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Pastoral Poetry and Stravinsky: A Search for an Expanded Definition of Neo-Classicism Through Exploration of the Relationship Between the Eclogues of Stravinsky's Duo Concertant and Petrarch's Bucolicum Carmen

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PASTORAL POETRY AND STRAVINSKY: A SEARCH FOR AN EXPANDED DEFINITION OF NEO-CLASSICISM THROUGH EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ECLOGUES OF STRAVINSKY’S DUO CONCERTANT AND PETRARCH’S BUCOLICUM CARMEN

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ABSTRACT

This treatise examines two movements of Igor Stravinsky’s (1882-1971) *Duo Concertant*. While writing the *Duo Concertant* Stravinsky read a book by his friend Charles Albert Cingria (1883-1954) about the poet Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), known in English as Petrarch. The composition reflected the influence of Cingria’s writing about Petrarch. Stravinsky writes in his *Autobiography*:

The spirit and form of my *Duo Concertant* were determined by my love of the pastoral poets of antiquity and their scholarly art and technique. The theme that I had chosen developed through all the five movements of the piece which forms an integral whole, and, as it were, offers a musical parallel to the old pastoral poetry.¹

Music critic Eric Walter White dismissed Stravinsky’s words, explaining that “in the long run, it would be best to put Stravinsky’s various explanations on one side and accept the work at its musical face value.”² Through examining the second and third movements of the work, marked *Eglogue I* and *Eglogue II*, this treatise aims to find a connection between Stravinsky’s music and Petrarch’s pastoral poetry. The term *eglogue* is French for the English term eclogue, which is a style of pastoral poetry. Petrarch wrote a set of twelve Latin eclogues between 1346 and 1352 called *Bucolicum Carmen*. The first two eclogues in the collection have striking similarities to Stravinsky’s music, and this paper seeks to document the relationship between the works. In the process, the treatise explores an expanded definition of neo-classicism—one that includes works that are inspired by Greek and Roman philosophy and artwork yet are modernized to fit the needs of the society from which it emerges.

Chapter 1 gives a background on Stravinsky’s neo-classical works and the composition of the *Duo Concertant*. Chapter 2 explores the history of the eclogue from


its creation in Alexandria by the ancient Greek poet Theocritus (c. 316-260 B.C.) to Petrarch. Virgil’s Eclogues are also discussed. Chapter 3 gives a historical context to Petrarch’s work through a discussion of his life, work, and philosophy. Chapter 4 compares and contrasts Petrarch and Stravinsky’s first eclogues, and Chapter 5 examines their second eclogues. Chapter 6 presents the conclusion.
A cautious optimism ran high during the early years of the twentieth century. Exciting developments in technology enabled people to send messages across the world (the telegraph), speak with unseen people (the telephone), move across land at quick speeds (the train and the automobile), and fly through the sky (the airplane). While many of these innovations were created at the end of the nineteenth century, they affected the average person by the time World War I started in 1914. The 1905 release of Albert Einstein’s doctoral thesis (which contained the *Theory of Relativity* in its basic form) challenged society’s beliefs about the nature of time. Progress sped up the pace of life, and this influenced almost every aspect of Western society. Yet, these new developments challenged the very notion of existence and its meaning. Novelist Robert Musil explained:

People who were not born then will find it difficult to believe, but the fact is that even then time was moving faster than a cavalry camel… But in those days, no one knew what it was moving towards. Nor could anyone quite distinguish between what was above and what was below, between what was moving forward and what backward.¹

World War I represented the apotheosis of the early twentieth-century optimism. Technology had hastened the deaths of almost an entire generation of young Europeans through the use of machine guns and air warfare. Musicologist Robert Morgan wrote:

The change in viewpoint did not come about immediately. In the early stages of the war, some even hoped that the conflict might have a positive effect, clearing the way for the foundation of a new social order. Many leading artists and musicians of the day actually entered the war with feelings of optimism and commitment paralleling those of their esthetic positions (all three principal figures of the Second Viennese School—Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg—did so, for example). By the time of the

armistice, however, most had been deeply shaken by first-hand experience with the brutality and banality of military conflict.²

Added mobility helped spread a deadly flu pandemic in the years following the war. The idea that Western civilization had been on a steady course of improvement throughout history and that the present day represented society at its best was destroyed. Many musicians desired a return to the simplicity of older art. Morgan clarifies:

It would be a mistake, however, to say that after the war music simply turned its back upon the technical innovations introduced during the earlier years of the century. Although many composers placed a new emphasis on tonal centricity and clarity, virtually no one (at least among the major figures) felt it desirable, or even possible, simply to resurrect the traditional tonal system of the common-practice period. Instead, new approaches to tonality were developed that retained in large measure the freely dissonant character of prewar music… Thus the general trend was not so much to reject the innovations of the preceding years as to accommodate them within a new esthetic framework.³

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was a major figure throughout the twentieth century, and his music reflected the changes in society. In 1913, Le Sacre du printemps premiered in Paris to a riotous audience. Stravinsky’s music featured a complex layering of Russian folk music. Its violent rhythms reflected the modernity that many composers of the time were striving for, and the piece was often imitated by other composers. Stravinsky established himself as an enfant terrible in Western Europe while at the same time promoting folk music of his Russian homeland. However, in 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution turned Russia upside down after the already disastrous few years of World War I. This left many Russians without home and country. Stravinsky was among these people. He writes in his Autobiography:

The Communist Revolution, which had just triumphed in Russia, deprived me of the last resources which had still from time to time been reaching

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³ Ibid., 157.
me from my country, and I found myself, so to speak, face to face with nothing, in a foreign land and right in the middle of the war.4

Stravinsky spent much of the post World War I years in France, where artists like Jean Cocteau and musicians like Erik Satie railed against recent artistic history—viciously attacking Debussy for “[missing] his way because he fell from the German frying pan into the Russian fire.”5 Cocteau advocated simpler music:

Musicians ought to cure music of its convolutions, its dodges and its tricks, and force it as far as possible to keep in front of the hearer. A POET ALWAYS HAS TOO MANY WORDS IN HIS VOCABULARY, A PAINTER TOO MANY COLORS ON HIS PALETTE, AND A MUSICIAN TOO MANY NOTES ON HIS KEYBOARD. ONE MUST SIT DOWN FIRST; ONE THINKS AFTERWARDS. This axiom must not serve as an excuse to those who are always sitting down. A true artist is always on the move. Picturesqueness, and especially exoticism, are a handicap to musicians, and cause them to be misunderstood.6

Cocteau pointed his finger at the exoticism Stravinsky exploited in his so-called “Russian” period works. Stravinsky reevaluated his compositional style amidst his time in France:

My feeling for clarity, my fanaticism for precision was waked through France, and my distaste for hollow twaddle and bombast, false pathos, lack of discretion in creative effusions—that was all at least strongly encouraged through my stay in Paris.7

Necessity also hastened the creation of Stravinsky’s new compositional voice. The post-war economy was struggling, and it was expensive to have giant orchestras perform new works. In L’Histoire du Soldat (an important transitional theatre work from 1918), he solved this orchestration problem in a unique manner. Deciding that he would take a

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7 Morgan, 168.
soprano and bass instrument from each instrument family, he arrived at the septet of the violin and bass, the clarinet and bassoon, the trumpet and trombone, and percussion.\textsuperscript{8} This also gave a visual diversity to the performing forces. The idea that the musicians should be onstage along with the dancers and actors (and not in a pit) was always in the conception of the work. Stravinsky writes:

[This] induced me to have my little orchestra well in evidence when planning \textit{L’Histoire d’un Soldat} [sic]. It was to be on one side of the stage, and a small dais for the reader on the other. This arrangement established the connection between the three elements of the piece which by their close cooperation were to form a unity: in the center, the stage and the actors; on one side of them the music, and, on the other, the reader. Our idea was that the three elements should sometimes take turns as soloists and sometimes combine as an ensemble.\textsuperscript{9}

Very few of his works from the 1920’s are written for large orchestra. The music of his new style valued the clarity of music from the eighteenth century, and he often borrowed techniques from those composers. Ultimately, musicologists call this music “neoclassical.”\textsuperscript{10} An example of this style is found in Stravinsky’s Concerto for Piano and Winds from 1924 (see Figure 1.1). The work’s title represents a philosophical change. After a series of pieces titled after fantastical Russian fairy tales (\textit{L’oiseau de feu} and \textit{Petrushka}) or the description of a pagan ritual (\textit{Le Sacre du printemps}), the use of traditional Italian terminology comes with heavy historical baggage, referencing their almost exclusive prominence in the eighteenth century.

The first movement begins with a short introduction, marked Largo, followed by the main body of the movement, marked Allegro, which is typical of the Baroque French overture style. Stravinsky’s use of dotted rhythms in the brass parts strengthen this connection. The first two bars also feature a chromatic voice exchange between the

\textsuperscript{8} Stravinsky. 113.

\textsuperscript{9} Stravinsky, 115.

second horn part and the tuba and contrabass parts (written in unison), moving from A minor to A major. Much of the movement features what may be called semi-functional tonality.\footnote{For further information, see: Chandler Carter, “Stravinsky’s ‘Special Sense’: The Rhetorical Use of Tonality in ‘The Rake’s Progress,” \textit{Music Theory Spectrum} 19, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 55-80.}

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Figure 1.1 Stravinsky, Concerto for Piano and Winds, First movement, m. 1-6
By using unusual inversions, doublings, and added notes, Stravinsky is writes somewhat tonal music while highlighting dissonance.¹²

Stravinsky, however, succeeds in making the concerto modern while referencing the past. Concerti in the Baroque period utilized string players for the accompaniment, which Stravinsky eschews for a wind ensemble. This immediately changes the timbre of music that could sound somewhat familiar to an educated audience member if strings had been employed.

Many of Stravinsky’s compositions during the 1920’s and early 1930’s share these neo-classical characteristics, and audiences were not exactly sure how to react to them. Stravinsky had become a hero to the avant-garde community, but he wanted to write works inspired by Baroque and Classical period composers and leave behind the works that made him a household name. According to composer Louis Andriessen:

[The] icy behavior of the composer who, since his return to Paris from Switzerland (1920), alienated his audience; who suffered from the popularity of compositions that he himself considered in the past perfect tense; and who, in as much as his compositions were not appreciated for the wrong reasons (as witnessed in the works of his epigones), fell just as much in disfavor with the avant-garde as with the average listener. “And to say that this Paris which lifted me in triumph seventeen years ago can offer me nothing better now than a public appearance in a chamber-music concert of this kind. One would think that one was in Zagreb,” the composer complained bitterly in 1927, having just finished *Oedipus Rex*. *Oedipus* did not bring him much luck either: after three performances the opera-oratorio disappeared from the repertoire…[Willem Pijper, Dutch composer and critic] said, “If the writer of this actionless opera had previously only written choral music for song competitions or if he had busied himself with arranging potpourris for wind bands, even then one would have had to call this opera-oratorio a scandalous pasticcio…the work of an incompetent craftsman…composed in a muddled artistic conscience.”¹³


While there are certainly social and economic factors for simpler music, Stravinsky also began to find a new way to limit his compositional output. He explained:

[Human] activity must impose limits upon itself. The more art is controlled, limited, worked over, the more it is free. As for myself, I experience a sort of terror when, at the moment of setting to work and finding myself before the infinitude of possibilities that present themselves, I have the feeling that everything is permissible to me. If everything is permissible to me, the best and the worst; if nothing offers me any resistance, then any effort is inconceivable, and I cannot use anything as a basis, and consequently every undertaking becomes futile… Let me have something finite, definite—matter that can lend itself to my operation only insofar as it is commensurate with my possibilities. And such matter presents itself to me together with its limitations. I must in turn impose mine upon it…My freedom thus consists in my moving about within the narrow frame that I have assigned myself for each one of my undertakings.\(^{14}\)

In the case of his music from the 1920’s, smaller ensembles and simpler, clearer, less expressive forms proved to be his limitations. Through using forms that already existed for hundreds of years, he was able to limit the amount that his own personality appears in the music. Stravinsky argued, “I consider that music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all…music is given to us with the sole purpose of establishing an order in things.”\(^{15}\) The words “establishing an order” resonate loudly in a time where technology had been able to completely change the order of things in society.

Stravinsky’s career was full of collaborations with other artists. While he claimed the idea for \textit{Le Sacre du printemps} came to him in a dream, the reality was that it was an intense collaboration between choreographer Sergei Diaghilev and designer Nicholas Roerich. Stravinsky’s works for violin were created with the help of American violinist Samuel Dushkin, who made quite an impression on Stravinsky:

I was very glad to find in him, besides his remarkable gifts as a born violinist, a musical culture, a delicate understanding, and—in the exercise

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\(^{15}\) Morgan, 173.
of his profession—an abnegation that is very rare. His beautiful mastery of technique comes from the magnificent school of Leopold Auer, that marvelous teacher to whose instruction we owe nearly all the celebrated violinists of today.  

The feeling was mutual, as Dushkin later wrote about Stravinsky:

His personal charm was evident at once. It was not long before I realized that he was not only capable of giving tenderness and affection but seemed to be in great need of them himself… The Stravinsky I had heard about and imagined and the Igor Fiodorovitch I met seemed two different people… We came to a perfect understanding.

It had been suggested that Stravinsky collaborate with Dushkin to write a violin concerto, and Stravinsky was apprehensive about composing a large work for an instrument he did not play:

To know the technical possibilities of an instrument without being able to play it is one thing; to have that technique in one’s finger tips is quite another. I realized the difference, and before beginning the work I consulted Hindemith, who is a perfect violinist. I asked him whether the fact that I did not play the violin would make itself felt in my composition. Not only did he allay my doubts, but he went further and told me that it would be a very good thing, as it would make me avoid a routine technique, and would give rise to ideas which would not be suggested by the familiar movement of the fingers.

Dushkin described their collaboration:

My function was to advise Stravinsky how his ideas could best be adapted to the exigencies of the violin as a concert display instrument. At various intervals he would show me what he had written, sometimes a page, sometimes only a few lines, sometimes half a movement. Then we discussed whatever suggestions I was able to make. Whenever he

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16 Stravinsky, Autobiography, 261-262.


accepted one of my suggestions, even a simple change such as extending the range of the violin by stretching the phrase to the octave below and the octave above, Stravinsky would insist on altering the very foundations correspondingly. He behaved like an architect who if asked to change a room on the third floor had to go down to the foundations to keep the proportions of his whole structure… Stravinsky’s music is so original and so personal that it constantly posed new problems of technique and sound for the violin. These problems often touched the very core of the composition itself and led to most of our discussions.19

After the successful collaboration with the violinist to write his only violin concerto, Stravinsky wanted to work with Dushkin again on a set of chamber music works for violin and piano in 1931. Stravinsky wrote:

Far from having exhausted my interest in the violin, my Concerto, on the contrary, impelled me to write yet another important work for that instrument. I had formerly no great liking for a combination of piano and strings, but a deeper knowledge of the violin and close collaboration with a technician like Dushkin had revealed possibilities I longed to explore. Besides, it seemed desirable to open up a wider field for my music by means of chamber concerts, which are so much easier to arrange…20

Stravinsky was an excellent businessman in addition to his artistry, and many times these two facets of his personality seemed in conflict to his contemporaries. Andriessen clarifies:

Two images of the “neoclassical” Stravinsky have long competed for the honor of being the one and only true image. The first is that of the petit bourgeois, revanchist composer, recognizable in a scornfully ironical characterization by Simon Vestdijk: “Stravinsky the person, the respectable husband and the hard worker, good Christian and neo-Thomist, officially recognized celebrity, who dedicated his compositions to God.” The other is already hinted at in 1924 in the magazine Comoedia: “…I was able to ask the young Russian maestro several questions without giving him the feeling of being submitted to an interview. He answered with the marvelous indifference of a banker explaining his minor business affairs to an agent of the sûreté.” What emerges here is a considerably more realistic image—that of the grand

19 Dushkin, 186-187.

bourgeois Stravinsky and his potentially polemic attitude of businesslike artistry.\textsuperscript{21}

Stravinsky knew that he would be able to introduce his music to areas that did not have “large orchestras of high quality, which are so costly and so rarely to be found except in big cities.”\textsuperscript{22} By touring a program of violin and piano works, Stravinsky set up concerts in venues where audiences would otherwise not have been able to hear his music. He also hoped to make more money by presenting these concerts so that audiences in these locations would be interested in his compositions and purchase the sheet music corresponding to the pieces performed. They also might buy recordings of the larger compositions, and Stravinsky could earn royalties from the sales. The \textit{Duo Concertant} for violin and piano was composed specifically for this series of recitals.

While writing the \textit{Duo Concertant} Stravinsky read a book by his friend Charles Albert Cingria (1883-1954) about the poet Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), known in English as Petrarch. Stravinsky quoted Cingria in Stravinsky’s \textit{Autobiography}:

\begin{quote}
Lyricism cannot exist without rules, and it is essential that they should be strict. Otherwise there is only a faculty for lyricism, and that exists everywhere. What does not exist everywhere is lyrical expression and composition. To achieve that, apprenticeship to a trade is necessary.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

Stravinsky continued in his own words:

\begin{quote}
These words of Cingria seemed to apply with the utmost appropriateness to the work I had in hand. My object was to create a lyrical composition, a work of musical versification, and I was more than ever experiencing the advantage of a rigorous discipline which gives a taste for the craft and the satisfaction of being able to apply it—and more particularly in work of a lyrical character.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{21} Andriessen, 81.
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\textsuperscript{22} Stravinsky, \textit{Autobiography}, 267.
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\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}, 268.
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\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid.}
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The composition reflected the influence of Cingria’s writing about Petrarch. Stravinsky writes:

The spirit and form of my *Duo Concertant* were determined by my love of the pastoral poets of antiquity and their scholarly art and technique. The theme that I had chosen developed through all the five movements of the piece which forms an integral whole, and, as it were, offers a musical parallel to the old pastoral poetry.  

The work is cast in five movements—*Cantilène, Eglogue I, Eglogue II, Gigue, and Dithyrambe*. All of the movements besides the *Gigue* feature titles that are associated with ancient poetry. The *cantilène* is an ancient type of French improvised lyrical poetry, often sung. The title also references the word cantilena—a long lyrical song-like melody. Three of the movements have specific references to “old pastoral poetry” in their titles. A dithyramb (translation of *dithyrambe* to English) is a hymn sung during festivals to the Greek god Dionysus, the god of wine and ecstasy. Dionysus was also associated with the growth of fruit and vegetables, a subject that rural, agrarian societies would include in their prayers. Often these poems feature irregular rhythmic patterns of text and they are extremely impassioned. The English translation of *eglogue* is eclogue, which is a type of pastoral poetry popularized in ancient Greece and Rome and revived by Petrarch.

Since the work was premiered in December, 1932, critics have been somewhat confused by the work. The *Gigue* in particular caused many problems of interpretation. Musicologist Neil Tierney criticized:

It is not a wholly endearing piece, mingling passages of grave beauty with garrulous episodes uncharacteristic of the composer… It is the *Gigue*, full of excitement and dash, but much too discursive and long, that ill accords with Stravinsky’s reputation for pithy and succinct utterances. The closing *Dithyrambe*…has a touch of mystery and serenity that redeem the more ungracious or perfunctory parts of the score.  

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Critic Eric Walter White calls the *Gigue* “boring.” Yet, the *Gigue* fits appropriately with the overarching pastoral theme. It is a rustic dance, and Stravinsky includes an episode of jazz infused music, which one could compare to a modern form of jig. As for the monotonous effect of the movement, early twenty-first century musicians might describe it as minimalist.

The piece’s connection to pastoral poetry was lost on Eric Walter White, who later explained that “in the long run, it would be best to put Stravinsky’s various explanations on one side and accept the work at its musical face value.” Cingria attended the first performance of the work in Paris on December 8, 1932. He wrote Stravinsky in a letter less than a week later:

> Only in the adagio, the [illegible] which can be hurled at full speed from the dust of diamonds. It is Petrarch. You [deserve] this equivalence. Do another Petrarch, in the manner of *Duo Concertant*. Perhaps this title would make them understand. How good it [is]; I am in it entirely. The trees are red on the snow. *Pétrarque* has appeared and will be sent to you from Lausanne.

Cingria refers to the final publication of the book that Stravinsky read while composing the *Duo Concertant*. The copy that Cingria sent to Stravinsky was inscribed, “To the author of *Duo Concertant*, which goes so well with Petrarch, from the [author] of this book, which [seeks to] justify nothing in the deafness of our era.”

Of *Pulcinella*, Stravinsky’s ballet that borrowed music from eighteenth-century composer Pergolesi, Stravinsky said, “*Pulcinella* was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible.” In most neoclassical music, composers reference music from the eighteenth century. However,

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Stravinsky goes even further back in the *Duo Concertant*. The word pastoral used in association with music often brings to mind Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony. While Beethoven’s symphony referenced the imagined pastoral utopia of Arcadia, Stravinsky brought that world to life as well as those of ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and medieval Italy and France through the *Duo Concertant*. Stravinsky found a way to write a pastoral piece of music that references historic styles of art without including Beethoven. Instead of being inspired by western classical music of another era, Stravinsky was inspired by ancient poetry. Stravinsky’s work questions the meaning of neo-classicism. Through exploring the evident similarities between Stravinsky’s eclogues and those of Petrarch, an expanded definition may be found.

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31 For further information, see: Maureen Carr, *Multiple Masks: Neoclassicism in Stravinsky’s Works on Greek Subjects* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).
CHAPTER 2
A BRIEF HISTORY AND ANALYSIS OF BUCOLIC POETRY AND THE ECLOGUE

To fully grasp what Stravinsky accomplished with the *Duo Concertant*, it is important to understand the history of pastoral poetry as well as have knowledge of Petrarch and his writings. In today’s noisy society many people seek an escape to the relative quiet of nature through second homes in small, rural towns and vacations to national parks and reserves. Surprisingly, this is not a new phenomenon. Ever since there have been cities, the countryside has been thought of as a place for peace and reflection. Artists throughout history have responded to the romanticization of the pastoral lifestyle. The Greek poet Theocritus (c. 316-260 B.C.) is widely acknowledged as the father of pastoral poetry, and his *Idylls* served as a model for many future pastoral poets—most importantly, Virgil—through the use of bucolic poems.

Many thesauri consider the words pastoral and bucolic to be synonyms, but this is somewhat incorrect. The word pastoral is a broad term that describes music, fashion, visual art, literature, poetry, and or philosophy that are derived from the simplicity of country life (usually as contrasted with urban existence). “Bucolic” also references rural life, but it is more specific and can only be applied to poetry. Scholar David M. Halperin clarifies:

_Bucolic_, as the word was used in antiquity, referred only to poetry; it would have been impossible for an ancient writer to qualify a prose narrative, a painting, or an outlook on the world as bucolic. Furthermore, what differentiates pastoral in the view of many modern critics is not a way of ordering verbal structures or combining particular themes—not, in short, a mode of literary discourse—but a set of attitudes which, to be sure, are expressed _par excellence_ in the formal productions of Renaissance and Neo-Classical pastoral but which can nonetheless be shown to antedate the creation of the pastoral convention in antiquity and to have survived the death of the genre in the late eighteenth century. This persistent habit of mind cannot be traced to the authorship or influence of any one individual; its origins seem to be as old as civilization itself.
Bucolic poetry, however, was invented by a historical personage at a specific point in time.\textsuperscript{32}

The pastoral sensibility is somewhat timeless and manifests itself in various ways in the zeitgeist of every culture, whereas bucolic refers to a particular style that emerged in ancient Greece. Theocritus created the term \textit{boukolikos} (“of or pertaining to a cowherd or cowherds”\textsuperscript{33}), and bucolic is the modern form of his word.

Most information about Theocritus comes from his own poetry. He was born in Syracuse, Sicily, and he traveled throughout ancient Greece—both city and countryside—during his life. At this time, Sicily was somewhat rustic, and Theocritus was aware of the customs of rural life. Greeks colonized Sicily from Arcadia in southern Greece. Critic John Heath-Stubbs argues:

From ancient times, indeed, the Arcadians had been known as the most primitive of the peoples of Greece, and they claimed to be the most ancient—holding that they remembered a time before the moon was created. Their neighbors noted the simplicity of their manners, and also one might add, sometimes their savagery. Lycaon, who drew upon himself the wrath of Zeus by offering him human sacrifice, was an Arcadian hero, and there is evidence that the same savage practice persisted among Arcadian peasants in historical times. Pan, the shaggy goat-footed and goat-horned god, was primarily an Arcadian deity. He might inspire travelers in lonely places with irrational ‘panic’ terror, and the shepherds feared to pipe at noon lest they should disturb his siesta. Yet, in thoroughly primitive fashion, hunters would flog his statue if he did not grant them success in the chase.\textsuperscript{34}

The Arcadian shepherds are the main characters in Theocritus’s \textit{Idylls}, and he presented a picture of what their lives were like in his poetry.


\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, 79.

The word idyll comes from the Greek word eidyllion, which means “little picture.” Scholar Anna Rist said:

Theocritus’s poetic technique produces a visual effect, a scene composed of fine detail, and is comparable in this to the contemporary plastic and pictorial arts with their highly imaginative choices of subject and dramatic capturing of the fleeting moment… Often one “picture” is superimposed on another by the juxtaposition of motifs of high imaginative impact that are particularly visual in quality, though the appeal to the ear is constantly there also.

The poetry presents a realistic version of the life shepherds lived at this time. Eidyllion can be contrasted with the Greek word idea (ideal), as much of Theocritus’s poetry idealizes the country life. Heath-Stubbs writes:

These shepherds are for the most part free peasants, who own their own flocks and obviously enjoy a reasonable if simple standard of living. This way of life was in fact passing in Theocritus’s own generation, and the shepherds of Sicily were being reduced to the status of serfs employed on the estates of large-scale landlords. It is this perhaps which throws its glow of nostalgia over his poetry, as of a lost golden age. But the poems are far removed from that depiction of a wholly idealized and artificial world of refined poetical shepherds into which pastoral poetry was to evolve in later ages.

Another form of idealization is important to Theocritus’s poetry—namely the glorification of the rural life as contrasted with living in the city. While the Arcadian transplants in Sicily were the subject of his poetry, Theocritus presented his work to the citizens of Alexandria. In the third century B.C., Alexandria was a highly developed, urbanized city, and its society represented a mixture of Greek and Egyptian cultures. It was founded by Alexander the Great during his conquests of North Africa in 332 B.C.

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36 Ibid.
37 Heath-Stubbs, 3.
As a wealthy city, education and knowledge were highly valued, and its citizens were patrons of culture. Heath-Stubbs clarifies:

It was this patronage which attracted Theocritus in common with many other poets of the Greek-speaking world to live and work in the Egyptian city. Alexandria, with its varied population of native Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and many others, was a cosmopolitan urban center more like the cities of the modern world than the little city-republics of classical Greece had been… Hence there grew up, as perhaps never before in history, a nostalgia for the life of the country and a tendency to idealize it. It was to the taste thus engendered that the pastoral poetry of Theocritus appealed.\footnote{Ibid., 2.}

The large, urban city model of society conflicts with the previous nomadic model of life, and literary critic Leo Marx suggests that pastoral poetry might be an “ambivalent response to rapid social change.” He continues:

It is a not improbable conjecture that the feeling that humanity was becoming over-civilized, that life was getting too complicated and over-refined, dates from the time when the cave-man first became such. It can hardly be supposed—if cave-men were at all like their descendants—that none among them discoursed with contempt upon the cowardly effeminacy of living under shelter or upon the exasperating inconvenience of constantly returning for food and sleep to the same place instead of being free to roam at large in the wide-open spaces.\footnote{Halperin, 86.}

In other words, the yearning for a simple life is as old as mankind. But, with every change in technology and lifestyle, a new desire for simplicity begins again. It is remarkable that through the lens of the rural world, Theocritus is able to comment on man’s inherent character. He established the tradition that bucolic poetry would be in dramatic format (either monologue or dialogue). This style possibly comes from “a type of improvised poetry still in use in some parts of Italy.”\footnote{Heath-Stubbs, 3.} Of the first \textit{Idyll}, Rist concludes:
Onto a setting of simple beauty in nature, art, and human friendliness, Theocritus has superimposed the tragic conflict of nature in man, at once generous and egocentric in its pulls, and suggests that the struggle for integrity and nobility is to the death, against a tyranny whose seat is in man’s own breast. ⁴¹

This poem features a dialogue between a shepherd, Thyrsis, and an unnamed goatherd. Though not educated, the characters made astute comments on humanity. Scholar Kathryn J. Gutzwiller explains:

In reading the first Idyll we hear both the voice of the poet and the voice of the characters, not speaking quite in unison, nor totally in dissonance, but commenting in a simple way and a sophisticated way at the same time… The implication for Idyll I is that the herdsmen are to be viewed as simple men who deserve a smile of indulgence and, at the same time, as men who can put into simple form universal truths that may have escaped the notice of the sophisticate amid the complexities of urban life. ⁴²

The poem begins with the two characters meeting each other in midday. Thyrsis tells the goatherd that his flute playing is excellent (second only to the god Pan), but the goatherd refuses to play for Thyrsis out of fear of waking Pan from his nap. Instead, the goatherd offers a wooden bowl as a prize to Thyrsis if he will sing of Daphnis, the mythical shepherd poet. The prize itself offers some wisdom. On the bowl, three stages of life are depicted to show a progression towards wisdom. Rist said:

Art of a higher degree, not merely ordering nature but bodying forth man’s self-awareness—the respect in which he is unlike the beasts—is also a prominent theme of this as of other Idylls… There are depicted three ages of Man, no doubt in a symmetrical arrangement of figures, the three “vignettes” being conventionally framed by borders of vines: a boy, flanked by two foxes, absorbed in his hobby and oblivious of the menace they constitute; two youths flanking a woman who here represents the perverse eros, and obsessed to exhaustion with their courtship of her;

⁴¹ Rist, 27.

Thyrsis sings of Daphnis to win the cup, and Theocritus further expounds on his point that humans struggle against their natural impulses of desire. Daphnis, according to mythology, was the son of a water nymph, and he grew up in the wilderness, becoming a cowherd and musician. He made a vow of fidelity to a water nymph, but was overcome with desire (personified by the god Eros; Daphnis’s vow of fidelity was considered an insult to Eros) for a human girl, who seduced him. As punishment for breaking his pledge, he was blinded. He resumed his vow of fidelity, and he now lies dying. However, he still wishes to break the oath again. A series of gods visit Daphnis, Aphrodite (Eros’s mother) being the last. Thrysis sings, “Lastly came smiling Aphrodite—only/she hid her smile, pretending grief. She said:/’You boasted, Daphnis, you would give Eros a fall:/have you not been thrown yourself by the tormentor?’” (Lines 101-104). Angered by Aphrodite’s teasing torment, Daphnis dies and will not let Aphrodite save him. Thyrsis sings (in the voice of Daphnis), “Here, my master: relieve me of this pipe of reeds,/caulked with wax—its breath so sweet, and trim about the lip, with bands…Already I/am Hades-bound:  Eros pulls me down!” (Lines 135-138). Theocritus makes the point through simple shepherds and goatherds that humans struggle with desire their entire lives until it kills them. Rist clarifies:

Characteristically, [Theocritus] is more concerned with the consistency of the internal action, the psychology of Daphnis’ fate, than with the external events. Daphnis’ death is both wanton and inevitable, both a punishment and a choice. It is paid to satisfy some complete order of the universe, but

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43 Rist, 24.
44 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 33.
it is even in one sense satisfying to the victim. The last line of the song suggests that by it his fidelity is vindicated, his fault atoned.\textsuperscript{47}

The psychological complexity of Theocritus’s poetry made his work popular among the Alexandrians, and many poets imitated his style. As the Roman society eclipsed that of the Greeks, many Roman artists were inspired by their Greek predecessors. At the same time, a nationalistic fervor prompted them to remodel the existing Greek culture into their own Roman image. Publius Virgilius Maro (70-19 B.C.), known as Virgil, was born into a creative culture that valued the Greek works but had also modernized them to suit various needs. Scholar H. J. Rose explains:

Their interests were either personal or political; if personal, they centered around a good deal of love-making and quarrelling, together with endless debate, mostly friendly enough, concerning literary matters. If political, they were generally violent, partly no doubt because to be violent in such matters gives admirable scope for lampoons, and Latin is a beautiful language for abuse.\textsuperscript{48}

Virgil was born at Andes, a village near Mantua, to an agrarian family. He was educated in Cremona, Milan, and eventually Rome, where he learned of Greek literature. Rome would have represented a big change for the small-town farm boy, and ultimately, Virgil became a permanent fixture of Rome. In Virgil’s lifetime, political turmoil abounded. Julius Caesar was crowned Emperor, murdered, and then civil war erupted between the camps of Octavian Augustus Caesar and Brutus. The climate in Rome was violent, and the concept of a sentimental, simple pastoral lifestyle might have seemed appealing to society.

Virgil was urged by one of his teachers to write pastoral poetry, and his \textit{Eclogues} (or \textit{Bucolics}), composed between 42 and 37 B.C., were the results. It is possible that Virgil called the set of bucolic poems \textit{eclogues} because he selectively referenced and updated specific passages in Theocritus’s \textit{Idylls}. The word \textit{eclogue} indicated pastoral poetry, but it also emerged with the added meaning selection. The \textit{Idylls} were clearly the

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 27.

inspiration, but Virgil modernized the works to suit Roman needs. Scholar Barbara Hughes Fowler argues:

There are echoes of Theocritus’s work throughout the *Eclogues*, whether in the general structure and subject matter of a particular poem or in the paraphrasing or actual translation of individual lines. Despite the obvious borrowings from Theocritus, Virgil’s *Eclogues* are not at all Theocritean. Theocritus’s *Idylls*, though sometimes set in Sicily or Cos, generally reflect the flora of the eastern Mediterranean, where he must have traveled. Virgil’s *Eclogues* are for the most part set in an imaginary Arcadia which is also at times his native Italian countryside.\(^{49}\)

Virgil’s eclogues comment on the dangerous political situation of his time. Literary Judith Haber clarifies:

Virgil does not, of course, answer the questions that he raises, but neither, really did Theocritus. The two poets are connected because they are both concerned with problems of continuity. And the fact that Virgil’s vision is considerably bleaker than Theocritus’s reinforces their connection at the same time that it makes their separation clear: the problematic that exists in both poets’ works is reproduced in the distance between them. Virgil’s understanding of Theocritus thus enables him to reimagine pastoral in increasingly darker forms, and, conversely, to view seemingly “antipastoral” situations and emotions as essentially pastoral.\(^{50}\)

Another innovation in Virgil’s poetry is the use of allegorical characters and situations to represent real, living people and events. In Virgil’s first eclogue, By 41 B.C., Octavian was the Emperor of the Rome, and Virgil’s father was the victim of political maneuvering. Octavian promised veterans land in Italy, and Virgil’s father’s land was to be given away to soldiers. However, Virgil pleaded with the emperor through a lawsuit and won. The first eclogue celebrates Octavian’s merciful treatment of Virgil’s family.


The eclogues represent Virgil’s first mature works. They were extremely popular in Rome, and they were performed in theatres to great acclaim. Scholar M. Owen Lee explains:

[Virgil] probably expected only to stimulate minds and imaginations; he appears also to have touched hearts: Tacitus reports that during one of the public performances the shy and retiring Virgil was present, and the crowd rose spontaneously in tribute. This might have been in deference to a young poet who had successfully rendered in Latin an elusive Greek Alexandrian art form; it was more likely in honor of a man who had caught up everyone’s recent history in a poetic instant and preserved it. He had given the permanence of art to the ordinary man’s sufferings in the civil wars, and expressed the hopes of all Italians for a peaceful future. They were grateful.\(^{51}\)

Because of their popularity, the eclogues continued to be studied throughout the history of the Roman Empire. Virgil’s bucolic poetry expanded upon the concept of complex answers to life’s fundamental questions being found through the simplicity of the rural world.

As the Catholic Church gained power by converting Europeans to Christianity, the works of the Greek and Roman writers became less studied. They were thought to be pagan and philosophically dissonant with Christian values because of their blatant references to polytheistic religions. As a result, many works lay dormant in libraries. By the fourteenth century, Virgil’s Eclogues were rediscovered and championed by Petrarch. He was inspired to write the Bucolicum Carmen, a set of twelve Latin eclogues, in a style modeled after Virgil’s eclogues. The use of mythology abounded and the dramatic style was still present, but Petrarch’s eclogues were highly personal in a way that none had been before. While hundreds of years passed between Virgil and Petrarch, each built on the foundation of the work of Theocritus.

CHAPTER 3

PETRARCH AND HUMANISM IN THE POETIC WORD

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Europe was still engulfed in what would later be described as the Dark Ages. Power was held by a very small percentage of extremely rich nobles alongside the Catholic Church. The average person lived in destitute conditions and rarely had any opportunity for advancement. Knowledge, many times the source of true power, was also held hostage by the upper classes. Being able to read was a rare skill, and many of the world’s important books were kept locked away in monasteries’ libraries. Monks were trained to read and write in order to make copies of books in order to disperse knowledge to select members of the Church. Many young men took religious orders with the goal of being educated. This gave the Catholic Church the power to suppress any information it found unseemly for the literate public. As a result, many of history’s greatest works fell into obscurity, waiting to be discovered in molding libraries throughout Europe. Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), in English known as Petrarch, emerged from medieval Italy to become one of the most important thinkers and writers of all time. His reverence for knowledge and the written word ultimately changed the world.

Petrarch was born on July 20, 1304 to Ser Petracco and Eletta Canigiani in Arezzo, Tuscany. Petracco was a successful lawyer in Florence before being banished to Tuscany due to trumped up charges of falsifying a legal document in 1302. At the end of the Middle Ages, lawyers were considered an educated class, and it was often a family trade. Petrarch was expected to follow in his family’s footsteps. But the political situation was tenuous, and life or death could be decided by the prevailing political sentiment. Biographer Henry C. Hollway-Calthrop writes of Petrarch, “Owing to his father’s banishment from Florence, he was ‘begotten and born in exile;’ and throughout the seventy years of his life he never continued long in one stay.”

The change in locale also probably had a large effect on the man Petrarch would become. While he enjoyed friendship with many influential people in courts throughout Italy and France, he often

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escaped this fast paced lifestyle to the serenity of the country, and it became a major theme in his writing. Hollway-Calthrop suggests, “The passion for Nature, which distinguishes Petrarch from his predecessors, was surely first aroused in him by the beauty of his childhood’s home.” Ultimately, the family (with the addition of a younger son, Gherardo, born in 1307) moved to Avignon, France, another relatively small town in the Provence region, in 1312.

As a young man, Petrarch and his father battled over Petrarch’s growing interest in books. He was often punished by having his books taken away from him, but this only served to strengthen his curiosity. In 1316, Petrarch was sent to Montpelier, France, to begin studying for a career in law, and he moved to Bologna, Italy, in 1320 with his brother Gherardo to continue his education. Here, he continued his love of the country. Petrarch wrote:

I used to go with those of my own age, and on festal days we would wander to a great distance, so that the sun often set while we were still in the country, and we did not get back till the dead of night. But the city gates stood open, or if by any chance they had been shut, there was no wall to the town, but only a brittle paling half rotten by age…so that you could approach it from numberless points, and each of us could make entry where it suited his convenience.54

His pastoral adventures served as an interesting counterpoint to the training he was receiving from some of the most important lawyers practicing in Italy, which he found somewhat frustrating. Petrarch wrote:

Philosophy is so prostituted to the fancies of the vulgar, that it aims only at hair-splitting on subtle distinctions and quibbles of words… Truth is utterly lost sight of, sound practice is neglected, and the reality of things is despised… People concentrate their whole attention on empty words.55

53 Ibid., 10.
54 Ibid., 23.
55 Ibid., 21.
Ser Petracco died in 1326, and this freed Petrarch from his father’s insistence on a career in law. He and Gherardo returned to Avignon, where Petrarch took minor ecclesiastical orders. In his early days in service of the Church, according to Encyclopedia Brittanica:

Petrarch enjoyed life in Avignon, and there is a famous description of him and his brother as dandies in its polished courtly world; but he was also making a name there for his scholarship and the elegance of his culture.  

At this time, it was not possible for a man of letters to make a living just from writing; many writers were lawyers or involved in the Church. Petrarch, deeply religious, chose a career in the Church, rejecting the worldly corruptions of Law. Ironically, at this time working for the Church was more of a political career. Petrarch would later serve as an ambassador and negotiator to various principalities in Italy.

April 6, 1327, would prove to be an important day in Petrarch’s life. This was the day he first saw Laura—the muse who would inspire his most enduring work of poetry, the *Canzoniere* (a collection of sonnets partially dedicated to his chaste love of Laura). It was love at first sight. Petrarch wrote in the third sonnet of the *Canzoniere*:

It was on that day when the sun's ray  
was darkened in pity for its Maker,  
that I was captured, and did not defend myself,  
because your lovely eyes had bound me, Lady.  
It did not seem to me to be a time to guard myself  
against Love's blows: so I went on  
confident, unsuspecting; from that, my troubles  
started, amongst the public sorrows.  
Love discovered me all weaponless,  
and opened the way to the heart through the eyes,  
which are made the passageways and doors of tears:  
so that it seems to me it does him little honour  
to wound me with his arrow, in that state,  
he not showing his bow at all to you who are armed.  

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While Petrarch never divulged her identity, he admitted that for whatever reason they would never be able to be together. He loved her for his whole life, and he continually revised the *Canzoniere*. In 1348, Laura (one among many of his friends) was killed by an outbreak of the plague. This served as a major turning point in Petrarch’s life. By 1350, he had given up all sensual pleasures in his life. Petrarch writes:

> In my youth I bore the stress of a passion most violent, through honorable and the single one of my life; and I should have borne it even longer than I did, had not Death, opportune in spite of its bitterness, quenched the flame just as it was beginning to grow less intense.  

With her death, he began to rethink the importance of worldly things, and the later poems in the *Canzoniere* reflect his change of philosophy. Petrarch wrote in the 364th sonnet of the *Canzoniere*:

> Love held me burning, twenty-one years, happy in the fire, and in grief full of hope: then, when my lady leapt to heaven with my heart, another ten years, weeping. Now I'm weary, and reclaim my life from that error that almost crushed the seeds of virtue: and, God on high, I grant my final years devotedly to you: penitent and sad at my years ill spent, that should have been put to better use, in fleeing trouble and finding peace. Lord, who first imprisoned me in this cell, release me, save me from eternal harm, who know my fault, and do not excuse it.  

Laura became a symbol of mortal desires, and he rejected the profane aspects of his love for her to embrace religion and spirituality. Scholar John Took writes, “Laura…came to

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58 Hollway-Calthrop, 33.

symbolize for him every kind of worldly desire and happiness, poetic and philological as well as erotic.”

While consumed with love for Laura, he still continued his affair with books and scholarship. In 1329, he began the first of many travels throughout Europe. These trips served both a sight-seeing tourist function as well as a treasure hunting excavation of monastery libraries for lost manuscripts. Petrarch wrote:

Whenever I took a far journey, I would turn aside to any old monasteries that I chanced to see in the distance, saying: “Who knows whether some scrap of the writings I covet may not lie here?” Thus about the twenty-fifth year of my age, in the course of a hurried journey among the Belgians and Swiss, I came to Liège, and hearing that there was a good quantity of books there, I stayed and detained my companions while I copied out one of Cicero’s speeches with my own hand and another by the hand of a friend, which I afterwards published throughout Italy. And to give you a laugh, I may tell you that in this fine barbaric city it was a hard matter to find a drop of ink, and what we did get was exactly the color of saffron.

The discovery of Cicero’s speeches among other lost manuscripts made Petrarch a champion of classical literature. Petrarch advocated the creation of private libraries, outside of the reach of the Church’s dogma. He also became an editor and translator of these newly discovered works, and he was influenced by their contents. Indeed, Petrarch wrote almost exclusively in Latin. These works represent his true indebtedness to classical literature and scholarship. Like Cicero, he wrote literary letters to his friends and family, commenting on both the nature of man and his own life. Scholar Letizia Panizza explains:

The literary letter suited him perfectly. It allowed him to express intimate thoughts on matters large and small in a lively, relaxed style—direct address to a friend—which could nevertheless drip with classical allusions at every turn of phrase. By means of his letters he fashioned his own persona, and some became miniature literary masterpieces—his account of a climb of nearby Mount Ventoux with his younger brother (Familiares

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61 Hollway-Calthrop, 44.
IV, I, 26 April 1336), for example. The various stages and frustrations of the upward journey are followed by Petrarch’s commentary on his own—and mankind’s—stages and frustrations in a spiritual journey.62

Through the fervid study and adoration of literature from antiquity, Petrarch hoped to comment on his own modern existence. This was the foundation of what would later be known as Humanism. The distant past represented a bright future for Humanists. Through the study of classical texts, new understanding could be wrought to better mankind. Education was at the forefront of the philosophy—an understanding of history, for instance, produced more enlightened members of society. After centuries of knowledge being held captive by the few, the Humanists wanted to expunge corruption from the medieval world. To the average, educated fourteenth-century eyes and ears, classical philosophy seemed new, and Petrarch’s writing became very popular among the courts in Europe. As a result, knowledge became in vogue among the upper classes; owning a library could be considered a status symbol. This rise in the culture of letters eventually led to the creation of the printing press, a major catalyst of the Renaissance in the fifteenth century. It also led to the formation of liberal arts colleges, where students studied history, rhetoric, poetry, and moral philosophy.

Petrarch’s classical scholarship is still influential today, but it was in opposition to the prevailing attitude of medieval scholars. Ancient Greek and Roman writings were thought to have nothing to do with a Christian lifestyle, and they were considered pagan—in the most pejorative sense of the word. Petrarch rejected these notions, and he advocated that there was no problem in utilizing the gods of antiquity along side the Christian religion. His writing often used metaphors from both cultures, which also influenced Italian writers in the fifteenth century (known as the Quattrocento) both positively and negatively. Panizza clarifies:

Petrarch’s combination of literary talents with classical scholarship fired Quattrocento humanists, but not unreservedly. His moral treatises aligned

the poet/philosopher/scholar with the contemplative life of solitude and reflection, and equated this life with Christian virtue.  

Many agreed with his message of knowledge as power, but some found the idea of a life away from society old-fashioned. He viewed the ancient writings as supporting materials in the argument for Christianity because of their ultimate moral standpoint. Through classical use of logic later in life, Petrarch became an even more devout Christian than he was in his youth.

Another decision that greatly affected Petrarch’s spiritual evolution was his brother Gherardo’s decision to enter a Carthusian monastery in 1343. The Carthusians aimed to include the solitude of hermits into their lifestyle. Most time was spent alone in prayer and silence. This represented a corporeal manifestation of one of Petrarch’s chief spiritual concerns—the quest for fortune and fame contrasted with the isolation and simplicity of rural life. Gherardo’s choice to leave the excitement of court life made Petrarch question his own situation. Petrarch’s position in the church afforded him the opportunity to socialize with the most elite members of society everywhere he went. He was often given prizes by various cities for his work, and he often wrote literary letters to members of court (including nobility). At the same time, he kept a home in Vaucluse, France (just outside of Avignon), where he retreated when he grew tired of his fast paced lifestyle. At Vaucluse, Petrarch was able to take long walks in the woods, garden, visit with friends, and write at his own pace. The rural landscape represented a freedom to create. Petrarch wrote to Cardinal Colonna (his superior at the time) in 1346:

Our peace you will find better than a city’s strife…
The grass will serve you for a couch, the trees
With their green branches form a roof for you,
And Philomel, unmoved as yet by love,
Will bring her cither and with tremolant throat,
Charming the woods, will sing her song of spring.
Then, if you will, my books will talk to you.  

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63 Ibid., 133.

Petrarch’s love of nature (the woods in particular) was widely known among his friends, and they gave him the nickname Silvanus (after Silvius, a character from Roman mythology, who was born in the woods).

Francesco Petrarch represents the culture of Europe in the fourteenth century. Change was in the air, and through Petrarch’s dedication to scholarship and friendship, he was able to profoundly affect life for many people. From the rebellious teenager combing through books to the older, respected scholar of antiquity, Petrarch’s quest for knowledge characterized a culture that was waiting for new answers to life’s questions. The progressive thrust came in the form of rediscovery of the past. Hidden away for centuries, the works of antiquity inspired Petrarch to create a new philosophy. While tortured by the nature of his existence, his struggle proved to enlighten many empowered citizens of a world where education was more valued than in the Middle Ages.
CHAPTER 4
THE FIRST ECLOGUE OF STRAVINSKY AND PETRARCH

Between 1346 and 1352, Petrarch composed a set of twelve Latin eclogues called the *Bucolicum Carmen*. Petrarch wrote in a letter to his brother:

Oppressed by tasks and troubles I could not give my attention to any work of sustained effort but having been accustomed from childhood to do something even if not always well I could not remain idle. So I chose the middle way and, setting aside more serious matters, I set about to compose something that would help me put my time to good use. And the aspect of that rural scene, the solitary woods, whither I would betake myself at dawn to relieve the troublesome cares of my spirit and whence I would return only with the coming of night, moved me to compose something of a pastoral nature. So, putting into effect something I had long pondered, I began to write a bucolic poem divided into twelve eclogues…

Petrarch used the eclogues to regain focus when he was unable to concentrate on writing his large work, *Africa*. His revival of eclogues during this period reflected a general desire to return to the philosophy of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Compared to medieval writings, these works would have seemed almost avant-garde to fourteenth-century readers. They were stylized, with the true meaning of what Petrarch was writing obscured in allegory.

Petrarch described the *Bucolicum Carmen* as “an ambiguous kind of poem that few might understand but many might find pleasing.” The allegorical nature helped him to comment on a multitude of topics. The entire set of eclogues features discussions of politics, a eulogy for a friend, criticism of religion and religious figures, celebration of good leaders, and comments about his own life. Literary critics have had to sift through the rural metaphors to figure out exactly what Petrarch was saying. Because it was unclear, Petrarch even wrote to his brother to explain what the first eclogue was truly about. The *Bucolicum Carmen* was extremely popular when it was published in 1357,

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and it continued to be copied regularly until about one hundred years after Petrarch’s death. During this time, having a commentary on one’s work was a sign of great esteem, and Benvenuto da Imola (a friend of both Petrarch and Dante) wrote one before he died in 1381. By 1581, very few new editions of the poetry were published—translator Thomas Bergin only knew of three between 1581 and the 1970s. Translations were rare as well. Full editions had only appeared in Italian and French. While the first and the third eclogues were found in English before, Bergin’s work reflects the first complete translation of the set into English.67

Stravinsky may have found a personal connection to Petrarch as he read Cingria’s book. During the 1920s, Stravinsky composed several neo-classical works that were influenced by music from the late eighteenth century. Petrarch could also be viewed as a neo-classicist. Like Stravinsky, Petrarch used older forms for modern purposes. Literature scholar John Took writes:

[The] humanist encounter with antiquity is for him a matter not primarily of aesthetic concern (though it is that too), but of existential concern. It is in and through the text, as subject to a kind of re-enactment in conscience, that he seeks to define the shape and substance of his own problematic being. This process of self-definition in and through the text is everywhere discernible in his work. At every stage of his experience as a poet and moralist, the authors and texts he takes most to heart are there as companions in the search for a properly structured and intelligible humanity…68

In the Bucolicum Carmen, Petrarch’s Latin did not conform to widely-used rules of grammar and syntax. He often used obscure (sometimes even incorrect) grammar, confusing his readers. Since he was a scholar, he most likely made these choices intentionally. Literary critic W. Leonard Grant writes:

The situation is far different when we turn to the mystifyingly allegorical and cryptic pastorals of Francesco Petrarca, who produced a round dozen of the most puzzling poems conceivable expressed in Latin hexameters as

67 Ibid., xi-xiii.

monotonous in rhythm as they are faulty in metre. These twelve eclogues, composed in a Latin sometimes turgid and obscure, are often so opaque in meaning that not only did scholars like Benvenuto Rambaldi and Donato Albanzani establish critical reputations by writing commentaries that explained the worst difficulties, but even their self-conscious author felt impelled to provide his admiring but puzzled friends with a key.69

Ultimately, the extremely stylized nature of the eclogues was confusing. This is very similar to the way Stravinsky used tonality in his neo-classical works. He conveyed the idea of tonal structures without fully delivering them; often, Stravinsky voiced tonal chords in odd ways to highlight dissonance. He also used ostinati to create a musical stasis, which locks the music in place and usually weakens a tonal chord progression. The ostinati are comparable to Petrarch’s “monotonous” Latin hexameters in the eclogues. By using a familiar language in a non-traditional way, Stravinsky was able to comment on modernity. The recognizable sounds of eighteenth-century music were transformed into a means of expressing the then current feeling that progress had taken the citizen nowhere. In Petrarch’s day, the eclogue would have been so old that readers would feel it was new. The eclogue was certainly a novelty by the time Stravinsky was composing the *Duo Concertant*, as the *Bucolicum Carmen* had fallen into relative obscurity. Neo-classical composers were interested in making something new out of something old, and this is exactly what Petrarch did with his eclogues. The eclogue served as an inspiration to both Petrarch and Stravinsky because of its history.

Stravinsky may have also been attracted to Petrarch because both traveled the world for their careers. By 1930, Stravinsky was a composer without a true home. Displaced from his native Russia by the Bolshevik Revolution, he lived in Paris for a time along with many Russian expatriates, and by 1931 settled in Switzerland where he wrote the *Duo Concertant* for a touring ensemble. Petrarch’s first eclogue depicts himself as someone who combs the earth for meaning. He and Stravinsky explored the world for different reasons.

The first eclogue of Petrarch is a dialogue between two shepherds, Silvius and Monicus. The first lines of the poem are (in Silvius’s voice):

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Monicus, hidden away alone in your quiet cavern,
You have been free to ignore the cares of the flock and the pastures;
I, hapless vagrant, go straying o’er thorny hills and through thickets.
Destiny—who could deny it?—has shaped different lots for twin brothers,
Born of one mother but having no hope of last rest together.⁷⁰

(Lines 1-5)

Petrarch chose the names specifically to show who the characters were, and he clarifies
this in a letter to his brother. Bergin observes:

In the letter Petrarch begins by explaining the significance of the namesorne by his speakers. He has called himself Silvius, he says, both
because the poem was composed in the woods and because he has always
had such great affection for the country and such a horror of cities that he
might as well be called Sylvanus as Franciscus. Gherardo is here
“Monicus,” after the designation of the Cyclops, signifying monoculus or
“one-eyed”; for of the two eyes that nature gave us for seeing the things of
earth and the things of heaven Gherardo keeps open only the one that is
fixed on the heavens.⁷¹

The two characters are brothers, and this sets up the allegory of the poem. Silvius (the
name Silvius is derived from a character in Roman mythology who was born in the
woods) represents Petrarch and Monicus represents Petrarch’s brother, Gherardo.
Petrarch was interested in traveling the world and becoming famous, while his brother
was a monk at a monastery.

The eclogue is divided into two sections. In the first section, Silvius and Monicus
discuss the differences in their lives. Silvius spends his time climbing mountains and
exploring the forest while Monicus has a quiet life in the caves. Monicus tries to get
Silvius to stop traveling and enter the caves. Petrarch writes (in the voice of Monicus):

Oh, if but only you might step over this stony threshold!
Why do you turn aside? Can it be that you fear these squalid
Huts or your well guarded leisure? Don’t frown; none under compulsion

⁷⁰ Petrarch, 3.
⁷¹ Ibid., 217.
Enters our caves, nay, many are turned away disappointed.\(^\text{72}\) (Lines 46-49)

In the second section, the brothers discuss the different philosophies and mythologies that shaped their lives. For Silvius, the poets of the antiquity are most important. Petrarch writes (in the voice of Silvius):

My masters sing of great Rome and of Troy and of kings locked in combat
Telling of love and its power, the effects of grief and of anger,
Who governs the flood and the winds, what spirit rules the high heavens.\(^\text{73}\) (Lines 75-77)

Monicus responds with his values that reflect the Christian philosophy. Petrarch writes (in the voice of Monicus), “Oh, but my master sings of the One, whom the gods He defeated/Reverence, Who with His nod can temper the fostering heavens…” (Lines 91-92).\(^\text{74}\) Monicus refers to Jesus as the god who succeeded in creating a monotheistic religion, which would defeat the gods in Greek and Roman mythology.

To fully understand the eclogue, it is important to grasp some of the symbolic images Petrarch uses. Petrarch writes (as Monicus), “Who, pray, bids you ascend with so much painful exertion/Lofty, unscaled mountain peaks, or to wander through desert wastelands,/Over moss-covered crags or where lonely cataracts thunder?” (Lines 8-10).\(^\text{75}\) This refers to Petrarch’s desire for fame; the unscaled mountain peaks represent fame itself. The desert wastelands signify “studies, which today are truly deserts, either ignored because of the greed for lucre or abandoned because of the hopeless sluggishness of intellects.”\(^\text{76}\) Meanwhile, for Monicus, the cave represents the monastery. Life is

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 7.
\(^{73}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{74}\) Ibid.
\(^{75}\) Ibid., 3.
\(^{76}\) Ibid., 217-218.
quiet and simple in that existence. Bergin writes, “The solitary cave is the Charterhouse of Montrieux, whither Gherardo has withdrawn to press the monastic life.”

Stravinsky composed many works for the stage and theatre that involved narrative programs. There are some striking similarities between the poetry and the music. Choosing the violin and piano instrumentation for the piece creates a musical dialogue similar to the two shepherds in Petrarch’s eclogue. But, he found the ensemble between keyboard and string instruments problematic. Stravinsky said:

For years I had disliked the sounds produced in combination by the percussive strings of the piano and the strings vibrated by the bow. In order to be able to accept this combination of instruments, I felt I had to use the smallest possible grouping, i.e., as two solo instruments, so as to find a way of solving the instrumental and acoustical problems arising from the alliance of the two different types of strings. This is what suggested the *Duo Concertant* for violin and piano. The wedding of the two instruments seemed to make for greater clarity than the combination of piano-forte with several stringed instruments, which tends to sound like an orchestral ensemble.

By forcing himself to write for a small ensemble, Stravinsky imposed a limitation on the composition—something that he liked. In the completed work, both parts have equal importance (as opposed to a virtuosic violin part with simple piano accompaniment), and the work is truly a duo. While Petrarch has to let his two characters take turns speaking, in music, both parts can speak at the same time without becoming cacophonous.

There are some structural similarities between the eclogues as well. Both have two major sections. In the music, measures 1-5 comprise the first section, and measures 6 to the end make up the second section. Both eclogues feature a general rustic quality. Petrarch writes about natural landscapes (i.e. caves, mountains, etc.). The violin part in Stravinsky’s eclogue could be viewed as stylized fiddle-music. The part requires the use of open strings, and it also features many fourths and fifths in double stops, which are generally associated with folk music. In the piano part, Stravinsky writes modal scales,

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77 Ibid., 217.


79 See Stravinsky’s response to Cingria’s words on Petrarch on page 10.
and they weaken the tonality of the music. Rustic folk music rarely functions with traditional Western tonality.

The temporal relationships in Stravinsky’s music create an interesting parallel with the poetry. In the first section, after four measures, there are no barlines for almost two pages of piano score. While the piano part’s ostinato locks the music in place, the sense of hierarchy of beats is completely lost. The two parts display opposing rhythmic groupings in the second section. The violin part’s accents do not line up with the piano part’s natural rhythmic flow (see Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1 Stravinsky, Duo Concertant, Eglogue I, m. 41-44](image)

In Petrarch, the two brothers live their lives independently of each other in completely different ways. Yet, Stravinsky also writes a canon in measure 5. This connects the two disparate voices (see Figure 4.2). The canon is voiced three beats apart. Later in this section without bar lines, the piano starts the canon, and the voices are only one beat apart, which brings the parts even closer together (see Figure 4.3). Much like the poem, only very early on are the two voices shown to be similar. It is possible that the violin and piano parts are representative of the two brothers. Both voices have distinct textures throughout the movement. The violin part is vibrant and features many leaps, different

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dynamics, and many registers. It is also technically challenging, and a listener would be aware of the difficulty (see Figure 4.4).

This is contrasted with the piano part, which almost always plays in a scalar, repetitive motion in the same general register. While actually somewhat complicated to perform, the sounding effect is one of simplicity (See Figure 4.5). This is a possible depiction of the two brothers’ lifestyles. The violin part would represent Silvius, as he is a wandering person in Petrarch’s eclogue. He climbs mountains and spends time at streams. The violin part’s registration changes could represent the different locations that Silvius visits. On the other hand, the piano part would represent Monicus. The simple writing lends itself to the image of monastic lifestyle. Not only does the modality of the part reflect a possible connection to Gregorian chant (which would have been sung in a fourteenth century monastery), but the goal of monastic life is ultimately one of simplicity.
Artists thrive on the influence of others to create their work. In particular, the past has served as inspiration to many writers and composers. Pastoral poetry from ancient Greece and Rome had an important impact on both Petrarch and Stravinsky, and both wrote fascinating eclogues. Through examining the connections between Petrarch and Stravinsky, our understanding of the *Duo Concertant* is enhanced. While the piece is not necessarily musically neo-classical (i.e. derived from late eighteenth-century musical styles), it has a relationship to Petrarch’s pastoral poetry from the fourteenth century. The fact that Stravinsky would give his music the same title as Petrarch’s poem offers a strong argument that he was aware of what he was doing. Because of this connection, the piece demonstrates non-traditional neo-classical characteristics.
CHAPTER 5

THE SECOND ECLOGUE OF PETRARCH AND STRAVINSKY

Petrarch’s second eclogue presents a eulogy to Argus, the king of the shepherds, spoken by three characters—Idaeus, Pythias, and Silvius. In Greek mythology, Argus was also known as Panoptes (all-seeing) because he had one hundred eyes. Yet again, Petrarch uses mythological characters to represent real people from his own life. In this case, Argus represents King Robert of Naples, who died in 1343. Petrarch wrote in a letter to Barbato da Sulmona and Giovanni Barrili, two members of the Neapolitan court:

It was that I should employ my weary hand in transcribing at least one specimen of the Bucolic poem which I lately composed in my solitude at Vaucluse—the part dedicated to the eternal memory of our most sainted king. In the words of Laelius, my desire is to send this acknowledgment—small indeed, but (as he imagines) acceptable—to you two and to Master Niccolò d’Alife, by whose advice and kind help he trusts that his affairs will have a favourable issue… In order that the sense of this Eclogue may be plainer you should learn that, according to the “argument” I mention, by the shepherd full of eyes is meant our most watchful lord king, who had been the far-sighted shepherd of his people; by “Idaeus” I mean our “Jupiter” (for Jove was brought up on Ida of Crete); by “Pythias” I mean our faithful Barbato from his signal renown for friendship; and since I may not assume this for myself, I have chosen to be not Damon but “Silvius”—both from my ingrained love of the woods, and because this form of poetry occurred to me (as I said) in my woodland solitude. The rest is clear. Again, farewell.

Thomas G. Bergin clarifies Petrarch’s letter and writes, “All of the gentlemen mentioned in the letter were prominent in the Neapolitan court; it was probably the eminence of Barrili, who was court chamberlain, that suggested Petrarch’s name for him,

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83 Ibid., 219-220.
‘Jupiter…” The use of the name Pythias comes from the story of Damon and Pythias. Anthony E. Smart explains:

[Damon and Pythias were] two young men whose loyalty to each other symbolizes true friendship. When Pythias, condemned to death by Dionysius the Elder, was released to arrange his affairs, Damon stayed on as hostage, pledged to die in place of Pythias, if he did not return. On Pythias' return, Dionysius freed them both.

The structure contrasts that of the first eclogue. In the second eclogue, Petrarch frames a dialogue between Pythias and Silvius with omniscient narration by Idaeus. Rather than a conversation between three characters about the death of Argus, Petrarch presents the story of a conversation between two people recounted by another person. This creates a form in four parts—introductory narration by Idaeus, Pythias’s eulogy, Silvius’s eulogy, and closing narration by Idaeus. The use of the narrative device is another example of Petrarch stylizing his work, which some literary critics found antithetical to the nature of the eclogue. Bergin writes, “Rossetti criticizes this kind of eclogue as repugnant to the dramatic mode which in his opinion is proper to the genre…” However, Petrarch succeeded in creating a statement of celebration and loss of a fallen ruler.

The musical counterpart to a eulogy is the elegy, and Stravinsky’s second eclogue could be described as elegiac. The slow movement features the dotted eighth-note, sixteenth-note rhythm typically associated with funeral marches (for example, Beethoven’s Third Symphony slow movement). Minor chords and ambiguous chords without thirds occur frequently, bringing to the ear a dark character. At measure 11, Stravinsky uses plodding eighth notes in the bass that could suggest a heartbeat propelled by grief (see Figure 5.1).

The music also serves as a contrast to the first eclogue’s fast and boisterous nature. Like Petrarch’s poetry, the parts come together in similar expression as

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84 Ibid., 220.
86 Petrarch, 220.
juxtaposed with the distinct opposition of texture in the first eclogue. Petrarch’s characters express their grief over the death of Argus, and Stravinsky’s two voices share the elegiac character, often in homophonic style.

This creates a more traditional sounding movement. In the poetry, Petrarch references more classical mythology than he does in his first eclogue, which lends a parallel to the movement’s grounding in semi-functional tonality.

Figure 5.1 Stravinsky, Duo Concertant, Eglogue II, m. 11-14

The form of the music, like the poetry, features four major sections—measures 1-11, measures 12-18, measures 19-25, and measures 26 through the end. The opening and closing sections both feature two motives that link them together. The first gesture features an oscillation between an upper and lower pitch and occurs in the first two bars (see Figure 5.2). In the violin part, the upper voice of the double stop uses the pitches D and C. The piano part also features the same type of oscillation in the upper voices, but it also features contrary motion in the lower voices. In measure 7, Stravinsky uses the same gesture, but he changes the rhythmic values and the voicing of the chords in each part, most likely to change the tessitura of the gesture (see Figure 5.3). However, the same effect is created as the motive is derived from the general movement of the pitches. In the closing section, Stravinsky references this opening motive in the last two bars (see Figure 5.4). The violin part features motion between A and G in the last two beats of measure 32. However, he removes the contrary motion from the piano part.
The movement comes to a point of repose on an A minor seventh chord in third inversion. However, the repose is somewhat ambiguous because the lower voices form a C major chord, while the upper chords clearly suggest a chord with A as the pitch center.
The bitonality of the chord reflects Stravinsky’s neo-classical urges to do something traditional in a modern way, but it also serves as an emotional comment on the nature of an elegy—it is both an expression of grief and a celebration of the deceased’s life. Petrarch’s poetry also reflects that duality. Petrarch wrote (in the voice of Silvius):

Famous for years in the forest, known in all meadows and pastures,  
Honored in song everywhere by comeliest maidens, as, leading  
Thousands of snowy sheep, he wandered the lonely by-ways,  
Weary at last of his charges and endless toil in the forest  
Now he has gone for aye. Like a bird he has soared to the summits  
Over impassable trails. And thence, from his peak high above us,  
Casting his glance far below, he observes our cares and our troubles,  
Making how small the woodland now seems that once he reigned over.  
Now he holds discourse with Jove, commending the flocks left behind him.  
Argus, farewell.  
Very soon all of us are certain to join you.87  

(Lines 112-121)

There is a bittersweet nature to this passage. Petrarch imposes the idea of the Christian heaven onto the Greco-Roman mythology. Jove is the head of the Roman gods, but in that mythology, the dead go to the underworld when they die. So, while Argus is no longer around to be loved and celebrated, he is in a better place—one where everyone that survived him might hope to go when they die.

The opening and closing sections also feature another gesture that first occurs in the violin part at measure 4 (see Figure 5.2). This is the first presentation of the dotted rhythm associated with funeral marches, and the descending motion could be “text painting” of tears. In the closing section, Stravinsky uses this same tear gesture at measure 27, but this time he transposes the pitches up a whole step (see Figure 5.5). This increases the tension in the music, while bringing the harmony towards the A Minor chord close of the movement. He also extends the phrase for a bar at measure 30 (see Figure 5.4).

87 Ibid., 29.
By using gestures rather than melody in the opening and closing sections, Stravinsky achieves a stylization of the general mood of the movement as a whole. The music he composed is distanced from the emotions that are inherent to the nature of an elegy. The gestures also help to create a four part form (A B C A’) that references the common practice period. This is similar to Petrarch’s use of the narrative device at the beginning and end of his poetry. The motives act as commentators on the more lyrical second and third sections of the movement. Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century music showed a tendency to express emotions in a more direct fashion than music from earlier times. Stravinsky tapped into a style of expression that was popular in Beethoven’s era through the use of motive, which would be consistent with typical neo-classical stylistic traits.

Stravinsky contrasts these sections with an almost romantic sounding second section. In the violin part at measure 12, Stravinsky uses the funeral march rhythm combined with leaps to create a passionately expressive mood (see Figure 5.6). While disjunct melodies are not necessarily associated with lyricism, the music could be described as lyrical or song-like in nature. The phrase is also long—seven measures—for a movement that is only 33 bars in total. Stravinsky pivots between G major and B minor in measure 13 with the violin part play G on the first and third beats and B on the second and fourth beats. Yet again, he shows the complexity of mourning by changing modes. The leaps create a feeling of instability.
In Petrarch’s second section, Pythias questions how and why Argus could die. Petrarch writes (in the voice of Pythias):

Argus, once light of the world and now grief of the desolate forest,
How could rash death be permitted to ravish your sacred body?
How could the earth dare receive it? You, of starry Olympus
Once the only observer, now under black sod you lie buried.
Whither has fled the joy of our world and its hope and its glory?
Who now is left that by scanning the skies can fortell the tempests?...
Who would survive—if he could—your passing? Truly, ye shepherds,
Life without Argus is death...  

(Lines 68-73, 91-92)

Pythias’s grief is expressed in a long series of questions in an emotional outpouring, much as Stravinsky’s phrase of music in the second section is a long phrase in a more directly emotional style of music. It could be that Stravinsky chose to make the leaps in the violin part to express the questioning nature of grief.

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88 Ibid., 23-25.
Stravinsky depicts a more reflective or contemplative form of elegy in the third section. Through the use of ornamentation in both parts, he conjures references to Baroque music (see Figure 5.7).

![Figure 5.7 Stravinsky, Duo Concertant, Eglogue II, m. 19-24](image)

The piano part is evocative of Bach’s music in its ornamentation. While the harmonic flow between beats one and two of measure 20 (and again at measure 22) is not common practice period voice leading, the overall effect is Baroque in its use of counterpoint and ornamentation. Not only does Stravinsky write imitation (the violin part at measure 20 is imitated by the piano in measure 22 with ornamentation), but he uses multiple voices moving at different speeds. An example of this occurs in the piano part at measure 20. One of the goals of neo-classicism was to filter music of the past through a modern lens, and the juxtaposition of Baroque keyboard writing with somewhat romantic and modern writing gives this section a special character and unique sound. Through borrowing
music from the past, Stravinsky is able to reflect on the state of music in the early
twentieth century.

This section corresponds in the poetry to Silvius’s eulogy of Argus. Petrarch writes (in the voice of Silvius):

Argus was king of the shepherds, endowed with more than a hundred
Eyes like to those of a lynx, a hundred keen ears and a hundred
Senses and skills and hands and a hundred long arms, far-reaching.
Only one tongue he had but with this he could move stones and savage
Brutes and uproot the stout ash, firm fixed in the soil of the mountain.89

(Lines 107-111)

Silvius presents a more reflective eulogy than Pythias’s emotional questioning. There is
a “text painting” element in Stravinsky’s music as well. His ornaments create more notes
and intricacy in the texture, which possibly represent the many eyes and ears of Argus.

Starting in measure 23 on the fourth beat, the leaps and dotted rhythms return to
the music. These features are associated with the more passionate music from before,
and the music moves away from the reflective character of the third section back to the
more stylized music of the final section. One could argue that Stravinsky was saying that
ultimately, grief is painful, no matter how calmly one expresses their sorrow.

Petrarch and Stravinsky used their second eclogues to comment on the nature of
eulogy and elegy. They present grief as a complicated emotion through both passionate
and reflective mourning. Stravinsky used neo-classical elements in his music to contrast
the way music has responded to sorrow through the ages, while Petrarch’s characters
engaged in a complex dialogue using mythological references from ancient times mixed
with Christian references (in Petrarch’s time considered modern). Both eclogues also
feature a framing device that stylizes the presentation of the ideas. Petrarch’s narration
and Stravinsky’s use of gesture create a distance between the emotions that lie in the
center of the eclogues and their opening and closing. This functions as an interesting
contrast. While the music is somewhat simple, the expression behind it is very complex.

89 Ibid., 27.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The desire for a return to a simpler past is as old as human civilization. A sense of nostalgia is inherent to the four major works of music and literature discussed—Theocritus’s *Idylls*, Virgil’s *Eclogues*, Petrarch’s *Bucolicum Carmen*, and Stravinsky’s *Duo Concertant*. However, each author managed to capture a snapshot of his own society within his work. Theocritus lived in one of the first cities of the world to resemble the modern megalopolis. Alexandria represented the blending of multiple cultures, and as a result, the arts flourished. Theocritus benefited from that, and he was able to make astute comments about Alexandria’s society (and humanity in general) in the *Idylls* because of the erudite society for which they were written. Virgil’s Rome was looking to define itself as it became the center of a very large empire. Virgil’s understanding of Theocritus’s work enabled him to style his own bucolic poetry into a more modern frame. With the tense political situation of the civil war in Rome, his *Eclogues* feature a darker character. While Petrarch’s *Bucolicum Carmen* is more personal than the bucolic poetry of Theocritus and Virgil, his work is a product of a society ready to make a shift in cultural paradigm. Without Petrarch’s quest for knowledge and discovery of many manuscripts in monastery libraries, the Renaissance might not have happened exactly when it did. Stravinsky seemed to have a magical connection with the zeitgeist of the world, and his work in the 1920s and 1930s represented a world that was in shock and disbelief after a calamitous war. Rapid change in the way society functioned seemed to affect these artists, a feeling that was pervasive throughout the societies in which they lived.

The concept of rural life was essential to these works as well. In the poetry, the imagined paradise of Arcadia is contrasted with the reality of city life. Pastoral feelings are usually tied to urban existence. Without the city, the countryside does not exist as a concept. Life has always moved faster and been more complicated in cities because of their dense populations. In turn, city denizens have felt throughout the ages that the rural lifestyle represented some sort of picturesque ideal. While many urban dwellers keep
country homes if they have the means to do so, there is something exciting about the big city with its many events and kinds of people. The reality is that no place is perfect, but the draw of a more natural environment is appealing to those that live in cities. Nature represented a kind of solitude and tranquility for Petrarch, and this has been a theme repeated throughout the history of art.

Stravinsky’s answer to the pastoral concept came in the form of the *Duo Concertant*. Many of his compositions are highly stylized. *Le Sacre du printemps* represents a stylization of Russian folk melodies, creating a highly detailed musical portrait of a primitive society. In *Pulcinella*, Stravinsky’s use of eighteenth-century Italian styles managed to capture a more modern element of music from a time long gone. The *Duo Concertant* is no exception. The two eclogue movements from the piece show striking similarities to Petrarch’s eclogues in their dramatic content. The mere fact that he chose to borrow the eclogue terminology from bucolic poetry shows the importance of pastoral poetry to Stravinsky. But, there are no rules to adapting poetry into instrumental music. The composition features a wide variety of compositional techniques. Stravinsky writes canons, dispenses with bar lines, displaces rhythmic groupings, imitates Baroque music, stylizes fiddle music, and writes soaring melodies. It is possible that older critics misunderstood the piece because of its disparate elements. However, when they are viewed as techniques of adapting a style of poetry that became irrelevant outside of academia, cohesion can be found. Polystylism became more prevalent in late twentieth-century music, and works like George Rochberg’s Third String Quartet were highly criticized for their juxtaposition of atonal music with Beethovenian romanticism.\(^9\) While Stravinsky’s piece is nowhere near as polystylistic as Rochberg’s postmodern works, the criticism might have been in the same vein.

The *Bucolicum Carmen* and the *Duo Concertant* demand an expansion of the definition of neo-classicism. In every generation, there are artists who look to the past for inspiration. In particular, the Greek civilization has inspired countless writers and composers to create new works. Petrarch found comfort in the words of Virgil and Cicero, and he sought to imitate them in his lifetime. However, he modernized their

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thoughts to comment on the society in which he lived. Stravinsky did the same with Petrarch’s poetry. While the *Duo Concertant* references Greek and Roman culture (through the lens of Petrarch), it does not sound like Stravinsky’s other neo-classical works or those of other composers. However, it can be considered to be neo-classical if the definition of the genre is expanded to include works that are inspired by Greek and Roman philosophy and artwork yet are modernized to fit the needs of the society from which it emerges. Late eighteenth-century music could be considered neo-classical in its desire to represent the form and balance inherent to Greco-Roman architecture. Yet, the Classical period composers were not interested in recreating the music from ancient Greece. This was also true of Stravinsky. He used modern compositional techniques to illustrate Petrarch’s poetry and philosophy, which in turn was inspired by ancient Greece and Rome.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael Jorgensen holds his Bachelor’s Degree in Violin Performance from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and his Master’s Degree in Advanced Instrumental Studies from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, United Kingdom. He will earn his Doctorate in String Performance degree from the Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. He has served as the Visiting Instructor of Violin at Middle Tennessee State University.

Michael performs in a wide variety of musical settings. He has performed with the Nashville Chamber Orchestra and the Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra. He has also been the Concertmaster of the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra as well as the Florida State University Symphony Orchestra, the Belle Meade Baroque Ensemble, OSSIA, and the Eastman School Symphony Orchestra.

On CD, and as the Concertmaster of the Eastman Chamber Orchestra, Jorgensen has performed the Czardas of Hubay with Charles Castleman and has recorded as violinist with the group, Alarm Will Sound, on Steve Reich’s The Desert Music CD.

Jorgensen has performed recitals in various locations in the United States and England; most notably, he has been the guest artist on the Carruther’s Pond Recital Series in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the London School of Contemporary Dance Lunchtime Concert Series.

He has premiered many works as the First Violinist of the Eppes String Quartet. As the First Violinist of the Chanticleer String Quartet, Jorgensen had the opportunity to participate in outreach programs performing chamber music for rural audiences that might not otherwise be exposed to chamber music.

His major teachers have included Charles Castleman, David Takeno, Stephanie Gonley, and Beth Newdome.