

LIES, LYRES, AND LAUGHTER: SURPLUS POTENTIAL IN THE *HOMERIC HYMN TO HERMES*¹

CHRISTOPHER BUNGARD

As students and scholars read the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, they often notice that it does not quite fit with the other longer hymns. Alongside the sadness of Demeter and the powerful might of Apollo, we find a baby god who steals and lies his way into membership in the Olympian community. Whereas many scholars acknowledge the presence of humor within the hymn, few have attempted to address the role that laughter plays in its narrative.² At four key moments in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, we observe Hermes, Apollo, and Zeus laugh in response to unexpected events. Though most archaic Greek laughter is understood in terms of mockery and derision, it is the goal of this paper to demonstrate how the laughter in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* acknowledges splits in the perceived unity

1 I follow West 2003 for the text of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. All translations of the Greek are my own.

2 Van Herwerden 1907.181 sees the hymn as “insigne hoc priscae impietatis documentum.” Schmid and Stählin 1929 see the hymn as co-opting Homeric seriousness in order to play with it, but then go on to discuss it in terms of religious importance, where the laughter takes away from moral potential. Allen, Halliday, and Sikes 1936 see the humor of the hymn as part of a national spirit that also produced Old Comedy, but then move on to its serious aspects. Sowa 1984 points to specific moments of humor, but apart from the idea that humor arises from an exaggeration of the *Wunderkind* motif, there is little discussion about why laughter should be a part of the hymn. Clay 1989 and Johnston 2002 and 2003 acknowledge that there is humor, but then discuss the Olympian community and performance contexts respectively. The major exceptions to this trend are Bielohlawek 1930, where the analysis of humor is primarily a function of the hymn’s focus on the *Kindheitsmotiv*, and Szepes 1980, where the analysis largely focuses on humor as a result of anachronistic events if we understand the hymn as composed at a time when merchants had acquired equal standing with aristocrats.

of Zeus's cosmos. This laughter enables a process that is at the heart of the hymn, transforming foe into friend.

Before turning to the hymn itself, it will be useful to briefly consider laughter in Homer in order to help us situate our thinking about the hymn. Though most of the laughter in Homer can be thought of as indicating the superiority of the laugher,³ there are clear moments when laughter can be seen as preserving communal unity by postponing strife. Stephen Halliwell reads the laughter directed at Hephaistos's antics (*Il.* 1.595–600) as laughter that does precisely this. As Hephaistos draws attention to himself imitating a cupbearer such as Hebe or Ganymede, “the laughter of the gods, on this premise, is positively appreciation of Hephaestus’ intentions, not aimed at his lameness as such” (2008.63; see also Halliwell 1991). Especially in the context of feasts, it should not be surprising that we have a kind of laughter that preserves unity at precisely the moment when the festive mode is threatened with division. As we turn to the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, I want to draw our attention to laughter that arises at moments of division. Rather than simply marking superiority, the laughter of the hymn seems to recognize what I will call “surplus potential,” borrowing from work on comedy by Alenka Zupančič (2008).⁴

Zupančič does not seek to create a universal understanding of comedy, but she is interested in a certain kind of comedy that emerges through short circuits that enable us to recognize a split in something otherwise perceived as unified and complete.⁵ When we think of a cupbearer, we believe we have a clear idea about what this entails, but then there is, for a brief moment, Hephaistos. Out of this split between the expected

3 Arnould 1990.49 notes that despite the evolution of laughter from Homer to tragedy and philosophy, laughter remains a way to affirm power and put others in a position of inferiority. Jäkel 1994 lays out instances of laughter in the *Iliad* under the categories of mockery, victory, friendly communication, and ritual laughter. It is on the first two categories that most discussions of Greek laughter focus, as highlighted by the ancient philosophical discussions handled by Stewart 1994. Gilhus 1997 discusses instances of laughter throughout the cultures of the Near East, where laughter is used to establish and mark the superiority of the laughing gods. Passages that support the laughter of superiority in Homer include the mocking of Thersites (*Il.* 2.265–70), laughing at Aias falling in dung (*Il.* 23.773–84), and the laughter of the suitors throughout the *Odyssey*.

4 Given Hermes' associations with laughter in Greek thinking, especially Aristophanes' *Peace* and Lucian's *Dialogi Deorum*, it is not out of place to talk about Hermes through the lens of comedy.

5 In this regard, Zupančič is interested in how comedy may help us better understand philosophy and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

beauty of a cupbearer and the deformed blacksmith performing the role emerges a surplus potential, which is the driving force of this comic mode. As Zupančič suggests: “Not only do we (or the comic characters) not get what we asked for, *on top of it* (and not instead of it) we get something we haven’t even asked for at all. And we have to cope with this surprising surplus, respond to it” (2008.132; emphasis in the original). We expect a beautiful youth to be serving drinks, and when we do not get this, we are not disappointed.⁶ We have not gotten what we asked for, but we latch on to this unexpected cupbearer. We have the opportunity to see Hephaistos take on the role, and much to our delight, we embrace the surplus. We are willing to welcome even the deformed cupbearer because we see that he is working in the interests of communal mirth.

At the same time, it is crucial that this split not break the perceived unity into two smaller unified entities. We cannot have a “proper cupbearer” and a “failed cupbearer” when Hephaistos takes his turn at playing the role. The surplus that emerges tells us something true about the perceived unity (whether beautiful or deformed, a cupbearer provides a means for communal mirth). In highlighting the split in the unified order, this kind of comedy insists upon the failure of the cosmos to ever be full and complete. We cannot split the cosmos up into smaller units so it might find its perfect form. Instead, this kind of comedy embraces the internal tensions highlighted by the surplus that reveals the internal split.⁷ This is a world that accepts ambiguity within a given concept.

Though not primarily interested in Hermes and comedy, Laurence Kahn has in mind a similar process when dealing with Hermes. Recognizing a connection between Hermes and Dionysos in disturbing the perfect order often embodied by Apollo, Kahn suggests: “If Dionysos is the Other, Hermes is simply uncertain alterity; if Dionysos destroys the norm, Hermes jostles it to reconstruct it immediately” (1978.184).⁸ Rather than allowing the unified cosmos to be split into smaller unities, Hermes

6 Disappointment is the dynamic of tragedy as Zupančič 2008.129 sees it. Using a Lacanian model of the relationship between desire and satisfaction, she posits that tragedy stands on the side of desire. When desire is not fully met—and desire never can be fully met—this lack is felt as a loss.

7 Zupančič 2008.122 asks: “Does not one of the crucial dynamics of the comic consist precisely in the fact that the more the two terms push each in its own direction, the more violently the one of the two will eventually pull the other with it?”

8 “Si Dionysos est l’Autre, Hermès est simplement l’altérité incertaine; si Dionysos détruit la norme, Hermès la bouscule pour la reconstruire aussitôt.”

insists on reconfiguring the system in new ways, and through this work, he brings to light surplus potentials that the Olympians will have to deal with. The laughter that emerges from the recognition of these surpluses, in turn, leads to a transformation of Zeus's fully developed cosmos.

Turning to the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, we can think of the four moments of laughter in the hymn as a clever ring composition on the part of the hymnist:⁹ (1) Hermes laughs as he invents the lyre because he recognizes that it will help him establish a relationship with the gods; (2) Apollo laughs in response to Hermes' lie when he begins to warm up to this new god; (3) Zeus laughs in response to Hermes' lie when he welcomes Hermes and his transformational energy as part of the cosmos; (4) Apollo laughs as he hears the lyre that leads to his friendship with Hermes. Laughter emerges when Hermes, a surplus to the established cosmos, negotiates his place among the Olympians. Once Hermes has a firm place among the Olympians, the tone of the hymn shifts when the hymnist details the oath that assures friendship between the children of Zeus and the privileges that will be Hermes' for all time (cf. Graefe 1973.517).

LYRE AND LAUGHTER

Though the invention of the lyre appears in other accounts of the young Hermes' life, it plays an unusual part in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. Other versions that mention both the cattle raid and the invention of the lyre usually have Hermes first steal the cattle and then invent the lyre. Our hymnist has reversed the process.¹⁰ As Susan Shelmerdine suggests,

9 Several other versions of this myth include laughter or smiling. These occur primarily at two moments in the myth: the Battos episode (Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 2.676–707) and Hermes' attempt to steal Apollo's bow (Schol.¹⁰ *Il.* 15.256, Horace *Carmina* 1.10, Philostratos *Imagines* 1.26). For the likelihood that Alcaeus's *Hymn to Hermes*, P.Oxy. 2734 frag. 1, contains a similar moment of Apollo's amusement when Hermes steals his bow, see Page 1955 and Cairns 1983. Similarly, Lucian constructs *Dialogi Deorum* 11 around a conversation between Apollo and Hephaistos about Hermes' tendency to steal from other gods. Apollo describes the young thief as προσγελῶ πάνσι ("with a laugh for everyone"). In these versions, laughter or smiling seems restricted to one moment, whereas the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* enables the audience to contemplate the laughter of three gods at four key moments in the hymn. Other brief or fragmentary accounts of this myth include the Hesiodic *Megalai Ehoiai*, Antoninos Liberalis *Metamorphoses* 23, Pausanias 7.20.4, and Nonnos *Dionysiaka* 1.337–40.

10 Schol.¹⁰ *Il.* 15.256 follows the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*: the invention of the lyre followed by the cattle theft. In Sophokles' *Ikhneutai* (Radt frag. 314.284–331) and ps.-Apollodoros's *Bibliotheca* 3.10.2, the stolen cattle provide the hide for the later invention of the lyre.

this reversal invites the audience to reorient their thinking about the myth (1984.202). Instead of being a myth about Hermes' attempt to supplant Apollo, it is reasonable to think that the focus of this hymn is on the ultimate friendship of the two young gods, facilitated by the charm of the lyre. Just as two songs by Hermes on his invention enable him to express his change in status over the course of the hymn (the first a recollection of his mother's cave, the second a theogony that situates him in the broader community),¹¹ I suggest that the laughter that occurs in these two scenes should also be thought about together.

Despite the wealthy holdings of his mother's cave, Hermes is unwilling to remain in seclusion.¹² The young god sets out to gain membership in the Olympian community by stealing his brother's cattle.¹³ Though he sets out with a clear purpose, he is quickly distracted when he stumbles across a tortoise. If we keep in mind Zupančič's suggestion that the comic emerges from surplus potentials, then we are in a better position to understand what it is that Hermes laughs at when he finds this tortoise. Instead of rejecting the tortoise in favor of his planned target, Apollo's cattle, Hermes is ready to employ the tortoise for his overall project of obtaining a place among the Olympians, and through the use of potentially contradictory language, the hymnist prepares us to understand how Hermes perceives this unexpected gift.¹⁴

Though recounting a version of the myth largely based on the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, ps.-Apollodoros has removed all laughter from his telling.

- 11 Johnston (2002 and 2003) draws attention to this particular point in connection with issues of maturation and initiation in the hymn. Szepes 1980.36 suggests the comic element in the tortoise becoming lyre develops "because in the course of the process it grows above its own possibilities." She goes on to suggest that we should see in the transformation of the lyre a prefiguring of the change in Hermes' own status. While I agree with the second point, I would emphasize that the tortoise could not undergo its transformation in Hermes' hands if it were not for the unforeseen potentials already existing in the tortoise, potentials that the hymnist's and Hermes' words help highlight.
- 12 It may be the case that the hymnist of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* has in mind a parallel with Odysseus, who is also kept away from his community by a daughter of Atlas. As Sheldermine 1986.57 suggests: "Hermes cannot reach his rightful place without leaving the safety and comfort of his hidden paradise, the cave of the goddess, and fighting, whatever the risk, for what he wants—his divine identity." An important part of that identity is the opportunity to embrace relationships with the Olympian community.
- 13 For discussions of the cattle raid as a means for young men to gain membership in the adult community in Greece and the Near East, see Walcot 1979, Haft 1996, and Johnston 2002 and 2003.
- 14 It is appropriate that Hermes, the ambiguous god who is simultaneously generous and greedy, as Kahn 1978.14 suggests, would stumble upon an animal that mimics his ambiguity.

The hymnist describes the tortoise as “walking with a swagger in its feet.”¹⁵ Thinking about the slow lumbering of a tortoise, we are unlikely to equate tortoises with festive dancers.¹⁶ Hermes finds a slow moving herbivore, and yet he is ready to welcome it into the world of the feast as a lyre that will accompany the fleet-footed dancing.

Equally, we might push further the hymnist’s use of the epithet ἐρσιόυνιος (28) in this context. Though “very beneficent” is appropriate for Hermes as the god of the lucky find or *hermaion*, the hymnist has opted to use this epithet right before the young god will speak in contradictory terms to the tortoise that he will deprive of life so that it might charm a hostile Apollo later on. Through these subtle hints, the hymnist is preparing us to listen to Hermes’ own thoughts about what it is that he has stumbled across.

At this first example of laughter in the hymn, we should not be surprised to find an emphasis on contradiction. Zupančič suggests that the comic movement has two key aspects. It is not only that an apparent unity (here a tortoise is a tortoise is a tortoise) splits, but also that in that split, we come to see an inherent contradiction. It cannot be reduced simply to itself (a tortoise is not just a tortoise).¹⁷ In spite of the split, the two sides remain linked. Hermes’ speech to the tortoise exposes and embraces the potential that comes from a tortoise that can be something different than a tortoise, and part of the humor of his speech emerges in the non-coherence of the tortoise.¹⁸

Following his laugh, Hermes’ very first word embraces a system that does not add up neatly. He refers to the tortoise as a σύμβολον (30), which in Greek can indicate both an omen and a tally. When we deal with a σύμβολον, there is always something that moves beyond it, but this surplus meaning is inevitably linked to it. Presented with something he

15 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 28: σαῦλα ποσὶν βαίνουσα.

16 Cf. Euripides’ *Kyklops* 40, where Silenos speaks of his comrades in part of Bakkhos’s entourage as σαυλούμενοι (“swaggering”), and Aristophanes’ *Wasps* 1173, where Philokleon refers to his dancing as σαυλοπρωκτιᾶν (“rump shaking”).

17 See Zupančič 2008.54–56 for a more detailed discussion of this process. Borrowing from Lacan, Zupančič uses the topology of the Möbius strip to illustrate the illusion of the split. Though we might perceive two sides to the strip, there is only really one surface as we travel around it.

18 Interestingly, in two instances of laughter in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (281 and 389), the laughter is a reaction to Hermes’ actions, which would blend well with Kahn’s 1978.16 image of Hermes as non-cohesive.

never asked for, Hermes laughs and acknowledges that there is more to the tortoise than we might first think. As he shifts from amused discovery to addressing the tortoise, Hermes continues to develop the idea that we should not think about this tortoise simply as the mountain-dwelling herbivore it appears to be.

His opening words to the tortoise abound in the same kind of contradiction that the hymnist employed when Hermes first found his future lyre (31–33).

χαῖρε, φῦν ἐρόεσσα, χοροϊτύπε, δαιτὸς ἐταίρη,
ἀσπασίῃ προφανεῖσα. πόθεν τόδε καλὸν ἄθυρμα,
αἰόλον ὄστρακον ἔσσο, χέλυσ ὄρεσι ζώουσα;

Welcome, you lovely in shape, beating the ground in
dance, companion of the feast, a glad tiding. Where did
you get this beautiful plaything, this dappled shell that
clothes you, tortoise dwelling in the mountains?

Hermes is able to connect the tortoise's walk with the movements of Greek dancing, and the lumbering tortoise is quickly transformed in Hermes' mind into the lyre that accompanies the swift dancing of the feast. Hermes continues imagining the tortoise in a festive context when he refers to its shell as an ἄθυρμα. What is for the tortoise an essential protective covering will become for Hermes the resonating chamber of his new lyre. Even before he has actually invented the lyre, he imagines the tortoise in its festive context. His opening salvo begins to expose the contradiction between the living, lumbering tortoise and the swiftness that one associates with the dead tortoise in the form of a lyre.¹⁹

Hermes proceeds to echo the Hesiodic proverb that it is better to be inside, since the outside world is dangerous (36), but this happens right before Hermes will deprive the tortoise of life by disemboweling it. We might understand this twist on Hesiod as the work of an inveterate liar, but there may be an explanation, as discussed by Yannis Tzifopolous, which lies in the surplus of Hermes' final words to the tortoise (37–38).

19 It is worth noting that Zupančič 2008.58–59 sees acceleration as one of the ways that comedy exposes the internal contradiction of any perceived unity.

ἦ γὰρ ἐπηλυσίης πολυπήμονος ἔσσεαι ἔχμα
ζώουσ' ἦν δὲ θάνῃς, τότε <δ'> ἄν μάλα καλὸν αἰείδοις.

Alive you will be a charm against baneful witchcraft. If
you die, then you will sing quite beautifully.

As a latecomer, Hermes interacts with Zeus's cosmos in a different way than an established god like Apollo might. The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* are set at opposite ends of the story of Zeus's command, as Jenny Strauss Clay reminds us (1989.96). Apollo is born as Zeus's order is solidifying. As a result, he comes to life claiming his *timai* unopposed, and when faced with rivals, he quickly eliminates them.²⁰ Hermes is born into a world that has already been established. Instead of eliminating rivals, he must negotiate a place for himself alongside the other gods. In order for him to join the Olympians, he needs a world that is full of surplus potential that can be exploited to restructure the cosmos—not for the sake of supplanting his elders, but to become integrated into their order.²¹ Here Hermes embraces the multiple potentials of the tortoise. As Tzifopoulos argues, Hermes is interested in the tortoise as something that will sit on either side of spell-casting. Alive it wards off spells, but in death as a lyre, it becomes the spell-caster.²² By embracing an additional capacity of tortoises as enchanters, Hermes equips himself with a tool that will prove useful toward the end of the hymn, where laughter reappears for the final time. We might then think about Hermes' laughter as the laughter he, as an outsider, hopes will mark his own acceptance into the cosmos—the unexpected surplus that becomes a recognizable part of the cosmos.²³

20 Cf. the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 131–32 and the episodes with Pytho and Telpheia. There is emphasis in the Pythian portion of the hymn on Apollo founding important sanctuaries of the Greek world at the expense of those already in place.

21 In dealing with the contrasts between Hermes' sacrifice in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* and the myth of Prometheus cheating the gods of choice meats in sacrifice, Kahn 1978.95 suggests that what Hermes illustrates is a split that does not reveal tension, a tear, or strife ("ce n'est pas la scission que révèlent ces tensions, ce n'est pas la déchirure ni l'Eris"), but rather that potential splits caused by Hermes are ultimately about integration.

22 Tzifopoulos 2000.152–53 argues that this understanding helps us comprehend the ambiguity in βέλτερον ("better") in line 36. For more on the relationship between poetry and spell-casting, see Parry 1992.

23 Arnould 1990.85 suggests that the laughter of Hermes does not come from the comical appearance of the tortoise, but rather upon reflection concerning the advantage that it

LAUGHTER INSIDE MAIA'S CAVE

When we look at the initial encounter between Apollo and Hermes, we notice that there is a marked shift from Apollo's threats of Tartaros and the underworld to a curious admiration for Hermes' abilities as thief. This shift is punctuated by a moment of gentle laughter (*ἀπαλὸν γέλῳ*, 281) that helps prepare the audience for the laughter of Zeus at the trial on Olympus. Though not entirely the same kind of laughter as Hermes' when he invented the lyre, Apollo's laughter reacts to a split in the cosmos created by Hermes—here between one's expectations concerning cattle rustlers and the reality that this cattle rustler is a little baby.

Informed by a bird omen that the thief of his cattle is a son of Zeus (213–14), Apollo bursts into the cave of Hermes' mother and initially tries to find the cattle by himself.²⁴ When it becomes clear that he cannot, he attacks the wily baby (254–59).

ὦ παῖ ὃς ἐν λίκνῳ κατὰκειαι, μήνυέ μοι βοῦς
 θᾶσσον· ἐπεὶ τάχα νῶϊ διοισόμεθ' οὐ κατὰ κόσμον.
 ῥίψω γάρ σε λαβὼν ἐς Τάρταρον ἡερόεντα,
 ἐς ζόφον αἰνόμορον καὶ ἀμήχανον· οὐδέ σε μήτηρ
 ἐς φῶς οὐδὲ πατὴρ ἀναλύσεται, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γαίῃ
 ἐρρήσεις ὀλίγοις μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἡγεμονεύων.

Boy, you who lie in your crib, show me the cows quickly, since soon the two of us will not part in gentlemanly fashion. I will pick you up and cast you into murky Tartaros, into the dreaded and inescapable darkness. Neither your mother nor father will bring you back up into the light, but you will go beneath the earth, leader among the little men.

In an attempt to bully Hermes into revealing the location of the cattle by referring to Tartaros, Apollo co-opts the language that is more appropriate

will provide him. I would emphasize that the advantage that Hermes gains comes in part from his ability to find the unexpected in the tortoise—its dance-like gait and toy shell. By embracing the surplus potential of his accidental find, Hermes creates for himself an enchanter.

24 There is the suggestion that a seduction is underway, as van Nortwick 1980.4 argues. As a result of the mention of gold, silver, nectar, and ambrosia, an ear well-trained to archaic Greek patterns should anticipate that Hermes will hoodwink Apollo in some way.

for the young Zeus establishing the Olympian order.²⁵ Because he views Hermes as a threat to himself and the well-ordered cosmos, he threatens to do to Hermes what father Zeus did to Hermes' own great-grandfather, Iapetos.²⁶ If performed successfully, this act would ensure that Apollo could maintain the stable world that has been upset by the young god. As Sarah E. Harrell notes: "The act [of hurling to Tartaros] is effective on two levels. Physically, Zeus deprives his opponents of strength and banishes them permanently from Olympus. Symbolically, his victims serve as reminders of the irrevocable consequences, an ultimate failure, of any attempt to defy him. They become a warning against future rebellion" (1991.315). Hermes would not only be deprived of his ability to disrupt Zeus's cosmos, but he would also stand as yet one more reminder of what happens to those who disrupt the stability of the world.

At the same time, Apollo's threats introduce a conundrum that reflects the general ambiguity of Hermes if we think back to Kahn's analysis of Hermes (see above p. 145). As Onofrio Vox argues (1981.109), there is a fundamental contradiction between Apollo's threat to cast Hermes into Tartaros and the threat that Hermes shall end up in Hades as a leader of little men. Whereas the threat of Tartaros is perfectly appropriate for rebellious gods, the threat that Hermes will be sent into Hades is more appropriate for mortals.²⁷ It is possible that we should understand the threat of banishment to Hades as the hyperbole of an outraged bully, but it does open up the possibility for Hermes to respond in a comic mode.

We have seen through Zupančič that the comic emerges from a surplus, and the contradiction introduced by Apollo (should we understand Hermes as god or as mortal?) opens up space for the comic mode to take over.²⁸ Once a surplus erupts onto the scene, it is possible to keep

25 This depiction of Apollo as a mini-Zeus appears in other texts as well. Cf. the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 375–87, where Apollo crushes Telphousa under rocks in order to punish her for opposing his attempt to establish his position in the cosmos.

26 The fate of Hermes' grandfather, Atlas, also stands as a reminder of what can happen to those who try to oppose Zeus.

27 In Philostratos, the threat is only that Apollo will push Hermes under the Earth. Kahn 1978.60–61 notes that we see a similar confusion between god and mortal in Hermes' sacrifice of the cattle. As he creates no hierarchy of gods, he also blurs the clear boundaries between gods and mortals.

28 Szepes 1980.32 suggests that the comedy of the scene emerges from the outdated views of Apollo ("there is no need of a new god on the Olympus"). Though a certain level of comedy emerges in the conflict between the two gods, there is more at stake than the vic-

comic activity going by insisting on the contradictions.²⁹ Apollo has indirectly raised a challenge to Hermes: prove to me that you really are a god! Hermes is ready to do so by portraying himself as just a baby, insisting upon Apollo's very first word *παῖ*.³⁰ As he develops the image of himself as a tender baby (263–73), he is doing more than simple child's play.³¹ Hermes can highlight characteristics that help him succeed as a thief. Stealth is naturally the most important tool in the thief's arsenal. Because of his youth, we might overlook Hermes when searching for a thieving culprit. By not looking the part, Hermes is more capable of theft than he would be if he looked like the type of person we would expect to be stealing cattle.³² Though this strategy of proving himself a god by emphasizing his status as baby is counterintuitive, it is only at the level of the gods that we can find a successful baby who is adept at rustling cattle.

In response to Hermes' insistence that he is, in fact, a baby, Apollo laughs softly (*ἀπαλὸν γελάσας*, 281). Dominique Arnould highlights several examples of laughter from adults at children that indicate superiority (1990.86–87).³³ We may be inclined to think of Apollo's laughter as yet another moment of mocking superiority—Hermes is no threat to the established and older Apollo. At the same time, we should be attentive to

tory of one viewpoint over the other. We should keep in mind that the hymn ultimately ends on a note of mutual friendship between Hermes and Apollo.

- 29 Zupančič 2008.140: "The art of comedy is precisely a singular continuity-through-interruption, a continuity that, as I have already stressed, builds with—and is built through—interruptions and breaks, a continuity that constructs with discontinuity, a continuity whose very stuff is a discontinuity."
- 30 Though *ὦ παῖ* is perfectly appropriate for addressing younger people in Greek, it is unusual to use this form of address in the singular without a patronymic, as Wendel 1929.98 observes. In developing the contrast between Hermes' Olympian ambitions and Apollo's anger over the cattle, Greene 2005.346 notes that Apollo "classifies Hermes merely as a child in his cradle (*ὦ παῖ ὃς ἐν λίκνῳ κατάκειται*) and he demands to be told of his cattle." On the address *παῖ*, see also Dickey 1996.
- 31 Halliwell 2008.19 draws attention to laughter's connection in Greek with play (*παίζειν*) and children (*παῖς*).
- 32 We should keep in mind the emphasis on Hermes' ability to confound vision when he reverses the cattle's tracks and disguises his own through the use of sandals. The Old Man of Onkhestos expresses his difficulty in putting into words precisely what it was that he saw when he saw Hermes with Apollo's cattle (202–11).
- 33 As parallels to the laughter of Apollo here, see, in Homer, Zeus laughing at Artemis (*Il.* 21.507–08) and Athena smiling at Odysseus (*Od.* 13.287–92). Arnould 1990.175 also notes that laughter combined with speech usually has a tone of superiority (cf. *Il.* 11.378–79, 21.408–09, *Od.* 16.354, 17.542–43, 18.35, and 18.163), but it may, on the contrary, reunite a group (cf. *Il.* 2.270, *Od.* 8.326, 18.320–21, and 20.358–59).

the way that this laughter is modified. By conditioning Apollo's laughter as ἀπαλὸν, the hymnist employs a phrase only otherwise used in *Odyssey* 14.463–66, where Odysseus places “soft laughter” in the context of drinking, singing, and dancing. Arnould notes the connection in Greek lyric between ἀπαλὸν and amorous contexts (1990.166), and Halliwell suggests that the soft laughter of Odysseus “evokes a state that is both self-indulgent and untroubled” (2008.87). Coupled with Apollo's immediate response, these two points suggest that we need to think about the laughter here in a more sophisticated way than the simple indulgence of a precocious youth.

Apollo changes his tone as a result of Hermes' comic performance. Where before Hermes was a nameless child lying in a crib, Apollo now says to Hermes (282, 289–92),

ὦ πέπον, ἡπεροπευτὰ, δολοφραδές
 . . .
 ἀλλ' ἄγε, μὴ πύματόν τε καὶ ὕστατον ὕπνον ἰαύσης,
 ἐκ λίκνου κατὰβαινε, μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἐταῖρε.
 τοῦτο γὰρ οὖν καὶ ἔπειτα μετ' ἀθανάτοισι γέρας ἔξεις.
 ἀρχὸς φιλητέων κεκλήσεται ἡματα πάντα.

My good man, deceptive, wily-minded . . . But come on, lest you sleep your last and final sleep, get up out of your crib, companion of black night. For then you will have this privilege among the immortals, you will be called leader of robbers for all days.

Abandoning the bullying language of Zeus's mastery, Apollo addresses Hermes as πέπον, a mark of affection between members of a shared community.³⁴ Expulsion from the company of the gods into the endless

34 Apollo deploys πέπον again at the end of the hymn when he is trying to negotiate a deal for the lyre (457). As Wendel 1929.21 catalogues, πέπον is used throughout the *Iliad* at moments when a character is urging a comrade to a particular action. Cf. *Il.* 9.252 (Odysseus to Akhilles), 11.314 (Odysseus to Diomedes), 11.765 (Nestor to Patroklos), 12.322 (Sarpedon to Glaukos), 15.472 (Aias to Teuker), and 17.179 (Hektor to Glaukos). The use of the participle κερτομέων (“taunt,” “slag,” 300) also suggests that we should begin to see Apollo and Hermes as part of a shared community. The hymnist employs the exact same verb in 56 as Hermes experiments with the lyre like κοῦροι at symposiastic feasts where, as Halliwell 2008.103 suggests, “this (κερτομεῖν) counts as a special ‘language-game’ which is (partly) exempted from the normal consequences of confrontational exchanges of

gloom of Tartaros has been replaced with the acknowledgement of one of Hermes' future roles as an Olympian (master of thieves). Apollo has not yet befriended Hermes, but we should hear in his laughter the beginning of the process that will lead to their ultimate friendship at the close of the hymn.³⁵ If we think about the laughter of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* as laughter that recognizes surplus potentials (a baby capable of rustling cattle and cleverly playing with his image), then we can begin to understand why Apollo changes his tone. Though he is still annoyed about his missing cattle, he shifts his relationship with Hermes through the change from ὦ παῖ to ὦ πέπον, a shift punctuated by laughter, and thereby he signals his curious admiration for Hermes' skills.

LAUGHTER ON OLYMPOS

When the hymn shifts from Kyllene to Olympos, Hermes has his first opportunity to appeal directly to his father for recognition of his status as Zeus's son and rightful Olympian. Much discussion of the Olympos scene has centered on whether or not Hermes perjures himself.³⁶ I propose that we look more closely at the rest of his defense, during which Hermes develops, through a clever manipulation of legalistic speech, another split in Zeus's cosmos. Zeus's laughter welcomes his son's ability to create this new surplus, which arises from the incoherence of a baby who is skilled in legalistic speech. Just as Hermes is surely a god by being a baby who is also an expert cattle rustler, so, too, does Hermes

abuse." Much like modern Irish slugging, where friends trade insults as a show of friendship, κερτομέων here should not be understood as antagonistic.

- 35 So long as the stolen cattle remain an issue, Apollo and Hermes cannot be reconciled, but, as Hyde 1998.71 argues, "Apollo's laugh marks the moment at which he first loosens his grip on the cattle; his laughter melts his righteous anger and a touch of detachment enters."
- 36 Callaway 1993 explores the issue of oaths in Homer and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. Fletcher 2008 has expanded upon Callaway specifically as regards the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. Both scholars are of the opinion that Hermes carefully uses oath practice in order to gain admission among the Olympians while avoiding perjury. Callaway also contains a concise summary of the oath issue in previous scholarship. To sum up her work quickly, Sowa 1984 asserts that both the oath proposed to Apollo and that proposed to Zeus are false. Allen and Sikes 1904 argue that the oath proposed to Apollo is false, whereas the wording of the oath proposed to Zeus steers clear of perjury. Baumeister 1860 and Gemoll 1886 focus on discrepancies in the wording of Hermes' oath to Zeus, and Clay 1989 argues that the literal reading of Hermes' two proposed oaths protects him from perjury.

confirm his divinity by being the baby who can hold his own in court against the older Apollo.³⁷

Even before Apollo has the opportunity to present his case to his father, Zeus immediately recognizes potential in Hermes that may not be immediately apparent. He seems to welcome Hermes by referring to him as “satisfying loot” (μενοεικέα ληΐδ’, 330) and by acknowledging Hermes’ resemblance to a κῆρυξ. Just as Apollo may have created an opportunity through his contradictory threat for Hermes to embrace the comic spirit, so Zeus may do so here through the ironic use of σπουδαῖον (“seriousness,” 332) in referring to the little baby who has confounded Apollo. We are confronted with the incoherence between Apollo’s frustration with the difficulty of recovering his cattle and Zeus’s amused perception of a baby who looks like a herald.

At the same time, Hermes finds himself in a dilemma as an infant trickster. Given the Greek belief of the truth in wine and children (οἶνος καὶ παῖδες ἀληθείς), any tricks that Hermes tries to pull are doomed to failure. Embracing his status as a child, Hermes is prepared to claim to speak the truth (ἀληθείην, 368), which we would expect from a child, but upon further reflection, we find a child who is not simply a child. Instead, we find a child who can manipulate legal conventions, a child who must be a god.³⁸

Thomas Cole argues that we need to understand ἀλήθεια not as an idea that exists in things, but rather as one that we find in people (1983.7–8).³⁹ As such, this kind of truth is marked by “completeness, non-omission of any relevant particular, whether through forgetting or ignoring” (1983.10). As Hermes develops his “true” defense, the kind of truth marked by completeness and non-omission slips from the account that Hermes actually delivers. In response to Apollo’s narrative of events (340–64), Hermes emphasizes the actions of Apollo. He complains that

37 Szepes 1980.37–47 explores this episode as a parody of Solon’s reforms. She only briefly mentions the laughter of Zeus, and the discussion turns more towards the social dynamics between aristocrats and merchants.

38 Szepes 1980.43 argues that Hermes’ insistence on his status as child is an attempt to extract himself from the legal process. As a child, he could not be brought to court. Given the early emphasis by the hymnist on Hermes’ desire to gain his rightful place among the gods (163–81), it seems equally important to understand this trial as an opportunity for Hermes to win approval from his father.

39 This argument stands in contrast to Heidegger’s understanding of ἀλήθεια as the “unhidden.” In particular, see Heidegger 1996.29 and 202–05.

Apollo has overstepped his bounds by failing to bring witnesses, bullying him to reveal the location of the cattle, and threatening to throw him into Tartaros (370–74). He then emphasizes the disparity between the mighty Apollo and the harmless baby that he pretends to be (375–77).⁴⁰ While he has spoken accurately about Apollo's breaches in proper conduct, Hermes has thus far failed to discuss his own actions.

The closest that he comes to making any statement about his own activity is hedged by language that emphasizes the relationship that he desires to have with the community of the gods (378–80).

παίθεο, καὶ γὰρ ἐμεῖο πατὴρ φίλος εὔχεαι εἶναι,
ὥς οὐκ οἴκαδ' ἔλασσαι βόας ὡς ὄλβιος εἶην,
οὐδ' ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἔβην· τὸ δέ τ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύω.

Trust me (you even boast that you are my dear father)
that I did not drive the cattle home in order to be rich.⁴¹ I
did not cross the threshold. I say this precisely.

Speaking very precisely, Hermes' only comments on his own activity are confined to two brief claims, but these claims are surrounded by language that focuses on his relationship with the gods. He begins with an appeal to Zeus for trust, which he emphasizes through the parenthetical appeal to Zeus to recognize his claims of fatherhood.⁴² If Zeus really is his father, then Zeus should believe him since this is what fathers do. The father of gods and men has an opportunity to embrace and engage in a relationship with his recently born son. By asking his father to trust him, Hermes implies that the relationship that exists between them preempts the facts. So long as trust is maintained, there is no need for the facts.

40 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 370–77: ἦλθεν ἐς ἡμετέρου διζήμενος εἰλίποδας βοῦς / σήμερον ἡελίοιο νέον ἐπιτελλομένοιο, / οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων ἄγε μάρτυρας οὐδὲ κατόπτας / μὴνύειν δ' ἐκέλευεν ἀναγκαίης ὑπὸ πολλῆς, / πολλὰ δέ μ' ἠπείλησε βαλεῖν ἐς Τάρταρον εὐρύν, / οὐνεχ' ὃ μὲν τέρην ἄνθος ἔχει φιλοκυδέος ἥβης, / αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ χθιζὸς γενόμην—τὰ δέ τ' οἶδε καὶ αὐτός— / οὐ τι βοῶν ἐλατῆρι κραταιῷ φωτὶ εἰοικώς.

41 I diverge from West 2003 in 379. If we read ὥς in the last clause, then Hermes' response adds one more loophole for him to slip out through. If an opponent can prove that he did drive the cattle home, then he is still left with the argument that his reasoning was not for the sake of profit.

42 Greene 2005.347 is right to draw attention to the strategic address of Zeus as ζεῦ πάτερ in 368. This is presumably the first time that Zeus has met Hermes and vice versa.

As Hermes continues to carefully craft his defense, an interesting pattern develops. Before he makes any claims about his own activity, he conditions these claims through appeals to relationships. Following the claim that Zeus should trust that he did not do what Apollo claims he has, Hermes immediately appeals to the respect he has for the gods, his love for Zeus, and the dreadful awe that he has for Apollo before turning back to Zeus to assert his lack of guilt (381–83). The speech that should be without gaps, partly because of Hermes' own claim to speak ἀληθείην and partly as a condition of his status as a child, does not provide arguments to disprove the claims made by Apollo. It does not fully address what Hermes has done, but rather it seeks to establish innocence through claims that he respects the divine order.

We notice that this defense is a clever and comic manipulation of legal language even when Hermes prepares to deliver his mighty oath, a parody of divine oaths with its odd guarantor, the well-decked porticoes of gods. Rather than offering an oath to his innocence, he swears (385–86),

μή ποτ' ἐγὼ τοῦτω τείσω ποτὲ νηλέα φωρήν
καὶ κρατερῶ περ ἐόντι· σὺ δ' ὀπλοτέροισιν ἄρηγε.

I will never, ever pay [Apollo] for that pitiless theft, even
if he is strong. You, support younger ones.

Hermes' final words cement the nature of this defense. As a child, he will naturally speak ἀληθείην, and as Zeus' child, he expects the support of his father against the arrogant actions of his older half-brother. He has not made a defense that proves his innocence so much as he has made a defense that establishes in very clear terms why he should not be punished as a member of the Olympian community.

When Hermes finishes his defense, the hymnist draws specific attention to Hermes as a baby through a reference to the blanket that he keeps wrapped around his shoulders (388). As we in the audience listen to Hermes' clever response to Apollo's accusations, we may have lost track of the fact that we are still dealing with Hermes as a baby. A comic surplus has burst into Olympus in the form of Hermes, the baby who proves himself skilled in legal wrangling, and if we keep this in mind as we hear Zeus's response, we are in a better position to understand why it is that he laughs.

There can be no doubt that Zeus sees through Hermes' attempts to dodge Apollo's accusations (389–90). At the same time, there seems to

be something more than the laugh of superiority that we see with Zeus in Homer.⁴³ Halliwell suggests that part of the laughter of Zeus here, and Apollo earlier, comes from “knowing appreciation of his precocious guile” (2008.100).⁴⁴ I would also add that the laughter that appreciates Hermes’ precocity stems from Zeus’s ability to recognize that Hermes is genuinely more than he appears to be. Just as Hermes could see a lyre in a living tortoise, so Zeus has already identified the potential of his son to be a herald. Thus we should hear in Zeus’s laughter a delight similar to Hermes’ when he finds the surplus potentials in the tortoise.

The laughter of Zeus that welcomes Hermes into the Olympian order quickly shifts to the need for reconciliation between the squabbling brothers. Thinking back to Zupančič, the comic spirit of this hymn cannot ultimately function if Hermes supplants Apollo. The split between the two gods cannot allow them to fall apart into two separate entities. Interestingly, then, this hymn concludes by shifting from Hermes’ acceptance into the broad community of the gods to building an enduring link between the very different sons of Zeus.

LAUGHTER THAT CEMENTS FRIENDSHIP

Now that Hermes has gained acceptance from Zeus, the hymn shifts focus from cosmic acceptance as part of Zeus’s order to the personal connection between the two sons of Zeus. Whereas they approached Olympus as Hermes and far-darting Apollo, they depart Olympus as the very beautiful children of Zeus (Διὸς περικαλλέα τέκνα, 397). The connection between the gods is reinforced all the more through the hymnist’s use of the dual.⁴⁵ Zeus has accepted his children, though he has left it up to them to resolve their dispute. The lyre, welcomed into the world by Hermes’ laughter, reappears as the tool that will facilitate friendship between the two gods.⁴⁶

43 As remarked above, Arnould 1990.86–87 notes moments of parents laughing at their children.

44 On a similar note, Callaway 1993.24 suggests: “It may be that Apollo and Zeus, as the gods with superior status in the situation, can afford to be generous and overlook the lies. It may be that craftiness and ambition, like love, receive their just rewards.”

45 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 397–98: τὸ δ’ ἄμφω σπεύδοντε Διὸς περικαλλέα τέκνα / ἔς Πύλον ἡμαθόεντα ἐπ’ Ἀλφειοῦ πόρον ἵξον.

46 The emphasis of the final movement of the hymn is on reciprocal exchange. I agree with Brown 1947.88: “The truth is that the terms of the bargain have been misunderstood.

Once again, the hymnist punctuates this moment with laughter, as Apollo marvels at the sudden emergence of the lyre.

When Apollo sees the hides of the slaughtered cattle, he is astounded by the might of his brother. He attempts to bind Hermes, who immediately causes the bindings to ensnare Apollo's cattle as well.⁴⁷ A possible lacuna in the text poses some problems. We can gather that Hermes has seen something that will anger Apollo. Whether the lacuna would inform us what Hermes has seen or draw our attention to an expression of Apollo's anger,⁴⁸ the result is the reappearance of the lyre. The hymnist carefully reminds us of Hermes' initial experiment with the lyre by echoing the language that precedes the song.⁴⁹ Even before Hermes has the opportunity to sing his second song (420–23),

γέλασσε δὲ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
 γηθήσας, ἐρατὴ δὲ διὰ φρένας ἦλυθ' ἰωή
 θεσπεσίης ἐνοπῆς, καὶ μιν γλυκὺς ἥμερος ἦρει
 θυμῷ ἀκούάζοντα.

Phoibos Apollo laughed and rejoiced. The lovely sound
 of the divine strain came over his heart, and sweet long-
 ing took hold of him in his soul as he listened.

Hermes does not lose the lyre, Apollo does not lose the cattle; they agree to share both lyre and cattle. Each initiates the other into his own art."

47 Kahn 1978.115 sees in this episode an important contrast between Hermes and Dionysos. Whereas Dionysos breaks the bindings of the sailors, Hermes embraces his.

48 The manuscript tradition contains no lacuna. Difficulties in the language of the text have led some to hypothesize a lacuna somewhere in this section. Following Baumeister 1860, Allen 1912 indicates a lacuna after line 415, suggesting the lacuna indicates what Hermes saw. West 2003 places one after line 416, creating a scenario in which Apollo demands compensation for his cattle. In contrast, Càssola 1975 sees no need for a lacuna, explaining 415 as Hermes hiding the fire in his eyes and replacing λαβὼν in 418 with λύρην.

49 Cf. the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 52–54 with 418–20:

φέρων ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα
 πλήκτρῳ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέλος, ἦ δ' ὑπὸ χειρός
 σμερδαλέον κονάβησε.

λαβὼν δ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ χειρός
 πλήκτρῳ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέλος, ἦ δ' ὑπὸ χειρός
 σμερδαλέον κονάβησε.

Drawing our attention through repetition to the sound the lyre makes when Hermes plays, the hymnist also wants to draw our attention to the connection between the laughter of Hermes before he invents the lyre and the laughter of Apollo when he first hears it.⁵⁰ The transformed tortoise has been tucked away for precisely this moment, and now we need to think about what it is about the lyre that makes Apollo laugh.

Arnould notes that laughter is commonly associated with the discovery of a new instrument (1990.218).⁵¹ Part of the wonder that comes with the discovery of any new technology, as Kahn suggests, comes from “the gap between the idea of clever machinery and its product which seems to largely surpass it” (1978.129).⁵² Disturbed at finding some of his cattle slaughtered by his troubling half-brother, Apollo is suddenly confronted with the sound of the lyre, the dead tortoise that has been given new life by Hermes in its combination with cow hides, sheep gut, and wood.⁵³ We should keep in mind that Zupančič (2008.56–58) argues that one of the important ways that comedy exposes surplus potential is through the sudden intrusion of the other side—here the power of the “voice” of the dead tortoise.⁵⁴ Through his joyous laughter at the sound of the tortoise-lyre, Apollo indicates his curiosity about how to respond to this unexpected thing that has erupted into Zeus’s cosmos.

Following Hermes’ song, a theogony that situates him properly within Zeus’s cosmos, Apollo finally has the opportunity to ask about this new instrument. While Hermes perceives and exploits the surplus potentials that others have overlooked, Apollo approaches the world as if everything already exists and simply needs to be discovered.⁵⁵ As part of the

50 Haft 1996.29 notes the role that humor and laughter play in the negotiations of Glendiot cattle raiders as they seek membership in the adult community.

51 In an interesting contrast, the satyrs and Silenos of Sophokles’ *Ikhneutai* (Radt frag. 314) feel pain as a result of the sound of the lyre (131 and 205).

52 “[*Thauma*] recouvre l’écart entre l’idée de machinerie astucieuse et son produit qui semble l’excéder largement.”

53 Kahn 1978.124 finds a foreshadowing of the friendship of Hermes and Apollo in the linkage of different animals to make the lyre.

54 There is an extended dialogue in Sophokles’ *Ikhneutai* (Radt frag. 314.299–312) between Kyllene and the chorus about the nature of the lyre. The dialogue involves guessing what kind of an animal could make such a sound. The conclusion to the guessing game neatly preserves the internal split in the lyre: Hermes calls the animal a tortoise, but the thing that makes noise a lyre.

55 It is important to think about the gods in relationship to each other, as Vernant 1980.99 reminds us. In this capacity, Hermes and Apollo appear in a similar capacity to Hermes and Hestia. As Vernant 1983 famously argues, Hestia stands in the middle and stands for

established order, Apollo offers two possible origins for the lyre: Hermes was either born with it or he was given it by some other god (440–42). Due to his attachment to the existing world, he has difficulty imagining that Hermes himself has invented the new instrument. Brought together by the persuasive mind of Zeus, the beautiful children of Zeus exemplify two extremes for how we may approach the world around us. On the one hand, we may look at the world as an infinitely flexible place. A tortoise can quickly be transformed into a lyre. On the other hand, we may look at the world as a place with known quantities. By bringing together Hermes and Apollo in friendship, Zeus enables his cosmos to reach a delicate balance between innovation and tradition.⁵⁶ By the end of the *Hymn*, Hermes and Apollo share roles as gods of herding, music, and prophecy.

LAUGHTER IN THE AUDIENCE

There is yet one more level where we can consider the role that laughter plays in this hymn. As Mary Depew argues, we should view hymns as gifts for the gods that they celebrate. It is then the goal of hymns to weave together the web that connects gods and mortals (2000.69). Scholars who have dealt with the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* inevitably mention the laughter and the humor of the hymn, and thus we should keep in mind that the laughter of the audience is part of the process of the laughter we find within the hymn.⁵⁷ Through laughter that develops out of comic surpluses, the hymnist encourages his Greek audience to celebrate Hermes' ability to thrive on his own contradictions. For a god to be a skilled inventor, expert cattle rustler, or practiced legal speaker would not be terribly surprising, but when combined with the fact that Hermes is emphatically a baby when he does all of this, the audience can recognize in this gap the great potential of the god being celebrated.

Through his energy to open up surplus potentials in the world, Hermes has transformed his brother, who has a history of eliminating rivals,

fixity, whereas Hermes on the boundaries represents mobility. In the interaction between the two opposites, our world arises.

56 Looking at a story of the Yoruba gods Ifa and Eshu, Hyde 1998.117 sees a parallel to Apollo and Hermes. As he says: "We get no tragic opposition, then; we get, rather, the creative play of necessity and chance, certainty and uncertainty, archetype and ectype, destiny and its exceptions, the way and the no-way, the net of fate and the escape from that net."

57 I am indebted here to observations made during the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Indiana Classical Conference in response to an earlier version of this project.

into a god willing to share in herding, music, and prophecy.⁵⁸ Though he has challenged the established order, the representatives of that order ultimately welcome the potential of this new god who resists the stagnation and rigidification of the cosmos, and this process of welcoming is marked with key moments of laughter. As we listen and laugh at the exploits of the young Hermes, we, too, welcome the energy that opens our world to new possibilities. Though at times we may want to be like Apollo with a fixed and stable view of things, we are enchanted by Hermes and enticed to see a world that pleasantly escapes our complete control.⁵⁹

Butler University

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58 Graefe 1973.526 sees two different worlds coming to understand themselves in the exchanges between Hermes and Apollo.

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