

“WARRIOR AND PASTORAL DUELS IN HOMER, THEOCRITUS, AND VERGIL”

by

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(Under the Direction of Sarah Spence)

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to demonstrate a relationship between the Homeric warrior-duels and the works of Theocritus and Vergil. Theocritus, the so-called father of pastoral poetry, transferred duels into a pastoral setting to create his herder figures who strive against each other with songs rather than spears. Vergil then proceeds to make use of Theocritus’ work and expands the existing boundaries of pastoral.

INDEX WORDS: Homer, Theocritus, Vergil, *Iliad*, *Idylls*, *Eclogues*, *Aeneid*, pastoral (bucolic), epic, complimenting, taunting, credentialing, warrior-duel, herder-duel, poetic space

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Ch.1 - INTRODUCTION

This thesis asserts that there is a clear and demonstrable connection between a set of the non-lethal Homeric warrior duels and the singing contests in Theocritus' pastoral *Idylls*, and that a further link exists between the same set of Theocritean poems and Vergil's *Eclogues*, rooting Vergil's much later work firmly in a tradition stretching back centuries. I contend that Theocritus draws on the patterns that exist in Iliadic duels, using them as a model for the singing contests between the herders in his new pastoral genre. I also argue that Vergil reuses and reimagines the components from the Theocritean contests in order to express his own pastoral vision, while continuing to maintain a clear connection to his predecessor.

General models for competitive verbal exchanges in poetry are not difficult to locate. In part of his discussion on *eris* Hesiod calls attention to the competition between singers in the *Works and Days* (*Op.* 17-26). Positive *eris* engenders the envy that exists between singers, ostensibly spurring them to compete with each other (*Op.* 24-26). We also see competition and verbal exchange linked in the lengthy exchange of heated speeches between Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1.121-311. The games at Phaeacia in *Odyssey* 8.133-233 also bear a close resemblance to the exchanges found in Theocritus' *Idylls*. The Phaeacian prince Laodamas begins the verbal exchange by remarking to his companions that Odysseus seems like a formidably built man. Then, prompted by his companion Eurualos,¹ he challenges Odysseus to participate in the games. After Odysseus refuses the challenge, Eurualos taunts him, saying that Odysseus clearly has a poor character and no talent. Odysseus responds by upbraiding Eurualos and then enumerating his own credentials as a respectable opponent, which he elaborates on after victoriously participating in the discus-throw. Nevertheless, despite shared elements between

¹ Eurualos translates as Broadsea.

any verbal exchange, it is, as I would argue, the Iliadic warrior duels that contain the most similarities to the contests in the *Idylls*. This study of the transformation of the epic warrior duels into pastoral herder duels will begin by first examining the pattern of the duels in their original epic context. The common plot features that exist throughout the duels are: the meeting of the main antagonists, the contest, and, finally, the outcome, through which the victor gains glory and honor. In addition to establishing the pattern the duels in the *Iliad* follow I look at how the language employed by the narrator and the antagonists serves to separate the dueling warriors from the larger narrative of the epic. This pattern can be established in the interactions between three pairs of dueling warriors (Glaucus and Diomedes in Book 6, Hector and Ajax in Book 7, and Aeneas and Achilles in book 20).

The challenge comes in exploring how Theocritus and, later, Vergil are able to take a motif present in one genre, epic, and use it for another, pastoral. In Theocritus, there are two additional challenges: first, the evidence for the epic duels as the model for Theocritus' pastoral duels, and second, how Theocritus is able to use the older epic motif in order to create a whole new genre. According to David Halperin, the usual elements of Theocritus' pastoral are an "encounter of two herdsman, discussion of their musical/poetic abilities, reciprocal invitations to perform, description of an appropriate setting or locale, discussion of the victor's prize, performance, response of the audience or narrator, award of the prize, and return to the business of herding."² The second chapter investigates the words and rhetorical techniques that Theocritus employs to construct the herder duels in *Idylls* 1, 5, 6, and 8, and how the model that Halperin so succinctly articulates relates to something very far removed from the peaceful pastoral setting of Theocritus.

² David Halperin, *Before Pastoral* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 162.

The story of Theocritus also serves as an introduction to a discussion about Vergil. The demonstrable verbal links between Theocritus' pastoral *Idylls* and Vergil's *Eclogues* 1, 3, 5, and 9 give great insight into how Vergil expands the capabilities of the genre that Theocritus started. Vergil both adheres to and deviates from the pattern of the herder duels that Theocritus established, using many of the components of Theocritus' revision of the epic duels (but not in a single mode of presentation) and following the same pattern each time. Vergil uses enough of Theocritus' work on the duels that his borrowings are recognizable, and Theocritus' influence on Vergil's poetry is clear. Instead of simply replicating the work of his predecessor, Vergil engages with Theocritus and pushes the genre in new directions; each time he deviates from the Theocritean pattern he adds a new dimension to the pastoral genre. The fleeting concerns of Theocritus' herders are replaced by more serious ones in Vergil.³ Theocritus gives us a new genre out of his manipulation of the Homeric duels. Vergil then stretches the boundaries of what ideas pastoral is able to encompass, and in so doing gives us a wonderful window onto how authors engage with their predecessors.

A Note on Terminology

The terms credentialing, taunting, and complimenting will be used to describe different portions of the verbal exchanges which occur prior to the duels between Homeric warriors, Theocritean, and Vergilian herders. The word "credentialing" is used to refer to the interaction when two parties first meet in the Homeric and pastoral encounters, specifically the act of one party explaining to another party who they are and why the interaction is worth the other party's time. The term applies to both adversarial and friendly meetings.⁴ The word "taunting" is fairly

³ Michael Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 5.

⁴ Credentialing is a term used by community organizers (specifically known to be used by the Industrial Areas Foundation) to train more organizers. It typically is used in a first time encounter, either with a target of organizational action or organizational outreach.

self-explanatory. Taunting indicates the portion of the verbal preliminaries to a duel where one party attempts to incite the other party to compete with them. Taunting may include an outright derogatory remark about one's opponent as well as self-praise that is designed to imply that the other party is lacking. "Complimenting" designates the part of the pre-duel verbal exchange where one party expresses their belief that the other party is a valued opponent, and therefore someone with whom it worth engaging in a duel.

Another term that appears is "poetic space." All poets must invent a frame that surrounds their words, a place for their poem to inhabit. This place is the poetic space that the poem occupies. The nature of the space that an author creates for their poetry sets the tone of the piece and informs the audience about the kind of poetry that they can expect to hear. The poetic space is like the stage on which the duels are set.

Ch.2 - THE MOTIF OF THE DUELING WARRIOR: HOMERIC ROOTS

The epic war described in Homer's *Iliad* may seem a strange place to look for the roots of pastoral poetry. Nevertheless, inspiration comes from many places, and authors may choose to draw on topical or structural elements. The *Iliad* is a treasure trove of different patterns for character interaction, and the potential for the exploitation of these patterns by later authors is endless. Sometimes these patterns emerge with even greater clarity when they are viewed through the prism of a later author's work. However, before we can properly discuss how a later author redeploys any of these elements, it is important to examine how they appear in their original context.

The heroes of Homeric epic frequently duel against each other one-on-one; the battlefield of the *Iliad* is filled with them.⁵ In the Homeric world duels are the primary way for warriors to assert their supremacy over others and to gain honor and glory. The typical warrior duel contains a series of predictable interactions; it is a "ritualized display of prowess."⁶ The Homeric warrior improves his own stature by defeating as many other warriors as possible and, whenever possible, despoiling his opponent. The duels provide one way that he may attain higher standing: "the more enemies a warrior defeats—especially if they are big, strong, skilled, and famous—the higher the status he is accorded among his compatriots. The warriors' avid . . . attempts to strip bloodied spoils from fallen foes are motivated by the desire to document status-

⁵ Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Homeric Warriors and Battles: Trying to Resolve Old Problems," *Classical World* 101, no.4 (Summer 2008): 475.

⁶ Rick Fields, *The Code of the Warrior* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 69.

enhancing kills.”⁷ Most the confrontations between warriors “contain traces of the posturing, bluffing, [and] insults,”⁸ in addition to the physical combat.

All the Homeric duels ostensibly begin with the expectation of physical combat, but their importance and use goes beyond the clash of arms. There are duels in the *Iliad* where instead of fully fledged combat (i.e., a fight to the death) the poet presents us with a duel that clearly focuses on the verbal preliminaries to the fight rather than the combat. In some cases physical combat never occurs at all. The key aspects present in these non-lethal duels are the attention that the poet pays to the verbal exchanges between the warriors and the imposition of an end to the duel before a fatal outcome can occur (even if the warriors have begun to fight).

The verbal components of the duels take place during their pre-battle activities.⁹ At this point, in the verbal portion of the duel that each warrior has the opportunity to vaunt his own value and assess the worth of his opponent. Usually the two warriors step out beyond their battle lines and enter the space between the battling armies. They then square off and take turns addressing each other. Afterwards, frequently, each warrior recites his lineage to the other in order to establish himself as a worthy opponent (both as a personal boast and to credential himself).¹⁰ Next, the warriors commence physical combat (usually with spears and swords). In general, the duels do not last long.¹¹ A common pattern of attack is as follows: the first warrior attacks his opponent with a spear, but he misses. Then the second warrior attacks the first warrior, and although he does not miss his target he is unable to penetrate the first warrior’s

⁷ Jonathan Gottschall, “Homer’s Human Animal: Ritual Combat in the *Iliad*,” *Philosophy and Literature* 25, no.2 (October 2001): 290.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For G.S. Kirk’s comments on the “speech elements” in the *Iliad* see G.S.Kirk, ed., *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 26, 265.

¹⁰ Fields, 69-70.

¹¹ Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 94.

armor or shield. Lastly, the first warrior succeeds in his next attack, killing his opponent.¹² The first warrior becomes the “greater hero” and he “shows his greater stature by killing his opponent.”¹³ How much honor the victory grants him depends upon the value of the man who he kills, the more worthy the opponent, the more honor he gains from the kill; this is why the verbal preliminaries to battle are important.

In several scenes in the *Iliad*, two warriors meet on the battlefield, trade words rather than blows (for the most part), and neither warrior slays the other.¹⁴ The warriors in these scenes primarily engage in the verbal preliminaries to the duel. Usually, but not always, the verbal exchange becomes longer and replaces the act of physical combat. The warriors fight the duel with the words rather than with spears and swords. Thematically, all of the non-lethal duels fit into the larger narrative of the *Iliad*, as they initially intend to engage in the proper physically violent combat anticipated in a dueling scene. However, while the scenes connect to a larger narrative, we can also extract them from the rest of the poem without causing a loss of cohesion (e.g. the duels between Diomedes and Glaucus, Hector and Ajax, and Aeneas and Achilles). When isolated from the *Iliad* they remain whole and intelligible pieces. They are small poetic spaces within the poem as a whole; the larger battle narrative (that is, the *Iliad* as a whole) fades into the background, and the poet trains the audience’s attention to the exchange of words and on the poetry.

The dexterity with which we can extract these scenes from their original context without damaging the integrity of the scene is one of their identifying markers. The easy removability of the dueling scenes makes it possible to treat them as complete templates for self-contained verbal

¹² Bernard Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1968), 6-7, 145-146.

¹³ Griffin, 143.

¹⁴ Cedric Whitman notes that duels, like other many other scenes in Homeric epic, follow a typology. Cedric Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 249.

exchanges. However, we cannot isolate all scenes in the *Iliad* from the surrounding narrative with the same ease. In contrast to the duels, some scenes require the audience to have information from the whole epic in order to be complete, and reading them apart from the entire narrative would leave too many unanswered questions. A good example of this is the well-known episode the “embassy to Achilles” from book 9 (*Il.*9.182-668). The embassy episode is more complicated than the dueling scenes, and it contains many established patterns, such as pouring libations, arrival, and departure.¹⁵ In addition to the presence of multiple patterns that make up the scene itself, the audience requires the information that precedes the arrival of the embassy at Achilles’ encampment in order to completely understand what is going on in the scene. This episode is not complete if it is read apart from the rest of its epic context.

Achilles’ contempt and anger at Agamemnon’s poor attempt at reconciliation becomes much clearer if we are already familiar with the circumstances that prompted him to seize Briseis and dishonor Achilles. In addition to such background information, the speech Agamemnon delivers before he sends the embassy to entreat Achilles is vital to understanding Achilles’ response after Odysseus delivers Agamemnon’s terms. Odysseus repeats Agamemnon’s offer of reconciliation verbatim, save the very last terms (*Il.*9.158-161). He omits Agamemnon’s requirement that Achilles submit to him and concede that Agamemnon is the greater of the two men. Odysseus leaves out the requirement that Achilles would find the most offensive in an effort to make the terms sound more agreeable. When Achilles rejects Agamemnon’s offer, he starts by saying that he hates the man who thinks one thing, but says another (*Il.*9.311-312). Achilles’ statement includes more than one particular meaning. One interpretation is that although Odysseus repeated the message for the most part, he left out the key source of contention. The entire situation arose out of Agamemnon’s belief that he is Achilles’ superior,

¹⁵ Fenik, 2.

and that therefore Achilles should yield to him. Without the two speeches simultaneously in mind it is not clear why Achilles refers to deceit when he first repudiates the offer; as a consequence, the audience requires the whole narrative to fully understand this piece of it.

Another example of a scene that requires the support of the surrounding narrative occurs when Priam visits Achilles' encampment in order to ransom Hector's body (*Il.*24.469-691). As in the embassy episode, and unlike in the duels, there is more than one pattern at play (for example supplication, sharing a meal, and retiring to sleep). Also, as in the embassy scene, the audience needs background information to understand what is going on. We need to hear Apollo's outrage over Achilles' treatment of Hector's body, as well as how Zeus intends to remedy the situation. Zeus dispatches several messengers. He sends Iris to tell Priam to go ransom Hector, and he commands Hermes to protect Priam on his way through the Greek lines to Achilles' encampment. He also sends Thetis to Achilles in order to remind him that he must agree to ransom Hector once Priam arrives. This information works like a preface and sets up the meeting between the two men.

The surrounding narrative is also needed for character identification. Patroclus and Hector figure prominently as causes of this scene between Priam and Achilles. We receive some explanation about Hector's identity, but none about Patroclus. When Achilles and Priam cry over their losses together Achilles does not identify Patroclus when he includes him in his lament (*Il.*24.511-512). The poet expects us to already understand who he is and his importance to Achilles (and his role in the epic as a whole) from all the preceding narrative.

Unlike scenes such as the embassy and the ransoming of Hector, which are firmly entrenched in the poem, the non-lethal warrior duels do not rely on information from the rest of the poem in order for the audience to understand them. The common patterns that exist

throughout the scenes—establishing a pattern for the non-lethal warrior duels—are the meeting of the main antagonists, who then make their introductions (credentialing/taunting/complimenting),¹⁶ after which they engage in a contest ending in glory and honor for the victor. Even when the contest contains physical combat, as it does in the contest between Hector and Ajax in Book 7, the victor is not determined by which warrior lives and which one dies. Instead, the duel comes to an end before a fatality can occur, and the victor must be determined from the material exchange of prizes or the words surrounding the separation of the two warriors.

Homeric warriors pursue *kleos* and *timē* through physical feats and words.¹⁷ They do not belong to a “tongue-tied” tradition. Instead, “when warriors meet on the battlefield, the scene may be long, articulate, and moving, as the one between Diomedes and Glaucus (*Il.*6.119-236). It is in a debate, in the *agorē*, as well as in battle, that men win glory.”¹⁸ Griffin refers to the scenes between two dueling warriors, as he states Homeric heroes can win glory through their words as well as their actions, and the nonlethal duels contain an interesting mixture of the two. When the warriors meet on the battlefield they are not in a setting that in reality would lend itself to making speeches or conversing.

Nevertheless, the warriors who meet on the battlefield may speak at great length. The epic poet carves out a space for the warriors, temporarily detaching them from the ongoing battle that surrounds them and giving them a space to engage in verbal exchanges before they enter into a contest of arms. When Diomedes and Glaucus meet on the battle field in *Iliad* 6, the narrator tells us that Glaucus (the son of Hippolochus) and the son of Tydeus (Diomedes) meet in the

¹⁶ See Introduction for the definition of the terms.

¹⁷ Ruth Scodel, *Epic Facework* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2008), 9.

¹⁸ Jasper Griffin, “The Speeches,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed. Robert Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 160.

space between where the two armies are fighting: “Γλαῦκος δ’ Ἴππολόχοιο παῖς καὶ Τυδέος υἱὸς/ἔς μέσον ἀμφοτέρων συνίτην μεμαῶτε μάχεσθαι” (“and Glaucus the son of Hippolochus and the son of Tydeus/ were coming together, into the middle, eager to fight” *Il.*6.119-120).¹⁹ The “in-between” space the poet designates for the warriors to duel in is an unreal “middle” space. The warriors step out from their own battle lines, Greek and Trojan respectively, and they come together to speak, with the intention to fight, in a space that is separate from both of the clashing forces. Such a space, devoid of other participants, is not something that exists between two actively clashing armies, but it is necessary for the poet to carve this space out of the battle in order to separate the warriors from the rest of the war and give them a place to exchange words.

The duel begins “conventionally enough”²⁰: Diomedes begins the verbal preliminaries to the duel and addresses Glaucus. He inquires after Glaucus’ identity (τίς δὲ σύ ἐσσι “who are you?” *Il.*6.123), as he claims not to have seen him before. It is important that Diomedes know the true value of his opponent before they fight.²¹ At the same time, Diomedes uses his question about Glaucus’ credentials as a worthy opponent in order to declare his own prowess in battle. He vaunts himself as a mighty warrior when he says that Glaucus seems brave to him because he comes to face Diomedes (*Il.*6.123-143): “ἀτὰρ μὲν νῦν γε πολὺ προβέβηκας ἀπάντων/ σῶ θάρσει, ὅ τ’ ἐμὸν δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος ἔμεινας:/ δυστήνων δέ τε παῖδες ἐμῶ μένει ἀντιόωσιν” (“but now you have stepped forward with courage, more than all the others, / and you have stood fast against my shadow-casting spear:/ and the children of the pitiable meet with my might” *Il.*6.125-127).

¹⁹ Translations here, and in all subsequent chapters, are my own. The passages from the *Iliad* come from: T.W. Allen, ed., *Homeri Ilias* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931).

²⁰ Ruth Scodel, “The Wits of Glaucus,” *TAPA* 122 (1992): 73.

²¹ Byron Harries, “Strange Meeting: Diomedes and Glaucus in *Iliad* 6” *Greece & Rome, Second Series* 40, no. 2 (Oct., 1993):136. Diomedes also has a second reason for concern. He has recently engaged in battle with the gods, here he seeks to affirm that Glaucus is a mortal man before Diomedes attacks him.

In this passage Diomedes, in the guise of a compliment to Glaucus, essentially continues to credential himself as a worthy opponent of any man. Then, as the anticipated next step in the duel pattern, Glaucus proceeds to offer his own credentials. He recites his genealogy to Diomedes, weaving in a tale of Bellerophon as an example of a great warrior in his line (*Il.*6.144-211). At this point, given the usual pattern of warrior-duels, we would expect a physical fight to commence and the victor to emerge after the two warriors fight to the death. However, this is not what happens, as the pattern deviates from its fatal path, and the duel between Diomedes and Glaucus remains a verbal exchange. Instead of striking the first blow, Diomedes responds to Glaucus by declaring that they are guest-friends to one another through their lineages: “ἦ ῥά νύ μοι ξεῖνος πατρῴϊός ἐσσι παλαιός” (“Truly, you are indeed now a paternal *xenos* to me” *Il.*6.215). Therefore, he claims, they ought not attempt to win glory by attacking each other both in the present moment and in the future: “ἔρχεα δ’ ἀλλήλων ἀλεώμεθα καὶ δι’ ὀμίλου” (“we should flee from the spears of one another even in the mob” *Il.*6.226). Diomedes further says that there are many famous men, Greeks for Glaucus and Trojans for Diomedes, whom the other can kill in order to increase his personal glory (*Il.*6.225-229). Next, Diomedes proposes that they reenact their grandfathers’ gift-exchange, and they trade armor as a sign of their friendship (*Il.*6.230-231), as one would have had the right to strip the armor from the other if they had fought to the death.

While this duel between Glaucus and Diomedes appears to end in a draw—because neither of them loses their life and both take the other’s armor (which is normally the right of the victor)—there is nevertheless an implied winner. Diomedes wins the duel by receiving a gift of higher value. He trades his bronze suit (worth less in the world of epic) for Glaucus’ golden armor. The poet attributes Glaucus actions to divine intervention: “Γλαύκῳ Κρονίδης φρένας

ἔξέλετο Ζεύς” (“Zeus son of Kronos took away the mind from Glaucus” *Il.*6.234).²² Diomedes’ proposal that they exchange armor can also be interpreted as an indication of his victory over Glaucus: he has the presence of mind to persuade his opponent to hand over the better prize.²³ In other similar scenes in the same epic, the victor is also determined by means other than one warrior killing the other.

The confrontation between Hector and Ajax in Book 7 is another example of a duel that does not end in a fatality. After the Greeks cast lots to determine who will meet Hector’s challenge to a duel, he and Ajax become the named dueling pair. Ajax begins the verbal preliminaries to the dueling scene by vaunting himself as on par with Achilles (*Il.*7.226-228).²⁴ He offers the advantage of the first strike to Hector, conveying Ajax’ belief in his own superior fighting skill (*Il.*7.232). Hector communicates his annoyance, when he counters (*Il.*7.234-243) by praising his own prowess in war as well as taunting Ajax, daring him to come and fight²⁵:

*Αἴαν διογενὲς Τελαμώνιε κοίρανε λαῶν
μὴ τί μευ ἤϊτε παιδὸς ἀφαιροῦ πειρήτιζε
ἢ ἢ γυναικός, ἢ οὐκ οἶδεν πολεμῆϊα ἔργα.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν εὖ οἶδα μάχας τ’ ἀνδροκτασίας τε:
οἶδ’ ἐπὶ δεξιᾶ, οἶδ’ ἐπ’ ἀριστερὰ νωμῆσαι βῶν
ἀζαλέην, τό μοι ἔστι ταλαύρινον πολεμίζειν:
οἶδα δ’ ἐπαίξαι μῶρον ἵππων ὠκειάων:
οἶδα δ’ ἐνὶ σταδίῃ δηΐῳ μέλπεσθαι Ἄρηϊ.(*Il.*7.234-241)*

Zeus-born Telemonian Ajax, shepherd of the host
in no way test me like a feeble child
or like a woman, who does not know about war-like deeds
But truly, I know well both battles and about the slaughter of men.
I know how to wield my dry ox-hide to right, and to the left
Which for me is a stout for fighting
And I know to rush into the battle of swift horses;

²² Scodel, “The Wits of Glaucus,” 73. Scodel notes that ‘gold for bronze’ becomes a common metaphor for an unequal exchange.

²³ Harries, 142.

²⁴ At this point in the epic Achilles has withdrawn from battle over Agamemnon’s affront to his honor.

²⁵ M.M. Willcock, *Homer: Iliad 1-XII* (Oxford: Macmillian Education Ltd., 1978; reprint, London: Bristol Classical Press, 2001), 255 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

and I know to dance in step with hostile Ares.

The worthiness of neither warrior is in question. Nevertheless, the poet has each man tout his skill and taunt the other before engaging in mortal combat with him. The boasting and taunting that Ajax and Hector engage in compose one piece of the whole pattern that we are examining in this chapter.

The battle portion of the scene, lines 244-276, is full of reciprocal blows between the two warriors as each of them tries to best the other, and attempts to kill the other (first with spears (*Il.7.249-262*), and rocks (*Il.7.263-272*) and then each man starts to proceed to swords). As expected in a duel, the first spear-throw misses. Here, the usual pattern is slightly expanded; both Hector and Ajax firmly hit each other's shields, but fail to wound one another. Ajax appears to gain the upper-hand in the duel, wounding Hector. However, unlike the standard version of a duel, this one is brought to a finish before there are any fatalities: "thus, in the course of the Trojan War hostilities are interrupted and give way to a 'friendly' but nevertheless lethal contest of fighting skill and courage."²⁶ Ajax and Hector essentially perform for the gathered Trojans and Achaeans. They engage in the contest with the same lethal intention of the other duels in the *Iliad*, however, like the other non-lethal warrior duels, an outside force intervenes and prevents a fatal outcome.

The herald Idaeus imposes an end to the duel when he says that they should not fight any longer today, since they are both loved by Zeus, and "ἄμφω δ' αἰχμητά" ("you two are spearmen both." *Il.7.281*): also night approaches. Ajax demands that Hector call the truce since he issued the challenge for a duel; if he does, Ajax will follow suit (*Il.7.284-286*). Hector agrees to bring the fight to a close for the day and proposes that they give each other gifts as signs that they had fought: ὡς ἄρα φωνήσας δῶκε ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον/ σὺν κολεῶ τε φέρων καὶ εὐτμήτω τελαμῶνι:/ Αἴας δὲ

²⁶ Hans van Wees, *Status Warriors* (Amsterdam: J.C.Gieben Publisher, 1992), 202.

ζωστῆρα δίδου φοίνικι φαεινόν” (“and having spoken he gave a silver studded sword/ and bearing [it] with a sheath and with a well cut leather strap:/ and Ajax gave (to him) a shining purple baldric” *Il.*7.303-305). The exchange recalls the final portion of the scene between Diomedes and Glaucus. However, while the gift-giving in that scene served to cement a pact (as tokens of *xenia*) rather than acknowledge a truce, this gift exchange marks the end of the combat: it ends in a draw because the two warriors are pulled apart physically. The duel may be treated either as a draw or as a victory for Ajax. Each side, Trojan and Greek, receives their respective warriors back with joy (*Il.*7.306-312), and so, in effect, the gift exchange is the potential prize that each warrior would have won had they been allowed to complete the duel and add to the many corpses of the war. However, the word for victory (νίκη) is used only in reference to Ajax; while both sides are happy to see their warriors it is possible to see the poet assign victory here to the Greek side alone.

Another example of a non-lethal duel occurs between Achilles and Aeneas in Book 20.156-352. Like Hector and Ajax, Aeneas and Achilles adhere to the pattern of trading speeches in which they establish their worthiness as opponents before they fight, except that they speak at far greater length than the previous pair. First Achilles speaks and then Aeneas. Achilles’ speech goes on for twenty lines, and Aeneas responds with fifty-nine lines.²⁷

Aeneas begins his speech by following the same pattern as Achilles and all the other warriors who participate in these sorts of non-lethal duels. In the first part of the speech (lines 206-209) he establishes himself as an equal to Achilles, reminding him that although his mother is the goddess Thetis, Aeneas’ mother is the goddess Aphrodite, therefore they are both semi-divine. Further emphasizing his divine lineage, Aeneas says his goddess-mother’s name as the very last word in line 209, which emphasizes his immediate lineage. After these lines, Aeneas

²⁷ Achilles:*Il.*20.178-198; Aeneas:*Il.*20.200-258.

declares that one of their houses would mourn a son that day, and that he and Achilles would not return from battle having only spoken words. Ironically, Aeneas then proceeds to talk more than Achilles. He starts off by saying “**but if you wish** to learn (about) these matters, so that you may know / my people well, and many men know it.”²⁸ In asking Achilles if he wants to know more about him, Aeneas actually breaks off his initial response to Achilles’ taunts, and Aeneas indicates that he intends to make another speech and essentially sings Achilles a song about his ancestors.²⁹ Although he made light of the verbal preliminaries and says that they should engage in a physical fight, Aeneas speaks at great length (before and after which he expresses a strong desire to fight). The juxtaposition of his attitude on speaking and Aeneas’ thirty lines about Dardanus and his descendants actually call attention to the fact that the two warriors are *not* fighting and are instead speaking in the space the poet has set aside from the contending armies.

The warriors are separated from what is going on around them each time they step away from their battle lines and out of the rest of the narrative. In this episode once again the warriors meet in the unreal space between the two battling armies: in the middle (*Il.*20.159, 245). The middle space is first brought up at the start of the episode (*ἐς μέσον, Il.*20.159) to describe where Achilles and Aeneas are headed with the intention of doing battle. The word reappears at line 245 (*ἐν μέσση ὑσμίνῃ*) after Aeneas has concluded his narrative about Dardanus. Where the first appearance of a word that means “the middle” indicates that the poet isolates the coming verses from the surrounding narrative, the second use of the word resituates us after Aeneas’ story, reminding us that the current verbal exchange has been taking place in the space “in-between.”

²⁸ εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις καὶ ταῦτα δαήμεναι, ὄφρα' ἐὺ εἰδῆς/ ἡμετέραν γενεήν, πολλοὶ δέ μιν ἄνδρες ἴσασι (*Il.*20.213-214).

²⁹ The subject matter in this portion of Aeneas’ speech is similar to the story about Bellerophon that Glaucus relates to Diomedes in their exchange in Book 6. Both stories go past immediate lineage and recount a longer story to their opponent.

These scenes fit the general pattern of a duel in Homer: the contestants address one another, exchange blows of some kind, and a victor is determined. However, they are also united in their common deviation from the generic pattern of warrior-duels. None of these three duels ends in a death, nor do they end with an absolutely indisputable victory of one warrior over the other. Different value is assigned to the suits of armor in the Diomedes and Glaucus episode: Ajax and Hector are pulled apart, and Poseidon snatches Aeneas away from Achilles. Each time the deviation occurs in the same place: the end of each of these duels does not come to a conclusion through the power of the antagonists; in each instance an outside force (whether preexisting *xenia*, a herald, or a god) acts upon the situation in order to bring it to a non-lethal finish.

Despite all the minor variations in the pattern, we can still see that the duels are part of a well-established pattern with predictable exchanges and resolutions. Within their own Homeric context the duels are always part of a larger narrative, but their easy isolation from the rest of the poem made them ripe for other authors to pluck out and remake. In the next chapter we will see how Theocritus, while exchanging a martial landscape for the tranquil countryside, is able to use the typical patterns of the non-lethal warrior duels (the agonistic exchange of words, the contrived, “middle” space, and the superimposed ending) as prototypes for his pastorals.

Ch.3 - THEOCRITUS LOOKING AT HOMER

The warrior duels from Homer are scenes within a single longer work, which can nonetheless stand alone as complete pieces if we separate them from the poem. This, I will argue is precisely what Theocritus does in his *Idylls*. Like Homer, Theocritus, creates a sense of overtly contrived and artificial poetic space between antagonists in his works (*Idylls* 1,5-8). Rural life in Theocritus' poetry is exemplified by "cultured leisure. . . with pretty, kempt shepherdesses, fluffy livestock [and] rich harvests," all of which appear without hard labor; the picture of Theocritus' countryside verges on the golden age.³⁰ He anchors his pastorals in the "unrealistic presupposition" that the primary function of herders, the care of their livestock, is a "minor distraction" from poetry, the main focus of Theocritus' herders.³¹ In the pastoral *Idylls*, he uses various devices to make it clear that he has constructed the countryside as a stage for his poetry to take place — for example, time of day, herder figures, livestock, prizes, judges, and images associated with the creation of poetry, such as cicadas.

It bears emphasizing that even the responsibilities and lifestyle of a herder are at the periphery rather than the core of Theocritus' pastorals. The herders may use the livestock that is in their charge as the prize of the singing duels that they engage in, but Theocritus does not show them actively caring for them. For instance, at the start of *Idyll* 1, Thyrsis and the goatherd first mention the possibility of using one of the animals as prize for a song. Thyrsis offers to look after the goatherd's flock if he will play for Thyrsis (*Id.* 1.12-14). After this, mention of

³⁰ Michael Schmidt, *The First Poets* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2005), 119-120.

³¹ Marco Fantuzzi and Richard Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 141.

practicalities of a herder’s responsibility to tend his flock fades away until the last two lines, and a song (or singing contest) remains. The animals form part of the pastoral tableau, like the fields, trees, and springs. Thyrsis and the other herder figures do not move their flocks from one pastureland to another, nor do they stand watch over them at night, nor do they relate to the animals in any other way other than in the context of how specific animals fit into the duel. Theocritus “refined away”³² all of the duller or less-than-pleasant practicalities of rural life in order to give way to his poets in the guise of herders. The remaining elements, therefore, which would ordinarily provide a connection to reality, actually serve to highlight the unreality of the poetic space.

Theocritus evokes the epic warrior duels when he uses the combative language of striving and places it alongside the expected verbs of singing in his depiction of the singing duels. Four of the poems examined in this chapter (*Idylls* 1, 5, 6, and 7) make use of the verb “ἐρίζω” or its compound “προσερίζω.”³³ It most commonly means “strive, wrangle, [or] quarrel.” Its second definition does not deviate much from its primary definition: “rival, vie with, challenge.”³⁴ All of the possible translations share a clearly competitive tone.³⁵ Gow describes the verb as belonging to “strenuous action, including contests of various kinds.”³⁶ In the very first *Idyll*, Theocritus links his singing herders and the notion of competition when his anonymous goatherd encourages the shepherd Thyrsis:

. . . αἰ δέ κ’ ἀείσῃς

³² Schmidt, 140.

³³ The first definition in the LSJ, using Theocritus as an example for this meaning of the verb, for “προσερίζω” is “strive with or against, “αὐτόθεν μοι ποτέρισθε” *Id.* 5.60.” For both verbs Theocritus tends to use Doric forms (ἐρίσθω/ ποτερίσθω). He makes this same dialect choice about other words. It is especially noticeable in the first verses of the first *Idyll*.

³⁴ Definitions come from: Roderick McKenzie, ed., *Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

³⁵ It can also mean that two parties are a match for one another. Hence, in Hesiod’s *Works and Days* “ἐρίζω” denotes the competition between two experts.

³⁶ A.S.F Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 99.

ὡς ὄκα τὸν Λιβύαθε ποτὶ Χρόμιν ἕσας ἐρίσδων
αἰγὰ τέ τοι δωσῶ διδυματοκόν ἐς τρεῖς ἀμέλξαι (*Id.*1.23-25)³⁷

..and if you sing
as once you sang striving against Chromis from Libya
I will give you a nanny goat bearing twins milked three times.

In the last two words in line 24, “ἕσας ἐρίσδων,” Theocritus places his verb of competition immediately after the goatherd asks Thyrsis to sing again. In this *Idyll*, as well as in all the others that follow it, competition takes place through song.

Variants of ἐρίζω occur with the greatest frequency in *Idyll* 5, which features the most combative of all the duels in Theocritus (*Id.*5.24, 30, 60, 67, 136), and directly links the poetry of Theocritus’ herders and active struggle in Comatas’ final couplet. Comatas jeers at Lacon that “It is not sanctioned, Lacon, that jaybirds vie with a nightingale,/and not hoopoes with swans, but you, wretch, are quarrelsome,”³⁸ strengthening the adversarial nature of their singing match, and elevating himself through his comment that certain birds should not be allowed to attempt to rival birds that are accepted as having beautiful songs.³⁹ Comatas declares himself the better poet, so much so that Lacon should not have presumed to vie with him. Even the more unusual use of ἐρίζω stays in keeping with the combative core meaning of the word: “ἀλλά γε καὶ τὸν εὐβοτον ἀμνὸν ἔρισδε” (“but you also bet a well-grazed lamb” *Id.*5.24). Theocritus reminds us that the lamb is the prize for whoever is victorious in the contest. The struggle for a prize⁴⁰ in turn provides a possible link between the agonistic striving of the Homeric duels and the singing duels of the *Idylls*.

³⁷ All Theocritus text taken from A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus*, 2nd edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952).

³⁸ οὐ θεμιτὸν Λάκων ποτ’ ἀηδόνα κίσσας ἐρίσδειν,/οὐδ’ ἔποπας κύκνοισι: τὸ δ’ ὦ τάλαν ἐσσι φιλεχθής. (*Id.*5.136-137)

³⁹ For the ancient Greeks the nightingale often signified the role of the poet. Hostile contest between different birds are used to stand in for contests between different poetic styles. Deborah Steiner, “Feathers Flying: Avian Poetics in Hesiod, Pindar, and Callimachus,” *American Journal of Philology* 128, no.2 (Summer 2007), 179, 188.

⁴⁰ Homeric warriors seek to gain glory and prizes from their victories, although, a victory does not guarantee a prize.

There are more connections between the Homeric confrontations and the singing duels of the *Idylls*, many of them mechanical. The two types share common structures and patterns in the meetings of the main protagonists, their introductions (credentialing/ taunting/ complimenting), their engagement in a contest, the determination of outcomes, and finally a victor gaining glory, honor, and prizes from the victory. *Idyll 1* picks up on this structure of the epic duels:

Theocritus' combatants may be fighting for different stakes (their lives don't rest on the outcome of the encounter) but they follow the same pattern of coming together, credentialing themselves and taunting the opposing party, and fighting for a prize. In this first *Idyll*, a shepherd and a goatherd meet at mid-day, echoing the idea of meeting at a mid-point that we saw in the *Iliad*. Each of them compliments the skill of the other in music and encourages the other to sing. The goatherd prevails upon the shepherd Thyrsis to sing about the love of Daphnis in return for a fine cup. The contest is brief in this *Idyll* because the goatherd essentially concedes the contest to Thyrsis when he insists that Thyrsis sing for the cup, which the goatherd offers up as though it had been won; the cup and therefore the victory belong to the shepherd Thyrsis. The competition between Thyrsis and the goatherd is essentially over before it begins because we know the prize and the winner from the start. While there is no active competition between the two herders in the first *Idyll*, Theocritus lays out the fundamentals of the pastoral herder duels that will follow, and more importantly does so using structures and patterns that echo the Homeric duels.

The exchanges of compliments at the start of the poem function to credential both the shepherd and the goatherd to one another. Like the Homeric warriors, the herders start the verbal exchange by establishing the value of their opponents. Through their words they make it known that they view the other as a potential worthy competitor for a singing match. In this poem

Theocritus conflates a judge-figure who appears in the *Idylls* that follow with the figure of the goatherd. At the same time that Theocritus portrays the goatherd as a worthy contestant he also presents him as a valid judge for the duel; his concession to Thyrsis provides that judgment. The goatherd ends the poem with a victory song for the shepherd as he officially declares him the winner with the pronouncement “ἤνιδε τοι τὸ δέπας” (“Here is the cup!” *Id.* 1.149).

The time of the encounter—noon—is significant.⁴¹ In addition to providing the Homeric sense of meeting at a middle point or place, it is very precise, providing an added element of contrivance on the part of the poet.⁴² The midpoint of noon “τὸ μεσαμβρινόν” (line 15) conveys the same idea found in the scene between Achilles and Aeneas and Diomedes and Glaucus where the meeting takes place “ἐς μέσον ἀμφοτέρων” (“in the middle of each of their sides” *Il.* 6.120); both phrases are so exact that they allude to the way the poet has purposefully set aside a space for them to speak to one another. In pastoral, the poet sets the characters apart from the world at large; in epic, the poet momentarily sets them apart from the Trojan War. This is especially evident in the scene from the *Iliad*, because when two sides actively fight there is generally no space that would be in the middle of the two sides; instead, they would be entangled with one another in battle.

We also see this idea of the middle come up in the song-versus-song singing match of *Idyll* 6, this time between Damoetas and Daphnis⁴³: “ἔζόμενοι θέρεος μέσῳ ἄματι τοιάδ’ ἀειδόν” (“sitting in the middle of a summer day they were singing this [song]” *Id.* 6.4). Theocritus

⁴¹ Times of day such as dawn, midday, and evening are temporal delineations that create a boundary between parts of the day — they are the times of day when one part of the day changes into another. For example the dawn is both a boundary between night and day and a time that exists between the two. Like dawn, the evening or twilight time of day occupies the space between the day and the night. Noon has a similar function, dividing the morning from the afternoon, and yet belonging to neither time.

⁴² Mid-day is the expected time for music making. It is also the traditional time to encounter divinities. See Callim.*Hymn.* 572-74 for an example. R.L. Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 74, 234.

⁴³ It ends in a draw; they trade prizes much like Hector and Ajax do in Book 7, giving the victory to both parties. “ἀνήσασται δ’ ἐγένοντο” (“They were unconquerable” *Id.* 6.46).

alludes to the otherwise non-existent space in which the poet of the *Iliad* places Glaucus and Diomedes (and Achilles and Aeneas) through the time of day, which, while perfectly real in the temporal sense, has a symbolic effect of artificiality and its allusion to a time that is neither of the morning nor of the afternoon, and as such stands apart from the rest of the day. As a time of rest, noon creates a pause in the day. Theocritus takes advantage of that pause to give his herders a place to sing undisturbed; he chooses not to show his herders attending to their duties.

Idyll 5 shares many elements and structures with the first *Idyll*.⁴⁴ Once again we have a goatherd (Comatas) and a shepherd (Lacon) in an artificial rustic setting. The two antagonists trade insulting accusations and other unpleasantries with each other, and then the back-and-forth of the insults culminates in a singing competition proposed by the goatherd. The shepherd Comatas sets out a lamb and a goat⁴⁵ as the respective prizes. A woodcutter called Morson serves as a judge; he stops the contest, and awards the lamb to the goatherd Comatas.

In many ways, the song competition found in *Idyll 5* is the closest cousin of the duels found in the Homeric epic. The antagonists sing in alternating couplets as each tries to best the other, a parallel to the alternating blows of battle between warriors; we see such a blow-for-blow attempt to best one's opponent in the duel between Hector and Ajax in Book 7 of the *Iliad*. As in *Idyll 1*, we can see how Theocritus picks up on the structure of the epic duels; his combatants may not fight to the death, but they follow the same pattern of coming together, engaging in credentialing themselves and taunting the opposing party, and fighting for a prize.

The *Idylls* do not always exactly imitate the Homeric dueling patterns. *Idyll 8* features a contest of song between Daphnis the cowherd and Menalcas the shepherd. They determine a set

⁴⁴ *Idylls 2* and *4* do not deal with the singing shepherds, who most clearly engage in the epic duel motif. However, they maintain the dialogue format through mute partners. The back-and-forth is picked up from the same motif that gives us the dueling shepherds.

⁴⁵ First, a kid is offered against the lamb, but it is not deemed to be of equal value as a prize, and so a goat is offered instead.

of pipes as the prize for the winner, and the judge is an unnamed goatherd, who declares Daphnis the winner of the duel (*Id.*8.81-84). The judge compounds Daphnis' victory even further when he offers him a second prize.⁴⁶ The goatherd says that he will give to him a hornless nanny goat if Daphnis will teach the goatherd to sing as well as Daphnis does (*Id.*8.85-87). The two dueling herders are introduced to the reader as “ἄμφω συρίσθην δεδαημένω, ἄμφω ἀεΐδην” (“both having learned to play the pipe, both having learned to sing” *Id.*8.4). The narrator begins the poem with a credentialing section (although the characters do not speak at first) when we find out who they are, and it also has a mild taunting section as each figure declares that he will best the other if they compete. Credentialing and taunting are part of the same part of the duel (the set-up) in both the epic duels and the pastoral duels; they vary in degree from duel to duel from the friendly, as in this poem, to the truly nasty, as in the taunts in *Idyll* 5 and in the duels between Ajax and Hector, and Achilles and Aeneas in the *Iliad*.

As we have seen, Theocritus never hesitates to reinterpret the Homeric structures to suit the poetic space he carves out. The judge-figure that Theocritus uses to determine the outcome of several of his pastoral *Idylls* is an important recasting of the pattern established by the epic warrior duels.⁴⁷ This character is a necessary addition to the original epic model; in general, in the epic world it is clear who has won: the winner is the warrior who is still alive and standing and capable of taking his opponents armor or weapons as his prize. Since no one dies (at least not in combat) or indisputably stands apart as the winner by virtue of what he wins in the forced tranquility of Theocritus' pastorals, the additional character of a judge is needed to determine the

⁴⁶ For a possible Homeric connection see Achilles' distribution of prizes at the games in *Iliad* 23.

⁴⁷ The character most like the judge-figure found in pastoral is the herald in *Iliad* 7, who announces that the duel between Hector and Ajax ought to be brought to a close. The herald and the judge are both figures that are not participants in the duel, but who bring it to an artificial close rather than having the duel run its natural course. In the epic setting this is necessary because Hector and Ajax do more than exchange words: they move on to the physical part of the duel (where the victor is traditionally determined in the epic world). In order for the duel not to end in the death of one of the warriors another figure must impose another ending.

outcome of these contests. In the Diomedes and Glaucus episode the victor can be determined by which warrior takes away the better prize. One piece of armor can be clearly better than another, but the comparison between livestock is not always clear-cut in the pastoral works.

The Homeric connection is still apparent. Theocritus, like Homer, clearly differentiates between his antagonists: where in Homer we saw Greeks versus Trojans, in Theocritus we see shepherds, goatherds, and cowherds vying against one another. Neither warrior dies in the dueling scenes upon which Theocritus has patterned his herders. Diomedes and Glaucus part in friendship, Hector and Ajax are pulled apart (a draw), and Aeneas is snatched up from his duel with Achilles by Poseidon (Achilles as victor). In all cases, an external force or mutual recognition imposes an other-than-fatal outcome. Theocritus takes this concept further and introduces an additional player to the genre. The best illustration of the continued use of the outside imposition of a declaration of victory occurs when the judge in *Idyll 5* interrupts the contest. Morson, the judge, orders Lacon and Comatas to cease singing, and then declares Comatas the winner. Like the herald in *Iliad 7* or Poseidon in *Iliad 20*, Morson imposes an end to the competition before it comes to a conclusion on its own.

The links between the original warrior duels and Theocritus' *Idylls* are suggestive even though the *Idylls* are set in a very different backdrop. However, the *Idylls* go beyond a simple spinoff of Homeric warrior duels; Theocritus reinvents the motif and creates a genre of his own, with its own purpose and objectives. The sequence of the *Idylls* in general is not clear, but it seems likely that what we refer to as *Idyll 1* was in fact the first, because it seems to establish a template for the rest of these poems.⁴⁸ The key elements found in the future contests between herders are present, both in their behavior towards one another and in the ways Theocritus goes

⁴⁸ Katherine Gutzwiller, *Theocritus Pastoral Analogies: The Formation of a Genre* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 101.

about creating the time and landscape in which his characters will compete and create their poetry.⁴⁹ The artistry of the cup that is offered up by the goatherd in return for the song (rather than the musical instruments and livestock that will predominate as the prizes in the other poems) can still be viewed as part of the art-for-art exchanges that are at play in the singing duels that follow, and definitely echoes the fine prizes to be won in Homeric duels.

Theocritus uses the ekphrasis of the cup in several ways. It is both a physical prize and a means of discussing his artistic intentions. A close examination of some of the images that we find on the cup provides insight into Theocritus' poetic agenda. As Gutzwiller notes, the images that Theocritus describes in the ekphrasis of the cup are "decorations that would properly adorn the finest works of Greek art." These amazing flourishes are to be found on an item that in practical life would serve as a "drinking cup and milking pail."⁵⁰ The practicality of the item combined with the sophistication of its decorations thus clearly gives it a double function,⁵¹ and when examined closer a third function emerges. The description of the decorations on the cup

⁴⁹ The middle line in the refrains of Thyrsis' song repeatedly draws attention to the nature of the new pastoral genre: "λήγετε βουκολικᾶς, Μοῦσαι, ἴτε λήγετ' ἀοιδᾶς" (speak bucolic songs, Muses, come speak bucolic songs). Each time the adjective "βουκολικᾶς" simultaneously captures the setting and the characters. Theocritus' use of the verb "Βουκολιάζομαι" (which appears in *Idylls* 5 and 7) serves the same purpose. Although the verb derives from the word for a shepherd, he does not use it to denote the occupation of the herders, but rather it always means "to sing bucolic songs," primarily in connection with singing contests. Theocritus applies the adjective *boukolikos* (*Id.* 5.44,60; 7.36) only to the songs and to the Muses. In addition to his herders' inattention to everyday tasks, the rural area that Theocritus places his poet-herders in is heavily stylized. His poets sing insulated from the concerns and dangers that exist in the world beyond their pastoral sphere: none of the potential dangers of the wild pasture land are present. Theocritus lays out this notion when he writes: "Ἄδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἅ πίτυς αἰπόλε τήνα, / ἅ ποτὶ ταῖς παραῖσι μελίσσεται, ἄδῦ δὲ καὶ τὴν / συρίσδεσ..." ("sweet is the whispering, goatherd, created by that pine tree over there, / near the springs, and sweetly do you / play the syrinx." *Id.* 1.1-3). The repetition of the distinctive Doric alpha in these lines is another manifestation of Theocritus' new form of poetry. Hunter, in contrast with Gow (who does not view the dialect of the words as germane to the interpretation of the poems) contends that the use of Doric forms throughout the poem is another aspect of *Idyll* 1 that indicates its programmatic value for the other poems. Theocritus' choices in his setting, characters, and the words he uses to write them out all disguise the poet behind a stylized rustic mask. The herders are not his depiction of true country life, but rather they are a way to speak to his audience. Fantuzzi and Hunter, 141-145.; Richard Hunter, *Theocritus and the Archaeology of Greek Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 32-35.; Schmidt, 140-141.

⁵⁰ Gutzwiller, 90.; Riemer Faber notes that: "The kissybian suits the genre of pastoral, for it was associated with the countryside ever since Odysseus offered one filled with wine to the Cyclops (*Od.* 9.346) and Eumaeus used one to mix wine for Odysseus (*Od.* 16.25)." Riemer Faber, "Vergil 3.37, Theocritus 1 and Hellenistic Ekphrasis," *The American Journal of Philology* 116, no.3 (Autumn 1995): 413. Similar information can be found in Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 11.476F-477D.

⁵¹ Gutzwiller, 90.

functions like the song that the goatherd would have offered if Thyrsis had not been prevailed on to sing,⁵² and the physical cup serves as a prize. The third use, though, provides the key to Theocritus' personal development of the genre. Theocritus' chief concern in describing the cup (though scholars have taken pains to attempt to reconstruct the physical object itself)⁵³ is in and of itself a statement on the nature of the poetry to follow—artificial creations in poetic space which use the pastoral setting—and the structure of the *Idyll*—as a backdrop to accentuate that separate space which he uses to talk about something quite removed from animal husbandry—in this case, the process and creation of art.

In general, ekphrases function as “symbolic microcosms” that serve to reiterate the ideas present in a poem as a whole.⁵⁴ The poet uses an ekphrasis to promote the same agenda he has in the rest of the poem, but using different images.⁵⁵ While at first glance an ekphrasis may appear to do no more than ornament a text, it actually invites the audience to examine the poem's themes from a different vantage point by temporarily stepping away from the main action of the poem, and creating a space unrelated to the chronology of the rest of the poem.⁵⁶ The level of detail that poets use to describe ekphrases varies from minimal to ornate. However, regardless of the level of detail used and whether or not the poet means for the audience to see the ekphrasis as a description of a true or imaginary object, “the poet was concerned to situate and relate to each other the details appearing in the work.”⁵⁷ The various images that Theocritus features on the cup work together in order to present the audience with a guide to his poetic agenda in the rest of the poem. In this particular ekphrasis Theocritus reiterates the importance that he places on the

⁵² Clayton Zimmerman, *The Pastoral Narcissus* (Boston: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), 76.

⁵³ A.S.F. Gow, “The Cup in the First Idyll of Theocritus,” *The Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 33 (1913): 207-222.

⁵⁴ Eleanor Leach, *Vergil's Eclogues: Landscapes of Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 73.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Michael Putnam, *Virgil's Epic Design* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), ix, 2-3, 209.

⁵⁷ Richard Thomas, *Reading Virgil and His Texts* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 310-311.

creative act. Theocritus' cup is not the only ekphrasis used to clarify the main themes in a poem. Indeed, in the next chapter we will look at how Vergil uses an ekphrasis, while borrowing elements that tie back to this Theocritean ekphrasis, to promote his own ideas.

Theocritus' ekphrasis describing the design on the cup draws attention to the privileged position that Theocritus assigns to the creation of art of any kind.⁵⁸ In it he “stakes out” the subjects under his purview: “love, loss, nature, the rustic life, art, and poetry.”⁵⁹ The image on the cup of a boy weaving cages for cicadas especially focuses on the privileging of poetry above everyday (and needful) work:

τυτθὸν δ' ὅσσον ἄπωθεν ἀλιτρώτοιο γέροντος
 πυρναίαις σταφυλαῖσι καλὸν βέβριθεν ἄλωά,
 τὰν ὀλίγος τις κῶρος ἐφ' αἵμασιαῖσι φυλάσσει
 ἤμενος: ἀμφὶ δέ νιν δύο ἄλώπεκες ἅ μὲν ἀν' ὄρχως
 φοιτῆ σινομένα τὰν τρώξιμον, ἅ δ' ἐπὶ πῆρα
 πάντα δόλον κεύθοισα τὸ παιδίον οὐ πρὶν ἀνησεῖν
 φατὶ πρὶν ἢ ἀκράτιστον ἐπὶ ξηροῖσι καδίξῃ
 αὐτὰρ ὄγ' ἀνδρείκοισι καλὰν πλέκει ἀκριδοθήραν
 σχοίνῳ ἐφαρμόσδων: μέλεται δέ οἱ οὔτε τι πῆρας
 οὔτε φυτῶν τοσσῆνον, ὅσον περὶ πλέγματι γασεῖ. (*Id.* 1.45-54)

Not far from this sea-beaten old man
 there is a vineyard beautifully weighed down with ripe grapes,
 and a certain little boy guards it sitting on a stone wall.
 And circling him are two foxes; one darts back and forth along the rows
 Thieving the edible grapes, while the other contrives all cunning against the boy's
 satchel, and says she will not let him sit until he breakfasts with dry bread
 nevertheless, he weaves a pretty grasshopper-trap with asphodel
 fitting (it) with a reed: he has no concern for the satchel nor for
 the care of the vines, as much as he rejoices in his weaving.

Hunter observes that Theocritus uses the image in order to explain his poetry—the image is
 “itself a manifestation of how poetry works.”⁶⁰ The boy is also frequently interpreted as

⁵⁸ Faber also notes that Theocritus owes part of his description to the shield ekphrasis of Achilles and Herakles. Faber, 412.

⁵⁹ Zimmerman, 25.

⁶⁰ Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection*, 77.

Theocritus’ representation of the bucolic poet because of his use of natural materials to create “something beautiful”⁶¹ —and because the boy is delimiting a space for the insect, which embodies the spaces a poet creates for poetry to inhabit, a place where it will continue to create poetry once it has been captured. Crickets, grasshoppers, and cicadas are frequently associated with song, so the allegory is fairly clear.⁶² The ekphrasis draws attention to the parallel between the boy on the cup who neglects his practical life—guarding the vineyard and eating—in favor of his creative art and the various herders who engage one another in poetic contests rather than attending to their duties. Both the boy and the herders focus their energies on poetic creation in preference to other matters.

Idyll 7 further stretches out the boundaries of the pastoral genre and the singing contests as Theocritus presents them in the rest of his pastoral herder duels. Although the scene takes place on a road, there is an almost immediate reference to an idealized country setting, and the end of this *Idyll* (*Id.*7.135-146) contains the most idealized version of the sympathy that exists between the landscape and the poet.⁶³ Theocritus segues into the often-seen poetic setting of a spring surrounded by trees through the lineage of one of Simichidas’ travel companions:

...Βούριαν ὅς ἐκ ποδὸς ἄνυε κράναν
 εὔ ἐνερρυσάμενος πέτρα γόνυ: τὰ δὲ παρ’ αὐτὰν
 αἴγειροι πτελέαι τε εὐσκιον ἄλσος ὕφαινον,
 χλωροῖσιν πετάλοισι κατηρεφές κομώσσαι. (*Id.*7.6-9)

Who, thrusting his knee on the rock,
 made the spring Burina from his foot; and beside it
 the poplars and elms were weaving a shadowy grove,
 waving thick-leaved with green leaves

⁶¹ Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection*, 82.

⁶² Fantuzzi and Hunter, 144. The sweet sound made by the cicada can be seen as far back as Homer (*Il.*3.152). The cicada also makes an appearance as a musical insect in Plato (*Pl.**Phaed.*259b-c).

⁶³ Fantuzzi and Hunter, 146.

The idealized country image of the elms and poplars actively working together in order to create a shady retreat (and by extension potentially delimited spot for poetry) are further assisted in their effort to conjure up the pastoral landscape by the appearance of a goatherd. As we saw in *Idyll 1*, Theocritus often specifies the sort of herder that a particular character is which adds a further dimension to the encounters. Usually, though, a single word for a shepherd, goatherd, or cowherd takes care of the specification. In *Idyll 7*, he devotes almost ten lines to a detailed description of how it is apparent to others that the man his party of travelers encounters, Lycidas, is without question the pastoral figure of the poetry-creating goatherd⁶⁴:

ἔσθλόν σὺν Μοῖσαισι Κυδωνικὸν εὖρομες ἄνδρα,
οὔνομα μὲν Λυκίδα, ἧς δ' αἰπόλος, οὐδέ κέ τις νιν
ἠγνοίησεν ἰδών, ἐπεὶ αἰπόλῳ ἔξοχ' ἔφκει.
ἐκ μὲν γὰρ λασίοιο δασύτριχος εἶχε τράγοιο
κνακὸν δέσμ' ὤμοισι νέας ταμίσιοιο ποτόσδον,
ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ στήθεσσι γέρον ἐσφίγγετο πέπλος
ζωστήρι πλακερῶ, ῥοικὰν δ' ἔχεν ἀγριελαίῳ
δεξιτερῶ κορύναν. καί μ' ἀτρέμας εἶπε σεσαρῶς
ὄμματι μειδιῶντι, γέλωσ δέ οἱ εἶχετο χεῖλες: (*Id.* 7.12-20)

We found a good Cydonian man, along with the Muses,
named Lycidas, a goatherd, and indeed anyone who saw him
could not fail to know it, since he was a goatherd above others.
For he had on his shoulders the tawny pelt of a shaggy thick-haired goat,
smelling of fresh rennet, around his chest an old shirt was bound tight
with a broad belt, and in his right hand he held
a crooked staff of wild olive. He — softly grinning — spoke to me
with smiling eyes, and laughter was holding his lip.

The surprise meeting with a figure straight out of the pastoral genre spurs on Simichidas (who is often accepted as standing in for the poet at large if not Theocritus himself) to invite the goatherd to engage in a trade of pastoral songs.⁶⁵ The staff that Lycidas has with him (and then gives to

⁶⁴ Hunter suggests that Theocritus models the meeting of Simichidas and Lycidas on Homeric scenes where a traveling mortal encounters a disguised divinity. Others assert that Lycidas stands in for Pan or a satyr. An Apolline connection is also suggested. The common thread between all interpretations is that he is more than he appears. Lycidas is not an ordinary goatherd. Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection*, 147-150.

⁶⁵ Gow, *Theocritus*, 128. Vergil will take the allusion of incorporating the poet into the work a step further and actually mention himself by name.

Simichidas) represents the gift of the genre of poetry that Lycidas represents to Simichidas: τάν τοι “ζφα” κορύναν δωρύττομαι⁶⁶ (“To you, he said, I present this shepherd’s staff” *Id.*7.43). It is likely that the image of one poet making a present of a staff to another poet is meant as an allusion to the staff given to Hesiod by the Heleconian Muses “as a symbol of his poetic vocation,”⁶⁷ here, from one poet to another.

In Simichidas’ conversation with Lycidas we see the Homeric heritage coming through. Like the herders of the other pastoral *Idylls*, Simichidas engages in credentialing and complimenting. He presents himself as an equal to Lycidas (*Id.*7.30) and claims that he is “...Μοισῶν καπυρόν στόμα” (“the clear mouth piece of the Muses” *Id.*7.37). He raises Lycidas up as someone worth exchanging songs with, praising the goatherd by telling him that “...φαντί τυ πάντες /συριγκτὰν ἔμεναι μέγ’ ὑπείροχον ἔν τε νομεῦσιν/ ἔν τ’ ἀμητήρῃσσι...” (“they say that you are the best syrinx-player among the herders and reapers” *Id.*7.27-29).

When the goatherd greets Simichidas he mentions one of the temporal and spatial markers of the pastoral *Idylls* straightaway: Σιμιχίδα, πᾶ δὴ τὸ μεσαμέριον πόδας ἔλκεις. (“Simichidas, which way do you drag your feet at noon” *Id.*7.21). Midday, as we have seen, finely separates the portions of the day, while at the same time belonging to neither the morning nor the afternoon. The road between the countryside and the city traveled by Simichidas, his fellow travelers, and the goatherd Lycidas is the same kind of liminal “in between” space. The spaces that lie in between identifiable points, such as city and country are full of potential because they do not belong to a clearly defined space; they are areas that lie in between borders: “the borderland was a place where anything might happen.”⁶⁸ They are places that lack definition and on account of that state are flexible and changeable rather than set, and in them the

⁶⁶ Doric form of δωρέω

⁶⁷ Gow, *Theocritus*, 142.

⁶⁸ Susan Cole, “Landscapes of Artemis,” *Classical World* 93, no. 5 (2000): 471.

inherent instability and potential for change can be channeled. Therefore liminal spaces are places of great creative possibilities and an appropriate place—whether temporal or geographic—for a poet to move old patterns, like the epic duels, in a new direction.

Theocritus leaves no ambiguity about the genre of his characters' songs in *Idyll 7*, despite his departure from the expected locus and cast of characters found in a pastoral exchange of songs (that is, a herder-duel). As if the use of pastoral⁶⁹ images and cues were not enough, he flatly writes: *βουκολιασδώμεσθα* ("Let us sing pastoral songs" *Id.7.36*). Mark Payne notes that even though Lycidas appears "in rags and smells foul" he "theorizes eloquently about poetic technique, and he sings a song that, in wistful evocation of past bucolic singers, is perhaps the supreme example of its kind."⁷⁰ The description of the goatherd's physical characteristics combined with the substance of his song serves to widen the landscapes of Theocritus' pastoral *Idylls* past their usual confinement to rural pastureland, stretching not just the Homeric set-piece but also the potential of Theocritus' new pastoral genre itself. The country images of springs and plants — though not actually present in the supposed current setting of the exchange of songs — alongside the presence of a herder-poet, the credentialing and complimenting that Simichidas participates in, and the noon time meeting of the two poets who then exchange songs all extend out of and point back to the herder singing duels found in the other poems.

Idyll 5 is the most contentious poetic contest found in the pastoral *Idylls*. In addition to the taunts and insults that lead up to the main singing contest, Theocritus uses the particular spots that Lacon and Comatas propose to situate themselves in during the contest to both further the combative spirit of the *Idyll* and alert the audience to the 'official' start of the poetry within the poem (*Id.5.31-34,45-49*). Therefore, even as they present the potential backdrops for their

⁶⁹ The pastoral genre.

⁷⁰ Mark Payne, *Theocritus and the Invention of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 19.

songs, Lacon and Comatas exchange competing visions of poetry: “Comatas and Lacon vie with one another to see who can paint their surroundings in more charming colors or who can offer a more attractive spot for repose. Trying as much to evoke as to describe, the herdsmen select from the countryside trees, plants, cool springs, the sounds of birds and of bees, the typical attributes of a *locus amoenus*.”⁷¹ The herders themselves idealize the setting for their country songs, and in doing so they draw attention to how the framework of their poetic space informs the kind of poetry that is created within it. As in the first programmatic *Idyll*, the pleasantness of the landscape (and the presence of crickets and bees) is connected with the quality of the poetry that the herders will create.

In his *Idylls*, therefore, Theocritus not only picks up but re-imagines the non-lethal Homeric warrior duels of the *Iliad*. Like all fictive narratives, the world of the *Iliad* is an artificial one. However, the artificiality of the Homeric world is hidden. The interactions between the characters are privileged over the construct that allows them to interact even when the poet creates a new poetic space within the rest of the narrative. In the non-lethal duels the focus is on the encounter, but it is the artificiality that allows for the encounter to take place. This same artificiality continues in the pastoral poetry of Theocritus, except far more explicitly; in the *Idylls* the act of creating poetic space is a function of the poem. The artificiality that allows two warriors to take the time to take part in a verbal exchange before they commence battle is similar to the contrivance of shepherds engaging in singing contests rather than watching their flocks or applying themselves to any of the realities of their world. The detachment from reality (whether hidden or overt) delimits the stage of Homer and of Theocritus, and it encourages the audience to participate in a willful suspension of disbelief.

⁷¹ Gregory Crane, “Realism in the Fifth Idyll of Theocritus,” *TAPA* 118 (1988): 107-122, 114.

The motif continued to evolve through the epics in literary history, but through Theocritus it found another life that extended beyond its potential for use in other epics. Although he also uses artificial space, like the space where the epic warriors did battle, to create his own landscape in which his herders may sing, and structures the encounters along lines that owe a clear debt to the Homeric tradition, Theocritus' development of the genre into the pastoral realm opens up significant new opportunities both for himself and for future writers that are closer to realities and subjects more tangible to his readers. Pastoral poetry "lies just across the border from reality,"⁷² and the landscapes of the *Idylls* are deceptively familiar. The items and figures from the natural and rural world that Theocritus uses to create his vision of the countryside are also the images that he uses to delimit the poetic space for the *Idylls*. Critically, however, Theocritus' words make the reader actively conscious that they are suspending their disbelief for the sake of a discussion of something, usually poetry. The artificial space in the Homeric epics is inwardly-focused; the device exists in order to provide a place for the encounter that occurs within it, but it must also connect with the larger narrative in which it is found. Theocritus' characters use the artificial space to focus attention on a subject of their choosing; without ties to a larger narrative they are able to sing any place and in any time period.

On the surface, Theocritus' pastoral works are simple country songs. However, "the simplicity of pastoral is deceptive," and far from being simple they have an artfulness "contrived by a poet of great skill."⁷³ The skillful creation of an undisturbed countryside as the poetic space where herders are poets before they are tenders of livestock gives to the audience a sense of the artificiality of the setting, and focuses the audience's attention on the exchanges between the characters — much the way that audiences had to suspend disbelief that two warriors would be

⁷² Payne, 21.

⁷³ Barriss Mills, *The Idylls of Theocritus* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1961), vii.

having an extended conversation in some mysteriously open space between two contending armies.⁷⁴ Theocritus imitates many aspects of that form. We see the exchanges of credentials and taunts that occur before the duels between the Homeric warriors to set up the poetry and signal to the audience that a contest is about to take place. Theocritus also reuses the notion of a middle space. The Homeric duels occur in the space between the two armies rather than in the midst of all the clashing warriors. Theocritus recasts the spatial representation of an “in between” space by having his singing duels occur at noon, a temporal middle.

It is this quasi-real quality, which Theocritus uses to highlight the contrived and unreal aspect of his countryside, that Vergil picks up on, expands, and magnifies in his *Eclogues*. As we shall see in the next chapter, Vergil takes the expectation of a poetic space where the affairs of the world do not intrude and that exists only nominally outside of the real world’s borders and uses that very expectation in order to draw attention to the actions and issues that are current in his world.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Ch.4 -VERGIL'S *ECLOGUES*: A NEW TAKE ON PASTORAL

Vergil continues on the genre-bending path already travelled by Theocritus,⁷⁵ heavily influenced by Theocritus' innovative work in the emerging genre of pastoral poetry. We find pieces of Theocritus' overall pastoral pattern throughout Vergil's work. Lorenz Rumpf rightly calls Theocritus' *Idylls* the "literary model of the *Eclogues*,"⁷⁶ based on his examination of the "nominal vocabulary"⁷⁷ (adjectives, nouns, and proper nouns) of the poems. The Greek names used by Theocritus reappear in Vergil's poems, and just like his predecessor's herders Vergil's characters often exchange antiphonal verse in the countryside; and, as in Theocritus Vergil's herders stand in for the poet.⁷⁸ At least initially, the pastorals of both authors are created with the intent of transporting their audience to a closed-off space where poetry flourishes, and where herders sing to one another undisturbed by outside events.

Vergil takes the expected norms of the pastoral, the verbal cues that indicate that the audience can expect beautiful poetry from the mouths of herders — undisturbed by the troubles, dangers, and necessities of daily life — and uses that expectation of calm repose to draw the attention of his audience to the troubled reality outside of the poetic space that the herders inhabit. In the same way that Theocritus imitated and manipulated his literary models in order to arrive at his pastoral *Idylls*, so too Vergil manipulates the expectations of the pastoral genre as laid out by Theocritus. Gian Biagio Conte writes that Vergil owes a "debt" to Theocritus,

⁷⁵Thomas, 246-247.

⁷⁶Lorenz Rumpf, "Bucolic *nomina* in Virgil and Theocritus," in *Virgil's Eclogues*, ed. Katharina Volk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 66.

⁷⁷Rumpf, 65.

⁷⁸Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 138.

because by engaging with him Vergil “reworks” and “restructures” the poetic devices of Theocritus for his own ends.⁷⁹

Richard Thomas notes that one way to understand the concept that we call “genre” is as the resulting product of the “manipulation of models.”⁸⁰ He repeatedly comments on the notion that new genres are born out of the reworking of old genres, whether the genesis occurs through manipulation, conflation, turning an old idea on its head, or openly making an effort to displace works that came before it.⁸¹ Although Thomas makes his remarks specifically in reference to how the corpus of Theocritus’ poetry came about, his statements hold equally true for what Vergil proceeds to do with his predecessors. Paul Alpers also makes note of Vergil’s heavy engagement with Theocritus, both in terms of what Vergil owes him as well as what he added to the genre Theocritus is credited with starting, and he argues that “the genius of the *Eclogues* was very largely a matter of returning to, realizing, and transforming Theocritean interests and practices.”⁸² Vergil’s ability to transform the genre without stretching it so far that it breaks is particularly interesting and impressive. Even in *Eclogues*, where current events form prominent pieces of the poem, there is no question that the genre Vergil uses to discuss them is pastoral.

Vergil’s engagement with Theocritus can be seen throughout the *Eclogues*; for example, he directly imitates Theocritus’ herders in many of the poems. In the *Eclogues* we see the continued evolution of the motif of two dueling protagonists in an artificial setting. Vergil takes the format of the Homeric duel that Theocritus had re-envisioned for his pastoral poetry and once again reformulates it. However, his remolding of the pattern is more subtle than the genre

⁷⁹Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 103-105.

⁸⁰Thomas, 247.

⁸¹In particular Thomas is drawing on: Tzvetan Todorov, “The Origin of Genres,” *NLH* 8 (1977): 161. Thomas, 253; In general, however, Thomas appears to reject the classifications that go along with the set ideas of genre. He regards this kind of classification as hindering the exploration of the texts. Thomas, *passim*.

⁸²Paul Alpers, “Theocritean Bucolic and Virgilian Pastoral,” *Pastoral Revisions: Arethusa* 23 (1990): 28.

transfer from epic to pastoral that Theocritus has done, a luxury afforded him because his predecessor had already made the leap from one genre to another. Vergil bends, but does not break, the expected pastoral structure.

Rather than make a total departure from one genre to another, Vergil disassembles the components that make up the pattern of Theocritus' herder-duels and moves them about as it suits him. Vergil's version the pastoral world is much more elastic than the one found in his model Theocritus' poems. Vergil blurs the individuality of both his characters and the poems as a whole.⁸³ For example, in the *Eclogues* a single bucolic name may or may not refer to the same individual in each poem, Vergil's pastoral characters are types rather than the individuals found in Theocritus.⁸⁴

Vergil's incorporation and transformation of the pieces that make up the larger pattern of the herder duels of the *Idylls* into his *Eclogues* "continued the reinterpretation of Alexandrian Greek poetry undertaken by poets of the late republic and carried it further, adding pastoral to the Latin repertory."⁸⁵ Unlike the Greek-speaking herder-poets of Theocritus (who are insulated from the cares of the outside world), Vergil's Latin-speaking herdsmen do not create poetry without the intrusion of the world outside of their immediate landscape. Michael Putnam posits that the *Eclogues* as a whole are poems that look for order, but rarely achieve it. The search for order is frustrated by unrequited love, death, and outside forces hostile to the notion of a pastoral retreat, as well as the violent political reality of the poet's own time.⁸⁶ In the context of the civil strife that Vergil was writing in, his new take on the pastoral genre "articulated

⁸³ Rumpf, 77.

⁸⁴ Rumpf, 76-77.

⁸⁵ John Van Sickle, "Studies of Dialectical Methodology in the Virgilian Tradition," *MLN* 85, no. 6 (1970): 887; Paul Alpers, *The Singer of the Eclogues* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1979), 241-242.

⁸⁶ Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 13.

conservative objections to change, but against it [there was] a hope of new order.”⁸⁷ The herders and the rest of the framework of the pastoral world allowed him to take hold of current subject matter, both praising the new powers in control of Rome while at the same time addressing the more problematic side of things.⁸⁸

Despite the departures, though, the patterns borrowed from Theocritus are still visible in most of the *Eclogues*; *Eclogues* 1, 3, 5, and 9 in particular all demonstrate both the deep connections to Theocritus’ genre and Vergil’s departures. We can quickly recognize the pattern in *Eclogue* 3; Menalcas and Damoetas begin by taunting one another before the contest in the manner of Comatas and Lacon in *Idyll* 5.⁸⁹ Damoetas first suggests a heifer as the prize on his part should Menalcas win the duel. Menalcas proposes to set some cups as a prize, but Damoetas claims to have ones just like them and seems to insist that the stakes be a heifer (*Ec.*3.28-37, 48), then they quickly find a judge with the same ease as the figures in Theocritus (*Ec.*3.50). They sing, answering each other in turn, and as in a significant number of the non-lethal duels in the *Iliad* and in the *Idylls*, no single winner is determined, Palaemon (the judge) declares that they are both worthy of the prize (*Ec.*3.109). The pattern from this poem calls to mind Theocritus’ works, particularly *Idyll* 5.

The couplets which the shepherds trade back and forth mimic the idea of how the warrior’s trade reciprocal words as they prepare to duel.⁹⁰ Where the structure of the duels is apparent in Theocritus’ pastoral *Idylls*, it is also explicitly stated by Vergil’s judge, Palaemon.

⁸⁷Van Sickle, 887.

⁸⁸Alpers, *The Singer of the Eclogues*, 114.

⁸⁹Putnam, *Virgil’s Pastoral Art*, 121.

⁹⁰As mentioned in the Introduction, epic duels are not the only places that we find verbal exchanges. We also find templates for structured amoebian exchanges, like the ones in the *Idylls* and *Eclogues*, in sympotic-style jesting (such as in the *Hymn to Hermes*). However, the primary interest of this thesis is the relationship between the Homeric duels, the pastoral *Idylls*, and the *Eclogues*. Stephen Halliwell, *Greek Laughter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 102-103.

He clarifies the structure of the poetic duel before it officially begins by describing the landscape of the poetic space and commanding the two herders to answer each other in alternating verses:

P: Dicite, quandoquidem in molli consedimus herba:
et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
nunc frondent silvae, nunc formosissimus annus.
Incipe, Damoeta; tu deinde sequere Menalca:
alternis dicetis; amant alterna Camenae. (*Ec.* 3. 55-59)⁹¹

Speak, since we sit together on the soft grass,
and now every field, now every field bursts forth trees;
Now the woods are leafy, now the year is most beautiful
Begin, Damoetas; then you Menalcas follow him:
You two will speak alternating: The Camenae love alternating verse.

These five lines encompass both the setting familiar from Theocritus' *Idylls* and the nature of the contest between the herders. Before the singing contest begins, Palaemon focuses the audience on the small piece of landscape — a grassy area with trees close by — where the two herders will create their poetry and attempt to best one another, uninterrupted by concerns outside of their poetry. Then, by setting down the rules of the contest, he signals the dueling format that Vergil's herders will observe.

Menalcas and Damoetas argue the merits of different potential prizes before the contest starts. Damoetas begins the debate by offering up a calf, to which Menalcas responds that he does not dare to bet livestock because his father and unjust stepmother will discover the missing animal. Instead, he says that he will wager two beechwood cups as the prize. They discuss in detail two sets of cups which call to mind the programmatic ekphrasis of the cup that Theocritus describes in his first *Idyll*:

M: . . . pocula ponam
fagina, caelatum divini opus Alcimedontis;
lenta quibus torno facili superaddita **vitis**

⁹¹ All the Latin text of Vergil's poetry is taken from *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

diffusos hedera vestit pallente corymbos:
in medio duo signa, Conon, et—quis fuit alter,
descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
tempora quae messor, quae curvus arator haberet?
necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo. (*Ec.*3.36-43)

. . . I will place beechen cups,
a work carved by the divine Alcimedon
onto which by a ready lathe having been added, a limber vine
dresses spread out berry bunches with pale ivy.
In the middle two imprints, Conon, and — who was the other?
who with his rod wrote down for all people the entire globe,
what seasons the reaper would have, and what seasons the bent ploughman?
I have not yet moved my lips to them, but, hidden, I preserve them.

and Damoetas responds:

D: Et nobis idem Alcimedon duo pocula fecit,
et molli circum est ansas amplexus acantho,
Orpheaque in medio posuit silvasque sequentis.
necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo:
si ad vitulam spectas, nihil est quod pocula laudes. (*Ec.*3.44-48)

And the same Alcimedon made two cups for us,
and all around he embraced the handles with gentle acanthus,
and with Orpheus in the middle did he place the following woods.
I have not yet moved my lips towards them, but, hidden, I preserve them:
If you look to the heifer, you would not praise the cups.

Vergil's most obvious model for these cups is lines 27-31 in *Idyll* 1.⁹² Theocritus' detailed ekphrasis, and the allusion to it here, like ekphrases in other poems may be used in order to create an unreal moment removed from the time of the poem through the atemporality of a work of art.⁹³

The central image in the description (whether of the whole object or of a series of descriptions on the object) has potential for significance.⁹⁴ Although in the end the cups are rejected as the prize for this competition, Vergil doubly emphasizes their importance to the poem

⁹²Faber, 413; Putnam notes that Vergil frequently engages with ekphrases from poems by earlier authors. Putnam, *Virgil's Epic Design*, 11-12, 21.

⁹³Putnam, *Virgil's Epic Design*, 2.

⁹⁴Putnam, *Virgil's Epic Design*, 154.

by placing the ekphrasis in the structural center of the poem and by placing a singer (Orpheus) as the central image on one of the cups: “Virgilian ekphrasis displays a change in attitude toward this feature [centrality], specifically a heightening of interest in the structural importance of the central object.”⁹⁵ The figures on the cups in *Eclogue 3* are central images in both senses; they are literally the middle as well as the primary images (*Ec.*3.36-48). Theocritus describes Conon and Aratus, and then Orpheus as “*in medio*,” he situates them at the center of the cups. Vergil borrows both the idea that a fine cup is a fitting prize for a singing competition and the acanthus edging from Theocritus, however, in a slight departure, Vergil provides a singer at the descriptive center of his ekphrasis, where Theocritus does not.

The idea of a contest of words occurring *in medio* is a familiar idea from both Homer and Theocritus. The Homeric warriors are physically placed in the spaces between the two sides, and Theocritus’ herders often meet in the middle of the day. Here Vergil also makes use of the middle as a place for verbal exchange by placing images of singers in the middle of the poem: “The medial reference itself appears in the center of the passage: Menalcas has the phrase *in medio* midway through his description of the cup (40), but he is capped by Damoetas, for whom *in medio* occurs at the medial caesura in the central line of his five line response (46). So the work of art and the poem or passage in which it appears visually mirror each other; the poem in a sense *is* the object.”⁹⁶ We saw a similar phenomenon (i.e., that the object distills the main theme put forward in the poem) at work in the ekphrasis Theocritus uses in *Idyll 1*. Where Vergil’s ekphrasis physically mirrors the body of the poem, the fictive activities taking place on

⁹⁵*in medio* is a “formulaic tag” indicating the center of the object, or of a series of scenes on the object, that is the subject of the ekphrasis. Thomas, 312-313.

⁹⁶Thomas, 314; Putnam, *Virgil’s Epic Design*, 154-155. Vergil’s use of a centerpiece for an entire ekphrasis (the battle of Actium), and not just a central vignette, will appear again on the shield of Aeneas (*Aen.*8.675-677). It will be introduced by the same phrase “*in medio*.” Also, just as in *Eclogue 3*, the image that Vergil describes as being in the middle of the shield also occurs in the middle of the passage about the shield.

Theocritus' cup matched the creative theme of the rest of the poem. In both Theocritus and Vergil's works the physical nature of the object both clarifies themes in the poem and reflects its entirety.⁹⁷ By having the art of the poem and the art of the object imitate one another, Vergil reinforces the significance for the poem of the image he has created — the creation of poetry (a major theme of Theocritus) is at the center of this particular *Eclogue*, and Vergil makes his most direct imitation of Theocritus in this poem.

The border that delimits an ekphrasis tells as much about the art as it does about the artist and his intentions, informing the reader of its meaning. In this case the shared detail of the acanthus that has been woven around both Vergil and Theocritus' cups connects the pastoral ideas set forward in *Idyll* 1 with *Eclogue* 3: it is a nod to the ideas that Theocritus set forward about his vision of pastoral poetry.⁹⁸ Like Theocritus' cup, Vergil's cups are not in sync with their rustic owners; they belong instead to the poet who created them,⁹⁹ as they are finely adorned and include images that relate to the act of artistic creation (Theocritus uses a boy weaving cages for cicadas, Vergil uses the ivy, the vines, and Orpheus).¹⁰⁰

Through the ekphrasis Vergil, while acknowledging the insular pastoral of Theocritus, also indicates his intention to take pastoral in a different direction. Theocritus' ekphrasis in *Idyll* 1 presents scenes that contain figures that appear realistic, but have a "self-conscious perfection" about them. They are static scenes which only appear to move; like the *Idylls* themselves, they are self-contained.¹⁰¹ Where Theocritus' images reflect the insular nature of his poems, Vergil

⁹⁷ Putnam, *Virgil's Epic Design*, 209.

⁹⁸This idea is illustrated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* when the artists within the art border their tapestries differently. Minerva borders her work with olives where Arachne borders hers with ivy and flowers (*Met.* 6.85, 217-128). The need to make the edge or border of the ekphrasis clear has a long standing tradition that goes back to the *Iliad* where the ekphrasis of Achilles' shield begins and ends with the ocean (*Hom. Il.* 18.483, 607-608). Thomas, 311.

⁹⁹Leach, 73.

¹⁰⁰Putnam observes that Vergil's choice of the ivy and the vines as part of the edge of the ekphrasis makes a connection to Bacchus and Apollo. And through them to the act of creating art. Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 125.

¹⁰¹Leach, 74.

emphasizes figures who look past the boundaries of the poem at hand. In one, the figures look beyond into the stars. In the other, Orpheus stands for the continuous generation of poetry; Vergil indicates the motion by having the forests actively follow Orpheus. And, most overtly, lines 84-89, the couplets that Menalcas and Damoetas trade concern Vergil's patron Pollio, and bring Vergil's real and present day into the normally insulated setting of the pastoral world.

There are other differences, too. Alpers observes that the taunting takes on a different tone than in its Theocritean model. When Vergil "imitates the coarse banter" of *Idyll 5* he "not only smoothes the rough edges" of the herdsmen but he also "literally composes their differences by turning their quarrel into a singing contest. Unlike its likely model in *Idyll 5*, this contest does not break down into renewed quarreling."¹⁰² Another place where Vergil alters the tone, without deviating from the primary pattern of the duel, is in the way he ends the *Eclogue*. His herders do not return to the original quarrel as Lacon and Comatas do, where Comatas mocks the defeated Lacon, instead Palaemon does not pronounce a judgment, but praises both contestants (*Ec.*3.108-111).¹⁰³ Alpers views the toning down of the taunts and the lack of a definitive victor as an example of Vergil's homogenization of the herder figures that he lifts out of Theocritus' pastorals. He distills the qualities that make character-types recognizable as belonging in the pastoral landscape out of Theocritus' individualized herders, creating a greater flexibility in the genre because he is not bound to consistently represent a character of a particular name in a certain way.¹⁰⁴

Vergil further loosens his adherence to the rules of engagement that are present in the epic duels and followed by the pastoral duels by Theocritus in *Eclogue 5*. Many of the familiar pieces of the pattern are present. However, instead of two figures who sing in explicit

¹⁰²Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 154.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 153-155.

competition with one another, Vergil presents two complementary poetic efforts, sung successively; it is a collective effort rather than a contest. At the end of the poem, no prize is won, since there was no competition; instead, there are gifts, which stand in the place of the traditional prizes. However, the general outline that forms the duels (two figures come together to trade verbal exchanges which culminates in material gain) still remains intact.

The poem begins with Menalcas' suggestion that he and Mopsus make music together. Menalcas sets the usual pastoral stage when he asks if they should make their poetry "hic corylis mixtas inter. . . ulmos?" ("among the elms that have been mixed with the hazel trees?" *Ec.5.3*). The image of the commingling trees delimits a potential poetic space for the two herders. Mopsus' suggestion (which ultimately prevails) that they use a cave serves to carve out a place removed from the rest of the world for them (*Ec.5.5-7*). Both of the potential settings offer a shady repose for the herder-poets and serve to insulate them from the pressures of the outside world.

Instead of a straight competition, Menalcas and Mopsus sing two pieces on the same subject that serve to complement one another. The idea of competition is still implicitly present in several references to competition with figures who are not present in the poem (*Ec.5.8-9, 15*). In this way Vergil both draws on the model of competition and incorporates figures who, while pastoral, are not present in the scene, thus bringing a small bit of the world beyond the poem's boundaries into the work, while allowing it to remain within the pastoral sphere. The prizes represent another minor variation. Instead of setting up a prize before they sing, the poem closes as Menalcas and Mopsus propose gifts as prizes for the songs that they have sung to each other. At line 81 Mopsus asks "Quae tibi, quae talia reddam pro carmine dona?" ("What for you, what

may I give as gifts for such a song?”). At the end, though, there are still recognizable debts to Theocritus.

Vergil takes this a step further in *Eclogue 9*, where the actual engagement (be it an official duel as in *Eclogue 3*, or an exchange of ideas as in *Eclogue 5*) that we have come to expect in this genre never happens. *Eclogue 9* “dramatizes the preliminaries to a friendly singing match that never takes place.”¹⁰⁵ *Eclogue 9* also provides the clearest departure that Vergil makes from Theocritus, with the more current themes that occupy his pastoral and the different direction that he takes it. Instead of presenting the exchange of verses as a duel, Vergil uses the part of the pattern that is supposed to lead up to the duel as his mode of exchange. The two sets of verse about Roman affairs (*Ec.9.26-29, 47-50*) present different views of Rome: Moeris’ words are full of lament and Lycidas’ full of a positive attitude towards Rome’s future.¹⁰⁶ The Theocritean verses share a similar dichotomy: Moeris relates the story of an unhappy love, and Lycidas tells of a happy one.¹⁰⁷

When Lycidas hears about the poet Menalcas’ brush with death in the recent political upheaval, he says to Moeris “quis caneret Nymphas? Quis humum florentibus herbis/spargeret aut viridi fontis induceret umbra?” (“Who would sing the nymphs? Who would sprinkle the ground with blooming grasses, or lead in the springs with green shade?” *Ec.9.19-20*). His rhetorical questions reflect the origin of the pastoral world — the poet. As the master poet, Menalcas sings the pastoral world into existence in his songs; in singing about subjects like nymphs he grows the “green cabinet”¹⁰⁸ that surrounds his song; reminding us that without the poet there can be no pastoral landscape. Rumpf writes regarding *Eclogue 9* that:

¹⁰⁵ Guy Lee, *The Eclogues* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1984), 94.

¹⁰⁶ Christine Perkell, “Vergil Reading His Readers: A Study of *Eclogue 9*,” *Vergilius* 47 (2001): 76-77.

¹⁰⁷ Perkell, 82.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1969), passim.

Virgil's bucolic sphere is a world created by the poet, a phenomenon explicitly described in. . . *Eclogue 9*, where Lycidas evokes the disastrous consequences that would have obtained if the great bucolic singer Menalcas had been killed in the turmoil of civil war. . . Not only does Menalcas praise the bucolic world in his song, but he alone is able to assemble the bucolic elements: the bucolic world exists only through his singing.¹⁰⁹

Rumpf hits upon the very thing that is new about what Vergil is doing in this particular collection of poems. He combines the unreal pastoral landscape, which exists through the herder's poetry, with real-time events from his contemporary world.

Vergil uses the artificiality of the setting to call attention to the reality in this *Eclogue*. Lycidas and Moeris may recall pieces of poetry, but the modern issues pervade the poem;¹¹⁰ such serious concerns from the author's present day do not make their way into Theocritus' pastorals, and are the hallmark of how Vergil uses the genre Theocritus established. Vergil's clear and overt concern with the same contemporary issue of land confiscations has caused *Eclogue 9* to be usually read alongside *Eclogue 1*.¹¹¹

Like *Eclogue 9*, *Eclogue 1* also calls overt attention to the outside world, rather than focusing on an insular space occupied by a few pastoral figures. In *Eclogue 9* Vergil makes it clear that his pastoral extends "to engage social and political realities that were excluded by Theocritus."¹¹² In *Eclogue 1* Meliboeus and Tityrus have a conversation about the present situation in the land around Rome. Instead of dueling with songs like the herders in Theocritus, Meliboeus and Tityrus go back and forth expressing alternating view points on the current political regime at Rome, views informed by the effect of the present political situation on their lives. Tityrus has fared well; he has been given land and leisure by the powers at Rome, and so

¹⁰⁹Rumpf, 78.

¹¹⁰Perkell, 66.

¹¹¹Wendell Clausen, *A Commentary on Vergil: Eclogues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 266.

¹¹²Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 161.

in particular he praises the young man who is like a god, a clear reference to Octavian. Meliboeus, however, has suffered on account of the present upheavals and is now an exile, and so his verses take up the cause of those who have become dispossessed of their land because of the same powers that granted Tityrus his land.

Vergil begins this *Eclogue* with the contrasting images of the pastoral tranquility of one herder and the unsettled flight of the other herder who has become an exile. The first two lines immediately remind the audience of the opening of Theocritus' first *Idyll* and its sweet rustic music. However, by line 3 Vergil has dramatically changed the expected pastoral tone:

M: Tityre tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
silvestrem tenui musam meditaris avena:
nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva.
nos patriam¹¹³ **fugimus**; tu Tityre lentus in umbra
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.

T: O Meliboee, deus nobis **haec otia** fecit.
namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram
saepe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti. (*Ec.* 1.1-10)

M: Tityrus, you reclining under the shade of the outreaching beech
reflect upon the sylvan muse with the slender oat-reed;
We are leaving the sweet furrows and the borders of our fatherland
We go into exile from the fatherland; you, Tityrus, relaxed in the shade
teach the woods to resound shapely Amaryllis.

T: Meliboeus, a god has made this ease for us;
and he will always be a god to me; his altar
often a tender lamb from our sheepfolds will make wet.
He has permitted my cattle to roam, as you discern, and that me myself
to play whatever I wish with rustic reed.

Vergil draws a clear-cut contrast between the calm leisure of Tityrus reclining under the tree and the misery of Meliboeus who has been ejected from his home. John Van Sickle comments that it

¹¹³Putnam notes that the word *patria* introduces several ideas previously unseen in pastoral poetry. The word itself “conveys a specific place reference, unusual in bucolic poetry, but also a series of values foreign to it — patriotism, devotion, justice and the like. . .” Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 23.

appears shocking for Tityrus to be making music and enjoying *otium* when such turbulent times have entered the realm of the countryside and his fellow herder suffers.¹¹⁴ The shock, however, is part of the dichotomy that Vergil presents in this poem.¹¹⁵ On the one hand there is Tityrus who is comfortable and enjoying the benefits of the new order and appearance of stability that have come to the Roman world. He enjoys a life that resembles the idealized lives of the herder in pastoral poetry, protected by the *tegmen* of the beech tree.¹¹⁶ On the other Vergil presents us with Meliboeus, who suffers at the hands of the new order so that others may enjoy it (*impius*. . . *miles Ec.1.70*). The pastoral trappings of the setting around the beech tree and of Tityrus emphasize the real subject matter in a genre of ideals.¹¹⁷

Vergil make reference to Amaryllis and Galatea (*Ec.1.5,30,31,36*), who are familiar subjects of the songs that the shepherds sing, and evokes the idea that the space the shepherds occupy in a pastoral is usually untouched by the outside world. His first reference to Amaryllis at line 5 evokes the pastoral figure without tying her into the lives of either shepherd. Her name serves as a signpost — much like the image of Tityrus taking his leisure under the shelter of the beech tree—that we are supposed to be in the insular world of the pastoral genre. The later references turn them into more concrete figures; they are the former loves of Tityrus. Tityrus' love affairs with Amaryllis and Galatea cement his position as the figure in this *Eclogue* who represents the more traditional pastoral herder figure as established by Theocritus. Instead of his

¹¹⁴Van Sickle, 889-890.

¹¹⁵Tityrus' experience is simply one example of how some people are faring under the new regime. His experience, not himself, is a shocking contrast to Meliboeus' experience. One “hallmark” of the *Eclogues*, not just the first *Eclogue*, is the “security and poise with which Virgil grasps the diversities and ambiguities of human experience.” Alpers, *The Singer of the Eclogues*, 113.

¹¹⁶The word *tegmen* has “quasi-military overtones” gives an active sense of protection to the shade that surrounds Tityrus. Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 21, 23-24.

¹¹⁷In the opening lines Vergil takes the audience from the isolated space under the tree where one herder is at liberty to compose songs to the collective misery of the *nos* represented by the other herder, Meliboeus: “From the limited, exclusive compass of the spreading beech tree and the sanctuary of the sylvan muse we travel, by way of Meliboeus' thoughts, to a different world, one of *patria finis* and *dulcia arva*. This is no idyllic dream. Meliboeus is worried about the land itself. . . The poet introduces a broader share of ideas which offer a marked contrast to the lightheartedness which is often pastoral poetry's trademark.” Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 22-23.

music or his love affairs becoming the subject matter of this pastoral as one might expect given the genre that we are supposed to be in, he serves as the contrast to the upheaval of the lives of many other herders. He displays many of the characteristics that we expect from a rustic herder — his name and the names of his loves are familiar, he first appears to the audience at leisure and contemplating music and the rustic muse, his place of rest under the tree is familiar as the kind of place where herders compose their music and verses.

However, despite all this, Tityrus is not an insular figure. He is not unaffected by the goings on of the world beyond his piece of the pastoral tableau. The affairs of the outside world — instead of having no effect on Tityrus— enable him to exist in the traditional pastoral landscape and give him the leisure to pursue song and music. He talks of going to Rome and the benefit of his land that he was given there, and so, his fortune too emanates from the world outside of the country setting. Here, as in *Eclogue 9*, the outside world is the subject and is aggressively intruding on the shepherds' space.

Vergil simultaneously evokes the unreality of the pastoral world by making it clear that the poetry of the shepherds is what the shepherds' world is made of (and through that expresses its removal from reality, as it only exists in their words) while folding it into what we expect to be a suspension of reality from the current and on-going problems of the poet's very real Roman world. Instead we find the inclusion and intrusion of subjects such as the city of Rome, the civil wars, and the land confiscations¹¹⁸ that were a consequence of those wars into the previously protected sphere of the pastoral herder figure “the reference to loss of plowlands is said to be

¹¹⁸Contemporary social issues are not proper pastoral topics. They are not subjects that Theocritus dealt with in his *Idylls*. Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 163.

particularly moving; for Meliboeus is expelled from the place of his work while Tityrus reclines beneath a beech, of which the fruit grows by its own accord.”¹¹⁹

Vergil’s use of the dichotomy between the lives of the two herders is also present in Meliboeus answer to Tityrus’ hyperbolic praise of his new god. Meliboeus brings the focus back onto the dispossessed people of Italy:

M: At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,
pars Scythiam et rapidum Cretae veniemus Oaxen,
et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.
En umquam patrios longo post tempore finis
pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen,
post aliquot mea regna videns mirabor aristas?
impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit,
barbarus has segetes. En, quo discordia civis
produxit miseros: His nos consevimus agros!
insere nunc, Meliboee, puros, pone ordine vitis.
ite meae, felix quondam pecus, ite capellae.
non ego vos posthac viridi proiectus in antro,
dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo;
carmina nulla canam; non, me pascente, capellae,
florentem cytisum et salices carpetis amaras. (*Ec.* 1.64-78)

But we, some of us will go from here to thirsty Africa,
some to the Scythia, and some will arrive at the swift chalky Oaxes,
some deep within the Britons, who are separated from the whole world.
Will I ever again, after a long time see the borders of my homeland,
and the top of my poor hut thatched with turf,
Will I wonder at the grain seeing my domain after a bit?
An unclean soldier will possess these new ploughed grain fields,
A foreigner these crops. Civil Discord has led we wretched ones to such a place:
together we sowed the fields for these men!
Graft now the pears, Meliboeus, now place your vines in order!
Go my nanny goats, formerly fortunate flock, Go!
After this I, stretched out in a green cave, will not see you all from far off
as you hang from the thorny cliff;
I will sing no more songs; not with me grazing you, my goats,
Will you crop flowering clover and bitter willows.

His description of exiles being forced to wander to far-flung places, even to such a place as Britain¹²⁰ that is set apart from “toto. . . orbe,” is just as hyperbolic as Tityrus’ speech in terms of

¹¹⁹Van Sickle, 897.

the likelihood that the *miseri* who have had their land confiscated would go so far away from Italy even if they had the means. However, unlike Tityrus' Germans in the Middle East and Parthians in German territory, Meliboeus speaks of the genuine plight of the new class of people who have had their homes taken away from them.

After his extreme expression of the projected wandering of his fellow exiles away from their Italian homes, Meliboeus turns to a lament over the loss of the kind of life idealized in pastoral. He spends these verses expressing the demise of the tranquil world projected by pastoral poetry for himself and all those like him. He must flee his home (literally the land of his fathers) so that it may be overtaken by figures ill-fitted to pastoral: soldiers and barbarians. The "discordia civis" that has instigated the fall of the pursuit of the pastoral life for so many and is the source of their present misery is finally named. Meliboeus looks back at the pastoral existence he previously led; addressing himself and his "formerly fortunate flock." On account of the intrusion of the outside world he will no longer see to his vines, sheep, nor will he sing in the middle of the countryside.

The countryside, in other words, is now a place of exiles and newly landless individuals, not of herders enjoying *otium* and song. Vergil has completely invaded the pristine poetic space of Theocritus' pastorals with problems from the outside world and with that has disrupted the insularity and artificiality that are the features of the pastoral genre. *Eclogue* 1 signals the attack of the outside world on the world of the herder-poet in several ways, from the corruption of the landscape, the addition of foreign figures, and the nature of the interaction between the herders. The exchanges of songs that abound in Theocritus are explicitly banished from the future of

¹²⁰The image of Britain is an "extreme form of the recurrent theme of division. The Britons, remote as they are, physically and spiritually, from the bucolic life, are even separated from known places. In other words, Tityrus' confinement within the ideal, a poet's sphere and creation of the imagination alone, is contrasted with the prospect of Meliboeus' relegation to something so literal and barbarous as to be without civilized society, beyond Scythia and Africa in distance, the implicature is, a world beyond our world." Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 58.

herders like Meliboeus in Vergil's tableau of country life (though they are present in many of the other *Eclogues*, and in a sense through the exchange of ideas between the two herders in this poem). His unhappy Meliboeus states that in this new countryside "carmina nulla canam" ("I will not sing any songs" *Ec.*1.77). Again, Tityrus represents the old pastoral world. In previous lines Meliboeus acknowledges his interlocutor's good fortune, and his maintenance of a tranquil and (relatively) insular life:

fortunate senex, hic, inter flumina nota
et fontis sacros frigus captabis opacum;
. . . hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras (*Ec.* 1.51-52, 56)

Lucky old man, here, among known rivers
and sacred springs, you will capture the cold shade!
. . . Under a high cliff over here the pruner will sing to the breezes

Meliboeus predicts that Tityrus will remain close to familiar places. Vergil places the familiarity of the rivers, springs, and the inviting shade in contrast with two things. First, they remind the audience that Meliboeus, unlike Tityrus, has had his familiar places taken from him and that he must now wander through unfamiliar places. Second, the landscape that Meliboeus describes is familiar from the pastoral landscapes set out by Theocritus, especially the springs and the seeking of shade as a place of repose (and poetry). Also, the mention of the *frondator* who will sing (*canet*) tells the audience that the song that has been taken away from Meliboeus (as he says later in the poem) will remain in the pastoral landscape of Tityrus. The links to the original genre are still present.

Vergil does not use Meliboeus as an isolated occurrence of a rustic being forced out of his usual landscape; rather he "stands for a class, the dispossessed."¹²¹ Again, this is a significant departure from the original genre. Meliboeus makes it clear from the start that when he speaks of "nos" he does not mean himself and Tityrus (whom he separates out of the "nos" by

¹²¹ Anton Powell, *Virgil the Partisan* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2008), 190.

specifically calling him “tu” (*Ec.* 1.1,4), and in this same manner in these verses Meliboeus talks about “nos” rather “ego,” but the “nos” once again excludes Tityrus (and all those not negatively affected by the incursion of the outside world into the countryside). Although Tityrus offers physical shelter and food to him, he does not attempt to counter Meliboeus’ complaints; he offers temporary respite, but he is unable to deny the situation of Meliboeus and the other exiles like him. Through Tityrus, Vergil has issued praise of the new regime at Rome, but in omitting any denial of Meliboeus’ injuries from the new order he does not firmly place one view over the other. The first *Eclogue* ends with an unsettled view of the countryside, a place that is now intruded upon by the outside world for both better and worse.

The intrusions are so dramatic that some have argued that the character of Tityrus himself (in addition to the subject matter) is anti-pastoral. Van Sickle sees Tityrus as the less sympathetic of the two herders on account of his acquiescence to the new powers in Rome and what he deems anti-pastoral behavior. He calls Tityrus’ god “a blatant political allegory flattering to revolutionary usurpation,” and finds his promise to sacrifice a lamb¹²² repeatedly “cruel and anti-pastoral. . . the stain of blood on country altars, an unwelcome overtone of violence in the idyllic scene, not without the suspicion of gluttony since the flesh would be a banquet for the man who sacrificed. In short, bad business, radical politics, and needless flaunting of property and play in the face of a less happy friend.”¹²³ Yet, the sacrifice of a lamb is not unheard of in pastoral poetry. In *Idyll* 5, the judge, Morson, looks forward to a share of the lamb’s meat as he awards the animal as the prize in the singing match. Given that Theocritus is often called the father of pastoral, it is difficult to see the act of sacrificing an animal as anti-pastoral in and of itself. However, if we tie the violence of the act of sacrifice to the god being

¹²²Alpers lists the lamb sacrifices as one of the “rural details” that Vergil includes in his representation of the pastoral landscape. Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 166.

¹²³Van Sickle, 892.

sacrificed to, then we can see the intrusion of current city life onto the pastoral scene and through that the anti-pastoral aspect of the poem. As seen in the very first verses of the poem, the idealized setting of pastoral is set up right next to the unpleasant real elements that it normally escapes from.

Wendell Clausen does not share Van Sickle's view of a smug Tityrus; instead he sees him as a compassionate figure,¹²⁴ when Vergil does not use him to attack or abuse Meliboeus. Tityrus' good fortune under the present regime (which allows him leisure and repose) and the offerings he gives in return for his good fortune do not make him a craven character; his fortune and maintenance of a pastoral life¹²⁵ serves as a contrast to Meliboeus' misfortune. While expressing his good fortune, he also offers shelter to his dispossessed interlocutor. Also, Meliboeus does not express anger towards Tityrus for faring better than himself under the present circumstances (*Ec.*1.11).

In either case, though, the contention in the first *Eclogue* does not come from petty personal problems between the two featured herder figures (as they do for example in *Idyll* 5) but from outside political forces and from Rome. Tityrus' present leisure extends from the youth at Rome¹²⁶ and by extension the triumvirs in control of the government of Rome, just as Meliboeus suffering has its origins in the same place. Although Tityrus speaks the very last verses of *Eclogue* 1 he does not get an effective last word in against Meliboeus. Tityrus' final words contain an offer of hospitality rather than a true response to Meliboeus' indictment of the suffering of all of those like him who have had their land confiscated by the triumvirs.

¹²⁴Clausen, 33.

¹²⁵He is still able to repose under a shady tree and create art. He continues to participate in the life of a herder-poet who composes among the trees, springs, and flocks.

¹²⁶Tityrus first refers to a god as the source of his present leisure at *Ec.*1.6, elaborating by talking about the youth he makes offerings to at *Ec.*1.42. At *Ec.*1.19 Tityrus does not answer Meliboeus question about who this god he speaks of is (delaying the response until *Ec.*1.42) but "Urbem. . . Romam" are the first words out of his mouth. The god, Rome, and the youth are all connected together as the place from where the fortunes of the inhabitants of the country side emanate.

Anton Powell observes the disarming nature of Theocritus' *Idylls*, the "contention and anguish" of the herders involve small and inward looking matters such as love and private rivalries over who is the better singer. He sees their privately oriented behavior as indicating a situation of political and economic security.¹²⁷ Unlike his model's absent (or positive) attitude towards the political and economic situation of his time, Vergil weaves in the problems of contemporary politics. Some of his herders talk about the impact of land confiscation on their lives, and on the lives of others. Vergil takes up the landscape of Theocritus' poetic space as well as his dueling herders. However, rather than creating a variation on a theme that maintains the peaceful thread of tranquil and secure countryside, Vergil has taken the expected tranquility and, more importantly, insularity of a pastoral poem and used that to draw special attention to the moments when he chooses to write about contemporary problems.¹²⁸ Vergil juxtaposes traditionally tranquil poetry with problems of civil conflict. Powell notes that the idealized verse of Vergil's *Eclogues* is itself a warning flag: "In the non-literary part of our daily lives, we sense reflexively what is afoot when an ideal is vigorously expressed. . . someone fears. . . the very opposite of the ideal."¹²⁹ Powell suggests that we can apply our automatic suspicion of overzealous statements in real life to literature. In this case, it is Vergil's choice of a calm pastoral backdrop that stresses the desirability of tranquility because of his concern with the forces that disrupt that kind of existence.

While *Eclogue* 1 does not overtly engage in the original agonistic motif of the duel by adhering to the use of a contest to set up the dialogue, it does bring out what Vergil is doing with the motif in his other poems and the flexibility he has brought to a previously rigid structure.

¹²⁷ Powell, 181.

¹²⁸ Powell notes that Vergil's pastorals have also been construed as portraying an ideal country life without any reservations, but that a closer inspection of the poems disproves that notion. Powell, 182.

¹²⁹ Powell, 181.

Theocritus' use of this motif is a very visible jump from one genre to another, and the elevated status of epic gave his shepherds an elevated status by likening them to the warriors of epic. The connection that Theocritus makes between the world of epic and the world of his pastorals requires a strict adherence to the model of its predecessor in order to clearly display the connection that Theocritus is making. When Vergil engages with the epic stage that Theocritus recast for the pastoral he is freer to play with the poetic space where two characters - whether warriors or shepherds - meet, converse, and engage one another in some kind of contest in a space created just for them. Theocritus has already established the landscape and verbal exchanges that take place in his new pastoral and so, it takes Vergil less time to set his scene. Vergil evokes the entire pastoral landscape in the first two lines of *Eclogue* 1, and with them raises all the expectations and understandings that Theocritus had established, without having to go through the whole expected scene. He does not have to spend time establishing the rules of engagement because we already know them, and because we know what they are Vergil is able to immediately go about altering them (as he does when he upends the Theocritean pastoral tranquility of *Eclogue* 1.1-2 in the very next line). We expect to hear two herders (either one shepherd and one goatherd or cowherd) address each other, they will establish their credentials as worthwhile opponents, decide to engage in a contest, set a prize, and then proceed to sing verses to one another until another pastoral figure pronounces the winner.

Indeed, Vergil has the liberty to focus on a single aspect¹³⁰ of the structure — usually what constituted the preliminary conversation in Theocritus - because the connection to epic, and the importance that that original genre lends the genre that Theocritus created, has already been made by Theocritus. Vergil is freer to play with the motif because he does not have to reestablish the connection; instead, Vergil continues to move the duels along, taking a new

¹³⁰Whether the preliminaries to the duel, the structure of the song, or a familiar ekphrasis.

direction. When Vergil introduces modern material and strife from the world outside of the pastoral stage he shatters the insulated (and therefore tranquil) aspect of the pastoral genre, but he does not create a new genre. He merely expands the existing one, which Theocritus used to discuss art, poetry, and love, so that the herders are able to sing and converse about a greater number of subjects. The dueling pattern that we found in epic still holds, just sometimes in pieces, and not in the relatively rigid construct used by Theocritus.

Despite taking full advantage of his flexibility to explore and expand the boundaries of the pastoral genre, Vergil in one important way actually brings the genre full circle. The structure of the duels in the *Iliad* makes them easy to isolate from the rest of the epic narrative. Theocritus chooses to focus on that isolation; his herders are the only narrative rather than a piece of a larger narrative. Where Theocritus detached the Homeric battlefield from the rest of its epic context, shrinking it into an isolated duel, Vergil re-engages his herders with elements outside of their immediate scene. As in the duels of the *Iliad*, the *Eclogues* are capable of being read in isolation while at the same time having a larger context. While Vergil's poems have broader themes dealing with such things as the issues of the land and the pastoral genre versus the elegiac genre, his incorporation of his Roman reality into the pastoral setting ties his poems back to the genre out of which Theocritus pulled the dueling motif. The non-fictional elements that Vergil incorporates from his own reality into his poetry functions much like the plot of the fictional setting of the *Iliad*. These elements tie the smaller pieces together as part of a single work that is linked by more than genre of the structure of each poem or scene. Although he places his herders in a landscape that appears physically similar to the pastoral landscape used by Theocritus, the herders in Vergil's poetry look past the immediate borders of the poem

(sometimes looking towards Rome, other times to characters who are not interlocutors in the poem).

The outward-looking nature¹³¹ of the *Eclogues* is most evident in *Eclogue 1*, where the entire conversation is composed of alternating (literally and substantively) points of view on how the new regime has impacted the characters' lives. The poetic space that Vergil uses shares the cosmetic and character elements of Theocritus, but the characters within the poetic space engage with a narrative context outside of their poetic space. This porous poetic space, rather than the old insulated pastoral landscape, becomes Vergil's version of the original Homeric battlefield.

Vergil's overt contemporary political angle turns what was a purely artistic device into a polemical one. His early work in the *Eclogues* shows a deep connection to his predecessors, and his use of Theocritus' pastoral genre is clear in his own pastoral poetry. Vergil does not engage with Theocritus solely to imitate him; rather, he uses him as a springboard for his own new poetry. He takes components, such as the herder duels, out of Theocritus' poetry, but he does not wed himself to using them in the same manner that his predecessor did; he takes his work in a different direction, away from the isolation of Theocritus' version of the pastoral landscape.

Vergil's talent for innovation, without breaking from tradition, has very important implications for his future writing. Thomas observes that after his engagement with Theocritus' *Idylls* in the creation of the *Eclogues* Vergil "continued to transform genre through intertextuality" in his subsequent poetry.¹³² In his later works, Vergil takes this flexibility even further: rather than limit himself to only the traditional elements of the genre he is working in to further his work, he borrows from across the genres he knew, and had engaged with in the past.

¹³¹In contrast to the inward focus of the *Idylls*.

¹³²Thomas, 261.

In so doing, he drove the evolution of those genres in new directions, even as his debt and connection to his predecessors remained clear throughout.

Ch.5 — THE PASTORAL ANCHOR

This study of a genealogy of Vergil's pastoral began by examining a series of scenes from Homer's *Iliad*. By exploring the interactions present in the non-lethal dueling scenes, and breaking down the components that make them up, we uncovered one pattern for verbal exchanges and a potential model for verbal exchanges in later poetry. Another aspect associated with these scenes that emerged on closer study was the nature of the poetic space in which the scenes take place. As we saw, the poetic space in Homer separates the duels from the rest of the narrative, and it is possible to detach the duels from the rest of the poem without detracting from the integrity of the scene.

These Homeric scenes are clearly one of the models that Theocritus had in mind when he was writing his *Idylls*. When we look at the *Idylls*, we see how Theocritus also isolates his contests. Instead of fencing off the contests from a larger narrative, as Homer does, Theocritus shrinks his stage to include only the verbal sparring between his herders; nothing lies beyond the borders of his immediate poetic space. The same patterns that govern the interactions in the warrior duels reappear in the singing contests that occur in Theocritus' pastoral *Idylls*. The shared pattern ties the Homeric dueling scenes to Theocritus' contests, and the connection shows that Homer had a clear influence on the work that Theocritus produced.

Although Vergil moves his pastoral away from the strict insularity of the *Idylls*, a clear connection exists between the Theocritus and Vergil. Thomas asks how a reader may determine when a reference is truly a reference to the work of a preceding author and when it is an accident of chance. He suggests that "in part the resolution to this problem lies in that most perilous quality of the mind, judgment, but at the same time two absolute criteria will be applied in what

follows: the model must be one with whom the poet is demonstrably familiar, and there must be a reason of some sort of reference — that is, it must be susceptible of interpretation, or meaningful.”¹³³ Vergil makes it clear that he has Theocritus’ work as one of his active literary models for his composition of *Eclogues*. In addition to the common landscape and patterns of verbal exchange that exist between the pastoral works of these two authors, Vergil also makes a direct reference to Theocritus when he call attention to his engagement with Syracusan verse and a rustic setting in *Eclogue 6* (*Ec.6.1-2*).

Vergil does more than acknowledge his predecessor. The detachment from reality that delimits the stage of Homer and of Theocritus and that encourages the audience to participate in a willful suspension of disbelief is not present in the same manner in Vergil’s *Eclogues*. The artificial theater of the dueling shepherds in the *Eclogues* is not as separate from the true present world as the stages of the others’ poems. The real world that the poets remove from the sets of the other works is ever-present in Vergil: there is a keen awareness of the presence of the realities of the outside world, and that world presses in on and threatens, and sometimes intrudes upon, the world of the shepherds. Indeed, Vergil uses the unexpected incursion of his contemporary world into the traditionally undisturbed pastoral landscape to draw attention to the events occurring outside of pastoral’s expected boundaries.

Applying Thomas’ criteria (that we must be able to both establish the author’s familiarity with a model, and that the reference to the earlier model must be pertinent and our own judgment) together with the stylistic and verbal cues that we have just explored, we can examine Vergil’s later writings. A key question of course, is: does he continue the pattern we saw in the *Eclogues*, pushing boundaries while maintaining a strong visible link to his predecessors? As with his work in the *Eclogues*, Vergil does not limit himself to the pre-

¹³³Thomas, 116-117.

established boundaries of the genre he has chosen to work in when he writes the *Aeneid*: “the norm becomes concrete within the genre, which is the literary institution with which epic poets must grapple when they decide to write a new text.”¹³⁴ In the *Aeneid* Vergil continues to draw heavily on Theocritus’ pastoral, both as an immediate source and as a way of retelling epic. He incorporates elements from the pastoral genre, thereby loosening his adherence to the norm of epic and widening the possibilities of his “poetic horizons.”¹³⁵ Vergil’s insertion of pastoral elements into his epic poem allows him to explore the themes of the poem from more angles than a strict adherence to epic norms alone would permit. In the same way, his herders’ engagement with contemporary issues allowed him to push pastoral further than if he had strictly adhered to Theocritus’ model.

For example, one pastoral feature that Vergil makes use of in the *Aeneid* is the sympathy and responsiveness of the landscape. The surrounding landscape returns the sound of the sorrow of the vanquished on the epic battlefield. As Turnus falls to the ground, beaten by Aeneas “consurgunt gemitu Rutuli totusque remugit / mons circum et uocem late nemora alta remittunt” (“The Rutulians rise up together with a groan and all around the entire mountain / re-echoes and the deep groves will send back (the sound) widely” *Aen.*12.928-929). The brief, but poignant, pastoral moment quickly returns to epic conventions once it has served its purpose and conveyed the all encompassing sadness of the war-torn countryside. Turnus pleads with Aeneas to respect his corpse and send it back to his father, not pressing his anger further (*Aen.*12.930-938). Aeneas is almost moved to spare his life, but seeing the baldric of Pallas (whose funeral had pastoral

¹³⁴Conte, 147.

¹³⁵Conte, 151.

elements in it) he strikes. In the last line of the epic (*Aen.*12.952) Turnus' soul re-echoes the *gemitus* of the Rutulians, the mountains, and the groves.¹³⁶

One of the prominent features of Aeneas' visit to Evander, king of the Arcadians,¹³⁷ is a tour through the tranquil country landscape that will one day be Rome (*Aen.*8.307-369).¹³⁸ Evander begins with a story about the golden age, and then points out various locations in the natural landscape. Vergil writes about contemporary buildings and sites that he tells us were still unbroken ground and part of the natural landscape, even the temple to Jupiter was occupied by thorny woods in Aeneas' time. As he does in the *Eclogues*, Vergil uses the rustic backdrop to bring up his own time. Instead of the social issues of his previous pastoral work, Vergil presents us with a walking tour of Augustan Rome through the voice of the Arcadian Evander.

Another example of Vergil's incorporation of pastoral elements occurs in *Aeneid* 7 when he uses the initial pastoral safety in the ekphrasis of Silvia's stag to emphasize the disruption of the countryside that the coming war will bring. Putnam discusses the ekphrasis at length in *Virgil's Epic Design*, commenting on what the pastoral details tell us about the surrounding epic narrative. Vergil provides idealized pastoral details such as the spontaneity with which matters occur (such as the tameness of the stag), which in other genres do not happen unless someone expends the effort to make them happen.¹³⁹ Through the tameness of her stag Vergil presents him as "the perfect pastoral animal, demonstrating in itself what in ordinary situations what would be either inculcated by training or achieved by man's constant intervention."¹⁴⁰ There are also verbal echoes to Vergil's earlier pastoral work in the *Eclogues*. The way Silvia decorates

¹³⁶ Comments in this paragraph are indebted to discussions on the sympathy of the landscape that took place in the Latin Survey course taught by Dr. Sarah Spence in Spring 2009 at the University of Georgia.

¹³⁷ The Arcadian homeland is associated with pastoral.

¹³⁸ Aeneas goes to the Arcadians in order to enlist them as allies against Turnus and his forces.

¹³⁹ Putnam, *Virgil's Epic Design*, 108-109.

¹⁴⁰ The stag always returns home to Silvia *Aen.*7.491-492. Putnam, *Virgil's Epic Design*, 109.

the hard antlers of her stag with soft garlands mimics one of the accomplishments of the pastoral figure Daphnis, who teaches men “to twine tough spears with soft leaves” (*Ec.*5.31).

The tranquil pastoral landscape contrasts with the hostilities of epic that Juno reintroduces when she dispatches Allecto to disrupt the Italian countryside: “the perversion of the pastoral landscape is implied both in details. . . and in the larger impact of Junonian chaos.”¹⁴¹ Vergil juxtaposes the security of the landscape and the signal that ruins the peace in the same moment when Allecto sounds the call to war with a *pastorale signum* (*Aen.*7.513-514) from her war trumpet.¹⁴² By intertwining the elements of the two genres in these lines Vergil draws his audience’s attention to the violence of the break between the nature of the landscape when pastoral tranquility reigns, and when epic war dominates it.

The aspects of the pastoral and epic genres come into striking contact when Iulus’ arrow makes noise as it rushes towards the stag (*Aen.*7.498-499). Elsewhere, Vergil does not associate sound with *harundo* when he uses the word to designate an arrow.¹⁴³ Here, however, it is pertinent that the arrow/reed makes a lot of sound (*multo sonitu*) as it goes towards its quarry. As a reed, pastoral herders play the *harundo* as part of their bucolic lifestyle, and so it is logically associated with sound. The *harundo* departs Iulus’ bow as an epic weapon, and as it closes in on its pastoral prey it literally alters the song from pastoral back to epic as it pierces the main pastoral image (the stag) through its core (the stomach and ribs). Iulus’ arrow pierces the pastoral calm signaling the beginning of the Iliadic half of the *Aeneid* and demonstrating the different impact that the two genres have on the landscape. In this episode Vergil highlights the fragility of the perfect and peaceful landscape of pastoral in the face of the rush of epic war.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹Putnam, *Vergil’s Epic Design*, 105-106.

¹⁴²Putnam, *Virgil’s Epic Design*, 104.

¹⁴³Putnam, *Vergil’s Epic Design*, 110.

¹⁴⁴Putnam, *Vergil’s Epic Design*, 112.

There is another combination of pastoral and epic in the last lines of Book 7. In the Catalogue of Italian Warriors, Vergil describes Camilla's spear in pastoral terms: "...gerat ipsa pharetram / et pastoralem praefixa cuspidem myrtum" ("she herself bears a [Lycian] quiver / and pastoral myrtle having been fronted with a spear-point" *Aen.* 7.816-817). The unmistakable pastoral origin of Camilla's spear reflects the changes that have occurred in the landscape since Iulus killed Silvia's stag, thereby shattering the pastoral calm that previously held the landscape. Vergil dramatizes the effect of the epic conflict on the land through the former peaceful occupation of Camilla's spear.

We see yet again how Vergil takes advantage of pastoral in the funeral of Pallas. Vergil fills Pallas' funeral pyre with pastoral images, drawing a contrast between the tranquility of the images and the violence of his death at Turnus' hands. The mourners place Pallas high up on his rustic litter (*agresti stramine*, *Aen.* 11.67). In addition to the pastoral plant images, Vergil also delimits the poetry about the pyre from the rest of the funeral in the same way that pastoral poets remove the poetry of their herders from other concerns: leaves shade the wicker bier, which is made of arbutus shoots and oak twigs (*Aen.* 11.64-67).¹⁴⁵ Outside of Pallas' shady repose Vergil's Aeneas takes on the role of Achilles at Patroclus' funeral (reinserting epic into the narrative).¹⁴⁶ In this episode Vergil keeps the pastoral and epic poetic spaces separate from one another. The poetic space of the bier separates Pallas from the epic world; it protects him as Aeneas was unable to do.

As all these examples show, Vergil freely reuses the pastoral imagery that he inherited from Theocritus to enhance his epic work in the *Aeneid*. Vergil consistently uses the tranquility and peace associated with the Theocritean pastoral landscape to highlight the action and

¹⁴⁵The materials used for Pallas' bier are noticeably full of life, in contrast to the corpse that they support.

¹⁴⁶Aeneas' sacrifice of enemy captives is especially reminiscent of Achilles' actions at the funeral in *Iliad* 23.

aggression that takes place in the epic. He makes use of both Theocritus' insular poetic space, the ease with which things happen in that space, and the plants and springs that commonly decorate the pastoral countryside. Indeed, looking in particular at the funeral of Pallas, and the combination of its pastoral images and similarities to the funeral of Patroclus, it seems as though Vergil is looking back all the way to Homer through Theocritus. This raises a very interesting question, namely whether Vergil consciously made a connection between Theocritus' herder-duels and the warriors-duels of the *Iliad*, and thus had his attention focused on the Iliadic duels. The primacy and nature of his title character is certainly different from Aeneas' role in the *Iliad*, and in the *Eclogues* Vergil had already showed no compunction about taking older material and reworking it to suit his needs. Whether or not Vergil made the conscious connection, Theocritus' pastoral works are a consistent anchor in Vergil's writings, and also provide a bridge across the centuries to Homer.

The pastoral genre is "by convention, a fantasy,"¹⁴⁷ and therefore the pastoral poet removes the scope of the poetic space from reality. The poet contrives a space for pastoral that consists of a rural landscape populated by singing herders, their loves, and various divinities — all safely tucked away from the cares of the outside world. The herders are stylized and not intended to be realistic, so as not to "shatter the spell"¹⁴⁸ of their isolation from reality. The same elements that a poet uses to create pastoral poetry has also been used to create a space in which to discuss other ideas, such as social commentary, while keeping the poem detached from reality, but as Putnam notes this is more the exception than the rule. As we have seen, Vergil was one of these exceptions.¹⁴⁹ He was one of the first to comment on contemporary issues with his

¹⁴⁷ Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art* 4.

¹⁴⁹ As we saw in the previous chapter, one way that Vergil does this is by showing how the intrusion of reality on a pastoral poetic space affects the landscape and its inhabitants.

Eclogues: “[they] are the first, and in many ways the greatest, example of pastoral poetry used to convey a message as well as delight.”¹⁵⁰

The guiding force behind new forms of literature is that “transformation and genesis occurs through intertextual manipulation of the model(s).”¹⁵¹ The successful creation of poetry combines the conventions of the literary tradition and the fight against it.¹⁵² Authors frequently fight against the traditions that come before them,¹⁵³ as we see through the poetry of Theocritus and Vergil. Through active engagement with their predecessors authors create new genres and test the limits of preexisting ones. Theocritus’ manipulation of Homer played a clear role in the development of his pastoral poetry, a brand new genre at the time. Vergil used Theocritus’ work as a model, staying within the genre but pushing it in a new direction, while also harking back to Homer. More importantly, in the *Eclogues*, Vergil’s familiarity and active engagement with Theocritus’ poetry is evident throughout. In addition to serving as a model for how to write pastoral poetry, Vergil used Theocritus as a window through which he engaged with his predecessors, including Homer, evolving old motifs and taking them in new directions.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, 4.

¹⁵¹Thomas, 260

¹⁵²Conte, 95

¹⁵³Conte, 92

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

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