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# The Departures of the Eclogues

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The Departures of the *Eclogues*

Senior Project Submitted to

The Division of Languages and Literature of Bard College

by

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2024

For Granny Goose. Love, Rowan

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# Introduction

***Joining the discourse***

Virgil's Eclogues have never, even in antiquity, lacked for scholarly attention. However, any disinclination to spill further ink on a text so thoroughly studied is countered by the enormous appeal of the qualities which brought it such widespread attention in the first place: Virgil's immersive invocation of the pastoral environment, the arch-sophistication of his literary craft, and, perhaps most distinctive, the obscure, yet unmistakable, twinges of melancholy that are to be found in the midst of such charm and beauty.

In this project, I aim to add a drop to the bucket of this robust discourse by explicating some of the places in the Eclogues where Virgil accomplishes an effect of "distance"—in the psyches of the characters, between the reader and the world of the poems, even between his own text and the literary tradition out of which it arises.

***The pastoral tradition***

The Eclogues are conscientiously modeled upon a collection of ten poems by Theocritus of Syracuse, an influential poet at the court of Alexandria in the early 3rd century BCE.[1] Theocritus' Idylls (Ειδυλλία), as they came to be called, are widely recognized as the founding work of the the pastoral genre in Greek literature. Some of its defining features, as he established them, were the premise of depicting the lives of shepherds in a highly idealized rural landscape, the conceit of much of the poetry itself as the "amoeban verse" sung by those herdsmen for their

[1] See the biographical overviews of Lesky 1966 and Dihle 1994; Coleman's introduction to his commentary on the Eclogues also offers useful background information on Virgil's predecessors.

own amusement during long, languid days of tending the flocks, and the preoccupation, in those songs, with erotic misadventure, playful rivalries, and the surpassing beauty of country life.

Above all, Theocritean landscapes and their inhabitants are thoroughly fantastical and unrealistic.[2] As many have said, this is not–nor does it purport to be–a good-faith representation of day-to-day rural existence, but rather an elaborate imagining of it developed by inhabitants of the growing urban centers of the Hellenistic era. The behavior, and especially the *speech,* of the Theocritus' shepherds is wildly improbable, marked by obscure erudition and incessant allusion, [3]and their existences are profoundly isolated from any broader social, political, or historical context. The pastoral developed by Theocritus is altogether an escapist genre, artificial through and through, but the fairytale world he sketches is no less engrossing for its improbability; put another way, the ploy at escapism is successful, and it is a gas.

Theocritus had other imitators in the century and a half before Virgil came on the scene,[4] with whom Virgil himself was undoubtedly familiar, but the Eclogues are the earliest known pastoral poetry in the Latin language.

***Historical background: Virgil and the Cisalpine Confiscations***

Publius Vergilius Maro was born in 70 BCE, in Mantua, Northern Italy, which was then a part of the Roman province of Gallia Cisalpina.[5] His parents were rural aristocrats who ran a farm in the countryside, and were well-to-do enough to provide their boy with a rhetorical education to the highest standards of the time; as an adolescent, Virgil studied in the provincial centers of Cremona and Mediolanum (Milan), and eventually made his way to Rome, where he

[2] Coleman 1994, 1-14
[3] Ibid., 7
[4]Ibid., 2
[5] See Nardi 1930, which is a little dated in style, but nevertheless a helpful, accessible synthesis of the occasionally daunting Virgilian biographical tradition.

began to make a name for himself as a poet. The composition of juvenalia is well attested, but the Eclogues, which were written while the poet was in his late twenties, are the earliest of Virgil's works to have survived intact, and their publication, lauded from the outset, appears to be what put him on the map.

The backdrop of the Eclogues' composition–and of Virgil's early life–was marred by the profound unrest of the final chapter of the Roman Civil wars, culminating in the Battle of Philippi and the ascension of Octavian in 42 BCE.[6] Though Virgil does not seem to have seen military action as a young man, the conflict hit, as it were, close to home for him in other ways. In his fight against Anthony and Lepidus, the young Octavian shored up military support by undertaking to pay his troops in holdings of fertile farmland, confiscated from supposed supporters of his political enemies; he ultimately made good on his promise, undertaking the "massive program of land confiscation"[7] as soon as he returned to Italy in late 42 BCE. Virgil's family's farm was among those seized.[8] In the wake of this disaster, Virgil brought to bear all the favor he had gained for himself as a poet from the ruling class and appealed desperately for the return of his lands. He was eventually successful in this, but, needless to say, most of his compatriots had no such luck, and it is in the context of such events that the Eclogues are explicitly situated.

***Methods and inquiry***

There is so much to be said about each individual installment of the Eclogues, as well as about the relations between any two poems within its painstakingly ordered sequence, that I have been

[6] See Beard 2016
[7] Ibid. 342
[8] Wilkinson 1966, 321-22

obliged to confine myself to the close examination of only a few poems. These are, are, more or less, the first, second, fifth, ninth, and tenth. In the order of my own arguments, I sought to honor the poet's symmetry to the highest degree possible, which, considering its fearsome integrity, was not difficult even for an elementary scholar. Thus, the first chapter here is focused on the first Eclogue, the second on the three "middle" poems in my schema, and the final chapter takes as its starting point the ending of the tenth poem.

## Chapter 1. Staging Intrusions: The Fallout of the First Poem

### *Reading in order*

This inquiry is both concerned with and premised upon the nature of the ten poems of the Eclogues as a unit. The very designation *Eclogae,* which is the poet's own,[9] betrays their conception as parts, however distinctive, of a whole. Furthermore, the Eclogues are, unlike Theocritus' Idylls,[10] still read and published today in the order in which the author himself so carefully arranged them; that sequence, which is demonstrably far from chronological, is a poetic device in and of itself. Put another way, the order in which the reader experiences the Eclogues has much bearing on her perceptions of their meaning.

Eclogue 1 basically enacts a crisis that works itself upon the reader the way the crisis of the evictions work upon the characters. Then, like those characters, who, in the wake of the civil war, the disenfranchisement of their land, the loss of friends, their experience–undoubtedly as eyewitnesses, if not victims–of military action and wanton violence, must go back  to their previous life as if nothing has changed, we proceed, shaken, into a collection of pastoral songs that are more or less in harmony with the extant tradition and  have little (on the surface) to do with the recent turmoil.

Both readers and characters are "defamiliarized" from their own experience of the pastoral world in several ways. On the heels of catastrophe, no one is quite, nor do they feel like, the same person, shaped by the same associations and experiences, as they were when living the exact same life beforehand. There is, of course, the actual loss to be a accounted for–and then, there is the distance between the survivors, with their laden perceptions of an environment once

[9] "Each poem was an *eklogé* 'excerpt, extract' from a projected whole" (Coleman 1994, 15).
[10] Hunter 1999, 4

taken for granted, and their past selves, as well as between the painfully disjointedness of this life and its outward appearance of relative continuity. In Eclogue 1, Virgil virtuosically conjures a pastoral world at once familiar and novel, introduces destabilizing events to the landscape, and then returns, bidding the reader to do the same, to that original sphere, in which, henceforth, we are hesitant to take anything at face value, and encouraged to read deeply into the slightest intimations of distance, alienation, and darkness.

My own initial exposure to the Eclogues constitutes an interesting demonstration of this phenomenon. The first poem I read was, in fact, Eclogue 2, which I stumbled across in an intermediate Latin course. I was delighted with its beauty, with the aching rendition of Corydon's longing and the loving detail in which Virgil rendered the Italian landscape. The latter at points reminded me, however improbably, of the environment of my own childhood in rural Vermont. But when I went to read the first poem, I was shocked not only at the pathos I encountered, but by the departure which it constituted from the seemingly innocuous beauty of its successor. Turning the page back to the second poem, I looked forward to a familiar distraction from the pain of the poor mother goat and Meliboeus' disastrous departure, with all its haunting echoes of contemporary displacement.

But with the disasters of the first poem fresh in mind, the second took on altogether new layers of meaning. In Corydon's professions, I noted less the warmth of his passion, and more the extremity of his alienation from the beloved; not only does Alexis never appear, we are given no indication that he is even within earshot of his suitor. The mention of the town, and Corydon's assertion of his own rural environment's superiority, rings newly jarring in conjunction with the contents of the first poem. Even the multi-sensory environment in which the details of the poem

immerse the reader is undercut by the memory of the context in which these same pleasures were so recently cataloged by Meliboeus. Virgil does not have to explicitly say that *this* area, too, is *turbatur.*[11] It is already irrevocably so.

***World-building, Part I: Immersion***

One of the prevailing delights of the pastoral genre, as a whole, is its immersive aspect. The pastoral Idylls of Theocritus certainly set a precedent of rich sensory description: Ἁδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἁ πίτυς αἰπόλε τήνα // ἃ ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖσι μελίσδεται, ἁδὺ δὲ καὶ τὺ // συρίσδες… (Id. 1.1-3) ("There is sweet music in that pine tree's whisper, goatherd, // there by the spring. Sweet too is the music of your pipe…").[12] In fact, these lines exemplify a pattern which Virgil adapts to great effect in the Eclogues; namely, in addition to vivid visual and aural detail, deictic language (τήνα, ποτὶ) serves to implicitly orient the poem's audience relative to the stimuli in question– "*here* is the pine tree, *over there* is the spring," etc.[13] It is a formula which finds parallel in the opening line of the Eclogues, *Tityre, tu patulae recumbans sub tegmine fagi* ("You, Tityrus, reclining under the cover of the spreading beech…")[14] wherein prepositional speech (*sub tegmine*) is combined with visual ekphrasis in order to situate the speaker and his listeners–those both in- and outside the poem–squarely within the pastoral sphere.

Another example occurs towards the end of the poem:

> hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras
> nec interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes,
> nec gemere aëria cessabis turtur ab ulmo (1.56-59)

---

[11] 1.12

[12] In all Theocritus quotations, unless otherwise noted, the Greek text is that of Hunter 1999. The English translations, if not my own, are those of Verity 2002.

[13] My (terribly limited) theoretical understanding of deixis is based upon the arguments of Bühler (1990); I was introduced to the topic through the studies of Ruffy (2006) and Bakker (1999).

[14] For the Latin text of the Eclogues, I use Clausen 1994; all translations into English are my own unless otherwise noted.

> "On that side, under the high rock, the leaf cutter will sing to the breezes,
> and meanwhile, however, will neither the hoarse wood-pigeons
> nor the turtle dove cease to moan your cares from the airy elm-tree.

Here, the initial focus of the sensory exegesis is sound: the singing of the leaf-cutter to the breezes, which in turn bear strong and pleasant tactile connotations of motion and breath (and are so nearly homophonic to *aures*, "ears"), and the calls of the birds. In fact, these "wood-pigeons" and "turtle-doves" are not themselves "singing," but "moaning," *gemere*, an emotive, anthropomorphizing term which also vividly illustrates, along with *raucae*, the distinctive, throaty calls of both species. The prepositions, in addition to situating the audience within the space, affect a pointed evocation of scope in the details on the high cliff and the airiest tops of the elm-tree. The reader can all but feel the breeze on her skin, hear the singing of the birds (and humans), and sense of the soaring altitude of the rocks and trees above her head.

Paradoxically, it is the very nature of Virgil's work as a highly conscientious tribute to Theocritean precedent which adds an original device to his literary world-building technique, and a new layer of psychic verisimilitude to his portrait of pastoral life. In the world of the Eclogues, literary consciousness and intertextuality constitute almost a language of their own, a sphere of sensory reference on par with sight or hearing: the slightest allusion to the Idylls, and the tropes of pastoral imagery established therein, are able to invoke a host of vivid implications which multiply the world-building effects of their already sensory, deictic language.

***World-building, Part II: Disruption***

The lines above, for example, are an obvious allusion to Idyll 7.39-47, another lush ekphrasis of a *locus amoenus*; both descriptions include, notably, an elm-tree (*πτερεία*, *ulmo*) and a "moaning

turtle dove" (ἐστένε τρύγων, *gemere…turtur*). The evocation of the passage at this juncture not only heightens the rich sensory associations by calling to mind those evoked in turn by Theocritus, the contrasting circumstances of the two scenes underscore the bitter sadness which in fact gives rise to Meliboeus' gushing ekphrasis. Whereas the speaker and his companions in Idyll 7 have just reached the *end* of a journey and are proceeding to make themselves at ease to savor the beauty of country life and each other's company,[15] Meliboeus, the speaker in Eclogue 1, is just starting *out* on a journey that will take him far away. An additional manifestation of "distance" is in the change in temporal mode. Simichidas gives his account in simple past tense, [16] but Meliboeus speaks in the future*,* of experiences which he presumably is drawing on some memory of but fully expects will never befall him again.

Associations with Theocritus and the formal precedents of the genre do not just inform the "construction" of the Eclogues' pastoral world–they are active in the minds of its inhabitants. The landscape of Virgil's poems is famously syncretic: the setting is at once the mountains of Arcadia,[17] the coast of Sicily,[18] the landlocked, gently undulating Mantuan countryside. On one level, these contradictions are just that, and are representative of the fundamental artificiality and fantasy of pastoral, which takes place in a land and a time altogether more imagined than remembered. At the same time, they can be read as profoundly psychologically realistic.

---

[15] Id. 7.30: "Eucritus and I and pretty Amyntas turned aside // To the farm of Phrasidamus, where we sank down // With pleasure on deep-piled couches of sweet rushes…" (tr. Verity 2002, 28).
[16] The narrator of Idyll 7 speaks in past tense throughout, which, according to Hunter (1999), is novel: "first person narrative events…not embedded in a wider context are rare in Greek poetry" (144).
[17] There are several mentions of "Arcadia," in its capacity as the mythical home of Pan, throughout the Eclogues; in 7, the two singers are even introduced as being *Arcades* themselves; and Eclogue 10 is largely set there. For a compelling discussion of the significance of Arcadia in Virgilian pastoral, see Clausen's introduction to Eclogue 10 (1990, 289).
[18] i.e,, the setting of Theocritus' pastoral; although, as discussed by Clausen in the passage noted above, the island is not Virgil's first choice for his own remote, fantastical setting, there are many echoes of its features in his allusions to Theocritus, as at 2.25-6, when Corydon describes looking at his reflection in the "calm sea."

A useful analytical framework for discussing this phenomenon is the notion of "thirdspace," which was developed by 20th century urban theorist Edward Soja.[19] Laura Nasrallah[20] summarizes Soja's theory thus: "'thirdspace' brings together conceived space (which [Soja] defines as space as it is) and perceived space (which he defines as space as it is imagined or theorized) into a 'fully *lived space,* a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency.'" Part of the "thirdspace" of the landscape of the Eclogues is, in fact, the associations which it stirs in an observer acquainted with Theocritus–and thereby, interpolations of foreign fauna and topography are just as "real" as the concrete features with which they mingle in the perceptions of Virgil's poet-herdsmen.

Several of the most stunning ekphrases of Eclogue 1 conjure just such a "Theocritean thirdspace." At 1.51, Meliboeus ruefully describes the fortunes of his interlocutor:

> Fortunate senex, hic inter flumina nota
> et fontis sacros frigus captabis opacum;
> hinc tibi, quae semper, vicino ab limite saepes
> Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti
> saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro (1.51-55).
>
> "Lucky old man, here, amid the known streams
> and sacred springs, you'll seek the cool shade;
> on one side, as always, the neighbor's hedgerow,
> having furnished the flower of the willow to the Hyblaian bees,
> will urge you, with a soft murmur, to enter sleep.".

[19] Soja, Edward W. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.
[20] Nasrallah 2005, 407.

Agricultural irrigation trenches were, as they continue to be, a ubiquitous feature of the northern Italian countryside;[21] Virgil will mention them again at 3.111, where they are called *rivos.* (Despite the variance in terminology, the first reference is no less obvious for its poetic repackaging, and for the *flumina* to be described as particularly "known" to a local only sharpens the allusion.) Perhaps just as notably, irrigation trenches are *not* a common feature of the hills of Sicily or Arcadia and they thus denote this particular landscape as a specifically Virgilian, northern Italian one. "Springs," however, especially ones termed "sacred" and "cool," litter Theocritean topography, the venerated haunts of nymphs which constitute, in their arid, sunny surroundings, a relief–both in the sense of "boon" and "contrast"--that is nothing short of holy. Here, the landscape which remains to Tityrus and which Meliboeus must take his leave of, Italian *flumina* and Greek *fontes* bubble side by side. If unlikely to be reflected in a topographical survey, the scene is, in fact, all too probable as a kind of "thirdspace," a place which a student of Theocritean pastoral has wandered through, savoring the beauty of his immediate surroundings and weaving them, even unconsciously, in amongst the accounts of faraway, yet similarly enargeic and beloved, beauty which he has lately absorbed.

The same principle applies to the following lines, about the bees in the hedgerow, which should not, whatever their intertextual or theoretical significance, go unremarked-upon for the sheer magnitude of their beauty–the onomatopoeia of *susurro*, the whispery wealth of alliteration in line 55 (*saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro*), the achingly evocative notion of drifting off to sleep in the warm sunshine. As commentators are quick to note, Hybla, whence the bees'

[21] "Along the Mincio… for miles and miles along the roads and through the fields run long irrigation ditches carrying water, seldom slow-moving, almost never stagnant, usually in active motion to moisten the earth and feed the roots" (Highet 1957, 47).

epithet derives, is in Sicily, "on the Southern slopes of Mt Etna" (Coleman 83). In light of the theory of thirdspace, the Sicilian bees buzzing in the Cisalpine hedgerow would not seem so great a fallacy after all. Although it is not identified when, exactly, in his early life and education Virgil read his Theocritus, it is certainly possible that he spent time in his home country after doing so;[22] perhaps, he lay in the soft grass by the willows on his family's farm and "heard" at once the *susurrus* of the bees at hand and the βομβεῦντι…μέλισσαι of Idyll 5.46. The conflation, as Meliboeus eventually articulates it, makes nothing less real–in fact, the psychological verisimilitude increases, as it is instinctive for the human mind, upon encountering a stimulus, to generate association (however faint or unconscious) with previous experience.

For Virgil and his *boukolikoi*, the pleasures of intertextuality are an explicit and irreducible component of the pleasures of poetry, itself one of the foremost joys of the pastoral world. Meliboeus' description of Tityrus in the opening lines "teaching (*doceo)* the woods to echo 'Amaryllis,'" an unmistakably Greek, as well as stock pastoral, name which furthermore takes the Greek accusative form, is a description of the dissemination of the Greek tradition into the Italian landscape, and thereby the formation of a Roman pastoral tradition.

But the first Eclogue also introduces many elements which are either unspoken or outright absent in the Theocritus, and thus constitute, on a literary level, intrusions of some outside influence into the pastoral sphere. These outside forces, within the action of the poem, are also the elements which cause the greatests tensions for its characters. Meliboeus' grief is not on account of any other figure within his world–it is not a lost love, or a prickly colleague, or even some agricultural ill-fortune. He is being driven from, and supplanted in, his home by

[22] See Nardi 1930, 41.

remote forces, arising from the *discordia civis* of the wider Roman republic. The mere mention not only of not only an urban setting, but THE *urbs,* the city of Rome, constitutes a not to be underappreciated intrusion of the non-pastoral. Theocritus himself wrote a swath of non-pastoral Idylls, from encomia of contemporary political figures and comedic mimes,[23] which take place in contemporary urban centers, but never does he place talk of such things in the mouths of the inhabitants of the pastoral Idylls. By making Tityrus speak of Rome, Virgil merges the two heretofore separate Theocritean categories and makes a bold departure from generic precedent.

It may be useful to examine some of the "intrusive" language and subject matter, and its location within the literal and literary landscape of the rest of the poem, before proceeding to analyze the effect of its presence. Coleman makes much of Tityrus' rudeness, or at the very least insensitivity, towards Meliboeus' situation,[24] wjjhich becomes apparent the minute the former begins speaking. But, as Meliboeus himself asserts, he is not particularly upset with Tityrus (*non equidem invideo,* "not, indeed, am I envious"); he instead classes his reaction as incredulity (*...miror magis*, ."...rather I marvel"), and only much later in the poem (1.70-1) directs his frustration and umbrage towards the faceless *impius miles*[25] ("impious soldier) and abstract *discordia* (disunity).[26] Meliboeus' lack of ire towards Tityrus, and his failure to, say, bid his fellow herdsman to come over here and say that to my face, constitutes another generic departure of sorts.[27] In Theocritean, and even subsequent Virgilian, scenes of "conflict," herdsmen do not hesitate to tussle with each other upon the slightest provocation; their banter and one-upmanship is as germane to the landscape as the playful buttings of young goats, and quite often take

[23] Indeed, the majority of the thirty-some Idylls confidently attributed to Theocritus are considered non-pastoral.
[24] "[Tityrus] now vaunts his success callously and complacently before his less fortunate friend" (90).
[25] 1.70
[26] 1.71-72
[27] Coleman concurs; see 90

interpersonal spats over love triangles and relative musical or agricultural prowesses as their explicit subjects.

So for Meliboeus not to air any grievances with Tityrus in response to what might elsewhere be readily taken as gloating–and goading–signals that something has shifted. The laws of genre are altered, or at least taken leave of along with the *fines patriae*. When Meliboeus subsequently lays his troubles at the feet of outsiders, a *miles impius* or a *barbarus,* it constitutes not so much an expression of reconciliation and solidarity as an exemplary intrusion, into the pastoral sphere, from the outside world of the troubled empire.

Another intrusion, on the level of both language and content, is Eclogue 1's frank inclusion of the terminology of Roman slavery. "Although a ubiquitous feature of the Italian landscape," Clausen notes, "slaves hardly appear as such in the E[clogues] or in the pastoral *Idylls* of Theocritus" (44). Indeed, Virgil never uses the word *servus/-a* of his characters;[28] but, the details supplied regarding Tityrus' legal status render it unmistakeable (Coleman 79).

*Peculium,* for example, is a technical term, and, acccording to Coleman, "very unpoetical word" (79),  for "property (in whatever form) assigned for use, management, and, within limits, disposal to someone who in law lacked the right of property, either a slave or someone in *patria potestas…* the possessor normally had a free hand in the management, and, if a slave, could expect to buy his freedom with the profits."[29] Coleman calls the term "a far more important piece of realism" even than the mechanics of self-manumission discussed so far "pointing to Tityrus' socio-legal status."[30] On the one hand, by characterizing his herdsman as once (and for most of

[28] See Clausen's note to 1.30 (44)
[29] Clausen's note to 1.32 (45), quoting Finley 1973.
[30] Coleman 1994, 79

his life) enslaved, Virgil does nothing new: it could be assumed of all the pastoral herdsmen one meets. On the other hand, by "saying the quiet part out loud" about Tityrus' legal status, Virgil steps outside generic convention, drawing attention to the nuts and bolts of the world, to its darker undersides, to the decidedly un-bucolic forces that governed the lives of its inhabitants. An explicit discussion of the mechanics of slavery is, to say the least, an incursion of both realism and darkness.

Tityrus gives this account of his personal history in terms of the timelines of his various romantic relationships. The names of both of the partners he mentions are, like his own, attested in the Idylls: Amaryllis is the love interest in Idyll 3, Galatea in Idyll 11. It constitutes a humorous contrast for the notoriously "slippery" (no pun intended) love-interest figure of Galatea to share a name with the woman who, in Virgil's poem, was not only won over by a humble herdsman, but for that relationship to have ultimately run its course, for this idealized figure to have proven at the very least incompatible with her partner, as any other fallible human character might. "While Galatea"–i.e., the ultimate Theocritean love interest–"held me, there was no hope of freedom or care for savings" (1.31-2): the statement can be read two ways. Did Galatea's behavior hinder Tityrus' attendance to these pressing legal-economic matters–or, in her company, did he give no thought to them whatsoever–literally, those concerns and hopes were not even extant? While he lived in the "Theocritean" world of Galatea, perhaps, there was no place for grim, humdrum Virgilian concerns of slavery and survival.

But the persistence of these same "real world" problems are what, to all appearances, brought about the end of this idealized, *idyllic* relationship. Tityrus' age and the history of his relations with the metonymic Galatea could be said, in short, to be situating him as

"post-Pastoral," and "post-Theocritean," in a way that both necessitated and was engendered by the pivotal trip to Rome. In Theocritus, one sees people struck down in the fairest bloom of youth, not ho-humming their way through their first gray hairs; love affairs end as explosively as they were kindled, not infrequently with the death of one party–they do not fizzle out over differences in household budgeting philosophies (Galatea *reliquit* Tityrus, she did not–or so there is no indication--*die*). It is a distinctive departure indeed.

In light of the economic–indeed, existential–concerns outlined by Tityrus in the preceding lines, Amaryllis' neglect of the harvest takes on a more dire, sinister cast, and thereby so does whatever disturbance prompted such self-sabotaging, let alone seemingly uncharacteristic, behavior. Perhaps we may detect a genuine foreboding, beyond the conventional lovesick loneliness, in Amaryllis' prayers and personal dysfunction, proportionate to the dangers that would in actuality have accompanied the trek from Mantua to Rome, in times of profound civil unrest, for a man of her husband's means and status. The stock pastoral gesture–this time of the grieving lover–once again casts a shadow of contemporary agony. "The sympathy of nature, the answering voice, is a fundamental assumption of pastoral,"[31] and here, what is being "answered" is Amaryllis' despair at Tityrus' absence–and, perhaps, of his return. Coleman points out that these examples could *also* be taken as "signs of neglect on the farm" which, likewise, once again heightens the practical crisis in which Amaryllis finds herself, her own welfare and that of her faraway beloved by no means guaranteed.

In the first Eclogue, a kind of defamiliarization takes place both on the level of content, as Tityrus and Meliboeus each rethink past experiences in light of new information gleaned

[31] Clausen 1994, 47

through their recent experiences of catastrophe, and on a meta-literary level, with Virgil continually subverting the stylistic expectations which he moments before cultivated in his sensory descriptions and allusions to Theocritus. Meliboeus' opening speech ends, as it began, with an enargeia of Tityrus' happy, pastoral, appropriately Greek-inflected existence: *tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra // formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas* (you, Tityrus, at ease in the shadows //are teaching the woods to re-echo "lovely Amaryllis"). These "echoing" lines are not too different at all, in their subject matter or even their diction, from their precursors: Tityrus' posture, his situation under the foliage, his physical ease, his quintessentially pastoral activity. The audiences' reception of this description, however, cannot be anything less than wildly divergent in light of Meliboeus' disclosure of his plight. The second description is to some extent an *umbra*[32] of the first, both its shadow and its ghost, its outline re-echoed but divorced from its essence.

In Meliboeus' next speech, we are able to bear witness as his understanding of that past, as well as whatever confidence he might have felt in the meaning of events during the moments in question, is destabilized, and knowledge of subsequent catastrophe retroactively reframes a formerly straightforward experience: *saepe malum hoc nobis, si mens non laeua fuisset, // de caelo tactas memini praedicere quercus* ("Often, I mind, this mishap was foretold me, had not my wits been dull, by the oaks struck from heaven."[33] Nothing that happened in the past has changed, as indeed it cannot. But Meliboeus' conception of it, like his perception of the landscape in the face of his imminent departure, is irrevocably altered, and what *is* the past if not how it is remembered?, just as, per the theory of thirdspace, the landscape is inextricable from

[32] See Chapter 3 for a further discussion of the significance, and multivalence, of this particular Latin word.
[33] 1.16-17; this is the translation of Fairclough (1999)

human conceptions of it. Meliboeus' understanding of the world has shifted, and by the condemnation of his (former) *mens* as *laeva,* he stands now in opposition to his former self as well. The statement expresses Meliboeus' estrangement from his past self, his memories, and his former understanding of the world's workings.

It is a subtle but brutal manifestation of the kind of defamiliarization that will unfold henceforth, even in Tityrus' brighter-toned response:

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Meliboee, putaui
stultus ego huic nostrae similem, quo saepe solemus
pastores ouium teneros depellere fetus.
sic canibus catulos similis, sic matribus haedos
noram, sic paruis componere magna solebam.
uerum haec tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes
quantum lenta solent inter uiburna cupressi (1.19-25).

That city they call "Rome–" oh, Meliboeus, silly me,
I thought it was like *our* "city," to which we shepherds
are accustomed to bring down the tender lambs of our flocks.
As puppies are like dogs, new kids like their mothers–
that's how I used to compare big things to small.
But among other cities, *this* one has raised up its head
as much as cypresses do amidst the lazy gelder-roses.

Tityrus' repudiation of his own past self as *stultus*, as well as his use of the perfect tense of *putavi,* delineate yet another such tension. Again, though Tityrus' tone–like his fate–is lighter than Meliboeus', he is essentially expressing the same sentiment as his less fortunate fellow did when rueing his failure to appreciate the significance of the lightning-strike. Tityrus' lens upon the world, and what its various entities and phenomena indicate, have been utterly reformed. In this passage, we can see a alienation in understanding occurring on several levels at once:

1) defamiliarization of the city of Rome for the presumably urban audience;

2) defamiliarization of the pastoral world,

a) for Tityrus, as he recollects it happening, and

b) for Meliboeus, in real time, as he listens to his companion;

3) alienation of Tityrus from his past, purportedly ignorant self;

4) an explicit, self-conscious account of the shift in perspective framework experienced by Tityrus (which thereby, automatically, changes that which he perceives as well).

The psychological phenomenon is underscored, perhaps, by Tityrus' choice of mother-and-child entities as an analogy (preceded by his allusion to the weaning of young lambs in the previous lines). It recalls the devastation inherent, however natural, in the leaving of the cosmos of one's mother's arms for the world outside, and of the irretrievable loss of childhood conditional in the transformations of youth.

Death has, as a rule, never been far away in the pastoral world. Idyll I takes the form ofo a lament for Daphnis, himself the supposed founder of the genre, struck down bitterly in the full bloom of his youth. Right away, in Theocritus, it hovers ubiquitously as the inverse to all that brings joy and wonder. Youth, flowers, the warm season, the day: all culminate, inevitably, in their destructive opposite, and are rendered so much more precious for their impending end. But it is a new kind of ache for the beautiful and the finite to be flourishing and extant, yet out of reach. Virgil makes it so that death and departure from the (pastoral) world are no longer synonymous, and his characters, in avoiding the former, often reckon with more ends both more fearsome and more banal.

Tityrus' characterization of himself as an old(er) man, who has seen a good swath of life's years already, is unmistakable, however much critics have scrambled to construe otherwise. An older shepherd is un-pastoral, and Tityrus is undoubtedly, deliberately rendered as such *because,* not in spite of, the genre-busting connotations. "Old men are rare in the conventional

pastoral world, which seems to be peopled by teenagers," says Coleman (78). Indeed, Tityrus is not quaintly senile–he seems simply…middle-aged. He is *greying,* not white-headed. He certainly has some life behind him–hence his discussion of *Libertas* looking to him relatively "late"--but also ahead of him, with his new partner, on his newly secured land. His age, in other words, is not particularly *romantic;* he is neither a wise, removed old observer, nor the expected hot-headed youth.

But there is no sharper example of a pain beyond death in this poem than the fate of his goats which Meliboeus describes at 1.12-15:

…en ipse capellas
protinus aeger ago; hanc etiam uix, Tityre, duco.
hic inter densas corylos modo namque gemellos,
spem gregis, a! silice in nuda conixa reliquit.

I can hardly lead. Just now, back there amidst the clustered hazels–
*twins*, the hope of the herd, ah…!--after laboring bitterly,
she left them on the bare flint.

What is more devastating, the image of the dying kids, or of their mother, forced to continue without them? No serviceable English translation can quite convey the gut-punch of the delayed verb in the sentence *his inter densas coryllos modo namque gemellos, // spem gregis, a! siilice in nuda conixa reliquit* ("over there, amidst the clustered hazels, just now, in fact, twin babies, the hope of the herd, ah!--after laboring painfully, she left them on the bare rock"). All that the goat goes through, the twins, the labor, the stark conditions–each more dire than the last–culminates in the devastation of the abandonment, rendering previous struggles laughable in comparison.

***Conclusion: An invitation to linger***

The first poem culminates, improbably, in an invitation. Tityrus (finally snapping out of his obliviousness, depending on how one reads it) addresses his fellow, making an offer of quintessential bucolic comfort: wholesome, rustic fare, the prospect of repose and leisure, the soft green shade of a *locus amoenus* (*hic tamen hanc mecum poteras requiescere noctem // frondem super viridi. sunt nobis mitia poma, // castaneae molles et pressi copia lactis…* ("Here, you would be able to rest the night, // upon green foliage. There are for us ripe apples, // soft chestnuts and an abundance of pressed milk…").

But the familiar, sensorily immersive pleasure initially evoked by Tityrus is qualified and destabilized in his final words: *et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant // maioresque cadunt altis de montibus* ("and now, far off, the highest roofs of the town are smoking // and great shadows are falling from the high hills"). Some obscure, not altogether un-threatening phenomenon is unfolding, and will continue to unfold, at the same time as the bucolic pleasures are being savored. In the mimetic format of the poem, Tityrus' direct address to Meliboeus doubles as one the audience, and thus, his invitation is extended to us as well. We, too, are bidden to proceed in partaking of the pleasures of the pastoral world (in this case, by continuing in our reading of the collection); at the same time, we are unable to discount the shadows which continue to seep in at its periphery.

## Chapter 2. Theocritean Departures

This chapter focuses upon three particular Eclogues which are each modeled very closely on a specific Idyll of Theocritus: the second, fifth, and ninth poems, which are universally considered to be based upon Idylls 11, 1, and 7, respectively. To a reader familiar with this source material, it becomes apparent that many seemingly arbitrary "departures" which Virgil makes from his model in fact serve to heighten the covert sense of alienation that permeates the landscape of the Eclogues, and to which the reader's attention has been tuned by the mechanics of the opening poem discussed in the preceding chapter.

### *Frustrated Lovers: Idyll 11 and Eclogue 2*

Eclogue 2 is a reworking of Theocritus' Idyll 11, which follows "a structure, familiar from archaic poetry, of gnomic opening followed by 'mythical' exemplification."[34] After addressing the poem to his friend Nikias and announcing the "moral" of the impending story, Theocritus begins his song in the persona of Polyphemus. He addresses Galatea already completely ὀρθαῖς μανίαις ("in a manic passion"), as we have been told to expect: ᾿Ω λευκὰ Γαλάτεια, τί τὸν φιλέοντ᾽ ἀποβάλλῃ; // λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς ποτιδεῖν, ἁπαλωτέρα ἀρνός, // μόσχω γαυροτέρα, σφριγανωτέρα ὄμφακος ὠμᾶς ("O white Galatea, why do you spurn your lover? // Whiter to look at than cream-cheese, softer than a lamb, // more playful than a calf, sleeker than the unripe grape" (Id. 11.19-21).[35] The pun on Galatea's name, followed by comparisons of her to various livestock and produce, straightaway establishes Polyphemus' disarming comic rusticity.

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[34] Hunter 1999, 215
[35] Tr. Verity 2002

He deplores her indifference to his yearning, which, he says, has consumed him, day and night, for years. They do have a history of specific encounters, and live, though in separate realms, in relative proximity to one another–it is not unreasonable for Polyphemus to assume that Galatea is within earshot as he sings "on the shore" ( Polyphemus concedes that he is not much to look at,[36] but is confident in his other merits: his prosperity as a shepherd, his prowess as a singer, the charming sundries he offers as love-gifts. He also stresses–in some of the poem's loveliest lines–the superiority of his terrestrial *locus amoenus* to Galatea's home in the sea.

After variously expressing the wish that he "had been born with gills" so that he could live underwater with Galatea, and cursing his mother, not, as a tragic hero might, for bringing him into a world of suffering, but rather for bad-mouthing him to her fellow sea nymph, Polyphemus more or less comes to his senses. He admonishes himself both for neglecting his tasks and for pining over one girl when, or so he says, he does not lack for erotic prospects: "maybe you'll find another Galatea, and a prettier one too."[37] He has, as promised, been consoled by his own song, by the "the medicine of the muses;" should we fail to extrapolate as much, the narrator returns to announce in the final lines, οὕτω τοι Πολύφαμος ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα // μουσίσδων (Id. 11.80) ("So by singing the Cyclops shepherded his love").[38]

Eclogue 2 also begins with an introduction by a first-person narrator, but it is considerably briefer than its multiple-stanza Theocritean counterpart:

> Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin,
> delicias domini, nec quid speraret habebat.
> tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos

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[36] ὥνεκά μοι λασία μὲν ὀφρῦς ἐπὶ παντὶ μετώπῳ // ἐξ ὠτὸς τέταται ποτὶ θὤτερον ὦς μία μακρά, // εἷς δ᾽ ὀφθαλμὸς ἔπεστι, πλατεῖα δὲ ῥὶς ἐπὶ χείλει (31-2) ("a shaggy brow spread right across my face, from ear to ear in one unbroken line. Below is a single eye, and above my lip is set a broad nose" (Verity 30-4)).
[37] Id. 11.75-76; tr. Verity 2002.
[38] Tr. ibid.

> adsidue veniebat. ibi haec incondita solus
> montibus et silvis studio iactabat inani… (2.1-5).
>
> "Corydon the shepherd was aflame for Alexis,
> the darling of the master, and did not have anything to hope for.
> He would only go, every day, to the shady heights amidst the close beech-trees;
> there, alone, he would toss out rustic sayings with hapless zeal
> to the mountains and woods."

This introduction contains no promise, even implicit, of any form of consolation for its protagonist. First of all, a "happy ending" immediately precluded; Corydon has "no reason to hope;" the description of Alexis as the "darling of the master," also dooms his prospects, in addition to deftly situating the romantic situation in a bleak socio-legal context. "Whether [the *domini*] is the master of Alexis alone or–more likely–of both Corydon and Alexis," Coleman observes, "the shepherd's plight is equally helpless" (91). Even more conspicuously absent is any prospect of the "reward" of Theocritus' story, namely, the medicine of the muses for a lovesick man. No such concept is even introduced.

Virgil changes the gender of the beloved,[39] but what is more salient (as male bisexuality is no more remarkable among pastoral shepherds as it is in the rest of the ancient world) is the transformation from a "courtship" dynamic to a pederastic one. Such relationships between (older) men and boys, as opposed to women, were essentially a phase, something that would eventually be "grown out of" by both parties–particularly the *eromenos,* upon whose extreme youth the original attraction was predicated. It was truly a "seasonal" relationship. On the contrary, heterosexual marriage was (supposedly) a union for life, with the dynamic between

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[39] While I would be the first to delight in a sympathetic portrait of queer longing in the Eclogues, that is not what we have on our hands here, and to argue otherwise would simply be a bad faith reading.Alexis and Corydon, it bears repeating, are not equal in status, and even less so in age; the defining characteristic of their relationship to one another is not that they are both male, but that they are a grown man and a child.

partners remaining consistent as they aged. In short, this is just another way in which there is an at least possible, longer-term "future" for Polyphemus and Galatea, but no such thing for Alexis and Corydon.

In addition to the vacuum of context which it creates, the lack of a presence for the "narrator"--he never speaks in first person or designates a particular audience, and certainly does not reveal, as Theocritus' does, anything of his own background[40]–heightens the *loneliness* of Corydon, as he proceeds, *solus,* to a remote spot to sing only to the *montibus et silvis.* Unlike Polyphemus on the seashore,[41] he does not select, as the location of his serenade, a place where he thinks his beloved might be able to hear him, since, in this case, it is out of the question. It is as if he has given up before he even begins, and indeed, what follows is arguably less an appeal to Alexis and more a lament at the accepted fact of his unavailability.

The very fact that Corydon possesses, let alone articulates, some cognizances of "town-," as opposed to "country-," life is a marked departure from Theocritean precedent. As Clausen puts it, "the opposition between town and country, latent in all pastoral, never surfaces in Theocritus" (62-3). Corydon's view–his *thirdspace*–of his setting is molded by his awareness of an altogether different kind of existence, and thereby also by the knowledge that his own is not universal–that it has limits, and perhaps even threats. The town, in this capacity (in addition to being the place where the absent Alexis is held) overshadows and underlays the entire Eclogue, like the absent presence of a beloved.

[40] The speaker of Idyll 11 refers to himself in the first person throughout this address to Nicias, and alludes to his personal background by referring to the Sicilian Cyclops as "my countryman" (ὁ παρ' ἁμῖν) (Id. 11.7).
[41] Id 11.13-14

The unspoken, hovering consciousness of the "town" throughout the poem prompts reconsideration of the man passages of achingly vivid deixis of country life:

> Nunc etiam pecudes umbras et frigora captant
> nunc viridis etiam occultant spineta lacertos,
> Thestylis et rapido fessis messoribus aestu
> alia serpyllumque herbas contundit olentis (2.8-11).
>
> "Now even the herds chase the cool shades,
> now even the hedges hide the green lizards,
> and for the reapers, tired from the fierce heat,
> Thestylis grinds garlic and thyme
> and sweet-smelling herbs.

One who is so used to–who, in fact, knows nothing *but*–these stimuli will be less inclined to remark upon them, let alone describe them at length. If only by imaginatively assuming Alexis' position as a city-dweller, whether to feel closer to him or to appeal to him more powerfully, Corydon has experienced some "departure" from the pastoral realm, and its thirdspace is thus irrevocably converted for him.

Another considerable change that Virgil makes to the Theocritean Idyll is in the degree of the besotted speaker's affection. Indeed, where Polyphemus begins with praises of his love, Corydon launches straight into berating Alexis for not returning his affections. Aside from the adjective *formosum* in line 1–in which, as a matter of fact, it is the narrator speaking, not Corydon–we have not seen for ourselves what, exactly, inspired his love for the young man in the first place. Even Polyphemus' protest at Galatea's elusiveness are inflected with bemused longing, not outraged: φοιτῇς δ'αὖθ' οὕσως ὅκκα γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἔχῃ με, // οἴχῃ δ' εἰθός ἰοίσ' ὅκκα γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἀνῇ με…; ("Why do you only come just as sweet sleep claims me, // why do you leave me just as sweet sleep lets me go…?) (Id. 11.22-3, tr. Verity 2002). Corydon, as it

were, chooses not sleep, but death in his correspondent expression: *mori me denique coges* ("you will drive me at last to death" (2.7).

Both Alexis and Galatea  described as being white/fair/pale (λευκὰ, *candidus*), but for Polyphemus, it is the thesis of his encomium to his beloved's beauty, whereas Corydon almost spits out the would-be compliment as part of his rather sinister quasi-warning to poor Alexis: *o formose puer, nimium ne crede colori: // alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur* ("o lovely boy, do not trust your complexion too much; white privets fall, dark myrtles are picked") (2.17-18). Here, when Corydon finally does call Alexis *formosus,* it feels almost sarcastic, and in context, altogether threatening.

That undertone is representative in a broader pattern in Corydon's "pursuit" of Alexis, at least vis-a-vis its Theocritean counterpart: his consistent use of language with resonances of violence and force. At 2.64-68, Virgil echoes a few lines from another Idyll, the ninth, in which a besotted young man uses a series of analogies from nature to describe the magnetic intensity of his longing: ἁ αἴξ τὰν κύτισον, ὁ λύκος τὰν αἶγα διώκει, // ἁ γέρανος τὤροτρον: ἐγώ δ'ἐπὶ τὶν μεμάνημαι ("The goat seeks the clover, the wolf the goat, // the crane the plow; I am maddened for you" (Id. 9.30-1). Meanwhile, Corydon say*s, torva leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam, // florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella, // florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella, // te Corydon, o Alexi* ("The savage lioness seeks the wolf, the wolf himself, the goat, // the wanton goat the seeks the clover; // Corydon, o Alexis, [seeks] you…"). Altogether, Virgil sticks rather closely to the Greek, which makes the details he *does* choose to alter all the more striking: Corydon provides two examples of a predator pursuing prey, further the hardly ambivalent *leaena* with *torva,* and the third, less violent example, he chooses to darken by

calling the grazing goat *lascivus.* Theocritus' speaker, in contrast, gives two decidedly non-violent examples, of the cranes and the goat, and in the only one that is explicitly predatory–the goat pursuing the sheep–the sting of which is somewhat blunted by the absence of any intensifying adjectives. What greater departure is there than from love to force?

***The Death(s) of Daphnis: Idyll 1 and Eclogue 5***

Virgil follows Theocritus in the inclusion, in one of his herdsmans' songs, of an elegy for Daphnis, a mythical figure and archetype of the pastoral genre, who dies of heartbreak after running afoul of Aphrodite and leaves behind a bucolic world awash with sympathetic grief. The subtle changes in Virgil's are instructive as to his development of the notions of *death* as only one, and by no means the worst, form of "departure" from the pastoral world. Theocritus' account ends in Daphnis' death. Virgil, on the contrary, *begins* with "the dread of something after death;" Daphnis is already gone, and all the focus is on the bereaved. The disaster in question, as with the displacements of Eclogue 1, has already taken place before the beginning of the narrative, which focuses on its fallout.

Not to be discounted is the placement of the Daphnis story within the Eclogues, vis-a-vis its position in the Idylls. In Theocritus, it is in Idyll 1, forming the inaugural herdsmans' song in his bucolics; Virgil buries it in E5. While this is still a prominent placement (right in the middle of the book, at the heart, if you will, of his pastoral world) it is notable that Virgil's collection commences with an altogether different catastrophe, not death, but something just as final, for which its survivors are at a loss for generic protocol.

Another detail of the episode's context that bears remarking-upon is at lines 14-15, where there is an explicit discussion of the act of writing. Mopsus classes his impending song as *in*

*viridi nuper quae cortice fagi // carmina descripsi* ("songs which I lately inscribed into the green bark of the beech tree") (5.14-15). Any such reference to the mechanics of literacy in the ancient world merits extensive treatment, but for the purposes of this discussion, it is best to limit the scope of our curiosity to the following question: Why would Virgil have a bucolic singer draw attention to the textuality of his upcoming performance at this particular juncture?

Among other things, any reader who encounters a mention of"written word in a pastoral poem and thinks "huh, that's new" thereby "checks out" of the poem's atmosphere which has so lately been conjured in the vivid deixis and heavy allusion of the surrounding lines. That mention of the act of writing reminds us, the readers, of the fact that we are, well, reading (or being read aloud to, as the case may be). We are not present in the same *hic et nunc* as the characters. The motif Virgil so devastatingly enacts in the opening lines of E1 thus recurs: a world is wrought, and then immediately alienated. We are immersed in a sphere, and then made abruptly aware of its limits. *This* iteration, in the beginning of E5, takes place in the middle–indeed, at the heart–of the collection, and signals the significance of the upcoming episode.

Let us make a brief overview of Theocritus' Daphnis elegy, and the circumstances in which the song is sung in Idyll 1. As in E5, this topic is requested of one singer-shepherd by another, implying its heretofore canonized status. Thyrsis' song begins with a formal invocation of the muse: Ἄρχετε βουκολικᾶς Μοῖσαι φίλαι ἄρχετ᾽ ἀοιδᾶ ("Begin, dear Muses, begin the song of the herdsman") (Id. 1.64). (The explicit designation of the imminent production AS "bucolic song" aids in the real time codification of a generic standard which Th. so cleverly enacts throughout the poem.) Thyrsis then introduces himself as its singer, although he will not be explicitly interpolated as a first person figure within the narrative itself. We might take note of

his name, the first given in the Idylls: Hunter argues that its Bacchic character helps to underscore Theocritus's ongoing project of conflating the origins of the bucolic tradition with the tragic,[42] and piques the reader's attention to elements of that genre in the upcoming lines.

We move into a chronological narrative, beginning with the onset of Daphnis' suffering as Thyrsis describes the sympathetic response of the natural world to Daphnis' demise: both wild animals and the herdsman's own charges lament (1.70-4). Gods and fellow-humans appear and question Daphnis on the nature of his suffering, so incongruent with the seeming good fortune of his personal beauty and appeal. The god Priapus casts Daphnis' lofty, existential ἄλγεα ("sorrows" in terms of decidedly comedic erotic frustration (as, indeed, it essentially *is*). But Daphnis persists in his stubborn tragic suffering, and "answered nothing, but nursed his bitter love up to the appointed end" (Id. 1.92-93).[43]Aphrodite, the source of his troubles, appears and gloats, to which D. responds defiantly: it is textbook tragic hubris. He bids farewell to his surroundings and to the beasts and gods who inhabit them, calling upon them all, once again, to bear witness to his outrage at the hands of the goddess and exhorting that "all things run contrary, since Daphnis is near to death (Id 1.133-4)."[44] At last he plunges into the river and drowns. Though inevitable–not even Aphrodite can appeal the fates' course on this matter–there is a decidedly agentive valence to his death, or at the very least, the terms upon which he dies. He *chooses* to continue to defy the goddess, remaining as indignant as any Euripidean hero till the bitter end; even the fatal act is cast, functionally, as a suicide. And there, his story ends.

[42] See Hunter's introduction to his commentary on Id. 1 (1999, 61-2).
[43] Tr. Verity 2002
[44] Tr. Ibid

Virgil's account, in contrast, *begins* with Daphnis' death, from the very first word, in fact: *exstinctum Nymphae crudeli funere Daphnin // flebant* ("The nymphs weep for Daphnis, extinguished by a cruel death") (5.20-22). Coleman sums up the difference concisely: "the *extinctum* placed first asserts the character of the song: it is a lament for the dead Daphnis, not, like *Id.* 1.64ff, an account of its last moments" (158). Whether Virgil's version will ultimately be complementary or revisionist, it is clear straightaway that have a different version of the story on our hands, one in which death is not the end, but only the beginning.

After death comes mourning, paralleling the laments which, in Theocritus, take place while Daphnis is still alive. The nymphs mourn, and so, incredibly, does Daphnis' *mother,* who is nowhere to be found in Theocritus' versions of the tale; and for extra emphasis, *nati* and *mater* are both in the final position of their respective lines. Daphnis' mother appeals the *injustice* of his death–*atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater* ("his mother cried out to the gods and the cruel stars") (5.22-23)--underscoring how Daphnis' death is not merely a tragedy but a outrageous contradiction of the natural order. Virgil has developed the generic pathos of a young man dying of heartbreak into the cosmic injustice of a mother burying her child.

The mother's reproach of the "gods and stars" is, furthermore, in opposition to the explicitly sympathetic deities (in addition to the natural world) found in Theocritus; in Thyrsis' song, Pan and Priapus express their sympathy, and Aphrodite, the instigator, is almost remorseful.. Nature mourns in Virgil, too, but there is a distinct sense of unwholesomeness, rather than appropriateness, in the dejection:

> grandia saepe quibus mandavimus hordea sulcis,
> infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur avenae;
> pro molli viola, pro purpure narcisso
> carduos et spinis surgit paliurus acutis (5.36-39).

> "In the furrows to which we once entrusted great barleys,
> ill-begotten darnel and sterile oats are born;
> instead of the soft violet, instead of the purple narcissus,
> thistle and thorn with sharp spines arise."

These "replacements" signify more than a perversion of the habits of nature; they are in fact eventualities which would have dire material consequences for real-world country folk in Eclogue 1, Virgil pulls back the conceits of the genre to reveal that his Tityrus is, in actuality, a poor, only lately enslaved man who labors hard for a living. It remained possible, in the subsequent poems, that the same is true of the other herdsman, and is simply unsaid. For subsistence farmers at the mercy of the approval of their masters, a poor harvest–even an ill-kept garden–poses a disastrous threat.

Virgil's song is less mimetic than Theocritus' inasmuch as the herdsman-speaker of Eclogue 5 is personified in his own account, speaking in first person as a witness to the events. This makes the experience less immersive, and our contact with the characters less immediate. We never occupy the same temporal or narrative field as Daphnis himself, the events in question being so obviously reported by a third party. How is this any different from the repetition of "I am Thyrsis from Etna?" For one thing, "Thyrsis from Etna" does not actually insert *himself* into the narrative. Mopsus addresses Daphnis directly, a bitter fallacy for obvious reasons: just as we, his audience, are not in the same plane as the events described and thus cannot witness them directly, Daphnis can never actually know what his friend said to him after he has died.

Virgil retains Theocritus's element of Bacchic imagery; indeed, if anything, he increases its prominence. Mopsus attributes to Daphnis almost a Dionysiac alter ego: *Daphnis et Armenias curru subiungere tigris // instituit, Daphnis thiasos inducere Bacchi // et foliis lentas intexere*

*mollibus hasta* ("Daphnis it was that taught men to yoke Armenian tigers beneath the car, to lead on the dances of Bacchus and entwine in soft leaves the tough spears")[45] (5.29-31) . It is Daphnis himself, says Mopsus, who actively disseminates the Bacchic-tragic poetic tradition which he merely is representative of in Theocritus. To a certain extent, Virgil's Daphnis is thereby a conduit of the *Theocritean* tradition into the Italian (pastoral) landscape, and when he dies, so does the connection to that tradition and the practice of its dissemination belied in *formosam resonare does Amaryllida silvas.* Daphnis death is, in *that* sense, the ultimate, most embodied Theocritean departure of all.

***A walk to town with Lycidas: Idyll 7 and Eclogue 9***

In its atmosphere and subject matter, the Ninth Eclogue is about as far from Theocritean pastoral as anything in the collection gets. At the same time, it contains some of the most prominent engagements with its model-text in the form of two directly translated quotations from the Idylls. This piercing simultaneity of direct interaction and radical digression lies at the heart of a poem about the agony that arises at the distance of the once-familiar.

The poem seems most closely modeled on Idyll 7. They follow the same basic premise: one party of herdsmen. on their way to a nearby town, encounters another shepherd; his name is the same in both, Lycidas (Λυκίδας). They proceed together for a stretch, trading bucolic performances. But there the similarity abruptly ends.

Idyll 7 is set on the Dodecanese island of Cos, where Theocritus is known to have spent a good deal of his life. It takes the form of a narrator, Simichidas, recollecting a time when he and a few of his friends made a trip from their home in town into the countryside to celebrate the

[45] tr. Fairclough

*Thalysia*, a local thanksgiving festival in which the “first fruits” of the year’s harvest were offered to Demeter. On the way, they bump into Lycidas, an “old goat herd” who is apparently well known for his prowess in bucolic musicianship, and, after some friendly banter. challenge one another to a song contest. Lycidas goes first; he sings about a faraway lover, praying for the man’s safety and sweetly delineating both his longing and the pleasure he nevertheless takes in lingering thoughts of his beloved. He branches out into more generic pastoral song, recollecting the myth of the herdsman Comatas, and end on a lovely profession of nostalgia for an earlier golden age in the form of an apostrophe to Comatas:

> αἴθ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐμεῦ ζωοῖς ἐναρίθμιος ὤφελς ἦμεν,
> ὥς τοι ἐγὼν ἐνόμευον ἀν᾽ ὤρεα τὰς καλὰς αἶγας
> φωνᾶς εἰσαΐων, τὺ δ᾽ ὑπὸ δρυσὶν ἢ ὑπὸ πεύκαις
> ἁδὺ μελισδόμενος κατεκέλισο, θεῖε Κομᾶτα (7.86-9).

> “I wish you had been on earth in my lifetime;
> I would have pasturned your fine goats on the hills,
> Listening to your voice, while you, divine Comatas, lying at ease
> Under oaks or pines sang your honey-sweet song” (Verity).

Simichidas responds, matching, like any good rustic singer, the themes of the preceding performance while remaining entirely original in content. He mentions himself at the beginning, saying that he, too, is besotted with longing at the moment, but proceeds for the rest of the song to recount the erotic misadventures of a fellow herdsman. Calling upon Pan to help his friend secure the attention of the boy he loves, he teases the Satyr-god with threats of quintessential rustic annoyances: “if you refuse, // may you scratch yourself all over, covered in bites,// and may you go to your rest on a bed of nettles” (Verity 7.109-10). The song ends as light-heartedly as he began, with Simichidas urging friend to “give up guard duty” at his beloved’s door and

strive for a tranquil life free of the pains of unrequited longing. Lycidas good-naturedly offers Simichidas his staff, which was wagered as a prize in the“contest,” and takes his leave of the younger men, who soon arrive at their destination, where they settle into a dazzling *locus amoenus* and enjoy their feast in high spirits.

Unlike Idyll 7, Eclogue 9 lacks any narrative frame, beginning entirely mimetically and *in media res*. These two constructions suit the subject matter of their respective poems perfectly. The evictions that have wreaked havoc in the landscape of the Eclogues occurred suddenly and without any precedent. In contrast, a seasonal festival of the sort that prompts the trip to town in Idyll 7 is a yearly recurrence which can be anticipated and planned for as well as contextualized securely within past experiences. Appropriate, too, is the fact that the first line of E9 is a question (or two, depending how the punctuation is construed),[46] and the first word is the indefinite relative *quo*. Even the characters have been dropped into the middle of an unfamiliar landscape, as it were, and are scrambling for context.

As with Meliboeus’ eviction in the first poem, and elegies for Daphnis in the fifth, the disaster in question has already taken place, and the story picks up as we begin dealing with the fallout. As Clausen puts it, bleakly but by no means inaccurately, “There is no turmoil… no hopeless flight. Only, for Moeris, the dreary routine of a menial existence embittered by memory” ( 206).

The events of the dispossessions, like the sight of the big city to Tityrus, were also, Moeris asserts, so unprecedented that there was, at the time, no cognitive framework for conceiving of them. *Numquam veriti sumus,* he says (“we never believed [it]”) (9.3). Perhaps

[46] *Quo te, Moeri pedes? an, quo via ducit, in urbem?* (“Whither, Moeris, are you walking? Is it into town, where the road leads?”)

rumors of the impending evictions circulated before they took place, but were too outrageous, according to anyone's understanding of the universe at the time, to be seriously considered. Now, the "I" of that tie is isolated from the speaker in the perfect tense, describing an outlook with which, though it is his own, he can no longer identify.

Hunter notes that, in antiquity, narrator and author were often conflated, with Simichidas taken as "a pseudonym for Theocritus"[47] and that, "if the narrating first person is not explained or embedded, then such poetry looks (auto-)biographical."[48] Virgil's self-insert as Menalcas in this poem parallels Theocritus' as Simichidas in Idyll 7. An enormous difference is that Simichidas is an active character–in fact, the narrator–of his poem, where Menalcas is never actually present and exists only in the heresy of the other characters. It is as if he can watch from afar but cannot do anything to help.

Eclogue 9 is novel in its inclusion of two more or less direct quotations of Theocritus, translated into Latin by (with every indication) Virgil himself. These translations are in many ways a microcosm of the poet's adaptive process, and its subtle but vast expressive potential: skillfully transferred from one linguistic context to another, and laden, at each occasional variance, with echoes of the Eclogues' other manifestations of distance and departure.

The first of these quotations occurs at 9.23, when Lycidas is expressing his horror at the near-death of Virgil's purported self-insert poet-landlord character; Menalcas' death, he exclaims, would also have meant the loss of his songs, songs such as–and then he launches into the Theocritus quote. A side-by-side presentation of Theocritus' Greek and Virgil's Latin is below, and one glance at it is enough to identify the overall fidelity of Virgil's translation.

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[47] See Hunter's notes to Idyll 1 in Verity's 2002 translation (96).
[48] Hunter 2002, 144.

| Theocritus: Idyll 3.3-5 | Virgil: Eclogue 9.23-5 |
|---|---|
| Τίτυρ', ἐμὶν τὸ καλὸν πεφιλημένε, βόσκε τὰς αἶγας,<br>καί ποτὶ τὰν κράναν, ἄγε, Τίτυρε: καὶ τὸν ἐνόρχαν,<br>τὸν Λιβυκὸν κνάκωνα, φυλάσσεο μή τυ κορύψῃ. | Tityre, dum redeo (brevis est via), pasce capellas,<br>et potum pastas age, Tityre, et inter agendum<br>occursare capro (cornu ferit ille) caveto. |
| *Tityrus, my wonderfully dear friend, pasture the goats,*<br>*and drive them to the spring, Tityrus; and the billy,*<br>*the tawny Libyan–watch out, lest he butt you.* | *Tityrus, till I return–the way is short–pasture the goats,*<br>*and once they're fed, drive them, Tityrus, to drink, and in driving,*<br>*beware of coming up against the billy–he butts with his horn.* |

Not only does the Latin say the exact same things in the exact same order, many of the words are cognates of those used by Theocritus (βόσκω and *pasco*, ἄγω and *ago*), and are expressed in parallel syntax. The two major differences between the two versions, namely, words the speaker uses to butter up Tityrus to agree to his request, and the description of the billy goat, add distinctive color to Virgil's Latin without ultimately changing th. It is this, according to Lycidas, the tasteful adaptation and dissemination of the Greek tradition, which Menalcas embodies, and which was so nearly lost to the pastoral world with his death.

The second quotation, spoken by Moeris, Lycidas' companion, is very different, both in the context in which it is spoken and in its degree of correspondence to its referent, which is far lower. In this case, the Theocritus in question is from Polyphemus' appeal to Galatea in Idyll 11:

> ἀλλ' ἀφίκευσο ποθ' ἁμέ, καὶ ἑξεῖς οὐδὲν ἔλασσον,
> τὰν γλαυκὰν δὲ θάλασσαν ἔα ποτὶ χέρσον ὀρεχθεῖν:
> ἅδιον ἐν τὤντρῳ παρ' ἐμὶν τὰν νύκτα διαξεῖς.
> ἐντὶ δάφναι τηνεί, ἐντὶ ῥαδιναὶ κυπάρισσοι,
> ἔστι μέλας κισσός, ἔστ' ἄμπελος ἁ γλυκύκαρπος,
> ἔστι ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ, τό μοι ἁ πολυδένδρεος Αἴτνα
> λευκᾶς ἐκ χιόνος ποτὸν ἀμβρόσιον προίητι.

τίς και τῶνδε θάλασσαν ἔχειν καὶ κύμαθ᾽ἕλοιτο; (Id. 11.42-49).

But please, come, at any time, to me,
and you will lack for nothing,
if you leave the gray sea to roar on the beach:
you'll find greater pleasure with me in the cave at night.
There, there are bay trees, there are slender cypresses,
there is dark ivy, there is the grape vine, bearing sweet fruit,
there is cold water, which dense-wooded Etna sends forth
from her white snows, an ambrosial drink.

In introducing his quotation, Moeris claims authorship of these lines (as opposed to attributing it to Menalcas, as Lycidas did), but kicks himself for his faulty memory. Indeed, in Moeris' version, the premise of the wooing Cyclops is maintained, but the terms in which he seeks to tempt Galatea are altogether different:

Huc ades, O Galatea; quis est nam ludus in undis?
hic ver purpureum, varios hic flumina circum
fundit humus flores, hic candida populus antro
imminet et lentae texunt umbracula vites.
huc ades; insani feriant sine litora fluctus (9.39-43).

"Come hither, O Galatea; for what fun is there among the waves?
here is the purple spring-time, here, around the streams,
the earth pours out varied flowers,
here, a white poplar overhangs the cave,
and the slow vines weave little shadows."

In contrast to the "streams of Etna," we have–surprise–*flumina,* which sound, from their subsequent description as watering the earth and the flowers, exactly like the agricultural trenches described by Highet which Meliboeus draws attention to at 1.55.[49] There could be no more effective indication of a transfer in setting from Theocritus' Sicily to Virgil's Mantua.

But what, exactly, are we to infer that Moeris is "forgetting" here? Has he altogether misremembered the details of his Theocritean inspiration, hence the change in setting, or is there

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[49] See page 10.

simply more that he meant to say? Perhaps it is something between the two, a loss of not only the memory of the pastoral legacy, but the protocol for disseminating those traditions into a new setting. The singers of Eclogue 9 are mourning the loss not only of their land, but of its once-seamless literary-inflected thirdspace.

# Chapter 3. The *umbrae*

## *An enigmatic conclusion*

The final lines of the tenth Eclogue (and thereby of the whole collection) are striking in their own right, as well as in the departure which they constitute, tonally and subjectively, from the immediately preceding material. They also feature the surprising and final transformation of a motif ubiquitous throughout the Eclogues, and the bucolic world in general: that of the *shade*. Most of Eclogue 10 takes the form of an elegiac tribute to the poet's late friend Cornelius Gallus, himself a prominent poet of that same genre who appears to have been a great influence upon as well as friend of Virgil;[50] he died in 26 BCE, in personal and political disgrace, following an ill-fated entanglement with a prominent actress.[51] In memorializing him, Virgil adapts extensively from Theocritus' elegy for Daphnis in Idyll 1,[52] casting Gallus as a tragic lover dying nobly as he calls upon the bucolic world to remember him and his songs. Then, Virgil concludes the apostrophe definitively, and announces the end of the music-making event in which this–as well as all of the preceding–poems have been staged: *surgamus: solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra, // iuniperi gravis umbra; nocent et frugibus umbrae. // ite domum saturnae, venit Hesperus, ite capellae* ("let us arise; the shade tends to be heavy for those singing, the shade of the juniper is heavy, and the shadows harm the fruits, Go on homeward, having been cultivated–the evening star is coming–go on, goats") (10.75-8).

There is much to say about these lines and the final departure which, upon so many levels, they enact. The effect of encroaching darkness accomplished by the repetition of the word

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[50] See Ross, 1975. *Backgrounds on Augustan Poetry* for an in-depth explanation of the significance of Gallus influence upon VIrgil and his contemporaries.
[51]"Cornēlius Gallus, Gāius." n.d. Oxford Reference. Accessed April 4, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095639658.
[52] "The structure and pessimistic tone of the Eclogue recall Thyrsis' Daphnis dirge" (Coleman 294).

*umbra* and the description of the descending twilight, especially in contrast to the imagery of rebirth and spring and continuity in the preceding lines' assurances of the endurance of Gallus' legacy, enacts a tangible chill upon the reader, both in the sense of a breath of cooler temperature, and of a stirring of unease. *Ite, ite,* says the poet, and we must move on.

But what could be the explanation for this abrupt shift, and what ought we to make of the Eclogues concluding on a note so cryptic and concerning?Has it been foreshadowed, so to speak, by any of the preceding material?

***The polysemy of umbra[e]***

There are other words and terminology for "shade" in the Eclogues, but I would like to focus on *umbra* because I believe that, in his use of this particular polysemic term, Virgil exploits the association of its other senses. If we broadly sort that polysemy into two categories, one, the benign and pleasant–i.e., the shade from the sun that facilitates a l*ocus amoenus*, and the sinister and threatening on the other hand, which includes the sense of the darkness of night and of a ghost or spirit (and, quantitatively, the realms of the dead), it is possible to trace how, throughout the Eclogues, Virgil will mingle these sense and their associations so that, by the time of the world's triple repetition in the final line, he has irrevocably imbued the term in its first designation with the sense of the second just as he has introduced a pre-existing but never yet associated darkness to the *loci amoeni* of the pastoral world.

"Shade," as in the shadow cast by a tree or rock or grove in the sunlight, is a ubiquitous and irreducible feature of the pastoral landscape, by no means beginning with Virgil. Arising, as it does, from a tree or other vegetation, shade often goes hand in hand with the presence of a water source, a boon for herds and herdsman, which together constitutes a place of shelter.

Nearly every instance of bucolic song-performance in the Eclogues takes place in such a spot, a *locus amoenus,* which is lauded as such in prelude to the singing. Indeed, the idea of the *locus amoenus* stretches back beyond even Theocritus; the opening of Plato's *Phaedrus* seems to have been a particularly influential occurrence.[53]

The primary meaning, besides shade-shadow, is, of course, "ghost" or "spirit," that which is left of a person no longer living. The plural *umbrae* can be used as a metonym for the underworld; in fact, it is in this sense that Virgil would later deploy it as the final word of the *Aeneid*, when Turnus' indignant soul "flees beneath the shades."[54] As a sort of in-between, in both sense and valence, of these two, *umbra/-ae* can also be a poetic metonym for darkness and night, more or less synonymous with *tenebra/-ae.*

***Precedents, Part I: Eclogue I***

The word *umbra* appears 16 times throughout the Eclogues, in 6 of the poems; additionally, the adjective *umbrosus* and the diminutive *umbraculum* each occur once, in Eclogues 2 and 9, respectively. (There are no uses of the verb *umbra,* which Virgil does later employ in the *Aeneid*.) With the exception of E8, *umbra* occurs more than once in each of the poems in which it is found.

The first two instances, as discussed *ad nauseam* in Chapter 1, occur in the first Eclogue: once in line 4, when Meliboeus so evocatively indicates Tityrus' situation *lentus in umbra,* "at ease in the shade," and once at the very end, with Tityrus now speaking, as he concludes his invitation to stay the night with the enigmatic and sobering acknowledgement of the "shadows falling from the high hills." The first time, at 1.4, it refers to the shade of the *locus amoenus*

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[53] Plato *Phadrus* 230 b-d
[54] *Aeneid* 12.952

under which Tityrus is situated, acting as a kind of anaphora for the more detailed *patulae… sub tegmine fagi* in the opening line. While that initial description is entirely pleasant, innocuous, and unambiguously representative of the quintessential *locus amoenus,* by the time it is referred back to as an *umbra* in the fifth line, massive disruption has already rocked the landscape in the form of Meliboeus' mention of his–and so many others'--impending exile. Hence, even though *lentus in umbra* should refer to the exact same "reality" as *patulae recumbans sub tegmine fagi,* because our understanding has, in the meantime, undergone such a radical shift, we cannot help but read the latter, ostensibly anaphoric description differently.

Virgil's choice of the specific term *umbra* in this opening passage of *Eclogue* 1 exploits this word's destabilizing tendency to the utmost. For Tityrus, indeed, is both "at ease" in the comfort of the shade *and* amidst the turmoil, the darkness, the death, the lately and the soon to be departed–in other words, the *umbrae* that have flooded the world around him. The preposition *in,* as opposed to the *sub* of the preceding lines, furthers the sense of the *umbra* as a pervasive, atmospheric entity, not a self-contained feature of the landscape. Thus, in its very first usage in the Eclogues, *umbra* has already assumed a duality whereby one, straightforward sense of the word has acquired the connotations of its more somber referents, paralleling the manner in which the pastoral sphere has been charged with an unprecedented darkness.

In the final lines, *umbrae* seems right away to indicate something not only other, but altogether more sinister than, the shade of a tree. But what, exactly, is so unsettling about this description? For one thing, it leapfrogs off of the more obvious disruptions in the preceding lines, which is considerable. Indeed, *umbra* is mentioned the line after an intrusive disaster at the opening of the first poem, too, but the difference is that there, the two things are explicitly being

set up as a contrast. Here, the two situations are joined by *et,* and thus presented as being part of the same phenomenon. The smoking roofs and falling shadows go hand in hand.

The verb *fumant* has occurred once before, in the exact same form and metrical position, in line 42. There, it is the altars which smoke for the *divus iuvens,* a reference with no shortage of its own destabilizing connotations. Though they are not seemingly otherwise related, the glaring similarity in morphology prompts the association of the two moments, and thus, of the policial, the severe and tumultuous and magisterial, with settled urban life.

One other thing to note is the presence of the hills, which has also not been heretofore remarked upon in any of the preceding landscape ekphrasis. They are by no means a surprising element of a generic pastoral landscape. Indeed, the archetypal settings of Sicily and Arcadia are quintessentially mountainous. But in Eclogue 1, Virgil has, as discussed, done much to suggest that we are not in either of those places, but in his homeland of Mantua; in other words, in an area without any prominent elevation–certainly nothing that could be described as *altus.* Coleman claims that this "reveals V. is not thinking of his native Mantuan plain,"[55] but surely, this has not been the first indication that we are in a landscape synthesized from the "real" and "imagined." With the hills, we could, as before, be dealing with a genuine thirdspace, in which the improbability, or rather the inconsistency, of the topography is beside the point. What is most salient, to our purposes, in Coleman's observation, is the fact that the presence of the hills is a revelation, not something that was to be readily gleaned from the preceding, seemingly exhaustive descriptions of the setting-landscape, and one that occurs at the last possible moment in the poem. It is not just a new element that is introduced in the form of the *altis…montibus* but

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[55] His note to 1.83 (89)

one that explicitly overpowers the surrounding landscape. Even if this only occurs on the "psychological" level of thirdspace, the effects, of disruption and nervous awe, persist.

***Delineating a textual locus amoenus***

A subtle, outrageously elegant maneuver is accomplished with these positionings. The *umbrae* at the outer "edges" of the poem thus overarch and *encompass* it, like the *patulae...tegmine fagi* under which Titytus lies; the *umbrae* create a canopy which *casts* an *umbra,* and what takes place beneath it, as beneath the foliage of a *locus amoenus,* is, in the form of the rest of the poem, the activity of bucolic song-making. The "shadows" at either end of the poem delineate the *locus amoenus* in which its activity will take place. Virgil is not content to confine this literary architecture to a single poem. By not only mentioning, but so heavily *emphasizing* (by way of the triple repetition of the word itself and the break in tone from the preceding lines) the *umbrae* in the final lines, he literally extends the canopy-delineating-umbra phenomenon over the entire collection.

This is only observable, like the limitations of any space, once you have passed through it and stepped outside it. We only gain this perspective on the world of the Eclogues once we have taken our leave of it, and are categorically unaware of the teleology of our experience while we are actually undergoing it. It is a final iteration of self-separation through looking back and knowing better; defamiliarizing, for whatever it is worth, past memory and ontology and experience. It wasn't what you thought it was while you were experiencing it, and now that you know, you will never be able to return to the former headspace. While we were inside it, we thought that the shade of the *locus amoenus* was indefinite, encompassing and constituting the

whole world. Now, we step outside of it and see its limits, see it as it is, a self-contained sphere, a finite island of relief in the harsh, bright sea of experience.

***Precedents, Part II: The "Inner Poems"***

A certain "problematization" of the motif of the shadow can be traced throughout the other poems in which the word appears, as well. In Eclogue 2, *umbra* occurs three times–or, more accurately, twice, in addition to one instance of the adjectival *umbrosus.* Its first appearance, in fact, is in the latter form, during the frame-narrator's description of the location in which Corydon takes refuge to sing of his longing; In other words it is, once again, the key component in an opening sketch of a *locus amoenus*. In the expected pastoral context, this shady grove would constitute a relief for Corydon, just as we might expect his forthcoming singing to serve, as it so explicitly does in the corresponding Idyll, as a balm for the aches of unrequited love. But just as his singing brings him no appreciable satisfaction, Corydon, although he occupies this nominally cool and shady spot, cannot seem to escape the burning heat of either the sun itself or the passion which it symbolizes. In light of how often, throughout the poem, he proceeds to remark upon, even complain about, that heat, one could easily forget that he does not actually appear to have moved, in real time, from his situation in the shade. As far as the mixed valences of *umbra* are concerned, the fact of the shade remains, but it is rendered, in context, entirely bereft of its normal properties of relief; the circumstances which it indicates are unchanged, but its connotations are subverted.

There are two more instances of *umbra* in E2, and in both, the "shade" is summoned as a rhetorical foil to Corydon's burning passion in its continuing correspondence to the merciless midday heat. At 2.10, Corydon lists examples of all forms of life seeking relief from the heat,

first among them, *pecudes umbras et frigora captant* ("the herds seek the shades and the cool"), while he (figuratively, we can only assume, since, again, the narrator informed us moments ago that he is actually singing *from* his own *umbrosus locus amoenus*), "seeks [Alexis'] footsteps alone under the burning sun (*sole ardenti*)." Here, ironically, it is the perfectly pastoral phenomenon of erotic yearning which precipitates Corydon's departure from another quintessential generic behavior, the instinctive seeking of the shade.

Again, at 2.67, Corydon's sentiments have put him at odds with the rhythms of nature: *sol crescentis decedens // duplicat umbras; me tamen urit amor…* ("the sun, descending, doubles the shadows; nevertheless, love burns me"). Here, as at the close of the first poem, is an interesting instance in of *umbras,* in the plural, referring simultaneously to the shadows of specific entities (something which the suh, does, indeed, quite visibly affect the size of), and, in its metonymic capacity, to the darkness of night, which is, indeed, what is taking place with *sol decedens.* Through that present participle, as well as the continuous aspect of *duplicat,* it is as though we witness the evolution of the distinct "shadows" into the twilight, as well as the subtle shift–indeed, *duplication*–of one sense of the word into another–taking place in real time. And all the while–rather unwholesomely, one cannot help but feel–Corydon's passion has no regard for these movements, for the usual transferences and cycles of nature.

The next use of *umbra* is in Eclogue 5, where it occurs, again, three times. And again–a pattern is emerging–the first instance is in the "setup" of the poem, before the narrative singing which constitutes the bulk of it begins. Mopsus, one of the poem's herdsmen, mentions the shadows as he indicates the possible places where the proposed bucolic exchange might take place: *sive sub incertas Zephyris motantibus umbras, // sive antro potius succedimus* ("...whether

we should go under the shadows, uncertain in the movements of the west wind, or rather in the cave") (5.5-6). While *umbras* here does rather unambiguously indicate the shade of trees, as the alternative *locus amoenus* to the shelter of the cave, the expression as a whole is specially charged, in large part due to the modifier *incertas,* which serves as a lovely, arresting descriptor of the manner in which the shadows of the leaves shift in the breeze. To outright modify this word, which has been so exquisitely exploited in its polysemy to the effect of ambiguity and destabilization, with the adjective "uncertain," "shifting" is an electric touch.

As in Eclogue 2, there are, after a single occurrence in the opening frame, two more instances of *umbra* in the fifth poem. At line 40, towards the end of his elegy for Daphnis, Menalcas bids his fellow mourners, *spargite humum foliis, inducite fontibus umbras, // pastores–mandat fieri sibi talia Daphnis* ("strew the earth with leaves, shroud the springs with shadows, o shepherds–Daphnis commands that these things be done for him"). What, functionally, does it *mean* to "shroud the springs with shades?" Coleman parses it as being done "presumably with branches and foliage" (164), noting that the the gesture, is not altogether an unprecedented one: "at the festival of the *fontanalia* each October, *in fontes coronas iaciunt et pateos coronant* (Var. L. 6.22) ["they cast garlands into the springs and crown the wells"]" (ibid).

In addition to, as Coleman points out, transposing the context of the of this ritual from festive to funerary, it is not the "garlands" of greenery themselves which Daphnis indicates, but the shade which they will cast. The idea is not that the springs will be adorned, or protected, but that they will be obscured and darkened. Additionally, one would imagine that the "springs" are not an area *lacking* for the shade of foliage in the first place, as the presence of the latter so often indicates that of the former. Daphnis' wish that the "shade" in these places be increased in order

to accomplish a gesture of mourning suggests a certain pathology inherent in the shade's excess, which could even be read as precipitating its characterization as *gravis* at the end of the 10th poem. Menaclsu, in satisfying symmetry, gets the last *umbra* of the poem. In the midst of his narration of the deification of Daphnis, he describes, in apostrophe, the quaint and earnest pastoral offerings which Daphnis will receive …*ante focum, // si frigus erit, si messis, in umbra* ("before the hearth, if it is cold, and if at harvest-time, in the shade") (5.70). Here, the operative property of the *umbra* is its cool temperature, which renders it a relief in the hottest season corresponding to that of the warm heart in a chill.

In E7, once again, one of the three *umbrae* occurs in the "frame," and two within the ensuing herdsman's songs. The ekphrasis of the *locus amoenus* at this poem's particular opening, which recollects Idyll 6, is an especially lovely one:

> Forte sub arguta consederat ilice Daphnis,
> compulerantque greges Cordyon et Thyrsis in unum,
> Thyrsis ovis, Corydon distenas lacte capellae,
> ambo florentes aetatibus, Arcades ambo,
> et cantare pares et respondere parati (7.1-4).
>
> "By chance, Daphnis was seated beneath the whispering ilex,
> and the shepherds Corydon and Thyrsis had driven their flocks together,
> Thyrsis his sheep, Corydon the she-goats, swollen with milk,
> both blooming with youth, Arcadians both,
> ready, as equals, to sing and to reply."

The narrator, Meliboeus, is then invited by Daphnis to take a pause in his labors to join in his idyllic repose: *si quid cessare potes, requiesce sub umbra* ("if you are at all able to pause, rest beneath the shade") (7.10). In the deixis of the scene that rounds out the invitation, Virgil accomplishes a notable sketch of a geographically syncretized thirdspace, as Daphnis, the

"Arcadian," indicates how *hic viridis tenera praetexit harundine ripas* ("here, the Mincius interweaves its green banks with the soft reeds") (7.13-14). Meliboeus, the articulation of whose name in the vocative case powerfully recounts the troubles of the first poem–indeed, no internal contradiction precludes them from being the same person at different moments–is hesitant to comply, out of concern for his practical duties. The concern for the new-weaned lambs becomes all the more poignant if the reader conflates this Meliboeus with the one in Eclogue 1, who so brutally loses the beloved young of his flock during his flight, and this expression of the obligations of labor resonates strongly with the implication of earnest economic hardship that Virgil has sown throughout the poems.

Nevertheless, Meliboeus elects to join in the leisure and the song exchange, stating, plainly, *posthabui tamen illorun mea seria ludo* ("I valued my duties less than their sport") (7.17). Meliboeus choosing to partake in the pleasures of the song contest, to *requiesce[re] sub umbra,* is "bad" for him inasmuch as it disrupts his attendance to his livelihood. The disharmony here, the inherent tension between these two modes of pastoral life–its labors and responsibilities on the one hand, and the diversions of the metonymic "shade" on the other–is, in retrospect, a clear example for the vague assertion of the tenth poem's final lines.

Corydon, who has been the initial speaker in the poem's stichomythia, speaks of shade, alongside other boons of nature, in one of his quatrains as if in prayer, invoking these elements' protection and offering them thanksgiving: *muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba, // et quae vos rara viridis tegit arbutus umbra, // solstitium pecori defendite* ("O mossy springs and grass softer than sleep and the green hedge which veils you with scattered shade, stave off the midsummer sun from my herds") (7.45-7). In some of the Eclogues' most breathtaking imagery, Corydon

invokes the salvific properties of three defining features of a *locus amoenus*: water (the *fontes*); grass, in its dual capacity as a comfortable seat for the shepherd and sustenance for his flock; and shade from the sun. These not only offer exquisite, almost aesthetic pleasure, they are actively salutary, for the heat of high summer from which they constitute an escape is dangerous to both humans and animals. Lest we pigeonhole the *umbra* and the time the herdsman-singer spends under it as fundamentally unwholesome to him, Corydon's invocation serves as a vivid reminder of its loveliness and indispensability.

The final *umbra* in E7 occurs, neatly, in one of Thyrsis' responses, as he is lamenting a pattern of degeneration in the landscape which he attributes to a lover's absence: *aret ager, vitio moriens sitit aeris herba, // Liber pampineas invidit collibus umbras* ("the field is dry the grass thirsts, dying by the fault of the air; Liber begrudges the hills the vine-leaf shadows…") (7.57-8). Commentators are quick to note the parallel mentions (and correspondent metrical positions) of *herba…umbra[s]* in these and the previously discussed lines. While in the latter they are in the opposite state of well-being, and the context is of an ultimately unhappy sentiment, the grass and the shade are themselves still positive entities; their absence, indeed, epitomizes the general state of trouble.

The one instance of *umbra* in Eclogue 8 also occurs in its *locus amoenus*-delineating narrative frame (although here it follows the distinctive and much puzzled over dedication to Pollio, which occupies the first few lines): *frigida vix caelo noctis decesserat umbra, // cum ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba, incumbens tereti Damon sic coepit olivae* ("scarce had the cool shadow of night departed the sky, when the dew on the tender grass was most pleasing to the flock, Damon, leaning on an olive staff, began thus…") (8.14-16). It is in these lines, Clausen

notes, that “pastoral order is reestablished after the interruption of [the dedication]” (244). The *umbra* is the first entity mentioned in this simultaneous setting and reasserting of the pastoral scene, but here, it does not, as in other, comparable introductions, refer to the arboreal shade of a *locus amoenus,* indicating instead the darkness of the receding night. While, as mentioned, that in and of itself is a standalone possible meaning of umbra, if that is what we are dealing with here, it is uncharacteristically redundant of Virgil to include the possessive *noctis* (“of night”). The presence of the modifier *frigora* further encourages an interpretation of *umbra* in its first sense, as that particular adjective has occurred several times by this point in the Eclogues in describing the shade in contrast to the heat of the sun. The expression “the shadow of night-time” thus reads best when its imagery is taken at face values. This summons the lovely implication of night-time as almost a “space” alike to one delineated by a patch of shade.

Intriguingly, *umbra* is here paired once again with *herba,* occupying the parallel position in an adjacent line. Here, too, as in 7.45-7 and 57-8, there is mention of water–in this case, the dew (*ros*)--forming another grouping of the three key components of a *locus amoenus*.

Finally, in tracing mentions of *umbrae* throughout these “inner” poems, we come to the ninth, which contains two uses of the word. Fascinatingly, both of these occur in either oblique or explicit quotations of other poems: in line 20, Lycidas references the moment in E5 where Daphnis bids the herdsmen to “shroud the springs,” and, later, the diminutive *umbraculum* occurs in of Moeris’ attempted quotation-translations of Theocritus. In this poem which displays a kind of post-pastoral pastoral existence, epitomized by an exchange of songs under radically altered circumstances, it is poignant that the only appearances of the *locus-amoenus* making

entity of the shade are to be found in the speakers' memory, not in their own experience. They certainly do not conduct their own exchange in such a setting.

***The final departure***

Coleman, Clausen, and others make the connection between the final lines of the tenth poem and a moment in the sixth book of Lucretius, which reads,

> Deinde videre licet quam multae sint homini res
> acriter infesto sensu spurcaeque gravesque.
> arboribus primum certis gravis umbra tributa
> usque adeo, capitis faciant ut saepe dolores,
> siquis eas subter iacuit prostratus in herbis (Lucr. 6.781-85).

"Again, you may see how many things have for man a violently noxious sensation, being loathsome and dangerous. Firstly, certain trees have a shade so dangerous that they often cause headache, if one has lain beneath stretched out on the herbage.[56]"

In this passage, Lucretius surveys various elements in the natural world which are categorically harmful to human beings. For any element of the pastoral cosmos to be categorically *gravis* to its native "singers" runs entirely counter to the "sympathy of nature" phenomenon that pervades the genre. In announcing that it is time for the singing to stop, and bidding us to *surgamus* and depart, Virgil not only urges departure from the pastoral sphere, but implicitly announces the cessation of pastorality itself. The Lucretius "quotation" only confirms those implications, because, as noted above, it derives from a passage discussing, at length, elements of nature which are categorically toxic to humans; in this particular example, the activity through which this harm is incurred is, to a reader at the end of the Eclogues, a particular familiar one: lying under the foliage of a tree.

[56] Tr. Smith, 2006

By alluding to a scientific work that purports to do nothing less than describe the nature of all things in the most universal and objective terms, Virgil unmistakably signals that we have departed from the *res* of the bucolic world and the principles on which it turns, and are back in the "real world," a universe as complex and indifferent as can be. A world conceived through the lens of stoicism, as is in *De rerum natura,* is the opposite of a landscape in which the trees and streams and wild animals behave uncharacteristically in order to mourn with humans when they are sad. In the Lucretian cosmos, not only does the natural world not sympathize with human beings in their distress, it is as often as not the *cause* of that distress.

The mention of the shade's deleterious effect on the fruits, *frugibus*, constitutes another touch of sobering realism. Ensuring that plants receive enough sun (and not too much darkness or cold) is a basic, common-sense consideration. Virgil has shown us, subtly but persistently, throughout the Eclogues, that his herdsman and country-dwellers really *are* workers, beholden in their efforts not only to concerns of personal subsistence, but, more often than not, to the authority of others, because they are enslaved or otherwise socio-economically subordinate. In such a stark hierarchical context, the eventualities cautioned against in these lines–lingering too long in the shade, incurring some sickness or injury, damage to agricultural products, the approach of night-time–are all sobering threats. An enslaved laborer's time was, needless to say, not his own. To remain *lentus in umbra* longer than deemed appropriate by the overseeing authority would, indeed, be "grave" for a singer who also happened to be a rural slave because he could be punished for such activity with great bodily harm.

Perhaps "the shade" is not good for this art form because it prefers melodramatic extremes, as opposed to ambiguity, syncretism, overlap, the middle ground. Pastoral song cannot

flourish in a world where these boundaries are so blurred. Its conceit relies on severe isolation, almost dissociation, and is not sustainable because in the real world–in the real countryside–things can be boring, things can overlap, as soon as you know what a town IS, especially from having gone there, you do not see the country the same way; as soon as there is knowledge of the other there is association and overlap, even if it is unconscious, and once-familiar, as a default, is lost.

**Conclusion**

The preceding pages have been a joyfully-undertaken, if not ultimately perfectly polished, to conduct a reading which traces some of the variously formed instances of "departure" which occur throughout Virgil's Eclogues. In Chapter 1, I sought to investigate ways in which the first poem acts programmatically to simultaneously introduce its audience to, and then alienate it from, the pastoral world. I argued that, by commencing his collection with so explicit a discussion of the disasters of the land confiscations, Virgil introduces a darkness to the pastoral landscape that will be apparent throughout the succeeding poems where they might not have been so obvious without a reading of the first poem. In addition to depicting a very literal departure in the story of Meliboeus' flight, the poem also accomplishes more esoteric "departures" in the manner in which it alienates both readers and characters from the landscape which they once straight-forwardly inhabited.

My second chapter was an attempt to examine the relationship of the second, fifth, and ninth poems to their Theocritean models, and to account for the distancing which Virgil cultivates in his intertextuality. Paradoxically, it is in some of the closest tributes to his Hellenistic model that some of Virgil's starkest departures are made, which increases the Eclogues' overall ethos of a world beloved but irrecoverable. Finally, I concluded with a brief philological overview of Virgil's use of the multivalent word *umbra* throughout the Eclogues in a ploy to explicate the enigmatic and deeply affecting character of the poem's concluding lines, arguing that, with his strategic placements of this word throughout the poems, he enacts a meta-literary *locus amoenus* of which the reader only becomes aware once she has passed through its limits.

Throughout the conduct of this inquiry, the spirit was more than willing, but the flesh often found itself short on time, and it is not lost on mre how much more there is to be said about each of the topics broached here. On the bright side, I am excited at the array of possibilities for further investigation, which I hope will be acted upon, by myself or others, in the near future. For one, I believe there is much more to be done with the study of Thirdspace and its application not only in further study of the Eclogues and pastoral poetry, but in other areas of Classical Studies as well. I do wish that I were better familiar with Theocritus and the Greek(-language) pastoral tradition in its own right, as well as for the purposes of more intelligently comprehending Virgil's relationship to it, which is a topic well-treated, but still deserving of much more attention.

In conclusion, I appreciate the indulgence of my elementary efforts in engaging with so beloved and well-studied text, and my ultimate hope is that it has prompted at least a whiff of fresh appreciation for the beauty and humanity of Virgil's poems, whether because of a detail I pointed out, or during a return to the text prompted by the impulse to correct me.

## Appendix. A translation of Eclogue 1

Meliboeus:
Oh, Tityus, lying under the vault of the spreading beech
you study your woodland song on the tender reed-pipe;
we leave behind the edges of our homeland and the sweet fields–
we flee our homeland; you, Tityrus, at ease in the shadow,
teach the woods to sing back "lovely Amaryllis."

TItyrus:
Oh Meliboeus, a god has made me these leisures;
at least, he will always be a god to me; at his altar
some tender lamb from my flock shall often fall.
He has licensed my cows to roam, as you see,
and me, to play what I will on the rustic pipe.

M:
Indeed, I don't begrudge you! I marvel, rather:
all throughout the country, in every quarter,
things are churned up. See!, I myself
am chasing my goats along, heartsick; and this one, oh Tityrus,
I can hardly lead. Just now, back there amidst the clustered hazels–
*twins*, the hope of the herd, ah…!--after laboring bitterly,
she left them on the bare flint.
Many times–if only my mind hadn't been clumsy–
this evil was foretold to us, by the oak trees, struck from the sky…
But anyway: tell me, Tityrus, who this god is.

T.
That city they call "Rome–" oh, Meliboeus, silly me,
I thought it was like *our* "city," to which we shepherds
are accustomed to bring down the tender lambs of our flocks.
As puppies are like dogs, new kids like their mothers–
that's how I used to compare big things to small.
But among other cities, *this* one has raised up its head
as much as cypresses do amidst the lazy gelder-roses.

M.
And what sort of business was the cause of your seeing Rome?

T.
Freedom! who, though late, attended to a lazybones,
when his beard was falling ever whiter from the clippers—
she attended to me nevertheless and, after a long time, arrived,
now that I belong to Amaryllis, and Galatea has quit me.
For, I will confess, while I was Galatea's,
there was no hope of freedom nor concern for savings.
Although many a victim left my enclosures
and many a soft cheese was pressed for the ungrateful town,
never yet did I return home with my hand heavy with coins.

M.
I wondered, Amaryllis, why you called, sorrowing, upon the gods,
for whose sake you suffered your apples hang in the tree;
Tityrus was gone from here. The very pines, O Tityrus,
the very springs, these very vines cried out for you.

T.
What was I to do? I could neither escape from slavery
nor address the presiding deities elsewhere.
*There*, I beheld that young man, Meliboeus,
for whom our altars smoke twice-six days a year,
there he gave, at once, an answer to my pleading:
"Pasture, as before, the cows, boys; rear the bulls."

M.
Lucky old man, so the lands will remain yours
and enough for you, although there's bare stone everywhere
and swampland chokes the pastures with murky weed.
Strange fodders won't tempt the lambing mothers,
nor the wicked contagions of a neighboring herd do them harm.
Lucky old man, here, amidst known streams
and sacred springs, you'll chase the cool shade;
on this side, as ever, the neighbor's hedgerow,
having fed its willow-flower to the Hyblaian bees,
will persuade you with a languid hum to enter sleep;

on that side, under the high rock, the leaf-trimmer will sing to the breezes,
and meanwhile, neither the hoarse wood-pigeons
nor the turtle-dove will cease to moan your cares from the airy elm.

T.
Sooner, I say, flying deer shall graze in the ether,
and the seas will leave fish naked on the shore;
sooner, with the boundaries of both transgressed,
shall a Parthian exile drink from the Arar, or a German from the Tigris,
than the face of that man shall fade from my heart.

M.
But we, the others, must go away from here–we will go, some to the parched Africans,
some to Scythia and the clay-tearing Oaxes
or to the Britons, utterly rent from the whole globe.
See!, will I ever, after a long time, marvel, as I look
at my native borders, the sod-built roof of my poor little hut,
a couple ears of corn–oh, my kingdom! after how long?

A feckless soldier will hold these cherished fallow-lands,
a barbarian these crops. See, how Discord has begotten
piteous citizens: for such men we've sown our fields!
Graft now, Meliboeus, the pear-trees, place, in a row, the vines.
Onward, my own, a once happy herd–onward, you goats.
No longer will I, stretched out in the green grotto, see you
a ways off, hanging off a brambly cliff;
I will sing no  more songs; no more, as I keep watch, oh goats,
will you crop the flowering trefoil and bitter willows.

T.
But you might rest here tonight,
upon the green leaves; there are ripe apples for us,
soft chestnuts and an abundance of pressed milk,
and now, far off, all the roofs of the houses are smoking
and greater shadows are falling from the high hills.

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