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Title: Pastoral Musings in the *Comedia*: Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching the Pastoral and *Comedia*

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Although the pastoral has been historically and consistently dismissed by critics as being superfluous to and detracting from the main plot, encountering pastoral episodes within the *comedia* generates pedagogical conversations within the classroom concerning the playwright, the characters, the audience and the early modern world. This presentation starts with Juan del Encina, who aptly modeled his *églogas* after Virgil's poetic and dramatic *Eclogues* to court royal favor and patronage, albeit unsuccessfully. Afterwards, I move to later *comedias* (e.g. Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna*) that present a disconnect between the city and the country which will demonstrate how dramatists utilized this privileged space (the pastoral) to criticize sociopolitical realities. Within a theatrical performance, a pastoral character becomes, as Paul Alpers labels, the "everyday man," thus establishing a connection between the general public and character(s) on stage. Thus, the playwright can draw the audience into the action of the play, especially if the principal roles are normally populated with privileged "damas" and "galanes." Similar to the fate of the *libros de pastores*, the pastoral in *comedias* of the seventeenth century (e.g. Lope de Vega's *La Arcadia* and Tirso de Molina's *La fingida Arcadia*) becomes too ornate and serves as a means to distract the audience from sociopolitical realities rather than make spectators aware of them. With this panoramic view of the pastoral encountered within *comedias*, comediantes will be able to incorporate additional pedagogical tools within the classroom setting.