idyll* 5, then, shifts from accusations of theft and the value of the stakes wagered to something at once both more personal and more poetic: we find here a palpable tension between generations – young versus old – and, more importantly, a tension between two contending poets – the established teacher and his former student. We should note here that we read Komatas' sense of the word "teach" (*ἐδίδασκον*, 36) as strictly representing the instruction of poetry. A glance back to archaic poetry, in particular to the proem of Hesiod's *Theogony*, provides us with a fitting example for the use of *διδάσκω* in the realm of poetic instruction:

*αἶ νύ ποθ' Ἡσίοδον καλήν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδήν,
ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ' Ἑλικῶνος ὑπὸ ζαθέοιο.*
(“and once they taught Hesiod, herding his lambs under holy Helikon,
beautiful song,” 22-23).

Here Hesiod, at the onset of this new work, recalls his training at the hands of the Muses (*αἶ*). However, the transmission of song presented here – from teacher to student – is slightly outside of the terms set by Theocritus. In *Idyll* 5, mortal teaches mortal; in this section of the *Theogony*,

divine agents of song teach a mortal. The perspectives, however, of Hesiod and Lakon as students, though of two entirely different sorts of teachers, is similar.

The Muses taught Hesiod a beautiful song (*καλήν ἀοιδή*, 22) which is, presumably, the text of the *Theogony*, if we are to believe the narrative fiction of this poetic trope. Hesiod's gift and burden then, from the perspective of student, is the one of singing only what the Muses have given him – a fully realized song (*ἀοιδήν*); the adjective *καλήν* is not merely a flattering tag but is Hesiod's own estimation of the *Theogony* as a previously composed text. *καλήν* situates Hesiod as a reader of the Muses' song, which he will transmit starting at line 36; what Hesiod sings from 36 onward is *καλήν* not by his own craft but by that of the Muses. The poet, in the imagined reality of this scene, is encouraged to present (or perform) a text given to him. Hesiod's burden here is the one shared by other poets who figuratively invoke divinity for poetic material: deities are the source of poetry; the mortal poet is but a conduit. The voice of the neophyte poet is then further restrained by the Muses:

*καί μ' ἐκέλονθ' ὑμνεῖν μακάρων γένος αἰὲν ἑόντων,
σφᾶς δ' αὐτὰς πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον αἰὲν ἀείδειν*
("they bid me to sing the race of blessed deathless gods, and forever to sing of them first and last," 34-35).

Now outfitted with the Muses' *ἀοιδή*, Hesiod is prevented from any personal deviation or creative input outside the Muses' *Theogony* text. By commanding Hesiod to sing about the gods and themselves, they are compelling a performance of their own text.

We should note that Hesiod is, at the time of his instruction, a practicing shepherd (*ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ'*). It seems that, apart from a divinely orchestrated plan, Hesiod was chosen by the Muses due to his proximity to Helikon in this rustic *locus*. Theocritus' Lakon, as a herdsman figure (responsible for lambs), gains his poetic abilities because of his proximity, in the bucolic *locus*, to an established singer, Komatas. Poetry within the *locus* of Hesiod and

Theocritus' bucolic actors, then, does not occur naturally; it does not simply rise up extemporaneously.¹³ Poetry has a direct source, a direct and traceable line of transmission. Like the rustic items won, wagered, or stolen in the *Idylls*, poetry itself is a part of the narrative's economy. Bucolic poetry in the *Idylls* is a commodity¹⁴ – either subject to purchase, request, and instruction or subject to neglect, ridicule, and outright rejection.

If we turn again to the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, we find that the divine thief-herdsman's prototype for bucolic song is given a very tangible value. Apollo, stunned by the young Arkadian's performance (425-433), remarks after a series of four epithets: *πεντήκοντα βοῶν ἀντάξια ταῦτα μέμηλας* ("you have taken an interest in matters [i.e. have just sung about topics] worth fifty cows," 437). The price of Hermes' song reflects and perfectly matches the property Apollo has lost. When Hermes steals Apollo's cattle at line 74, he takes *πεντήκοντ' βοῦς* ("fifty cows"). Because Apollo eventually receives Hermes' lyre, and with it Hermes' song, he has, through the unexpected (and temporary) theft of his cows, paid a price for his poetic instruction. Before this transmission occurs, Hermes states that he will not "begrudge you [Apollo] entering upon my craft" (*τέχνης ἡμετέρης ἐπιβήμεναι οὐ τι μεγάρω*, 465). The use of *τέχνη* here has an implied sense of instruction and the physical cost of that instruction. Hermes, like other poets whose work is "not tangible", stresses that his technique or song is "a form of merchandise . . . in order to be remunerated."¹⁵ His use of *τέχνη* sets an expectation of fair transmission of song (through purchase) in the bucolic *locus*. Pieces of

¹³ The sole exception here is Hermes singing in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*. Apollo naturally casts his doubt on the child god's musical talents, ascribing them to the instruction of a teacher, when he asks: *ἤε τις ἀθανάτων ἤε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων / δῶρον ἀγαυὸν ἔδωκε καὶ ἔφρασε θέσπιν ἀοιδήν;* ("did one of the gods or mortal men offer you the wonderful gift and teach you inspired song?" 441-442).

¹⁴ Murray (2006) 57-61 for the poet as "craftsman" and poetry his "craft" in archaic sources.

¹⁵ Murray (2006) 58-59.

property – such as the disputed goatskin and pipe in *Idyll* 5 – may be acquired by dishonest theft; bucolic song, however, survives through an insistence on poetry as craft and its due payment.

Within the *locus* of the *Idylls* there are two established forms of commerce: one, of course, is the material exchange from theft or contest winnings; the second is the transmission of songs. At the end of *Idyll* 8, wherein Daphnis and Menalkas compete, the goatherd judge declares Daphnis the victor: *λάζεο τὰς σύριγγας: ἐνίκασας γὰρ ἀείδων* (“here is the pipe since, singing, you have won it,” 84). Immediately after awarding the pipe to Daphnis, the goatherd judge makes an offer: he will provide Daphnis with a small she-goat (*μιτύλαν αἶγα*) on the condition that Daphnis teaches him how to sing (*αἶ δέ τι λῆς με καὶ αὐτὸν ἄμ’ αἰπολέοντα διδάξαι*, 85). The goatherd imagines himself being taught, naturally, *ἄμ’ αἰπολέοντα* (“while tending goats”), the expected work of an *αἰπόλος* (“goatherd”, 81). His proximity to Daphnis while performing rustic (and non-poetic) tasks is, for the *αἰπόλος*, a guarantee of his poetic instruction. Just as Hesiod approached the Muses on Helikon and benefited, so too can the goatherd (with the surety of a she-goat) approach the poetically successful Daphnis and profit as a student. This is the major difference of divine versus mortal transmission of song: Hesiod is gifted with the *καλὴν ἀοιδὴν* (*Theogony*, 22) at no personal cost whereas the goatherd in *Idyll* 8 offers a she-goat to his prospective teacher as a satisfactory *τὰ δίδακτρα* (“teacher’s fee”, 86).¹⁶ The goatherd forfeits personal property, as any amoebaeon contestant would, but not in the hopes of besting Daphnis; the goatherd, once he has learned Daphnis’ skill, will invariably use it to his poetic advantage against another herdsman.

Menalkas, it can be argued, sang just as skillfully as Daphnis; however, it is Daphnis’ pleasant voice that has won over the judge here: *ἀδύ τι τὸ στόμα τευ καὶ ἐφίμερος ὦ*

¹⁶ Recall that Thyrsis sings about Daphnis in *Idyll* 1 at the request of a goatherd who, like the goatherd judge in 8, offers up a tangible reward (the famously wrought cup).

Δάφνι φωνά (“Daphnis, you have a sweet mouth and charming voice,” 82). The goatherd’s use of *ἀδύ* (“sweet”) and *ἐφίμερος* (“charming”) shows his perspective as a listener (or reader) of Daphnis’ song; because it is “sweet” it is worth learning – because it is “charming” it is worth remembering. Daphnis’ song has been chosen for transmission within the bucolic *locus*; that of Menalkas, on the other hand, will garner no greater provenance than its place in this single *Idyll*. The *Idyll* poet mentions, after this very contest, the loser Menalkas *ὡς δὲ κατεσμύθη καὶ ἀνετράπετο φρένα λύπη* (“and so he burned up and his body was ruined with grief,” 90). Elsewhere in Theocritus *κατασμύχω* is used in the context of a one being wasted away by Eros: in *Idyll* 3, the love-song for Amaryllis, the unnamed narrator complains that cruel Eros burns him down to the bone (*ὅς με κατασμύχων καὶ ἐς ὀστίον ἄχρις ἰάπτει*, 17).¹⁷ In a *locus* comprised of living and verdant imagery, the image of a parching fire is antithetical to its ongoing existence. The destructive impact of *κατασμύχω* deprives Menalkas of his bucolic livelihood and, more importantly, negates the efficacy and transmission of his poetic talents. Just like the elegiac lover of Amaryllis in *Idyll* 3, Menalkas is in a position of personal (and material) loss; he is bound to produce poetry that stems from this loss and, in the elegiac tradition (where loss is necessary for poetic production), will never be successful.¹⁸

Songs, in particular the songs of contest victors, are preserved in the bucolic *locus*, whether by request for recitation or instruction. It is possible, in the realm of *Idyll* 5, that Lakon approached Komatas with a similar offer. Yet Lakon, unlike Hesiod, does not appreciate the burden of his poetic instruction; what he knows from Komatas is anything but a *καλὴν ἀοιδίην*

¹⁷ For a Roman example of this imagery cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.2 where Dido is *caeco carpitur igni* (“consumed [ruined] by an unseen fire”) in her passion for Aeneas.

¹⁸ Menalkas’ loss is put further into elegiac tones by the sexualized simile in line 90. He grieves his personal loss *οὕτω καὶ νύμφα δμαθεῖσ’ ἀκάχοιτο* (“like a maiden grieves, being overcome, 91). Through this simile, Menalkas is put into a passive position by the successful Daphnis; so too does Menalkas’ song yield to that of Daphnis.

(*Theogony* 22). At the mere suggestion that he was taught by Komatas, Lakon retorts by asking *καὶ πόκ' ἐγὼ παρὰ τεῦς τι μαθὼν καλὸν ἢ καὶ ἀκούσας μέμναμ'*; (“when do I recall either learning or hearing anything good from you,” 39-40). The Muses song (the *Theogony* text) had intrinsic beauty that Hesiod valued as *καλὴν*. Lakon doubly insults his former teacher by not only doubting the quality of Komatas’ instruction but also its given form: there is no song (*ἀοιδὴν*) as Hesiod knew it, but rather the dismissive and indefinite *τι* – an uncategorized *something*.

Komatas, through a proverbial statement, responds to Lakon by presenting a rather negative model of the teacher-student relationship: *θρέψαι κύνας, ὡς τυ φάγωντι* (“to raise dogs only so that you are eaten, 38).¹⁹ To imply that Lakon, as a student, was less than human (and is susceptible to the innate wildness of once well-mannered animals) befits the mockery up to this point. But this is not another insult couched in the language of personal regret: Komatas presents a model of poetic reception, one that is naturally agonistic. The student, once he has received the necessary set of skills to function apart from his teacher, in this case as a young poet, will invariably challenge his former teacher.

Not only is Lakon rising up against his former instructor, he is also rejecting the established (or canonized, if not too strong a term) poetry of the bucolic *locus*. At line twenty, just after hearing Komatas’ pledge of innocence, Lakon retorts: “If I believe you, may I receive the woes of Daphnis” (*αἴ τοι πιστεύσαιμι, τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγε' ἀροίμαν*, 20). Lakon is, at once, being histrionic and commenting on his perception of bucolic poetry: Daphnis’ woes

¹⁹ Cf. *Iliad* 22.66-71 where Priam mournfully notes that his own dogs will consume him after death. This certainly touches upon fears of corpse disfigurement, a topic of great importance with the incipient death of Hektor in this very book, but there is more to it. The dogs started out wild, untamed, and more than willing to consume human flesh; through Priam’s instruction, they have lost their natural ferocity. What is terrible here and at *Idyll* 5 is that any creature – dog and man alike – should still resort to violence against the one who taught them.

(ἄλγε'), as *Idyll* 1 informs us, are the result of unrequited love that leads to the herdsman's death (Δάφνις ἐπεὶ θνάσκει, 135). Hunter describes the reappearance of this line at *Idyll* 5.20 as “proverbial for the worst fate which can befall a herdsman.”²⁰ However poignant an image it calls up, this sequence of words - τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγε' - has less to do with the imagined suffering and fate of Daphnis than with Lakon's view of what is already established bucolic poetry; in *Idyll* 1 they serve as a sort of title for a poem the goatherd asks Thyrsis to sing (ἀλλὰ τὸ γὰρ δὴ Θύρσι τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγε' αἰείδεις, “But you, Thyrsis, sing the *Woes of Daphnis*”, 19). The poem Thyrsis eventually sings (64-145), the goatherd suggests, garnered him success and renown in a previous contest:

. . . αἰ δέ κ' αἰείσης
ὥς ὄκα τὸν Λιβύαθε ποτὶ Χρόμιν ἄσας ἐρίσδων
 (“but if you sing [the woes of Daphnis] just as you did once, contesting with
Libyan Chromis,” 23-24).

The recitation of Daphnis' ἄλγε' matters enough to the goatherd for him to offer an ornamental cup (κισσύβιον, 27). This poem appears to be a part of the bucolic repertoire even here in *Idyll* 1: these lines hint at a fictive but flourishing and long standing poetic history in the bucolic *locus*, one which we can only glimpse within the framework of the *Idylls*. No matter how dismissive Lakon is of Komatas' instruction, his teacher intimates that he was once a fit pupil. Responding to Lakon's question (*Idyll* 8.39-40), mentioned above, Komatas crudely quips that his student has actually heard and learned something good καλὸν (39): ἀνὶκ' ἐπύγιζον τυ, τὸ δ' ἄλγεες (“when I was drilling you, and you were suffering,” 41). This sexually abusive language in this context reminds us of the fate of Menalkas in *Idyll* 8, whose poetic inferiority made him like a woman forced into submission (δμαθεῖσ', 91). Not only was Lakon, as a student, inferior to Komatas (and presumably he still is) he was a willing participant in suffering

²⁰ Hunter (1999) 74.

(*ἄλγεες*): due to the graphic nature of Komatas' comment, surely this verb points towards physical pain. However, when we recall Lakon's dismissive view of Daphnis' woes (20), as an imagined fate and as a extant poetic text, the (punning) use of *ἄλγεες* takes on a different semantic meaning. *ἀλγέω* means to suffer as Daphnis did as well as to perform the very poem about the mythic herdsman's pains, to sing the *τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγε'*.

Before Morson is roped into being a judge in *Idyll 5*, there is one final dispute concerning the eventual location of the amoebaeon contest. Between Komatas and Lakon, location within the *locus* is a contentious and symbolic issue, further distinguishing the tensions between teacher and student, between established poet and upstart poet. Initially, Lakon makes what appears to be a kind gesture by inviting Komatas to join him under an olive tree and coppice (*τεῖδ' ὑπὸ τὰν κότινον καὶ τ' ἄλσεα ταῦτα*, 32). Once Komatas sits underneath the bucolic foliage favored by Lakon he will, as his former student assures him, sing better (*ἄδιον ἄσῃ*, 31). This generous invitation sours, however, when Lakon, riled up by Komatas' reminder of his former pain (*ἄλγεες*, 41), bids *ῶδ' ἔρπε, καὶ ὕστατα βουκολιαξῆ* ("come *here* and you will sing a bucolic song for the final time, 44). The deictic force of *ῶδ'* ("here") serves to distinguish Lakon's sense of his own bucolic *locus* apart from that of the *Idyll*-landscape. His individual *locus* is capable of making Komatas a better poet (*ἄδιον*) or, rather, of making Komatas a poet Lakon would approve of (i.e. one whose work resembles his own). Lakon's *locus* would be the terminus of Komatas' own bucolic output – his final opportunity to sing as a traditional *βουκόλος*. Komatas, like Lakon, stays fast in his own *locus*, refusing both Lakon's invitations (*οὐχ ἔρψῶ τῆνεῖ*, "I will not go over *there*," 45). Again, the emphasis of a deictic term - *τῆνεῖ* ("there") – delimits Lakon's *locus* as a place separate from the *locus amoenus* proper. Shade, as we recall, the necessary place of respite for bucolic singers in a daytime genre, is apparently

lacking where Lakon has taken refuge. Komatas boasts that the *locus* he remains in has sufficient shade whereas in Lakon's *locus* ἄ σκιᾶ οὐδὲν ὁμοία ("the shade is not half as good," 48). Like the *locus* summoned up at the very beginning of *Idyll* 1 - Ἄδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἄ πίτυς πήνα ("sweet the whispering pine there," 1) – Komatas takes up shelter underneath a pine tree (πίτυς ὑψόθε, 49). Though not whispering, Komatas' pine proves how fruitful and beneficial it is by shedding its cones (δὲ καὶ βάλλει κώνοις, 49). Gow wryly notes "a shower of pine-cones might be thought of as a disadvantage."²¹ Komatas' boastful insistence – found in δὲ καὶ ("and even") – indicates that tumbling pinecones are hardly detrimental but are, perhaps, a gesture of fecundity on the part of the *locus amoenus*. Komatas' *locus* (and poetic position apart from the rebellious Lakon) is active and productive.

As we saw in *Idyll* 1, so much of what defines the bucolic genre is the *locus amoenus*. Passages describing the physical environment are anything but purple passages to delight the reader, but are structured projections of the genre itself. Lakon, by severing himself from the greater bucolic *locus*, is, in effect, taking up a stance partially outside the generic boundaries of the bucolic *Idylls* overall. The two herdsmen, of course, never come to a single location for their contest. They, then, sing from differing *loci* – one traditional (Komatas) and one seeking an identity apart from this tradition (Lakon).

Once the contest begins, at line 80, Komatas starts and Lakon responds. In *Idyll* 8, the decision of just who sings first and who, alternately, responds, is decided by lot:

πρῶτος δ' ὧν ἄειδε λαχὼν ἱκτὰ Μενάλκας,
εἶτα δ' ἀμοιβαίαν ὑπελάμβανε Δάφνις αἰοιδάν.
("and so, by lot, loud-voiced Menalkas sang first, and then Daphnis took up a responding song," 30-31).

²¹ Gow (1952) 103.

Procedure here is far less impartial. Lakon bids Komatas to, at last, begin: *εἶα λέγ'* ("Come on, speak," 78). Being the first singer in an amoebaeon contest is an advantage²²; he sets a theme and produces poetry that the second singer must develop and attempt to outdo. How strange that Lakon, who already bears the burden of being in the shadow of his former teacher, would insist on being the second singer. Whatever poetry Komatas sets forth, Lakon must respond to it directly and, hopefully, *misread* it in such a way as to distinguish his own poetic merit for the judge, Morson; in doing so, successfully, Lakon has a clear opportunity to carve out his own space through "an act of creative correction", as Bloom puts it.²³

Morson judges in favor of Komatas and, unlike the decision made by the goatherd in *Idyll* 8, offers no reasons for this decision. We have read this contest as one not between bickering herdsmen but rather between oppositional poets: teacher versus student, old poet versus new poet. It is possible that Lakon, who has clearly removed himself from the greater *locus amoenus*, disdainfully placing himself into a separate and competitive *locus*, was bound to lose this contest from the start. His rejection of Komatas' teachings (the older poetry of *Idyll* 1) is, as Bloom puts it, an attempt to "clear creative space" for himself.²⁴ If this is truly the case, then why is Lakon not successful? For a young poet to detach himself from the burden of influence set upon him by his predecessor(s), he "proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet".²⁵

The process by which the poet avoids parroting his master outright is, for Bloom, termed the *clinamen* or "the swerve".²⁶ The poet avoids making the mistake of repeating the texts of his predecessors, but he never loses sight (or reference) to the texts which are seminal for his own

²² Gow (1952) 93.

²³ Bloom (1997) 5 and 30.

²⁴ Bloom (1997) 5.

²⁵ Bloom (1997) 30.

²⁶ Bloom (1997) 42-43.

literary production; these earlier texts not only inform the work of the new poet, they serve as a ready-made tradition within the poet wishes to insert himself. If he can escape outright mimicry of his poetic sources – i.e. blatant *imitatio* – he is that much stronger for his other textual associations. Lakon, we recall, does more than just *swerve* away from Komatas and his instruction. Lakon rejects former bucolic song altogether – he refuses to play a role in its natural transmission. Lakon also rejects the *locus amoenus* of Komatas and other literary predecessors (such as Thyrsis in *Idyll* 1), carving one out will, as he impudently boasts, be the *terminus* for the traditions contained in Komatas’ poetry (**ὤδ’ ἔρπε, καὶ ὕστατα βουκολιαξῆ**, 44). Bloom informs us (perhaps as a warning): “The stronger the man, the larger his resentments, and the more brazen his *clinamen*.”²⁷ It seems that Lakon has been so bold as to *swerve* not merely away from Komatas but from the bucolic *locus* as a whole.

²⁷ Bloom (1997) 43.

CHAPTER 3

RECEPTION IN VERGIL'S SEVENTH *ECLOGUE*

As we turn from Theocritus to Vergil, we find a different *locus* – a patchwork of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, a series of minor distortions and negations, a territory of characteristically Roman *misreadings* (to recall Bloom again). Among the most ostensible shifts from the Greek bucolic to the Roman pastoral lies in the identities of Vergil's *Eclogue* denizens. In the previous chapter, we located the source of action of Theocritean characters in archaic poetry, specifically in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*. Hermes, for singers such as Thyrsis, Komatas and Lakon, is a fitting prototype, a guide for bucolic tendencies, namely to herd, to steal, and to sing. In Vergil's first amoebaeon poem, *Eclogue 3*, we find these Mercurial motivations in place; however, they show signs of revision. The poem begins with a recollection of Theocritus *Idyll 4*, a mimetic bucolic piece displaying Battos and Korydon bantering without a proper amoebaeon contest. Vergil's first line - *Dic mihi, Damoeta, quoniam pecus an Meliboei?* ("tell me, Damoetas, whose flock is that? Meliboeus'?" *Eclogue 3.1*) – echoes Theocritus' opening line - *Εἶπε μοι ὦ Κορύδων, τίνος αἱ βόες ἢ ῥα Φιλώνδα* ("tell me Korydon, who do those cows belong to? Philondas?" *Idyll 4.1*). In the context of cattle (or rustic property) such a direct intertext can be seen, perhaps, as a form of theft on Vergil's part. As we proceed, we expect an overt imitation of *Idyll 4*; we expect Menalcas to play Battos and Damoetas to play Korydon. Yet, following line 2, Vergil swerves away from this sort of thieving intertextuality: his pastoral characters will not serve the part of Latinized Theocritean characters. Instead of the non-confrontational (yet barbed) chatter of Theocritus' herdsmen, Vergil's herdsmen quickly fall into strife. Menalcas mocks Damoetas,

calling him *alienus custos* (“an unfriendly shepherd”) and taking credit for cutting down Micon’s vines (*vitis incidere falce novellas*, 3.5-11). Then Menalcas accuses Damoetas of being a goat thief: *non ego te vidi Damonos, pessime, caprum excipere insidiis* (“did I not see you, rascal, overtake Damon’s goat with traps?”, 17-18). This accusation of theft shows that the Mercurial impulse does in fact persist in Vergil’s *Eclogues*. The dispute shifts from loss of property (which Damoetas claims to have won in a previous contest, 21-22)¹ to musical (or poetic) skill. Menalcas doubts Damoetas’ skill with the wonderfully compressed quip – *cantando tu illum* (“you beat him in singing?”, 25); the position of *tu* places Damoetas at a clear disadvantage, as Menalcas sees it, between his discredited poetic prowess (*cantando*) and his supposed victim (*illum*). Menalcas deprives Damoetas of his bragging rights by using his own words (*cantando . . . ille*, 21) against him. In order to defend his reputation as a successful poet, not to clear himself of being painted a thief, Damoetas formally challenges Menalcas to a contest: *vicissim experiamur* (“shall we test one another in turn?” 28-29).

How did we come upon a *locus* where poetic skill eclipses the crime of theft or plain rustic mischief? Let us return to the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* and focus on the scene where Hermes’ song, played on his newly created lyre, impresses Apollo (417-489). After Apollo inquires about the origin of Hermes’ song and lyre, the young god offers him both outright (464 ff.). Yet before Apollo can take the lyre and its rustic song, Hermes sets out a prescription for his actions:

μέλπεο καὶ κιθάριζε καὶ ἀγλαίας ἀλέγυνε
δέγμενος ἐξ ἐμέθεν: σὺ δέ μοι, φίλε, κῦδος ὄπαζε
 (“enjoy and play the lyre and tend to triumphs, accepting it from me: and also, friend, do me honor,” 476-477).

¹ *Eclogue* 3.21-22: *An mihi cantando victus non redderet ille, / quem mea carminibus meruisset fistula caprum?* (“well didn’t he, conquered by my singing, hand over the goat which my pipe merited with songs?”)

The series of imperatives from Hermes helps to transfer both instrument and its poetry to its new owner. In return for the lyre, Hermes receives a “gleaming whip” (*μάστιγα φαεινήν*, 496) from Apollo.² This exchange “ordains” Hermes a herdsman (*βουκολίας τ’ ἐπέτελλεν*, 497) thereby limiting his rustic role (as was announced back at 14) – a thieving herdsman, no longer a rustic poet. The domain of song proper, and now that of rustic song specifically, belongs solely to Apollo; the instrument confirms this exclusive ownership and inheritance when Apollo for the first time plucks it:

*πλήκτρῳ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μένος: ἦ δ’ ὑπένερθε
σμερδαλέον κονάβησε: θεὸς δ’ ὑπὸ καλὸν ᾄεισεν*
 (“with the pluck, he tested the strings. And under his hand, it sounded awesomely: the god sang in accompaniment.”, 501-502).

The verb in line 502, *ᾄεισεν*, officially transfers the authority over and potential of rustic song from the innovator Hermes to Apollo. Apollo sings to the very first Arcadian audience and, in doing so, becomes the god chiefly concerned with the creation of poetry in a pastoral context.

The spatial *locus* we encounter in the *Eclogues*, it seems, stems from this portion of the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*. Vergil’s pastoral singers are not beholden to Hermes-Mercury alone; their *locus* and the poetry they create within it is governed by Apollo. In the *Eclogues*, we find Apollo displacing or, more accurately, inheriting the role once played by Hermes in the Theocritean *Idylls*. The first proper appearance of Hermes in the *Idylls* occurs at 1.77-78.

According to Thyrsis’ song about Daphnis, Hermes was first to approach and address the dying herdsman:

*ἦνθ’ Ἑρμῆς πρᾶτιστος ἀπ’ ὤρεος, εἶπε δέ: “Δάφνι,
τίς τυ κατατρύχει; τίνος ὦγαθὲ τόσσον ἐρᾶσαι;”*
 (“and Hermes came first from the mountains and said: ‘Daphnis, who exhausts

² Vergados (2007) 355: *μάστιξ* is used elsewhere in early Epic in the context of driving horses or donkeys (e.g. *Il.* 5.266, 5.748, 11.532, *Od.* 6.81, *Dem.* 378), and not cattle; but Hermes will receive the tutelage over various animals, including horses and donkeys, in addition to the *βουκολία* (567-71).

you, good man, whom do you long for so much?”, 77-78).

In what is an echo of this scene, *Eclogue* 10 depicts the ailing Gallus (a stand-in for Theocritus' Daphnis), who is approached not by Hermes, as we would expect, but rather by Apollo: *venit Apollo 'Galle, quid insanis?' inquit* (“Apollo came: ‘What’s this madness, Gallus?’ he asks, 21-22). Apollo, as the overseer and ultimate patron of this pastoral Arcadia, replaces Hermes as the first-responder to his grieving poet.

The role of Hermes, furthermore, is utterly supplanted by Pan who bears the title of *deus Arcadiae* (“god of Arcadia,” 26), a role formerly held by Hermes in the Homeric *Hymn: μεδέοντα καὶ Ἀρκαδίας πολυμήλου* (“ruling flock-rich Arkadia,” 2). We are not so much shocked by Pan’s replacement of Hermes as representative deity of Arcadia, but rather by the focus shifting from Hermes (as prototype for pastoral character) to Arcadia itself. Vergil’s pastoral singers are styled less as Mercurial (or Hermetic) and rather align themselves, and their poetry, with an Arcadian identity.

The first half of the *Eclogues* contains no reference to Arcadia or to Arcadian herdsmen. In the second half of Vergil’s collection, however, Arcadia becomes the dominant spatial *locus*, beginning with *Eclogue* 7. In this *Eclogue* the herdsmen are called *Arcades* both by the poem’s narrator Meliboeus and by one of the competing herdsmen himself, Thyrsis (lines 4 and 25-26 respectively). The application of *Arcades* at this point in the *Eclogues* is further important since, as Van Sickle reminds us, these singers are “the first Arcadians in the book.”³ Vergil, at this moment, is shifting from the Sicilian setting inherited from Theocritus to an entirely different,

³ Van Sickle (2004) 162. Coleman (1977) 207 insists: “This is the earliest reference to Arcady in connection with the pastoral myth.” We differ on this point. Given our previous reading of the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, where Hermes and his Arcadia serve as the template for Theocritus’ (and thus successive Roman poets’) bucolic *locus* and denizens.

now Roman (due to Vergil's poetic appropriation of Arcadia), pastoral *locus*.⁴ Yet one question comes to mind here: why the notable shift from Sicily to Arcadia?⁵ In light of Vergil's historical and political milieu, Coleman suggests that the "slave revolts culminating with Spartacus, the depredations of Verres, the war with Sextus Pompey" made Sicily "too grim to sustain the idyllic image."⁶ If we follow Coleman on this point, which is an attractive one, then we have one more question: why does Vergil choose to shift his focus from Sicily to Arcadia in *Eclogue 7*, midway in his collection?⁷ Evidence of the *Eclogues*' composition might offer us an answer, but the result of such research is problematic. In my view the answer does not lie in historical fact but in a stylistic emphasis – the apparition of Daphnis (in line 1), who was very recently mourned by Menalcas and Mopsus in *Eclogue 5* and mourned long ago in Thyrsis' song from Theocritus' *Idyll 1*. In that poem, Daphnis makes his status as a Sicilian clear when, dying, he bids farewell to his homeland waters, in particular to Arethusa herself: χαῖρ' Ἀρέθουισα (117). When Meliboeus fortuitously comes across Daphnis in *Eclogue 7.1*, we know that the mythic herdsman has not only denied his death in *Eclogue 5* and in *Idyll 1*, but he has – by situating himself among Meliboeus, Corydon, and Thyrsis – traded his Sicilian identity for that of *Arcades*. Daphnis' shady sitting place in *Eclogue 7 (sub arguta ilice, 1)* resembles that of Tityrus' in *Eclogue 1.1 (sub tegmine fagi)*, which establishes his concert with Vergil's pastoral landscape. Daphnis, as

⁴ Sicily *does* have a place in Vergil's previous *Eclogues*. It is the explicit setting of *Eclogue 2: mille meae Siculis errant in montibus agnae* ("my thousand lambs wander on Sicilian mountains", 21). Sicily is also present in *Eclogues 4* and *6*.

⁵ To be fair to the guiding influence of Theocritus' *Idylls*, Sicily is but one setting for his poems. Coleman (1977) 207 reminds us: "In Theocritus various pastoral settings are specified – south Italy in *Id.* 4.17, 5.72, Cos in *Id.* 7.1 – but Sicily, the country of Daphnis (*Id.* 1.117) and Polyphemus (*Id.* 11.7, Bion 2.1) as of Theocritus and Bion themselves was the most favored (*Id.* 8.56, 9.15, *Ecl.* 4.1, 6.1)."

⁶ Coleman (1977) 208.

⁷ A further, equally unanswerable question might be: "Why, apart from obvious intertextual links to Theocritus, would Vergil bother with Sicily at all if its resonance with Roman readers was so irksome?"

integrated Arcadian character, is responsible for the text of *Eclogue 7*. His kindly invitation to Meliboeus gives way to our first encounter with Arcadian herdsmen: an amoebaeon contest.

In *Eclogue 7*, Meliboeus begins by recalling an encounter with Daphnis, who informed him that the herdsmen Corydon and Thyrsis were on the verge of a contest (5); after worrying about the care of his livestock, he decides to listen, for “the contest between Corydon and Thyrsis was a great one” (*certamen erat, Corydon cum Thyrside, magnum*, 16). The contest he witnesses begins only when he explicitly announces it: *igitur contendere . . . coepere* (“therefore they began to contend,” 18-19). The following forty-eight lines contain the contest proper between Corydon and Thyrsis. Meliboeus, who appears to have vanished from the *Eclogue*, at last speaks towards poem’s end (*haec memini*, “I recall these matters,” at line 69). Meliboeus then, through *haec memini*, reveals that he is present to recall the bulk of the poem’s narrative through memory. The struggle between Corydon and Thyrsis has never been in the *Eclogue*’s present time; it resides in the past, in recorded memory.

Meliboeus never directly interacts with any of the pastoral characters in the poem: not Daphnis, not Thyrsis, not Corydon. He finds himself in the convenient position to witness a contest by chance (*forte*, 1); his wandering goat leads him to this competitive space: *huc mihi . . . caper deerraverat, atque ego Daphnim auspicio* (“here my goat had wandered and I see Daphnis,” 6-8). The dramatic tense shift from the pluperfect *deerraverat* to the vividly present *auspicio* helps to show that Meliboeus’ encounter was something of a fluke; the present *auspicio* almost indicates the narrator’s shock (both then and now with this re-telling) at seeing Daphnis here in Arcadia. This verb also “suggests surprise at a phenomenon so strange, under the circumstances, as to take on the character of an omen.”⁸ The appearance of Daphnis, here a

⁸ Putnam (1970) 226. Putnam also cites a similar use of *auspicio* at both *Eclogues* 2.66 and 9.58.

revenant, is jarring for reasons we have noted above. Yet when we return to the notion of theft – that is, Vergil’s theft of the narrative framework in *Idyll 8* – Daphnis’ place in this text is quite expected. We should not be entranced by the mythic herdsman’s return from death, but rather the disparity in his roles: in *Idyll 8* Daphnis is a competitor in an amoebaeon contest; here, in *Eclogue 7* he “is neither contestant in the song nor judge of its merits” but has been relegated to an all but silenced spectator.⁹ Meliboeus’ recollection informs us that, prior to his arrival, Daphnis, Corydon, and Thyris were all present *in unum* (“in one place”, 2). This detail momentarily leads us to believe that Daphnis, who holds a central spot *sub ilice*, presides as the requisite tertiary figure in any contest: the judge. Yet once Corydon and Thyrsis have finished singing at line 69, Daphnis does not reemerge as a speaking figure; he offers no comment, no response, and no judgment. Meliboeus, as we have seen, is the poem’s terminal speaker, and what he tells us – *victum frustra contendere Thyrsim* (“Thyrsis, conquered, strove in vain,” 69) – is the only clear indication of a judgment. Perhaps Meliboeus is transmitting Daphnis’ decision or, perhaps, this is wholly Meliboeus’ personal judgment as a witness to the contest. Neither possibility is fully guaranteed by the text. What is guaranteed, however, is that Daphnis, apart from his kindly invitation to Meliboeus to join him, is a mute spectator unlike in his previous Theocritean incarnations, where he played the active role of singer (*Idyll 1*) and successful amoebaeon competitor (*Idyll 8*).

Then, we wonder, why is Daphnis – no insignificant pastoral character – situated here at all? Lee reads Daphnis’ reappearance in the *Eclogues* as “like a god in epiphany.”¹⁰ Van Sickle’s reading lacks this imaginative fancy; he reads Daphnis’ presence as one that “marks a [Tityran]

⁹ Putnam (1970) 223.

¹⁰ Lee (1989) 56.

locus among singers.”¹¹ In other words, this Daphnis is the one of Tityrus’ design in *Idyll* 1 and, because of this specific provenance he represents a Theocritean perspective if not a literary stand-in for Theocritus himself. In this reading, then, Daphnis-Theocritus bears silent witness to Vergil’s own pastoral process, to Vergil’s handling of the genre. Vergil’s poetic prowess – by turning the Sicilian Daphnis into an Arcadian and by making him a witness to “not only the ‘where’ but the ‘how’ of [his] pastoral poetry” – is all the more certain.¹² Yet our reading of Daphnis-as-Theocritus need not be entirely agonistic. Vergil situates a remnant of Theocritus’ *Idylls* in his *Eclogues* and systematically allows it to participate, albeit quietly, in an innovation of the overall genre.

With Daphnis and Meliboeus positioned as spectators (or readers), let us turn to the important situation at hand: the *magnum certamen* between Corydon and Thyrsis. It is strange that these two young Arcadians should quarrel at all. Unlike previous contests in the *Idylls* and *Eclogues*, we find no accusations of theft or any indication of mischief that indicate contention. Meliboeus insists on their equity in age (both are young, 4), in identity (both are Arcadian, 4), in poetic competence (both are equally prepared – *pares parati* – to sing and respond, 5). The sole disparity between them, at the start, is what sort of animal they herd: Corydon tends goats, Thyrsis sheep (3). Yet this difference alone cannot be the source of their *certamen*. In fact, that they tend entirely different animals prevents accusations of covert theft from occurring: a goat in the company of a shepherd would be incredible, if not ridiculous, and would betray the cunning and secrecy necessary for successful theft. It would also prove a bizarre revision of the spectacular accomplishments of pastoral’s prototypical thief: Hermes. Without theft, we would suspect some overwhelming tensions between Corydon and Thyrsis. If we recall *Idyll* 8, which

¹¹ Van Sickle (2004) 162.

¹² Putnam (1970) 254.

provides the paradigm of this *Eclogue*, then we would suspect a clear challenge of one's poetic talents. As the unnamed narrator tells us, Menalkas boasts *φαμί τυ νικασεῖν, ὅσσον θέλω αὐτὸς ἀείδων* ("I say that I, singing, will defeat you in whatever way I choose," 7). Menalkas purports that he can best Daphnis in song; Daphnis, defending his questioned skill, decides to compete with his challenger. We find no parallel in *Eclogue 7*. If we recall *Idyll 5*, once accusations of theft were forgotten, the tensions between Komatas and Lakon were based on age (older versus younger) and, more importantly, on instruction (teacher versus student). Yet the tensions present in *Eclogue 7* have little to do with age or instruction as in *Idyll 5*. Corydon and Thyrsis are age-mates (*ambo florentes aetatibus*, 4), and they are both equally prepared to sing competitively (*et cantare pares et respondere parati*, 5). Meliboeus' description of the Corydon and Thyrsis (3-5) shows equals who have little cause for strife. Therefore, the tensions that usually precede amoebaeon contests are not present in *Eclogue 7*. Without a clear reason for judgment in this poem, the reader is all the more pressed to seek out a true source of strife between Corydon and Thyrsis.

The first amoebaeon exchange between the competitors reveals the true source of strife. Corydon, in his first amoebaeon strain, refers to Codrus (*meo Codro*, 22); and here, the possessive adjective *meo*, while establishing a friendly familiarity between the two poets, suggests Codrus as a possible teacher of Corydon. If nothing else, Codrus is an ideal poetic model for the young singer. He hopes, in this opening invocation to the Nymphs of Libethra (*i.e.* Helikon itself)¹³, to be given the same divine poetic skill (*carmen*) as Codrus was (and as Hesiod himself was in his *Theogony*). If he cannot be gifted *quale meo Codro* ("just as to my Codrus",

¹³ Coleman (1977) 212-213: "There was a town Libethrum or Libethra east of Mt. Olympus in the Pierian district . . . and also a peak called Libethrium in the Helicon complex, on which there were shrines to both the Muses and the *Numphai Libethriai* (Paus. 9.34.4, Strabo 8.410)."

22), if he cannot achieve the same poetic success as his possible former teacher did, then his poetic career is done for: *si non possumus omnes hic arguta sacra pendebit fistula pinu* (“if we are not capable of all this, my clear-singing pipe will hang here on the sacred pine,” 23-24). If Corydon does not succeed he will be relegated to the unfortunate position of all defeated singers – one of silent preservation, one of stymied influence; he and his poetry will be isolated here (the deictic *hic*) in *Eclogue 7*. Corydon, unlike the brazen Lakon in *Idyll 5*, does not hope to overthrow or surpass his poetic forebear; rather, he hopes to be, at most, Codrus’ peer, his equal (recalling the use of *pares* at line 5).

Corydon’s initial quatrain, which focuses on equity between poets young and old, between teacher and student, is notably un-Bloomian (as we read the strife between Lakon and Komatas in Chapter 1). That is not to say that the struggle between old and new poets is absent from *Eclogue 7*. This struggle, though unimportant to the characters of this *Eclogue*, belongs to the poem’s external reality: there is tension between Vergil and Theocritus. Our reading of Daphnis as Theocritus (or as his bucolic output), who witnesses Vergil’s rendering of an Arcadian pastoral *locus* and song, is agonistic and characteristically Bloomian. What better way to outperform your poetic model than to import him into your poetry and prevent him from altering the course of your overt [is that what you mean?] innovation? Vergil incorporates Daphnis-Theocritus but all but strips him of his efficacy: he turns from an active poet (in *Idylls 1* and 8) into a static figure – a Theocritean point-of-interest (as Van Sickle notes)¹⁴ in an otherwise Vergilian text. Daphnis is here refashioned as an Arcadian spectator, not an active judge. Vergil’s past is given fit tribute but not sway.

¹⁴ Van Sickle (2004) 162.

Thyrsis' response (25-28) to Corydon's opening invocation (21-24) makes the reason for this *certamen* finally clear. Instead of the Libethrian Nymphs, Thyrsis appeals to no deity, pastoral or otherwise; he reserves his imperative *ornate* (matching Corydon's similar tactic found in *concedite*, 22) for the denizens of this recently realized *locus* – the *pastores Arcades* (“Arcadian herdsmen”, 25-26). Thyrsis appeals not to the gods but to his poetic peers – here Meliboeus and Corydon – to “adorn a rising poet with ivy” (*hedera nascentem ornate poetam*, 25). Corydon cannot oblige, of course. His poetry is tapped into an intimate relationship with the foremost literary deities – Helikonian Muses, here in the guise of Nymphs; by invoking them he “announces his dependence on the Muses to activate the power of song and prays for their help.”¹⁵ Thyrsis, alternately, is independent of higher inspiration: he needs it neither to compose his poetry nor to become a meritable poet. He need only address his readers – *pastores Arcades* – who will crown him “as recognition of proven abilities”¹⁶ which, by contest's end, should be apparent to them. If he wins, Corydon will hang up his pipe, and Thyrsis' poetry will survive, being transmitted throughout the Arcadian *locus*.

Not only does Thyrsis deny Libethrian assistance (Arcadia's surrogate Muses), he additionally decries the human importance of Codrus to Corydon. He mockingly hopes “that Codrus' sides may burst with envy” (*invidia rumpantur ut ilia Codro*, 26). *ut* here indicates a clause resulting from Thyrsis' previous appeal to the Arcadians: *ornate*. Once Thyrsis has been crowned, presumably as Corydon's superior, his influence will overshadow other Arcadians – the recipients of his imperative and even former poets like Codrus. His success in *Eclogue 7* will overwhelm the suggested literary past, which is found in Codrus, so much so that the tradition Codrus represents – which Corydon hopes to expand and poets, such as Hesiod in the proem of

¹⁵ Putnam (1970) 232.

¹⁶ Putnam (1970) 232.

the *Theogony* have guaranteed – will be unmade altogether by envy. *Rumpantur* is no subtle verb – it is both figuratively uncomfortable and laden with sexual and physical violence.¹⁷ Thyrsis knows this all too well. When he delivers this riposte to Corydon, he himself is privileging a poetic tradition, one markedly different from his competitor's and one which is entirely non-pastoral. Thyrsis, on the offensive, draws an intertextual link between himself and Catullus *Carmina* 11.17-20. Catullus, bidding Furius and Aurelius to deliver a message to his salacious *puella*, remarks just how she holds her lovers “repeatedly bursting all their groins” (*identidem omnium ilia rumpens*, 19-20). Thyrsis' use of *ilia* is particularly abusive in light of the Catullan echo; it reduces Codrus from divinely inspired poet to one of the nameless threehundred adulterers (*moechis . . . trecentos*, 18) unmade by their sexual involvement with Lesbia. Codrus falls from his status as high pastoral poet to the reviled fodder of elegiac poetry. Doubly wrapped up in Lesbia's sexual possession – *complexa tenet* (“embracing them, she holds them,” 18) – and envy (*invidia*, *Eclogue* 7.26), Codrus and his ability to empower Corydon are diminished, sapped of (pro)creative energies.

Now that the *pastores Arcades* have gotten rid of two forms of poetic instruction and tradition – one divine, one mortal – Thyrsis has but one more command for them. If the now ineffectual Codrus should praise him overmuch (*si ultra placitum laudarit*, 27) the Arcadians must “bind his brow with cyclamen” (*baccare frontem cingite*, 27-28). Thyrsis fears that if he receives an inordinate amount of attention he will suffer from it by potentially losing his poetic career: *ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro* (“lest the wicked tongue harm the future poet,” 28). It is unclear whether Thyrsis is nervous about the potential criticism that comes along with renown

¹⁷ Adams (1982) 150-151 cites the compound *dirumpo* (formed from *dis-* and *rumpo*) in his chapter entitled “The Vocabulary Relating to Sexual Acts”, noting that “the metaphor of bursting is applied to the effects of sexual desire or activity on the male.”

or about the potentially misleading flattery of lesser poets. In either case, the *pastores Arcades* find themselves at the blunt end of a second command to crown Thyrsis. Just as Codrus was enervated twice over, Thyrsis must be twice over wrapped up in the tokens of poetic triumph; both *hedera* and *baccare* ensure the stability of a notably susceptible poet who describes himself as both *nascentem* and *futuro* (25, 27). Where *hedera* is clear, *baccare* is a troubled term. Coleman cites that it has no suitable translation¹⁸ and that it “may well have been given a false etymology from *Bacchus*.”¹⁹ It is perhaps this initial reference to the suggestive sounding *baccare* and the later reference to Liber himself (58) that leads Lee to read the *certamen* in *Eclogue 7* as a “pre-Nietzschean struggle between the Apollonian . . . and the Dionysian.”²⁰ Indeed, Corydon’s opening vignette confirms, in detail, this reading. When he refers to Codrus he extols him since “he makes verses nearest to Apollo’s” (*proxima Phoebi versibus ille facit*, 22-23). This is a flattering but still respectful appraisal of Corydon’s teacher; it makes no transgression nor ignores the gods outright as Thyrsis does. Codrus’ poems are naturally *proxima* in relation to Apollo: he is older than Corydon and so is that much closer in time to the moment when Apollo inherited Arcadian song, here the *carmen*, from Hermes in the Homeric *Hymn*. Codrus is closer to the source of this pastoral *locus* where Apollo, here as Phoebus, not Hermes holds dominion (as we have discussed above).

While we will not delve into the theoretical issues implicit in using Nietzschean terminology (a task Lee does not trouble himself with either), we will use this striking dyad – Apollonian versus Dionysian – to explain, in part, the tensions between Corydon and Thyrsis.

¹⁸ Coleman (1977) 136, 214.

¹⁹ Coleman (1977) 136.

²⁰ Lee (1989) 56. Previously on p.52, Lee derived (from the work of A. J. Boyle) a “set of [six] standards” for pastoral song – an *ars poetica* within the *Eclogues*. They are as follows: “artistic control”, “power to change the listener”, “a fertile union of both Apollonian and Dionysian”, “creative force”, “moral substance”, and “compassion”.

Neither theft nor mischief, neither age nor instruction is the cause of this *magnum certamen*: this dispute stems from the differing styles and poetic aspirations showcased by either poet. Corydon hopes to find himself an equal of the former Corydon, not surpass him; if he succeeds, he will demonstrate a positive model of pastoral transmission, one that looks back to tradition and the divine for inspiration and longevity. Thyrsis, however, composes poetry primarily for his contemporary Arcadian readership, those who are able to shore up his tenuous status as *poeta* and *vates* and guarantee him success. Where Corydon wished to participate equitably in his particular literary tradition, Thyrsis equips himself with the barbs of his forebears (the *ilia rumpens* of Catullus 11) without reverence for the pastoral tradition. The *pastores Arcades* and Catullan intertext are called upon, not to strengthen his poetic craft but to guarantee survival in his projected arc from *nascentem poetam* to the future *vatem*. Let us dwell for a moment on the term *vates*. *Vates* is a troubled term; one that did not always have such a desirable meaning in archaic Latin poetry. Since Vergil is an inheritor of archaic Latin poetry, in particular Ennius (where *vates* was synonymous with lesser poet), we should evaluate how he employs *vates* in his *Eclogues*. Vergil was not alone, of course, in championing a positive use of *vates*. If we look at Horace *Odes* 1.1 – to which Thyrsis’ *hedera* and *frontem* (25, 27) has drawn us, echoing Horace’s *doctarum hederæ præmia frontium* (“the ivy-gifts of learned brows,” 1.1.29) – we find a particularly striking use of *vates*, common among the Augustans.

In the final two lines of *Odes* 1.1, Horace conditionally requests Maecenas to install him among the lyric poets (*quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres*, “but if you enroll me among the lyric poets”, 35). For Horace to be considered one of the lyricists (i.e. one of the Greek Lyric 9) would not only be an honor, it would secure his place within a tradition that is distinctly non-Roman. Horace underscores his blend of Greek and Roman sources with the term *vatibus*, a distinct

marker of Roman poetic identity, which immediately precedes *lyricis* and balances it out. Yet, where the identity of the *lyricis* is rather evident the *vatibus*, however, needs to be further scrutinized. The term *vates* contains a dual meaning: it is both poet and prophet. For Quinn, Horace includes *vatibus* in order to “stress the inspired or prophetic power of the poet.”²¹ While this is true, as evidenced by the direct mention of Euterpe and Polyhymnia, both sources of poetic inspiration, the term *vates* was not always such a positive or flattering title for a poet.

In Book 7 of the *Annales*, Ennius sets out to define himself as a Roman epic poet and does so by distinguishing himself from his two major precursors Livius Andronicus and Naevius. With one critical line – *scripsere alii rem vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque canebant* (“others wrote about it with verses which Fauns and poets sang long ago”, i) – Ennius deftly casts his predecessors into the past and characterizes their poetry as outdated and fatuous (the stuff of mythical creatures and prophets). The image of *Faunei* may be read as an amusing literary slight against Andronicus and Naevius, but *vates* here is all the more damning in that it implies real human referents. The verses (*vorsibus*) that Andronicus and Naevius employ are at fault because they belong to and are indicative of the old and tired tradition of the *vates*. It should be noted at this moment that Ennius’ *vorsibus* has less to do with the actual content of poetry but more to do with meter. Until Ennius, the Roman epic tradition was set out in Saturnians, an authentic (i.e. non-Hellenic) metre, which was composed in alliterative lines comprised of two cola emphasizing rhythm over syllabic quantity. Ennius, however, went against the emergent Saturnian epic and composed his *Annales* in dactylic hexameter. For a poet, who perceived himself as the Roman Homer, or *alter Homerus* (as Horace later described him)²², the choice of

²¹ Quinn (1980) 121.

²² *Ep.* 2.1.50-1: *Ennius et sapiens et fortis et alter Homerus ut critici dicunt* (“Ennius, wise, bold and, as the critics say, a second Homer”).

dactylic hexameter was, in effect, “the expression of Ennius’ entire concept of his function and mission.”²³ Ennius’ bold innovation and denunciation of Saturnian poets may have misfired, but the readiness with which later poets adopted hexameters, for epic and other genres, secured his place within the Roman tradition.

Vates then, through Ennius, was charged with negative emphasis; it marked out Ennius himself, and those who wrote hexameters afterwards, as tasteful poets who correctly looked to their former Greek models and made it a point to innovate Roman poetry through importing new metres and styles. This is, in effect, Ennius’ mission: not only did he alter the course of Roman poetry, he clearly denounced poets whose mission or project was not in league with his own. Those poets (*alii*) who held onto what was traditional and therefore outdated bore the stain of *vates* and were outdated.

The use of *vates* in *Eclogue 7* seems to be in line with the Augustan reclamation of the word as a favorable term for a poet’s self-identification according to Thyrsis. However, another instance of *vates* in *Eclogue 9* shows this sense of the term being called into question. Lycidas confesses his discomfort to Moeris when *me quoque dicunt vatem pastores* (“the herdsmen even call me a poet,” 33-34). He is loath to believe their appraisal of his poetic status: *sed non ego credulus illis* (34). For a moment, it seems as though Lycidas is a poet now operating in the Aracadia of Thyrsis’ design, where the *pastores*, as readers, guarantee the poet’s success and title; the *pastores* are in charge of making young singers into fully developed poets / *vates*. However, the two previous lines indicate Lycidas’ preferred method of literary endowment, one that provides a counterweight for the undesirable *vates*: *et me fecere poetam Pierides; sunt et mihi carmina* (“the Pierian maidens have also made me a poet; their songs are mine,” 32-33).

²³ Newman (1965) 44.

Pastoral deities are fashioners of *poetae* whereas mortal pastoral inhabitants are fashioners of *vates*.

The role of the *vates*, it seems, has no proper place in the *Eclogues*. Its time has not yet arrived; it is, recall, *futuro* (7.28) – no longer weak (*nascentem*), but certain to come. Thyrsis anticipates a time when and a text where the *vates* can compose successfully. Let us, along with Thyrsis, glance ahead in Vergil's corpus to Book 7 of the *Aeneid* where the poet halts his epic in order to summon the muse Erato for further inspiration. At line 41 he writes: *tu vatem, tu, diva, mone* ("you, goddess, you – instruct the poet"). Vergil bids Erato to instruct (*mone*) him so that he can continue writing, and he commands her to instruct him, explicitly, as a *vates*. He is not the babbling prophet (as Ennius would have it) singing among the Fauns. He is not the ultimately defeated Thyrsis in *Eclogue 7*, nor is he Lycidas who distrusts the *pastores* estimation of him in *Eclogue 9*. Vergil, at *Aeneid* 7.41, is distinctly a *vates* participating in the hexametric epic tradition that he owes to Ennius himself. Just as Horace styled himself as *vates* through the agency of the Muses Euterpe and Polyhymnia, Vergil also styles himself as *vates* by way of a Muse, Erato. The manner in which Horace and Vergil identify as *vates* is not really an outright refusal of the term's negative past but rather a modification of it: *vates* now can and are expected to bring innovation to Roman poetic forms. Neither Horace nor Vergil, in these cases, appears to adopt Ennius' markedly dismissive tone when it comes to such self-fashioning.

The Augustan employment of *vates*, however, is not entirely without force. In fact, as a programmatic word, *vates* becomes the distinguishing term that establishes allegiances between certain poets (such as Horace and Vergil) and, without aspersion, excludes others. And that, in the end, is the trouble with Thyrsis' use of *vates*: it is his sole means of excluding other traditions (that of Corydon-Codrus) and stabilizing his career yet to come. Thyrsis' responses to Corydon's

poetry consistently write him out of the pastoral *locus* and the *Eclogues* themselves. When Corydon sets forth his vignette about Galatea (37-40), Thyrsis inverts the lovely, enticing imagery of his competitor and closes his riposte with *ite domum pasti, si quis pudor, ite iuveni* (“go home, my full-fed herds, if you have any shame, go home,” 44). At first, it seems a further inversion of Corydon’s own invitation to Galatea that when the bulls return to their stalls sated (*pasti tauri*, 39) *si qua tui Corydonis habet te cura, venito* (“if you have any concern for Corydon, come here,” 40). Thyrsis’ goading revision is clear enough in this context. His response, unbeknownst to Corydon, Meliboeus, or Daphnis, has a far greater significance within the *Eclogues* as a book. The terminal line of *Eclogue* 10, final poem in the collection, runs: *ite domum saturae, venit Hesperus, ite capellae* (“go home my full-fed goats, Evening comes, go home,” 77). The textual links between both lines is remarkable. When Thyrsis calls out *ite domum* in *Eclogue* 7, he himself is transported to the moment that decisively marks the end of the *Eclogues*, of the pastoral *locus*. His *ite domum* overlaps with that of *Eclogue* 10.77 almost perfectly. At his point of transition from the *Eclogues* to the *Georgics*, Thyrsis finds himself closer to texts where his poetry will be successful and he will be crowned a *vates*. This forward projection makes his guarantee of *futuro* (28) far more certain.

Thyrsis, unlike the poetic voice of *Odes* 1.1, lacks a ready-made tradition to strengthen his cause and his poetic skill here. The tradition to which he appropriately belongs will come. Thyrsis is a miscreant poet, rejecting the tradition shown to him by Corydon and lacking the stable poetic identity of *vates* (and the poets who should fall under that category) because he is not yet a *vates*; *futuro* makes this clear. He looks forward in time, presuming not only his own poetic identity but his own literary relevance – both of which lie outside the boundaries of this Arcadian *locus*. Thyrsis is, in part, the poet of the *Georgics* or the *Aeneid* – he is representative

of a poet who has, admittedly, benefited from the poetic instruction of the *locus amoenus* but, in aesthetic and practice (as we can tell from his contribution to the contest), is marking his separation and progression from it. If victory for a pastoral singer is a guarantee of *canonization* in the narrative and dramatic fabric of the pastoral *locus* (as Meliboeus' positive affirmation of Corydon at the end of *Eclogue 7* intimates), Thyrsis' loss officially excludes his contributions as pastoral poet. Yet, for a poet who has lost his vision of a vibrant pastoral *locus* and its ability to foster worthwhile (or successful) poetry, is this displacement not appropriate? Thyrsis cannot possibly win the contest in *Eclogue 8*: Thyrsis has no stable place in a genre that very consciously acknowledges and defends the preservation of a poetic past, a poetic tradition. Yet Thyrsis, tapping into his Mercurial self, momentarily mutes this past by stealing a debilitating line from Catullus. Thyrsis' *ite domum* permits him to cleverly tap into the transitional force of the *Eclogues*' final line while, simultaneously, stealing its impact.

CHAPTER 4

RECEPTION IN CALPURNIUS SICULUS' SIXTH *ECLOGUE*

Scholars believed that Titus Calpurnius Siculus lived during the third century AD – under either the emperor Carus or Alexander Severus – until Haupt, in 1875, found a number of poetic features that suggested he wrote in the Neronian era.¹ By 1980, Champlin had moved Calpurnius back under the Severan date; and, in 1997, Horsfall also denied a Neronian date, yet labeled Calpurnius (in Mayer's paraphrase) as a poet "with a fascination for the Neronian period."² For the sake of this chapter, however, we need not side with either the Neronian or the Severan camp. Evident in the scholarship and important for our reading is that Calpurnius was born *after* Vergil's acme; what matters is that Calpurnius is, generically, a poet born in Vergil's literary wake. Even though Hubbard focuses on Calpurnius' relationship with Vergil, whom Hubbard considers (in openly Bloomian terms) to be "the dominant poetic father"³, one cannot help but encounter Theocritus in these later *Eclogues*. Both poets, as pastoral precursors, and their influences are inescapable for Calpurnius and the reader.

Calpurnius wrote seven *Eclogues*. The first, fourth, and seventh *Eclogues* all share a panegyric theme, praising the new emperor (believed, depending on which side of the debate one favors, to be Nero or Severus) and seeking his patronage. The second and sixth *Eclogues* contain

¹ Mayer (2006) 454-456, offers a nice history of the scholarship behind the tug-of-war involved in dating Calpurnius Siculus.

² Mayer (2006) 455. Also, Hubbard (1996) 68 presents a nice list of scholars involved on both sides of the debate: "In favor of a later date are Champlin 1978, 1986; Armstrong 1986; Courtney 1987; Horsfall 1993. Arguing against the down-dating are Townend 1980; Mayer 1980; Wiseman 1982; Amat 1991."

³ Hubbard (1996) 67.

singing contests that differ greatly in theme and outcome from contests in earlier pastoral poetry. *Eclogue 5* is a didactic piece concerning the “management of sheep and goats”⁴: here the singer Micon acts as a poet in the tradition of Thyrsis, who was defeated in Vergil’s seventh *Eclogue*. Micon mirrors Thyrsis with his blend of pastoral and georgic poetics.⁵ *Eclogue 3* is nearly elegiac in tone, presenting the “non-pastoral motifs of jealousy, domestic violence, contrition, love letters, suicide threats, and dead lovers’ epitaphs.”⁶ His extant poetry shows us a poet cognizant of his place within a growing pastoral tradition and confident in his own style of *aemulatio*; his *Eclogues* are not merely a hodgepodge of Theocritus and Vergil. He is a pivotal figure in the pastoral genre, one who passes the torch to later Latin poets such as Nemesianus⁷; he was imitated (Amat says) by poets like Modoin d’Autun⁸, and “il est fort prisé de Petrarque et de Ronsard.”⁹ It was specifically his book of *Eclogues*, not the *Laus Pisonis* (a panygeric poem written for Piso), that established Calpurnius as a poet during the Renaissance; once the *Eclogues* were attributed to Calpurnius “il passait pour un poète de grande valeur, presque l’égal de Théocrite et de Virgile.”¹⁰

⁴ Keene (1996) 117.

⁵ Keene (1996) 117 declares that *Eclogue 5* “is to be classified with the Georgics of Virgil rather than with his *Eclogues*. It is to a great extent an imitation of the third Georgic . . .”

⁶ Hubbard (1996) 69-70. In describing these *Eclogues* I have followed Hubbard’s model.

⁷ A Carthage-born poet of the late third century CE. Four *Eclogues* along with the sizeable fragment of a didactic poem, the *Cynegetica* (“On Hunting”), are attributed to him. His clear progression from the pastoral *Eclogue* to the didactic form makes for an attractive and early case for the so-called “Vergilian career”: pastoral, didactic, epic.

⁸ Amat (1991) xix: “Il a été imité par Modoin d’Autun, sous Charlemagne.” D’Autun was an imitator of the *Laus Pisonis* (a poem attributed to Calpurnius) not the *Eclogues*.

⁹ Amat (1991) xix: “He is rather prized by Petrarch and Ronsard.”

¹⁰ Amat (1991) xix: “He passed for a poet of great value, almost the equal of Theocritus and Virgil.” Praise of Calpurnius is hardly consistent in modern scholarship. A few years after Amat, Wendell Clausen (1994) xv n.3, in his edition of Vergil’s *Eclogues*, presents a less than flattering view of “post-Vergilian pastoral poetry, that is, poetry written in the Renaissance and later (for Vergil’s ancient *imitators*, Calpurnius Siculus and Nemesianus, *may be disregarded*), which lacks the delicate hardness of Vergil’s *Eclogues*; it tends, rather, to be simple and sentimental –

All this is to situate Calpurnius in the position of a younger poet, one in the process of establishing himself (given the textual evidence available to us), and one who must build upon (yet push against) his very prominent precursors. The poet's burden, in the face of pastoral tradition, is doubled by the presence of Theocritus and Vergil; yet, in a more positive perspective, the poet's sources of inspiration and of pliant intertexts are also doubled. As we consider *Eclogue 6*, which depicts a failed amoebaeon contest, we find a highly self-conscious poet who, along with his pastoral singers, is in direct dialogue with the traditions available to him. As a young poet striving to shake off the overwhelming voices of his precursors, his teachers, Calpurnius is similar to the Theocritean Lakon in *Idyll 5*, struggling against Komatas. In sorting out what themes may be rightly incorporated into the pastoral genre, Calpurnius is like both Thyrsis and Corydon, in Vergil's seventh *Eclogue*. Tradition dictates a particular set of expectations that works for and against Calpurnius. Navigating between tradition and innovation is always a tricky endeavor for the poet. Calpurnius, especially in his depiction of an aborted contest in *Eclogue 6*, shows that no poet can plot his own course and come out of it unscathed. C. H. Keene, in his 1887 edition of Calpurnius' *Eclogues*, brusquely deems *Eclogue 6* to be "on the whole the least successful of the poems of Calpurnius."¹¹ Even Jacqueline Amat, who is generally favorable to Calpurnius (as long as he does not encroach upon Vergil's superiority)¹², observes "ce poème est le plus faible du recueil."¹³ Over the course of this chapter, we will show

Milton's *Lycidas* is a powerful exception – and frequently degenerates into mere prettiness." [Emphasis is our own.]

¹¹ Keene (1996) 132.

¹² Amat (1991) xviii-xix: After conceding that Calpurnius is on par with Vergil metrically, she caps her initial portrait of the younger poet with "En somme, un jeune homme talentueux, mais sans génie (In sum, a talented young man but without genius)." That is, without the "génie" of a poet like Vergil.

¹³ Amat (1991) 53: "This is the weakest poem of the collection." This sentiment comes from J. Hubaux (1930) 226. Regarding Calpurnius' *Eclogues* as a whole, Hubaux, on p. 204, says: "Elles

how *Eclogue 6* is in direct dialogue with the pastoral amoebaeian tradition, intimately familiar with its hallmarks and, likewise, with its potential for innovations.

Eclogue 6 begins with the idea of lateness. The poem's first two words, spoken by Astylus, are *serus ades* ("you arrive late," 1). If we think back on Hubbard's use of Bloom's theory of poetic inheritance, the adjective *serus* is a particularly charged word; it drums up a certain literary anxiety that Hubbard (via Harold Bloom)¹⁴ refers to as the "unbearable weight of tradition."¹⁵ While Calpurnius may be flagging his perceived place within the pastoral tradition, *serus* is directly pitched at Astylus' soon-to-be rival, Lycidas. According to Astylus, two young herdsmen – Nyctilus and Alcon – have just recently participated in an amoebaeian contest (*modo . . . certavere . . . alterno carmine*, 1-2). As both Lycidas and the reader are at a disadvantage, both being late (*serus*), and must depend on Astylus to telegraph the details, this contest should be properly vouched for. Astylus is quick to provide the necessary credentials: a judge was present, Astylus himself (*iudice me*, 3), and both participants offered up wagers (*non sine pignore*, 3). Alcon, we are told, was named the victor (*sustulit omnia victor*, 5).

The reader may be satisfied with this second-hand report of the contest between Nyctilus and Alcon, but Lycidas immediately takes umbrage with it: he does not doubt that a contest actually occurred (that much he is willing to believe) but rather sincerely doubts that Alcon could have bested his opponent. Alcon, Lycidas retorts, is a shabby poet (*rudis*, 6); his victory is plausible (*credibile est*, 7) only if harsh-singing birds (a crow and an owl) can overcome ones

sont inférieures même à la médiocrité (They are inferior, touching upon mediocrity)." Though Amat admits that Calpurnius does display some originality in this *Eclogue*, "il ne démarque jamais Virgile (He does not always shake off Virgil)" (53).

¹⁴ Hubbard (1996) 67 where he describes Bloom's work on poetic inheritance and his own use of this theory in reading Calpurnius' *Eclogues*.

¹⁵ Hubbard (1996) *passim*: We have drawn these words from the title of his article. His reading of Calpurnius' *Eclogues* stems from this very idea lateness within a tradition. On p. 68, Hubbard states that "Calpurnius was acutely aware of his belatedness and derivative literary status. . . ."

that sing beautifully (a thistlefinch and a nightingale, 7-8). The impact of Lycidas' reply is twofold: Alcon's success (and Astylus' own aesthetic judgment) is both against nature's design and against the design of Lycidas' rhetorical flare, as demonstrated by his well-crafted *adynaton*. It is this dispute –over who truly merited victory in a former contest – that drives Astylus and Lycidas into contention and moves them closer to becoming amoebaeon opponents. Such a contention is vastly different from what we have seen in Theocritus' and Vergil's contests where theft and disparities in age or poetic craft provided the necessary impetus for competition. Astylus and Lycidas, who now bicker over “differing estimations of Nyctilus' and Alcon's poetic work,” have altered their pastoral identities: they are not typical Sicilian or Arcadian singers but rather ones that inhabit a *locus* where “book culture and literary criticism, rather than the performed word, is clearly dominant.”¹⁶ That is not to suggest that Theocritus' and Vergil' pastoral denizens are not readers and critics of other texts. Indeed, in the previous two chapters we have seen them adeptly playing those roles. The difference lies in the relationships between characters found in the imagined worlds of the *Idylls* and Vergil's *Eclogues*: Lakon and Komatas have a clear relationship in *Idyll 5*; Corydon (and by extension Codrus) has a clear relationship with Thyrsis in *Eclogue 7*. The contests in *Idyll 5* and *Eclogue 7* stem from personal disputes that are clearly delineated to the reader. In Calpurnius' sixth *Eclogue*, however, the reader is given no context for just who Nyctilus and Alcon are and what their relationships with Astylus and Lycidas truly are. We are never privy to the amoebaeon poetry of this former contest. Outside of *Eclogue 6*, the reader is at a loss to find further depictions or references to Nyctilus or Alcon in Calpurnius' work: the reader cannot look to the dramatic fiction of Calpurnius' *Eclogues* to flesh out the matter. The questing reader is invited to search outside of Calpurnius' poetry altogether

¹⁶ Hubbard (1996) 69.

in search of an external model for the unseen contest. In this way, Nyctilus and Alcon (and their contest) can be speculatively thought of as any former amoebaeon text from, say, the pastoral collections of Vergil or Theocritus. The growing contention between Astylus and Lycidas is over their unspecified literary past; as they dispute who truly won the former contest, they are really disputing what aspects of tradition are and are not permitted in Calpurnius' newer pastoral landscape.

In our search to better understand the unspecified literary past of *Eclogue 6*, we find an outside model in Vergil's seventh *Eclogue*. Recall that Meliboeus, following after an errant goat, has come across Daphnis who bids him watch the contest unfolding between Corydon and Thyrsis (1-13). It is Daphnis' invitation to Meliboeus that begs comparison with Calpurnius' sixth *Eclogue*: *huc ades, o Meliboee* ("here you are, Meliboeus," 11). This line is, in part, echoed in Astylus' *serus ades, Lycida* (*Eclogue 6.1*). Both speakers preface their vocative address to a newly arrived herdsman with the verb *ades*. Space and location are vitally important in Vergil's text (the deictic *huc* occurring three times in lines 6-11), which comes as no surprise when we recall that this poem unveils Vergil's new pastoral *locus* – Arcadia. However, location is less important to Astylus and Lycidas; they are far more concerned with time: *serus* ("late," 1) and *modo* ("recently," 1) are sharply juxtaposed in Astylus' opening lines. That Lycidas and the reader are belatedly on the scene (*serus*) is all the more unfortunate since the contest in question has happened recently (*modo*). It seems mere happenstance that Lycidas did not stumble upon the contest at all. Yet chance had everything to do with the construction of Vergil's seventh *Eclogue*, which is reported to the reader via Meliboeus' memory of the event (*haec memini*, 69). Meliboeus' presence beside Daphnis was entirely fortuitous, and he conveys this in the poem's first line by the striking adverb *forte* ("by chance," 1).

With Vergil *Eclogue 7* as our primary intertext here, the reader expects Astylus' *serus ades* ("you arrive late," 1) to be the beginning of a more thoroughgoing recollection. It would behoove Astylus, playing the role of a fortunate Meliboeus, to recall his experience for both Lycidas and the reader; the curiosity of both parties invites recollection. As mindful readers of Vergil's *haec memini* (*Eclogue 7.69*), we expect a transcription of the former events. Astylus does no such thing. He is not, nor will he play the part of, a Meliboeus. What the reader finds in Calpurnius is not an iteration of the past but rather a steady focus on the poem's dramatic present, on the emergent dispute between Astylus and Lycidas. There is a considerable gap between the past and present, between what Astylus knows and what the reader and Lycidas do not know. When Calpurnius bypasses the Vergilian model found in *Eclogue 7's haec memini*, he chooses to further widen these gaps. The past is not directly accessible to us in detail. Meliboeus' recollection of the "great contest" (*certamen magnum*, 16) between Corydon and Thyrsis not only allows for us, as readers, to share in Meliboeus' fortuitous (*forte*, 1) encounter, it encourages us to participate in the contest's judgment (which is not given to us explicitly). If readers are perplexed by Corydon's unattested victory, they are encouraged to scrutinize Meliboeus' transcription for evidence. This type of reading experience is, naturally, not a uniform or unanimous one. Meliboeus' preservation of the *certamen magnum* (lacking an official judgment from Daphnis, who was presumably the *iudex*) has led to a flurry of scholarly debate over just who is the legitimate poetic champion of *Eclogue 7*.¹⁷ Clausen suggests that Vergil used Meliboeus' "imperfect recollection" of the contest in order to sidestep "the obligation, or possibly the embarrassment, of justifying his umpire's decision."¹⁸ And thus scholars, who are readers, have been left to argue and sort out the details in the end. The strategies of this

¹⁷ Clausen (1994) 210-212 provides a helpful summary of the long-standing debate.

¹⁸ Clausen (1994) 213.

scholarship, of this revisionary reading process – which is contentious – are not entirely different from what we see unfolding between Astylus and Lycidas in Calpurnius’s sixth *Eclogue*. We, as readers, are bearing witness to an ongoing readerly debate between two herdsmen, between Calpurnius himself and Vergilian tradition.

The dispute over a literary past is no slight matter for Astylus and Lycidas. The poetic merits of the former pair of singers, Nyctilus and Alcon, are directly tied into the poetic abilities and motivations of the current pair of singers. To bear this point out, let us now return to Lycidas’ first retort, the bird-themed *adynaton* of lines 6-8:

*Nyctilon ut cantu rudis exsuperavit Alcon,
Astile, credibile est, si vincat acanthida cornix,
vocalem superet si dirus aedona bubo*
(“that crude Alcon could have beaten Nyctilus in song is believable, Astylus, if the crow conquers the thistlefinch, if the shriek-owl overcomes the tuneful nightingale”).

Alcon’s success as a poet and, by extension, Astylus’ future poetic success in his current argument with Lycidas is impossible; it violates the natural balance drawn out in the *adynaton*. The literary past, for Lycidas, is variously discordant and pleasant. By defending his reading of the past, Lycidas – by means of the explicit bird imagery – draws a clear line of transmission between himself and Theocritus. Lycidas’ *adynaton* comes, with minor variations, from the final part of *Idyll 5*, where Komatas, now set upon by his former student Lakon, counters his young rival with his own bird-themed couplet:

*οὐ θεμιτὸν Λάκων ποτ’ ἀηδόνα κίσσας ἐρίσδειν,
οὐδ’ ἔποπας κύκνοισι: τὸ δ’ ὦ τάλαν ἔσσι φιλεχθής.*
(“Lakon, it is against nature that a jay contend with a nightingale, that a hoopoe contend with swans: you are a quarrelsome wretch,” 136-137).

The force of these lines, chiefly in the words *οὐ θεμιτόν*, points out the impossibility of Lakon’s success in this contest. The terms here are twofold: Lakon’s victory is prevented by nature’s design, which deems him to be a lesser bird, and, furthermore, he is easily written off as

a mere instigator (*φιλεχθής*, 137). In their contest, this couplet is Komatas' trumping verse: Lakon does not respond, though it is his turn. The judge Morson immediately confers victory upon Komatas in the lines following: *τὴν δὲ Κομάτα δωρεῖται Μόρσων τὰν ἀμνίδα* ("Morson awards you the lamb, Komatas," 138-139).

In Calpurnius' *locus*, then, Lycidas is not only reading himself into a former contest, he is utilizing the winning words of Komatas intertextually for his own success in his readerly dispute with Astylus. It is as if, at this moment in *Eclogue 6*, Lycidas hopes to prematurely win the budding contest by importing a sentiment that garnered Komatas an immediate and undisputed victory. Unlike the unseen contest between Alcon and Nyctilus, Lycidas has witnessed (or read) the contest in *Idyll 5*. Lines 6-8 show Lycidas inserting himself into the role of Komatas and, thereby, asserting himself as a victor. Furthermore, Lycidas' intertextual reference to Komatas reveals his open support for Morson's judgment in *Idyll 5*. Is this not the root of contention in *Eclogue 6*? Lycidas and Astylus are, as pastoral readers, bickering over their "differing estimations"¹⁹ of a past contest. Lycidas is now further disputing the poetic past by drumming up a Theocritean contest and rather ostensibly supporting that victor's claim.²⁰ When Lycidas employs a version of Komatas' verses at lines 7-8, he is not contesting tradition as it stands in the *Idylls*. He is, alternatively, in agreement with that tradition. The relationship he shares with Theocritus' Komatas is one where a student benefits from, but does not hope to overshadow and nullify, the craft of his precursors. Lycidas supports this markedly positive line of reception between teacher and student, between older and younger poets; he proves himself to be the model student that Lakon refused to be. The readerly argument in *Eclogue 6* has, it seems,

¹⁹ Hubbard (1996) 69.

²⁰ Presumably if we extended this specific textual dispute, Astylus would support Lakon, the opposing poet.

proven Lycidas to be textual thief. By stealing the winning words of Komatas, he anticipates his own victory. In this way, his strategy appears to be that of Vergil's Thyrsis, in *Eclogue 7*, who openly steals both Catullan barbs (26) and the final line of the *Eclogues* (44) for his own advantage. The readerly dispute is a platform for Lycidas to flex his poetic strengths, which lie in his intimate familiarity with other pastoral texts.

Yet Astylus does not succumb to the Mercurial impulse that Lycidas resorts to. Quite the opposite: he turns his attentions inward, away from texts external to this *locus*. His stake in the dispute, at this point, is far more personal. His reply reveals a direr portrait of the consequences of literary revision by way of readerly quarreling. As we have seen, victory is not merely a notch in the herdsman's belt. As the declared winner, his poetry is granted the further success of posterity. His poetry will not perish along with him. His song will be requested, paid for, and taught to other pastoral inhabitants. The loser of a contest has little hope of further poetic impact outside the imagined confines of his specific text (whether *Idyll* or *Eclogue*). If Astylus yields to Lycidas at this moment, he will invert his recent judgment thereby refusing Alcon the credit he is due. Such a possibility of defeat has potential consequences for Astylus: his future as a poet will be negated. If Nyctilus is, as Lycidas insists, the better poet (*si magis*, 10) then Astylus will renounce the pursuit of his lover, Petale: *non potiar Petale, qua nunc ego maceror una* ("may I never win Petale, by whom alone I am now vexed," 9). The reference to Petale, though surely sentimental, is left vague until the themes for the contest are declared later in the poem.

Mnasyllus, as the appointed *iudex*, bids both herdsmen to sing about amorous themes: *Astyle, tu Petalen, Lycida, tu Phyllida lauda* ("Astylus, you praise Petale and you, Lycidas, praise Phyllis," 74). Petale, it is revealed, is no mere elegiac catch but is the essential driving theme of Astylus' poetry both in this contest and apart from it. In more severe but no less pertinent terms, Petale is

his poetry. Like Vergil's Gallus in *Eclogue* 10 and certainly like Corydon in *Eclogue* 7, Astylus' love gives rise to his poetic output. Recall that Corydon expresses, in no uncertain terms, that if deprived of his beloved Alexis (*si formosus Alexis montibus his abeat*, 55-56), whom he addressed back in *Eclogue* 2, the rivers would dry up (*flumina sicca*, 56). The *flumina* are not solely geographic markers in Vergil's landscape; they are representative of pastoral song itself. When, in *Eclogue* 3, the judge Palaemon calls an end to an ongoing context, he says "boys, now shut off the rivers" (*claudite iam rivos, pueri*, 111). Palaemon's *rivos* are the figurative representation of the young competitors' poetry. Just as the loss of Alexis will be the loss of Corydon's primary cause for song, so too the loss of Petale for Calpurnius' Astylus will remove his reason for writing. Where the readerly dispute in *Eclogue* 6 is advantageous to Lycidas, it serves as a warning to Astylus. Perhaps we can glean an early lesson at this point. Any poet, especially one who comes late into a tradition (*serus*, 1) and is keenly aware of his belatedness, is granted a boon of intertexts for his use. However, if he composes always with an eye to his past, always questioning his status, he runs the risk of poetic sterility – forced into silence by an overwhelming tradition.

It is through the idea of lateness within a tradition, apparent to both Calpurnius and his pastoral interlocutors, that we have read our way back into the Vergilian *locus*, in particular the Arcadia of *Eclogue* 7. As we argued in the previous chapter, this is a *locus* where Apollo, who is the rightful inheritor of Hermes' lyre, holds sway as the chief deity. Yet Apollo is not the sole influence on Vergil's pastoral song. We recall that there is an observable tension between the Apollonian and Dionysian, between the "ordering intellect and daemonic inspiration."²¹ This is, as we have argued, the major conflict between Corydon and Thyrsis. Corydon wishes to inherit

²¹ Lee (1989) 52.

the successes of his model poet Codrus, who writes verses that approach the compositional fineness of Apollo himself (*proxima Phoebi versibus ille facit*, 22-23). Thyrsis, conversely, bids his fellow Arcadians to adorn him with accoutrements suggestive of Bacchus-Dionysus: *baccare frontem cingite* (27-28). If Apollo and his aesthetic counterpart Dionysus are a part of the Vergilian pastoral tradition, how does Calpurnius, picking up where Vergil left off, treat these deities in his book of *Eclogues*? Bacchus, it seems, is of little importance to Calpurnius' *Eclogues*: he is allotted but one direct reference in the collection. In *Eclogue 4*, Corydon flatters another herdsman with this positive appraisal: *et modo te Baccheis Musa corymbis munerat* ("and now the Muse rewards you with Bacchic ivy," 56-57). Like Thyrsis' *baccare*, Bacchus here appears only through the tokens associated with him: he has no direct agency of his own. The role of Apollo in Calpurnius' poetry is comparatively sizeable: references to *Phoebus* occur three times²² and references to *Apollo* occur seven times.²³ The considerable presence of Apollo, in light of Vergilian pastoral, may suggest that Calpurnius is in league with his predecessor's aesthetic, if not obsequiously. However, counter to expectations, the Calpurnian Phoebus Apollo is less frequently identified with music or even the literary aspects of the pastoral *locus*. More often than not he is associated with the urban center of Rome itself, one exterior (if not, in some ways, antithetical) to the *locus amoenus*.

A young Corydon, in *Eclogue 4*, is chided by Meliboeus for composing verses for Apollo because "the godheads of mighty Rome should not be sung in the style of Menalca's sheepfold" (*magnae numina Romae non ita cantari debent ut ovile Menalcae*, 10-11).²⁴ Corydon is not an inept poet, despite his youth (*iuvenis*, 10); in fact he is, Meliboeus implies, a rather skilled

²² All three references occur in *Eclogue 4*: 70, 89, and 159.

²³ Four times in *Eclogue 4*: 9, 57, 72, 87. Once in *Eclogue 6*: 16. Twice in *Eclogue 7*: 22 and 84.

²⁴ Menalca is a pastoral character who appears three times in Vergil's *Eclogues*: 2.15, 3 (*passim*), 5 (*passim*).

pastoral poet of Vergilian pedigree. Yet therein lies the trouble: as a pastoral inhabitant, who composes pastoral poetry, his verses are not appropriate for an urban deity. Pastoral poetry, which is established on the conceit of rustic versus urban, does not belong in the city; it will not transfer from one particular *locus* to another. The reader already suspects that Corydon and Meliboeus are engaging in a form of doublespeak when they refer to the god Apollo as one *numina Romae* (10). Before his enthusiasm is quashed by Meliboeus, Corydon says that he is well prepared to sing about the god Apollo “who rules over peoples and cities and toga-clad peace” (*qui populos urbesque regit pacemque togatam*, 8). What is more spectacular is that Corydon has, he believes, written verses that belie his pastoral identity: he has not written verses “which do re-echo in a woodland fashion” (*quae nemorale resulent*, 5) but rather ones “with which the golden-age may be sung” (*quibus aurea possint saecula cantari*, 6-7). The golden age once presaged by Vergil’s fourth *Eclogue* has come at last. And this Calpurnian Apollo is at its helm instead of the one Vergil foretold, that is his own: *iam regnat Apollo* (10). Corydon, though late in coming like his creator, is able to do what Vergil could not do himself: actively write *carmina* fitting for such a leader. Where Vergil anticipated the arrival of a golden age Apollo, Calpurnius (and his pastoral inhabitants) is able to properly commend and commemorate him. But Corydon, and Calpurnius himself, are not quite ready for this lofty task. He is incapable of crossing over into Rome, of crossing over into another genre entirely. This generic flexibility does, however, belong to Meliboeus. Corydon asks Meliboeus, as courier, to bring his best poems to Apollo: *fer, Meliboee, deo mea carmina* (58). Meliboeus is all the more capable of doing this because “it is your right to visit the sacred shrines of the Palantine Phoebus” (*tibi fas est sacra Palatini penetralia visere Phoebi*, 158-159). This Calpurnian Phoebus Apollo is both leader of the Vergilian golden age and is housed in the very real geography of Rome. If

Corydon's poetry is to reach this Roman *numen* and appeal to him, it must deny (or cleverly disguise) its affiliations with the pastoral *locus amoenus*. The Calpurnian Apollo is not the gentle, approachable teacher of poets. He is, rather, a distant deity – the pastoral outlier who, as a patron, is difficult to access and appease.

The most arresting and telling appearance of Apollo comes in the final line of Calpurnius' book of *Eclogues*. In *Eclogue 7*, the young Corydon regales Lycotas with his recent visit to Rome. Instead of depending on Meliboeus, instead of being satisfied with his woodland verses (*nemorale*, 4.5), he traveled to Rome in order to seek out this new Apollo. He was there, away from the pastoral *locus*, for quite some time: Lycotas remarks that Corydon is *lentus ab urbe venis* ("you are slow in returning from the city," 1). Corydon, who strove to be like the Vergilian Tityrus in *Eclogue 4* (*Tityrus esse laboras*, 64), returns to the pastoral genre, clad in the adjective which first described Tityrus in Vergil's *Eclogues*: *lentus*. There we find a Tityrus who is *lentus in umbra* ("relaxed in the shade," 4): it is his direct engagement with pastoral themes that makes him *lentus*. However Corydon, through his absence from the pastoral *locus*, through his temporary rejection of pastoral themes, is transformed into a Tityran figure: one whom Apollo probably will not reject (*nec mihi Phoebus forsitan abnuerit*, "perhaps he will not reject me," 4.70-71). Back from Rome, we suspect that Corydon is correct in this suspicion, for he has now seen the golden age patron for himself.

While taking in spectacles at an amphitheater (7.23-72), Corydon reports that he just nearly caught a direct view of his emperor god (Lycotas calls him the *venerandum numen*, "revered godhead", in line 76), whom he tellingly describes as *in uno et Martis vultus et Apollonis esse putavi* ("I thought his face to be that of both Mars and Apollo in one," 83-84). It is with this very line that Calpurnius chooses to conclude his book of *Eclogues*. Up to now, we

have seen Apollo refracted in Calpurnius' *Eclogues*; he has been largely obscured, seen only through his disparate constituent aspects: distant Roman god and literary patron (*Eclogue* 4), handsome and golden-haired (*Eclogue* 6.14-16), and as *pastoralis*, a non-singing shepherd (*Eclogue* 7.22). Now, at the end of Calpurnius' collection, we come to see the god's true likeness – his *vultus*. The structure of line 84 wedges this face between both Mars and Apollo. Corydon himself cannot report this detail with certainty, as indicated by *putavi*. Here, in Calpurnius, we find a blend of Apollo and Mars, not his expected aesthetic counterpart Bacchus-Dionysus (as we saw in Vergil). The measured aesthetic of Apollo will not find balance with the unfettered, yet still positive, creative energies of Dionysus. Here Mars holds equal dominion: violence, itself a type of unrestrained energy, will play counterpart to restraint and “ordering intellect.”²⁵

Pastoral intimations of Mars, and the military violence he represents, are rare and, when they do occur, are presented as external to the *locus amoenus*. We find such a reference in Vergil's tenth *Eclogue*. Here a lovelorn and elegiac Gallus, playing the role of Theocritean Daphnis, is approached by none other than Apollo himself who informs him: *tua cura Lycoris perque nives alium perque horrida castra secuta est* (“your beloved Lycoris has followed another through snows, through terrible [military] encampments,” 22-23). Gallus, now in Arcadia, finds his lover displaced – wandering through Martian *castra*, which are far outside of the Arcadian landscape.

The violence of Mars is everpresent in *Eclogue* 6: both Astylus and Lycidas seethe with it throughout their interaction. This is especially evident in the final 15 lines of the poem.

Mnasyllus, as appointed judge, has set the singing theme - love (*Astile, tu Petalen, Lycida, tu Phyllida lauda*, “Astylus you praise Petale, Lycidas you praise Phyllis,” 75) and we expect, at last, Astylus and Lycidas to settle their dispute in an amoebaeian fashion. Lycidas speaks next,

²⁵ Lee (1989) 52.

but instead of singing about Phyllis he proceeds to slight his opponent with a vague sexual insult. Mnasyllus, he says, recently overheard Astylus and Acanthis, an otherwise unknown woman, in the Thalean wood (77-78). What exactly he heard is unclear to the reader, but Astylus' immediate reaction makes it clear that he has cause to be personally offended: *non equidem possum, cum provocet iste, tacere* ("truly I cannot keep quiet when that one provokes me," 79). Lycidas' provocation has ruled out Astylus' genuine participation. The slighted herdsman says that he is about to burst (*rumpor enim*, 80) – a verb that is, as we saw in the previous chapter, laden with sexual as well as violent significance. What is more, he openly claims that Lycidas is an unfit competitor since "he seeks nothing except quarrels" (*nihil nisi iurgia quaerit*, 80). This denigration of Lycidas' motivations as a competitor is all too similar to the word Komatas used in *Idyll 5* to pin Lakon: quarrelsome (*φιλεχθής*, 137), that is, not interested in the amoebaeian game proper. The *vultus* of Mars has now clearly emerged. The herdsmen have shifted their focus from competitive song, which is bound by specific rules, to *iurgia*, which wholly preclude the possibility of pastoral composition. Astylus fully reveals his own Martian impulse when he threatens Lycidas not with insults but with physical violence: *efficerem ne te quisquam tibi turpior esset* ("I would see to it that no one would seem uglier to you than yourself," 88). This sort of threat is striking in a pastoral context. Amat notes that Calpurnius, in *Eclogue 6*, "confère à ses personnages et à leur dispute une violence et une rusticité fort éloignées de l'élégance virgilienne."²⁶ We are indeed far from Vergil and his pastoral tradition. The violent rusticity on display here has taken the proper place of settling disputes through poetic arbitration.²⁷

²⁶ Amat (1991) 53: "Confers upon his characters and their dispute a violence and rusticity very removed from Virgilian elegance."

²⁷ Amat (1991) 55.

Calpurnius' poetry will not descend into depictions of outright violence. After all, the representative *vultus* that oversees the Calpurnian *Eclogues* is shared between Mars and Apollo. The bitter wrangling and near outbreak of violence in *Eclogue* 6 must be balanced out by the Apollonian focus on literary craft. Through a comparative reading of the first Einsiedeln *Eclogue*²⁸, we will show that Calpurnius' violence does not occur to spite the expectations of the pastoral tradition but acts as a form of *aemulatio*, steering the potential of amoebian poetry away from tradition. The presence of Mars, like that of the Vergilian Bacchus, reveals an integral part of Calpurnius' own aesthetic. Twelve lines into the first Einsiedeln *Eclogue*, after challenges have been made by the herdsmen Thamyras and Ladas, Ladas deflects further pre-contest wrangling by asking "what does it help to waste daylight with mad words" (*quid iuvat insanis lucem consumere verbis*, 13). Since dusk so often concludes songs in the pastoral landscape, daylight is too precious to waste with *insanis verbis*, with words that expressly do not belong to the diction of amoebian poetry. Daylight (*lucem*) is, figuratively, the primary poetic space available to a pastoral poet. Yet a traditional contest has no place in Calpurnius' sixth *Eclogue*. Astylus and Lycidas focus their poetic energies on their *iurgia*, ever delaying the progress of a formal contest.

Just prior to the appearance of Mnasyllus (who offers to be a judge), Lycidas, momentarily breaking from the quarrel, poses the question: *sed quid opus vana consumere tempora lite* ("but what need is there to waste time with useless strife?" 27). A textual link to the first Einsiedeln *Eclogue* is immediately apparent in the verb they both employ: *consumere*. Instead of *insanis verbis*, Calpurnius supplements *vana lite*. Calpurnius' Lycidas would seem to

²⁸ Duff (1982) 319: "The Einsiedeln pastorals, so called after the tenth-century manuscript at Einsiedeln" are comprised of two incomplete poems that "date almost certainly from the early years of Nero's reign."

be in agreement with Ladas in Einsiedeln *Eclogue* 1.13 regarding the use and purpose of strife: insults must eventually yield to the constructive rules of a contest. This, however, is not the case at all. Calpurnius, though reflecting the Einsiedeln poet's concerns, alters the terms of his question. Where the Einsiedeln poet asked "What does it help" (*quid iuvat*), Calpurnius poses a rather different question: "What is the need" (*quid opus*). The elision of the verb *est* subtly allows the primary definition of *opus*, removed from its context, to emerge: a work (artistic or otherwise). The fact that Astylus and Lycidas, after laying their extravagant wagers (30-58), fail to hold a formal contest is no oversight. Their bitter argument fills the poetic space typically reserved for measured amoebaeon song.²⁹ Calpurnius' *opus* here, by way of Mars' aesthetic influence, is in fact the very dispute between Astylus and Lycidas.

We will conclude this chapter with perhaps the most striking feature of *Eclogue* 6: the abandonment of the traditional venue for amoebaeon song, that is under a tree, in favor of a cave. At line 61, Mnasyllus suggests that the competitors relocate *sub ilice* ("under an ilex-tree"), a fitting place any pastoral contest. Yet Astylus and Lycidas will have none of this and will not abide by the dictates of Vergilian or Theocritean traditions. Astylus caps his response with two complaints about the waters surrounding them: *vicini nobis sonus obstrepat amnis* ("the neighboring river's sound drowns us out," 62) and *obest arguti glarea rivi* ("the disruptive river's gravel interferes," 65). Astylus and Lycidas seek an escape from this loud, disruptive *locus*: the rivers, in particular, impede the poetic abilities of Calpurnius' singers. This is an unexpected complaint. The pastoral environment generally enables song. Yet Astylus and Lycidas are belated participants in a genre that is not theirs alone. Their *locus* is an inherited one, containing all the other poetry sung there before Calpurnius' arrival on the scene. The emphasis

²⁹ The use of *tempora*, a more encompassing term than the Einsiedeln poet's *lucem*, reaffirms this point.

here on water – *amnis* and *rivi* – and its audible distractions makes this all the more understandable. Rivers, as noted above, are not merely features of the pastoral landscape, they are representative of the poetry composed there: *claudite iam rivos, pueri; sat prata biberunt* (“shut off the rivers, boys; the meadows have drunk enough,” Vergil, *Eclogue* 3.111). Pastoral song is figuratively transformed into water, into the very substance that nourishes and maintains the natural world that comprises the genre itself. Vergil’s employment of *sat* is quite telling in light of Astylus’ complaints: the venue found under the ilex-tree is filled by a surfeit of others’ poems. The surrounding disruption is not, as Hubbard calls it, that of an “unbearable” tradition but rather an overbearing one.³⁰

Calpurnius and his herdsmen must find a neutral space, a quieter and relatively untouched location for their own output. Lycidas is first to respond with a compelling suggestion:

*Si placet, antra magis vicinaque saxa petamus,
saxa, quibus viridis stillanti vellere muscus
dependet scopulisque cavum sinuantibus arcum
imminet exesa veluti testudine concha.*

Mnasyllus: venimus et tacito sonitum mutavimus antro
 (“if it is appealing, let us rather seek the caves and neighboring crags, from which green moss hangs with dripping fleece, and a shell roof, like a hollowed out tortoise shell, overhangs rocks forming a round arch, 66-69).

And so, at this moment, they retreat to the cave for textual quiet. Mnasyllus takes stock of this silence at their arrival: *venimus et tacito sonitum mutavimus antro* (“we have arrived and have replaced noise with a silent cave,” 70). The cave is truly *tacito* because, when we look back at the pastoral tradition, this cave has never hosted competitive song. Caves are present in Vergil’s *Eclogues* 5 and 6 where they serve as the backdrop for funerary dirges for Daphnis and Silenus’ mythical-cosmological song respectively. There is nothing comparable in Theocritus’ *Idylls*. Yet Calpurnius is not directly focused on his pastoral precursors at this moment. The simile Lycidas

³⁰ Hubbard (1996).

uses to describe the cave – *exesa veluti testudine* – transports us to the text which predates Vergil and Theocritus; a text which served, as we argued in Chapter One, as the model for the motivations of future pastoral figures: the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*.

Before he fulfills his role as thief and cowherd (*ληιστῆρ', ἐλατῆρα βοῶν*, 14), Hermes, for the first time, leaves his cave, his birthplace: *οὐδὸν ὑπερβαίνων ὑψηρεφέος ἄντροιο* (“stepping over the threshold of his high-roofed cave,” 23). At this very moment, one that is variously liminal (as indicated by *οὐδὸν*), Hermes comes across the tortoise that will eventually be crafted into his musical lyre. With creature in hand, he returns to his cavernous home (*κίε δῶμα*, 40) and proceeds to hollow the shell out (41-42). Hermes’ first act as Arcadian innovator, as prototypical pastoral figure, is to fashion the *φόρμιγγα γλαφυρήν* (“hollowed lyre,” 64). It is here, at the cave of Arcadian Hermes, that Calpurnius’ herdsmen take refuge from the *sonitum* (*Eclogue* 6.70) of pastoral tradition. The silence (*tacito*, 70) they discover therein is the silence at the very moment that precedes creation, precedes innovation. It is like the poetic silence that stood in Arcadia in the moments before Hermes, as thief and shepherd, harnessed the true creative potential of his hollowed lyre. Amid a calculated series of revisions to the pastoral tradition, Calpurnius along with his herdsmen have situated themselves in a source-text that bypasses the din of Vergil and Theocritus. No longer *serus* (“late”), Calpurnius locates himself in a state of primacy, at the very moment of creative innovation that will give rise to the pastoral genre itself.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS

Over the course of this thesis we have explored the various forms of reception in pastoral amoebaeen contests. We have read these various contests as texts within texts: just as Theocritus, Vergil, and Calpurnius Siculus are producers of texts, so too are their competing herdsmen. These poets, whether historically real or characters in a bucolic or pastoral collection, are in constant dialogue with their genre, their contemporaries, and their forebears. Amoebaeen contests are, in some way, a fitting stage for this very interaction between a poet and his literary environs (both past and present), between tradition and innovation.

As we have seen, it is the song of the victor that has a future place in the generic *locus* since it has a clear line of transmission after a contest. The victor's song is later requested, purchased, taught, or recorded (and therefore transmitted) through memory as we saw in Vergil *Eclogue 7*. There, Corydon modeled himself after one of his poetic forebears, Codrus, who was perhaps his formal teacher (as Komatas was to Lakon in Theocritus *Idyll 5*). If Codrus was not Corydon's teacher proper, then he has certainly influenced the younger poet by means of his successes as a competitive poet. Meliboeus, whose memory (*haec memini*, 69) provides the whole text of *Eclogue 7*, will presumably see Corydon (whose name echoes twice at the poem's conclusion, thus truly reiterating his victory) as a model poet; Meliboeus will look back to Corydon in his future compositions just as Corydon looked back to Codrus. Thus the victor's song never loses its value as poetry, specifically as winning poetry; in a way, it determines and ensures the future careers of poets who receive it and build from it.

Yet reception is not always entirely positive or honest: sometimes theft is employed as a form of reception. We located this initial impulse to steal – an action which precedes some formal contests – as a model behavior outlined by Hermes in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*. Just as Hermes stole the cattle of his brother Apollo, some bucolic or pastoral herdsmen also participate in programmatic action, stealing property as a means of inciting a poetic competition. However, not every herdsman in Theocritus, Vergil, or Calpurnius Siculus is an outright thief of rustic possessions. They all, however, engage in a form of theft, pilfering poetic texts for their own advantage. These acts, performed under the influence of Hermes who stands at the seminal head of the bucolic and pastoral tradition, are literary larcenies (i.e. examples of allusion) enacted by careful readers and critics of texts, not by selfish rustics.

This reading of intertextuality in pastoral poetry is problematic. Not every instance of intertextuality is couched in explicit terms of theft; not every depiction of theft provides the reader with an opportunity to see explicit allusions to other texts. However, the specter of Hermes-Mercury in bucolic or pastoral poetry invites further analysis of just how theft and allusion are utilized, within and apart from competitive contexts. Theft, an act that depends on a particular sort of cunning, typically provides the context of poetic competition where a herdsman must rely on his intellectual and poetic cunning to defeat his opponent. Perhaps this sense of double cunning – physical and artistic – can be traced back to *πολύτροπος* in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*: this adjective, as we saw in Chapter 1, registers on an intellectual as well as on an verbal level.

In order for an act of theft to be truly successful, it requires that the thief not be caught. Yet when poets make unattributed allusions, a type of theft, the point is to strengthen his poetry by means of a reference that displays his erudition; the alluding poet, as a thief, wants to be

caught by his readership. The intellectual and verbal dexterity found in *πολύτροπος*, in being a Hermetic thief, can additionally be located in the poet's employment of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*. For Theocritus, Vergil, and Calpurnius Siculus – allusion is an opportunity to drum up his textual forebears (and therefore provide the reader with a ready-made literary tradition) while straying enough not to retread the past. For the competing bucolic and pastoral poets, who inhabit their collections, *imitatio* and *aemulatio* are a very real component of the amoebaeian game; allusion provides a herdsman with a poetic edge over his competitor.

As we have seen, amoebaeian contests in Theocritus, Vergil, and Calpurnius Siculus provide the reader with models of reception, which are not entirely removed from the agonistic framework of the contests themselves. Just like their thieving herdsman, pastoral poets write with an eye towards Hermes, casting themselves as both thieves and craftsmen.

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