THE DECLINE OF PASTORAL IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH POETRY

H. R. TILLEY

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© H. R. Tilley, B.A. (Hons.), B.Ed.

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ABSTRACT

Although pastoral has had a long and varied history in literature, English poets have never felt completely at ease with the genre. Renaissance poets modified the classical pastoral to suit their own purposes. Spenser and Milton both used pastoral for satiric purposes rather than simply as a vehicle to express longings for a simpler life. Both ultimately rejected it. The native English tradition stemming from the "popular" pastorals and the mystery plays served also to modify the foreign tradition. Consequently there is an element of realism and lyricism in the English Renaissance pastoral which distinguishes it from the pastorals of the classical tradition. Throughout the Renaissance pastoral permeated almost every form of literary expression.

During the eighteenth century, however, a change occurs in the attitude towards pastoral largely as a result of the rather restrictive theory of the French critic Rapin and his English follower Pope. The displacement from reality, inherent in pastoral since Virgil, now becomes extreme. Addison, Philips, and Purney stress the need for more realistic description and an indigenous pastoral. Other poets like James Thomson appear to question the efficacy of the genre as a vehicle of serious poetic expression, and turn to longer descriptive-reflective poems to express pastoral themes.

This study attempts to show how English poets in the eighteenth century either worked within the genre to transform it into something more dynamic and vital, or else rejected it altogether as a serious poetic form. Part of the reason for the decline of pastoral was the growing consciousness of the invalidity of poetry which depicts shepherds who are remote from everyday reality. Other factors contributing to its decline were the new humanitarianism as found in the poetry of Goldsmith, Crabbe, and Cowper, as well as a greater interest in naturalistic description than is normally found in the pastoral poetry of the earlier part of this century. The ridicule cast upon pastoral by such writers as Gay, Swift, Johnson, Goldsmith, and Richard Jago also tended to undermine the prestige of the genre. The culmination of this changed attitude toward pastoral comes with Wordsworth's "Michael". "Michael" is a pastoral poem which is free of pastoral conventions, is set in the English lake district, and treats of the life of the shepherd Michael in a more realistic way than shepherds had been depicted in the traditional pastoral of a poet like Pope. But Wordsworth began no major revival of pastoral as a genre. By 1800 the general critical attitude towards pastoral had hardened into distaste. No major revival of the genre was possible.

This thesis has been examined and approved by

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PREFACE

Writing in 1798, Nathan Drake advises poets that if pastoral poetry cannot exist without "shepherds singing and piping for a bowl or a crook," they should "cease to compose it." This statement epitomizes the prevailing attitude towards conventional pastoral in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The purpose of this study is to attempt to explain why English poets became so dissatisfied with the pastoral tradition; to indicate why, for example, a critic of Dr. Johnson's stature and discernment could say of Lyttelton's "Progress of Love" that "it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral".

The subject suggested itself to me during a reading of Thomson's Seasons where I saw echoes of Virgil's Eclogues. It occurred to me that Thomson was treating of pastoral themes in a poem that was not, properly speaking, pastoral. Further reading led me to believe that the more serious writers of the second half of the eighteenth century turned away from pastoral to deal with pastoral themes in longer descriptive-reflective poems. I found also that among those writers who continued to use the genre after Pope there were concerted efforts to broaden its scope, to make the genre more vigorous, more relevant to life. For this reason the material presented has been treated in chronological order, so that the gradual change of attitude towards pastoral can more readily be seen.

The first acknowledgment of any student of pastoral must be to W.W. Greg whose Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama (1905) has proven a most valuable reference work for my first chapter. I am equally indebted to J.E. Congleton's comprehensive study of Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England, 1684-1798 (1952). This book has proven invaluable as a reference work, and in certain cases where original source material was not available to me I have been obliged to quote from his book. I hasten to add, however, that this study attempts something quite different from what Congleton does in his book. Whereas he deals strictly with critical theories about pastoral, I have attempted to trace in poetic practice the gradual rejection of pastoral by serious writers in the eighteenth century and to show the gradual decline of the genre as a vehicle for serious poetic utterance. Reference has been made to the theory of pastoral only to indicate certain trends which were making themselves felt in practice. No attempt has been made to cover to the same extent the critical material presented by Congleton. I might add also that no attempt has been made to comment on all the pastorals written during this period. Only those poems which seem to me to indicate a definite development in poetic practice have been discussed in any detail.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. P.A. O'Flaherty, my supervisor, whose interest and suggestions for improvement have been a great encouragement to me. To Dr. E.R. Seary I am grateful for his assistance in innumerable ways throughout my

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H.R.T.
31 March 1968.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

E.E.T.S.	Early English Text Society
ELH	A Journal of English Literary History
JEGP	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
SP	Studies in Philology

CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND: PASTORAL POETRY BEFORE POPE

"pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
pascere oportet ovis, deductum dicere carmen."[1]
(Virgil, Eclogue VI, 4-5)

1.

The long vogue of pastoral poetry suggests that it is connected with a universal impulse of the human mind to retreat from the stresses and complexities of urbanized society to a simpler and less demanding life close to nature. This desire to escape assumes many forms. For one person it may take the form of a complete retreat from society to the life of a hermit; for another it may take the form of an extended vacation to the seashore. Since physical escape is not always possible, man sometimes compensates for this by creating his own private dream world - an ideal world to which he can escape, for short periods at least, in his imagination. Often man writes down his desire for wish-fulfilment, and thus he begins to mythologize his desire for the ideal world. In literature, this desire to escape may be expressed in many forms, for example, romance, fairy-tale, western story, adventure story, to name a few. Pastoral is one of these forms. This universal urge to retire from the hectic involvement in the complex world of reality to an ideal world of simplicity, innocence, and love is the main theme of pastoral.

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[1] "A shepherd, Tityrus, should feed sheep that are fat, but sing a lay fine-spun." Virgil, trans. H.R. Fairclough (1953), p. 43.

Many writers have attempted to define pastoral. The term itself is derived from the Latin word "Pastor" meaning "a herdsman" or "shepherd", and Virgil's use of this word in his Eclogues, as may be seen from the foregoing inscription, may have had some influence on its being applied later to poems which deal mainly with shepherds who "feed sheep [and] sing a lay fine-spun." The term is applied also to the Idylls of Theocritus (3rd. Century B.C.). Although Theocritus is considered the first pastoral poet, he is not simply and purely a pastoral poet in the sense that he writes on pastoral themes only. "Idylls", the term applied to the poems of Theocritus, is derived from the Greek word εἶδος meaning "form, shape, figure". As applied to the poems of Theocritus it originally meant "little pictures", but because of its later association with pastoral it is now defined as a "short description in verse or in prose of picturesque scene or incident, especially in rustic life, [or an] episode suitable for such treatment".[2]

Just as it is important to distinguish between the Pastorals of Alexander Pope and such idyllic poems as John Dyer's "Grongar Hill", Oliver Goldsmith's Deserted Village, and Thomson's Seasons, all three of which have pastoral elements,[3]

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[2] The Concise Oxford Dictionary, ed. H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler (1960).

[3] By "pastoral elements" I mean passages or episodes which have a pastoral setting or employ certain conventions common to pastoral, but which are enclosed in poems which should, more strictly, be designated by some other term, e.g. descriptive-reflective, meditative, etc.

so it is important to distinguish between those poems of Theocritus and Virgil which may be considered pastoral poems and those which may not. The fourteenth idyll of Theocritus, "The Love of Cynisca", though ostensibly dealing with common life, ends with a flattering account of Ptolemy and what may be a veiled request for his patronage. The seventeenth idyll is a panegyric of Ptolemy and, likewise, should not be called a pastoral poem. Virgil's fourth eclogue is an encomium to Pollio, a Roman Consul, and as such could hardly be called a pastoral poem if it were not for the reference to the golden age. The golden age, which, according to Virgil, is to return during Pollio's consulship, is so important to the later development of pastoral that this eclogue has to be considered as a seminal poem. Virgil's sixth eclogue has a pastoral setting, but since its subject is mythological it should, perhaps, be called a little epic (or epyllion) rather than pastoral. Likewise "Little Heracles" and "The Hymn to the Dioscuri" by Theocritus should be called epics since their settings are not pastoral and their themes are mythological. Similarily, the fifteenth idyll of Theocritus, "The Women at the Adonis Festival",[4] is not pastoral. Like Bion's "Lament for Adonis", it lacks the pastoral setting. Because of the tradition that Adonis once tended sheep, however, and because of the dying-god motif[5] of the

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[4] J.M. Edmonds, trans., The Greek Bucolic Poets (1950), p. 175. This poem is considered the model for the town eclogue which became so popular, especially for burlesque purposes, in the eighteenth century.

[5] See Sir James G. Frazer, The Golden Bough (1929), Vol. I, pp. 335 ff.

Adonis myth - with its lamentation for the death of nature and rejoicing at the resurrection of Adonis and the return of Spring - these poems have become associated with pastoral. Adonis, then, appears frequently in pastoral. In Virgil's tenth eclogue he is the fair Adonis who once fed sheep by rivers. Much later Shelley writes his pastoral elegy for Keats under the name of "Adonais".

What, then, is meant by the term "pastoral" when applied to poetry? W.W. Greg's comments on the essentials of pastoral are worth noting:

> An insistence upon the objective pastoral setting is of prime importance in understanding the real nature of pastoral poetry; it not only serves to distinguish the pastoral proper from the more vaguely idyllic forms of lyric verse, but helps us further to understand how it was that the outward features of the kind came to be preserved, even after the various necessities of sophisticated society had metamorphosed the content almost beyond recognition....What does appear to be a constant element in the pastoral as known to literature is the recognition of a contrast, implicit or expressed, between pastoral life and some more complex type of civilization....Only when the shepherd-songs ceased to be the outcome of unalloyed pastoral conditions did they become distinctively pastoral. It is therefore significant that the earliest pastoral poetry with which we are acquainted, whatever half articulate experiments may have preceded it, was itself directly born of the contrast between the recollections of a childhood spent among the Sicilian uplands and the crowded social and intellectual city-life of Alexandria.[6]

Greg insists on the "contrast, implicit or expressed, between pastoral life and some more complex type of civilization" as the constant element in pastoral. His insistence, also, on

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[6] W.W. Greg, Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama (1959), p. 4.

the "prime importance" of the "objective pastoral setting" in enabling one "to distinguish the pastoral proper from the more vaguely idyllic forms of lyric verse" must be borne in mind when discussing this type of poetry. For the purpose of this study, then, pastoral poetry may be taken to mean poetry which deals primarily with the lives of herdsmen and swains in a rural setting and which contrasts, implicitly or explicitly, the simple, innocent, ideal life of these herdsmen with the more complex and often corrupt reality of urban society.

2.

The quality of pastoral that has been most ridiculed since the eighteenth century is its artificiality of tone and situation. This artificial quality is largely the result of the recurrent use of certain devices or situations which, from Virgil onwards, become a permanent part of the pastoral tradition. As time goes on, the use of these "conventions" in pastoral indicates a gradual widening of the gap between reality and the situation presented in the poem. The displacement or dissociation between the real life situation and the situation depicted in the poem is so great in the early eighteenth century pastoral, for example, that it is almost impossible to find any correspondence between the two.

This dissociation is not commonly found in the Idylls of Theocritus. The rural setting for Theocritus is his native Sicily and in that setting he gives a somewhat realistic portrayal of the life of the Sicilian herdsman. This is not so in Virgil's Eclogues. Virgil's rural world is Arcadia. In Eclogue II, where he is following Theocritus closely, his shepherds are Sicilian. In Eclogue X, however, the setting is Arcadia,[7] and all the Arcadians along with "Pan the god of Arcadia" come to mourn the death of Gallus. Likewise at the end of Eclogue IV, Virgil says that even if the god Pan were to contend with him in song, "Arcadia being judge", Pan himself would own defeat. This is not the central region of the Peloponnesus, however, but an imaginary world suggested to Virgil by a passage in Polybius. Polybius gave an account of his own native region and stated that the Arcadians were, from the days of their infancy onwards, accustomed to practise the art of musical contests. Bruno Snell suggests that "Virgil came across this passage when he was composing his shepherd songs, the Eclogues, and at once understood it to refer to the Arcadian shepherds; for Arcadia was shepherds' country and the home of Pan, the god of the herdsmen, inventor of the Syrinx. And so Virgil located the lives and the poetic contests of his

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[7] Bruno Snell, The Discovery of the Mind (1953), p. 282, suggests why Sicily would not be suitable for Virgil's purpose: "Theocritus who was born in Syracuse had written about the herdsmen of his own country. Meanwhile, however, Sicily had become a Roman province, and her shepherds had entered the service of the big Roman landlords. In this new capacity they had also made their way into Roman literature; witness Lucilius' satire on his trip to Sicily. But they could no longer be mistaken for the shepherds of song and love".

shepherds in Arcadia."[8]

Whereas in Virgil the situations depicted in the eclogues begin already to show evidence of dissociation from the real situations of everyday life, this is not so in Theocritus. Theocritus deals with both mythical and realistic subject matter in his Idylls, but he seldom intermingles both of these elements in the one poem. Whether depicting a singing match between two shepherds on the Sicilian hillside or the citizens attending the Adonis Festival, Theocritus does not introduce mythical figures into his scene, except, perhaps, as part of a song about a myth or folk belief. In dealing with myth, as he does in Idyll I, "The affliction of Daphnis", there is no intermingling of real persons with mythical persons such as we find in Virgil's Eclogue X. In Eclogue X, Virgil laments the death of his poet friend Gallus. He intermingles the mythical and the real by having Pan and the Naiads mourn Gallus, a real person. Likewise, in Eclogue VI, Silenus sings a mythological song of the creation of the universe. He sings of muses, nymphs, and gods, but into the midst of these legendary figures Virgil places the real person Gallus, wandering by the waters of Permessus.

Virgil was not the first to do this, however. The "Lament for Bion"[9] intermingles, in a similar way, mythical and

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[8] Snell, op. cit., p. 281.

[9] This poem has been attributed traditionally to the Syracusan poet Moschus who lived around 150 B.C. J.M. Edmonds, op. cit., p. xxii, comments as follows: "None of Moschus' extant works are really Bucolic; for the 'Lament for Bion' is certainly by another hand."

realistic elements. Nymphs mourn for the real poet Bion. Bion is depicted as the poet-shepherd and this association may be the origin of the poet-shepherd figure in pastoral. The poet Bion (c. 100 B.C.), following Theocritus, keeps his "Lament for Adonis" in the realm of pure myth. For these pagan poets, the myths form a body of common folk-belief, but after Virgil these myths are considered as part of a pagan culture that has little relevance in a Christian world. Yet in Milton's "Lycidas" the nymphs are called upon to tell where they were

> when the remorseless deep
> Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
> (ll. 50-51)

This indicates the breadth of the displacement between reality and the situation depicted in this seventeenth century poem.

There is further evidence of displacement from the real situation in the other eclogues of Virgil. In Eclogues I and IX, for example, the subject of discussion between two herdsmen is the land re-distribution policy initiated by Octavian to provide farms, in Virgil's native province of Northern Italy, for his discharged veterans following his victory at Philippi in 42 B.C. Virgil has his shepherd and goatherd discuss the dispossession of farms resulting from this new policy. Instead, however, of depicting them as farmers, as in real life they were, Virgil depicts them as herders of sheep and goats. Thus they are, to some extent, dissociated in these poems from the conditions of

actual life. In the other eclogues too we find this same dissociation of pastoral poetry from the conditions of actual life. In Eclogue III, for example, a singing match between two shepherds has to include a compliment to Pollio, patron and poet, for looking so kindly on the shepherd's work. Likewise in Eclogue V Mopsus rejects Menalcas's suggestion to sing to "Phyllis and her Loves", or "In praise of Alcon", or of "Codrus Quarrelling", in favour of one of his own compositions on the apotheosis of Daphnis. Some writers[10] interpret this as an allegory about the recent deification of Julius Caesar and a compliment, therefore, to Octavian, nephew of Caesar. The fourth eclogue, which introduces the concept of the golden age to pastoral, is also a compliment to Pollio under whose consulship this new age will begin. The sixth eclogue deals with the creation of the universe - a matter with which one would not expect shepherds to be familiar.

Thus it can be seen that Virgil introduces into the pastoral atmosphere his friends, his contemporaries, and his patrons under the guise of shepherds. Sometimes his shepherds discuss love, but more often they discuss some topic of greater importance, causing an incongruity between the matter under discussion and the characters by whom it is being discussed. The seeds of its destruction, then, are already planted in the pastoral poetry of Virgil. Later writers, following Virgil's

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[10] Previous to 1800, Daphnis was held to be Caesar. See D.L. Drew, "Virgil's Fifth Eclogue: A Defence of the Julius Caesar - Daphnis Theory", Classical Quarterly, Vol. XVI (1922), pp. 57-64.

example, employ these stock situations or conventions to discuss matters as varied as the love complaint of a shepherd of the golden age or corruption in church and state affairs. This displacement between reality and the situation depicted in pastoral becomes broader as time goes on. The inevitable result is that the situation depicted in pastoral becomes so stereotyped, especially in the conventional eclogue of the early eighteenth century, that a conscious rejection of the genre sets in. This displacement or dissociation of pastoral from real life owes much to the example of Virgil's eclogues.

To say only this of Virgil, however, is to give an unbalanced view both of his ability as a writer and the full extent of his influence on the later pastoral tradition. To say that Virgil is less realistic than Theocritus, or that he is willing to use a pastoral setting which is remote from reality, is to state merely what Virgil intended. He did not intend to write directly about the lives of shepherds. His intention, as has been suggested, was to write about matters of great import. If Virgil presents us with less insight into character, less variety of pastoral ideas and images than Theocritus, he does, on the other hand, present us with poems that are, stylistically, gems of literature. His eclogues are executed with a polish and refinement that make them as different from the Idylls as Milton's "Lycidas" is from Spenser's Shepheardes Calender. While Spenser's use of language may be said to owe something to the practice of Theocritus, Virgil provided pastoral,

especially pastoral elegy, with that exalted and noble expression which Milton found so suited to the expression of his thoughts on the occasion of the deaths of his two friends, Edward King and Charles Diodati. In doing this, Virgil set the example for the dignified expression of grief, which (though in lesser hands it suffered from exaggeration and sentimentality) in the hands of Milton gave us one of the finest poems of its type in the language. It can thus be seen that Virgil's influence was more than merely formalizing certain devices which have since come to be accepted as conventions of the pastoral tradition.

Although many of the conventions will be dealt with later in connection with individual poets, a brief list of the main conventions will clarify what is meant by this term. They include the unhappy shepherd, the fair shepherdess, the wandering flock, the oaten pipe, the singing match and the awarding of prizes, the elaborate description of prizes, a third shepherd to tend the herd while the contest is on, and the elaborate floral descriptions which are associated mainly with pastoral elegy. Other conventions more closely associated with pastoral elegy are the appeal to nymphs or other companions of the dead shepherd, the "pathetic fallacy" in which all nature is depicted as mourning the death of the shepherd, and, finally, the deities, shepherds and others, who visit the afflicted shepherd. These, then, are the more common conventions of formal pastoral.

The poetic forms used by Theocritus and imitated by Virgil have also become traditional in pastoral. First, there is the

singing-match. This match may be rude banter between two shepherds, or dialogue which may conceal contemporary events under a thin veil of allegory.[11] Secondly, there is the love-lay either of courtship or complaint, and thirdly, there is the dirge of the shepherd for a dead companion who was also a poet-shepherd. These, then, are the more common conventions and poetic forms which have been associated with pastoral poetry since the time of Virgil. Certain aspects of classical pastoral become very pronounced in later pastoral poetry. This is especially true of allegory. Another inherent aspect of the classical pastoral is its dramatic quality. This particular quality provides much of the dynamic for the later proliferation of pastoral themes in drama. Again, the narrative quality of certain classical pastorals is adapted later to the pastoral romance. The classical pastoral, then, has inherent qualities which provide the dynamic for its future adaptation to other forms of literary expression. Unfortunately, it contains as well the seeds of its own destruction in its tendency to dissociate the situation depicted in its poetry from the actual conditions of life.

3.

The writing of pastoral eclogues did not completely

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[11] This is not common practice in Theocritus although J.M. Edmonds, op. cit., p. xvi, suggests that perhaps Theocritus wrote Idyll VII, "The Harvest Home", as an appeal on behalf of his poet-friend Sotades who had been imprisoned by Ptolemy. The scholia preserve a tradition that in this idyll Simichidas is Theocritus himself.

disappear during the Middle Ages, although little of significance has come down to us.[12] With the revival of classical literature in the fourteenth century, however, there came a renewed interest in pastoral, especially the Virgilian pastoral. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, Virgil, largely because of the supposed prophetic quality of his "Messianic" eclogue,[13] was considered something of a Christian even though he had lived in the pre-Christian era. Pastoral began now to influence drama and romance as well as poetry, and its influence spread outside Italy to Spain and later to France. Such was the dynamic quality of pastoral that its influence penetrated almost every form of literary expression.

Petrarch (1304-1374), Boccaccio (1313-1375) and Mantuan (1448-1516) are three humanists who influence the pastoral tradition to a considerable degree. Concerned as they were with man and his affairs, they looked upon pastoral not as a means of escape from the complexities of life, but as a useful instrument of satire on political, social, and ecclesiastical

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[12] Calpurnius, Nemesian, Radbert, and Metellus each wrote eclogues following the Virgilian model. The most noteworthy is Radbert (c.790-c.865), a monk and sometime abbot of a monastery in Westphalia, who concluded his De Vita S. Adalhardi with a pastoral elegy which shows a mixture of classical and biblical elements.

[13] Writers of pastoral saw the possible correspondence between Isaiah and Virgil's fourth eclogue. Isaiah, prophesies that the Lord shall give a sign and "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (7:14), and he shall eat "butter and honey" (7:15). During his reign "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, ... and a little child shall lead them" (11:6). Thus by analogy the traditional shepherd tending his flock becomes associated with the pastor of Christ's flock.

matters. They adapted the Virgilian pastoral to suit their own particular purposes. Conscious of the somewhat decadent practices within ecclesiastical and political circles, Petrarch and his followers found the pastoral eclogue to be a convenient vehicle for satiric attacks on church and state. In adapting the Virgilian eclogue to their own purposes, however, the humanists increased its artificial quality by their emphasis on the conventions. They stressed, also, the didactic and allegorical qualities of Virgil. Petrarch declared, with entire justice, that his twelve Latin eclogues could be understood only with a key. In the eclogues of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and especially Mantuan, the Christian and pagan elements exist side by side. Mantuan's virulent satire exerted an important influence on such English writers of pastoral as Alexander Barclay, Barnaby Googe, and Edmund Spenser.

Several other continental writers who influence English pastoral should be mentioned briefly. Sannazaro (1458-1530) wrote five Latin Piscatory Eclogues which may have provided the inspiration for Phineas Fletcher's Piscatory Eclogues, and almost certainly they attracted Milton since Sannazaro's first piscatory eclogue is a lament by a shepherd named Lycidas for the drowned shepherdess, Phyllis. The similarity between the circumstances of the deaths in both poems suggests that Milton may have known Sannazaro's eclogue. More important as far as pastoral romance is concerned is Sannazaro's Arcadia, which provided Sidney with the idea for his pastoral romance of the same name and restored to later pastoral the Virgilian setting of Arcadia. Of importance

also to the development of pastoral drama is Guarini's Il Pastor Fido (1590) which was translated into English for the first time in 1602 and during the seventeenth century had a considerable vogue in England. Guarini's play served as a model for John Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess (1610). The variety of subject and poetic form in these works, then, indicates the dynamic quality of pastoral at this time.

4.

The humanists made the pastoral a vehicle for criticism of the real world and in doing this helped to determine how pastoral would be used by English writers in the Renaissance. There is, however, from the very beginning a certain uneasiness among English poets who write traditional pastorals. Although Shakespeare does not write pastorals in the traditional manner, he conveys his attitude toward the pastoral world and the conventions of traditional pastoral by his ridicule of them in As You Like It. Spenser and Milton both write traditional pastorals, but one can sense their uneasiness with the genre and a tendency to modify it to suit their own purposes. The two latter poets consider the concept of the golden age of pleasure and ease as something to be rejected for a more active and virtuous life in the fallen world. They both keep pastoral alive and dynamic because they modify it to treat of matters which are of considerable importance in the life of man. When, in the early eighteenth century, pastoral becomes a vehicle

mainly for depicting the pleasure and ease of a golden age whose existence many poets themselves begin to doubt, it is inevitable that its effectiveness as a vehicle of poetic expression should be called into question. For those writers who take advantage of the allegorical element in pastoral to discuss matters of great import covertly, the conventions of traditional pastoral are something of a convenience. The remoteness of the pastoral world depicted in such poems as Shepheardes Calender and "Lycidas" from the real world can be overlooked somewhat, since the subject matter of these poems has a very real connection with the life of the times. Even in Spenser, nevertheless, there is some attempt to locate the setting of the pastorals on the English countryside through reference to local place names. In the early eighteenth century, however, pastoral becomes so bound up with conventions and "rules" that it is not only the dissociation between the situation of the poem and everyday reality that works against the genre; the content of the conventional pastoral itself, depicting shepherds of the golden age "as they may be conceiv'd then to have been", is so shallow and unrelated to life in the real world, that the rejection of pastoral becomes inevitable.

Another important influence which modifies the foreign pastoral tradition as treated by English poets is the native impulse or tradition. This native tradition stems from the mystery plays of the Middle Ages and from the "popular" pastoral poetry which was part of the popular literature of

England before the foreign pastoral tradition made its appearance in English literature. The realistic detail of the Second Shepherds' Play, for example, and the freshness and variety of some of the popular pastorals, influence to a considerable extent the future development of pastoral in England. The "pastourelle" motif also helped to modify the English pastoral and to add variety of theme which is not found in the foreign pastoral tradition. The "pastourelle" was a lyric of courtly origin which became popular in Provencal, France and Italy during the fifteenth century. Its influence can be detected in Robert Henryson's (1430?-1506) "Robyn and Makyne" and in some of the numerous pastorals in England's Helicon (1600). There is, finally, the tendency towards eroticism, under the influence of such French poets as Saint-Amant (1594-1661), which is evident in the pastoral poetry of Thomas Randolph, Richard Lovelace, and Robert Herrick in the seventeenth century. This tendency can be seen especially in the libertine extension of the golden age concept of the orthodox tradition. In addition to the plenitude of nature and the absence of pride, envy, honour, and such vices that we find in the orthodox concept, there is the emphasis on sensual innocence and the gratification of the senses.

These, then, are some of the influences and modifications which English poets bring to bear on the foreign orthodox tradition of pastoral. They give vigour and variety to English pastoral throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Some of the variety of pastoral can be seen from a perusal of the literature of this period. Such diverse works as Sidney's Arcadia, a pastoral romance, and John Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess, a pastoral drama, attest to the dynamic quality and variety of pastoral literature at this time. Before the eighteenth century, then, pastoral is alive and dynamic. Yet for all its vigour, certain poets feel uneasy writing in the genre and often apologize for doing so. It may be that the empirical bent of the English mind could not easily accept the dissociation between the situation depicted in pastoral and the situation in real life.

Let us look now at how the three greatest writers in the English Renaissance, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton regard, use, and modify the traditional pastoral. Spenser rejects the ease and pleasure of the pastoral life. The Shepheardes Calender may be read as rejection of the pastoral life in favour of the truly dedicated life in the world.[14] Spenser's humanistic bent, like that of one of his models, Mantuan, found the pastoral a convenient vehicle for indirect and veiled criticism of contemporary affairs. Although Spenser is content to model certain of his eclogues on the earlier pastoral tradition (he does this in "March", "Aprill", and "August", for example, where the unreal world of pastoral provides the setting) he does not always follow the foreign tradition. In the moral eclogues the setting is the fallen

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[14] See A.C. Hamilton, "The Argument of Spenser's Shepheardes Calender", ELH, Vol. XXIII (1956), p. 171.

world of nature where political and religious corruption providesthe subject matter. Spenser, in fact, makes some important contributions to the development of pastoral. These contributions include the use of an artistic framework - the calendar - which gives a continuity to the series; an attempt to give pastoral a real English setting; the introduction of a variety of verse forms and metres; the introduction to pastoral of the fable and its element of Chaucerian humour; and, finally, the adaptation of pastoral to English soil through the use of a new type of language. Yet Spenser does not appear to be completely at ease with pastoral as a poetic form even after he has made these modifications to suit his own purposes. E.K. feels obliged to apologize for Spenser's use of "this kind of wryting" which is "both so base for the matter, and homely for the manner". The reason E.K. gives for Spenser's writing pastorals is that Theocritus, Virgil, Mantuan, and the other pastoral poets wrote pastorals first "to proue theyr tender wyngs, before they make a greater flyght". Is Spenser looking forward to that time when he can forego the "homely shepheards quill" for the muse of heroic poetry? In "June" Colin says he "neuer lyst presume to Parnasse hyll", and he then apologizes for his rhymes which he says "bene rough, and rudely drest". In "October", however, where Cuddie "complayneth of the contempte of Poetrie", Piers advises him to

> Abandon then the base and viler clowne,
> Lyft vp thy selfe out of the lowly dust:
> And sing of bloody Mars, of wars, of giusts,
> Turne thee to those, that weld the awful crowne.
> To doubted Knights, whose woundlesse armour rusts,
> And helmes vnbruzed wexen dayly browne.
> (ll. 37-42)

Significantly, in "December", Colin says

> And I, that whilome wont to frame my pype,
> Vnto the shifting of the shepheards foote:
> Sike follies nowe haue gathered as too ripe
> And cast hem out, as rotten and vnsoote.
> (ll. 115-118)

Just as the whole poem shows the process of Spenser's finding his vocation, his epiphany to the world, so the poem shows also his dedication to the life of the world and a rejection of the easy pastoral life - both the easy life of the traditional shepherd and the easy and corrupt life of the false pastors of the church. In "Januarie", the first plaintive eclogue, Colin, "vnder whose person the Author selfe is shadowed", is shown as being unhappy in the simple pastoral world of innocence where the faithless Rosalind eludes him. His dissatisfaction is shown in the breaking of his "oaten pype". The defeat of nature, as represented by the death and resurrection of Dido in "November", however, seems to reassure Colin. In "December", he rejects the life confined to the state of nature, and instead of trying to please the "rude Pan" of "Januarie", he is now dedicated to a greater Pan, Christ. Thus he rejects the pastoral Paradise[15] for a dedicated life in the world:

> Adieu delightes, that lulled me asleepe,
> Adieu my deare, whose loue I bought so deare:
> Adieu my little Lambes and loued sheepe,
> Adieu ye Woodes that oft my witnesse were:
> ("December", ll. 151-154)

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[15] Likewise in Faerie Queene, Book VI, Spenser introduces the golden age setting in which the shepherd Meliboe lives a life "free and fortunate from all the tempests of these worldly seas" (Canto IX, v.20). Spenser ultimately rejects this ideal pastoral world, however, since it cannot withstand the brutal attack of the "Brigants" who "invade" and "murder" the shepherds.

Shakespeare, likewise, rejects the pastoral world and he ridicules its conventional shepherds. His attitude toward pastoral is conveyed in his treatment of the pastoral world in As You Like It. The banished Duke introduces the pastoral theme in his first speech: "Are not these woods/More free from peril than the envious court?" The Forest of Arden is not the pre-lapsian golden world, however, since here characters feel the "penalty of Adam", the "icy fang" and "churlish chiding of the Winter's wind". Shakespeare introduces two realists - Touchstone, the court fool, and Corin, the old shepherd - who provide "touchstones" against which the other characters may be judged. Jacques, the melancholy moralizer, considers Touchstone "a material fool" yet is himself "ambitious for a motley coat". Touchstone is "a material fool" - a man of the senses. On entering the Forest of Arden, Rosalind complains of her weary spirits. Touchstone cares not for his spirits if his "legs were not weary". This same sensous quality characterizes his love affair with Audrey. He is a realist and unlike Jacques, who refuses to return to court, or the banished Duke, who is living in the Forest of Arden "like the old Robin Hood of England" fleeting "time carelessly, as they did in the golden world", Touchstone longs for the court-life. Like Jacques and the banished Duke, he knows the corruption, envy, and tyranny of the court, but unlike them he does not seek to escape it, because he realizes that these things are part of life and that he himself has participated in them. In Act V, Sc. IV, Touchstone says: "I have trod a measure; I have flattered a lady; I have been politic

with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors". He is a man of experience.

Old Corin is another standard by which the pastoral world and its inhabitants are judged. Shakespeare presents the conventional pastoral lovers in Silvius and Phoebe. The portrayal of Silvius, however, has been influenced by the courtly love tradition in poetry. For Silvius love is made of "sighs and tears", "faith and service", "all purity, all trial, all observance". Phoebe is the "proud disdainful shepherdess". In William and Audrey, he presents the burlesque counterpart of the conventional lovers - Silvius and Phoebe - to show what rustics are really like. William, who is said to have "a pretty wit", is practically speechless before Touchstone. Audrey is really an ignorant shepherdess who knows not the meaning of "poetical" and proclaims she is "not a slut", though she thanks the gods that she is "foul". Shakespeare presents us with a third unrealistic love affair in that of Rosalind and Orlando. They hardly belong to the pastoral world and appear to be closer to the everyday world of reality. They are both of the court, yet for a while they act like literary shepherds and shepherdesses. Orlando "abuses our young plants with carving 'Rosalind' on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles, all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind". Rosalind swoons when she hears he has been injured. Against these unrealistic love affairs, Shakespeare sets the realistic, sensual love-affair of Touchstone and Audrey. Touchstone takes William's shepherdess from him. Unlike Silvius

and William, Touchstone has no illusions about love: "man hath his desires; and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling". He takes Audrey in marriage since otherwise they "must live in bawdry".

By introducing Touchstone and the old shepherd, Corin, Shakespeare shatters the pastoral ideal. Corin has not the perpetual youth of the pastoral lover Silvius, yet he has "loved ere now". His days of sighing "upon a midnight pillow" are past, as are all the "actions most ridiculous" that he has forgotten. His confrontation with Touchstone provides an interesting insight into the relationship of the world of the court and the world of pastoral. These two realists have a firm grip on life. Touchstone's retort that Corin is damned "for not being at court" does not stand up in the light of the common sense philosophy expressed by Corin. His philosophy may have its limitations, but it is not to be degraded and it is grounded in fact. He may not know the manners of the court, but his final answer that he is a "true labourer" who earns what he eats, envies no man's happiness, and is content with his "harm", and that his greatest pride is to see his ewes graze and lambs suck, shows that he has no illusions about life. Of course he is not the conventional shepherd of pastoral, and, just as the Duke leaves the green world to return to the court,[16] so

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[16] Shakespeare also introduces pastoral into his later play The Winter's Tale but this time without the explicit mockery of its conventions that is found in As You Like It. Implicitly, however, he again expresses the same attitude toward the pastoral ideal by showing that it must ultimately be rejected for the world of reality - in this case the court.

Shakespeare rejects the conventional pastoral figures for the more realistic Corin. Corin and Touchstone are the realists. Touchstone is the only character who is really conscious of time in the play, and it is time and reality that eventually shatter the timeless, ideal world of pastoral.

Milton, too, ultimately rejects pastoral and the irresponsible life of pagan joy which it represents. This attitude is conveyed through his treatment of the pastoral world in "Lycidas" (1637) and "Arcades" (1632). "Lycidas" is a poem not so much about Edward King as about Milton himself and his reactions to life. The fact that King was something of a poet and preparing for church orders, and that Milton himself was a poet, and, as such, something of a priest also in the service of God, opened the way for the allegorical treatment of both as shepherds "nurst upon the self-same hill".(l. 23) The poem crystallizes the conventions of the whole pastoral elegy tradition. Milton's use of traditional pastoral elegy with its conventions produces a certain displacement between the situation depicted and real life. Milton was anything but a herder of sheep. Yet because of the biblical influence on pastoral that has already been discussed, the poet-shepherd figure caring for Christ's flock is not as remote from reality as he at first appears. Thus Milton's poem, like Spenser's Shepheardes Calender, overcomes to some extent these shortcomings of pastoral by dealing with matters of some concern to man - corruption in church and state affairs and the state of poetry. Milton's mixing of classical and

biblical elements (Christian St. Peter and classical Jove) is common practice in Spenser, too, though Dr. Johnson deplores it. In "Lycidas", however, Milton appears to have trouble in trying to maintain a mood consistent with the pastoral elegy. He appears to be impatient with the pastoral tradition and expresses his impatience by allowing reality to shatter the mood of the pastoral world. The opening of the poem is traditional. The nymphs are questioned about their absence, and there is the pathetic fallacy of universal nature lamenting the death of Lycidas. This is followed by the first digression in which reality - Milton's own concern for poets, poetry, and the clergy - breaks in upon the pastoral world. Milton questions the value of tending the "homely slighted Shepherd's trade" and meditating "the thankless Muse". Since the "blind Fury with th' abhorred shears" might without warning slit "the thin-spun life", might it not be better to "sport with Amaryllis in the shade"? A hint of the solution of the basic tension between this pagan joy of living and Christian responsibility is given near the end of this movement when Phoebus says that "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil ... But lives and spreads aloft ... in Heav'n". The Christian consolation which comes at the end of the poem is here anticipated.

The mood of the traditional pastoral elegy returns at "O Fountain Arethuse", and then follows the procession of the mourners. Once again, however, the world of experience breaks in upon the pastoral world with the entrance of St. Peter, "The Pilot of the Galilean lake", who speaks through stern theological

realities and condemns the false clergy who "creep and intrude and climb into the fold", and whose "hungry sheep look up, and are not fed". Soon "the dread voice is past" and the poem again returns to the somewhat shattered pastoral mood. Then follows the traditional catalogue of flowers. These flowers, which "strew the Laureate Hearse where Lycid lies", bring, however, only illusory ease and "false surmise" against the reality of loss. But presently "false surmise" and weeping are replaced by renewed hope and a request for the shepherds to "Weep no more", since Lycidas is now "mounted high" through the influence of "him that walk'd the waves". Here is the conventional consolation in Christian and biblical terms. Whereas, however, "Epitaphium Damonis" ends with the song of ecstasy, "Lycidas" returns after the quieter passage of consolation to the classical pastoral setting where the "uncouth Swain" is "warbling his Doric lay". Milton's apparent impatience with the pastoral tradition throughout this poem, as has been pointed out, indicates that he was not completely at ease writing within the genre. In fact, there is at least a hint of his rejection of pastoral in the last line of the poem: "Tomorrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new".

Perhaps the "great task-Master" of Sonnet VII, written five years earlier than "Lycidas", was now calling him to more important tasks in poetry. John M. Wallace in an article on Milton's "Arcades" - a masque written in the same year as the sonnet - states that the main theme of this poem is the "flight from Arcadia". The poem shows Milton's growing dissatisfaction

with the kind of world the pagan paradise offered. "For Milton", Wallace says, "the conversion of the pagan world, not a compromise with it, was the only legitimate aim of a Christian. Dr. Hamilton has suggested that Spenser had a similar intention in writing The Shepheardes Calender, but if the breaking of Colin's pipes symbolizes his rejection of the pastoral mode in favor of a more dedicated life in the world, the symbolism is not as clear as it is in the final song of 'Arcades'. The shepherds are openly encouraged to 'Bring your Flocks, and live with us' ..., and the masque closes with a succinct mythical allusion which clearly repeats the invitation."[17] This poem was written five years before "Lycidas", and appears to anticipate Milton's rejection of pastoral in the later poem.

This uneasiness with the pastoral genre and the world depicted in it is apparent in the writings of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. Spenser and Milton both modify the foreign pastoral tradition to suit their own needs. One phenomenon which influences and enriches the treatment of the conventional pastoral is a native English pastoral tradition, owing little or nothing to the classical pastoral, which existed in English literature as early as the fifteenth century. It would seem convenient to treat this native impulse separately, and trace it from its beginning in the Second Shepherds' Play (early 15th. c.).

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[17] John M. Wallace, "Milton's 'Arcades'", in Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Arthur E. Barker (1965), p. 84.

This native tradition can be said to give pastoral something of the quality that is attributed to the Idylls of Theocritus - a spontaneity and freshness that are lacking in much of the poetry of the foreign pastoral tradition, plus a sense of somehow being not too far removed from reality. The Second Shepherds' Play from the Wakefield Mystery Cycle, for example, is supposed to center upon Christ's Nativity, but of the eight scenes in it only the last two deal with the Nativity. The first six scenes give what is in effect a burlesque version of the last two. The play owes nothing to the orthodox classical tradition of pastoral. The main influence working upon it is that of the Bible together with the native comic impulse. These are combined to produce a farce that is unique in our literature at this early date.

Mak's description of his wife has an air of realism that is not to be found in the orthodox foreign tradition of pastoral:

> She's sprawling by the fire; that's nothing new.
> The house is full of brats. She drinks ale, too.
> Come good or ill, that she will always do.
> She eats fast as she can,
> And each year gives a man
> A babe or two to scan.
> Though I had much more money in my purse,
> She'd eat and drink us to the Devil, sirs.[18]
> (Sc. I, ll. 189-196)

To be sure, she is no idealized Galatea or Phyllis.

The native impulse can be seen in the "popular" pastoral poetry of this period as well as in the drama. In the following

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[18] R.S. Loomis and R. Willard, eds., Medieval English Verse and Prose (1948), p. 445.

anonymous poem of the fifteenth century, which resembles the Second Shepherds' Play in theme, an attempt is made to present a "real" English shepherd:

> The shepard upon a hill he satt;
> He had on hym hys tabard and hys hat,
> Hys tarbox, hys pype and, hys flagat;
> Hys name was called Joly Joly Wat,
> For he was a gud herdes boy.
> Ut hoy!
> For in hys pype he mad so mych joy.[19]

Here we have not the conventional shepherd that we expect to find in traditional pastoral but a "gud herdes boy" with "hys tarbox, hys pype, and hys flagat".

Robert Henryson (1430?-1506) has given us in his "Robyn and Makyne" an example of native non-classical pastoral in a Scottish setting. Again there is no apparent influence from the foreign tradition, but the theme is one that recurs throughout pastoral - the lover complains of unrequited love. In this poem Robyn, the shepherd, is loved by Makyne, but he does not return her love until it is too late. When he does have a change of heart he expresses it in the same rather suggestive terms that are sometimes found in the saucy love-encounters of later pastoral. Makyne, however, has already had a change of heart herself and reminds Robyn of the truth of "stories auld":

> The man that will nocht quhen he may,
> Saill haif nocht quhen he wald.[20]

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[19] Frank Kermode, English Pastoral Poetry From the Beginning to Marvell (1952), p. 50.

[20] E.K. Chambers, English Pastorals [n.d.], p. 4.

Henryson's poem is a version of the "pastourelle". Briefly, the "pastourelle" deals generally with the poet or a gentleman who meets a shepherd-maid (a real peasant) while he is riding by and makes love to her, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. Often his action brings the whole of the girl's family against him. The "pastourelle" motif reappears in the pastoral ballads which are popular in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The native tradition influenced Spenser's Shepheardes Calender as well, as can be seen from the jauntiness and simplicity of expression of the following passage:

> Perigot. It fell vpon a holly eue
> Willye. hey ho hollidaye,...
> Per. I saw the bouncing Bellibone,
> Wil. hey ho Bonibell,
> Per. Tripping ouer the dale alone,
> Wil. she can trippe it very well:
> ("August", ll. 53 ff.)

Nicholas Breton (1545-1626) produced some of the finest pastoral lyrics of the English Renaissance. His Passionate Shepheard appeared in 1604. The third pastoral, dealing with the contrast between the life of the swain and that of the king, gives something of the poetic flavour of the whole volume:

> Who can liue in heart so glad,
> As the merrie countrie lad?
> Who vpon a faire greene balke
> May at pleasures sit and walke?
> And amidde the Azure skies,
> See the morning Sunne arise?[21]

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[21] Nicholas Breton, Works, ed. A.B. Grosart (1966), Vol. I, p. 6.

Likewise, his "Phillida and Coridon", sung during an entertainment given to Queen Elizabeth at Elvetham in 1591, is a delightful song and is a literary variation of the pastourelle theme.

Christopher Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd to His Love" deserves to be mentioned because it deals with a common pastoral theme in the language of erotic fantasy so common in Elizabethan poetry:

> Come live with mee, and be my love,
> And we will all the pleasures prove,
> That Vallies, groves, hills and fieldes,
> Woods, or steepie mountaine yeeldes.[22]

"The Nimphs reply to the Sheepheard", one of the numerous imitations of Marlowe's poem, is equally interesting in that it shatters the whole pastoral ideal with the answer that

> Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
> When Rivers rage, and Rocks grow cold,
> And Philomell becommeth dombe,
> The rest complaines of cares to come.[23]

Michael Drayton's pastorals also deserve passing reference. His Idea, The Shepherd's Garland Fashioned into Nine Eclogues (1593) is modelled on the traditional eclogue and shows the influence of Spenser in diction and in certain themes. More interesting, however, is his later Muses' Elizium (1630) which contains a mixture of pastoral and fairy lore. Something of the delightful lyric quality of these poems and the paradisical quality of this imaginary half-fairy, half-pastoral

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[22] Englands Helicon, ed. Hugh MacDonald (1962), p. 192.

[23] Ibid., p. 193, signed "Ignoto".

world is conveyed in the following stanza from "The Third Nimphall".

> Naiis. The Fairies are hopping,
> The small Flowers cropping,
> And with dew dropping,
> Skip thorow the Greaves.[24]

Greg comments on this poem as follows: "The Muses' Elizium is in truth the culmination of a long sequence of pastoral work. Of this I have already discussed the beginnings when dealing with the native pastoral impulse; and however much it was influenced at a later date by foreign models it never submitted to the yoke of orthodox tradition, and to the end retained much of its freshness".[25]

So much for the native pastoral impulse in Renaissance poetry. There were, as has already been suggested, other important developments in pastoral which will demand some attention. There was the tendency toward eroticism, under the influence of such poets as Saint-Amant. Thomas Randolph in his poem "Upon Love Fondly Refus'd for Conscience Sake" (1638) writes that conscience is "but a Bedlams midnight theme" (l. 51). Likewise in his "Pastorall Courtship" (1638) Randolph's swain

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[24] Michael Drayton, Works, ed. J.W. Hebel (1961), Vol. III, p. 273.

[25] Greg, op. cit., p. 106. A rather different and more ambitious type of pastoral which deserves mention is William Browne's Britannia's Pastorals (1613-1616). The poem has been described as either a pastoral epic or a versified romance. It contains some 10,000 lines, is unfinished, and owes much to the foreign tradition. Browne's naturalistic descriptions of the Devon countryside, however, give an effect of realism similar to that conveyed by Spenser in his reference to Kent and the "Kentish downes" in "Iulye", "September", and "Nouember".

tells his Phyllis:

> No danger in these shades doth lye,
> Nothing that wears a sting, but I:
> And in it doth no venome dwell,
> Although perchance it make thee swell.[26]

A similar view is expressed in Lovelace's "Love Made in the First Age" (1659):

> No Serpent kiss poyson'd the Tast,
> Each touch was naturally Chast,
> And their mere Sense a Miracle.[27]

The sensuous, lyric quality of Herrick's pastoral poems owes little to the orthodox pastoral tradition. In them we find a mixture of pagan and Christian elements. Underlying much of his poetry is a pagan, primitive awareness of the celebration of natural fertility implicit in the folk ceremonies marking the passage of the seasons. This idea of the celebration of the fertility of Nature is not new, however, since it appears also in Idyll VII of Theocritus. Pagan and Christian elements are mixed in Herrick's "Corinna's Going A-Maying" (1648), a poem which deals with the "carpe diem" theme. The poem argues for freedom to become involved in the natural life-force, i.e. for sensual freedom. This natural life-force appears as a force beneath Christianity. It is "a harmless follie of the

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[26] Thomas Randolph, Poems, ed. G. Thorn-Drury (1929), p. 110.

[27] Richard Lovelace, Poems, ed. C.H. Wilkinson (1953), p. 147.

time"[28] out of which we shall grow. The lyrical, sensuous quality of Herrick's pastorals sets them apart from traditional pastoral poems.

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) treats pastoral in a manner very different from those writers discussed thus far. In his "Mower" poems, "The Garden", and his "Nymph Complaining for the death of her Faun", a strong Puritan strain is found - an emphasis on purity, virginity, and innocence. Marvell sees man's moral wrongs as a corrupting force on unfallen nature. His garden is directly opposed to the libertinism of the gardens of Randolph and Lovelace. In the opening lines of "The Mower Against Gardens"[29] he discusses the relationship between art and nature. Art is the "vice" which "Luxurious man" has used to "seduce" and corrupt unfallen nature "most plain and pure". In his poem "The Garden" Marvell depicts the "happy Garden-state" as an image of Eden before the Fall. Unlike the libertine version of the golden age where the glorification of sensuality was a vital element, Marvell considers that it would be like having two Paradises in one "To live in Paradise alone". One of the most complex of Marvell's poems is his "Nymph Complaining for the death of her Faun". No attempt will be made to interpret its possible meanings. Frank Kermode comments as follows on

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[28] Robert Herrick, Poetical Works, ed. L.C. Martin (1956), p. 69.

[29] Andrew Marvell, Poems, ed. Hugh MacDonald (1952), p. 42.

the complexity of this poem: "This poem probably represents the furthest and most mysterious development of English pastoral poetry. It was impossible to go further; there had to be a new start".[30]

There is a new start as shall be shown in the next chapter. Unfortunately, it means the beginning of a gradual rejection of pastoral throughout the eighteenth century. This chapter has attempted to show how pastoral poetry gradually moves away from depicting the world of reality and in so doing causes a dissociation of pastoral from the conditions of real life which becomes most pronounced in the eighteenth century. Pastoral remains a very dynamic genre up to this time, however, for several reasons: first, it deals with matters of some import in the life of man and in this way offsets the displacement factor somewhat; secondly, its influence spreads into all fields of literature and it thus remains a dynamic force; and, thirdly, the native tradition gives a variety and vigour to the orthodox pastoral tradition which saves it from becoming stifled. In the next century, however, the genre becomes so bound up with "rules" and conventions, so removed from reality, and as a result so inane in its treatment of subject matter, that certain poets turn away from pastoral proper to longer meditative poems in which they give expression to pastoral themes.

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[30] Kermode, op. cit., p. 253.

CHAPTER II: POPE TO THOMSON

"Who (said the Nymph) would sing of bleating Flocks,
Or hanging Goats that browze on craggy Rocks,
When ancient Bards have rifled all the Store,
And the drain'd Subject can afford no more?"
(William Diaper, Dryades, ll. 268-271)

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During the first quarter of the eighteenth century English pastoral poetry, for the first time in its history, is strongly influenced by a theory of pastoral which emphasizes the importance of rules for poetic composition derived from the practice of Theocritus and Virgil. In order to understand this new attitude toward pastoral, an attitude which caused poets later in the century to choose other modes of expression for their pastoral themes and longings, we must turn briefly to the pastoral theories of the French critics, René Rapin (1621-1687) and Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757).

Rapin started his literary career by writing his Eclogae Sacrae, which were published in 1659. His "Dissertatio de Carmine Pastorali" was translated under the title "A Treatise de Carmine Pastorali" and printed with Thomas Creech's translation of Theocritus's Idylliums in 1684. Rapin based his theory of pastoral on the poems of Theocritus and Virgil, while the criticism of Aristotle and Horace gave him guidelines for laying down its rules. In the first part of his essay, he defines pastoral as "the imitation of the Action of a Sheapard, or of

one taken under that Character".[1] It should reflect the state of innocence, sincerity, peace, ease, and plenty of the golden age, and thus avoid the mean and ugly. In the second part of the essay, he discusses the form and matter of pastoral. The "Form" may be narrative, dramatic, or mixed, but he thinks the mixed manner of imitation more proper. The pastoral poet should never venture upon a lofty subject. Love is a very suitable subject for pastoral, but it must be pure and innocent. The "Manners" likewise should be suitable to a shepherd of the golden age - neither too clownish nor too courtly. Rapin says there are three things in which the whole character of a pastoral is contained: "Simplicity of Thought and expression: Shortness of Periods full of sense and spirit: and the Delicacy of a most elegant ravishing and unaffected neatness".[2]

The third section of his dissertation is a discussion of rules for writing pastorals. Following Aristotle's example in tragedy and epic, Rapin decides to gather from Theocritus and Virgil the rules for pastoral. These are mainly a repetition of what he has already discussed. The "Matter" should contain the action of a shepherd, and only one simple story is permissible. The "Form" or mode of imitation is either dramatic or narrative, or is a mixture of both. The poem may begin with an invocation. "Expression" must be "pure and lambent", avoiding

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[1] Quoted in J.E. Congleton, Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England: 1684-1798 (1952), p. 56.

[2] Congleton, op. cit., p. 59.

both the "abject and despicable" and also the "dazling". Pastoral should be written in "Heroick" measure, but this measure should not be so "strong" and "sounding" as in epics. Short descriptions and frequent comparisons are proper to the country and to the character of a shepherd. The "Manners" of Virgil's golden age shepherds are preferred to the harshness and lewdness of those of Theocritus. Concerning "Sentences", they should not be weighty or philosophical since the only philosophy suitable for pastoral is such as is found in proverbs and old sayings.

Rapin's "Treatise", then, is the first criticism of pastoral which assumes that it is possible to lay down a systematic set of rules to govern the genre. In establishing these rules, Virgil is the preferred model. Rapin does, however, consult other sources for authority, such as the "Scholiasts" and "Commentators". As we shall see, Rapin's ideas about pastoral exert a considerable influence upon Pope and also upon Pope's friends Temple, Chetwood, Walsh, and Gay.

The second important French critic to influence English pastoral theory in the eighteenth century was Fontenelle. Fontenelle differed from Rapin in his views on pastoral, and his theories were supported by such writers as Addison, Ambrose Philips, Tickell, and Purney. His "Discours sur la nature de l'eglogue" (1688) was translated into English by one "Mr. Motteux" under the title "Of Pastorals" in 1695. He refutes many points set forth by Rapin, and he relies subjectively on "the Natural

Light of Reason" rather than on the objective authority of the ancients. Fontenelle reasons that since it is man's nature to wish for happiness and ease, then the quietness and leisure of a shepherd's life appeal to his lazy nature. But man does not relish the state of absolute laziness. Therefore some "agitation" is needed, but it must be such as may be reconciled to the kind of laziness that possesses man, and that is to be found in "Love". Therefore pastoral poetry must present concurrently the two strongest passions, Laziness and Love.

Fontenelle refuses to deduce his theory from the authority of the ancients. Concerning "Characters" of pastoral, he says that they should be like neither the primitive nor the modern shepherd, since the primitive had not the leisure to grow polite and the "real" modern shepherd is too poor and dejected. He considers ploughmen, reapers, fishermen, and huntsmen unsuitable for pastoral since their lives are too hard. Pastoral, therefore, should expose only the tranquillity and innocence of a shepherd's life, while concealing its meanness and misery. Love is the only appropriate "Matter" for pastoral poetry. Regarding "Expression", Fontenelle recommends a mean between clownishness and affected expression. He rejects both the similes that are "worn thread-bare" through imitation of Virgil, and the clownish proverbial sayings which "real" shepherds continually use. Lastly, "actions" rather than "reflections" should dominate the pastoral since, again, it is more appropriate to the character of a shepherd.

Congleton summarizes the basic difference between Rapin and Fontenelle thus:

> The contrast between Rapin and Fontenelle, considering the proximity of their dates, is striking. The basic criterion Rapin uses is the Ancients, "whose very doing ... is Authority enough," and from their works he deduces his theory, which is therefore essentially objective. Fontenelle ignores the Ancients completely and develops his theory on premises that are subjective and psychological. Rapin tests his ideas by the works of the Ancients; Fontenelle tests the Ancients (as well as the Moderns) by his ideas.[3]

Dryden also exerted an influence on eighteenth century pastoral poetry, but his influence lies not so much in his theory of pastoral as in his translation of Virgil's Pastorals (1697). He seems to follow neither the theories of Rapin nor those of Fontenelle. In the "Dedication"[4] to his translation of Virgil he praises his master's "Genius" but, unlike Rapin, does not blindly worship him. Dryden notes that Virgil "rais'd himself above that humble Stile in which Pastoral delights". The "humble stile" is, for Dryden, more proper for the education and conversation of shepherds. He seems to prefer Theocritus and says that he "may justly be preferr'd as the Original, without injury to Virgil, who modestly contents himself with second place". He mentions Spenser as "a third poet in this kind, not inferiour to the two former", and whose "Shepherd's Kalendar ... is not to be match'd in any Modern Language".

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[3] Congleton, op. cit., p. 70.

[4] John Dryden, Poems, ed. James Kinsley (1958), Vol. II, p. 869.

Thus, like Fontenelle, he sees the beauties of classical pastoral but is not blind to what has been achieved by the modern writers in the genre. In fact, he refers to Fontenelle as "the living Glory of the French". Dryden's translation of Virgil's Pastorals is a fairly literal rendering in smooth and elegant couplets. It contains much of the poetic diction that we find in eighteenth century pastoral: the streams and fountains are usually "crystal"; the plains and rocks "neighb'ring", and the waters and floods either "neighb'ring" or "running". However the smoothness of the versification and the elegance of expression make them worthy models for the young aspiring poet.

As we turn to a discussion of Pope, we shall see that it was largely the influence of Rapin's "rules" and his concept of pastoral as remote and artificial that led Pope to formulate his own "rules" for writing pastoral and to put them into practice in his own pastoral poems. This Pope does with a considerable degree of success, and, considering his own theory of pastoral, it would be less than just to judge him according to standards which he did not recognize, even if we know that for pastoral as a whole the path which he followed was disastrous. His pastorals are artificial, removed from reality, and for this reason they were ridiculed by later pastoral writers. His influence on pastoral in the first half of the eighteenth century, however, is central and powerful. He enlisted the aid of such writers as Swift and Gay to ridicule the more realistic pastorals of Ambrose Philips, and such a display of talent was too great for those opposed to Pope. He was to lose out in the end, not

because he failed in what he set out to do in pastoral, but because what he set out to do was almost completely alien to the empirical bent of the English mind. Poetry was expected to "hold the mirrour up to nature", and empirical reality could not be completely debarred from it. But the urge to express inner yearnings, to escape from one's immediate involvement in life, has to find expression also. Certain writers of the first quarter of the eighteenth century were content to express these "feigned" longings in highly conventional pastorals like Pope's because this fitted their ability. Other poets of greater ability, whether they were discontent with the conventional pastoral mode or simply felt that more realistic detail should be brought into pastoral, turned away from the conventional pastoral to other modes of poetic expression such as sea-eclogues or the longer meditative or descriptive-reflective poem.

2.

Although Pope's "Discourse on Pastoral Poetry" was first published in 1717, he claimed to have written it in 1704 when he wrote his Pastorals. Since the Pastorals may be taken as Pope's demonstration of theory put into practice, it is convenient to look at his theory in the light of what has been said already to see the extent to which Pope was influenced by the rigid neoclassicism of Rapin and the rationalism of Fontenelle. Pope

is, of course, familiar with the critical theories of both these writers, as well as with those of Dryden. His professed design is to "comprize ... the substance of those numerous dissertations ... without omitting any of their rules".[5] Rapin has the greatest effect on Pope, although Fontenelle is echoed in a few passages of the "Discourse". When Pope says that "what is inviting in this sort of poetry proceeds not so much from the Idea of that business, as of the tranquility of a country life", he is following closely a similar passage of Fontenelle. He likewise follows Fontenelle in saying that the delight of pastoral poetry "consists in exposing the best side only of a shepherd's life, and in concealing its miseries". These concepts were arrived at by Fontenelle, not by looking at the practice of the ancients, but by following the "natural light of reason".

Rapin's theory, however, is derived from the practice of Theocritus and, in particular, Virgil. In stating the rules by which Pastoral ought to be judged, Pope says that they must be derived from those in whom that art is found in perfection. The practice of Theocritus and Virgil - "the only undisputed authors of pastoral" - serves, therefore, as the model. Pope's definition of pastoral and his comments on the various components of pastoral, if compared with Rapin's comments, will be found to be almost a repetition of Rapin's ideas. Pope defines pastoral

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[5] Quotations from Pope's "Discourse on Pastoral Poetry" are taken from The Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt (1965), pp. 119 ff.

thus:

> A Pastoral is an imitation of the action of a shepherd, or one considered under that character. The form of this imitation is dramatic, or narrative, or mix'd of both; the fable simple, the manners not too polite nor too rustic: The thoughts are plain, yet admit a little quickness and passion, but that short and flowing: The expression humble, yet as pure as the language will afford; neat, but not florid; easy, and yet lively. In short, the fable, manners, thoughts, and expressions, are full of the greatest simplicity in nature.

Although all of these ideas are very close to Rapin's, Pope does manage to avoid the contradiction inherent in Rapin's comments on expression. Rapin says that expression should be "the purest which the language will afford" and at the same time be in a dialect "peculiar to the Country".[6] Pope states simply that the expression be "humble, yet as pure as the language will afford". In fact he later criticizes Spenser's use of "old English and country phrases" since they were either "entirely obsolete, or spoken only by people of the lowest condition".

Pope echoes Rapin in saying that the complete character of pastoral consists in "simplicity, brevity, and delicacy". Again, his comments on the proper character of the shepherd are close to Rapin's, but the process by which he arrives at this concept is more closely allied to the rationalistic process of Fontenelle. "If we would copy Nature", he writes, "it may be useful to take this Idea along with us, that Pastoral is an image of what they call the Golden Age. So that we are not to

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[6] Quoted in Congleton, op. cit., p. 58.

describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceiv'd then to have been". In demanding that character be in keeping with shepherds of the golden age, Pope is closer to Rapin than to Fontenelle, who rejects both golden age and modern shepherds. But the process by which Pope arrives at this concept once again reminds one more of Fontenelle. The subject of each eclogue is to have "some particular beauty in itself", and should not be repeated in the other eclogues. The variety of scenes or prospect in pastoral is obtained "by frequent comparisons, drawn from the most agreeable objects of the country; by interrogations to things inanimate"; by beautiful, but short, digressions and by "elegant turns on the words, which render the numbers extremely sweet and pleasing". Having noticed Pope's stress on "Golden Age shepherds" and scenes drawn from "the most agreeable objects of the country", it is easy to see why he later attacks the somewhat more realistic elements in Philips's Pastorals. "As for the numbers themselves", writes Pope, "tho' they are properly of the heroic measure, they should be the smoothest, the most easy and flowing imaginable". By "heroic measure", of course, Pope means rhymed iambic pentameter, but in his use of this term he is echoing Rapin. These are the rules by which Pope felt that pastoral should be judged. It is to Pope's credit that within the rules set down he achieved great success. He depicts golden age shepherds among "the most agreeable objects of the country", and the most outstanding quality of his Pastorals is that they are "the smoothest, the most easy and

flowing imaginable".

In the remainder of the "Discourse" Pope discusses the major pastoral poets. He favours Virgil over Theocritus since the former exceeds "in regularity and brevity, and falls short ... in nothing but simplicity and propriety of style". While allowing "considerable Genius" in Spenser, he censures him for the length of his eclogues, his use of allegory and his discussion of matters of religion in a pastoral style, and his employment of "lyric measure". He censures also the calendar design since "the year has not that variety in it to furnish every month with a particular description, as it may every season". Pope ends his "Discourse" with the comment that his four pastorals "comprehend all the subjects which the Critics upon Theocritus and Virgil will allow to be fit for pastoral". As shall be seen presently, such rigidity and confinement to rules are alien to the spirit of most English writers. To maintain such a theory could end only in its being challenged and rejected. Pastoral had not been thus confined by rules at any time previous to this in England. It had achieved a tremendous variety in expression, character, scenery, subject matter, language, and meter from its beginnings in the early native tradition. Now for the first time in English literary history, a very important and influential poet lays down rather restricting rules regarding the writing of pastorals. Although holding a great respect for the spirit of classical writings, the English temperament is, by instinct, averse to any sort of rules which could be deduced from the practice of the ancients. The empirical

strain in English poetry could not be stifled by theory. A conflict was inevitable. It broke out shortly after the publication of Pope's and Philips's pastorals in Tonson's Poetical Miscellanies (1709).

3.

The first thing to note about both Pope's and Philips's pastorals is that they are conventional. They contain many imitations of Virgil and Theocritus in form and subject matter. Pope claims that his Pastorals[7] "have as much variety of description, in respect of the several seasons, as Spenser's". Additional variety is added in that "the several times of the day are observ'd, the rural employments in each season or time of day, and the rural scenes or places proper to such employments". There is, also, some regard for the "several ages of man, and the different passions proper to each age". Philips has no such design for his Pastorals.[8] Pope's "Spring" is set in a "Vally" in the morning and is a conventional singing match between two shepherds; Philips's Sixth Pastoral is also a singing match between two shepherds and both of these poems follow the pattern of similar pastorals of Virgil and Theocritus. Pope's "Summer"

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[7] Alexander Pope, Poems, pp. 123 ff.

[8] Ambrose Philips, Poems, ed. M.G. Segar (1937), pp. 5 ff.

is set by the "River's Side" at noon, and, like Philips's First Pastoral, is a conventional love complaint in narrative form. Pope's "Autumn" is set on "a Hill" at sunset and contains the "Rural lays" of two shepherds, Hylas and Aegon; one "mourned a faithless", the other "an absent", love. Philips's Second Pastoral contains the complaint of one shepherd Colinet to his friend Thenot about the "blasting Storms of Calumny" and the "Slander" of "Untoward Lads" who "make mock of all the Ditties I endite". Pope's "Winter", in keeping with the season of death in nature, is a conventional pastoral elegy "to the memory of Mrs. Tempest" and is set in "a grove" at midnight. Philips's Third and Fourth Pastorals are both conventional pastoral laments. These three pastorals contain the conventional pathetic fallacy of nature mourning the shepherd's loss. Pope's "Winter" and Philips's Third Pastoral have the traditional consolation passage near the end of each poem. Philips's Fifth Pastoral is a panegyric to "Young Colin Clout; who well could pipe and sing".

Ostensibly these poems are very similar in form and subject matter. The smooth-flowing, polished couplets of Pope show the superior poetic skill which he possessed and which has gained for his four pastorals a lasting place in literature. There are greater differences than this, however, between the pastorals of these two poets. While the pastoral poems of both writers are conventional, those of Pope are more closely imitative of Virgil's eclogues than those of Philips. Whereas Pope's poems reflect his neo-classicism, Philips's reflect his tendency to introduce more realistic and more "English" situations in the

manner of Spenser, whom he quite often imitates in diction, expression, and pastoral names. The love complaint of Pope's "Summer", which is set in the golden age, contains an appeal to a "lovely Nymph" to come "and bless the silent Hours":

> Where-e'er you walk, cool Gales shall fan the Glade,
> Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a Shade,
> Where-e'er you tread, the blushing Flow'rs shall rise,
> And all things flourish where you turn your Eyes.
> (ll. 73-76)

How different is the following appeal of Philips's First Pastoral where Lobbin urges his love to come and "live a Shepherdess":

> O come, my Love! Nor think th' Employment mean,
> The Dams to milk, and little Lambkins wean;
> To drive a-Field by Morn the fat'ning Ewes,
> E'er the warm Sun drinks up the cooly Dews.
> (ll. 83-86)

This is not a picture of the golden age when nature provided all. Lobbin's shepherdess has work to do and all things do not "flourish" where she turns her eyes.

Pope makes no attempt to describe the features of "Daphne" in his pastoral lament. He does give a rather vague picture of Sylvia in "Spring":

> Sylvia's like Autumn ripe, yet mild as May,
> More bright than Noon, yet fresh as early Day,
> Ev'n Spring displeases, when she shines not here,
> But blest with her, 'tis Spring throughout the year.
> (ll. 81-84)

The cadence of these lines is beautiful and soothing, but the picture of Sylvia is rather vague. Pope, of course, did not

intend to paint a realistic picture. He was describing Sylvia's beauty in the kind of diction that was both familiar and pleasing to his readers, and which conveyed a general feeling that would be readily understood. But in doing this, Pope was in fact breaking away from a tradition of realism already established in English pastoral poetry. Compare the foregoing passage with the following passage from Philips's Third Pastoral, where he laments the death of Albino and describes the scene of his death:

> In yonder gloomy Grove stretch'd out he lay,
> His beauteous Limbs upon the dampy Clay,
> The Roses on his pallid Cheeks decay'd,
> And o'er his Lips a livid Hue display'd.
> (ll. 41-44)

Philips uses poetic diction quite as frequently as Pope (for example "pallid Cheeks" and "livid Hue"), but the "dampy Clay" is a fresh image and the last two lines convey a more definite picture than the one evoked in Pope's lines.

Whereas Pope's diction and expression in the Pastorals are both elegant and in keeping with the character of "Golden Age" shepherds, Philips's expression shows the influence of Spenser and in fact gives a more realistic rendering of shepherds as they actually are. Pope in Guardian No. 40 gives ironic praise to the following passage from Philips's Fourth Pastoral:

> O woeful Day! O Day of woe! quoth he;
> And woful I, who live the Day to see!
> (ll. 47-48)

Pope, with tongue in cheek, calls this passage "extremely elegant"; but one can easily see the resemblance, both in the repetition and the diction, to Spenser's Shepheardes Calender. Philips uses such words as "hight", "endite", "trow" in conscious imitation of Spenser for the purpose of achieving the same effect with language that Spenser aimed at and which Theocritus was supposed to have achieved by following the Doric dialect.

From this brief analysis one can see that the original pastoral urge to express the desire to escape from present involvements is replaced, in Pope, by the desire to try one's "tender wings" in the lowest of poetic genres, after the manner of Virgil. The opening lines of Philips's First Pastoral give a hint, at least, of this desire to "quit the city Throng/To meditate in shades the Rural Song". Whether Pope realized it or not, Philips, like Spenser, imitated the spirit of the ancients rather than their works. The situations of Pope's Pastorals are highly imitative of similar situations in Virgil, and he refers to the same nymphs and gods that are found in Theocritus and Virgil. Philips makes reference to "Nymphs", but instead of using the pagan mythology of the ancients he imitates rather the spirit of Theocritus in that he uses English folklore and local proverbs.[9] When, for the sake of ridicule, Pope quotes

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[9] In Spectator No. 523 for October 30, 1712, Addison, after disposing of Pope's "excellent Compositions" in Lintot's Miscellany of that year in a sentence, proceeds to recommend to his reader's consideration "the Pastorals of Mr. Philips". "One would have thought it impossible for this Kind of Poetry to have subsisted without Fawns and Satyrs, Wood-Nymphs and Water-Nymphs, with all the Tribe of Rural Deities. But we see he has given a new Life, and a more natural Beauty to this way of Writing by Substituting in the Place of these Antiquated Fables, the superstitious Mythology which prevails among the Shepherds of our own Country". Addison's preference for more realistic pastorals in a local setting can be inferred from this passage.

four passages of proverbs from Philips pastorals in Guardian No. 40 he appears not to realize that this is as much part of the folk belief of the English as the myths were a part of the folk belief of the Greeks. This is also one of the aspects of Philips's Pastorals which Gay burlesques in The Shepherd's Week.

Pastoral is not for Pope what it had normally been for earlier pastoral writers. It is neither a vehicle for virulent satire nor a vehicle for the expression of the desire to escape from involvement in city life. It is for him a place to try his poetic talents. Pope is fully aware that urban life is real life; he knows that London is where decisions are made and society is moulded. This consideration always tempers his depictions of rural life outside pastoral. The country, for Pope, is not a means of escape, but rather a place where one may occasionally pursue "Successive Study, Exercise and Ease".[10] His "Windsor Forest" is a "topographical" or "local" poem in the tradition of John Denham's "Cooper's-Hill" and John Dyer's "Grongar Hill". In this poem Pope expresses his attitude to rural life:

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[10] A somewhat similar attitude to rural life is expressed by John Pomfret in The Choice (1700). Pomfret states that if Heaven would grant "That I might choose my method how to live ... Near some fair Town I'd have a private seat". In his "little Garden" he would have "a silent Study plac'd ... with all the noblest Authors grac'd". In these Authors, he says,

> I'd always take my Morning Exercise:
> For sure no minutes bring us more Content,
> Than those in pleasing, useful Studies spent.
> (11. 30-32)

Pomfret also wrote several pastorals of little intrinsic interest. His "Pastoral Essay on the Death of Queen Mary" (1694) is a conventional pastoral elegy.

> Happy the Man whom this bright Court approves,
> His Sov'reign favours, and his Country loves;
> Happy next him who to these Shades retires,
> Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires,
> Whom humbler Joys of home-felt quiet please,
> Successive Study, Exercise and Ease.
> (ll. 235-240)

In his "Epistle to Miss Blount, on her leaving the Town, after the Coronation" (1714), Pope expresses a similar urge to be away from the town, but this time with vivid, realistic detail:

> So when your slave, at some dear, idle time,
> (Not plagu'd with headachs, or the want of rhime)
> Stands in the streets, abstracted from the crew,
> And while he seems to study, thinks of you:
> Just when his fancy points your sprightly eyes,
> Or sees the blush of soft Parthenia rise,
> Gay pats my shoulder, and you vanish quite;
> Streets, chairs, and coxcombs rush upon my sight;
> Vext to be still in town, I knit my brow,
> Look sow'r, and hum a tune - as you may now.
> (ll. 41-50)

This, however, is not pastoral. This kind of concrete detail giving the appearance of first hand observation does not appear in his pastorals. They are much less realistic, much more artificial.

4.

Thomas Tickell's series of articles on pastoral in the Guardian[11] raised Pope's ire and resulted in a battle of wits

[11] Numbers 22, 23, 28, 30 & 32. All of April 1713.

between these two spokesmen for their respective theories. Tickell espoused the rationalist position of Addison, Philips, and Purney and disturbed Pope by virtually neglecting to pay any attention to his Pastorals while praising those of Philips. Not to be outdone, however, Pope turned the tables on Tickell and Philips by praising ironically,[12] in Guardian No. 40, the passages which Tickell had quoted to prove Philips's genius. The general theory outlined by Tickell was derived mainly from Fontenelle, with considerable modification to suit the English taste and temperament. Briefly the theory outlined is this. Tickell agrees, in general, with Fontenelle that "the first race of men" were happy, but they were also "rude withal, and uncultivated". In writing pastorals, therefore, he advises that "the tranquillity of that life appear full and plain, but hide the meanness of it; represent its simplicity as clear as you please, but cover its misery".[13] In Guardian No. 23, Tickell discusses the appropriate character, manners, and expression of the shepherd. Simplicity, he finds, is necessary in the character of shepherds. They may have "good sense" and even "wit", provided "their manner of thinking be not too

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[12] It is interesting to note that Pope had given reserved praise to Philips's Pastorals before Tickell's Guardian papers had aroused his jealousy. In a letter to Cromwell dated 28 October 1710, after pointing out several shortcomings in Philips's poems, Pope writes: "In the whole, I agree with the Tatler, that we have no better Eclogs in our Language. This Gentleman, (if I am not much mistaken in his Talent) is capable of writing very nobly". See Alexander Pope, Correspondence, ed. George Sherburn (1956), Vol. I, p. 101.

[13] Guardian, No. 22, April 6, 1713.

gallant or refined". Shepherds "are not allowed to make deep reflections" except "where the thought is so obvious, that it seems to come easily to the mind". Then Tickell quotes a passage from Ambrose Philips's First Pastoral[14] to show his "admirable improvement of Virgil and Theocritus". Pope was evidently enraged to find that the quotation to illustrate an "admirable improvement" upon Virgil and Theocritus was taken, not from his own pastorals, but from those of Philips. Again, in keeping with the spirit of the ancients, Tickell stresses the importance of superstition and proverbial sayings to the character and speech of a shepherd, since, he says, "we find the works of Virgil and Theocritus sprinkled with left-handed ravens, blasted oaks, witch-crafts, evil eyes, and the like. And I observe with great pleasure that our English author of the pastorals I have quoted hath practised this secret with admirable judgment".[15] This, of course, is one of the aspects of Philips's Pastorals which Pope induced Gay to ridicule in his Shepherd's Week. Tickell elevates Theocritus above Virgil as a pastoral writer in Guardian No. 28, and, in No. 30, expresses the more normal English independence of thought by recommending "this our island as a proper scene for pastoral". He then proceeds to ridicule the conventional pastoral and to upbraid "our countrymen" who "have so good an opinion of the Ancients, and think so modestly of themselves, that the

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[14] (ll. 79-82)

[15] Guardian, No. 23, April 7, 1713.

generality of pastoral-writers have either stolen all from the Greeks and Romans, or so servilely imitated their manners and customs, as makes them very ridiculous". Tickell ridicules the modern practice of imitating the "theology" of the ancients by referring to "left-handed ravens", "blasted oaks, withering meadows and weeping deities", and maintains instead that "that part only is to be retained which is universally known, and the rest to be made up out of our own rustical superstition of hobthrushes, fairies, goblins, and witches". Tickell concludes this paper with praise of his "countrymen Spencer and Philips" from whom "these rules are drawn". In Tickell's final paper in the series[16] he deems Philips the "eldest-born" of Spenser. Tickell's theory, then, is almost directly opposed to that of Pope. He favours Philips's pastorals and is against servile imitation of the ancients. He ridicules the conventions of pastoral in theory as Swift had begun to do in practice.

Pope's essay in the Guardian[17] just ten days later intensified the conflict. Writing anonymously, he ironically turned the passages already quoted by Tickell from Philips's pastoral to his own advantage in ridiculing Philips. He ridiculed Philips's "antiquated English", his "choice of names peculiar to the Country", his introduction of "Wolves in England", and "his roses, lilies and daffodils", which all "blow in the same season". His censure of Philips's use of "proverbs" has

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[16] Guardian, No. 32, April 17, 1713.

[17] Guardian, No. 40, April 27, 1713.

been commented upon earlier. Finally, Pope places himself in a more favourable light by bestowing praise ironically on Philips's "elegant dialect, which alone might prove him the eldest born of Spenser", and by comparing his pastorals with a pastoral ballad composed in the "Somersetshire dialect". His ridicule of Philips is so devastating that the reader is inclined to agree with Pope that what he himself has given us in his Pastorals is "something better".

5.

Gay's Shepherd's Week (1714), written at the request of Pope, and perhaps of Swift,[18] was intended by Pope to be a burlesque of the realistic pastorals of Philips. Actually, these pastorals turned out to be truer to the English countryside and more in keeping with the spirit of pastoral than either Pope's or Philips's. Gay's use of realistic detail and English folklore and superstition is quite in the spirit of the pastorals of Theocritus. Swift, too, did much

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[18] Swift, in a letter to Pope dated 30 August, 1716, mentions a certain "ingenious Quaker ... who writes verses to his mistress, not very correct" and says that "it gives me a hint that a sett of Quaker-pastorals might succeed, if our friend Gay could fancy it.... I believe further, the Pastoral ridicule is not exhausted.... Or what do you think of a Newgate pastoral, among the whores and thieves there?" Pope, Correspondence, Vol. I, p. 360.

to discredit pastoral, and in 1711 wrote "A Town Eclogue"[19] in which some of the more (to him) ludicrous conventions of the classical pastoral are parodied. Gay's burlesque intention is evident in the ironic tone of his Proeme[20] to the Shepherd's Week. He says that "no Poet ... hath hit on the right simple Eclogue after the true ancient guise of Theocritus, before this mine attempt". His professed aim is "to describe aright the manners of our own honest and laborious plough-men". He is aware of the "rout and rabblement of critical gallimawfry ... of late days" concerning the golden age. His purpose is to set forth "a rather lively landscape" of his own country, in which "thou wilt not find my shepherdesses idly piping on oaten reeds, but milking the Kine, tying up the sheaves, or if the hogs are astray driving them to their styes". It is fairly obvious that the intended object of ridicule here in Philips. The language of his shepherds is "such as is neither spoken by the country maiden nor the courtly dame; nay, not only such as in the present timesis not uttered, but was never uttered in times past; and, if I judge aright, will never be uttered in times future". He borrows some of his pastoral names from Spenser, as well as the idea of the weekly calendar. He points out, however, that he has omitted "Sunday or the Sabbath, ours being supposed to be Christian shepherds, and to be then at

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[19] This poem is discussed in Chapter Three where Swift is dealt with more fully.

[20] John Gay, Poetical Works, ed. G.C. Faber (1926), pp. 28 ff.

church worship".

Something of the anti-pastoral, burlesque tone of Gay's Shepherd's Week can be seen in the following passages:

> Shall heavy Clumsilis with me compare?
> View this, ye lovers, and like me despair.
> Her blubber'd lip by smutty pipes is worn,
> And in her breath tobacco whiffs are born.
> ("Wednesday", ll. 37-40)

Her name itself suggests that she is anything but the dainty nymph we would expect to see tripping lightly o'er the green. The following section is meant to carry to absurdity the kind of realism attempted by Philips:

> Thus Marion wail'd her eyes with Tears brimfull,
> When Goddy Dobbins brought her cow to bull,
> With apron blue, to dry her Tears she sought,
> Then saw the cow well serv'd, and took a groat.
> ("Tuesday", ll. 103-106)

It is doubtful whether Pope himself escapes parody in certain lines of Gay's pastorals. The lines from Pope's "Summer" quoted earlier and beginning "Where-e'er you walk, cool Gales shall fan the Glade," (l. 73) seem to be parodied by Gay in the following lines from "Tuesday":

> When-e'er you mow'd I follow'd with the rake,
> And have full oft been sun-burnt for thy sake.
> (ll. 61-62)

Likewise a similar passage in Gay's burlesque pastoral elegy - "Friday" - seems to parody the lines of Pope's "Summer":

> Where-e'er I gad, I Blouzelind shall view,
> Woods, dairy, barn and mows our passion knew.
> When I direct my eyes to yonder wood,
> Fresh rising sorrow curdles in my blood....
> Sometimes this crook drew hazel boughs adown,
> And stuff'd her apron wide with nuts so brown;
> Or when her feeding hogs had miss'd their way,
> Or wallowing 'mid a feast of acorns lay;
> Th' untoward creatures to the stye I drove,
> And whistled all the way - or told my love.
> (ll. 41 ff.)

Such low treatment of a solemn topic would never be allowed by Pope, and in fact up to this time had not been permitted in any pastoral elegy in English. The sublimity of an elegy like "Lycidas" now becomes degraded by a burlesque pastoral intended only to ridicule the genre. There is little wonder that serious poets began to turn away from pastoral as a serious poetic genre.

Gay's "Saturday" is modelled upon Virgil's sixth eclogue, "Silenus". The situations depicted in both eclogues are very similar, except that whereas Silenus sings of the creation of the universe, Bowzybeus sings of local superstition and folklore:

> Of nature's laws his carrols first begun,
> Why the grave owle can never face the sun.
> For owles, as swains observe, detest the light,
> And only sing and seek their prey by night....
> How Will-a-Wisp mis-leads night-faring clowns,
> O'er hills, and sinking bogs, and pathless downs.
> (ll. 51 ff.)

This passage is, of course, in the spirit of the Idylls of Theocritus in that it depicts folk-belief. The burlesque intent can be seen, however, from the opening stanza. The first three lines gives the expectation of a "loftier" theme, but the fourth

is somewhat bathetic:

> Sublimer strains, O rustick Muse, prepare;
> Forget a-while the barn and dairy's care;
> Thy homely voice to loftier numbers raise,
> The drunkard's flights require sonorous lays,
> With Bowzybeus' songs exalt thy verse,
> While rocks and woods the various notes rehearse.
> (ll. 1-6)

Gay published five more "Eclogues"[21] in Poems on Several Occasions (1720). These are entitled "The Birth of a Squire", "The Toilette", "The Tea-Table", "The Funeral", and "The Espousal: A Sober Eclogue Between two of the People called Quakers". They are all in the "town" eclogue tradition and are a mixture of satire and burlesque. "The Espousal" was suggested by Swift in 1716. Its opening lines appear to be a burlesque of Virgil's First Eclogue, which in Dryden's translation begins thus:

> Beneath the Shade which Beechen Boughs diffuse,
> You Tity'rus entertain your Silvan Muse.
> (ll. 1-2)

Gay's opening lines run thus:

> Beneath the shadow of a beaver hat,
> Meek Caleb at a silent meeting sate.
> ("The Espousal", ll. 1-2)

Gay's burlesque of pastoral, then, must be seen as having an important influence on the attitudes of writers to this genre. Pope, one of the most important and influential writers of the

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[21] Gay, op. cit., p. 131 ff.

age, persuaded Gay to undertake this task, and he had as well the full support of that other great writer, Swift, who had already written a burlesque pastoral and would do so again. Swift and Gay had begun to ridicule the conventional pastoral in practice in much the same way that Tickell had in theory.

6.

Many less influential writers than Pope and Gay continued, however, to write eclogues. Parnell, a member of the Scriblerus Club with Swift, Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, and Jervas, wrote two eclogues: "Health" and "The Flies". Both are moral and didactic. Both dispense with the traditional shepherds and Arcadia, and are not really conventional pastorals. Pope, in a letter to Parnell in 1717, praises his "story of Pandora, and the Eclogue upon Health" as "two of the most beautiful things I ever read".[22]

More important than Parnell from the viewpoint of the development of pastoral theory and practice are William Diaper's Nereides: or, Sea-Eclogues (1712) and Thomas Purney's Pastorals (1717) along with his Full Enquiry into the True Nature of Pastoral (1717). Diaper tries to present new subject matter for pastoral. In his Nereides he uses many of the conventions

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[22] Pope, Correspondence, Vol. I, p. 396.

of pastoral poetry, and he takes Theocritus as his chief model. Following the example of Theocritus, Sannazaro, and Phineas Fletcher, all of whom wrote piscatory eclogues or idylls, Diaper sets out to expand the scope of pastoral still further. He wants to explore the possibility of writing about the sea in pastoral poetry:

> ... it will be allow'd, that the Beauties (as well as the Riches) of the Sea are yet in a great measure untouch'd: And those who have made some Attempts that way, have only given us a few Piscatory Eclogues, like the first Coasters, they always keep within sight of the Shore, and never venture into the Ocean.[23]

This attempt to introduce new subject matter into pastoral is a clear rejection of the ideas of Pope. Diaper also allows greater freedom of versification in pastoral than is permitted by either Pope or Philips. Dorothy Broughton makes the following comparison:

> A superficial relationship between Diaper's Sea Eclogues and the Pastorals of Ambrose Philips arises from a common choice of eclogue form and treatment, expressed in the heroic couplet. But Philips's verse is more formal and conventional than Diaper's. While impeccably correct and vying with Pope's for smoothness, Diaper's couplets are freer and more varied in the use of triplets, half-lines and alexandrines than is common for the period. His technique recalls Dryden's rather than that of any of his own contemporaries.[24]

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[23] William Diaper, Complete Works, ed. Dorothy Broughton (1952), p. 16.

[24] Ibid., p. xxxviii.

Another interesting element in Diaper's pastorals is first-hand, realistic description of men and scenery. His eclogues do not depict the golden age. His characters have to work for a living, and he often writes with his eye steadily fixed upon the object before him:

> The Cod (delicious Food!) Mullets and Soles,
> And shining Mack'rell swim for us in shoals.
> Such Fare the wealthy Citizen will prize,
> Ev'n when they stink, (long kept) and we despise.
> While on sow'r Herbs the Shepherds poorly feed,
> Or sapless Cheese, and Crusts of Mouldy Bread;...
> All do not love in clotting Fields to sweat,
> Where clayie Fallows clog the labouring Feet.
> (Nereides, Ec. XII, ll. 48 ff.)

Here, then, we have an able writer wishing to write pastoral but unable to accept the restrictive doctrines of the French critics and Pope. Diaper sees the need to rejuvenate pastoral, give it something new to do. Before the end of the century many more poets would attempt to do the same but, lacking the authority of a Pope or Swift, their efforts would end in failure.

In 1717, the same year that Pope published his "Discourse on Pastoral Poetry", Thomas Purney published his Full Enquiry into the True Nature of Pastoral. Purney's theories are closely allied to those espoused by Fontenelle, Addison, Philips, and Tickell. "The most compleat kind of Pastoral", he writes, "is that which most beautifully draws the present Life of Shepherds, and raises Pity or Joy, by the four Parts of Pastoral, Fable, Characters, Sentiments and Language".[25] The "Fable" should be

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[25] Thomas Purney, A Full Enquiry into the True Nature of Pastoral (1717), ed. Earl Wasserman (1948), p. 6.

"implex", it should have anough scope so that there would be ample opportunity to portray character, engage the emotions, and convey the moral. Here we can see that Purney wished to elevate pastoral to a dignified position similar to that held by epic and tragedy. Regarding "Character", he writes that "Since Simplicity and Tenderness are universally allow'd to constitute the very soul and essence of pastoral", then the "Soft-Sex" should be introduced as well as men. To preserve this simplicity those "Passions or Desires, which engage the busy and active part of mankind; as Ambition, and the like"[26] must be avoided. The shepherd's circumstances must reflect neither the "Golden Age" nor the miseries of actual country life, but rather the "agreeable Sentiments of our own Country (by describing it, but omitting all that is not delightful in it)".[27] To add more to the probability, the poet may "mention several places in the Country, which actually are to be found there; and will have several opportunities of giving his Stories an Air of Truth".[28] The "Sentiments" include both "Images" and "Thoughts". The only images fit for pastoral are the beautiful and the gloomy. The thoughts should be in harmony with the "State of Life" being presented. The "Language" should be "enervated" by the use of "old words" and "compound words" mixed with "monosyllables", "tender phrases" and "beautiful turns".

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[26] Purney, op. cit., p. 28.

[27] Ibid., p. 25.

[28] Ibid.

Purney's opposition to the rules prescribed for pastoral by Pope and his followers is apparent in his refusal to look to the models of Theocritus and Virgil and in his inclination to depend rather on his own common sense. His preference of Theocritus to Virgil, and his respect for Spenser and Philips provide clear evidence that he favors a less rigid approach than Pope's to the writing of pastoral. He states emphatically that "our Language is infinitely the finest of any in the world for pastoral"[29] and, contrary to what the "rules" critics say, "there may be several sorts of Pastorals".[30] There is a strong empirical bent in Purney's theory as well as a desire to dignify pastoral.

Purney wrote four pastoral poems. His "Paplet: or, Love and Innocence" and his "Lallet: or, The Tender Shepherdess" appeared in Pastorals after the Simple Manner of Theocritus (1717).[31] "The Bashful Swain" and "Beauty and Simplicity" appeared in the same year. The title of the second pastoral, "Lallet", indicates the new prominence he was giving to the "Fair-Sex". Purney is indebted to both Spenser and Gay. He is indebted to Spenser for his use of archaisms and dialect words and to both Spenser and Gay for that air of reality with which he describes his scenes. Purney is even less offended by the coarser aspects of country life than Gay. His descriptions

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[29] Purney, op. cit., p. 69.

[30] Ibid., p. 71.

[31] Thomas Purney, Works, ed. H.O. White (1933), p. 1.

are lively and vigorous and apparently based on first-hand observation:

> A Cave there is by Idlehill,
> Ye know the Place where Shepherds loll:
> There Fauney often goes, I guess,
> To hear the Lark, or toy with Lass.
>
> A Sweetbreer dainty o're it spread;
> That Roses bore, and cast a Shade.
> Abie it ran a Rivolet;
> Painted with Sky and Flowers so sweet.
> To this the lilly-finger'd Lass,
> Soft wailing, pointed as did pass.
> May seem she wish'd to set in th' Cave
> Her Love might thither hap to rove.
> ("Lallet", ll. 259-270)

Here the description of the cave with the "Sweetbreer" shading it and the reflection of the "Flowers" and "Sky" in the "Rivolet" present a vivid and distinct image to the reader. Purney's style is one of utter simplicity. His pastorals are free of much of the poetic diction of his day, and his style is at times so down to earth that it becomes insipid and mean:

> Sooth is he, but to kissing he's so given!
> He'll kiss till he's odd, and then kiss to come even.
> He'll kiss at the Hedge, and he'll kiss at the Gate;
> He'll kiss if the chattering Magpie but prate!
> ("Paplet", ll. 163-166)

Purney, then, was striving for "simplicity" and "tenderness" in pastoral that would arouse "pity or joy" by means of a "Fable" with a "Moral". He was convinced that English was the finest of any language in the world for pastoral and that the setting of the pastoral should be the English countryside. And so we have another minor writer attempting to counteract

the influence of Pope and inject new life into a genre whose prestige was fast being undermined.

7.

It would appear that other writers of greater poetic genius than Purney had similar thoughts on pastoral but were, perhaps, dominated by the neoclassic theory of pastoral whose most influential spokesman was Pope. Such a poet was James Thomson (1700-1748).[32] Some of his early poems were pastorals, and certain sections of The Seasons (1726-30) indicate that he may have originally intended it to be a pastoral poem. A passage of twenty-eight lines in "Spring" which describes the golden age of the traditional pastoral was retained in all editions from the first in 1728 to that of 1738; but it was withdrawn in 1744. There are numerous passages throughout The Seasons which indicate the influence of the traditional pastoral.

Thomson's early poems deal with pastoral subjects. His "Pastoral Between Thirsis and Corydon upon the Death of Damon" is

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[32] Some indication of the influence of Pope on Thomson is given in the following comment by J. Logie Robertson: "There is sound criticism in the judgement of Johnson that in the process of improvement: The Seasons lost somewhat of their original race or flavour. The Scotticisms, too, were expressive. And the keenness of his colour-sense, which he had inherited from his country's ballads, became dulled in deference to the taste of Pope and Lyttelton". James Thomson, Complete Poetical Works, ed. J. Logie Robertson (1908), p. vi.

a traditional pastoral elegy, but his poem "Of a Country Life", published in The Edinburgh Miscellany (1720), is a miniature sketch of The Seasons. It indicates Thomson's love of the rural retreat and sketches briefly the employments, the joys, and the hardships of the different seasons. It is not long enough to include the kind of moral reflections on this type of life that we find so extensively in The Seasons. Even though this poem is void of any of the conventions of pastoral, it nevertheless is in the true spirit of pastoral, as the opening lines indicate:

> I hate the clamours of the smoky towns,
> But much admire the bliss of rural clowns;
> Where some remains of innocence appear,
> Where no rude noise insults the listening ear.
> (ll. 1-4)

The poem contains much of the diction so common in eighteenth century poetry. There is a certain amount of generalized description in it but, like The Seasons, it has passages that are much more naturalistic and much less generalized than the kind of descriptions we find in the conventional pastorals. The following passage from "Of a Country Life" is an attempt to describe at first hand the ease and tranquillity of a country life in somewhat realistic terms:

> You, on the banks of soft meandering Tweed,
> May in your toils ensnare the watery breed,
> And nicely lead the artificial flee,
> Which, when the nimble, watchful trout does see,
> He at the bearded hook will briskly spring;
> Then in that instant twitch your hairy string,
> And, when he's hooked, you, with a constant hand,
> May draw him struggling to the fatal land.
> (ll. 51-60)

Although these lines contain such examples of poetic diction as "meandering", "watery breed" and "bearded hook", they nevertheless present a vivid and realistic picture of somebody trouting on the banks of the Tweed. Again Thomson attempts to give "a local habitation" to his poetry - a point which Purney stressed in his Full Enquiry. A similar descriptive passage in "Spring" bears a close resemblance to the passage just quoted and conveys through the use of concrete diction a fairly definite picture:

> Now is the time,
> While yet the dark-brown water aids the guile,
> To tempt the trout. The well-dissembled fly,
> The rod fine-tapering with elastic spring,
> Snatched from the hoary steed the floating line,
> And all thy slender watery stores prepare.
> But let not on thy hook the tortured worm
> Convulsive twist in agonizing folds;
> Which, by rapacious hunger swallowed deep,
> Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breast
> Of the weak helpless uncomplaining wretch,
> Harsh pain and horror to the tender hand.
> (ll. 382-393)

In his use of words like "dark-brown water", "tortured worm/ Convulsive twist" and "tear", Thomson is finding the words to fit the description rather than making the description fit the words - he is being empirical in his descriptions.

The Seasons is not always this vivid in its descriptive passages. Many of the passages in "Summer" describing the swain are more literary than realistic, but it must be conceded that Thomson, in this descriptive-reflective poem, is striving for something more concrete and realistic to replace the somewhat

insipid and artificial pastorals written in close imitation of Virgil. The poem is not what could properly be called a pastoral poem, but it does have pastoral elements. Many passages appear to be imitations of traditional pastorals, for example this passage in "Summer" where

> the mower, sinking, heaps
> O'er him the humid hay, with flowers perfumed;
> And scarce a chirping grasshopper is heard
> Through the dumb mead.
> (ll. 444-447)

Yet there are other sections which describe more realistically the summer toils. For example:

> Even stooping age is here; and infant hands
> Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
> O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll.
> Wide flies the tedded grain; all in a row
> Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
> They spread their breathing harvest to the sun.
> ("Summer", ll. 358-363)

Thomson, following Addison, Philips, and Tickell, does not ignore the superstitions and folk-lore of the country side

> where
> At the fall of eve the fairy people throng,
> In various games and revelry to pass
> The summer night, as village stories tell.
> But far about they wander from the grave
> Of him whom his ungentle fortune urged
> Against his own sad breast to lift the hand
> Of impious violence. The lonely tower
> Is also shunned; whose mournful chambers hold,
> So night-struck fancy dreams, the yelling ghost.
> ("Summer", ll. 1672-1681)

The closing lines of "Autumn" indicate, as do so many other passages throughout the whole of The Seasons, how important the

pastoral theme is to Thomson as he writes this poem:

> This is the life which those who fret in guilt
> And guilty cities never knew - the life
> Led by primeval ages uncorrupt
> When angels dwelt, and God himself, with Man!
> (ll. 1348-1351)

The Seasons is not a pastoral poem. It should more properly be called a descriptive-reflective or a meditative poem. It does, however, contain many pastoral elements, and, what is more important, it indicates a new development in attitude of poets towards the writing of pastoral. Because of the insipidity and artificiality of the conventional pastoral, and the dominant position of Pope as critic and poet, some writers during this period and many more in the middle and later decades of the century tended to look to new modes of expression for pastoral themes. Ambrose Philips attempted to introduce an air of realism into his Pastorals; Gay, in his attempt to burlesque the genre, produced even more realistic pastorals than Philips, but unfortunately it was with the explicit intention of casting ridicule at the genre. In this he was joined by Swift, and, for the first time in its history, the English pastoral was used as a weapon against itself. Pope was so influencial that Purney's theories were practically ignored and Diaper's Sea Eclogues exerted very little influence. It is almost as if a certain apathy towards pastoral had set in among the more important writers. Thomson, after some early attempts at writing pastorals, turned to a more ambitious form

and poured his thoughts, which contained much that is normally considered matter for pastoral, into it. Those critics who demanded more realism, less artificiality, local setting and less imitation of the ancients were temporarily overwhelmed, but as we shall see in the following chapters, the influence of the neoclassic doctrine began to wane as the century moved on.

CHAPTER III: RAMSAY TO JOHNSON'S RAMBLER

'Better the toiling swain, oh happier far!
Perhaps the happiest of the sons of men!
Who vigorous plies the plough, the team, or car,
Who houghs the field, or ditches in the glen,
Delves in his garden, or secures his pen:
The tooth of avarice poisons not his peace;
He tosses not in sloth's abhorred den;
From vanity he has a full release;
And, rich in nature's wealth, he thinks not of increase.
(James Thomson, Castle of Indolence, Canto II, Stanza LV)

1.

Throughout the second quarter of the eighteenth century there are more frequent attempts to broaden the scope of pastoral in subject matter, character, setting, expression, and form, as well as a rejection, by serious writers, of the rules of conventional pastoral. Conventional pastorals are still being written by those whose talents are best suited to write in the imitative and artificial manner so characteristic of many of the pastorals of the earlier period. Pope's theory of pastoral exerts the greatest influence on this type of writer. Those who find the neoclassic theory of pastoral too restrictive either turn away from pastoral or else attempt innovations within the genre in an attempt to make it a livelier, more appealing poetic form.

Allan Ramsay (1686-1758), a native of Scotland, wrote several pastoral poems in the vernacular, the most important of which is his pastoral drama The Gentle Shepherd (1725). In writing pastoral drama, Ramsay is merely expanding that dramatic

quality which is characteristic of pastoral. Having shepherds conversing or competing in a singing-match is a feature of pastoral from Theocritus onward. In The Gentle Shepherd the central characters are Patie, the gentle shepherd, and Peggy, the shepherdess. Ramsay employs the concealed identity motif to bring a happy ending to a love affair between these two young lovers. At the beginning of the poem, Patie's true identity is concealed, but he is later found to be the son of the newly returned "laird", Sir William Worthy. As a lowly shepherdess, Peggy is considered below the station of Patie. Fortunately, Peggy's true identity is revealed also. She is found to be Sir William's neice who was stolen away as an infant by an old woman when her death was "threaten'd by an uncle's wife".[1] The drama ends happily with the promise of the forthcoming marriage.

Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd, coming at this particular time, is another example of the attempts on the part of different poets to introduce variety of both content and form into pastoral. Fletcher had, of course, produced The Faithful Shepherdess, which is a pastoral drama, but since this was not a "copy of the ancients" it can be assumed that it did not measure up to the standard of pastoral demanded by those who looked to the ancients for authority.[2]

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[1] Act V, Sc. iii, l. 88.

[2] The neoclassic attitude to this type of composition is aptly expressed by Pope in his "Discourse": "Tasso in his Aminta has as far excell'd all the Pastoral writers, as in his Gierusalemme he has outdone the Epic Poets of his country. But as this piece seems to have been the original of a new sort of poem, the Pastoral Comedy, in Italy, it cannot so well be consider'd as a copy of the ancients." Pope, Poems, p. 121.

The traditional pastoral theme is expressed in The Gentle Shepherd by Sir William as he views the "ruins" of his "once fair seat" shortly after his return:

> Thrice happy life! that's from ambition free;
> Remov'd from crowns and courts, how cheerfully
> A calm contented mortal spends his time,
> In hearty health, his soul unstain'd with crime.
> (Act III, Sc. i, ll. 37-40)

The "thrice happy life" is not that of the golden age shepherd, however, but of one living in the peace and tranquillity of the Lowlands of Scotland. The conversation between Patie and Peggy in Act II, Scene iv, is typical of the realistic detail that sets The Gentle Shepherd apart from the conventional and artificial pastoral so common earlier in the century:

> Peggy. When first thou gade wi' shepherds to the hill,
> An' I to milk the ewes first try'd my skill,
> To bear a leglen was nae toil to me,
> When at the bught at e'en I met wi' thee.
>
> Patie. When corn grew yellow, an' the heather-bells
> Bloom'd bonny on the muir an' rising fells,
> Nae birns, or briers, or whins, e'er troubl'd me
> Gif I cou'd find blae-berries ripe for thee.
> (Act II, Sc. iv, ll. 52-59)

The vivid detail in passages such as this suggests that the poet was writing from first-hand knowledge of the Scottish countryside, not attempting to visualize an ideal setting in distant Arcadia.

In keeping with their humble character, Ramsay's shepherds talk of witchcraft and superstition; but they speak of local superstitions rather than of those found in the ancients. And, again quite realistically, the noble Sir William is made

to discredit such folk beliefs as notions of

> the clouded mind,
> That is, thro' want of education, blind!
> (Act V, Sc. i, ll. 53-54)

Thus there is an originality and independence in Ramsay's work that is unusual in much pastoral poetry of this period. In giving his pastoral "a local habitation", Ramsay makes his work accord more with the rationalistic theory of pastoral as set forth by Philips, Tickell, and Addison than with the theories expressed by Pope. It gives an indication of the direction which pastoral was now taking toward a less restrictive, less artificial mode of expression.

2.

That Moses Browne tried to rid pastoral of some of its restrictions is made evident in the title of his Piscatory Eclogues: An Essay to introduce New Rules, and New Characters into Pastoral. To which is prefix'd, a discourse in Defense of this Undertaking (1729). Although he mentions "New rules", Browne is really closer to the thinking of those who advocated a rationalistic approach than he is to the "rules" critics. In his "Essay in Defence of the Piscatory Eclogue", he lashes out at the "arbitrary, humoursome pedantry of Scholiasts and Commentators" who allow the "characters of Shepherds" to be

"the only subjects of pastoral", and who "allow but seven of Virgil's Eclogues, and ten of the Idylliums to be purely pastoral". Rapin, he says, has followed the "general humour" of pedantry "but he changes, Frenchman like, and is so volatile in opinion - affirms and denies in the same breath, and uses such freedom of conjecture, that his argument will carry less authority".[3] Using Theocritus and Virgil as his example, Browne turns the argument of the "rules" critics against these critics themselves. He refutes neoclassicism with classicism:

> So that both from Theocritus and Virgil's authority and practice, let but the manners of the speakers be adapted to the simplicity and purity of the golden age; let them have but leisure for their muses, and the country for their residence, and whether they are Shepherds, Anglers, Fishers, Fowlers, &c. it is equally indifferent.[4]

Although Browne respects Theocritus and Virgil and accepts the golden age origin of pastoral, he is not in sympathy with the "rules" critics. Like Ramsay he inclines rather toward the rationalistic or common sense approach.

Browne wishes to broaden the scope of subject matter and to add variety to the types of characters which may be depicted in pastoral. In addition to the shepherd, he sees no reason why "an angler singing of rivers, the breed, haunts, and nature of fish; or a Fowler at his pleasant, artful recreation,

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[3] Moses Browne, Angling Sports: in Nine Piscatory Eclogues, 3rd. ed. (1773), p. xx.

[4] Ibid., p. xxiv.

sitting under a green shade and watching his nets" might not be "adapted to Eclogue" so as to "acquire general esteem, as well for their easy instructive philosophy, as entertaining variety".[5] Regarding language, Browne has found "by the Dialogues of his Anglers, how properly they would suit with the innocent, humble, nature of Eclogue". He disagrees with the "Legislators of Pastoral" who ordinarily expect "low and clownish" phrases from their swains. After reminding his readers that "Hesiod, Moses, and David" were all shepherds, he states that "We should not ... imagine it is deviating from their characters to make them civil and ingenious, and for fear of drawing them courtiers, paint them as savages: the golden mean is to be observed, and, if in some places I have made my Swains (it may be thought) a little too well bred for natives of the country, it is because I judged my subject not straitened, nor the speakers limited to all the slavish forms the pastoral critics have required".[6]

Thus it can be seen that Browne is very much displeased with the narrowness and restrictions of the "rules" criticism. He wishes to introduce novel elements into pastoral, and he thinks that the language should not be always "low and clownish" but rather should be in keeping with the character being presented. His "Essay" is another example of the growing dissatisfaction with the conventional and artificial pastoral.

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[5] Browne, op. cit., p. xxix.

[6] Ibid., p. xxxiv.

It also represents a further attempt to broaden the scope of pastoral and may be considered part of the general tendency at this time to re-introduce variety of both content and form into the genre.

Browne's Piscatory Eclogues, unfortunately, do not live up to the expectations created by the "Essay". For the most part they are dreary and insipid. Several of them deal in some detail with the various species of trout and their haunts and habits. To a reader not particularly interested in angling this soon becomes boring, and the eclogues have little else to recommend them. There are nine eclogues in all, dealing consecutively with the following topics: "Angling Seasons: or, The Weather"; "Night-Fishing: or, The Nocturnal"; "The River Enemies"; "The Sea Swains"; "Renock's Despair"; "The Anglers Songs"; "The Strife"; "The Fowlers", and lastly, "The Complaints: or, The Friends". Near the end of the "Essay" he explains that fishermen, "if they can be lawfully used", must be used "sparingly", since, "following their laborious employments on the main", their lives would not normally have the ease and tranquillity associated with this type of poem. He has used them "but once in these Eclogues ... to see how a mixture of characters, and a designed variety of subjects would appear, and agree with this sort of writing". He has "but one Eclogue with Fowlers, all the rest are taken up with shepherds or rural persons, and anglers".[7]

Although dealing ostensibly with "anglers", some of the situations presented in these eclogues follow the pattern

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[7] Browne, op. cit., p. xxxvi.

of the traditional eclogue. In Eclogue I two anglers relate to a herdsman "the Inconveniences from long Droughts and land Floods, the Signs and changes of Weather, Seasons best for this Recreation, and the Methods of Summer and Winter Angling". Following this the herdsman, in the traditional manner, "makes each a suitable Present". In Eclogue VI, two Anglers "sing, alternately, ... on subjects which seem to occur most sudden and accidental without Order or Design" after which they are "severally commended, and rewarded for their Skill". In Eclogue VIII two swains likewise sing alternately, and Eclogue VII is a traditional singing-match between a "shepherd" and a "Fisher". Eclogue V, "an amorous soliloquy of a slighted swain", is a rather insipid and artificial love complaint employing pathetic fallacy in the manner of pastoral elegy.

Browne describes several English rivers, but it is questionable whether the descriptions given in the eclogues are derived from first-hand observation or from Walton's Compleat Angler to which he often refers. One of the few passages which suggest first-hand observation is the following section from Eclogue II, describing the early morning after sunrise:

> Now sparkling dew-drops glisten on the grain,
> And coolly breezes fan the healthsome plain.
> "The plow-boy o'er the furrows whistles blithe,
> And in the mead the mower whets his scythe".
> Shrill horns alarm the sportsman from his dream,
> And the bells tinkle on the new-yok'd team.
> (ll. 147-152)

As has already been suggested, Browne's chief importance lies not so much in his Piscatory Eclogues as in his attempt to

introduce new subject matter and new characters into the genre and in his more reasonable attitude towards the language of pastoral. He succeeds in this aim to some extent in these eclogues, but the quality of his verses rarely rises above the mediocre and he is thus not a very good model for later writers.

3.

Swift began writing burlesque eclogues in 1711 and the devastating effect of his satiric attacks on pastoral can hardly be overestimated. He did more than any other single writer to bring disrespect upon the genre. Before discussing his three bitterly satiric poems published in 1734, we should look at "A Town Eclogue" (1711),[8] the first of a type known as burlesque or anti-pastoral poems written to expose the artificiality of conventional pastoral. In this eclogue Phillis, "a poor heedless maid", is having a "Second Babe" whose support she expects Corydon to share. The opening lines have an air of pastoral, and the characters have pastoral names; otherwise the poem has nothing distinctly pastoral in it. The following passage indicates the tone of Swift's burlesque and satire:

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[8] This poem, attributed to Swift, appeared in The Tatler, No. 301, 10-13 March, 1710-11. See Jonathan Swift, Poems, ed. Harold Williams (1958), Vol. III, p. 1087.

Phil. With this large Petticoat I strive in vain
To hide my Folly past, and coming Pain;
'Tis now no Secret; she, and Fifty more,
Observe the symptoms I had once before.
A Second Babe at Wapping must be plac'd,
When I scarce bear the Charges of the last.
(ll. 51-56)

Phillis is hardly the nymph of Pope's "Summer" whose very presence causes trees to "crowd into a Shade" and "blushing flow'rs" to rise. Her condition, too, is a trifle less dignified that one would expect of a nymph of the golden age of "innocence".

Swift again lashes out at conventional pastoral in three poems published in 1734: "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed", "Strephon and Chloe", and "Cassinus and Peter".[9] Here are the two opening lines of "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed":

Corinna, Pride of Drury-Lane,
For whom no Shepherd sighs in vain.
(ll. 1-2)

Corinna is clearly no Arcadian damsel, and Swift's description of her is very different from the traditional descriptions of nymphs and shepherdesses:

The Nymph, tho' in this mangled Plight,
Must ev'ry Morn her Limbs unite.
But how shall I describe her Arts
To recollect the scatter'd Parts?
Or shew the Anguish, Toil, and Pain,
Of gath'ring up herself again?
The bashful Muse will never bear
In such a Scene to interfere.
Corinna in the Morning dizen'd,
Who sees, will spew; who smells, be poison'd.
(ll. 65-74)

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[9] Swift, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 580 ff.

"Strephon and Chloe" deals with the sudden awakening to reality of the inexperienced and innocent Strephon on his wedding night. In the opening lines of the poem, Chloe, the nymph and bride, is described in terms appropriate to a goddess. Following the wedding, Strephon is "perplex'd" about how he should "demean himself the Wedding-Night". To Strephon, she was like "a Goddess dy'd in Grain" who

> Was unsusceptible of stain:
> And, Venus-like, her fragrant Skin
> Exhal'd Ambrosia from within:
> (ll. 86-88)

Strephon, however, is made more aware of the truth about her when he finds her urinating in a "Vessel" in bed. The scene suddenly changes, and stark reality shatters Strephon's dream world in much the same way that Swift wishes to shatter the artificial dream world of conventional pastoral:

> The little Cupids hov'ring round,
> (As Pictures prove) with Garlands crown'd,
> Abasht at what they saw and heard,
> Flew off, nor evermore appear'd.
>
> Adieu to ravishing Delights,
> High Raptures, and romantick Flights;
> To Goddesses so heav'nly sweet,
> Expiring Shepherds at their Feet;
> To silver Meads, and shady Bow'rs,
> Drest up with Amaranthine Flow'rs.
> (ll. 193-202)

Strephon finds that the "Scent" of her urine is not as "heav'nly sweet" as he expected from "heav'nly Chloe".

"Cassinus and Peter" is written in the same vein of satire and burlesque. It is called "A Tragical Elegy" but can

be taken, to some extent, as a burlesque of the pastoral elegy. The traditional pastoral elegy is a lamentation for the death of some close friend or fellow poet in a pastoral setting. The best example in English is Milton's "Lycidas". To mention "Lycidas" in the same context as "Cassinus and Peter", however, is to descend from the sublime to the ridiculous. Cassinus and Peter are "Two College Sophs of Cambridge Growth". Cassinus has discovered something concerning his beautiful nymph Caelia that has driven him to distraction. She has committed "A Crime that shocks all human Kind", and he bids farewell to his friend Peter thus:

> Yet, kind Arcadians, on my Urn
> These Elegies and Sonnets burn,
> And on the Marble grave these Rhimes,
> A Monument to after-Times:
> "Here Cassy lies, by Caelia slain,
> "And dying, never told his Pain.
> (ll. 73-78)

We know however that the distress felt is out of all proportion to the "crime". Swift, in addition to satirizing these two young "special Wits", seems in this poem to be ridiculing the inanity and insipidity of many of the love complaints of pastoral.

Swift's talent was well suited to the burlesque of pastoral. He spent his life deflating the myths which man had created about himself to protect himself against reality. He knew that the primitive golden age was only a dream, and he directed his efforts towards shattering that dream. Swift knew that a nymph, far from being "Venus-like", exhaling "Ambrosia from within", was likely to be "a filthy Mate" who "must either

void or burst". He stripped the veneer off the pastoral dream world and showed us a rotten core. Henceforth Arcadia has about it, in the minds of many serious writers, a stigma from which it never fully recovers.

4.

William Collins's Persian Eclogues (1742)[10] represent a further attempt to broaden the scope of pastoral. Collins, like Pope, attempts to give unity of time to his pastorals. The first is set in a "valley" in the "Morning"; the second in the "desart" at "Mid-day"; the third in a "forest" at "Evening", and the fourth on a "mountain" at "Midnight". The eclogues are didactic in intention. The first, "Selim; or, the Shepherd's Moral", is set in a valley near "Bagdat" and uses oriental names, but otherwise has little to distinguish it from other didactic eclogues written in the traditional manner. In it Selim, the poet-shepherd, informs the "Persian Maids" that "'Tis Virtue makes the Bliss, where'er we dwell". At the end of his "Lay", Selim relates to the maids the various "Virtues" and informs them that "These are the Virtues that must lead to Love" (l. 68).

The second eclogue introduces "Hassan; or, the Camel driver", who endures the "scorching Sand" of the desert to seek

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[10] Thomas Gray and William Collins, Poetical Works of Gray and Collins, ed. A.L. Poole (1926), pp. 208 ff.

"The golden Ore". Collins employs the situation of Theocritus's Idyll II and Virgil's Eclogue VIII in reverse. In Theocritus and Virgil the shepherdess is trying to work a magic spell to bring her lover back to her again, and the refrain is repeated after each incantation. Here, however, it is Hassan's own desire for fortune that has drawn him away from his Zara, whose "breaking Heart implor'd in vain". The refrain is repeated here by Hassan who regrets the day he decided to leave. The pastoral theme and the didactic intent are both evident from the following passage:

> Thrice happy they, the wise contented Poor,
> From Lust of Wealth, and Dread of Death secure;
> They tempt no Desarts, and no Griefs they find;
> Peace rules the Day, where Reason rules the Mind;
> Sad was the Hour, and luckless was the Day,
> When first from Schiraz' Walls I bent my Way.
> (ll. 65-70)

The third eclogue, "Abra; or, the Georgian Sultana", is interesting because it employs the "pastourelle" situation, which is so common in Provencal love lyrics and the earlier pastoral ballad. In this eclogue the Great Abbas - the Sultan - hears the "rural Maid" while riding by and seeks her love:

> Great Abbas chanc'd that fated Morn to stray,
> By Love conducted from the Chace away;
> Among the vocal Vales he heard her Song,
> And sought the Vales and echoing Groves among:
> At length he found, and woo'd the rural Maid,
> She knew the Monarch, and with Fear obey'd.
> Be ev'ry Youth like Royal Abbas mov'd,
> And ev'ry Georgian Maid like Abra lov'd.
> (ll. 19-26)

The use of "vocal" vales and "echoing" groves indicates that Collins has not rid himself of the poetic diction so common in this period. The eclogue is interesting, however, not only because of the use of Eastern names, but also because it represents a return to the type of situation depicted in earlier pastoral ballads. It is therefore not part of the orthodox pastoral tradition and it indicates a broadening, once again, of the scope of pastoral.

The fourth eclogue, "Agib and Secander; or, the Fugitives", is set in a mountain in "Circassia". "Two Brother Shepherds", Agib and Secander, are fleeing from their Tartar captors. Collins is certainly not depicting the world of golden age shepherds in this eclogue; instead he describes a world whose ease and peace have been shattered by the harsh reality of war:

> No more the Virgins shall delight to rove,
> By Sargis' Banks or Irwan's shady Grove:
> On Tarkie's Mountain catch the cooling Gale,
> Or breathe the Sweets of Aly's flow'ry Vale:
> Fair Scenes! but ah no more with Peace possest,
> With Ease alluring, and with Plenty blest.
> No more the Shepherds whit'ning Seats appear,
> Nor the kind Products of a bounteous year;
> No more the Dale with snowy Blossoms crown'd,
> But Ruin spreads her baleful Fires around.
> (ll. 43-52)

This is the last eclogue of the series, and it may not be assuming too much to say that Collins here indicates his own attitude toward the world of pastoral, which cannot withstand the "Ruin, and the Waste of War" (l. 60). He may be saying that the ideal world of pastoral must be shattered once it is confronted by reality.

The didactic intention and conventional diction make these pastorals fairly typical eighteenth century poems. Their importance to the development of pastoral lies in Collins's attempt to broaden the scope of the genre by experimenting with an oriental setting and oriental characters. Again we have a movement away from Pope, a new attempt to revive a dying genre. The reversion to a situation common to the earlier pastoral ballad is also an interesting development. No doubt the revival of interest in the ballad itself during this period accounts to some degree for this phenomenon.

5.

William Shenstone (1714-1763) may be expressing his attitude towards conventional pastoral in his short poem entitled "On Certain Pastorals":

> So rude and tuneless are thy lays,
> The weary audience vow,
> 'Tis not th' Arcadian swain that sings,
> But 'tis his herds that low.[11]

His "Colemira, A Culinary Eclogue" (1743) is another burlesque of pastoral. Damon, the "swain", complains of his rejection by

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[11] Alexander Chalmers, The Works of the English Poets (1810), Vol. XIII, p. 301.

Colemira, whose

> hands outshine the fire, and redder things;
> Her eyes are blacker than the pots she brings.
> (ll. 19-20)

The tone of the whole eclogue is conveyed in the following stanzas:

> "But thou, my Fair! who never wouldst approve,
> Or hear the tender story of my love;
> Or mind, how burns my raging breast, - a button -
> Perhaps art dreaming of - a breast of mutton".
>
> Thus said, and wept the sad desponding swain,
> Revealing to the sable walls his pain:
> But nymphs are free with those they should deny;
> To those they love, more exquisitely coy.
> (ll. 65-72)

Shenstone, like Swift, is clearly ridiculing the unreality of the pastoral world. Colemira is not the dainty nymph with milk-white hands, but is rather a kitchen maid whose rough hands "outshine the fire, and redder things", and whose mind turns more on "a breast of mutton" than on a "tender story" of love from a "desponding swain".

His "Pastoral Ode to the Honourable Sir Richard Lyttelton" (1743) is really a panegyric to Sir Richard in a pastoral setting. Compliments are paid to Sir Richard's wife and several worthy gentlemen. It is an insignificant poem, but at least there is no attempt in it to burlesque the pastoral mode. More important to the development of pastoral is "A Pastoral Ballad" (1743), written in four parts. The poem consists of four eclogues which show the progress of a swain's love from "anguish" at his nymph's

departure to "disappointment" when she fails to return. The four eclogues are entitled "Absence", "Hope", "Solicitude" and "Disappointment". Dr. Johnson said of this poem: "I cannot but regret that it is pastoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the crook, the pipe, the sheep, and the kids, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the grossness of a country life".[12] One cannot help thinking, however, that Johnson is here expressing his natural dislike for pastoral in general, since he goes on to quote thirty-six lines from this poem without adverse criticism of them. Johnson says of the first twelve lines which he quotes that "if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no aquaintance with love or nature".[13]

Although this poem has the orthodox pastoral situation of the swain complaining of his unrequited love, and is also didactic, it nevertheless has qualities which represent a definite change from the type of conventional pastoral so commonly found earlier in this century. Shenstone's use of anapestic trimeters, rhyming a b a b c d c d in eight-lined stanzas, indicates a move away from the heroic couplet which had been the chief metre used in pastoral since Dryden. In this poem also Shenstone shows a good deal of poetic competence in his use of a metre whose tripping quality has a tendency to degenerate

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[12] Johnson, Lives, Vol. II, p. 411.

[13] Ibid.

into doggerel. Finally, there is an empirical strain in this poem, an attempt at detailed realistic description, which again represents this noticeable progressive change in attitude away from artificiality toward a more realistic treatment of pastoral themes.

Commenting on the care which Shenstone took of his "grounds" at Leasowes, Johnson says that "The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye".[14] The following description from "Hope" may help confirm this statement, and indicate as well that here Shenstone may be giving his reader a brief glimpse of his little estate:

> Not a pine in my grove is there seen,
> But with tendrils of woodbine is bound:
> Not a beech's more beautiful green,
> But a Sweet-brier entwines it around:
> (ll. 9-12)

The element of realism and his innovation in metre are the qualities in Shenstone's poems which deserve attention and which indicate further this slow change in attitude towards pastoral poetry. In addition to this it may not be too far-fetched to see in the title "A Pastoral Ballad" a renewed interest in the native impulse that was such an integral part of much sixteenth century pastoral. During the period under discussion the ballad was attracting much attention, and Shenstone gave valuable aid to Bishop Percy in the preparation of his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765).

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[14] Johnson, Lives, Vol. II, p. 408

6.

In 1744, Joseph Warton[15] published "The Enthusiast: or, the Lover of Nature". This is not a pastoral poem, but it does contain pastoral elements and its elevation of "Nature" above "Art" in both social and aesthetic aspects shows an important development in the attitude to the doctrines which dominate poetry in general, and pastoral poetry in particular, up to this point in the eighteenth century. The poem opens in a way characteristic of much eighteenth century pastoral:

> Ye green-rob'd Dryads, oft at dusky eve
> By wondering shepherds seen, to forests brown,
> To unfrequented meads, and pathless wilds,
> Lead me from gardens deck'd with art's vain pomps.[16]
> (ll. 1-4)

The idea of the superiority of Nature to Art is apparent in the preceding lines, but it is even more evident in the following lines which indicate also a rejection of regularity, rules, and formality in poetry:

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[15] "Five Pastoral Eclogues" (1745) on the sorrows of German shepherds in war-time, with a brief Preface, have been attributed to Joseph's brother Thomas Warton. Eric Partridge, in The Three Wartons (1927), p. 20, says that "T.W. disclaimed authorship". Whoever wrote these eclogues, their chief importance to this study lies in the fact that they are written in blank verse, thus showing a departure from the heroic couplet, and, again, there is an attempt to introduce new subject matter (this time German shepherds) and an air of realism in description.

[16] Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. XVIII, p. 159.

> Can Kent design like Nature? Mark where Thames
> Plenty and pleasure pours through Lincoln's meads;
> Can the great artist, though with taste supreme
> Endu'd, one beauty to this Eden add?
> Though he, by rules unfetter'd, boldly scorns
> Formality and method, round and square
> Disdaining, plans irregularly great.17
>
> (ll. 47-53)

Warton's picture of "Yon shepherd idly stretch'd on the rude rock" (l. 66) is a traditional pose of the shepherd in pastoral. His picture of "the first of men" deals with the traditional golden age theme of pastoral and bears resemblance not only to Lucretius, as Warton's note indicates, but also to the description of the golden age in Virgil's fourth eclogue:

> Happy the first of men, ere yet confin'd
> To smoky cities; who in sheltering groves,
> Warm caves, and deep-sunk vallies liv'd and lov'd,
> By cares unwounded; what the sun and showers,
> And genial earth untillag'd, could produce,
> They gather'd grateful ...
>
> (ll. 87-92)

Warton's primitivism is different, however, from that of the neoclassic view and the rationalistic view alike. In An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope (1756) Warton rebukes those who, because they supposed the beauties of Theocritus "too great and abundant to be real, referred them to the fictitious and

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17 A.O. Lovejoy in "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms" in English Romantic Essays: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. M.H. Abrams (1960), p. 13, comments on the last three lines as follows: "It was no far cry from this to the rejection of the rules in the drama, to a revulsion against the strait-laced regularity and symmetry of the heroic couplet, to a general turning from convention, formality, method, artifice, in all the arts".

imaginary scenes of a golden age".[18] Warton refutes this view because, he says, "the climate of Sicily was delicious, and the face of the country various and beautiful: its vallies and its precipices, its grottos and cascades, were sweetly interchanged, and its flowers and fruits were lavish and luscious. The poet described what he saw and felt; and had no need to have recourse to those artificial assamblages of pleasing objects, which are not to be found in nature".[19] This substitution of cultural primitivism (reference to present day primitive societies) for chronological primitivism[20] is evident in "The Enthusiast" as well. Near the end of the poem, when Virtue with her "immortal train" is about to "forsake Britannia's isle", Warton writes:

> Oh, who will bear me then to western climes,
> (Since Virtue leaves our wretched land) to fields
> Yet unpolluted with Iberian swords: ...
> Where Happiness and Quiet sit enthron'd,
> With simple Indian swains, that I may hunt
> The boar and tiger through savannahs wild,
> Through fragrant deserts, and through citron groves?
> (ll. 233 ff.)

The desire to be borne "to western climes ... With simple Indian

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[18] Joseph Warton, An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope (1806), Vol. I, p. 4.

[19] Ibid., p. 3.

[20] Congleton, op. cit., p. 116, comments as follows: "Earlier arguments against the Golden Age convention are usually negative and end after showing that it is illogical, but Warton reinterprets Theocritus and equates the Golden Age convention with real rural life and external nature. In short, he substitutes cultural primitivism for chronological primitivism and thus lays a new foundation for pastoral poetry".

swains" indicates Warton's preference for a present day, simple, unsophisticated society rather than the supposed golden age of primitive man.

Thus although "The Enthusiast" is not strictly a pastoral poem, it does have pastoral elements and indicates a further development in the attitude toward pastoral. The poem is written in blank verse, and this indicates a definite development away from the heroic couplet. Warton's bold assertion of the superiority of nature to art implies a definite change of attitude toward rules, formality, and conventions in poetry. There is also in Warton a changed attitude toward the golden age and a heightening of emotional tone. These, along with the element of realism in this poem, make it significant in a study of the change in attitude toward pastoral poetry which takes place during the eighteenth century.

7.

Dr. Johnson's Rambler[21] papers of 1750 constitute the most important critical statement on pastoral since Pope's "Discourse" in 1717. Johnson's contempt for conventional pastoral is such that he has little regard for the productions

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[21] No. 36: "Delights of Pastoral Poetry", and No. 37: "Principles of Pastoral Poetry". For quotations, see The Rambler, ed. S.C. Roberts (1953), pp. 78-86.

of any pastoral poets since Virgil, "from whose opinion it will not appear very safe to depart". He concedes that Virgil's eclogues provide the best examples from which, using his own reason and good sense, he can formulate a definition of pastoral. He defines pastoral as "a poem in which any action or passion is represented by its effects upon a country life". Johnson would thus not confine pastoral to the depiction of shepherds of the golden age. He rejects the golden age concept of pastoral because "in pastoral, as in other writings, chastity of sentiment ought doubtless to be observed, and purity of manners to be represented, not because the poet is confined to the images of the golden age, but because, having the subject in his own choice, he ought always to consult the interest of virtue". Here one can see the importance to Johnson of the moral quality of literature. Johnson looked with disgust upon the "numbers without number" of imitators who transmit "the same images in the same combination from one to another, till he that reads the title of a poem may guess at the whole series of the composition". The passage following this indicates not only Johnson's view of the "moral purpose" of literature, but also why Johnson thought so highly of Crabbe's The Village:[22]

> Nor will a man, after the perusal of thousands of these performances, find his knowledge enlarged with a single view of nature not produced before,

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[22] James Boswell, Life of Johnson (1960), p. 1202, reports that Dr. Johnson admired The Village because "its sentiments as to the false notions of rustick happiness and rustick virtue were quite congenial with his own".

> or his imagination amused with any new application of those views to moral purposes.[23]

Johnson considered the range of pastoral to be narrow: "For though Nature itself, philosophically considered, be inexhaustible, yet its general effects on the eye and on the ear are uniform and incapable of much variety of description". Since the images of rural life are "so few and general", he concludes that "the state of a man confined to the employments and pleasures of the country is so little diversified" that he is but seldom in circumstances that attract curiosity. While not objecting strongly to the "new source of pleasure" which Sannazaro attempted in substituting "fishermen for shepherds", since he "may display all the pleasures and conceal the dangers of the water", Johnson, nevertheless, finds "two defects in the piscatory eclogue". First, it offers "much less variety than the land", and, secondly, "the ignorance of maritime pleasures in which the greater part of mankind must always live" presents "another obstacle to the general reception of this kind of poetry".

Johnson's good sense is demonstrated in his discussion of the delights of "true pastoral". "The images of true pastoral", he says, "have always the power of exciting delight, because the works of nature, from which they are drawn, have always the same order and beauty, and continue to force themselves upon our thoughts, being at once obvious to the most careless regard, and

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[23] Rambler, No. 36 (July 21, 1750).

more than adequate to the strongest reason and severest contemplation". Johnson's empirical strain is evident here, since it is the "works of nature" rather than the works of art from which the "images of true pastoral" are drawn. Unlike those authors who make their personages speak a "mangled dialect" and fall victim to the inconsistency of "joining elegance of thought with coarseness of diction", Johnson's view of true pastoral "admits of all ranks of persons, because persons of all ranks inhabit the country. It excludes not, therefore, on account of the characters necessary to be introduced, any elevation or delicacy of sentiment. Those ideas only are improper which, not owing their original to rural objects, are not pastoral".

Johnson's attitude toward conventional pastoral, then, was determined by his conception of the value and purpose of literature. His reason would not allow him to admit into pastoral false manners or false sentiments which did not always "consult the interest of virtue". For Johnson, pastoral must give "a representation of rural nature" and exhibit "the ideas and sentiments of those (whoever they are) to whom the country affords pleasure or employment". Johnson's empirical strain is demonstrated in his discussion of Virgil's Eclogues in a paper in the Adventurer in 1753. He reasons that the "first and the tenth pastorals ... are sufficient to place their author above the reach of rivalry" because "these two poems were produced by events that really happened; and may, therefore, be of use to prove, that we can always feel more than we can imagine,

and that the most artful fiction must give way to truth".[24]

Johnson's criticism then did much to discredit the often insipid and inane conventional pastorals. It did much, too, to consolidate the new attitude towards pastoral and seemed to point the way toward the longer meditative poems such as Crabbe's Village and Goldsmith's Deserted Village which deal in more realistic and empirical terms with rural life. One cannot help but feel, however, that Johnson's true attitude towards pastoral is that so often expressed towards poems of this type in the Lives of the English Poets (1779-1781). This attitude is perhaps best summarized by his retort to Mrs. Thrale for her defence of Matthew Prior's. "The Despairing Shepherd" (1703): "Nonsense can be defended but by nonsense".[25]

9.

It must not be thought, however, that Johnson's criticism of pastoral was all that was written on the topic since Pope's "Discourse". Scattered comments appear which favour the position of Philips, Tickell, and Purney. Numerous minor writers defend the neoclassic position of Pope. The following passage from Congleton summarizes the critical output on pastoral since Pope:

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[24] Adventurer, No. 92 (September 22, 1753).

[25] Reported by James Boswell, op. cit., p. 408.

> Many writers and critics between 1717 and 1750 defend the neoclassic conception of the pastoral. In fact there are more essays which reveal an emphasis similar to that in Rapin, Chetwood, and Pope than those which lean toward the principles set forth by Fontenelle, Tickell, and Purney. It is only because Dr. Johnson's writings on the pastoral are more penetrating and convincing than the essays of the belated neoclassic critics that one can claim that there was a triumph of rationalism.[26]

Several less important writers also wrote conventional pastorals during this period, but since they follow generally the orthodox pattern and are highly imitative they need not be dealt with in detail. George Lyttelton's Progress of Love (1732) is a series of four eclogues written in the manner of conventional pastoral. He employs classical names for his shepherds, and the setting is Arcadia rather than the local countryside. William Broome's "Daphnis and Lycidas" (1726); Thomas Blacklock's "A Pastoral, On the Death of Stella", "A Pastoral Inscribed to Evanthe" and "The Plaintive Shepherd" (all of 1746); and Mrs. Charlotte R. Lennox's "Aminta and Delia" and "A Pastoral from the Song of Solomon" (both of 1747) are other examples of pastoral poems which are still being written in the conventional manner.

In spite of the appearance of these conventional pastorals, however, there is a noticeable trend throughout the second quarter of the eighteenth century away from the imitative and artificial quality of conventional pastoral toward a less restrictive and more varied practice and theory of pastoral poetry. By mid-century there has been a general rejection, among serious writers on

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[26] Congleton, op. cit., p. 108.

pastoral themes, of the "rules" criticism of Rapin and Pope. These writers generally attempt to broaden the scope of pastoral by experimenting with new content and techniques. Ramsay's depiction of life in the Scottish Lowlands, Browne's eclogues on "Angling Sports", and Collins's "Persian Eclogues" introduce subject matter and characters that would have been unacceptable to the neoclassic pastoralist. Ramsay's pastoral drama and Warton's "Enthusiast" add variety to the form of pastoral. Warton's poem indicates a new tendency to treat of pastoral themes outside the genre. Variety of setting is introduced by Ramsay, Browne, and Collins.

In addition to this broadening of scope, there are other significant developments in the attitude toward pastoral. Realism in pastoral, the element which induced Pope to enlist Gay's aid for the purpose of ridiculing it, is now considered almost an essential element. Ramsay, Shenstone, Swift, Warton, and to some extent Browne, all have a certain amount of realistic detail in their poems. In Shenstone, also, there appears a revival of interest in the pastoral ballad which was so common a poetic form in the sixteenth century. Collins, in his use of the pastourelle situation, seems to be looking back to the earlier love lyrics of Provencal as well as to some English pastoral poems of the sixteenth century. Shenstone's use of anapestic trimeters in his "Pastoral Ballad" shows a trend away from the heroic couplet, and so also does Warton's use of blank verse. Warton's primitivism helps to shatter the neoclassic view of a chronological golden age and points towards the newer

concept of a life of simplicity and innocence among present day primitive societies. Finally, Swift's and Shenstone's burlesques of pastoral are effective weapons against the genre itself, and both writers, but especially Swift, contribute greatly to the decline of pastoral as an effective poetic form. Increasingly throughout the latter half of the century there is a tendency for the better poets not to write in the genre or else to align themselves in critical opposition to its artificiality. Only those poets of lesser ability continue to defend it and to write conventional pastorals.

CHAPTER IV: JOHNSON'S RAMBLER TO WORDSWORTH'S "MICHAEL"

> Fled are those times, when, in harmonious strains,
> The rustic poet praised his native plains:
> No Shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
> Their country's beauty or their nymphs rehearse;
> Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
> Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
> And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
> The only pains, alas! they never feel.
> On Mincio's banks, in Caesar's bounteous reign,
> If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
> Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
> Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
> From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
> Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?
> (Crabbe's The Village, ll. 7-20)

1.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century there is an abundance of critical writing about pastoral and a substantial amount of pastoral poetry being written. There are, however, two distinct tendencies with regard to pastoral poetry which may be traced. First, there is the continuing tendency to write pastoral poems within the genre; secondly, there is the tendency, among certain poets, to treat pastoral themes in poems which are not, properly speaking, pastorals. Within the genre certain writers are content to write conventional eclogues in the manner of Pope. There is also a tendency, among poets writing within the genre, to continue the attempt to broaden the scope of pastoral. In the early part of this period these latter writers are influenced mainly by the theory of pastoral

as set forth by Addison, Tickell, and Purney, and by the criticism of Dr. Johnson. As the period progresses, however, writers and critics tend to place more stress on the subjective element inherent in the rationalist theory and emphasize an empirical approach to the writing of pastoral. They demand not only that the pastoral be made indigenous but also that the descriptions be more realistic. Thus in the theory of Langhorne, Tytler, Aikin, Blair, and certain reviewers, and in the practice of such writers as Cunningham, Jago, and Southey, there is a strong empirical element in their emphasis on naturalistic descriptions. There is a tendency, also, to give expression to the pastoral or retirement theme in longer descriptive-reflective poems. Throughout this period, then, there is a noticeable trend away from the conventional pastoral toward a more empirical treatment of pastoral themes both within and outside the genre.

Especially among those poets who write outside the genre there is a tendency to treat rural life realistically; to depict the rural world as it actually appears to the observer, and to present to the reader the actual conditions of the rural dweller without glossing over his hardship and misery. Crabbe, in fact, appears to aim directly at exposing the wretchedness and hardship of country life. This growing tendency to depict rural life as it actually is stems from a changed attitude toward nature in poetry. Generally speaking, there is a tendency among writers like Pope, Gay, Addison, and Johnson to regard nature and the country as a retreat from the

more turbulent, involved, sophisticated life of the city, as a place where a person may enjoy a respite from the hectic pace of city life. There is not to say that these men prefer the country to the city; the opposite, in fact, is true. It means that to these authors the country is a sanctuary where the mind might find peace and the spirit rejuvenation.[1] Even though Addison, Tickell, and Purney stress the necessity of making pastoral indigenous, it is not because of any love of nature for its own sake, but rather because the idea of golden age pastoral is as repugnant to them as it is to Johnson.

Thomson, in The Seasons, treats nature in its varying aspects: calm and stormy, pleasant and unpleasant.[2] In this poem he interprets nature, for the first time in the century, in terms of man's moral and spiritual life. The poem is not merely descriptive. Nor is it the sort of treatment of nature

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[1] The passage (ll. 235-240) quoted in Chapter Two from Pope's Windsor Forest indicates this attitude toward the country and shows, at the same time, the preference for the more active life of city and court. Likewise in "Rural Sports" (ll. 435-443), Gay refers to the "happy fields", the "shady woods", and the "murm'ring streams" as "the sweet composers of the pensive soul".

[2] The changed attitude toward nature in poetry which takes place during the eighteenth century has been variously attributed to the influence of the empirical philosophy of Locke, Newtonian Physics, and the Deistic conception of nature. In "The Return to Nature in the English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century", Studies in Philology, XIV, July 1917, C.A. Moore deals with the influence of Shaftesbury on the treatment of nature in Literature. Commenting on a passage from the Characteristics, which Moore considers "a statement of Nature's spiritual power over man", he says "it would be difficult - I think impossible - to find in any literature of his day utterances so nearly akin to the mood of Wordsworth". (p. 263).

that is normally found in conventional pastoral. As a result of this changing attitude toward nature in poetry, there is a tendency, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, to deal with it more realistically and to depict it as it is observed. This tendency is evident in certain poems written within the pastoral genre, but is more evident in the longer meditative poems, such as Crabbe's Village and Goldsmith's Deserted Village. It indicates a rejection by these writers of the conventional pastoral depicting golden age shepherds in distant Arcadia, and goes beyond even the rationalist insistence on indigenous pastoral. It indicates a tendency to give expression to pastoral themes in a realistic way in longer poems that are essentially outside the pastoral genre. With these poets also there is a renewed effort - lost sight of for a time in the conventional neoclassic pastoral - to write on matters more directly concerning man in the real world. The culmination of this empirical tendency and the tendency also to dispense with the conventions of pastoral comes in Wordsworth's "Michael" with which this chapter ends.

2.

During the period under discussion numerous poets continue to write pastorals. Some of them write in the traditional manner of the conventional pastoral; others write within the genre while

they attempt to broaden its scope. Robert Lloyd (1733-1764) wrote "Arcadia. A Dramatic Pastoral" (1761), "in honour of their present majesties' marriage".[3] Thyrsis, the shepherd whose marriage the poem celebrates, is praised throughout for the blessings he bestows upon his fellow shepherds. The setting of the poem is Arcadia and the shepherds are the traditional sort. Apart from the metrical variety of this dramatic poem, there is little else of interest. The traditional pastoral displacement is evident here in the presentation of their majesties in the guise of shepherd and nymph. Lloyd's "Chit-Chat. An Imitation of Theocritus" (1762) is interesting in that he adapts the situation of Idyll XV of Theocritus to suit his own purpose. In Idyll XV Praxinoa and Gorgo, two countrywomen, are realistically presented as they prepare for and attend the Festival of Adonis at the palace of Ptolemy. In Lloyd's poem the two women, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Scot, are presented realistically as they prepare to attend the procession of the King to the House of Lords. The interesting aspect of the poem is that the characters are not given the pastoral names commonly found in the earlier town eclogues, and it lacks the pastoral machinery normally associated with these poems. Lloyd is imitating the spirit of Theocritus rather than his Idyll.

Charles Churchill (1731-1764) published "The Prophecy of Famine: A Scots Pastoral"[4] in 1763. The poem is a bitter satire

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[3] Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. XV, p. 100 [n].

[4] Charles Churchill, Poetical Works, ed. D. Grant (1956), p. 193.

upon Scots:

> 'Into our places, states, and beds they creep:'
> They've sense to get, what we want sense to keep.
> (ll. 215-216)

The poem is important to this study for two reasons: first, the pastoral mode is once again being used for satiric purposes as it was during the Renaissance; secondly, Churchill ridicules severely the pastoral genre and its conventions in this poem. The satiric tone prevails from the opening lines:

> When Cupid first instructs his darts to fly
> From the sly corner of some cook-maid's eye,
> The stripling raw, just enter'd in his teens,
> Receives the wound, and wonders what it means;...
> Trembling and blushing he the fair one views,
> And fain would speak, but can't - without a Muse.
> (ll. 1 ff.)

The "stripling" must then climb the "sacred mount", prune his wings, tune his "oaten reed" and to the "hills and rills" proclaim "the loves of nymphs, and eke the loves of swains". Then follows a passage which ridicules the conventions of pastoral:

> Clad, as your nymphs were always clad of yore,
> In rustic weeds - a cook-maid now no more -
> Beneath an aged oak Lardella lies -
> Green moss, her couch; her canopy, the skies.
> From aromatic shrubs the roguish gale
> Steals young perfumes, and wafts them thro' the vale.
> The youth, turn'd swain, and skill'd in rustic lays,
> Fast by her side his am'rous descant plays.
> Herds lowe, Flocks bleat, Pies chatter, Ravens scream,
> And the full chorus dies a-down the stream.
> The streams, with music freighted, as they pass,
> Present the fair Lardella with a glass,
> And Zephyr, to compleat the love-sick plan,
> Waves his light wings, and serves her for a fan.
> (ll. 15-28)

Churchill shows in this passage that he is well aware of the ridiculous separation of conventional pastoral from the real world. The maid is no longer a "cook-maid" but a nymph with the pastoral name "Lardella" - this name itself is not without a satiric touch. Instead of being surrounded by unpleasant kitchen smells, she is surrounded by "young perfumes" from "aromatic shrubs". The youth is no longer a "stripling raw" but a swain "skill'd in rustic lays". Churchill points up for ridicule, also, some of the poetic diction commonly used for description in earlier eighteenth century pastoral: "Herds lowe, Flocks bleat, Pies chatter, Ravens scream". The result of this, he says, is that "nature's banish'd by mechanic art". His own attitude to the "mechanic art" of pastoral can be seen from the following lines, which echo a speech by Edmund at the beginning of King Lear:

> Thou, Nature, art my goddess - to thy law
> Myself I dedicate - hence slavish awe
> Which bends to fashion, and obeys the rules,
> Impos'd at first, and since observ'd by fools.
> (ll. 93-96)

Churchill employs the shepherd figures for his own satiric purposes later in the poem. They "tune some merry roundelay", but they are not the conventional shepherds of the golden age:

> Here, for the sullen sky was overcast,
> And summer shrunk beneath a wintry blast,
> A native blast, which, arm'd with hail and rain,
> Beat unrelenting on the naked swain,
> The Boys for shelter made; behind, the sheep,
> Of which those shepherds ev'ry day take keep,
> Sickly crept on, and, with complainings rude,
> On nature seem'd to call, and bleat for food.
> (ll. 335-342)

The "wintry blast ... arm'd with hail and rain" is not part of the golden world. Thus Churchill ridicules the pastoral mode along with its conventions and "rules".

John Langhorne (1735-1779) wrote and translated several pastorals. "Menalcas, A Pastoral" and "Genius and Valour. A Pastoral Poem" are from his own hand. He translated Bion's "Death of Adonis" and Milton's "Epitaphium Damonis". "Menalcas" is a short poem of nineteen lines in the form of an invitation to Delia to come to her sighing shepherd. "Genius and Valour" (1764) is a longer poem in which the shepherd Amyntor praises "Fair Scotland's honours" in both genius and valour. The poem ends with an appeal to the Scottish bards to awaken and "Hail the high trophies by thy country won". This poem is, in fact, a reply to Churchill's attack on the Scots in "The Prophecy of Famine". The poem has the traditional pastoral setting and conventional shepherds. In 1764 Langhorne edited Collins's Oriental Eclogues and added his own preface entitled "Observations on the Oriental Eclogue".[5] Although Langhorne wrote eclogues in the traditional manner, his "Observations" show that in theory he advocated certain changes. He emphasizes originality in pastoral composition, reveals his interest in things oriental, and emphasizes also the importance of natural description. Pastoral, he says, "had its origin in the east" and it sprung from "the early ages" when "the chiefs of the people employed themselves in rural exercises, and ... astronomers and legislators

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[5] Robert Anderson, The Works of the British Poets (1792-1807), Vol. IX, p. 533.

were at the same time shepherds". A changed attitude toward nature is evident in the following statement. Langhorne says that the pastoral poetry which "such shepherds" attempted "would take its subjects from those scenes of rural simplicity in which they were conversant, and, as it was the offspring of harmony and nature, would employ the powers it derived from the former to celebrate the beauty and benevolence of the latter". The celebration of the "beauty and benevolence" of nature looks forward to its treatment by such poets as Cowper and Wordsworth.

Langhorne's exoticism is evident in his discussion of the "beautiful and luxuriant marriage pastoral of Solomon", which is the "only perfect form of the oriental eclogue that has survived" and, "like all eastern poetry, it is bold, wild, and unconnected". He is arguing for a broader scope in subject matter when he says that "it is to be lamented that scarce any oriental compositions of this kind have survived". He goes as far as to suggest that possibly Theocritus had in mind certain expressions of the prophet Isaiah when composing his Idylls. Langhorne stresses also the importance of naturalistic description. In discussing Eclogue IV of Collins, he quotes a passage (ll. 17-20) to illustrate the "grandeur and variety in the landskip Collins describes". "This is certainly painting of nature", he writes, "and the thoughts, however obvious, or destitute of refinement, are perfectly in character. But, as the closest pursuit of nature is the surest way to excellence in general, and to sublimity in particular, in poetical description, so we find that this simple suggestion of the shepherd is not

unattended with magnificence". Langhorne's observations on the beauty and benevolence of nature, and the importance of naturalistic description in poetry, are in keeping with the changed attitude toward the treatment of nature in poetry prevalent at this time. His emphasis on eastern poetry indicates a further, though relatively unsuccessful, attempt to introduce an eastern setting and subject matter into pastoral.

Important to this study also is Langhorne's longer poem The Country Justice (1774). This poem was written at the request of Richard Burn, "one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland".[6] In his treatment of the wretchedness and poverty of the lower classes in village life, Langhorne anticipates Crabbe's The Village. The poem is an appeal to the Justices of the Peace to

> let thy life assume a nobler plan,
> To nature faithful, and the friend of man!
> (Part II, ll. 190-191)

Though not a pastoral poem, The Country Justice has pastoral elements. Langhorne's depiction of the life of the poor wretched shepherd is not that of the shepherd of the golden age, but rather anticipates the similar realistic treatment of rural

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[6] Anderson, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 251.

life by Crabbe:

> The game I start courageously pursue ....
> And first we'll range this mountain's stormy side
> Where the rude winds the shepherd's roof deride,
> As meet no more the wint'ry blast to bear,
> And all the wild hostilities of air.
> -That roof have I remember'd many a year;
> It once gave refuge to a hunted dear -
> Here, in those days, we found an aged pair;-
> But time untenants - hah! what seest thou there?
> "Horror! - by Heav'n, extended on a bed
> Of naked fearn, two human creatures dead!
> Embracing as alive! - ah, no! - no life!
> Cold, breathless!"
> 'Tis the shepherd and his wife.
> I knew the scene, and brought thee to behold
> What speaks more strongly than the story told.
> They died through want -
> (Part II, ll. 74 ff.)

It would appear that Langhorne had himself gradually became dissatisfied with the depiction of rural life found in pastoral and later dealt with it more realistically in this longer poem.

Michael Bruce (1746-1767) wrote two pastoral poems,[7] "Daphnis" and "Alexis". "Alexis" (1766) is a traditional love complaint of the shepherd Alexis written in heroic couplets. "Daphnis: A Monody" (1765) is a traditional pastoral elegy "To the memory of Mr. William Arnot", a young friend of Bruce. There is some realistic description in such passages as the

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[7] Because of the controversy arising out of John Logan's (1748-1788) publication of Poems on Several Occasions, by Michael Bruce (1770), Anderson has printed only those "pieces which have been claimed for the one or the other by their respective friends" (British Poets, XI, p. 1030). "Damon, Menalcas, and Meliboeus", a traditional singing match modelled after those of Theocritus and Virgil, is omitted from the poems of both Bruce and Logan by Anderson. Chalmers attributes this poem to Logan, however, as he does also The Episode of Levina, from Bruce's poem "Lochleven".

one beginning "O happy days! for ever, ever gone!" The poem, however, follows the orthodox pattern of pastoral elegy: there is the lament for his loss, the questioning of the Muses, and the final apotheosis of the shepherd with the plea to "cease your lamentations". Certain lines echo Milton's "Lycidas". The title may be taken from Virgil's Eclogue V of the same name.

John Cunningham (1729-1773) wrote numerous pastorals, as the title of his Poems, Chiefly Pastoral[8] (1766) suggests. He is one of the few pastoral writers of this period whose poems display a lyrical quality reminiscent of the pastoral poems in England's Helicon (1600), whose inspiration springs mainly from the native impulse. This lyrical quality and the likeness of certain situations depicted to those in the earlier pastorals can be seen in the following stanza of "Corydon and Phillis". Corydon is standing beside "Young Phillis" who he thinks is sleeping:

> Young Phillis look'd up with a languishing smile,
> "Kind, shepherd", she said, "you mistake;
> I laid myself down just to rest for a while,
> But trust me, have still been awake:"
> The shepherd took courage, advanced with a bow,
> He placed himself close by her side,
> And manag'd the matter, I cannot tell how,
> But yesterday made her his bride.
> (ll. 25-32)

Likewise, his "Content: a Pastoral" has beautifully flowing lines that have a smoothness and elegance very different from

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[8] Anderson, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 631.

traditional pastoral. Something of the poem's lyrical quality can be seen from the following stanza, describing the shepherdess Content:

> Her air was so modest, her aspect so meek!
> So simple, yet sweet, were her charms!
> I kiss'd the ripe roses that glowed on her cheek,
> And lock'd the dear maid in my arms.
> Now jocund together we tend a few sheep,
> And if, by yon prattle, the stream,
> Reclin'd on her bosom, I sink into sleep,
> Her image still softens my dream.
> (ll. 17-24)

Cunningham's pastorals are not without passages of realistic description either, although such passages are uncommon. His "Day. a Pastoral" is divided into three unconnected groups entitled "Morning", "Noon", and "Evening". In each the landscape and the labour for the time of day are described. The following stanzas from "Evening" suggest first-hand observation:

> O'er the heath the heifer strays
> Free:- (the furrow'd task is done)
> Now the village windows blaze,
> Burnish'd by the setting sun.
>
> . . .
>
> Trudging as the ploughmen go,
> (To the smoking hamlet bound)
> Giant-like their shadows grow,
> Lenghten'd o'er the level ground.

Cunningham wrote several other pastorals,[9] each of which have something of the same lyrical quality, and each shows in its

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[9] Other pastoral poems by Cunningham include "Palemon", "Phillis", "Delia", "Damon and Phillis", "Corydon", "Damon and Phoebe", "The Respite" and "A Pastoral".

variation of meter, its realistic touches, and its treatment of subject matter a move away from the conventional eclogue of the neoclassic tradition.

Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770) wrote several eclogues in which he followed the traditional form of pastoral but departed abruptly from tradition in subject matter, character and setting. In 1769 he submitted to Horace Walpole a group of four eclogues,[10] written, supposedly, in fifteenth century England by one Thomas Rowley, a priest. Walpole, with the aid of Gray and Mason, soon detected the fraud. The first, second, and fourth eclogues deal with the subject of war. In Eclogue I "Twayne lonelie shepsterres" tell of the terrible bloodshed caused by the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster. In Eclogue II, "pious Nygelle" tells of King Richard's fight with the "warrynge sarasyns". In Eclogue IV, Elinoure and Juga weep for their lovers who are away fighting the wars of the Roses. Although the "twa pynynge maydens" are sitting on a "daise-ey'd banke", the setting is not Arcadia but rather the banks of the river "Ruddeborne" near St. Alban's. The reason for their complaint is not unrequited love but the fact that their lovers are gone "To fyghte for Yorke". The poem ends on a tragic note. Upon learning that "bothe their knyghtes were slayne", they "Yelled theyre lethalle knelle, sonke ynn the waves, and dyde". Eclogue III is a moral eclogue in a local English setting with local characters. In it a "manne" and "womanne" are

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[10] Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. XV, p. 381.

proceeding "down in the delle" to help "at makeynge of haie". They meet Sir Roger, the priest, and the "manne" enquires of him why a knight should "bee moe great" than a swain is "Inne honnoure, knyghtehoode and estate?" The moral is conveyed through the illustration of the tall tree which shakes in furious storms while the dwarf "flowrette" stands unhurt. "Syke", Sir Roger says, "is a picte of lyffe":

> Thieselfe a flowrette of small accounte,
> Wouldst harder felle the wynde, as hygher thee
> dydste mounte.
> (ll. 90-91)

Chatterton also wrote African eclogues. In "Narva and Mored" a young priestess on "the steepy cliffs of Chalma's sacred ground" relates the somewhat pathetic story of a young priest Narva, who was "bred to the service of the godhead's throne" but fell in love with the beautiful young Mored. Narva then forgot "his sacred vestment and his mystic lot", and the poem ends, also, on a tragic note:

> Lock'd in each others arms, from Hyga's cave,
> They plung'd relentless to a wat'ry grave;
> And falling murmur'd to the pow'rs above,
> Gods! take our lives, unless we live to love.
> (ll. 101-104)

"The Death of Nicou", another African eclogue, tells the story of how "mighty Nicou" revenged the death of his sister Nica by slaying her husband "young Rorest", who stole her away. "Pining with sorrow", she died. In "Heccar and Gaira", the third African eclogue, the warrior Gaira tells how he left his "lov'd Cawna" to pursue a dangerous "prowling tiger". On his return Cawna and

his children had been taken away by "a worthless train" in "common slav'ry". Now he kills all the tigers he sees for vengeance.

In Chatterton's eclogues, then, there is an attempt to broaden pastoral by introducing new subject matter, setting and characters. Chatterton was attempting to do for the African eclogue something similar to what Collins did and Langhorne advocated for the oriental eclogue. In both cases, however, there is little that might be termed realistic description. The tragic or melancholy tone of Chatterton's eclogues indicates, also, a further development in the treatment of pastoral themes. It seems to foreshadow the more pathetic and humane treatment of characters such as is found in Southey and Wordsworth.

In 1769 The Monthly Review published a translation of Saint-Lambert's "Discours Preliminaire" along with a review of his poem Les Saisons. The "Discours Preliminaire" is important because of Saint-Lambert's emphasis on external nature in poetry and the importance of exactness of description. The poet should "rather paint than describe, and his pictures should have one character: he should give one sentiment the sole possession of his heart, and all the parts and colours of his picture should concur to excite this sentiment".[11] He discusses the relationship of Thomson's Seasons to his own poem Les Saisons, and makes an interesting observation on the treatment of nature in descriptive-reflective poems. "Nature will become interesting", he says,

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[11] Quoted in Congleton, op. cit., p. 130.

"if she is painted in her relations to sensitive beings; she will become interesting, if descriptions are interposed with natural and moral truths, with ideas that enlighten the mind, with rules of conduct and principles of virtue: she will become interesting whenever she is painted under the influence of the sentiments she should inspire, whether sublime, great, mournful, poor, rich, agreeable, or beautiful".[12] This statement seems to apply, not only to the treatment of nature in Thomson's Seasons, but to the treatment of nature by later poets such as Cowper and Wordsworth. Saint-Lambert makes no distinction between the primitivism of the golden age and that of present day primitive societies since he believes that "rural or pastoral poetry is cultivated before men formed into large and polished societies, or when the pleasure of such societies began to lose their relish".[13] His attitude toward primitivism and the treatment of external nature in poetry indicates a definite move away from the attitude of both neoclassicist and rationalist theories of pastoral toward a theory based on empirical standards. His emphasis also on the sentiments which nature "should inspire" foreshadows the treatment of nature by later poets.

A.F. Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, published an edition of the Piscatory Eclogues of Phineas Fletcher in 1771. He prefixed an essay "Of Pastoral and Piscatory Eclogues" which reveals his

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[12] Quoted in Congleton, op. cit., p. 131.

[13] Ibid., p. 130.

dissatisfaction with the separation of pastoral from reality. In discussing the golden age of perfect simplicity, innocence, and ease as depicted in pastoral, he says "nothing can be more fantastical than to depart entirely from nature, and describe a manner of life, which neither never did, nor could possibly exist. An affectation of this kind in the writers of pastoral, is the reason why we are justly displeased with the most modern pastorals, as well as many of the ancients".[14] It is interesting to compare these comments with the opening lines of Crabbe's Village (1783), which serve as an inscription to this chapter. Both show the growing dissatisfaction with the artificiality of pastoral poetry and recommend a more empirical treatment of rural life.

John Aikin (1747-1822) in his "Essay on Song-Writing in General" (1772) stressed the necessity of realistic description in pastoral poetry. With respect to poetical composition which is based upon nature he says: "In general, whatever is designed to move the passions cannot be too natural and simple. It is also evident that when the professed design of the poet is to paint the beauties of nature and the rural landscape of pastoral life, he must give as great an air of reality as possible to his piece, since a bad imitation necessarily produces disgust".[15] Aikin's empirical strain is evident also in his "Essay on Ballads and Pastoral Songs"(1772). In this essay he

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[14] Quoted in Congleton, op. cit., p. 133.

[15] John Aikin, Essays on Song Writing, 2 ed. (1774) p. 7.

draws a distinction between the ballad and the pastoral. Whereas the "ancient ballad ... should be perfectly natural, and appropriated to our own soil ... Pastoral poetry is a native of happier climates, where the face of nature, and the manners of the people are widely different from those of our northern regions. What is reality on the soft Arcadian and Sicilian plains, is all fiction here".[16] While commending Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd for its "air of reality" and "genuine taste of beautiful simplicity" in its "descriptive parts", he nevertheless considers that the "sentiments and manners are far from being entirely proper to the characters". "There is one point", he says, "in which a pastoral writer of any country may venture to follow low nature exactly and with a minute nicety: this is in the scenery and description. Natural objects are scarcely ever disgusting, and there is no country so unblessed as to be unprovided with an ample store of beauties, which must ever please in an accurate representation, independently of all fashion or peculiarity of taste".[17] He expresses similar views on the importance of natural description in poetry in a later essay entitled "An Essay on the Plan and Character of Thomson's Seasons" (1788). In this essay also he helps to break down the division between the georgic tradition in poetry and pastoral, a tendency which is evident to some extent in John Scott's second Amoebean Eclogue.

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[16] Aikin, op. cit., p. 31.

[17] Ibid., p. 34.

Sir William Jones (1746-1794) published a volume entitled Poems in 1772 which included "Arcadia, a Pastoral Poem" and "Solima: an Arabian Eclogue". "Arcadia" is a long allegory on the development of pastoral from Theocritus to Pope and Gay. In the Advertisement to the poem Jones says that "he took the hint of it from an allegory of Mr. Addison, in the thirty-second paper of the Guardian".[18] The setting of the poem is Arcadia and the shepherds are conventional. The poem is written in heroic couplets and follows closely the prose account of Addison. The poem "Solima" is not, he writes, "a regular translation from the Arabic language; but most of the figures, sentiments, and descriptions in it, were really taken from the poets of Arabia".[19] Solima is an Arabian princess who had bid "all Eden spring before our eyes" to cheer the "fainting quest", to shelter the poor "and the weak protect", and "to warm the traveller numb'd with winter's cold". In addition to this interest in humanitarianism, the poem indicates a further attempt to broaden the scope of pastoral by writing on oriental subjects.

John Scott (1730-1783) wrote three groups of eclogues: Moral Eclogues (1773), Amoebean Eclogues (1782) and Oriental Eclogues (1782). In the very brief Advertisment to the Moral Eclogues Scott indicates his agreement with Dr. Johnson's "most rational definition of pastoral poetry" and further states that "this theory the author of the following eclogues has endeavoured

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[18] Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. XVIII, p. 445.

[19] Ibid., p. 441.

to exemplify".[20] As the title of these eclogues indicate, they are meant to convey a moral. Scott uses the pattern made popular by Pope of depicting different seasons, locations, and times of day in each eclogue, except that Winter is excluded. Apart from occasional passages of naturalistic description, however, these eclogues differ little from the conventional pastoral. The shepherds are conventional and the setting, although not explicitly Arcadian, is very close to it. In his brief Advertisment to the Amoebean Eclogues (1782) Scott betrays an awareness of the growing dissatisfaction with pastoral eclogues: "The plan of the Carmen Amoebaeum, or responsive verse of the ancients, inconsistent as it may be deemed with modern manners, was preferred on this occasion, as admitting an arbitrary and desultory disposition of ideas, where it was found difficult to preserve a regular connection".[21] There are two amoebean eclogues. The first is an imitation of the responsive singing-match of the traditional amoebean pastoral. In it two shepherds describe the rural scenery in alternate verse. The setting and situation depicted are entirely traditional and the ending where "The hamlet smokes in amber wreaths arise" echoes Virgil's Eclogue I. Its introduction of occasional passages of natural description is its most interesting aspect. The Second Amoebean Eclogue is not, strictly speaking, a pastoral poem at all. The only touches of pastoral are the "three rural

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[20] Anderson, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 729.

[21] Ibid., p. 741.

bards" who sing of "rural business". Even here the sense of competition is not evident in the way that it is in the singing contests of Theocritus and Virgil. The poem is more properly in the georgic tradition, although it is much shorter than Virgil's Georgics. The first stanza by the first bard, in fact, echoes very closely the opening lines of Book I of Virgil's Georgics:

> The care of farms we sing - attend the strain -
> What skill, what toil, shall best procure you gain;
> How different culture different ground requires;
> While wealth rewards whom industry inspires.
> (ll. 9-12)

This mixing of topics on husbandry[22] with pastoral indicates the growing tendency to distinguish less rigidly between pastoral and georgic poetry.

Of the Oriental Eclogues (1782) the first has the form of the traditional complaint, but the subject matter is different. Scott feels obliged to explain to the reader that "He, who describes what he has seen, may describe correctly: he, who describes what he has not seen, must depend for much on the account of others, and supply the rest from his imagination".[23]

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[22] Virgil's Georgics is a didactic poem on husbandry or farm management and is thus quite distinct from his Eclogues. The topics which form the main subject matter for its four books are introduced in the five opening lines of Book I: "What makes the crops joyous, beneath what star, Maecenas, it is well to turn the soil, and wed vines to elms, what tending the kine need, what care the herd in breeding, what skill the thrifty bees - hence shall I begin my song." Virgil, trans. H.R. Fairclough (1953), Vol. I, p. 81.

[23] Anderson, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 745.

Thus we cannot expect much realistic description in these poems. The interesting thing about these poems is the introduction to the genre of new characters, subject matter, and scenery, in the manner of Collins. "Li-po; or, the Good Governor" is "a Chinese Eclogue" about the good governance of Li-po "a prince in that country". The subject matter again indicates a tendency to treat of diverse matters in the pastoral genre. As has been already pointed out, Scott's Moral Eclogues depart very little from the traditional pastoral. There is a tendency in the Amoebean Eclogues, however, to treat of subject matter normally dealt with in georgic poetry. In the Oriental Eclogues Scott, while still following the traditional form of pastoral eclogue, has attempted to broaden the scope of subject matter and character. After Scott very few conventional eclogues are written. While the traditional form of the eclogue may be used, there are very few eclogues written with the setting in Arcadia and depicting shepherds of the golden age. The tendency henceforth is to introduce more realism and variety of subject matter and character into the traditional form of pastoral.

Reference should be made at this point to a review of "New Idyls. By Solomon Gessner. Translated by W. Hooper, M.D." in the Gentleman's Magazine in 1776. Salomon Gessner (1730-1788) was a Swiss poet and painter whose Pastoral Idylls were highly praised in England for their benevolent sentiments, keen observation of nature, and strong moral quality. His Idylls have had an important influence on English pastoral writers. An article entitled "Rural Poems. Translated from the Original German

of M. Gessner" appeared in The Critical Review as early as 1762. Many articles were written following this in various periodicals. The short introductory paragraph to the translation of Gessner's Idyll XVII ("Menalcas and Alexis") in the Gentleman's Magazine indicates the two qualities of these poems which most reviewers thought fit to praise. The reviewer, referring to Gessner, writes: "In the work before us he has endeavoured to display the extent of his genius by uniting the sister arts in one laudable design, namely, that of exhibiting the benevolent affections in the most natural and amiable light. By making choice of rural subjects for his poetry, he very naturally introduces the beauties of landscape by way of illustration; and, by thus blending them together, he applies the powers of both to inculcate some moral duty or inspire some generous sentiment".[24] By "exhibiting the benevolent affections" and by introducing "the beauties of landscape by way of illustration", Gessner appealed to those writers of pastoral who felt that pastoral should "inspire some generous sentiment" and provide naturalistic descriptions.

One of the most comprehensive reviews of the works of Gessner appeared in the Literary Magazine, and British Review (1789).[25] This anonymous reviewer discusses Gessner's paintings as well as his poetry. Like many other critics, the reviewer praises Gessner for his naturalistic descriptions and credits

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[24] Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. XLVI (1776), p. 80.

[25] Literary Magazine, and British Review (April, 1789), pp. 241 ff.

him with realizing for the reader the "pleasing fictions of the golden age" by visiting the "enchanting banks of the Sil and the Limmat", where "our author studied the beauties of nature, and that rich imagery which he has so happily expressed in his writings". In his Preface to the Idylls Gessner himself writes that "sometimes I steal away from the hurry of the town, and seek relief in the solitude of the country; where a view of the beauties of the fields banishes from my mind every care, and effaces those disagreeable impressions, which I brought along with me. Transported at beholding such admirable scenes, I am happier than a shepherd of the golden age, and richer than a monarch".[26] The reviewer then stresses the importance of feeling in judging poetry, while at the same time he allows a certain weight for genius, taste, and learning: "Though it is not from authorities, but by what one feels, that we ought to judge of such works as those of Mr. Gesner, yet the approbation of men of genius, taste, and learning, will always have a certain weight". He then quotes a letter from Rousseau to Huber who had translated Gessner's Idylls. Rousseau has just read the Idylls after having a "most dreadful pain of body". He writes thus:

> This is the real truth. I perceive that your friend Gesner is a man according to my own heart, hence we may judge of his translator, through whom only he is known to me. I am much obliged to you for having freed our language from that foolish and ridiculous jargon which deprives images of truth, and sentiments of loveliness.

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[26] Literary Magazine, and British Review (April, 1789), p. 245.

> Those who attempt to embellish and adorn nature, are people without genius, and without taste, and who have never been acquainted with its beauties. For six years past I have, in my retreat, led a life very much like that of Amyntas and Menalcas .... At present you have inspired me with a desire of seeing another spring, to wander with your shepherds through new paths, to share my solitude with them, and to behold with them rural retreats, which are not inferior to those which you and Mr. Gesner have described so well.[27]

This is Rousseau's favourable reaction to the naturalistic descriptions and the benevolent sentiments expressed in Gessner's Idylls. Although there is also adverse criticism of Gessner's pastorals, these are the qualities most often praised, and they are the qualities most looked for in pastoral at this time.

No less important to the consolidation of the new theory of pastoral is Hugh Blair's Lecture on "Pastoral Poetry" (1783). Blair's empiricism is evident in his insistence that "In every Pastoral, a scene, or rural prospect, should be distinctly drawn, and set before us. It is not enough, that we have those unmeaning groups of violets and roses, of birds, and brooks, and breezes, which our common Pastoral-mongers throw together, and which are perpetually recurring upon us without variation. A good Poet ought to give us such a landscape, as a painter could copy after. His objects must be particularized; the stream, the rock, or the tree, must, each of them, stand forth, so as to make a figure in the imagination, and to give us a pleasing

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[27] Literary Magazine, and British Review (April, 1789), p. 246.

conception of the place where we are".[28] Blair, however, is not too different from Fontenelle in his conception of the "middle station" of pastoral. The poet, in presenting "the idea of a rural life" which "may have actually taken place" must maintain a "pleasing illusion", and display "all that is agreeable in that state, but hide whatever is displeasing". Regarding character, Blair states that "we expect to be entertained by shepherds, or persons wholly engaged in rural occupations". While "an amiable simplicity must be the groundwork of his character", the shepherd "may have good sense and reflection; he may have sprightliness and vivacity; he may have very tender and delicate feelings". Blair criticizes the "barren and slavish imitation of ancient pastoral topics", and believes that pastoral poetry may take a "wider range": "The various adventures which give occasion to those engaged in country life to display their disposition and temper ... might give occasion to many a pleasing and tender incident; and were more of the narrative and sentimental intermixed with the descriptive in this kind of Poetry, it would become much more interesting than it now generally is, to the bulk of readers".[29] Here, as in his comments on Gessner's Idylls, Blair stresses the importance of the sentiments presented in pastoral. "The chief merit" of Gessner, he writes, "is, that he writes to the heart; and has enriched the subjects of his Idylls with incidents,

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[28] Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, ed. Harold F. Harding (1965), Vol. II, p. 340.

[29] Ibid., p. 346.

which give rise to much tender sentiment. Scenes of domestic felicity are beautifully painted".[30] Blair's lecture presents the culmination of the new theory of pastoral. His stress on particularized descriptions of nature, on the necessity of wider range of subject matter, and the importance of sentiment and feeling in pastoral points forward to the later treatment of pastoral by Wordsworth. The prevalent attitude towards pastoral at this time also helps explain why writers like Cowper, Beattie, and Crabbe go outside the genre to deal with pastoral themes.

Richard Jago (1715-1781) wrote two poems which are important to this study. In "The Scavengers. a Town-eclogue"[31] he ridicules the pastoral conventions in the manner of Swift. This poem also contains echoes of Gay's Shepherd's Week. The opening lines have the same bathetic effect as the opening lines of Gay's "Saturday". Jago's poem begins thus:

> Awake, my muse, prepare a loftier theme.
> The winding valley and the dimpled stream
> Delight not all: quit, quit, the verdant field,
> And try what dusty streets, the alleys yield.
> (ll. 1-4)

This is a deliberate parody of the opening lines of many conventional pastorals. The same burlesque effect is attained in the lines describing the occupation of this "pair" of street scavengers:

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[30] Blair, op. cit., p. 348.

[31] Anderson, op. cit., Vol XI, p. 721.

> Last of the toiling race there lived a pair,
> Bred up in labour, and inur'd to care!
> To sweep the streets their task from sun to sun,
> And seek the nastiness which others shun.
> (ll. 19-22)

In the following passage Jago achieves ludicrous effects by the implied comparison of the circumstances of the "delightful chat" of this "pair" with similar activities of conventional shepherds and shepherdesses:

> Ah! Gaffer Pestel, what brave days were those,
> When higher than our house our muckhill rose!
> The growing mount I view'd with joyful eyes,
> And marked what each load added to its size.
> Wrapped in its fragrant steam we often sat,
> And to its praises held delightful chat.
> (ll. 51-56)

The ending too is a deliberate ridicule of the ending of many conventional pastorals. In the conventional pastoral it is usually the "setting sun" that drives the shepherds from the field. The cause of the departure of these scavengers is quite different:

> Thus wail'd they pleasure past, and present cares,
> While the starv'd hog join'd his complaint with theirs.
> To still his grunting different ways they tend,
> To West-street he, and she to Cotton-end.
> (ll. 83-86)

A different kind of pastoral, but not, it seems, without its touch of burlesque, is Jago's "Ardenna. a Pastoral-Eclogue. To a Lady". In this eclogue "two swains the Doric reed essay'd" to sing the praises of Ardenna, "the peerless maid", who chose her seat "on Arden's blissful plain". Although the poem has the

traditional pastoral setting, and "Damon" and "Lycidas" are traditional shepherds, the following lines seem to ring with something less than a true note:

> Plains, hill, and woods return the well-known sound,
> And the smooth beech records the sportive wound.
> (ll. 35-36)

The "well-known" sound and the "sportive" wound have the effect of burlesque, as does the following passage which describes what Ardenna has done for the shepherds:

> She for her shepherds rears the rooty shed,
> The chequer'd pavement, and the straw-wove bed.
> For them she scoops the grotto's cool retreat,
> From storms a shelter, and a shade in heat.
> Directs their hands the verdant arch to bend,
> And with the leafy roof its gloom extend.
> Shells, flint, and ore their mingled graces join,
> And rocky fragments aid the chaste design.
> (ll. 67-74)

This passage seems to overemphasize for the sake of a ludicrous effect. Jago's handling of these poems indicates a further attempt to ridicule conventional pastoral and to discredit it as a poetic genre.

Although Jago's "Edge Hill" (1767) is more strictly a "local" poem, it does have pastoral elements. It treats the country-side in a somewhat realistic way, and, what is more important to the future development of pastoral, it emphasizes the "benign" effects of nature and its "moral" influence on man.

> Hail happy land! which nature's partial smile
> Hath rob'd profusely gay! whose champaigns wide

> With plenteous harvests wave; whose pastures swarm
> With horned tribes, or the sheep's fleecy race;
> To the throng'd shambles yielding whomesome food,
> And various labour to man's active powers,
> Nor less benign than to the weary rest.
> (Book IV, ll. 192-198)

The passage following this describes the labour of the "lordly swain". The description of his housewife before the "blazing hearth" testing "the tangl'd wool" and enticing the "ductile thread" with "sportive hand" has an air of realism.[32] Jago then goes on to treat of "Nature's Moral plan":

> Nature herself bids us be serious,
> Bids us be wise; and all her works rebuke
> That ever-thoughtless, ever-titt'ring tribe.
> (Book IV, ll. 254-256)

This treatment of the benevolent aspects of nature which have an effect for good on man indicates this new way of dealing with nature in poetry. The pastoral elements in this local or topographical poem indicate also the growing tendency to deal with pastoral themes outside the genre and the tendency to break down the division between pastoral and longer poems on similar subjects.

Robert Southey (1774-1843) published two groups of formal eclogues: The Botany Bay Eclogues (1797-1803) and English Eclogues (1799-1808). Both these groups lack any traces of pastoralism. Southey dispenses with the conventional shepherds. The Botany Bay Eclogues utilize the diurnal pattern made popular by Pope. They treat of life in the penal colony at Botany Bay in a way that shows humane feelings towards those convicted.

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[32] This passage, however, appears to echo a similar passage from Virgil's Georgics (Book I, ll. 291-296).

His English Eclogues, with the exception of Eclogue IV, are set in the English countryside. The first three of these were published in 1799, the fourth in 1808. Southey's attitude toward the pastoral eclogue is expressed in his short Preface to the English Eclogues: "With bad Eclogues I am sufficiently acquainted, from Tityrus and Corydon down to our English Strephons and Thirsisses. No kind of poetry can boast of more illustrious names, or is more distinguished by the servile dulness of imitated nonsense. Pastoral writers, 'more silly than their sheep', have, like their sheep gone on in the same track one after another".[33] Gay, he says, is the only modern pastoral writer who "struck into a new path". Eclogue I presents an old gardener's feelings of nostalgia and regret that his old Lady of the Mansion has passed away and that the new owner will make alterations which the gardener does not welcome. Eclogue II treats sympathetically the "wretched" life of Hannah who "bore unhusbanded a mother's pains" and now is being buried. Eclogue III shows similar humanitarian feelings for the widow whose orphan grandchild "play'd the wanton" and broke her "grandam's heart". In Eclogue IV the setting is the town and the subject is the funeral of an Alderman "in whose heart Love had no place for natural charity" (l. 95). These eclogues lack any traces of pastoral and its conventions. They are written in blank verse, and Eclogues II and III especially show the humanitarian interest of the Romantics in the less fortunate members of society.

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[33] Robert Southey, Poems, ed. Maurice H. Fitzgerald (1909), p. 411.

Nathan Drake's essay "On Pastoral Poetry" in his Literary Hours (1798) represents the culmination of the contempt for conventional pastoral and the culmination also of the empirical attitude toward pastoral composition. In this essay he attacks the slavish imitation of conventional pastoral and recommends that poets imitate the spirit rather than the works of Theocritus. If, "instead of absurdly introducing the costume and scenery of Sicily", poets had "given a faithful representation of their own climate and rural character, our pastorals would not be the insipid things we are now, in general, obliged to consider them, but accurate imitations of nature herself, sketched with a free and liberal pencil, and glowing with appropriate charms". "If rural life", he continues, "no longer present us with shepherds singing and piping for a bowl or a crook, why persist, in violation of all probability, to introduce such characters? If pastoral cannot exist without them, let us cease to compose it".[34] This is the advice offered by Drake to those who persist in creating the myth of Arcadia. To Theocritus "these personages were objects of hourly observation"; to the eighteenth century reader they are a "violation of all probability". Drake's essay, then, represents the complete rejection of the conventional pastoral and argues for an indigenous pastoral depicting English rural life in a realistic way. Two years later, in 1800, Wordsworth's "Michael" does just that. Wordsworth imitates in this poem the spirit

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[34] Nathan Drake, Literary Hours, 2 ed. (1800), Vol. I, pp. 326-7.

rather than the works of Theocritus. Before discussing "Michael", however, it is necessary to look at those writers who, during the second half of the eighteenth century, reject pastoral as an effective poetic genre and deal with pastoral themes in longer meditative or descriptive-reflective poems.

3.

In addition to those writers who attempt to broaden the scope of pastoral and who stress the empirical element, there are others who reject the genre altogether and deal with pastoral themes in longer descriptive-reflective poems. These writers appear to have little interest in further development of pastoral. Any comments they make about it are usually disparaging and indicate little interest in broadening its scope. Some of them stress the importance of rural description and the expression of benevolent sentiment, but when they do so they have the longer meditative or descriptive-reflective poem in mind rather than the strictly pastoral poem.

John Dyer (1700-1758) published The Fleece,[35] in four parts, in 1757. This poem is not a pastoral, but it has a rural setting and deals with the lives of real shepherds. The poem is more properly in the tradition of Virgil's Georgics,

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[35] Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. XIII, p. 228.

however, than in the pastoral tradition. Dyer's concern for the wool trade in England prompted its composition, and his didactic intention is evident throughout the poem. In the following passage one can see a strong similarity between Virgil's didactic intention in the Georgics and Dyer's in The Fleece:

> Come, gentle swains, the bright unsully'd locks
> Collect: alternate songs shall soothe your cares,
> And warbling music break from every spray.
> Be faithful: and the genuine locks alone
> Wrap round: nor alien flake nor pitch enfold:...
> Guard too from moisture, and the fretting moth
> Pernicious: she, in gloomy shade conceal'd,
> Her labyrinth cuts, and mocks the comber's care.
> (Book II, ll. 30 ff.)

The poem is written in blank verse. Dyer's interest in external nature is attested to by the descriptive passages of the poem, and his treatment of the lives of shepherds outside the pastoral genre indicatesa growing tendency in this direction at this time.

Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774) is another writer who rejects pastoral. In his Citizen of the World Goldsmith's Chinese philosopher writes that "Pastorals are pretty enough - for those that like them, - but to me Thyrsis is one of the most insipid fellows I ever conversed with; and as for Corridon I don't chuse his company".[36] In another letter in which he ridicules the funeral elegies written upon the great, Goldsmith's philosopher writes that the "most usual manner" of "being poetically sorrowful on such occasions" is thus:

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[36] Letter XCVII.

> Damon meets Menalcas, who has got a most gloomy countenance. The shepherd asks his friend, whence that look of distress? to which the other replies, that Pollio is no more. If that be the case then, cries Damon, let us retire to yonder bower at some distance off, where the cypress and the jessamine add fragrance to the breeze; and let us weep alternately for Pollio, the friend of shepherds, and the patron of every muse. Ah! returns his fellow shepherd, what think you rather of that grotto by the fountain side; the murmuring stream will help to assist our complaints, and a nightingale on a neighbouring tree will join her voice to the concert. When the place is thus settled they begin: The brook stands still to hear their lamentations; the cows forget to graze; and the very tygers start from the forest with sympathetic concern.[37]

After pointing out that he is "quite unaffected by all this distress", the philosopher then parodies the pastoral elegy by giving "the specimen of a poem upon the decease of a great man, in which the flattery is perfectly fine, and yet the poet perfectly innocent". Of the five stanzas in the poem, the two following indicate the burlesque intent:

> Ye muses, pour the pitying tear
> For Pollio snatch'd away:
> O had he liv'd another year!
> - He had not dy'd to-day.
>
> How sad the groves and plains appear,
> And sympathetic sheep:
> Even pitying hills would drop a tear!
> - If hills could learn to weep.[38]

It is not surprising, then, that Goldsmith turns away from the pastoral to the longer poem to express his views on rural life.

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[37] Letter CVI.

[38] Ibid.

Goldsmith's Deserted Village (1770) is a descriptive-reflective poem which has pastoral elements. The poem, however, lacks the conventions which are commonly found in the eighteenth century pastoral poem. Goldsmith presents a more sentimental view of rural life than does Crabbe, and he glosses over many of its unpleasant aspects. Yet he fully believes that he is presenting a real situation.[39] His poem deals with, and shows his concern for, the depopulation of the small village in England. Although he may have drawn upon recollections of his childhood in the village of Lissoy in Ireland for his description of Auburn, it is generally felt that Auburn is meant to represent such towns as were being depopulated throughout England at this time. It is interesting to note the similarity between the situation presented in this poem and that presented in Virgil's Eclogue I. The situation described in Eclogue I is the dispossession by Octavian of the lands belonging to the farmers in Northern Italy for his discharged veterans following his victory at Philippi in 42 B.C. Instead of calling them farmers, of course, Virgil makes them shepherds. The poem, however, deals with a real situation. Goldsmith is dealing with a somewhat similar situation, but he is doing it outside the pastoral genre and there is no

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[39] In his letter of Dedication to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith writes: "... I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I alledge, and that all my views and enquiries have led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display". Oliver Goldsmith, Collected Works, ed. A. Friedman (1966), Vol. IV, p. 285.

displacement in the sense of making the farmers shepherds.[40] The pastoral theme is reiterated frequently in the poem, especially in the following lines:

> O blest retirement, friend of life's decline,
> Retreats from care that never must be mine,
> How happy he who crowns in shades like these,
> A youth of labour with an age of ease;
> Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
> And since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly.
> (ll. 97-102)

Goldsmith's descriptive passages give an air of first-hand observation. Note the following lines, for example:

> Sweet was the sound when oft at evening's close,
> Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
> There as I past with careless steps and slow,
> The mingling notes came softened from below;
> The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
> The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
> The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
> The playful children just let loose from school;...
> But now the sounds of population fail,
> No chearful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
> No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
> For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
> (ll. 113 ff.)

Goldsmith's descriptions show less of the harsh realities of rural life than do Crabbe's. He presents, however, what he

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[40] In an essay entitled "The Revolution in Low Life", Collected Works, Vol. III, p. 195 ff., Goldsmith discusses the depopulation of villages. Describing one such village whose inhabitants had to depart he writes: "Such was their misery, and I could wish that this were the only instance of such migrations of late. But I am informed that nothing is at present more common than such revolutions. In almost every part of the kingdom the laborious husbandman has been reduced, and the lands are now either occupied by some general undertaker, or turned into enclosures destined for the purposes of amusement or luxury." (p. 197).

considers to be a realistic view of life in the English village at this time, and, what is more important, he does so without the machinery and artificality that is so much a part of conventional pastoral.

James Beattie (1735-1803) published Book I of his poem The Minstrel,[41] written in the Spenserian stanza, in 1771. Book II was published in 1774. The sub-title of the poem is "The Progress of Genius" and the poem itself sketches the education of the minstrel Edwin, who represents Beattie himself. The poem is not a pastoral, but it does have a pastoral setting and the minstrel Edwin is depicted as a shepherd-swain:

> There lived in Gothic days, as legends tell,
> A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
> Whose sires, perchance, in Fairyland might dwell,
> Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;
> But he, I ween, was of the north countrie; ...
> The shepherd-swain of whom I mention made,
> On Scotia's mountain fed his little flock;
> The sickle, scythe, or plough, he never swayed;
> An honest heart was almost all his stock:
> His drink the living water from the rock;
> The milky dams supplied his board, and lent
> Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
> And he, tho' oft with dust and sweat besprent,
> Did guide and guard their wanderings, wheresoe'er they went.
> (Book I, ll. 91 ff.)

He is not a conventional shepherd of the golden age. He is "oft with dust and sweat besprent" and at his birth "No prodigy appeared in earth or air" (l. 130). In Book II, when young

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[41] James Beattie, Poetical Works, ed. Alexander Dyce (1866), p. 7.

Edwin approaches the "hoary sage" to find out whether what he had heard about corruption at court is true, he revels in the thought of the golden age - "The age of love, and innocence and joy" (l. 329) - which Fancy paints to wean "the weary soul from guilt and woe:" (l. 349). He learns from the sage, however, that

> Fancy enervates, while it soothes, the heart,
> And, while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight.
> (Book II, ll. 362-363)

Edwin is further informed that history and philosophy are essential to curb "Imagination's lawless rage" (l. 400). The poem indicates the tendency at this time to deal with pastoral themes outside the genre. Its passages of gothic imagery with its "corses pale" and "ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng" (ll. 280-28) seem to indicate the new interest in this type of literature, and certain descriptive passages dealing with Beattie's boyhood among the hills and vales seem to foreshadow Wordsworth's Prelude.

George Crabbe (1754-1832) is yet another example of a poet who rejects pastoral and deals with rural life in a realistic way in The Village[42] (1783). As the inscription at the beginning of this chapter indicates, he criticizes severely those writers who in "tender strain" reveal the "amorous pains" of shepherds - "The only pains, alas! they never feel". He

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[42] George Crabbe, Poetical Works [n.d.], p. 17.

shares Dr. Johnson's view of pastoral.[43] The sordid realism of Crabbe's poem is in striking contrast to the sentimentalized picture of the village as presented by Goldsmith. Since he is fully aware of the hardships of the "poor laborious natives", he asks himself the question:

> Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
> In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?
> (Book I, ll. 47-48)

To this he answers, "No":

> I paint the Cot,
> As Truth will paint it, and as Bards will not:
> Nor you, ye Poor, of letter'd scorn complain,
> To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
> O'ercome by labour, and bow'd down by time,
> Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
> (Book I, ll 53-58)

Crabbe's is no pastoral of the golden age. In "wand'ring long, amid these frowning fields", he "sought the simple life that Nature yields", but found instead that

> Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her place,
> And a bold, artful, surly, savage race.
> (Book I, ll. 111-112)

At the end of Book II, Crabbe laments the death of Lord Robert Manners who was killed in battle in April 1782. This is not

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[43] Boswell, op. cit., p. 1202, says of Crabbe's The Village that Johnson "had taken the trouble not only to suggest slight corrections and variations, but to furnish some lines, when he thought he could give the writer's meaning better than in the words of the manuscript". As an instance of this, Boswell quotes the six lines beginning "On Mincio's banks ..." (ll. 15-20) as being Dr. Johnson's with the exception of line 19. Johnson's comment on this poem as reported by Boswell has already been mentioned in Chapter Three.

the conventional pastoral lament, however. Manners is not a feigned shepherd; there is no pathetic fallacy, no ascending of his soul to heaven. Crabbe realizes that no "chiming of a song" can heal the grief-stricken bosom:

> 'Tis not, I know, the chiming of a song,
> Nor all the powers that to the Muse belong,
> Words aptly cull'd, and meaning well express'd,
> Can calm the sorrows of a wounded breast;
> But Virtue, soother of the fiercest pains,
> Shall heal the bosom, Rutland, where she reigns.
> (Book II, ll. 257-262)

Crabbe, then, set out to shatter the pastoral dream world. His picture of the wretched conditions of village life does much to shatter the illusion of pastoral and to discredit the genre.

William Cowper (1731-1800) published his long poem The Task,[44] in six books, in 1785. He has entitled the books "The Sofa", "The Time-piece", "The Garden", "The Winter Evening", "The Winter Morning Walk", and "The Winter Walk at Noon". These titles, however, give little indication of the theme of the poem. The poem was written at the suggestion of Lady Austen that he attempt a poem in blank verse. Upon Cowper's protest that he had no subject, Lady Austen suggested that which became the subject of Book I - The Sofa. However, as Cowper indicates at the beginning of Book III, in "designing other themes", he has "rambled wide" (l. 14). He frequently deals with the pastoral theme of the corrupt city versus "the mild and genial

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[44] William Cowper, Poetical Works, ed. John Bruce (1865), Vol. II, p. 3.

soil of cultivated life" in the country:

> But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
> And genial soil of cultivated life
> Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
> Yet not in cities oft: in proud, and gay,
> And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
> As to a common and most noisome sewer,
> The dregs and feculence of every land.
> ("The Sofa", ll. 678-684)

Allied to the pastoral theme of a simple life close to nature as opposed to the sophisticated life of the city is the theme of nature versus art. In the following passage Cowper not only stresses his preference of nature over art, but also foreshadows the treatment of nature that we find later in Wordsworth. Art's

> imitative strokes can do no more
> Than please the eye - Sweet Nature every sense.
> The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
> The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
> And music of her woods - no works of man
> May rival these; these all bespeak a power
> Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
> ("The Sofa", ll. 426-432)

The "air salubrious", the "cheering fragrance", and the "music of her woods" which "bespeak a power peculiar" in nature are not yet the "presence that disturbs ... with the joy/of elevated thought",[45] but these descriptive phrases do indicate a new interest in sights and sounds of nature both for their own sake and for their ability to "Exhilarate the spirit" (l. 182) and to "lull the spirit while they fill the mind" (l. 187).

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[45] William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey", ll. 94-95.

For the most part Cowper gives exact descriptions in his poem,[46] and the following passage gives a realistic description of a pastoral scene in rural England:

> The Grove receives us next;
> Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
> We may discern the thresher at his task.
> Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
> That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
> Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
> The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
> Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
> Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
> And sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread
> Before he eats it. - 'Tis the primal curse,
> But softened into mercy; made the pledge
> Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.
> ("The Sofa" ll. 354-366)

The thresher, unlike the traditional shepherd, has to sweat over his bread before he eats it. Cowper, later in the poem, rejects the notion of the golden age:

> Would I had fallen upon those happier days
> The poets celebrate; those golden times
> And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,
> And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose ....
> Vain wish! those days were never; airy dreams
> Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand,
> Imparting substance to an empty shade,
> Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
> ("The Winter Evening", ll. 513 ff.)

Cowper, then, like Goldsmith, Beattie, and Crabbe, rejects the

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[46] In a letter to William Unwin dated October 10, 1784, Cowper writes: "My descriptions are all from nature: not one of them second-handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience: not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural". John Bruce, in his edition of The Poetical Works of William Cowper (1865), Vol. II, p. 13, attests, in a footnote, to the accuracy of a descriptive passage in "The Sofa", ll. 154 ff.

golden age concept and the conventions which have been attached to the pastoral tradition in poetry. Unlike Goldsmith and Crabbe, who continue to use the heroic couplet in the poems cited, Cowper uses blank verse. Cowper's descriptions avoid the poetic diction generally used for objective detail and give the impression of first-hand observation depicted in simple, direct language. His treatment of nature in this poem indicates the changing attitude towards nature which has been discussed in the introductory section of this chapter. In his natural descriptions he deals less frequently than Thomson with the harsher aspects of nature, towering mountains and storms, for example, and his preference is rather for tame nature and objects familiar to everyday life. His emphasis also on the soothing effect which nature has on the mind and spirit of man is a further development in the attitude towards nature in poetry and looks forward to its treatment by Wordsworth.

The poems which have been cited above, then, illustrate the dissatisfaction among more serious writers with the conventional pastoral and an unwillingness to use it in serious poetry. The empirical strain, in poetry which deals with matters that are normally dealt with in pastoral, opens the way for the unconventional realistic pastoral poem with an English setting such as is found in Wordsworth's "Michael".

4.

With the end of the century comes the publication of Wordsworth's "Michael"[47] (1800). This poem is being discussed here, not only because it comes at the end of the period under discussion, but also because it marks a distinct break away from conventional pastoral. Yet it is truly a pastoral poem. Its theme is the pastoral theme of the corrupt city life as opposed to the innocent, virtuous life of the shepherd close to nature. In this poem Wordsworth dispenses with all the pastoral machinery and presents a narrative about a Cumberland shepherd, Michael, whose son, Luke, has to leave his native "Green-head Ghyll" to seek his fortune in London in order to save his father's fields from passing "into a stranger's hand" (l. 231). As sometimes happens with young men who pursue fortune in the big city, Luke began

> To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
> He in the dissolute city gave himself
> To evil courses: ignominy and shame
> Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
> To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
> (ll. 443-447)

At the same time the sheep-fold which Luke had begun at old Michael's request is still unfinished and remains so at Michael's death. Wordsworth presents us not with the traditional shepherd of the golden age but with the type of shepherd with whom he was familiar. Michael may be slightly idealized through Wordsworth's

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[47] William Wordsworth, Poetical Works, ed. T. Hutchinson, rev. E. De Selincourt (1960), p. 104.

eyes, yet he is part of Wordsworth's experience. The importance of feeling is evident in this poem. The sentiments expressed go beneath the surface of everyday living and touch the heart of man:

> There is a comfort in the strength of love;
> 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
> Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
> (ll. 448-450)

Such sentiments rarely find expression in the conventional pastoral. The world presented there is too remote from everyday experience for the reader to be able to establish identity with the poem. In "Michael" it is possible for the reader to make this identification.

Wordsworth, then, restores to pastoral a dignity which the genre, for a period at least, had lost. He makes it once again an acceptable vehicle for poetic expression. His use of blank verse shows the complete release of the pastoral from the domination of the heroic couplet, and his rejection of conventional machinery helps to eliminate much that was held contemptible in pastoral. The time for a revival of traditional pastoral, however, had past. It had suffered too much at the hands of the critics and satirists to be accepted seriously in the future. In addition to this, the Romantic dislike for poetic kinds was detrimental to its future acceptance. Poems continue to be written on pastoral themes, but they are, perhaps, better described as idyllic or lyric rather than pastoral in the sense that it has been defined in this study. A few poets

write formal pastorals in the nineteenth century, but the production is scanty. Poets in the twentieth century write poems in which the pastoral theme is present but they generally lack the pastoral conventions as well as the shepherds.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The woods of Arcady are dead,
And over is their antique joy;
Of old the world on dreaming fed;
Grey truth is now her painted toy ...[1]

English poets have never been completely at ease with the traditional pastoral. They modified the classical pastoral which they inherited through Italy and France to suit their own purposes. Theocritus had given realistic sketches of life, especially rural life, in the Sicily of his day. He has been awarded the title of the father of pastoral poetry because of the many imitations of his Idylls from Bion and Moschus onwards. As the centuries passed the conventions of pastoral gradually took precedence over the depiction of rural conditions - imitation replaced observation. Fortunately for English pastoral poetry, the native tradition with its empirical strain was well established by the time Barclay and Googe introduced the foreign pastoral tradition into English. The influence of this empirical strain is evident in such poets as Spenser, Breton, Browne, and Drayton. Shakespeare, aware of the complexity of human experience, could not accept the artificiality of the pastoral world and the conventions of pastoral poetry, so he ridiculed them in As You Like It. In "Lycidas", reality shatters the pastoral dream world. Other pastoral writers - Drayton, Herrick,

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[1] W.B. Yeats, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" in Crossways (1889).

and Marvell, for example - show a reluctance to succumb to the conventions of the foreign pastoral tradition, and in some of their pastorals they inject an element of realism that is common in the English pastoral at this time. Pastoral is a dynamic genre during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and all of the major poets write pastorals of one form or another.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century there is a gradual trend away from the empirical element in pastoral as the influence of the French critics makes itself felt in England. Pope, in particular, comes under the influence of the "rules" theory of Rapin. Since Pope is the major poet of the first half of the eighteenth century, his influence on writers at this time is extensive and powerful. For the first time in the history of English pastoral an attempt is made to restrict the genre by forcing it to conform to a set of rules. The situations depicted in the neoclassic pastorals of Pope are remote from reality. They depict, instead, the life of the shepherd in the mythical golden age. Consequently pastoral poetry becomes highly artificial and imitative, since the ancients (Virgil in particular) are held up as the only worthy models for imitation.

Naturally there were those whose reason and common sense rebelled against being subjected to such authority. These writers felt that to be effective pastoral must have an indigenous setting rather than a setting in distant Arcadia. They conceded, however, that sordid reality might be glossed over and slightly idealized

in pastoral poetry to suit the delicate taste of the gentleman reader. They rejected the shepherd of the golden age and Arcadia, but they did not, however, have any particular interest in nature for its own sake. The country was looked upon as a pleasant but temporary retreat from the bustle of city life. The chief spokesmen for the rationalist theory were Addison, Tickell, and Purney, and they followed the lead of Fontenelle. There were other writers, however, who held nothing but contempt for the artificiality of pastoral. Swift was such a writer and he lashed out at pastoral with his own burlesque versions. Gay, too, wrote burlesque pastorals and the tendency to use pastoral as a weapon against itself spread throughout the century. Dr. Johnson held nothing but contempt for the insipidity of traditional pastoral, and his critical writings on the genre opened the way for a broader treatment of pastoral themes. The Wartons, Langhorne, Tytler, Aikin, Blair, and certain reviewers of pastoral poetry, demanded a more realistic treatment of rustic conditions in pastoral. They demanded a depiction of rural life as it actually was, with benevolent sentiment and exact descriptions. They demanded an empirical approach to pastoral. The most extreme example of this realistic approach to rural life is Crabbe's The Village.

There is an abundance of critical writing on pastoral throughout the eighteenth century. During the latter half the main tendency in these critical writings is to throw off the "rules" and to broaden the scope of the genre. The result is that many writers within the genre make a conscious effort to

add variety of subject matter, character, scenery, and versification to pastoral poetry. This criticism of the narrowness of pastoral and, in addition, the effect wrought by the ridicule of the genre by those writers of burlesque or anti-pastorals, combine to bring about a rejection of pastoral by writers like Crabbe, Goldsmith, and Cowper. The new attitude toward nature in poetry, as exhibited for example in works like Thomson's Seasons, influenced writers also. As a result writers like Beattie, Crabbe, Goldsmith, and Cowper, turn toward the longer descriptive-reflective poems to express themes that had normally been dealt with in pastoral.

The English mind has always found itself ill at ease when restricted by "rules" which have little relevance to reality. It rebelled against the rules which for a short period stifled pastoral poetry and led to the eventual decline of the traditional pastoral as an acceptable mode of poetic expression. The culmination of this reaction comes in Wordsworth's "Michael". The cycle is now complete. Just as Theocritus gave, in his Idylls, sketches of rural life in the Sicily of his time, so Wordsworth in "Michael" gives a sketch of rural life in the Lake district of England in his day. Here is a poem on a pastoral theme in a pastoral setting without the machinery and conventions, but with the true idyllic spirit of the Idylls of Theocritus. Wordsworth's poem may have a more melancholy tone than many of the Idylls, but it is the spirit and not the poems of Theocritus that Wordsworth imitates.

There are a few writers who continue to write poems

using the pastoral form during the nineteenth century, but the production is small. John Clare, for example, writes his Shepherd's Calendar (1827), employing the calendar series used by Spenser. Yet, his treatment of subject matter is quite different from that found in traditional pastorals. He treats of village life in a realistic way not commonly found in traditional pastoral, and his observations of nature in this poem reveal the mind of a naturalist rather than that of a poet imitating Theocritus and Virgil. Shelley's "Adonais" (1821) follows the form of the traditional pastoral elegy and is indebted, to some extent, to Bion's "Lament for Adonis". Shelley, like Spenser and Milton, uses the pastoral to criticize severely what he considers injustices in society. He lashes out at the reviewers, "The herded wolves, bold only to pursue" (l. 244), who scattered "their insults and their slanders without heed"[2] upon Keats's "Endymion". The poem fuses much of Shelley's thought: his hatred of reviewers, his contemplation of death ("No more let Life divide what Death can join together" - l. 477), and his idealism ("The One remains, the many change and pass" - l. 460). Likewise, Arnold's "Thyrsis" (1866) follows the form of the pastoral elegy, and Thyrsis is the poet-shepherd figure. The poem's setting and realistic description of the countryside around Oxford, along with its expression of quiet sincerity, distinguish it from many of the conventional pastoral elegies which preceded it. Both of these elegies - "Adonais" in Shelley's

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[2] P.B. Shelley, Selected Poetry and Prose, ed. Carlos Baker (1951), p. 290. Preface to "Adonais".

contemplation of Death, and "Thyrsis" in Arnold's collegiate association - owe something to Milton's "Lycidas". In the twentieth century little poetry has been written in the conventional pastoral tradition. Poems treating of rural life or retirement generally dispense with the traditional shepherds and lack the conventions of pastoral. The Arcadian setting, also, has been replaced by a local rural setting familiar to the poet. Such poetry is perhaps better designated by the terms lyric or idyllic poetry rather than pastoral. The critical attitude towards pastoral as a result of the ridicule cast upon it during the eighteenth century has made a major revival of the genre highly improbable.

AMARYLLIS

Once, when I wandered in the woods alone,
An old man tottered up to me and said,
"Come, friend, and see the grave that I have made
For Amaryllis". There was in the tone
Of his complaint such quaver and such moan
That I took pity on him and obeyed,
And long stood looking where his hands had laid
An ancient woman, shrunk to skin and bone.

Far out beyond the forest I could hear
The calling of loud progress, and the bold
Incessant scream of commerce ringing clear;
But though the trumpets of the world were glad,
It made me lonely and it made me sad
To think that Amaryllis had grown old.

(Edwin Arlington Robinson from
The Children of the Night, 1890-1897)

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