

Virgil, *Eclogue* 9: Valleydiction

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Goodbye your hens running in and out of the white house,
Your absent-minded goats along the road, your black cows...¹

Like *Eclogues* 1, 3, and 5, *Eclogue* 9 is a dramatized encounter without narratorial or authorial mediation. Like 3 and 5, the poem scripts dialogue introduced by an opening question and answer. The exchanges in 3 moved toward a contest in song, judged a draw by the umpire called in as he came by; the players in 5 moved to a handy grotto to swap songs before swapping precious gifts. *Eclogue* 7 was like 3 in that the preliminaries set up a song-contest, but it was like 5 in that it is presented, at least finally, as a tribute to one individual. Where both singers in 5 sang songs for the memory of Daphnis, 7 recounted the amoebaeian triumph of Corydon through the narration of Meliboeus, framing the vivid interchanges as *his* tour de force of evocation. The *First Eclogue* found no place for song, as Meliboeus left the valley forever, and Tityrus told of his own contrasting luck.² Poem 9 echoes each of these varied ‘mimes’ in one way and another, most obviously in matching its moment to poem 1, as a trip between country and city arising from irruption of veteran settlers on to confiscated allocations of confiscated land in the triumviral settlement imposed on Italy after Philippi—precious little singing finds a place on this occasion, too. Yet 9 does contrive to glorify an absent master-singer, and this absent master-singer’s singing, in the form of intermittent snatches of remembered lyrics revived by the participants, and this comes across as a variation on 5’s concert for Daphnis and 7’s re-staging of Corydon’s victory. In that 9 homes, at some level, on competition in the exchange of songs, if not improvised original songs, it shadows, to a degree, the format of 3.³

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To put this more assertively, the reading of the sequence of 'odd' *Eclogues* as a (however unintegrated) interwoven series suggests a field of possibilities with which 9 is billed as likely to chime, from which it is programmed to deviate, beyond which it presumptively o'erleaps. Since dramatic scripts require interpretative direction, and fleeting scripts minimize confirmatory development and amplification (9 is shortest of the 'odd' poems, and outdone only by *Eclogue* 4), the *Eclogue* should be read for its productivity as a 'kit' that programmes, fuels and launches an instance of interpersonal exchange of language. Granted that literary, textual, and cultural transcoding of the instance as exemplary provocation for reflection and exchange within an audience motivated the writing of the poem and arises from any particular performance of it; but this text is offered up to competing construal and interpretative appropriation. Literary allusion (see 5. Appendix), metapoetics (esp. section 4), or determination through the manipulations of a specific close reading, need not close down active reading. Just hold to the pragmatics of intercommunication between the speakers—voices, characters, call them what we will—and the potential for this poem's interchange to stimulate divergence and dispute will be activated. For there is no monopoly of rightful interpretation within the pragmatics of conversation; only and ever shifting catenations of anticipation, implicature and power-play—interactivity to be explored, but never authorised, assigned, or settled. We all know from talk with and between others that they generate rival accounts of what has been transacted, agreed, settled, misunderstood, inflicted, perpetrated; accounts which can only be brought together for confrontation or conciliation by renewed conversation that generates further need for fresh reassessment... Virgil's script instigates difference first within its dialogue and then within its interpretation—but we shall find that its telling last gesture is the suspension and indefinite *deferral* of finality.

Drawing on the scholarly tradition of competing accounts, this essay will sketch five summary readings of *Eclogue* 9.⁴ The first three privilege the *dramatis personae*, and extrapolate first from the axiom of cooperative interaction (1), and then that of competitive manipulation (2A vs. 2B). It takes two to talk, takes a 'we' to empower an 'I'; no 'I' can be replicated within a 'we', so interval, non-alignment and friction are endemic to any personal exchange—however harmonious, pacific, interdependent. Billy-goats lead the herd; they butt one another across any

valley. Lycidas and Moeris need to meet, to relate to each other, to communicate—if they are (n)ever to comprehend (construct/understand) their moment. Each must face the rhetoric of the other, bid for control, contend for status—so that it remains unclear whether Lycidas tugs and Moeris won't budge, or whether it is the other way about—just the way that conversations must work. The final pair of readings attend to contextualization of the exchange within the rural sociality of the *Eclogue's* valley (3); and of that within the urban(e) culture of Virgilian poetics (4).

There is no call to impose a hierarchy on this plurality; not an earthly chance of 'deriving' one from some implied authorial intent or deduced cultural horizon (5. Appendix). The invitation of the mime is to realize ourselves in our rehearsals of the sense—our sense—they initiate.

1. Intersection: between the pair of them

Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.⁵

Moeris and Lycidas interconnect. They know each other already; well enough to swap names, so they can skip asking for them and get on with what wants saying. Lycidas instantly *intercepts* Moeris: he is concerned about his trajectory, worried where he is going. What is driving him? Is he out of control, under alien control, or just hitting the highway—following his nose, anywhere'll have to do? It looks bad, this shouldn't be happening, 'Turn again, Moeris!' Lycidas wants a reason to let Moeris go—maybe this trip up to town is just normal marketing, a routine round-trip, nothing to worry about? So long as they are talking, whatever gets said, Moeris hasn't left, whether Lycidas blocks his path or steps a way alongside him; conversation ties Moeris to where he has come from, stops him leaving the world he knows. Whatever words pass their lips, Lycidas stands in for whatever holds Moeris to 'home'—to 'here-now-us'.

Lycidas was right. Even if this could look ordinary enough—a rustic taking kids off to town—passion fills the scene from first to last, this shouldn't be happening, it's nothing short of the disruption of a whole way of life, a nightmare adynaton of fear, misery, grudge, hatred. Moeris' syntax rips it up: the interloper's crude monosyllables of 'I-me-mine' legalized brutality, that is the primal tableau Moeris imprints on Lycidas;

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he has *already* left the valley, his valley, behind.⁶ For the old world was abolished by citified *fiat*. Make no mistake, a ‘migrated *colonus*’ is a contradiction in terms. The man with the piece of paper has made ‘here’ spell ‘there’, turned ‘now’ into ‘a never before’, torn up identities, so that ‘we’ are severed from ‘our patch’. Forget the future, it is cursed, so curse it, the future is forfeit, as estranged from ‘us’ as we are. The moment of defeat dictates everything evermore, in total, cosmic revolution. Moeris leaves all right, leaves an epitaph for a dead world; he’s working for the aliens, everyone is, let it sink in: there is no future—nowhere to go, no trajectory, no ‘where next?’.

Throughout the conversation, Moeris is interred in grim desolation: whatever happened before the fall rubs in the misery of the new dispensation. He is a zombie, going nowhere—whatever path his feet tread—and so long as he is speaking with Lycidas, and beyond, their bond is their common bondage: the insurgents marched in, down this very road, and took over meaning, the very meaning of ‘our’ words. Hear Moeris speak for all, for Lycidas, all the Lycidases, the lost valley: not his journey, but everyone’s; one voice speaks, and because our ‘here’ henceforth belongs to him, he puts ‘us’ where we belong—nowhere. We may or may not live just the way we always did, we do things like take kids to town for someone, yes; but severed from ‘our patch’, from the affective attachment to, from the identification with and through, *agellus*, we *coloni* have nothing that is *noster*, we have lost our selves. All *share* the portion of ‘Moeris’, so everything he’s saying, they can say it just as good. Just one too many mornings...

Lycidas joins Moeris in the past tense; but so as to correct him gently, by politely rectifying the picture: the land is where it always was, the hills are alive, look after themselves, withdraw beyond harm, shrug off any control, beginning their gentle gradient just as far as they always did.⁷ The beeches are where the beeches always were, distinctive landmarks attesting the persisting continuity of the landscape. This ‘old guard’, this ‘cosmos’, retains its outlook (*ueteres...omnia*, vv. 9–10 ~ *ueteres...omnia*, vv. 3–4). Lycidas does not recognize Moeris’ community, his ‘us’: word is—the word of the actual community—that the past and present have been re-assembled by one of Moeris’ ‘us’, the very person to withstand might, ‘Men-alcas’. He, and all the others, would surely dissociate himself from the view attributed to him by Moeris—just like Lycidas (*certe equidem audieram*, v. 7).

Moeris repudiates this by *agreeing* (*audieras et fama fuit*, v. 11); but, no, whatever Lycidas, or anyone else said, that's dead and gone. It's over. Everyone, and that means Lycidas too, must acknowledge the traditional truth applies to them—to 'us' (*nostra...dicunt*, vv. 12–13). The odds against tomorrow were impossible; the most they could do was cut losses as best they could and save their skins; the most the country skyline could do was warn them, as Moeris is warning Lycidas, and Menalcas would say no different if he were present. He's with Moeris—and Lycidas is with Moeris, too (*tuus hic*, v. 16). Otherwise the conversation would not be happening. Lycidas' cancellation of the ruination is itself cancelled—Moeris speaks for Menalcas, for 'us'.

Lycidas does not argue. Sticks to Moeris' concession, that Menalcas *is* as alive as Moeris. Here's a topic they can both enthuse over. He is part of the past that *has* persisted into the present—his singing always brought the country to life, as it does, still, when his songs are sung. Menalcas' songs bring 'us' together—'we' were always after Amaryllis (*nostras*, v. 22).⁸ Moeris follows suit, with a three verse snippet from Menalcas, on behalf of 'us' (*nobis*, v. 27). The response re-draws the environment in the cameo selected by Lycidas, doomed unless the map could be re-drawn...before the confiscations did that already.

But the teamwork is felt, and blessed by Lycidas (*sic...sic...*, vv. 30–1), who sees the pair of them as ready now for a celebration of the moment, a bout of song (*incipe si quid habes*, v. 32).⁹ They are a fine match for each other, and maybe for Menalcas (*et me...*, *et mihi...*, *me quoque*, vv. 32–3);¹⁰ closer to each other than the rest of the *pastores* (*dicunt...sed non ego credulus illis...*, v. 34). Lycidas trusts himself to Moeris' estimation. Moeris has already been going along with him, trusts him with a try at remembering another song—if a contest in memories was what Lycidas had in mind. Lycidas (probably)¹¹ takes up the offer and interlard a snippet to match Moeris'—has a try at remembering the song he had heard Moeris practising, one that promises long-term security and prosperity for the countryside in the name of divine love. He left room for Moeris to carp or carry on (v. 45). But *he* remembers, instead, only how he once remembered songs (*memini*, v. 52 ~ *memini*, v. 45): he puts Menalcas between Lycidas and himself, with an excuse to sweeten a refusal. His own 'now' is void of song.

Lycidas will have none of this. 'Now' is the right time, he interjects, and the right place (*nunc*, v. 57 ~ *nunc*, v. 53). This is the right 'we'

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(*nostros*, 56). Moeris is just playing hard to get, he cajoles; they are in this together, half the journey already shared (*nobis*, v. 59), the rest before them (*ueniemus in urbem*, v. 62); still within range of the valley, ideal for sharing song (*canamus*, v. 61). He won't be dislodged, no fear, by space or time (*nox...uia*, vv. 63–4), for *ego + te* march side by side, they belong, bound to song, | *cantantes...* | *cantantes* (vv. 64–5), in the fellowship of the road, *eamus...eamus* (vv. 64–5). He weans Moeris all too abruptly off the past, reminding him of his load, and, of course, the burden of that, the 'now' he must bow to. The songs must wait, for another time, another place, another 'us', call it 'the coming of Menalcas'. But yes, Moeris accepts the generous first person plurals, in principle, if no more is in reach: the duo can get the kids to town together, do what must be done; the singing must wait for a threesome 'us' (*agamus*. | ...*canemus*. | |, vv. 66–7).

Halfway already, Lycidas had pretended (v. 59). The characters met each other halfway, each mindful of the other. Lycidas entertained Moeris when that was out of the question. Menalcas' songs brought them together, a little. Fellow feeling changed nothing for Moeris, whether he's embittered for life or could be saved by better news, but then (as he is sure) nothing could; still his favourite songs helped, a little, through getting wheedled by another fan; even if they couldn't save a world. Somewhere between the the two things—the grim trudge into soulless oblivion appropriate to obsequies for home and for traditional culture; and some preternaturally normalised double-act of warbling to pass any time, or lighten whatever journey—the ten-minute sketch intercut two people coping, just—with 'it', and with each other.¹² Would *our* 'we'?

2a. Intervention: Right between the eyes

Too soon to say goodbye,
Too soon to say forgive me,
Too soon to send us your instructions:
You know what our luck is like.
...
Too soon to despair yet.
You ought to know our luck.¹³

Lycidas spots Moeris, looks for an adventure; another scalp, another

walking song-hoard. Moeris' people are in turmoil, and Moeris is in a state. Lycidas presses on: he fashions a sensitive, empathetic 'heap of broken images' to evoke their valley, and picks from Moeris' vista of cataclysm the topic of Menalcas, which is to say, singer, singing and song (*carminibus*, v. 10). Moeris rejects the invitation: songs are doves, and the world is full of war and the sky full of eagles. *His* last word is Menalcas—barely alive (*Menalcas*. 1, v. 16 ~ *Menalcan*. 1, v. 10). Moeris isn't singing.

Lycidas turns on the pathos. Moeris paired himself with the maestro Menalcas, and interlinked himself with Lycidas. He might be completely wrong about Menalcas—the story of 'the law-suit, a cawing on the left, and a contract out for the singer' hardly *sounds* very likely: is it more plausible than Moeris' pessimistic refusal to listen to 'what everyone is saying about the reprieve engineered by Menalcas' magic' is well-founded? Anyhow, the chance to lament Menalcas hands Lycidas an opportunity for further poetizing: it's not just that he gets to enthuse on the creative powers of the poet, reeling out the tributes in best bucolic style (vv. 19–20 ~ 3.20–1, 40): rather his one-man audience is himself addressed *through* the apostrophe to Menalcas, and the interfusion steers Moeris away from his gloom and doom, and toward impersonation of the absent bard. Lycidas has enough in the bank to give a snatch of Menalcas his own treatment. In putting up the folk-singer's voucher of authenticity, 'I first heard this song from...', Lycidas *says* he got the three lines by sneaking up on Menalcas (or was it Moeris?) not long since, and by keeping his mouth shut and his ears open. *This* is bound to draw Moeris into the game (even if he is not already centre-stage).¹⁴ It has amounted to a take-over of his associate and hero.

The particular excerpt is set into Menalcas' (or Moeris') life as the precipitate of an interlude given over to desire. *This* road is short (*uia*, v. 23), and *return* is promised. Meantime, business as usual—the usual seamless round, of pasture, drive, water, drive (*pasce...pastas age...agendum*, vv. 23–4). Maybe envision the singer-lover leaving, leaving to go see Ms Popular. While he is away, his understudy fills the gap, and sees off any trouble with the billy-goat. Pure genius this, every hum-drum instruction a love-song to learn, a steal ready-made for any fan to apply to their own ventures. How Menalcas managed to distil rustic song, how he *lived* his blues!¹⁵ Or else, Moeris took up that sliver from Menalcas, sang it for himself when the cap fitted, that moment *he* let his

duties go hang, off to Amaryllis.¹⁶ In his turn, Lycidas is using Menalcas' song to twit Moeris. He spied on him, guessed the game before it was played, stole the verse—and now waves it at Moeris, who may have to ponder Tityrus' role afresh, and watch out for the menacing horn right before his eyes? You can't keep a good song down. And 'Tityrus will watch the animals graze' is *just* what you say when a song-contest is at hand (5.12).¹⁷

Moeris retaliates in kind, his words, too, having the ring of song-contest warm-up (*immo haec*, v. 26 ~ *immo haec*, 5.13). So Lycidas gets his way. He has got some unknown draft Menalcas out of Moeris. He has got song out of him before he could slink off without a word (worse than Meliboeus in *Eclogue* 1, with his *carmina nulla canam*, v. 77; but *he* initiated the elaborate interchange there, before taking his one-way trek out of the valley). And he has got sourpuss Moeris to trade poetry licks, got him to play the maestro Menalcas. Lycidas tricked his way, from so unpromising and indecent an encounter, to a one-on-one trial of strength with the wizard of verse's devoted clone—his 'cover-act'.¹⁸ If the price has been that the blood he has got out of the stone Moeris has been hand-me-down borrowed plumes, he may now have lit the flame: time to flatter Moeris into playing the original minstrel, if he can take a hint, or at least to keep it going, and sing some more—let himself forget the troubles a while.

Lycidas wishes him safety and prosperity, calling him to begin (*incipi si quid habes*, v. 32 ~ *quin age si quid habes*, 3.52, *incipi...si quos...ignis...habes... incipe*, 5.10–12). His wares are doing so well, he *must* be popping with the milk and honey of sweet rhapsody... Lycidas shows his hand, to get Moeris to follow suit. His boast nearly matches him to Menalcas, or nearly matches him to Moeris—let's say, to the 'Menalcas-Moeris' that Moeris would like people to think, or know, he really is.¹⁹ But no panic, Moeris can be assured, this poetaster is still wet behind the ears—no match for Varius or Cinna, or whomever else, let alone Menalcas. Moeris will sound like a swan, against Lycidas' cackle.

The challenge gets a pay-off. Moeris works at it. If only he can kick-start the memory. Five whole verses of erotic appeal, dripping; an enchanted world in full bud, ready and waiting. More Menalcas? (Would he struggle to remember his own material? Would he brag: 'a piece not without distinction', v. 38?) At any rate, Lycidas has got him to give it all he's got.²⁰ For his turn, Lycidas (probably) plays safe. He plays off five

lines, to the right beat, he is sure—maybe not verbally exact, maybe therefore improved in Lycidas’ performance, whether the lines were Moeris’ own song (this time), or whether they are more Menalcas, filched already from Moeris’ repertoire (*numeros memini, si uerba tenerem*, v. 45 ~ *si ualeam meminisse*, v. 38). Lycidas is ribbing Moeris again: would he pass off re-cycled Menalcas as his own? What else? (cf. 5.55 *vs.* 13–15).

Whatever, Lycidas could see why Moeris came up with this interstellar scrap, this gem, out in the still of the night, playing Menalcas *and* his Daphnis as *he* star-gazed in the archetypal shepherd’s delight.²¹ A new star spells salvation and prosperity for the countryside. Feel the joy—a fat future beyond our time on earth (*pura...sub nocte*, v. 44 ~ *signorum suspicis ortus...ecce...processit...astrum*, vv. 46–7). The ‘contest’ slyly foisted on one of the contestants gives Lycidas licence to plunder ‘Moeris-Menalcas’, out-quoting them, topping their vision of earthly paradise with a maybe souped-up version of heaven-sent beatitude from their songbook. As rhetorical manipulator, Lycidas has conjured Moeris into seduction out of himself: if this defeated misery is not, rather, something of a defeatist, down on his knees before need be, then he can at least be reminded that, not *that* long since—Lycidas hasn’t been at it so very long—Moeris was about, mouthing millenary visions under a red sky, with all the mythopoeia of annunciation. Whoever steps into Daphnis’ shoes will lift their heart in star-struck elation, suffused with joy and coloured with summer, in harmony with the countryside. The magic is catching?

In eristic terms, Lycidas trounced Moeris—out<man>oeuvred, under surveillance and suspicion of piracy, displaced from the repertoire he thought his. But he over-achieved, if he hoped to trade more strains. For Moeris throws in the towel: he should have retired long since. ‘So many songs’—he’s forgotten more than you’ll ever know... Menalcas, now, he promises, will be another story.

Lycidas has nothing to lose by being direct. Moeris should get on with it. The conditions are ideal, none better for time-out, for song. All alibis and escape-routes are covered—if he won’t stop for the showdown, Lycidas will stick to him all the way; this pest he’ll never shake off (cf. Horace’s *Ninth Satire*).²²

Moeris can only bow out, torching the wells behind him: his promise that the real showdown is yet to come, Lycidas ain’t seen nothing till Menalcas sings, seems to acknowledge in its wording that he *has* been in

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a preliminary tussle (*desine plura, puer*, v. 66 ~ *desine plura, puer*, 5.19). If *this* is not the end (cf. 8.61, *desine...iam desine...uersus*).

Interdiction; valediction.

2b. Interception: between a rock and a hard place

and so all things time will mend
and so this song will end.²³

Lycidas needs telling. His jolly badgering is out of place. ‘Moeris’ toes wait only for his boot-heels to go wandering? Where does the road lead, it leads to town?, indeed. No, Lycidas has lots to learn. All change—land, people, animals—these are revolutionary times. Eyes can miss it all: see these kids, but listen who they are for; where he stands—*he* says what goes down. Like the rest, this naïf hugs what other rustics tell each other, as if the world outside could rate singing alongside artillery. But the treetops *are* now broken (*ueteres, iam fracta cacumina, fagos* |, v. 9 ~ *densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos* |, 2.3, *ueteres fagos*, 2.12),²⁴ and the kids stand for all the victims, valley, Moeris, Lycidas, and all.²⁵

Moeris looks for terms to analogize comprehensibly (*tantum...quantum*, vv. 11–12 ~ *tantum...quantum*, 1.24–5, glossing *Urbem...Romam*, v. 19). Rockets, sonnets; eagle, doves. Heed warnings, like this one, they can save necks. A Lycidas really might go serenade a tank, melodize in court. These dummies Chinese-whisper ‘Menalcas’ and think they understand. But Moeris has been there.

The simpleton begins to see. Lose Menalcas and the valley is a wasteland. But the second-hand smattering of song the novice has picked up on, from or via Moeris, shows the penny hasn’t dropped. Lycidas doesn’t see it’s over, ballad, sweetheart, billygoats, skiving. Moeris must interrupt. Cuts in abruptly: ‘No!’ (*immo*, v. 26). Replace with a fragment from Menalcas grappling with Rome for their way of life—on a wing and a prayer. At the interface with the Powers That Be, Menalcas must train Commissioner Varus, just as Moeris now trains Lycidas with the tale. If you play Varus and like the song, like the idea, like the idea that the singing swans of Mantua will wing the ‘U’ of *Varus* in its arc across the sky (*uarus* means ‘incurving, as of horns), if you like this sample of the songs starring Varus in store, from this and all the Menalcases, and if you want the project realised, then see that it must

be up to you. No Mantua, no Menalcas; no swannery, no stardom. Play Lycidas, and learn that doggerel among the ditches, that pre-design for life, is at the mercy of metropolitan politics. One bureaucrat's whim, a line on a map, and the valley does not exist. The rhythms of pastoral life are irrevocably incorporated in a rolling programme of plans for the structuring of Italy: you need a Tityrus to watch the herd and mind billy; you need Varus to look out for Mantua and fend off Cremona. The scenes interpenetrate. They knit and knot.²⁶

Moeris' quotation was of a piece that was 'occasional' with a vengeance. A no from Varus and it never would be completed; a yes, and it would be obsolete, would need to be re-fashioned or ditched.²⁷ However many times Menalcas 'used to sing', or 'began to sing', Varus his terms (*canebat*, v. 26), the lines were strictly tied to their precarious moment. Lycidas should see that Menalcas' intercession, his bid to bind the politician to grant the artist habitat and habitus in return for product, commits at least some songs to displacing | *Tityre* with | *Vare* (vv. 23, 27). Even if the new songbook will go on to subjoin the old repertoire to the grandee's name (as in *Eclogue* 6, vv. 1–12, with *Tityre*, *Vare*, *Vari præscripsit pagina nomen*). Give them what they take for pure country style, and the 'lofty phrasing' is bound to 'seem[] absurd'.²⁸ That is the deal.

Moeris' coup in finding *the* quote to cap the one Lycidas was so pleased to have pirated, an instant triplet he *hasn't* come across, one he will find hard to forget and even harder to rip off or re-use, enframes Lycidas' citation and his understanding of the conditions of possibility for its composition. What interplay! Lycidas can only admire his skill in selecting from what must be an overflowing, superabundant, repertoire of songs—ready with a flash of sweetened diction to irradiate the last-ditch struggle to save the valley without the shadow of death (vv. 30–1). But, all too predictably, he takes this as encouragement to stand up and be counted. He is ready for the test, a Menalcas in the making, this fledgling Varius or Cinna. Moeris' response is to intervene, put Lycidas back in his box. Whether he means to take on Moeris or Menalcas through Moeris, as Lycidas or Lycidas through Menalcas, he would do best to button his lip and *think*,²⁹ while Moeris will for his part pretend he didn't hear the drivel just uttered, and try to perform a *real* song, worth all his own effort, all Lycidas' respect, all the fame it deserves. The piece, whether conceived by Menalcas or by Moeris,³⁰ sums up in a complete and well-rounded span of five lines the revelling in the

harmonics of rustic paradise that Lycidas identified as the trademark wizardry of ‘a Menalcas’ (*o Galatea...flumina...humus flores...umbracula*, vv. 40–2 ~ *Nymphas...humum florentibus...umbra*, vv. 19–20).

Lycidas does not intuit that Moeris is setting him limits, the choice is for him to be sensible and play safely in the bower, or get out of his depth madly taking on the breakers—if not becoming one, and smashing himself on the shore. He (probably) hasn’t done what he was told, hasn’t been listening, either, but dredging up another overheard ditty, more Menalcas, or was it Moeris’ own? Whichever, he is ready to try joining Menalcas at the cutting edge. He has chosen to introduce the song that would bind the Roman political firmament to beatification of the countryside, aping Moeris’ earlier effort to absorb the prior song within the ambit of his rejoinder—upping the ante to interplanetary sublation: Lycidas’ poemette beams up the spring brightness of Moeris’ Nirvana, hypostasizes a universe of Caesarian love.³¹ If the song is to have further occasions to commemorate, beyond the moment which first precipitated it, if the Julian star, rather than the Julian comet, rules life on earth, then the comet must prove no flash-in-the-pan—but the signs haven’t looked good, and the outlook is black, to Moeris.³²

Lycidas finds himself parroting the grant that ordains a prosperous future for the new settlement, buying its promise for his own (*insere, Daphni, puros; carpent tua poma nepotes*, v. 50 ~ *insere nunc, Meliboeae, puros, pone ordine uites*, 1.73).³³ The tune he got right; the words, however, passed him by—he can’t have heard what he was saying. This crass re-citation, worse than his earlier intermezzo on busy hives and popping cows in store (he had blathered) for Moeris,³⁴ is where Moeris gives up on him.³⁵ From here on, his words speak to his own thoughts, and only fob Lycidas off.

Omnia fert aetas (v. 51). Like much of what we have to say about time, this all-purpose nugget of omniscience looks like a dull platitude, but like any of our basic clichés works rhetorically as an education *in nuce*.³⁶ Echoing Lycidas’ last line, it must ‘first’ mean ‘Time brings all’ (Αἰὼν πάντα φέρει, A.P. 9.51.1). So... Give it time. Patience is its own reward. Hang in there. Things get better. And, listen, Lycidas, for the cliché speaks to as many thoughts as time permits: *omnia fert aetas animum quoque*. It’s not too late to learn. One day you’ll understand. We all have to grow up. It all takes time. Moeris was a boy once, who had to learn, too. Put in the hours of practice. We’ll make a singer of you yet.

But, on the other hand, the cliché speaks to Moeris, too. What time brings you, it takes from me. ‘Time takes all.’ Time has robbed Moeris of the long days of youth, stolen his memory-bank of songs, takes his singing voice, too: getting old brings oblivion, old age robs your mind—steals the soul, makes off with the mettle.³⁷ Fortunately enough, no doubt, because Moeris has nothing left to say, after Lycidas’ painfully insensitive performance, which went to show he hasn’t heard a word, and needs all the time in the world to catch on, maybe even use *his* mind. The times, they are a-changin’—so the chance won’t come again. As Moeris *tells* him, the moment ‘Lycidas’ spotted him, bore down on him, like a wolf on the fold, Moeris should have beat it, not let his voice vamoose and leave him behind, with nothing to say. Nothing that could ever be ‘enough’, for a Lycidas (*satis*, v. 55). The mistake was to let Lycidas use him for a punch-bag Menalcas-substitute. To try to explain. The fool wants to try out his idol, he’ll have to wait. ‘Time brings all.’ The cliché mobilizes language as far as the speaker can mean, and further yet, as it takes in the situation in which the utterance was made and heard, and is now repeated and overheard, in any performance of the poem in our theatre of language. Innocently or not, the saying looses the power of language at large. Not that Lycidas could hear this, but ‘*The time brings/takes all*’. The Age—the Times—*have* brought total, cosmic revolution (*omnia*, v. 51 ~ *omnia*, v. 5, *omnia*, v. 10). Triumviral times, the disaster of civil war, then the disaster of post-war settlement, which brings veterans to take over the valleys. Moeris has lived through it. Existential and epistemic shift. Ask Menalcas.

But don’t ask Moeris. He has despaired of getting through. ‘Time blesses, then curses, us all.’ There’s no telling the young, no heeding the old. Time pre-programmes human existence, every step of the way. Lycidas thinks Moeris is impressed and wants more, but worries that he’s losing it. *He* wants more, more fun playing the singer, trying out his ‘Menalcas’. Silence all around, the falling away of all undertones; the milestone tomb; the spot where leaves are stripped for fodder, hang the lazy shade. He catches Moeris’ mood, but doesn’t know it.³⁸ He never thought on those kids, what fetching them to town is acting out before his very eyes, with every stride. Sees them only as a bundle—an inconvenience—not the burden of doom, the sign of all their subjection. What The Age has brought, and taken over.

Moeris gently puts him down: *puer* (v. 66).³⁹ The singing lesson has

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been a disaster. Neither sharing the journey nor discussing the circumstances has clarified the present, its pressure and demand, walking out of the oasis to the sound of a favourite tune | *Tomorrow never knows* what it doesn't know too soon. And Lycidas cannot be brought to imagine the menacing future that it determines (*quod nunc instat*, v. 66). So sing another time, when (if) there is one—way down the track, in time and space.⁴⁰ No intermediaries. Nobody sings, until *Menalcas* sings. (There should be such luck.)⁴¹

Where Lycidas spoke of the cunning 'silence' that won him songs so he could get started toward beating the best, Moeris told him of the 'silence' that a singer needs for reflection before a performance (*tacitus*, vv. 21, 37). Where Lycidas claims 'silence' cues song, Moeris commands 'hush' to deny song (*silet*, v. 57 ~ *desine plura*, v. 66). Did the pair ever interrelate?

3. Interface: between here and eternity

...but the time ain't tall if on time you depend
and no word is possessed by no special friend⁴²

Two figures meet. To drive kids to town. An ordinary routine, however extraordinary the circumstances. Another chance to swap songs—along the way, or off the road. Talk can prime singers to improvise in competition; or to air their choicest compositions to show each other (up). Singing songs is what they know best, it means everything. In particular, songs are the vectors of local culture. They are learned up and retained in the memory; the art of inventing and re-inventing songs is a spontaneous productivity, but it rests on a repertoire associated with masters, as well as technique and talent. Yes, pastoral mythologizes oral culture, away from town.

The banter of Lycidas and Moeris intertwines a performative poetics, hailing the seminal inspiration of the poet *Menalcas*, but in doing so setting out how singer, singing and song interlock, what they can do, and how embedded thinking (about) them must be.⁴³ *Menalcas'* songs go with him, unless Lycidas can access them, by hook or by crook, unless Moeris can pass them on, with some sense of what they represent. But *Menalcas* can be lamented—missed, longed for—and so conjured up.⁴⁴ Personification of *carmina...nostra* (v. 11), he sings through his successors'

tributes—summoned to fix things once more whenever a girl needs a visit and cover is needed; heroized as saviour of his kind, poet of praise out in the big time; ventriloquized when spring needs to be put back in the year; and superimposed, in his turn, on the avatar of pastoral song, Daphnis,⁴⁵ when a new optimism must promise to give successors something to crow about (as envisioned at Daphnis’ deification, 5.58–64). The chain passes up through Menalcas, to Daphnis, and thereafter, through Silenus, to Apollo and the source (*Eclogues* 5–6). Where mourning Daphnis honoured poetry and showed off what power poetry *can* wield, namely to catasterize its heroes (*Daphnin...tuum tollemus ad astra | Daphnin ad astra feremus*, 5. 51–2 ~ *Vare, tuum nomen | ferent ad sidera cycni*, 9.29), discoursing on Menalcas’ absence, his reprieve or otherwise, elicits a portrait of the artist’s range, his versatility, his capacity to represent; but this *without* integrating the motifs into a meta-narrative.

The quartet of interlaced citations make a collage of exemplary fragments, intersert with equally exemplary construals and derivations. As a discourse *about* the institutions and practices of a community, the dialogue captures the complexity of the appropriations to collective, group and participant interests which call for the delivery of poetry and its discussion, for flow and interflow.⁴⁶ The particular master-repertoires and the occasions for their perpetuation can be smashed, and the chain broken, but this itself calls for commemoration and recall.⁴⁷ It misses the point to choose between strength *or* fragility in this envisioned traditional culture. The talkers and singers put, find, miss and lose *themselves* in the songs they perform, refuse to perform, allude to, repress, dub and segue.⁴⁸ Songs deal with history; but nothing does. Nothing deals with history; songs do.⁴⁹

So much for the rustics’ mime. We must now face the poetics of the *Eclogue* as poem.

4. Intertext: strictly between the lines

...

somewhere down the road

someday

the very last thing I’d want to do

is to say I been hittin’ some hard travellin’ too.⁵⁰

Neither Lycidas nor Moeris knows they are in a poem. All the *pedes* lead along Virgil's lines to town, from start to finish (*uia ducit, in urbem* |, v. 1 ~ *ducis...uia...in urbem* | ...*uia*, vv. 56–64).⁵¹ Lycidas makes out they are half-way where the tomb *begins* to show to *end* this *Eclogue*, but he is not to know that the seven verses given him between the poem's two pairs of recitations are *Virgil's* centrepiece (vv. 30–6), that the central verse pivots on its hub *carmina*, flanked by two lines that end in *poetam* | and start with | *uatem*, twin(n)ing *Pierides* with *pastores*, and *me fecere* with *me quoque dicunt*, strung together with triple gemination in *et me...et mihi...me quoque*, and introduced with the command | *incipere* (vv. 32–33–34).⁵²

Still less could Lycidas realise that he began the *Eclogue* interview by quoting himself from another master's bucolic poem. His opening question(s) echoed the first words spoken in the 'Once upon a time' narrative of Theocritus' Simichidas in *Idyll* 6 (v. 20). Spoken by the smiling Lykidas, who goes on at once to add five further lines full of reasons why he should call a halt. The journey *that* time had been 'from town' (v. 2), and the jaunty band on their way to a harvest-festival had got not quite half way there, not so far as the landmark tomb, when they found Lykidas, a goatherd and just like one (vv. 10–14). Lycidas could only echo himself when he presented *his* traveller, the solitary Moeris, with a landscape crafted to elicit song, with its tomb marker to signal midway (vv. 60–1). To cap it all, Lycidas' own modestly self-promoting *recusatio* at Virgil's halfway house (vv. 32–6)⁵³ had been echoing the challenge to sing voiced by Simichidas to Lykidas, on the back of a proposal to share the road, the day, and bucolic song (vv. 35–41; 35–6) which Lycidas would fail to impress on mute Moeris as *their* traipse was stopped dead by Virgil's *finis* (vv. 64–5; 66). Lykidas had got Simichidas to *begin* singing (v. 49), going first as Lycidas would, with a *recently* composed song (v. 51 ~ v. 21), but one he himself fashioned out in the wilds (v. 51), not a chunk of second-hand Menalcas pinched from Moeris (v. 21).

No, Lykidas sings at length, sings a love-song which hosts singing, songs about singing songs, songs for lovers to find themselves in, songs featuring Tityrus as guest artiste (vv. 52–89; 72–89)⁵⁴—not three lines ordering Tityrus to cover while we're off (with luck) for a quick one (vv. 21–3). Moeris stretches to his three whole lines of a Menalcan sketch for a p(r)oem never, never yet, written (vv. 26; 27–9), where Simichidas went on to pick easily his own finest labour of love, for full

performance and appreciation (vv. 94; 96–127; 128–130). With that, Lykidas was off, leaving the company to reach journey's end, an Eden of plenty befitting prayerful oblation to the harvest goddess, whose blessing had perfected the poetry offered her for blessing (vv. 130–57).⁵⁵ Lycidas and Moeris were caught in grim defeat (v. 5) and a fragmented prospect (v. 9), where singing and song were to match, as derivative and dislocated, desultory and disparate, as the poem they hypostasize: '*un texte manqué...* Exemplum of poetry's didactic and moral impotence, Virgil's failed text in this sense signals too a failed world.'⁵⁶

Fate winds 'Moeris' along this road.⁵⁷ This farmer, who supplied the drugs for *Eclogue* 8's spells that finally led Daphnis home from town, and a certified (Theocritean)⁵⁸ werewolf at that (vv. 95–9; 100, etc., *ducite ab urbe...* 109, *ab urbe uenit* ~ 9.1, *ducit in urbem*, 62, *ueniemus in urbem*), had had no other track record in poetry before Lycidas the wolf-cub accosted him in *Eclogue* 9. He takes Virgil's collection on out...toward journey's end (10.1, *extremum...laborem*), he links urbanity to pastoral, the interstitial farmer from the fields. Along with Moeris, 'who would not sing for Lycidas', go the bundle of thoughts, the welter of words, that makes and are made from a biosphere and a book.

Interwoven into Virgil's poem are strands of echoic speech and slices of re-cited poetry that between them straddle and re-present the parameters of the gently-sloping valley of the *Eclogues*, between the high mountains and those broken beeches. Intermingled and intermixed song and speech mobilized a re-presentation of *Theocritus*' re-presentation of poetry arising from encounter in song. Both as focalized in *Idyll* 7's traverse of the terrain of bucolic, and as envisioned throughout his pastoral songs. For this singing of urban Virgil and Theocritus is resoundingly 'past-oral' and 'post-oral', derives itself dually from the pre-textual sociality it enfolds, and from its signification within that readerly world, 'in town', which it pre-supposes.⁵⁹

But *Eclogue* 9 refracts around the broken discourses strewn along its wayside. Its songs between them range over the territory without pausing to attempt more. The first song showed us how song embedded in pastoral life is handed down the line of singers—creative echo, as between vv. 21–3 and *Idyll* 3.3–5, starts from projection into the scene that precipitated a classic performance: any bucolian off to serenade (an) Amaryllis departs from Tityrus, the goats, and watch-out-for-billy. Theocritus' song began singing this as *its* overture—liminal prelude to

singing, spoken yet itself sung;⁶⁰ Virgil relays this, shows how the scene can replicate itself, modulated through each singer-poet's own interblended take on its point. Lycidas' version purloined from Menalcas-Moeris renews and interleaves Theocritus, adding, unknown to them and to him, the insert 'while I'm away' and its accompanying emollient gloss that 'the way is short', with their fresh pertinence for the moment of re-citation (*dum redeo—brevis est uia*, v. 23).⁶¹ But this is no wayfarer's song, and is not sung, only evoked, by Lycidas—he *cites* the song, or rather the prelude to the song; *as* a citation.⁶² The song itself must wait for the occasion for singing it—when Menalcas *returns* (some day; nevermore). But Virgil's appropriation of the song acts out the practice of *Eclogue* 9, *as/and* the practice of re-citation of Theocritus and other songbooks from which the singing of the *Eclogues* is constructed.⁶³

The second 'song', Moeris' appeal to Varus to interfere, is similarly quoted but not performed; its performance is totally out of the question on the road to town, a conditional promise of a performance if a rightful occasion could be, or could have been, secured. What Moeris-Menalcas want(ed) from it was the opportunity to 'perfect', complete, adapt, sing, re-cite the song it prays to become. *Eclogue* 9 *is*, nonetheless, itself the occasion for the appeal, on behalf of the terrain it transects; and it keys for the book of *Eclogues* the lethal intrication of its pastoral 'doves, ...swans, ...Venus' within range of its triumviral 'spear, eagle, and Mars'.⁶⁴ How hard for the Lycidases to comprehend this voice within their repertoire—an endangered song and lifeway that would barter bucolic praise for survival, when the bulldozers have already moved in from Rome. This appeal, any appeal, belongs, after all, where Moeris is taking it, at the end of the trail, in town. But (t)here it is, for all that.

Challenged by Lycidas to 'begin'—to begin singing, begin a song, that is, whoever might get the credits as composer—Moeris-Menalcas sang, or at any rate, re-cited, a version of an excerpt from half-way through *Idyll* 11's song of Polyphemus to the sea nymph Galatea (vv. 39–43 ~ 19, 42–9).⁶⁵ That this serenade was elaborately introduced in Theocritus' song as an exemplary myth whose singing was occasioned by the love sickness of the poet's friend, tags that version with its own aetiology, as was the case when the *Eclogue* book already echoed it in its own extended serenade in *Eclogue* 3. (The amoebaeon songs hosted by *Eclogue* 7 also drew on the Cyclops.) Moeris' cue *told* us this is a classic performance (*neque est ignobile carmen*, v. 38), its interlinear allusivity demands/

repays thought (*mecum ipse uoluto*, | *si ualeam meminisse*, vv. 37–8).

In Theocritus, the point is that every lovesick swain/singer/poet/friend is a Polyphemus; ‘The Galatea song’ is for solitary pining on the edge that divides the fair desired from monster desire; a ‘drug’ specially concocted for all such occasions. Not likely to pull off the impossible trick of luring her out of her habitat, but (for what it’s worth) a lovely song precipitated by the singer-lover’s pain.⁶⁶ Lovely enough to seduce Theocritus into singing, Nicias into pondering for himself, Menalcas-Moeris into adapting for Lycidas, Virgil into re-writing, and so into the repertoire of any readers Virgil may pick up along the way. The version performed by Moeris’ slips in *ludus* and *uer purpureum* (vv. 39–40), and by weaving song creates a flower-decked and shaded bower for song, woven into the design from Theocritus, *Idyll* 7.7–8.⁶⁷

In context, his performance delivers, as already noticed, on Lycidas’ vision of Menalcas as necessary poet-creator of the bucolic idyll (vv. 19–20). But what call is there to rehearse the serenade song, as Moeris departs the vale of tears, leaving cave and vines behind, out of his element and vowing to sing no more? A young Polyphemus must seduce with his long inventory of produce and bounty at his disposal; behold Moeris’ goats, off to town ‘for *him*—the alien monster’ (*haec mea sunt...hos illi...mittimus haedos*, vv. 3, 5 ~ *mille meae Siculis errant in montibus agnae*, 2.21).⁶⁸ Moeris parades, in lush anaphoric deixis, that he tries on the Theocritean komast’s six league boots, but anyone who comes ‘hither’ and looks ‘here’ will find his cupboard is bare (*huc...huc*, vv. 39, 43; *hic...hic...hic*, 40–2 ~ ἐντί...ἐντί...ἔστι...ἔστ’...ἔστι, vv. 45–7).⁶⁹ Moeris has no ‘I’, no ‘my’, no ‘mine’ (*vs. ἀμέ...ἐμίν...μοι*, in just vv. 42–7). His ‘Polyphemus’ is at once also his ‘Galatea’: Menalcas—out of reach. And instead of hugging some desolate shore, Moeris is pursued from one end of the poem to the other by Lycidas’ pestering.

The fourth song, the one and only (fleeting) chance Lycidas will get to perform, has him trying out more stolen Menalcas-Moeris, sure of the music, but anxious about the lyrics. His last line, as we saw, found neither its time nor its place, however enthusing his ditty on the new heavenly order of *Diuus Iulius* may sound to himself, however directly he hoped to address Moeris’ agonized vision of agricultural depression. If Menalcas-Moeris ‘had heard’ that the valley was saved, and incanted a magic song to make salvation work, and keep on working so long as the sung would be sung, the occasion engendered the poetry—and the poetry

would memorialize, and keep ‘making’ the occasion. But now, Moeris maintained, this new world has simply destroyed the old (*antiquos signorum...ortus*, v. 46 ~ *ueteres...ueteres*, vv. 3, 9). This is the word he has brought, what Lycidas and we have ‘heard’ (*audieram*, v. 45 ~ *audieram...audieras...sed*, vv. 7, 11).⁷⁰

Along the way, we can make out other interspersed voices, wider echoes—notably the evocation of Callimachus’ epigram immortalising Heraclitus, which Moeris parades as a song he *does* remember singing—the last song he could forget: the song that remembers and obliges us to remember, every time it is sung, ‘how many times I remember us both setting the sun in interchange’.⁷¹ In one direction, the signs point back past Theocritus, through his echoes, to Homer, Archilochus, and all the poet-singers who were ever walkin’ a road other men have gone down,⁷² signposted, it seems, by the choice of *Iliadic* Bianor, ‘shepherd of peoples’, for the tomb where Lycidas proposed to make the topology of song (v. 60; cf. *hic...hic...hic*, vv. 60–2 ~ 40–2).⁷³ In the other, it is not difficult to find that both Moeris’ and Lycidas’ attempts to visualise chaos, as well as to deny it, have provided the occasion for the production of haunting *Virgilian* song, when the herdsmen have been talking, not singing, whatever they meant by their contributions, whatever each made of the other’s turns—epitomized by the uncanny ‘*Chaonian* doves’ which has become the poem’s, the *Eclogue* book’s, Virgil’s emblem (esp. vv. 2–6; 7–9; 11–13; 19–20; 57–61, etc.).⁷⁴ And pastoral incapacity to provide accurate and precise information in terms of the city discourses, even when law, property, status, dateline, and topography set the agenda, actually *grounds* its power to evoke.⁷⁵ The *Eclogues* can barely address the subject of Rome, Varus, Caesarian politics post-Julius, so Tityrus’ saviour in *Eclogue* 1, and the *triumphator* of *Eclogue* 8’s prelude, must settle for nameless praises, for example, while Varus receives in *Eclogue* 6 the accolade of refusal, and not much more than his name (than infamy) from *Eclogue* 9. Nor are the *Eclogues* about to audit and inventory their own holdings—ready for the receivers; for ‘“Le parole *lontano*, *antico* e simili sono poeticissime e piacevoli, perchè destano idee vaste, e indefinite’ ... What [poesie] requires is a highly exact and meticulous attention to the composition of each image, to the minute definition of details, to the choice of objects, to the lighting and the atmosphere, all in order to attain the desired degree of vagueness.’⁷⁶ Exactly vague bucolic does know songs tuned to life, songs to tune to life: *intertexture*.

5. Appendix: town and gown

A small grove massacred to the last ash,
 An oak with heart-rot, give away the show:
 This great society is going smash;
 They cannot fool us with how fast they go,
 How much they cost each other and the gods.
 A culture is no better than its woods.⁷⁷

In its reception, *Eclogue* 9 is positioned by Horace's answering composition, *Satires* 1.9, as a poet's sally away from the city, bringing it all back home as a counter-provocation to the perspectives, values and norms bred into civilised culture. The urban(e) *flâneur* Horace may protest for all he is worth that he cannot cope with the roles that frame metropolitan sociality, he is in too much of a hurry to get involved, isn't up to court procedure or able to understand Roman law (vv. 38–40, *inteream si | aut ualeo stare aut noui ciuilia iura, | et propero quo scis*); but he is caught in denial, and parades the fact—well aware of judicial procedure and due process of law (vv. 36–7, 74–7). Horace precisely does *not* 'perish' for lack of clout in court (v. 38, *inteream*), but is instead 'saved' by the law, by Apollo, god of the forum: *sic me seruauit Apollo. ||* (v. 78). Whereas Moeris and Menalcas were out of their depth—not only did they between them *not* 'save' all the countryside (v. 10, *omnia...seruasse uestrum Menalcan*), but they owed their lives to one of their crows' advice to drop their litigation (v. 16, *nec uiueret*).

The two poems' hasty journeys are throughout written by Horace into a parallelism, verbal and conceptual, that positions Virgil as his dialectical partner. In brief, cf. esp. (Horace ~ Virgil):

Ibam forte uia Sacra, v. 1 ~ *quo uia ducit?*, v. 1;

'suauiter ut nunc est...et cupio omnia quae uis', v. 5 ~ *nunc uicti... Fors omnia uersat*, v. 5;

aiebam tacitus, cum quidlibet ille | garriret, uicos, urbem laudaret... 'nil agis; usque tenebo; | persequar hinc quo nunc iter est tibi...usque sequar te' ...ut...asellus, | cum grauius dorso subiit onus, vv. 12–21 ~ *Id quidem ago et tacitus...mecum ipse uoluto*, v. 37, *usque ad aquam et...fagos, | omnia...*, vv. 9–

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10, *licet usque...eamus; | ...eamus, ego hoc te fasce leuabo*, vv. 64–5;

'si bene me noui, non Viscum pluris...non Varium facies: nam quis me scribere pluris | aut citius possit uersus? ...inuideat quod et Hermogenes ego canto', vv. 22–5 ~ *et me fecere poetam | Pierides, sunt et mihi carmina, me quoque... neque...Vario uideor nec dicere Cinna | digna*, vv. 32–6 [Horace's 'Viscum and Varius' contaminate Virgil's 'Varius and Cinna' with Gallus' 'Viscum and Cato', cf. n. 53];

nunc ego resto...instat fatum mihi triste, Sabella | quod puero cecinit diuina mota anus urna, vv. 28–30 ~ *tristes quoniam fors omnia uersat, v. 5, me...sinistra caua monuisset ab ilice cornix, v. 15, ['Moer-is:'] quod nunc instat, agamus; v. 66;*

ni fecisset, perdere litem | , v. 37 ~ nisi me quacumque nouas incidere lites | , v. 14.

The *tertium quid*, the presently absent motor of the poetic plots, out of town and in town, is the metathesis 'Menalcas-Maecenas':

'haberes | magnum adiutorem...dispeream ni | summosse omnis', vv. 47–8 ~ *audieram....omnia...uestrum seruasse Menalcan*, vv. 7–10;

'non isto uiuimus illic | quo tu rere modo', vv. 48–9 ~ *sed carmina tantum | nostra ualent, Lycida, quantum...*, vv. 11–12;

'accendis, quare cupiam magis illi | proximus esse', vv. 53–4 ~ *causando nostros in longum ducis amores*, v. 56.

The nub of Horace's self-portrayal as Power's protégé is that he has and does find a way for poetry to keep him safe—'saved by songs', along with 'his' patch—where the bucolic singers could only proffer to Power the reproach of the bereft, the powerful appeal of the powerless victim.

In particular, Horace is preserved by this his poem, and by its poetics—not least by his intertextual recourse to the strong lead of

Lucilian satire, whose own poetic had in turn gained salvation from poetry by quotation from Homer: Lucilius had quoted archer Apollo's rescue of Hector from battle, τὸν δ' ἐξήραξεν Ἀπόλλων (*Il.* 20.443), had quoted it as quotable, as a tag, the citability of poetry through a cultural tradition, *nil ut discrepet ac τὸν δ' ἐξήραξεν Ἀπόλλων | fiat* (Warmington 267–8); Horace has learned the verse, learned it as a transferable cadence that is there to suit the occasion, and now translates into Latin so as to invoke the forensic god of Roman law. With (triumviral) Roman Law, Roman Satire, Homeric Epic, the power of the traditionality of Graeco-Roman classical culture, Horace draws up an impregnable phalanx of 'poetic protection'. Song does save the day (*carminibus seruasse*), and with that Mr Urbanity turns on his heel and is off, free on the Sacred Way.⁷⁸

The revolutionary ratio of allusion does not, however, securely stabilize signification. Virgil's *Eclogue* is, for example, revalued by supplementation with Calpurnius Siculus' book of Neronian *Eclogues*, which culminates in Corydon's revisionary 'journey back from town', another Tityrus full of the marvels of Rome, but one wishing he could slough his bucolic self and come close to the spectacular Mars-cum-Apollo enthroned there: || *lentus ab urbe uenis, Corydon...* (7.1 ~ *quo uia ducit, in urbem, ...ueniemus in urbem*, vv. 1, 62).⁷⁹ The intervention of Calpurnius, whose *Eclogue* 4 expounds in unmistakably Horatian terms the indispensable role of Maecenas' patronage in turning Virgil into the poet of *Eclogues*, then *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* (4.152–63), undoes the Horatian antithesis with Virgil. For all he is worth, Calpurnius would pin the allegiance of Virgil's *Eclogues* to the world that expropriates and dispossesses them: *A culture that knows it is no better than its woods.*

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Notes

1. L. MacNeice, 'Valediction', in *Collected poems* (London, 1966) 54 (January 1934).
2. The *Eclogues* name *uallis* just three times (2.40, 5.84, 6.84); but they inhabit considerably more: in my view, the 'U' figure of the valley—beneath the shadows falling ever longer from the mountains above (1.83)—should oust that infamous 'bucolic arch', or 'chapel', as glyph for the 'ring-structure' of *Eclogues* 1-<2-[3-(4-{5}-6)-7]->8-9—with egress (and access) via 10.
3. Cf. J. Henderson, 'Virgil, *Eclogue* 3: What keeps an idiot in suspense?', *CQ* [forthcoming].

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4. The major extended modern readings are: C. Segal, 'Tamen cantabitis, Arcades: exile and Arcadia in *Eclogues* 1 and 9' (1965), in id. *Poetry and myth in ancient pastoral* (Princeton, 1981) 271–300, M.C.J. Putnam, *Virgil's pastoral art. Studies in the Eclogues* (Princeton, 1970) 293–341 (unconscionably slighted by U.K. reviewers), P. Alpers, *The singer of the Eclogues. A study of Virgilian pastoral* (California, 1979) 136–54. Cf. G. Stégen, 'La neuvième bucolique de Virgile', *LEC* 21 (1953) 331–42 (lightly revised in id., *Commentaire sur cinq Bucoliques de Virgile* (3, 6, 8, 9, 10) (Namur, 1957) 99–110) on the 'ruse' of Lycidas; and E. De Michelis, 'L'Egloga di Meri', *Studi Romani* 16 (1968) 269–79 on Moeris. E.A. Schmidt, 'Poesia e politica nella nona Egloga di Virgilio', *Maia* 24 (1972) 99–119 proposes powerful ideological/aesthetic intercoding. H. Oppermann, 'Vergil und Oktavian', *Hermes* 67 (1932) 197–219, at 198–212, offers a sensitive and subtle exegesis, on earlier premisses.

5. E. Dickinson, *The complete poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. T.H. Johnson (London, 1970) 9: no. 7 (c. 1858).

6. Cf. Putnam 296 on *agelli > haec, nostri > mea*.

7. Cf. Putnam 301. *collis/collum* must underlie the imagery (Isid. *Orig.* 14.8.19, *collis...quasi colla*). For the poetry of Lycidas' gentle landscape, cf. Schmidt 101.

8. W. Clausen, *Virgil, Eclogues* (Oxford, 1994) 274, on v. 22 wants 'my sweetheart', ...not therefore the sweetheart of Lycidas and Moeris...and certainly not "everyone's favourite"'.

9. Cf. Putnam 311.

10. Cf. Stégen 337, Schmidt 108–9.

11. MSS and editors divide between attributing vv. 44–5 to Moeris (cf. R. Coleman, *Virgil, Eclogues* (Cambridge, 1977) 268 f. on v. 51) or to Lycidas, with 46–50 (Clausen 280 f., on vv. 39–50), or with 46–50 to Moeris (J. Conington, *P. Vergili Maronis Opera, Vol. 1* (London, 1881⁴) 106; cf. Schmidt 109 n. 23). Parallelism between vv. 37–43 ~ vv. 44–50 demands the latter.

12. Cf. E.W. Leach, *Virgil's Eclogues* (Cornell, 1974) 210–1, 'The singers are opposite in mood and philosophy, and thus in their evaluations of pastoral song. They are not, however, opposed in sympathies', etc. De Michelis 270 turns a point: 'Lícida...è devoto alla poesia del poeta Menalca; ...Meri, alla poesia nel poeta Menalca.'

13. I. Ratushinskaya, 'Too soon to say goodbye', in *Pencil letter* (Newcastle, 1988) 88 (9 December 1986).

14. Cf. Alpers 141.

15. Cf. Schmidt 105, 'non...come autore di un canto d'amore bucolico, ma...come un cantore pastorale, di cui il canto accompagna l'azione, il cui canto rispecchia e nello stesso tempo è la sua azione'.

16. N.B. *tibi*, v. 21: for Coleman (260), Menalcas; for Clausen (274), Moeris.

17. G. Lee, 'A reading of Virgil's fifth Eclogue', *PCPhS* 203 (1977) 62–70 shows how both theft and 'Stop thief' smear and counter-smear underpin pastoral politesse. N. Zagagi, 'Self-recognition in Theocritus' Seventh *Idyll*', *Hermes* 112 (1984) 427–38, at 433 detects eristic undertones and insinuations between the singers there.

18. Cf. esp. Stégen 334.

19. Cf. Stégen 336–8, for Lycidas' 'false modesty'.

20. Cf. Stégen 339, 'il chante, le mieux qu'il peut'.

21. Cf. Stégen 339.

22. See 5. Appendix.
23. D. Gilmour, 'Childhood's end', on Pink Floyd, *Obscured by clouds* (*Music from La Vallée*) (EMI, 1972).
24. Cf. Alpers 137.
25. Cf. Putnam 298 f.
26. Cf. Schmidt 111–2, '...la condizione della possibilità di cantare a Mantova, il presupposto dell'esistenza di cantori come Menalca e Meride.... anche il primo carme dipende dal compimento di ciò che auspica il secondo canto'.
27. So Schmidt 105, 'il carme compiuto avrebbe dovuto contenere la conservazione di Mantova come ragione dell'elogio e sotto forma di elogio attuale. ... Un canto di lode con l'inizio *Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis* non è concepibile'.
28. Leach 205; but cf. Schmidt 111 n. 25 for the chiasmic symmetry and musicality of v. 29.
29. Cf. De Michelis 271, 'l'indignazione di Meri rode dentro, più che non appaia di fuori...'
30. e.g. Segal 290–1 takes this song and the next to be Moeris' 'own'.
31. Cf. Schmidt 114–5, '...la bellezza e la pace del mondo bucolico...sono doni di una politica'.
32. Cf. Alpers 144, 'the grammatical ambiguity seems pointed and acute. If *processit* is a true perfect, then the comet, as Page remarks, 'is here spoken of as a permanent constellation, to which husbandmen might look for guidance and blessing.' But the imperfect subjunctives qualify this promise by the possibility that the *sidus Iulii* was a mere historical event. The grammatical turn reminds us that the promise will have to be fulfilled by the actions of men, in historical time.' The procession may be over—or may be cyclic process, on the new Julian calendar to be sung through Roman time ('Vergil refers not only to the newly named month of July, when fruits and harvests ripen...', K. Galinsky, *Augustan culture* (Princeton, 1996) 160).
33. For planting for tomorrow, cf. A. Deman, 'Virgile, *Bucolique*, IX, 50', *Latomus* 15 (1956) 374.
34. Cf. F. Leo, 'Vergils erste und neunte Eclogé', *Hermes* 38 (1903) 1–18, at 15, on vv. 30–1.
35. Cf. *duceret...collibus*, v. 49 ~ *ducit...colles*, vv. 1, 7 (Putnam 319).
36. For discussion, cf. M.C. Giner Soria, 'Tiempo en la Egloga 9', *Helmantica* 33 (1982) 337–44: times of poem, of bucolic, of narration; L. Deschamps, 'Réflexions sur l'espace et le temps dans les *Bucoliques* de Virgile', *Humanitas* [Coimbra] 39 (1987) 115–22, esp. 120–1, on bucolic rhythms and territories, on enshrined achrony.
37. De Michelis 274 rightly insists on deepening *animum* beyond 'memory' *simpliciter*. It is important to insist that only Moeris' language here and *puer* at v. 67 suggest that there is any age difference between Lycidas and himself: both may read as *ad hoc* derogation rather than descriptive data: 'diction is used situationally' (T.E.S. Flintoff, 'Characterization in Virgil's *Eclogues*', *PVS* 15 (1975–6) 16–26, at 19).
38. Cf. Segal 285–6, Alpers 146 for the vibes, good and bad, in Lycidas' vista.
39. Cf. De Michelis 273, 'il rancore non gli appuntisce contro il buon giovine, ...il suo rancore è contro la vita'.
40. So Putnam 324, on *in longum ducis*, v. 56, cf. *ducit*, v. 1.
41. Cf. Stégen 340. The echo is 'better' than the original, Meliboeus' *carmina nulla*

canam (1.77): but don't Menalcas-Moeris think singing will be 'better' in so far as it is...*bitter*? Haven't they *both* 'forgotten all those *carmina* (v. 53)?

42. B. Dylan, 'Restless farewell', on *The times they are a-changin'* (CBS, 1964).

43. Cf. esp. Schmidt 117, 'Il dialogo, il canto, è inserito tra i doveri della vita quotidiana ed è per così dire strappato ad essi.'

44. Cf. Putnam 312.

45. Cf. Putnam 306, W. Berg, *Early Virgil* (London, 1974) 12–15.

46. Alpers 150 takes *Idyll 7* to be *about* how pastoral is transmitted, while *Eclogue 9* is an *example* of this.

47. Cf. Schmidt 103, 'La compagnia dei due uomini è diventata quella di una comunità festiva.'

48. Cf. Leach 207, 'in choosing their favorite pieces from the works of Menalcas they have made his poems expressive of themselves.' Cf. K.J. Gutzwiller, *Theocritus' pastoral analogies. The formation of a genre* (Wisconsin, 1991) 169, on *Id. 7*, 'Is there a connection between the content of the songs and the dramatic situation at hand? Are Lycidas and Simichidas communicating to each other mimetically, as Daphnis and Damoetas seem to pass to each other a message about love?'

49. Cf. R.B. Hardy, 'Virgil's epitaph for pastoral: remembering and forgetting in *Eclogue 9*', *Syllecta Classica* 2 (1990) 29–38 for the mood-swings mimed here. C. Perkell, 'Virgilian scholarship in the Nineties: *Eclogues*', *Vergilius* 36 (1990) 43–55, at 45 divines a decade of inconclusiveness and fading coherence: she's not (yet) wrong. The debate is polarized between optimism at fellow-feeling and hope rising through the series of inset songs, as in P. Alpers, 'Theocritean bucolic and Virgilian pastoral', *Arethusa* 23 (1990) 19–47, cf. Alpers 138–140, *vs.* pessimism at encompassing bleakness, as in S.V. Tracy, 'Theocritean bucolic and Virgilian pastoral: commentary on Alpers', *Arethusa* 23 (1990) 49–57, cf. A.J. Boyle, *The Chaonian dove. Studies in the Eclogues, Georgics, and Aeneid of Virgil* (Leyden, 1986 = *Mnemosyne Supplement* 94) 14, 16 etc. There must be some kinda way out of here...?

50. B. Dylan, 'Song to Woody', on *Bob Dylan* (CBS, 1962).

51. Theocritus has Lykidas' first speech begin with Simichidas' feet, and end on the echoing natural music of *his* feet singing on the stones: πᾶ δὴ τὸ μεσαμέριον πόδας ἔλκεις ...ποσὶ νισσομένοιο | πᾶσα λίθος πταίοισα ποτ' ἀρβυλίδεσσιν αἰεῖδει. | |, vv. 21, 25–6).

52. Schmidt 107.

53. G. D'Anna, 'Verg. *Ecl.* 9, 32–36 e Prop. 2, 34, 83–84', in *Filologia e forme letterarie. Studi offerti a Francisco della Corte II* (Urbino, 1989) 427–38 treats vv. 32–6 as *recusatio*, à la *Ecl.* 6.3–12. S. Hinds, 'Carmina digna. Gallus P Qasr Ibrim 6–7 metamorphosed', *PLLS* 4 (1983) 43–54 at 45–6 shows how Virgil enchains Gallus with Theocritus, at the heart of his poem, in *fecere poetam* | *Pierides* and *carmina*, at 9.32–3, in *non ego*, at v. 34, and in *dicere...digna* and *Vario... Cinna*, at vv. 35–6 ~ *fecerunt carmina Musae* | ...*deicere digna...non ego, Visce...Kato*, Gallus fr. vv. 6–9. J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin poetry* (Oxford, 1997) 354–5 shows how anaphora can signal allusion, as Virgil < Theocritus (vv. 32–3 < 37–8): but *both* καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ...κήμε...ἐγὼ δὲ τις and *et me...et mihi...me quoque* clearly open wide the question of intertextual traditionality to embrace others on the chain of inspiration: when Virgil twins *fecere poetam* | *Pierides*, a displayed bilingual etymological boast of 'poet' as 'creator' (ποιέω, J.J. O'Hara, *True names. Vergil and the Alexandrian tradition of etymological word-*

play (Michigan, 1996) 250–1), with *dicunt* | *uatem pastores*, he asks us to etymologize again (cf. *ib.* 278), on this occasion within Latinity, and find *uates a uiendis carminibus* (Varro *ap. Isid. Orig.* 8.7.3: *Lat. Ling.* 7.36, *antiquos poetas uates appellabant a uersibus uiendis*, cf. O’Hara 288), as we are soon prompted: *Ecl.* 10.70–3, *diuiae, uestrum cecinisse poetam*, | [=] *...gracili fiscellam textit hibisco*, [= *uiet*] | *Pierides; uos haec facietis maxima Gallo*, | *Gallo...*, where in valediction Virgil shows himself weaving his vatic love-gift of the basket of *Eclogues* for Gallus through echoic ‘allusive anaphora’ after Gallus (cf. Wills 147). Every poetic/vatic voice inspires all diction in the valley of poetics—‘T’ after ‘T’ after ‘T’ after...

54. Cf. Gutzwiller 169, ‘As Lycidas’ final words...may be a direct quotation from Tityrus or the closing comments of Lycidas himself, so the final lines of Simichidas’ song...may be a quotation...or the words of Simichidas himself.’

55. Cf. esp. Segal 279–85; S. Posch, *Beobachtungen zur Theokritnachwirkung bei Vergil* (Innsbruck, 1969) 22 fully tabulated *Idyll* 7 > *Eclogue* 9.

56. Boyle, *Chaonian dove*, 14.

57. Schmidt 100.

58. Cf. *Id.* 14.22.

59. Cf. Schmidt 119. For the argument that ‘*Idyll* 7 shows that it finds both inspiration and art by moving into the city and toward the Library’, cf. H. Berger, ‘The origins of bucolic representation: disenchantment and revision in Theocritus’ Seventh *Idyll*’, *CA* 3 (1984) 1–40, at 33.

60. Cf. Alpers 142.

61. Cf. Putnam 308.

62. *Idyll* 3 itself began by dramatizing its own citationality [i.e. The Amaryllis serenade begins by announcing itself]: ‘I am [i.e. This is] the Amaryllis serenade’ (Κομάσδω ποτὶ τὰν Ἀμαρυλλίδα).

63. A modern orthodoxy posits that Virgil was adding his *et me* to other poets’, behind Theocritus, in particular Philetas, whose ‘poetry included serenading of Amaryllis by Lycidas’ (E.L. Bowie, ‘Theocritus’ Seventh *Idyll*, Philetas and Longus’, *CQ* 35 (1985) 67–91; for bibliography and scepticism, cf. P.E. Knox, ‘Philetas and Roman poetry’, *PLLS* 7 (1993) 62–83, at 68 and n. 42).

64. A.J. Boyle, ‘A reading of Virgil’s *Eclogues*’, in id. (ed.) *Ancient pastoral* (Berwick, Vic., 1975 = *Ramus* 4 (1975) 187–203, at 195.

65. Cf. Schmidt 112, Putnam 315–17. ‘Here he is [= This is] singing the Galatea song’ (ὁ δὲ τὰν Γαλάτειαν αἰείδων, v. 13).

66. Cf. S. Goldhill, *The poet’s voice. Essays on poetics and Greek literature* (Cambridge, 1991) 249–61.

67. For *texunt*, v. 42 ~ *textit*, 10.71, cf. n. 53 above.

68. Theocritus’ Cyclops recommends to himself (and all Polyphemuses) to try ‘going and weaving cheese-baskets’ (vv. 73), as Virgil tells his love-stricken friend Gallus that he is doing (10.71): the *Eclogues* have been that remedy for desire (that failure?), all along.

69. Included on Wills’ list of allusive anaphorae from *Eclogues* to *Idylls* (355).

70. Cf. Putnam 315–7. The notorious crux at vv. 57–8, *et nunc omne tibi stratum silet aequor et omnes*, | *aspice, uentosi ceciderunt murmuris aurae* (‘sea’ or ‘plain’? ~ ἠνίδε, σιγῆ μὲν πόντος, σιγῶντι δ’ ἄηται, *Id.* 2.38), may silently stress ‘now’ as against ‘in

the intertext', while 'all' and 'levelled' emphasise the extension of *aequor* from synonymy with πόντος to its full semantic range: 'whatever "flattened surface" you can ask for, plus the hot air of an hyperinflated circumlocution'—as Simaetha's incantation bitterly *meant*, as she contrasted external quiet with the deafening pain in her blazing heart, vv. 39–40. Her poet, however, had overblown his rendering of ἀῆται | by Latin's sonic double and transliteration of its unmarked synonym, αὔραι, *aurae* |, from αὔω, 'shout, roar', and/or ἄω, 'blow', but superadded the animated amplification *uentosi ceciderunt murmuris* to (out)match the energy of the [Homeric] poeticism [ἀνέμοιο] ἀῆται |—cf. Plat. *Cratyl.* 410b—unpacked as 'wind's onomatopoeic blowing/roaring', which enacts its own 'fall' in the 'cadence' *aurae* |, where Theocritus' line had exited in aural-conceptual oxymoron: σιγῶντι <> ἀῆται |.

71. G.D. Williams, 'Conversing after sunset: a Callimachean echo in Ovid's exile poetry', *CQ* 41 (1991) 169–77, at 169 n. 3, on vv. 51–2 ~ Callim. *Epigr.* 2 Pfeiffer (= *A.P.* 7.80) 2–3: 'Perhaps Moeris' memory is not as frail as his self-deprecation suggests'. Virgil's *cantando* proliferates the self-enacting magic of the poem beyond Callimachus' ἐν λέσχῃ. On Callimachus, cf. J.G. MacQueen, 'Death and immortality: a study of the Heraclitus epigram of Callimachus', *Ramus* 11 (1982) 48–56; on Virgil, cf. Alpers 143.

72. Cf. F. Williams, 'Scenes of encounter in Homer and Theocritus', *MPhL* 3 (1979) 219–25, K.J. Dover, *Theocritus. Select poems* (London, 1971) 150.

73. *Iliad* 11.92, slain after the noonday *Zeitangabe* of woodcutters' rest, before two further killings account for former herdsmen, cf. F.E. Brenk, 'War and the shepherd: the tomb of Bianor in Vergil's Ninth Eclogue', *AJPh* 102 (1981) 427–30, S.V. Tracy, 'Sepulcrum Bianoris: Virgil *Eclogues* 9.59–61', *CPh* 67 (1982) 328–30. Cf. N. Krevans, 'Geography and the literary tradition in Theocritus 7', *TAPhA* 113 (1983) 201–20, at 212–3 on literary mapping of poetry through names.

74. Cf. W. Batstone, 'Introduction: how Virgil's pastoral makes a difference', *Arethusa* 23 (1990) 5–17, at 17 n. 17, on 11–13, 'language which...extends the limits of *carmina* at the very moment that it complains of their limits'.

75. 'Over 70% of the *ager Mantuanus* was, it seems, covered by the Cremonese grid which extended to within 1 km of the town itself' (L. Keppie, *Colonisation and veteran settlement in Italy 47–14 BC* (Rome, 1983) 90).

76. I. Calvino, 6. *Six memos for the next millennium* (London, 1996) 57–8, 'Exactitude', quoting and expounding G. Leopardi.

77. W.H. Auden, 'Bucolics: 2. Woods', in *Selected poems* (London, 1968) 90.

78. Cf. J. Henderson, 'Be Alert (Your country needs lerts): Horace, *Satire* 1.9', *PCPhS* 39 (1993) 67–93.

79. Calpurnius' work effectively *modulates* Virgilian pastoral, overlaying and re-arranging the score, cf. P.J. Davis, 'Structure and meaning in the *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus', *Ramus* 16 (1987) 32–54, E.W. Leach, 'Corydon revisited: an interpretation of the Political *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus', *Ramus* 2 (1973) 53–97 and id., 'Neronian pastoral and the world of power', *Ramus* 4 (1975) 204–30, C. Newlands, 'Urban pastoral: the seventh *Eclogue* of Calpurnius Siculus', *CA* 6 (1987) 218–31, T.K. Hubbard, 'Calpurnius Siculus and the unbearable weight of tradition', *Helios* 23 (1996) 67–89.