

200 PASTORALISM AND THE FUNCTION OF  
THE PASTORAL  
IN LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

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## P R E F A C E

In this thesis I have made a study of certain aspects of pastoralism and the pastoral genre in late Elizabethan literature. I have done this because I felt that Elizabethan pastoral writing was, at its best, far more than just a literary exercise undertaken, as was much Continental pastoral writing, to furnish the vernacular with a genre approved by Classical precedent. The strength of Elizabethan pastoral derived from the combination of certain indigenous factors present during Elizabeth's reign, with the current interest in imitating the Classics and introducing a famous genre into the vernacular.

There had always been in English literature a strong response to the natural world and this response revealed itself in pastoral writing in which the traditional naturalistic details derived from Classical sources were infused with the grace and strength of direct observation. More importantly, Elizabethan England had a monarch who was not only ideally suited through her sex and celibacy to play the leading role in a pastoral world, but who also actively encouraged and enjoyed the eulogistic sentiments native to the Renaissance pastoral. In the English attempt to imitate a favourite Renaissance version of the pastoral - the use of a pastoral framework to comment on ecclesiastical or political affairs - there was, in Tudor Protestantism, with all its internal conflicts and its vital struggle against the political and spiritual forces of the Roman church, an ideal source of material for eclogues in the style of Mantuan. Such factors ensured that Elizabethan pastoral had a significance and relevance largely lacking in the more academic products of Continental pastoralists.

The initial chapter discusses terminology, and explores certain Renaissance theories of the pastoral which gave rise to the distinctive Renaissance version of the pastoral. Chapter Two attempts to give some explanation

of the appeal of pastoralism and the pastoral mode during the Renaissance. Inevitably the escapism inherent in pastoralism was as attractive a feature then as it has been before or since. Yet it was the interest in the pastoral as a genre ratified by its Classical origins, and the suitability of pastoralism as a means of expressing, concretely, certain popular Renaissance philosophical ideas, which formed the basis of the vogue. In its distinctive Renaissance version it became, too, a means of comment on political and ecclesiastical affairs, and conversely, a means of eulogising the status quo. I have devoted some space to these two aspects for, in Elizabethan England, the conditions which prevailed both in the religious and socio-political spheres made the pastoral a most suitable vehicle for talking about one's world. Chapter Three is devoted to the cult of Elizabeth in so far as it took a distinctively pastoral form, while Chapter Four concentrates on the opposing function of the pastoral - the pastoral as a mode of comment (usually critical). In Chapter Five, with reference to some of the current philosophical theories mentioned in Chapter Two, I have looked at some of the ways in which Shakespeare and Spenser used the pastoral, and pastoralism, as a vehicle for exploring these issues.

The pastoral literature written during the final two decades of Elizabeth's reign, despite its roots in Classical, Continental, and native literature, and its continuing influence into the seventeenth century, was essentially distinct. I have, therefore, tended to concentrate on the conditions and the literature of the final two decades of the sixteenth century, for it was during these years that the pastoral reached its apogee both as a serious medium of expression and as a formula popular with readers. Inevitably one looks backwards and forwards so that there is some account taken of works which do not fall strictly within the Elizabethan era. In the final chapter I have suggested some of the reasons for the decline in the use and significance of the pastoral in the early years of the seventeenth

century. Yet, despite the growing rejection of the Renaissance version of the pastoral, some pastoral was still written, but with rather changed ideas as to its function and concerns. The influence of pastoral modes of expression and attitudes is found in some of the new genres which developed in the seventeenth century. I have looked briefly at certain works of Ben Jonson to illustrate these trends. The chapter ends with a discussion of some of the pastoral and anti-pastoral elements in the works of John Donne, for it is in his work that one can most vividly see the attitudes and concerns which were ultimately to destroy the pastoral as a vehicle for serious literary expression.

As the subject of this thesis is pastoralism and the pastoral as it penetrated modes of thought and expression in Elizabethan England, I have deliberately omitted any discussion of the major pastoral poem of the seventeenth century - "Lycidas" - although written a mere thirty-four years after Elizabeth's death. For "Lycidas" (and, indeed, Shelley's "Adonais" or Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis") is the result of a conscious choice on the part of the poet to produce a particular type of poem, following recognised formulae, within an established tradition. As such it is, in a sense, a throw-back. Despite the fact that he also consciously drew on an established literary tradition, for the Elizabethan writer pastoralism was an *idée fixe* to an extent to which it was so no longer either for Milton or his readers. The social, psychological, philosophical, and literary conditions which underlay the Elizabethan preoccupation with pastoralism and the pastoral did not long survive the death of Elizabeth.

The Appendix examines a selection of poetic miscellanies from the second half of the sixteenth century and the first two decades of the seventeenth century in order to trace a graph of the rise, and decline, of interest in the pastoral during that period.



When using the term "Renaissance" I have remained fully aware of the perennial debate as to its usefulness and its legitimacy as an umbrella term to describe the multifarious intellectual views and attitudes which prevailed in Western Europe from, roughly, the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. I have, however, used the term as a shorthand device to refer to that period in so far as it revealed a demonstrable impact, on the intellectual life of Western Europe, of the humanistically inspired interest in the cultures of Greece and Rome, an increased preoccupation with educability and the spread of knowledge in the wake of the printing press, and an awakened interest in nationalism with all its concomitant values and concerns. It was in the sixteenth century that these elements began seriously to affect English political, social, and cultural life.

I am extremely grateful to Associate Professor Malvern van Wyk Smith who, as supervisor of this thesis, has generously given of his knowledge and time. It was he who first interested me in the pastoral aspects of Elizabethan literature and who encouraged me to explore them in greater depth. I should also like to thank Professor Butler and the members of staff of the English Department at Rhodes University who, throughout my undergraduate years and during subsequent post-graduate studies, have stimulated my interest in literature and enthusiastically shared their knowledge with me. To Ruth Harnett I owe special gratitude for breaking down my initial reserve towards Spenser and revealing to me the subtleties and delights of The Faerie Queene.

To my husband, I owe gratitude for encouragement, patience, understanding, and perceptive comment during the preparation and writing of this thesis.

I am also indebted to the staff of the Rhodes University Library who were ever helpful and solicitous in aiding my research.

To Mrs. Celeste Herbert my gratitude for her careful and painstaking decipherment of my longhand script when faced with typing the first draft, and for her willingness to type the final draft.

NOTE ON STYLE.

I have followed the stylistic conventions set down by the M L A Style Sheet (rev.ed.) and, where further information was needed, I have consulted Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1973).

I have kept to original spelling in titles and in quotations from primary sources. When quoting from a secondary source I have naturally retained the spelling used in the source.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### (i) Towards a Definition

Pastoralism, as defined by a dictionary, has to do with shepherds, and pastoral poems are poems portraying country life. But pastoral poetry is distinct from rural poetry and the distinction lies in the distance from reality. The aim is not necessarily to recreate an accurate picture of a shepherd's life. This artificiality has gradually been recognised as the distinguishing attribute of pastoralism and the dictionaries have taken cognizance of this particularization of meaning. In the 1918 edition of Webster's the third meaning of the noun, "pastoral", is given as:

A poem, drama, romance, etc., describing the life and manners of shepherds or, by extension, country and outdoor life of any kind; a poem in which the speakers assume the character of shepherds, etc., a bucolic; also, pastoral poetry, drama, etc., as a literary form or style.<sup>1</sup>

However, the 1961 edition differs in a significant manner in its second definition of the noun:

A literary work (as a poem or play) dealing with the life of shepherds or rural life generally in a usually artificial manner and frequently archaic style, typically drawing a conventional contrast between the innocence and serenity of the simple life and the misery and corruption of city and especially court life, and often using the characters as vehicles for the expression of the author's moral, social or literary views....<sup>2</sup>

E.K. Chambers sums it up in his introduction to English Pastorals, "pastoral is not the poetry of country life, but the poetry of the townsman's dream of country life".<sup>3</sup> It has, as its base, the perennial har-

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, eds. W.T. Harris, F. Sturges Allen (G + C Merriam & Co., 1918).

<sup>2</sup>Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 2 vols. (Springfield, Mass.: G + C Merriam & Co., 1961), Vol.II.

<sup>3</sup>E.K. Chambers, Introduction to English Pastorals (London: Blackie & Son Ltd., 1895), p.XXXIX.



king back to nature among those who live divorced from nature. Inevitably, nature is seen through rose-tinted spectacles - as Bruno Snell puts it "a genuine summons back to nature would silence the whole of pastoral poetry." <sup>1</sup>

Closely associated with the pastoral impulse is the myth of the Golden Age. <sup>2</sup> This is the belief that at some time or, even now, at some place, man has lived simply and in accord with nature and has benefitted from this harmonious relationship. This belief is obviously a form of primitivism, whether cultural or chronological. Chronological primitivism sees the best conditions of human life occurring either in the past, occasionally at the present, <sup>3</sup> or in the future. Aspects of this form part of Christian belief - the garden of Eden and the Second Coming. Cultural primitivism is ever-present, witness the "hippy" philosophies of the sixties and the present-day appeal of the "ethnic" among those living in complex, highly evolved societies. <sup>4</sup>

Primitivism may be either "soft" or "hard". "Soft" primitivism sees the ideal life as being easy, carefree, with nature providing spontaneously all that man needs. "Hard" primitivism sees man's needs as few; his life simple, ascetic but self-sufficient, with wealth, luxury and am-

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<sup>1</sup>Bruno Snell, The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought, trans. T.G. Rosenmeyer (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p.287.

<sup>2</sup>One has to distinguish the pastoral "impulse" from the pastoral "genre". The "impulse" is the ever-recurring tendency for sophisticated, urban man to look to a simpler, often rural, life as an ideal alternative to his complex one. During the Renaissance the impulse was, for various reasons, strongly present (see below, Ch.II) and was itself scrutinized for its validity. The "genre" indicates the use of pastoral subject matter and themes as a form or mode of literary composition. In this thesis I shall use the term "pastoralism" to denote the impetus and "the pastoral" to denote the particular poetic kind.

<sup>3</sup>The possibilities for eulogy exist here.

<sup>4</sup>I am indebted for the terms "cultural" and "chronological" primitivism to A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas, eds. G. Boas et al., Vol.I (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935).

bition being expendable and, even, undesirable. As such it is essentially a Stoic approach. In Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender there are strong elements of each of these aspects. The debates in "Februarie", "Maye", "Julye", and "October" involve the dichotomies between the hard and soft attitudes. Despite the ultimate impression that Spenser favours the hard approach, the debates are never solely black and white as each disputant is allowed reasonably serious arguments.

Primitivism is an attractive force whenever man considers his present social life to be unfulfilling and even corrupt. As William Empson has stated, "this grand notion of the inadequacy of life... needs to be counted as a possible territory of pastoral."<sup>1</sup> Nature is seen as a refuge and pastoralism becomes a form of escape as opposed to its alternative aspect of being a means of looking at, and judging the actual complex society of the writer.<sup>2</sup>

But the pastoral has yet another aspect. It can be a microcosm of the complex world. The pastoral thus presents, in Kathleen Williams' words, "a delicately distanced version of reality where everything is present - love, work, thought, art, death - but in a simpler and more readily comprehensible form."<sup>3</sup> In pastoral the complex is made simple and the universals can be extracted. The complex world can be assessed by "reducing its complexity and confusion to a conventional simplicity."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p.115.

<sup>2</sup>Escapism and attack, the two major aspects of the pastoral, derive from these two attitudes.

<sup>3</sup>Kathleen Williams, Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p.214.

<sup>4</sup>W. Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser: A Study (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), p.35.

One further aspect of the pastoral is suggested by Empson when he talks of the double attitude of complex man to simple man - in one way he is better, in another he is not so good.<sup>1</sup> The Renaissance thinkers were greatly attracted to this paradox and aspects of it form the basis of all the nature/nurture, nature/art, country/court, debates.<sup>2</sup>

Pastoral seen as a microcosm of the poet's actual world readily lends itself to allegory. In this way, a humble genre - for this is how the Renaissance critics viewed it - can figure the highest and most serious matters, and it was this aspect of the pastoral which attracted the Renaissance poet. In a hierarchical society, the shepherd as ruler and, in the Renaissance, usually owner of his flock was an attractive and useful analogy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Empson, p.15.

<sup>2</sup>I shall be discussing some of these dichotomies in Ch. V below.

<sup>3</sup>An early example of the shepherd-ruler analogy appears in a British Museum manuscript, Bibl. Cotton. Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse XV and XVI. cent. p.145.

#### A Ballet of a Shephard

"I am a poor shephard yet born of high blood.  
This lyfe lyke me so well, I think none so good  
I raigne and I rule my flock at my wyll

.....

A king cannot governe hys men as he lyke  
My shepe wyll obeye, when I blowe in my pipe.

.....

I am always redy to dye for my sheep  
from wolvs and from lyons, I wyll them safe keep."

(ii) Renaissance Theories of Pastoral

Before discussing the actual use of the pastoral in late sixteenth century literature, one should take a brief look at Elizabethan critical theories of the pastoral. *Why?*

It is a commonplace to say that the Elizabethans, and their Continental contemporaries, held a decidedly didactic view of literature. In critical treatise after treatise this didactic purpose is emphasised. It derives mainly from the Humanist emphasis on literature as a moral force. Because of the belief that literature could be a powerful force for good, it was felt that its content ought to promote moral action and favour the growth of wisdom.

A study of literature was believed to be indispensable for the conduct of life. In contrast to Dante's concern with individual salvation in another life, there was now a concern with the citizen's right action in this life. H.A. Mason goes so far as to state "the Humanists' impasse was that they could find no justification for literature other than its moral instructiveness".<sup>1</sup> This moral purpose was strengthened in England and Northern Europe by the strong Protestant tendency, derived from the belief that salvation was the responsibility of the individual, to saturate daily actions and events with moral significance.

Horace, whose Ars Poetica was a beloved treatise in the sixteenth century, had emphasised this didactic role:

Poet's aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life.

. . . . .

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<sup>1</sup>H.A. Mason, Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p.66.

He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader.<sup>1</sup>

The Renaissance theorists tended to ignore the "or to amuse" in favour of the didactic role. Although George Puttenham concedes the pleasure motive, "Albeit in merry matters (not dishonest) being used for mans solace and recreation it may be well allowed",<sup>2</sup> William Webbe, discussing the ancient Greek poets, mentions some few who, unlike the majority who paid no heed to the "profytte or comoditye that the Readers shoulde reape by their works" were "not so much disposed to vayne delectation"<sup>3</sup> (my italics).

The frequent references to didacticism in Sir Philip Sidney's influential An Apology for Poetry (ca.1583) underline the importance of this view. The Apology is an extremely important document because it is so representative. Sidney defines poetry as "an arte of imitation... with this end, to teach and delight".<sup>4</sup> Again, he describes the poet "beautifying it [poetry] both for further teaching, and more delighting".<sup>5</sup> He refers to this didactic purpose at least eight more times in the treatise<sup>6</sup> concluding that "sith the ever-praise-worthy Poesie is full of vertue-breed-ing delightfulnes" poets should receive the full appreciation they deserve.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Horace, Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, eds. Capps, Page, Rouse (Heinemann, 1926), ll.333-4, 343-4.

<sup>2</sup>George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie (1589) in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. G. Gregory Smith, 2 vols. (1904;rpt.Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967), II, 24. All subsequent references in this thesis to particular Elizabethan critical treatises will be taken from Smith unless otherwise stated.

<sup>3</sup>William Webbe, A Discourse of English Poetrie (1586), Elizabethan Critical Essays, I, 236.

<sup>4</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays, I, 158.

<sup>5</sup>ibid., p.169.

<sup>6</sup>ibid., pp.172, 175, 179, 184, 185, 197, 200.

<sup>7</sup>ibid., p.205.



Despite the fact that Sidney was writing an apology which would explain the insistence on the moral usefulness of poetry, it is certain that Sidney genuinely held this didactic view. However, he wrote much poetry in which it would be difficult to discern a didactic purpose - so what exactly did he mean by "teaching"? It is obvious from Sidney's undoubted appreciation of poetry as an aesthetic pleasure, his interest in the poetry and poetic programs of Italy and France, his concern to improve the standards of English poetry, and the seriousness with which he approached poetry, that poetry as the mere sugaring of a moral pill would be an unworthy description of his assessment of its essence. Allegorical poetry may very easily fulfill a didactic purpose, but nowhere is it claimed that poetry is necessarily allegorical or that non-allegorical poetry is worthless. From the Apology one gains a clear impression that Sidney is concerned with a defence of the imaginative world ("the world is brasen, the Poets only deliver a golden") and that he acknowledges the power of poetry as an imaginative and emotional force (see his reference to Chevy Chase). It is poetry as an expression of the imagination, as a creative act, that puts it on an equal footing with philosophy although, in its combination of content and form, it far surpasses philosophy as a pleasurable experience. The Humanists had emphasised the educative and refining influence of literary study and Sidney, too, seems to reveal an awareness that true poetry has a civilizing, cultivating and, hence, ameliorating effect on man which is of greater value than the more limited and limiting role as a mere vehicle for moral exempla. As we are certain that Sidney meant what he said about "teaching" it is necessary to avoid limiting the term to utilitarian didacticism. However much Horace's "utile dictum" was asserted, it is obvious from the poetry produced that the practising poets, and Sidney was one of them, had a, perhaps, intuitive grasp of the essential nature of the poetic. Although Castelvetro, in 1570, was almost alone in advocating delight as the end of poetry, there is in Sidney, too, hints of his awareness that this very delight is in some

way the essence of the poetic experience.<sup>1</sup>

Despite such hints at a less purely utilitarian response to literature, the overt emphasis on allegory and didacticism ensured that the pastoral genre, although recognised as a minor one, was consciously used for didactic purposes. Although at the height of the pastoral vogue numerous pastoral lyrics appeared in which the purpose was obviously one of mere delight, Renaissance opinion was such as to see the pastoral as a vehicle for more weighty matters than mere "vayne delectation".

Although Theocritus' idylls had contained a large amount of idealization and sophistication - he had even included his friends in shepherd guise - it was Virgil who first made use of allegory in his Eclogae, a use which was to influence profoundly the Renaissance conception of the pastoral. It is probable that Virgil consciously considered pastoral as a vehicle for matters other than mere rural description. His Eclogae served both as a world of escape from the realities of the Augustan Empire and a point of departure for comment on that Empire. The themes of pastoral were significantly extended.

Boccaccio explicitly states that he and his master, Petrarch, had chosen Virgil as a model rather than Theocritus because Virgil "abscondit" some meaning "sub cortice nonnullos... sensus" whereas Theocritus signifies nothing in his pastorals "praeter quod cortex verborum demonstrat".<sup>2</sup> The popularity of the Eclogues of Mantuan set the seal on the critical approval of the allegorical eclogue. To Virgil's personal and political

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<sup>1</sup>Castelvetro, in his edition of Aristotle's Poetics.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in J.E. Conington, Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England, 1684-1798 (University of Florida Press, 1952), p.15.

Conington is indebted for this reference to Walter W. Greg, Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama (London: A.H. Bullen, 1906) where Boccaccio's letter containing the above quotation appears in a footnote on p.18.

allegory, he added religious allegory in order to attack religious and ecclesiastical abuses, a technically easy step given the traditional interchangeability of pastoral and religious terms.<sup>1</sup>

Congleton points out that during the Renaissance there was, with regard to the pastoral, "a solidarity of purpose unequalled in any other period".<sup>2</sup> The primary purpose was to deal allegorically with personal, political, and religious ideas. Pastoral was a means of giving vent to one's thoughts and feelings about one's world. Many Elizabethan writers emphasise the ulterior motives behind the pastoral. Sidney in his Apology discusses the "Pastorall Poem":

Is it then the Pastorall Poem which is misliked? (for perchance, where the hedge is lowest they will soonest leape over). Is the poor pype disdained, which sometime out of Melibeus mouth can shewe the miserie of people under hard Lords or ravening Souldiours? and again, by Titirus, what blessednes is derived to them that lye lowest from the goodnesse of them that sit highest? sometimes, under the prettie tales of Wolves and Sheepe, can include the whole considerations of wrong dooing and patience; sometimes shew that contention for trifles can get but a trifling victorie".<sup>3</sup>

E.K. in The Epistle Dedicatory to the Shepheards Calender gives his opinion that the "New Poet" chose "to unfold great matter of argument covertly".<sup>4</sup> Nash in The Anatomie of Absurditie reveals the general ten-

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<sup>1</sup>An example of the complete interchangeability of religious and pastoral terms appears in a work by Richard Bernard, printed in 1607, and entitled The Faithful Shepheard: or The Shepheardes Faithfulnesse - "Wherein is for the matter largely, but for the maner, in few words set forth the excellencie and necessitie of the Ministerie; A Ministers properties and dutie....".

This is a wholly religious work but one could be misled by the title into thinking it a secular eclogue or sonnet sequence. This work appears in the Bodleian Library MS.G. Pamp.1327 (3).

Likewise, the Christian paradox of the humble being exalted proved an extremely potent force in religious eclogues.

<sup>2</sup>Congleton, p.177.

<sup>3</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays, I, 175-6.

<sup>4</sup>ibid., p.131.

dency to seek meanings in all works and immediately gives Virgil as an example of allegorical content:

Is there not under Fables, even as under the shaddowe of greene and florishing leaves, most pleasant fruite hidden in secrete, and a further meaning closely comprised? Did not Virgill under the covert of a Fable expresse that divine misterie which is the subiect of his sixt Eglogue. [sic] <sup>1</sup>

The two most extensive and categorical pronouncements on the pastoral during the Elizabethan period are worth quoting as a final indication of this attitude. William Webbe's lengthy treatise, A Discourse of English Poetrie (1586) contains the first extended passage of formal criticism of the pastoral in England. After mentioning Theocritus, Virgil, Titus Calphurnius and Baptista Mantuan as the chief exponents of the genre he continues:

Although the matter they take in hand seemeth commonlie in appearance rude and homely, as the usuall talk of simple clownes, yet doo they indeede utter in the same much plesaunt and profitable delight. For under these personnes, as it were in a cloake of simplicitie, they would eyther sette foorth the prayses of theyr freendes, without the note of flattery, or enveigh grievously against abuses, without any token of bytternesse. <sup>2</sup>

He then significantly spends some time on a comparison of Spenser's Sheepeheardes Calender and Virgil's Aeglogues.

Perhaps the most succinct discussion of pastoral appears in the slightly later treatise of George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie (1589). He entitles Ch. XVIII "Of the Shepheards or Pastorall Poesie called Eglogue, and to what purpose it was first invented and used", <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.331.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.262. The reference to the lack of "bytternesse" is a perceptive assessment of the nature of pastoral satire especially in the light of the tone of the new satire of the late nineties. See Ch.VI below.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., II, 39.



and after discussing the theory that the pastoral, being the songs of shepherds whose form of life "was the first example of honest fellowship",<sup>1</sup> is therefore the first form of poetry, he proffers his alternative theory and, by attributing the origin of the pastoral to a sophisticated society, he indirectly reveals the allegorical bias of the sixteenth century.

But for all this, I do deny that the Eglogue should be the first and most auncient forme of artificiall Poesie, being perswaded that the Poet devised the Eglogue long after the other drammatic poems, not of purpose to counterfaint or represent the rusticall manner of loves and communication, but under the vaile of homely persons and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to have bene disclosed in any other sort, which may be perceived by the Eglogues of Virgill, in which are treated by figure matters of greater importance then the loves of Titirus and Corydon. These Eglogues came after to containe and enforme morall discipline, for the amendment of mans behaviour, as be those of Mantuan and other moderne Poets.<sup>2</sup>

Gradually, as Congleton points out, towards the turn of the century, other possibilities for the genre are advanced.<sup>3</sup> Congleton quotes Hall's "Defiance to Envy" prefixed to Virgidemiarum (1597) and shows how it reveals "an emphasis on a lighter and more superficial aspect of the pastoral... the heyday of the allegorical eclogue is over".<sup>4</sup> By 1619 Drayton in his Preface to the second edition of his "Shepherd's Garland Fashioned in nine Eglogs" can hint at other possibilities for the pastoral.<sup>5</sup> He seems to limit his allegorical content to personal matters - ecclesiastical satire is omitted - and there is a conscious attempt to ensure that his pastorals contain verifiably English descriptions of nature and the country-

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<sup>1</sup>ibid.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.40.

<sup>3</sup>Congleton, p.45.

<sup>4</sup>ibid., p.46.

<sup>5</sup>"My Pastorals bold upon a new straine....."



side. This concentration on the rural-descriptive aspect increased with his subsequent revisions, and in his later works one is very close to the world of Marvell and Walton. As with their writings, the countryside is still often a metaphor but the description of that countryside is detailed and concrete and far removed from the conventional and perfunctory setting of the typical Renaissance pastoral.

By the eighteenth century the pendulum had swung completely towards the Rationalist view that pastoral poetry should primarily satisfy the innate yearnings of men who, though engaged in active life and its turmoils, desire ease and tranquillity which can best be portrayed in the depiction of a necessarily refined version of the shepherd's life.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Johnson, in a typically categorical statement, reveals his awareness of the Renaissance tendencies in the pastoral as he denounces them:

It is therefore improper to give the title of a pastoral to verses, in which the speakers, after the slight mention of their flocks, fall to complaints of errors in the church, and corruptions in the government, or to the lamentations of the death of some illustrious person....<sup>2</sup>

One must emphasise, however, that, despite the fact that the eclogue with its particular history as an allegorical form was, during the Renaissance, the pastoral poem par excellence, a tendency to think and write in pastoral terms was present in many other kinds of imaginative writing.

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<sup>1</sup>This gradual change in the function of pastoral during the final years of the sixteenth and the early years of the seventeenth century will form part of this thesis. Congleton's work presents a full account of the pastoral from a historical perspective. He treats fully the neo-classical, Rationalist, and Romantic attitudes in the following few centuries.

<sup>2</sup>The Rambler No. 37 in W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (eds.), The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, Vol.III: The Rambler (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), pp.204-05.

Pastoralism reveals itself in various ways and, in the finest pastoral works, however much the pastoral is used as a vehicle, there remains an awareness of the attractions and drawbacks of pastoralism in the face of a predominantly court-city culture.

(iii) Ideas Of Decorum In Relation To The Pastoral

It is perhaps useful now to give a brief summary of the Elizabethan ideas of the correct manner for writing in this particular form - what the Elizabethans referred to as "decorum". Decorum demands that the matter, language, form, and all the component elements of the poem are appropriate to the characters. Once again the primary source was Horace's Ars Poetica but, as with the didactic suggestion, Horace's remarks were treated in a much more prescriptive manner than he had probably intended.

George Puttenham in The Arte of English Poesie refers frequently to the necessity of maintaining decorum. He writes "every mans stile is for the most part according to the matter and subiect of the writer, or so ought to be and conformable thereunto." <sup>1</sup> He then proposes to "set downe which matters be hie and loftie, which be but meane, and which be low and base, to the intent the stiles may be fashioned to the matters, and keepe their decorum and good proportion in every respect." <sup>2</sup> He eventually devotes a whole chapter to this topic, a chapter which he entitles "What it is that generally makes our speach well pleasing and commendable, and of that which the Latines call Decorum." <sup>3</sup>

The subject matter of the pastoral was recognised as being low and base and therefore the correct style would be correspondingly low, humble

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<sup>1</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays II, 154.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.155.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., Ch. XXIII, pp.173-181.

and plain.<sup>1</sup> Given the rural nature of the characters of pastoral, even dialect might be condoned although significantly Sidney disliked this aspect of Spenser's Shepheardes Calender.<sup>2</sup> E.K., however, supports this innovation and praises Spenser's "pastoral rudeness, his morall wisenesse, his dewe observing of Decorum everye where."<sup>3</sup>

A slight difficulty arose over this aspect of rusticity. Should the characters be like the magnificent shepherds of a Golden Age and speak in the measured cadences of Virgil, or should their speech be like that of ordinary, uncouth, contemporary shepherds? Inevitably a compromise was found and, once again, George Puttenham proves the best spokesman, "for neither is all that may be written of Kings and Princes such as ought to keepe a high stile, nor all that may be written upon a shepheard to keepe the low, but according to the matter reported, if that be of high or base nature."<sup>4</sup> So one could always plead one's important, veiled motives if accused of too much sophistication in one's shepherd's speech.

Puttenham's "low and base" style has certain affinities with the plain style which Douglas L. Peterson identifies and contrasts with the courtly style.<sup>5</sup> Peterson means by "plain" a direct, "homespun"

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<sup>1</sup>Pastoral shared a base, unpolished style with the other "humble" genre, the satire, but, because of the etymological confusion of "satyre" and "satyr", formal Renaissance satire accomodated a crudity and coarseness wherein it differed from the plain, homely, but restrained, pastoral style. (See Ch.VI below). Most of the Renaissance theorists seem to be concentrating solely on the eclogue in their discussions of pastoral style. Presumably a pastoral lyric was meant to conform too but in practice the lyrics were often extremely ornate and baroque in style.

<sup>2</sup>"That same framing of his stile to an old rustick language I dare not alowe, sith neyther Theocritus in Greeke, Virgill in Latine, nor Sanazar in Italian did affect it". Eliz. Crit. Essays I, 196.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p.128.

<sup>4</sup>ibid., II, 157.

<sup>5</sup>The English Lyric from Wyatt to Donne (Princeton University Press, 1967).

idiom which avoids rhetorical tropes, foreign borrowings and other decorative devices in favour of an unaffected, restrained style and vocabulary to suit a serious, contemplative, morally didactic tone and the, generally, anti-courtly sentiments. The "courtly" style is, by contrast, specifically associated with courtly values and is highly rhetorical and decorative - at its best, truly eloquent; at its worst, regurgitating a set poetic diction in an emptily decorative manner.

As early as 1553, Thomas Wilson in The Arte of Rhetorique had distinguished the three styles in terms close to Peterson's. He says that they are:

.... the great or mighty kind, where we use great wordes, or vehement figures:  
The smal kinde, when we moderate our heate by meaner wordes....  
The lowe kinde, when we use no Metaphores, nor translated wordes, nor yet use any amplifications, but go plainely to worke, and speake altogether in commune wordes.<sup>1</sup>

The contrasting styles of Old Lalus and Rhombus in Sidney's The Lady of the May (1578), although deliberate parodies, give a useful indication of the contrast between the "mighty kind" and the "lowe kind" and would have been instantly recognisable to the audience as being representative of these two styles. Old Lalus begins:

A certain she creature, which we shepherds call a woman, of a minscall countenance, but, by my white lamb, not three quarters so beauteous as yourself, hath disannulled the brain-pan of two of our featioust young men....

This is Rhombus:

Now the thunder-thumping Jove transfund his dotes into your excellent formosity, which have with your resplendent beams thus segregated the enmity of these rural animals....<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Elizabeth J. Sweeting, Early Tudor Criticism: Linguistic and Literary (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940), p.119.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Mona Wilson, Sir Philip Sidney (London: Duckworth, 1931), p.121.



If one looks at a selection of pastoral writing it is clear that the pastoral was not, in practice, confined to Peterson's "plain" style. Indeed much pastoral poetry is decidedly ornate and courtly - particularly the lyrics. However, when the writer's concerns are essentially contemplative, satiric, or didactic, the style is plain in Peterson's sense. Many of the eclogues of The Shepheardes Calender would fall into this "plain" category. In contrast, the "Aprill" eclogue is undoubtedly "courtly" and yet E.K. could praise Spenser's "dewe observing of Decorum everye where." It seems as if the contemporary assessment of decorum in relation to the pastoral would encompass such an ornate lyric not only because of its complimentary purpose but also because there is a deliberate attempt to suit the diction to the rural setting as had been done in the plainer, moral eclogues. The words and phrases that are most often annotated in editions of this lyric ("Bellibone", "for-swanck and for-swat", "deffely", "Paunce", "Sops in wine", "Damzins") serve to anchor the rhetoric onto a rural base.

Realism, in the twentieth century sense, has not much place in Elizabethan literature. Certain conventions were accepted and adhered to so that, to complain that the shepherds in Elizabethan pastoral are obviously not speaking in a really "low and base" way as the actual contemporary shepherds might have spoken, is beside the point. Indeed in As You Like It Shakespeare presents us with three different shepherd voices - the conventional pastoral lovers, Silvius and Phoebe, speak a stylized verse; William and Audrey, the country bumpkins, speak an awkward dialect to amuse a socially superior audience, and the plain-living, wise, simple shepherd, Corin, speaks a suitably plain, chaste prose. None of the three types are portrayed realistically - they all derive from accepted conventions.

Presumably, when working within the pastoral genre, a Renaissance writer would be judged to have kept decorum if, in the subject matter, he



ensured that allegory was used to discuss any topic not necessarily low and base, and that the style was suitably plain and unrhetorical if discussing serious, contemplative subjects; or, if the style and form be ornate, befitting a courtly topic, a veneer of rusticity be present to suit the pastoral setting.

## CHAPTER TWO

The Renaissance pastoral in England, at its best, has a vitality and strength far removed from the insipidities inherent in this most artificial of genres. Much of this strength and vitality derives from a happy fusion of the deliberate attempt at imitating the Classical genres with the strong native pastoral tradition. In addition, there were certain other aspects inherent in this period which either increased an interest in the pastoral or which could be expressed remarkably well in the terms of the pastoral. In this chapter I shall be discussing the classical and native trends and also these extraneous aspects which increased the vogue of the pastoral and added substance to its traditionally rather limited content.

### (i) Humanism and "Imitatio"

To the initial question as to why there was such a preoccupation with the literatures and philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome during the Renaissance, the answer is mainly "Humanism". In the last years of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, the Florentine humanists studied the Classics in depth, both for their moral guidance and their practical importance. Such was the reverence for Classical Rome that there had arisen a deep conviction that a study of the literature and philosophy of antiquity would somehow enable one to emulate the grandeur and eminence of that period. There was a profound interest in returning to the origins - the sources of pure wisdom and beauty. The Ancients were considered to know about ethics and the good life and, with the sudden upsurge of interest in what exactly constituted the good life, the interest in Classical literature soared. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A "sudden upsurge" because, with the interest in man in a secular role which is one of the hallmarks of the Renaissance period, debates about what constituted "the good life" became increasingly popular and relevant. Medieval Scholasticism had no need to debate such an issue - "the good life" for the medieval Christian being clearly and unequivocally defined by the Church.

By the early sixteenth century the ideas and aims of the Christian humanists had taken hold in England and a generation of Tudor humanists arose to promulgate the humanist programme.<sup>1</sup> The names of Cheke, Ascham, Elyot, Mulcaster are closely associated with the grammar schools, many of whose pupils were destined to remain laymen who would utilize their education in the service of the state. Douglas Bush sums up the Tudor humanist programme in The Renaissance and English Humanism, "the broad aim of Tudor humanism was training in virtue and good letters; the practical aim was training for the active Christian life, especially public life".<sup>2</sup> Both moral and intellectual training was emphasised.<sup>3</sup> With the slowly growing awareness that their claim on office was no longer absolute, one finds the aristocracy increasingly interested in gaining an education with the conscious aim of utilizing this education in the service of the state.<sup>4</sup> Combined with this practical interest in education, the aristocrat was greatly influenced by the plethora of current works on conduct and manners relating to the idea of the courtier-gentleman who was meant to combine the virtues of the knight with those of the humanistic scholar. Long before Sir Thomas Hoby transla-

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<sup>1</sup>The reasons for this particular timing of the influence of the Italian Renaissance on England have been fully discussed in numerous works. See particularly Lewis Einstein, The Italian Renaissance in England (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1902); J.R. Hale, England and the Italian Renaissance (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954).

<sup>2</sup>University of Toronto Press, 1939. Reprinted London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.78.

<sup>3</sup>One must never underestimate the synthesis achieved between pagan Classical culture and Christianity. The Christian humanists deliberately aimed to use their knowledge of classical literature and philosophy in the service of Christianity.

<sup>4</sup>J.H. Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance," The Journal of Modern History, XXII (1950), 1-20. Hexter reveals that later in the sixteenth century there were even "plans in which the education of the aristocracy was to be subsidised out of the common purse as a matter of public responsibility". p.18.

ted Castiglione's Courtier in 1561, these ideas had filtered through in such works as Sir Thomas Elyot's Book of the Governour (1531).<sup>1</sup> Castiglione made various pronouncements which were to promote an interest in both the passive appreciation of poetry and the active attempt at versification. He suggested that a courtier attempt to write poetry so that his criticism of it be more informed and intelligent. A boost was given to the vernacular, too, in the face of the great popularity of neo-Latin imitations of the Classics when Castiglione wrote "let him much exercise himself in poets... and also in writing both rhyme and prose, and especially in this our vulgar tongue".<sup>2</sup>

The educational emphasis on the Classics, combined with the fashionable accomplishment of being a poet, or at least, a versifier, resulted in a determination to excel in all the classical genres and even, such was the nationalist fervour, outdo them in the vernacular. Petrarch had shown that he could write both Latin and Tuscan poems in most of the classical genres and his influence was paramount. W. Leonard Grant has documented, in great detail, the vast neo-Latin output in imitation of just one, rather minor, classical genre.<sup>3</sup> Significantly he states that, in Scotland,

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<sup>1</sup>The Courtier was extremely popular. It was reprinted in England in 1577, 1588, 1603. In a little treatise of 1579, Cyville and uncyville life, the court spokesman, Vallentine, says to Vincent, the country spokesman, "For to take upon me to frame a Courtier were presumption, I leave that to the Earle Baldazar, whose booke, translated by Sir Thomas Hobby, I thinke you have, or ought to have read." p.68. This treatise is republished in Inedited Tracts: Illustrating the Manners, Opinions and Occupations of Englishmen during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Roxburghe Library, 1868).

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Einstein, The Italian Renaissance, p.319.

Significantly the great humanist teacher, Roger Ascham, in his work, The Scholemaster (1570) writes of the Courtier "which booke, advisedlie read, and diligentlie folowed, but one yeare at home in England, would do a jong gentleman more good, I wisse, then three yeares travell abroad spent in Italie." (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1916), I, 61.

<sup>3</sup>Neo-Latin Literature and the Pastoral (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965).

Latin was "the accepted, normal, recognised vehicle of expression in poetry as it never was in England" (p.201). Study of the Classics and the growth of nationalistic pride in one's own country and one's own language led to attempts at imitation in the vernacular. In the early sixteenth century there was a definite movement to make English capable of literary excellence. Richard Mulcaster, who had taught Spenser at Merchant Taylor's School, was an ardent advocate of the vernacular, "I do not think that any language... is better able to utter all arguments, either with more pith or greater plainness than our English tongue is".<sup>1</sup> By 1603 Samuel Daniel could be more adamantly chauvinistic and maintain that "all our understandings are not to be built by the square of Greece and Italie. We are the children of nature as well as they".<sup>2</sup>

As the goal was to write eloquently whether in Latin or in the vernacular and as eloquence was believed to be the distinctive feature of the Classics, a close imitation of these models was necessary.<sup>3</sup> "Imitatio"

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<sup>1</sup>The First Part of the Elementary (ed.1582), p.258. Quoted in A.L. Rowse, The England of Elizabeth: The Structure of Society (London: MacMillan + Co., Ltd., 1962), p.508.

<sup>2</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays, II, 366-7.

The constant feeling that classical literature is a standard against which the vernacular output would necessarily be judged was a strong one. Ben Jonson writing in his Prologue to The Sad Shepherd (date unknown, but perhaps as late as 1635) reveals the tenacity of this view:

"and though hee now present you with such wooll,  
As from meere English Flocks his Muse can pull,  
He hopes when it is made up into Cloath;  
Not the most curious head here will be loath  
To weare a Hood of it; it being a Fleece,  
To match, or those of Sicily, or Greece"

<sup>3</sup>Bush, The Renaissance, p.60 mentions John of Salisbury's idea which could be traced back to St. Augustine and which was current among the Renaissance humanists, that through eloquence alone can man use that faculty that distinguishes him from the beasts - Reason. Bush also writes of Cicero's theory that eloquence is "articulate wisdom". This combination of eloquence and wisdom was a favourite ideal of the humanists and it explains the attraction of Cicero who had fused rhetoric and philosophy in his work.



was elevated into a conscious poetic doctrine. Significantly, the humanist teacher, Roger Ascham, devotes a lengthy concluding section of his Schole-master to "Imitatio" which he defines as "a facultie to expresse livelie and perfitelie that example which ye go about to folow".<sup>1</sup> He also suggests that someone write a book "de Imitatione... conteyning a certaine fewe fitte preceptes, unto the which should be gathered and applied plentie of examples, out of the choisest authors of both the tonges" (p.17). He gives an indication of imitation in practice when he suggests that "who soever hath bene diligent to read advisedlie over Terence, Seneca, Virgil, Horace, or els Aristophanes, Sophocles, Homer, and Pindar, and shall diligently marke the difference they use, in proprietic of wordes, in forme of sentence, in handlyng of their matter, he shall easelie perceive what is fitte and decorum in everie one, to the trew use of perfite Imitation" (p.23).

Gradually there arose a conscious effort not merely to copy the ancients as an exercise but rather "to learn from them the means of creating something new".<sup>2</sup> Writers were valued for achieving formal excellence in the great "kinds" of classical literature. This preoccupation with "kinds" rather than with subject matter per se led to a tendency for the Renaissance poet to approach composition with the attitude "I want to write an epic - now what should I write about?"

Virgil was unanimously judged the greatest classical poet and his

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<sup>1</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays, I, 5.

<sup>2</sup>John Buxton, Elizabethan Taste (London: Macmillan & Co.Ltd., 1963), p.12.



poetic output was scrutinized with care.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, he had begun with the pastoral and ended with the epic, a progression which fitted well the contemporary hierarchical assessment of these two genres. Barclay, who published Certayne Eglogs in ca., 1514, seems to imply that one purpose of the pastoral genre is to form an exercise for young poets. E.K., too, emphasises the appropriateness of this humble genre for a new poet:

Which moved him rather in Aeglogues then other wise to write, doubting perhaps his habilitie, which he little needed, or mynding to furnish our tongue with this kinde wherein it faulteth; or following the example of the best and most auncient Poetes, which devised this kind of wryting, being both so base for the matter and homely for the manner, at the first to trye theyr habilities, and, as young birdes that be newly crept out of the nest, by little first to prove theyr tender wyngs before they make a greater flight. So flew Theocritus, as you may perceive he was all ready full fledged. So flew Virgile, as not yet well feeling his winges. So flew Mantuane, as not being full somd. So Petrarque. So Boccace.... So finally flyeth this our new Poete as a birde whose principals be scarce growen out, but yet as [one] that in time, shall be hable to keepe wing with the best.<sup>2</sup>

Countless versifiers, many of them destined never to progress further, produced pastorals as befitting the novice. Spenser's publication of The Shepheardes Calender would, to a Renaissance readership, immediately invite comparison with Virgil. As C.S. Baldwin remarks "Spenser turned to it as to the established European form in which to prove oneself classical and offer one's poetic encomium. It was the obvious medium by which

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<sup>1</sup>There were various reasons for this assessment of Virgil but one should remember that he was suited, temperamentally, to the Renaissance poet. Although Homer was given lip service, it was Virgil's epic which was consciously imitated. Both Virgil and the Renaissance poet wrote with a patriotic motive for a sophisticated audience. There were other parallels between life under Augustus and life under the autocracies of the monarchies or city-states of the Renaissance. One notes William Webbe's assessment "the most famous, renowned, and excellent that ever writte among the Latine Poets, P. Virgill, who performed the very same in that tongue which Homer had doone in Greeke, or rather better, if better might." Eliz. Crit. Essays, I, 237. On the other hand, George Chapman in his prefatory notes to his 1598 translation of Homer's Iliad had to pioneer the reassessment of Homer in the face of the adulation of Virgil. Ibid., II, 298-9.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., I, 131-2.

to win rank as a poet."<sup>1</sup>

So it was that the humanist emphasis on the classical corpus, the felt need to imitate, and even overreach, the classics, and the close study of how and what the ancient authors had written, ensured that the pastoral gained an important place in the programme of any aspirant poet.

## (ii) The Philosophical Climate

In this section I do not propose to give a complete summary of Renaissance philosophical theories but merely to present some of the aspects of the current philosophical ideas which seem to have particular relevance for pastoralism. The favourite topics of the philosophical debates - nature/nurture, the active/contemplative life, nature/art, the relative excellencies of country/court/city life - arose from particular philosophical theories and were often treated in the literature of the period in pastoral terms. Obviously, pastoralism, seen as an alternative to a sophisticated, artificial existence, was, by its very terms, suited to the presentation of these philosophical dichotomies. I do not want to suggest that the pastoral was ever merely (or only) a means of presenting certain philosophically fashionable alternatives, but, rather, that the pastoral gained an element of depth and seriousness in a period when such ideas were current.

The humanists, by translating many of the works of classical Greek writers for the first time, and, by enlarging and improving the Latin corpus, certainly influenced Renaissance philosophy. The ideas embodied in ancient literature served as a ferment and inspiration for current thought.

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<sup>1</sup>C.S. Baldwin, Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice, ed. D.L. Clark (Columbia University Press, 1939), p.88.

Not that one should identify humanism with Renaissance philosophy.<sup>1</sup> It was only gradually that some humanists realized that philosophy should become part of the studia humanitatis. However, their emphasis on ethics rather than metaphysics, their emphasis on the moral, active life, contributed to "the gradual process by which wisdom was transformed from intellectual eruditio to a moral virtue, from theoretical knowledge to probity in action,"<sup>2</sup> with all the implications of this new assessment.

One must remember that the Renaissance period was noted for its eclecticism. Scholasticism, with its Aristotelian bias, was not overthrown by the rise of Neo-Platonism but continued to be influential throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Often many different theories were present in the work of the same thinker. Plato and Aristotle's original writings were studied with all the accretions of medieval Christian, Byzantine, and Arabic scholars. Finally, one cannot underestimate the influence of the particular environment on the different theories of the various Renaissance schools. For instance, an emphasis on the superiority of the active life, material pleasures and rewards, well suited the bourgeois ruling classes of Republican Florence whereas the ecclesiastical governments would provide a more congenial atmosphere for an emphasis on the contemplative virtues.

Most of the classical philosophers had made some contribution to the topics which, during this period, achieved such importance. Which kind of

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Oskar Kristeller insists on the distinction between the two. "Thus I should like to understand Renaissance humanism, at least in its origin and in its typical representatives, as a broad cultural and literary movement, which in its substance was not philosophical, but had important philosophical implications and consequences." Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains (New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1961), p.22.

<sup>2</sup>Eugene F. Rice Jr., The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), p.213.

life is best? - the active or contemplative, that of the solitary wise man or the active citizen; what should one's attitude be towards fame?; was the simple man and the simple life essentially better than the educated sophisticate in his artificial environment?; what were the respective roles of nature and nurture in man's growth to full human potential? Plato had reacted against the civilization of his time and had advocated, at least for some, a return to simplicity, ascetism and the limitation of desires. However, Reason was to him of paramount importance; man's natural instincts were unlikely to be naturally good. He gave human institutions their full due. <sup>1</sup>

Aristotle in his Ethics had maintained that the ultimate end of man is contemplation but he had also emphasised that man must know and act (my italics). The Stoics had insisted on man's ability to use his Reason to shape his life and endure its evils. Man should control his passions, be content with his lot and ideally live a simple life, disdainful of fame, luxury, and wealth. Seneca extolled the virtues of the hard life of the German "barbarians" in contrast to that of his luxury loving fellow citizens. <sup>2</sup> However, he was not so much the primitivist as to deny the need for "art" or "education" to complete the work of nature. True Stoic virtue was unattainable by means of nature alone. The Epicureans and Cynics both advocated the cultivation of self-sufficiency which would enable man to live in contentment, for man's real needs are few.

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<sup>1</sup>"He who appears to you the worst of those who have been brought up in laws and in the society of other men would appear a just man, aye, a master of justice, if he were compared with men who had no education or courts or laws nor anything whatever to constrain them to practise virtue - with the savages, for example, whom the poet Pherecrates exhibited at last year's Lenaeon festival." Protagoras 327. Quoted in A Documentary History of Primitivism, p.208.

<sup>2</sup>De Providentia iv. 14-15.



Each of the above philosophical ideas had some currency during the Renaissance. In the active versus the contemplative debate, the Neo-Platonists tended to assert that the contemplative life was the noblest. Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), who had translated all Plato and Plotinus into Latin, felt that, in the ascent of the soul towards God through contemplation, man achieved his true end. Francesco Filelfo (1388-1481), Giovanni Pontano (1426-1503) and Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) likewise asserted that the contemplative life was superior. Yet action was not to be despised, since theoretical knowledge, unused, is absurd. Conversely, the view that an active life was nobler, gradually gained ground. Hiram Haydn emphasises this trend, "the living of human life has taken precedence over contemplating the meaning of human life" <sup>1</sup> (original italics). Petrarch, the arch humanist, had early stressed that wisdom is an active virtue and he emphatically extols the active life. <sup>2</sup> Pomponazzi (1442-1525), despite being an Aristotelian, was much influenced by Cicero in his view that practical virtue, moral action, rather than contemplation, is the end of man. Salutati (1331-1406) viewed the will as superior to the intellect and more powerful, as did the later thinkers, Ronsard (1524-1585) and Pierre Charron (1541-1603). Ronsard was adamant. He stated that intellectual virtues undermined the active life and were for the lazy, for "hermits and other such fantastical and contemplative people." <sup>3</sup>

The general tendency was to find a balance between the two views - Cicero and Dante had shown in their own lives that this was a possibility.

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<sup>1</sup>The Counter-Renaissance (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p.58.

<sup>2</sup>"It is better to will the good than to know the truth." De Ignorantia, 70, quoted in Rice, The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom, p.37. However Petrarch also dedicated a treatise to Solitude and he often wrote of the pleasures of the retired life he led in Vacluse, near Avignon. In him one can see clearly the often very ambivalent attitudes to these alternatives.

<sup>3</sup>Des vertus intellectuelles et morales, 1038-9. Cited by Rice, ibid., p.155.



The humanist tendency to view learning divorced from right conduct and social action as sterile and possibly even dangerous became the most representative view. Man needed to know how to act before he acted. <sup>1</sup>

The growth of the idea that goodness is associated with simplicity, that wisdom is to be found in the humble, which we find carried to its logical conclusion in Montaigne (1533-1592), Haydn describes as one of the most persistent features of the counter-renaissance. <sup>2</sup> This tendency had close links with the praise of country life, the condemnation of the passion for fame, and the debate as to the relative importance of nature and nurture. <sup>3</sup> Despite a reaction by some against learning and culture, a belief (which had its roots in Cynicism and Stoicism) that art is opposed to nature, one finds, again, an attempt at a balance. Man is given the seeds of perfection by nature, but needs art to bring these seeds to fruition. <sup>4</sup>

Closely related to the nature/nurture debate were the various attitudes towards the idea of the golden age. The humanists tended to acknowledge the historical existence of a golden age but thought that, although nature is essentially good, the addition of art to post-lapsarian nature is

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<sup>1</sup>This viewpoint is particularly valuable in an assessment of Calidore's behaviour in The Faerie Queene, Book VI. See below, Ch.V.

<sup>2</sup>Counter-Renaissance, p.92.

<sup>3</sup>The following is Pierre Charron's view: "In the fields the spirit is more free and to itself... Cities are prisons to the spirits of men, no otherwise than cages to birds and beasts. This celestial fire that is in us, will not be shut up, it loveth the aire, the fields; and therefore Columella saith, that the country-life is the cousen of wisdom,.... Againe, the country life is more neat, innocent and simple. In cities vices are hid in the rout... so that to live in cities is to be banished in the world, and shut from the world." Of Wisdom, trans. Sampson Lennard, 1612, p.217. Quoted in Louis B. Wright, Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), p.591.

<sup>4</sup>"The angel is perfect by nature; man is perfected by art." Carolus Bovillus, De Intellectu, I, 5 fol.3 v. Cited by Rice, p.121.

always an improvement. Others denied that primitive man had lived in the golden age and held a progressive view of history.<sup>1</sup> The materialists of the Macchiavelli school also denied that there had ever been a golden age. Men are naturally bad. Occasionally, the addition of art will ameliorate man.<sup>2</sup> More often it won't.<sup>3</sup> Yet another group looked nostalgically back to a past golden age when art had not spoilt nature.<sup>4</sup>

Closely linked to the nature/nurture debate too was that of the source of true nobility in man. Petrarch had thought much about this. One of the ideas that was advanced was that true nobility was allied to virtue not birth, seeing that all men owed equally their origin to God. This had important repercussions in the pastoral where the noble shepherd could be contrasted with the base courtier. Likewise the shepherd figure lived close to nature, simply and innocently; shunned fame and fortune; had ample opportunity for the contemplative life, and in his person thus portrayed many of the abstract philosophical positions current during the period.

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<sup>1</sup>"You suppose the first age was the goulde age. It is nothing soe. Bodin defendeth the goulde age to flourish now, and our first grandfathers to have rubbid thorowghe in the iron and brasen age at the beginnige when all things were rude and unperfitt in comparison of the exquisite finesse and delicacye, that we are grown unto at these dayes." Gabriel Harvey to Spenser, Letter Book, 86. Cited by Haydn, p.522.

<sup>2</sup>See Raleigh, Discourse of War in General, in which he states that "natural conscience" is insufficient to curb men's passion. Law is needed to restrain men. See Haydn, p.522.

<sup>3</sup>Caliban's speech, "You taught me language; and my profit on 't/Is, I know how to curse...." (The Tempest I.ii.363-4.) reflects this viewpoint.

<sup>4</sup>The discovery of the New World and its inhabitants, who appeared to many Europeans to be noble savages, strengthened this view. "We found the people most gentle, loving and faithfull, voide of all guile and treason, and such as live after the maner of the golden age". Richard Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation (1589), from Explorations in Living, eds. Winfield H. Rogers, Ruby V. Redinger, Hiram C. Haydn II, (New York, 1941), II, 553. (Amadas and Barlow's account of the first voyage to Virginia). Quoted in Haydn, p.510.

Although I have given the philosophical positions of, mainly, Italian thinkers, it is important to remember that all these theories achieved such currency as to have become, by the sixteenth century, the common property of the educated. Ficino's philosophically elaborate theory of Platonic love becomes the commonplace notion of countless versifiers; Castiglione could debate in the first book of The Courtier whether courtesy is allied only to gentle birth; and in England, in 1597, there could be a poetical debate over the relative merits of the court, the country, and the city, to which Bacon, Wotton, Thomas Bastard, and Donne contributed.<sup>1</sup>

Pastoralism and the pastoral were particularly suited to exploring and debating such philosophical commonplaces. As soon as one posits two opposing environments (the one man-made and, hence, artificial; the other, natural), and two opposing lifestyles (the one sophisticated; the other simple), the way is open for an exploration of such topics as the relative merits and demerits of each environment and lifestyle, the respective roles of nature and nurture on the human personality, or the relative advantages and disadvantages of a quiet, retired life and a life of full participation in human affairs. During the Renaissance the pastoral was used for just such debates. This is however in no way to ignore the great quantity of pastoral writing of the Renaissance in which the pastoral mise-en-scène was used for eulogistic or escapist purposes.

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<sup>1</sup>There was also direct contact among the Italian philosophers and those in Northern Europe. Erasmus corresponded voluminously with contemporary philosophers and there is some evidence of direct contact between Colet and Ficino.

(iii) The Native Pastoral Traditions

During the second half of the sixteenth century when the vogue for writing in pastoral terms became so widespread in England, there was still remaining a long and strong native pastoral tradition of thought and writing on which to graft the classical kind and from which this formal genre could derive much of its vitality and strength. Most modern critics of the Elizabethan pastoral admit that the success of good pastoral depends much on this fusion of the classical and the native.<sup>1</sup>

Most obviously, England was primarily an agricultural and pastoral land. There were few large towns and the majority lived in rural areas. Many visitors from the Continent commented on this aspect with surprise as it differed so radically from, for example, the Italian city-state culture. Although London was the centre of court life, and the magnet for the ambitious from all regions of England, as early as 1420 an Italian, Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), remarked; in a letter, that the nobles considered it disgraceful to live in towns, and judged the degree of man's nobility by the extent of his estates.<sup>2</sup>

The extent of England's actual pastoral lands impressed visitors. The North, Wales, and the South-West were mainly pastoral although corn was grown for subsistence. One visitor remarked "Between London and Oxford the country is in some places very fertile, in others very boggy and

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<sup>1</sup>Enid Welsford singles out "that mingling of courtliness and classic grace with sympathy for the real country life and country pastimes, which is characteristic of English pastoralism at its best". The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship between Poetry and the Revels (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1927), p.211.

H.B. Lathrop, in discussing Greene's plays, romances, and songs, talks of the "magic union of Italian or French grace, delicate, but lacking in vitality, with the blithe and brisk rural and sylvan tradition of English life". Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman 1477-1620 (New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1967), p.157.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of October 29, 1420, quoted in Einstein, The Italian Renaissance, p.221.



mossy; and such immense numbers of sheep are bred on it round about that it is astonishing." <sup>1</sup> Paul Hentzner in his Travels in England, 1598, mentions with amazement the "numerous flocks extremely white, and whether from the temperature of the air or goodness of the earth, bearing softer and finer fleeces than those of any other country. This is the true Golden Fleece, in which consist the chief riches of the inhabitants, great sums of money being brought into the island by merchants, chiefly for that article of trade". <sup>2</sup>

It was during this period that the dominance of pastoral farming caused severe hardships. One should read the literary pastoral effusions against the background of the actual social conditions for it is here that one can most easily see the gap between reality and the Arcadian dream. The enclosures of tillage for conversion into pasture caused unemployment, and, often, shortage of crops. Two contemporary complaints reveal a little of this harsh reality. In a work dating from the 1550s is this bitter complaint:

The more shepe, the dearer is the woll.  
The more shepe, the dearer is the motton.  
The more shepe, the dearer is the beffe.  
The more shepe, the dearer is the corne.  
The more shepe, the skanter is the whit meate.  
The more shepe, the fewer egges for a peny....

As we do thynke, we have two losses more that we have not spoken:  
The firste losse is for lacke of household kepyng and mayntenaunce  
of tyllage. It is great decay to artyllary: for that do we reken,  
that sheperdes be but yll artchers.... <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick, Duke of Wirtemberg, 1592. Quoted in England as seen by Foreigners in the days of Elizabeth and James the First, ed. William B. Rye (London, 1865), p.30.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.110.

<sup>3</sup>"Certayne causes gathered together, wherein is shewed the decaye of England, only by the great multitude of shepe, to the utter decay of household keping, mayntenaunce of men, dearthe of corne, and other notable dyscommodityes approved by syxe olde Proverbes" 1550-1553. Reprinted in Early English Text Society Extra Series, XIII, 1871, pp.96, 100.



As late as 1598, Thomas Bastard could still write:

Sheep have eat up our meadows and our downs.  
Our corn, our wood, whole villages and towns,  
Yea, they have eat up many wealthy men,  
Besides widows and orphan children;  
Besides our statutes and our iron laws  
Which they have swallowed down into their maws.  
Till now I thought the proverb did but jest  
Which said a black sheep was a biting beast. <sup>1</sup>

However, the reality of England's pastoral economy could also serve to enhance the artificial genre. E.C. Wilson gives an example, from speeches delivered to the Queen at Sudeley in 1592, where "actuality breaks the pastoral illusion". <sup>2</sup> An old shepherd speaks and draws from the actual Cotswold pastoral setting for his traditional compliments:

Vouchsafe to heare a simple shephard: shephards and simplicity cannot part. Your Highnes is come into Cotshold, an uneven country, but a people that carry their thoughtes, leuell with their fortunes; lowe spirites, but true harts; using plaine dealinge, once counted a jewell, nowe beggery. These hills afoorde nothing but cottages, and nothing can we present to your Highnes but shephards... This lock of wooll, Cotsholdes best fruite, and my poore gifte, I offer to your Highnes; in which nothing is to be esteemed, but the whitenes, virginities colour; nor to be expected but duetye, shephards religion.

There was a longstanding familiarity with pastoral terms in religious language on the authority of both the Gospels and the Messianic prophecies. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>K.R. and G.E. Fussell, The English Countryman. His Life and Work. 1500-1900 (London: Andrew Melrose, 1955), p.17.

<sup>2</sup>Elkin Calhoun Wilson, England's Eliza, Harvard Studies in English, XX (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1966), pp.155-6.

<sup>3</sup>A religious version of a popular hunting song dating from ca.1540 reveals this popular use of semi-pastoral terms in a religious context. The final stanza provides the key to the foregoing allegory:

"The hunter is Christ, that hunts in haste,  
The hounds are Peter and Paul,  
The Pope is the fox, Rome is the rocks,  
That rubs us on the gall."

Quoted in Tudor Verse Satire, ed. K.W. Gransden (Univ. of London: The Athlone Press, 1970), pp.58-59.

The proliferation of improved translations of the Bible into the vernacular from 1525 onwards served to increase this familiarity.<sup>1</sup> The priest was equated with the shepherd in the formal pastoral as early as Petrarch and this equation, with its overtones of the Good Shepherd, particularly suited the Protestant mind in its reaction against the pomp and power of Rome. It was to prove easy to accept the combination of the classically inspired pastoral and the medieval allegorical approach, sanctioned by Mantuan, in order to discuss, critically, current ecclesiastical problems and abuses.

Shepherds had traditionally been present at the Nativity and this popular belief proved a tenacious one.<sup>2</sup> The shepherd interludes in the medieval morality plays allowed for a sub-plot involving earthy humour and revealing a familiarity with the actual world in the midst of the seriously religious atmosphere. Not only did the presence of these interludes lead to an unclassical but distinctly English mixture of styles in the drama of the late sixteenth century, but it is the treatment of these shepherds - their earthiness, their recognisably plebeian features, their humour and the humour at their expense - which recalls the treatment of shepherds by Theocritus. These native shepherds often added sinews to the classically inspired pastorals of the Elizabethan period.

Throughout the middle ages there had been writing of a pastoral nature in lyrics and longer works, often political allegories. Most often pastoralism had appeared as praise of the simple life as against court life and aristocratic pretension. Huizinga talks of the customary, albeit highly theoretical, aristocratic appreciation of simple, diligent peasant life when "everyone had declared that he was sighing for a diet of cheese,

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<sup>1</sup>Translations of the Bible appeared in 1525, 1535, 1537, 1539, 1560, 1568, 1572.

<sup>2</sup>"and in the Angels Song to Shepheards at our Saviours Nativitie Pastorall Poesie seemes consecrated." Michael Drayton, Preface to the Eglogues, 1619.

apples, onions, brown bread and fresh water." <sup>1</sup> The contents of Tottel's Miscellany (1557) reveal an emphasis on certain themes which had had a longstanding currency and which could very appropriately be given a truly pastoral flavour. The golden mean, the mean estate, the wheel of Fortune (all primarily attacking ambition), and the satirical attitude towards the life of a courtier, prove to be the subject of many of the poems. There is an emphasis on getting away from the dangerous life at court ("Among good things, I prove and finde,/The quiet life dothe most abound" <sup>2</sup>). The alternative is not yet specifically the country but the transition is close. Thomas Wyatt writes a satire on a courtier's life from the safe distance of the country ("But I am here in kent and christendome" <sup>3</sup>), but the emphasis here is still on his inability to dissemble and thus be the true courtier, rather than on his contentment in the country. One poem is particularly interesting in that it romanticises poverty just as pastoralism tends to do:

Serve God therefore thou pore, for lo, thou lives in rest,  
Eschue the golden hall, thy thatched house is best. <sup>4</sup>

The writer is obviously not a poor peasant and is talking about poverty from some distance. In "The complaint of Thestylis amid the desert wodde" [No.201], the setting, which is summarily mentioned in the opening lines, mirrors the psychological state of the deserted lover. In the

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<sup>1</sup>Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, trans. F. Hopman (Penguin Books: Peregrine, 1965), p.132. Also Huizinga, Men and Ideas: History, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, trans. James S. Holmes and Hans van Marle (Harper and Row: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), pp.284-5. Pastoralism is shown in its essence in such distancing from reality.

<sup>2</sup>[No.170.] "They of the meane estate are happiest." All quotations are taken from the edition of Hyder E. Rollins, 2 vols., revised edition. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).

<sup>3</sup>[No.125.] "Of the Courtiers life written to John Poins."

<sup>4</sup>[No.200.] "The pore estate to be holden for best."

answer to this poem, "A comfort to the complaynt of Thestylis" [No.234], the town is presented as a source either of distraction or further attraction in contrast to the lonely, depressing country. In a few decades this attitude was to change and the country was to be a place of unequivocal attraction for the courtier or tradesman cooped up in the city.<sup>1</sup> Not only the sophisticated reader had acquaintance with these themes. The ballads of the period reveal the same dichotomies - the contented mind/the mind full of care; ambition/contentment; court/country; king/peasant.<sup>2</sup> The sophisticated, classically inspired poets welded these ubiquitous, indigenous themes to a classical form, breathing new life into a form which could have remained a merely perfunctory "imitatio" of a Virgilian prototype.

There was, too, a closeness to nature, a familiarity with country pastimes, a deep respect for rural tradition which one might wrongly dismiss as mere form. Henry VIII participated wholeheartedly in the popular May Day customs.<sup>3</sup> The wild man, the subject of many traditional beliefs, has close affinities with the shepherd. Both are close to animals and feel protective towards them. Both derive an inner strength and incorruptibility from their association with nature.<sup>4</sup> Classical divinities were easily assimilated into a rural landscape already permeated with spirits from

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<sup>1</sup>By 1611, in Thomas Heywood's play The Golden Age these sentiments had become commonplace. See Act II.i.

<sup>2</sup>One such ballad entitled "The Merry Life of the Countriman/, wherein is shewed his contented minde and laboursome toil/mixed with pleasure, most pleasaunte and delightfull to be songe/To the tune of Lacaranto" begins "A Prince doth sit a slippery seat/and bears a careful minde" Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MSS, poet.185, fol.19.

<sup>3</sup>For a description of one of his May Day festivities see Welsford, The Court Masque, p.129.

<sup>4</sup>The wild man and shepherd reveal the aspects of hard and soft primitivism respectively. See above, Chapter I, Section (i).



indigenous folk lore. Shakespeare could draw on a very real belief in, and knowledge of, fairy lore in A Midsummer Night's Dream.

The finest pastorals of this period have also an explicit concern with concrete natural details which distinguishes them from the general tendency of the pastoral to draw details of natural description from classical examples rather than from direct observation. Indeed W.J. Keith quite rightly sees this tendency to create "not a countryside but the countryside" as that which distinguishes pastoral writing most clearly from rural writing which "depends for its effectiveness on a verifiable connection with an existing countryside".<sup>1</sup> In the best pastoral one often detects a genuine knowledge and love of the countryside however allegorical the purpose might be. Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender provides one with many un-Arcadian descriptions of scenery. Virgil's Gnat, too, is saturated with particularized details.<sup>2</sup> Breton's collection, The Passionate Shepherd (1604) abounds in carefully observed pictures of country life.<sup>3</sup>

Towards the end of this period, in the early seventeenth century, when the Renaissance idea, that the sole purpose of pastoral was the allegorical one, was being eroded, one witnesses an increase in description for its own sake which was ultimately to lead to the blurring of distinctions between the pastoral and the rural.<sup>4</sup> Significantly the pastoral lyric, which often had little or no allegorical motive, had always a

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<sup>1</sup>The Rural Tradition (The Harvester Press Ltd., 1975), pp.32,4.

<sup>2</sup>See particularly ll.73-88.

<sup>3</sup>One example from Pastoral 3:

"And the little black-haired coney  
On a bank for sunny place  
With her forefeet wash her face."

<sup>4</sup>See Congleton, Theories of Pastoral Poetry.



proportionately large amount of scenic description, whether drawn merely from the "locus amoenus" tradition or from personal observation. It was Drayton, Sabie and Browne, all of whom rejected the primacy of the allegorical motive and emphasised the intrinsic value of pastoralism, who, in the early years of the seventeenth century, produced poetry the essence of which is empirical, naturalistic observation.<sup>1</sup>

(iv) The Queen as a Pastoral Figure

It was the fortune of Elizabethan writers of pastoral to have, in the person of their Queen, someone who was uniquely fitted to play a pivotal role in a pastoral world. W. Leonard Grant has amply revealed the proliferation of pastorals intended as panegyrics during the Renaissance.<sup>2</sup> The Medicis, Charles V, Pope Leo X, Catherine de' Medici, Francis II, Elizabeth I, all were eulogised in the highly evocative terms of the pastoral and its corollary, the golden age. New rulers were showered with verses proclaiming the new golden age which would necessarily be restored by their accession and, as Harry Levin comments, Ronsard almost wore out this clichéd greeting using it for one "short-lived and ill-starred sovereign after another".<sup>3</sup> The proliferation of pastoral eulogies in England must be seen as part of a widespread Continental vogue which became increasingly over-used as the sixteenth century progressed.

However, in England, more than in any other European country, there was a ruler who was particularly suited to pastoral treatment and who gave

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<sup>1</sup>I shall be discussing this change in the pastoral output more fully in Chapter VI below.

<sup>2</sup>Neo-Latin Literature.

<sup>3</sup>The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance (London: Faber & Faber, 1970), p.73. Ronsard wrote a pastoral masque in which a chorus of shepherdesses hails their shepherd queen, Catherine de' Medici. Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Gustave Cohen (Paris, 1966), I, 918.

much credence and vitality to this fashionable cult. Certain of the significant facts of her person and her reign might logically be discussed in pastoral terms. Her achievement of a religious settlement after the fluctuations and persecutions of the previous few decades impressed the popular imagination. Pastoral-religious terminology was repeatedly used to describe her role as the preserver of the true religion in the face of the threats from Rome. In 1570 she was excommunicated and this served to strengthen the popular view of her as the shepherdess guarding her flock against the wolves and foxes of Roman Catholicism. In 1588 there was published a very pedestrian blank verse account of her reign up to that date by J[ames] Aske in which England is repeatedly likened to a flock of sheep, the Pope to a fox or a wolf and, by implication, God and Elizabeth to the shepherds.<sup>1</sup> Such associations continue throughout her reign and even appear in writings about her after her death. In one of these she is petitioned as a saint in Heaven to help her subjects, "the faithful beadsmen of most distressed and most dejected comons of England," and she is made to reply:

I found you like a hunted shattered flocke  
Your very soules beatinge against the rocke  
Of ignorance and superstition  
Just in the way to fowle sedition  
I playd the sheppard, and the pilott too  
And noe lambe, noe fleece, more than my dew  
Was ere exacted from the common store

. . . . .

Kept you (like sheepe) in peace within the foulde.<sup>2</sup>

Elizabeth could also fit the role of the unattainable but infinitely desirable figure of traditional love poetry and, by extension, represent the ordinary shepherd's lass, Eliza, in pastoral writing. Traces of the myste-

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabetha Triumphans (London: Printed by Thomas Orwin for Thomas Gubbin and Thomas Newman, 1588), Bodleian Vet.A.1.e. 41.

<sup>2</sup>"A most gracious answer secured by the blessed Eliza with a divine admonition..." ll.41-47, 76. From a diary/commonplace book, Ilium in Italliam Oxonia ad Protectionem. Oxonia. Exudebat Josephus Barnesius, Anno Dom. 1608. Bodleian, Eng. Poet, f.10.p.111.

rious and powerful "lady in an enclosed garden" of medieval literature linger. George R. Kernodle points out that the walled garden with its presiding lady came, of necessity for visual reasons, to be replaced by bowers, woodland caves or grottoes in the tableaux vivants of the late medieval period.<sup>1</sup> With the vogue for pastoral the "female in a bower" figure quite simply became a shepherdess in a pleasant natural setting.

Elizabeth was a virgin and a Tudor - both appropriately symbolised by a rose. Flowers and Spring are naturally associated, and this Flora had brought back the eternal spring of the golden age in which, magically, flowers and fruits appear together.<sup>2</sup> This virgin, though chaste, was as fruitful as Ceres, both materially and spiritually.<sup>3</sup>

Popular veneration for the Virgin Mary, which had reached a peak during the preceding centuries, could now be transferred to the virgin Queen. Following the classical renaissance, associations of all the virgins in Graeco-Roman mythology were consciously evoked. Elizabeth as Diana was especially appropriate. Diana, the rural virgin goddess of hunting was naturally likened to a virgin Queen who also enjoyed the chase. Likewise, her actual enjoyment of, and proficiency in, dancing, music, and poetry, fitted her for the pastoral world which held these particular accomplishments in high esteem.

The rural estates of her nobles to which she made her calculated progresses were the setting for entertainments of a predictably pastoral

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<sup>1</sup>From Art to Theatre: Form and Convention in the Renaissance (University of Chicago Press, 1964), p.74.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth is addressed as Flora in one of Sir John Davies' Hymns of Astraea. The virgin, Astraea, would restore the golden age on earth at her return.

<sup>3</sup>Frances A. Yates points out that Virgo is an autumnal (fruitful) sign. "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute, X (1947), 27-82.

nature. Most of these entertainments drew on, and mingled, elements of rural folk lore, classical mythology, and religious imagery, which were all most easily fused in pastoral terminology.

The popularity of the legend of the judgement of Paris as a device of Tudor flattery strengthened the pastoral associations surrounding the Queen. Paris, a shepherd, singles out the Queen, rather than one of the three deities, in George Peele's play of 1581 and, not only is her majesty and virginity complimented, but she is closely associated with a shepherd figure.<sup>1</sup> Given her pastoral associations, her courtiers naturally appeared as shepherd swains, a usage which Spenser draws upon heavily in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe.<sup>2</sup> As a result George Peele, in 1589, could, without incongruity, address Essex, a most unpastoral figure, in pastoral terms in his "Eglogue Gratulatorie Entituled: To the right honorable, and renowned Shepheard of Albion's Arcadia: Robert Earle of Essex and Ewe, for his welcome into England from Portugall".

These strikingly appropriate pastoral connotations were deliberately encouraged as part of the propagandist cult of the Queen.<sup>3</sup> At a time when the pastoral was a popular literary convention with classical authority behind it, how fortunate was it to be able to utilize it in the flattery and praise of the most powerful patron without the incongruity which was so often glaringly revealed in the Continental effusions.

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<sup>1</sup>The Judgement of Paris device was popular in eulogies on the Continent too. A famous pictorial rendering of Peele's conceit is the Hampton Court painting by the Monogrammist HE (1569) reproduced by Roy Strong in Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1963), Plate VI.

<sup>2</sup>See especially ll.377-583.

<sup>3</sup>I shall discuss the deliberate aspect of the cult in Ch.III below.



(v) The Psychological Appeal

It was for various psychological reasons, too, that pastoralism and the pastoral had particular appeal at this period. We, perhaps, might find the preoccupation with shepherds extraordinary, whether it be Henry VIII with a dozen companions disguised as shepherds and being entertained by Wolsey to a sumptuous banquet,<sup>1</sup> or the proliferation of shepherds and their lasses in almost every branch of literature, or the ease with which pastoral terms were used for the most varied subjects; but the pastoral, in addition to being a classically approved genre, encompassed a particularly congenial set of ideas in the face of the realities of Elizabethan life.

Although the formal Renaissance pastoral was primarily a way of looking at and judging the status quo, pastoralism as an escape from reality or, at least, an attractive alternative to reality, was a powerful force. The ideal of the Renaissance was active service for the state and yet one does gain the impression that those most active in this service were attracted by an alternative life style. One remembers Walter Mildmay's mature and thus necessarily ambivalent attitude to the court in his advice to his son:

Know the Court but spend not thy life there, for Court is a very chargeable place. I would rather wish thee to spend the greatest part of thy life in the country than to live in this glittering misery.<sup>2</sup>

Life for the ambitious was a constant struggle for survival and preferment in a society in which a handful held the keys to all power, and in which patronage was an essential ingredient of the struggle for success.

Wallace T. MacCaffrey analyses the structure of power in the Elizabethan

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<sup>1</sup>This incident is mentioned by Lewis Einstein in Tudor Ideals (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1921), p.28.

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Joan Simon, Education and Society in Tudor England (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1966), p.352.



era and emphasises that, for the younger brothers of the nobility and for the lesser gentry, life was quite literally a desperate struggle to win favour and position.<sup>1</sup> These men were often greedy, restless, ruthless careerists striving for some hold on the limited sources of power.<sup>2</sup> Spenser describes the rat race of court life with insight and feeling in Colin Clouts (ll.690-730) and in Prosopopoia; or Mother Hubberds Tale (ll.631-642, 895-914). In the midst of this jostling for position and all its concomitant corruption, the promise of the peace and tranquillity of the country could prove a strong allurements. The praise of the country in specific contrast to the life at court is endlessly repeated in contemporary literature. Often poems contain specific references to the miseries of a courtier's life. Lines from an anonymous poem "What pleasure have great princes" printed in W. Byrd's Psalms, Sonnets and Songs (1588) say much the same about the nature of courting the powerful as does Spenser:

    Their [i.e. herdmen wild] dealings plain and rightful  
    Are void of all deceit;  
They never know how spiteful  
    It is to kneel and wait  
On favourite presumptuous,  
    Whose pride is vain and sumptuous.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," Elizabethan Government and Society, Essays Presented to Sir John Neale, eds. S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, and C.H. Williams (University of London: Athlone Press, 1961), pp.95-126.

<sup>2</sup>This scramble for power was often the subject of severe admonishments as it went completely against the anti-ambition sentiments inevitably current as well. In a tract dated 1588, The English Ape, the Italian imitation, the footesteppes of Fraunce by W[illiam] R[ankins] one reads of "Those climbing mindes whose armes would reache to heaven and whose thoughts are stitched to the starres, are these men that like poison dispearse themselves in ye veines of the commonwealth, and faigne covet to desire that which they cannot aspire". pp.10-11. Bodleian, Malone 642 (4).

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse, chosen by E.K. Chambers (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1932), pp.243-4.

Sidney, too, could write knowledgeably of "this false, fine, Courtly pleasure" in his "Disprays of a Courtly life" where he writes of an old man's lament at being now a courtier, having once been a shepherd. Perhaps the most poignant rendering of the escapist dream as opposed to the reality of one's calling is Essex's short poem which gains much of its poignancy from our knowledge of the fate of this courtier:

Happy were he could finish forth his fate  
In some unhaunted desert, most obscure  
From all societies, from love and hate  
Of wordly folk: then might he sleep secure;  
Then wake again, and give God ever praise,  
Content with hips and haws and bramble-berry;  
In contemplation spending all his days,  
And change of holy thoughts to make him merry;  
Where, when he dies, his tomb may be a bush,  
Where harmless robin dwells with gentle thrush. <sup>1</sup>

Often the poems of the period use the fashionable pastoral convention to express the perennial "security is contentment" theme. Thomas Campion's "Jack and Joan they think no ill", which avoids Arcadianism in its affectionate description of indigenous country folk, ends:

Now you courtly dames and knights,  
That study only strange delights,  
Though you scorn the home-spun gray  
And revel in your rich array;  
Though your tongues dissemble deep  
And can your heads from danger keep:  
Yet for all your pomp and train,  
Securer lives the silly swain. <sup>2</sup>

Richard Barnfield's lengthy "The Shepherds Content or the happiness of a harmless life" (1594) fully explores all the disadvantages of other professions, whether urban, courtly, or rural, to prove that "a Shepherds life is most Content". Not only has the life inherent advantages but Barnfield reveals by dexterous arguments that this life partakes also of all the aspects of the other modes of life which might appeal to his sophisticated readership:

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<sup>1</sup>Oxford Book, *ibid.*, p.793.

<sup>2</sup>*ibid.*, pp.836-7.

He [i.e. the shepheard] is a King, for he commands his Sheepe;  
He knowes no woe, for he doth seldome weepe

He is a Courtier, for he courts his Love:  
He is a Scholler, for he sings sweet Ditties:  
He is a Souldier, for he wounds doth prove;  
He is the fame of Townes, the shame of Citties;  
He scornes false Fortune, but true Vertue pitties.

He is a Gentleman, because his nature  
Is kinde and affable to everie Creature. <sup>1</sup>

During this period, too, all classes were affected to some extent by the increased mobility within the social structure. New men, especially the increasingly wealthy and powerful entrepreneurs and businessmen, constituted a threat to the hitherto secure power base of the aristocracy. The social and economic mobility which characterize the Elizabethan period was caused, to a great extent, by expansion and development in industry, agriculture and trade. Improved farming methods resulted in improved yields, especially as the wealthier bought up the smaller, less productive lands of their neighbours. There was increased investment from abroad in the expanding industries. Not only was this in the form of direct monetary investment but the increased number of Protestant refugees from Europe brought with them particular skills which benefitted the growing industries. Frequently the actual managerial class rose to become part of a wealthy middle class. "Never in the annals of the modern world has there existed so prolonged and so rich an opportunity for the business man, the speculator and the profiteer." <sup>2</sup>

Rowse traces the upward mobility, a movement dictated largely by wealth, of the various social groups. <sup>3</sup> The instances of yeoman becoming members of the gentry increased manifestly during Elizabeth's reign.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse, eds. John Barrell and John Bull (Allen Lane, 1974), pp.80-88.

<sup>2</sup>Lord Keynes, Treatise on Money, II, 159. Cited by Rowse in The England of Elizabeth, p.109.

<sup>3</sup>The England of Elizabeth.

Rowse instances the Bales family of Carlton Curlieu, "the head of the family was a yeoman in that generation [reign of Henry VIII], a gentlemen in the next, knighted in the next with a baronetcy by 1643 - all achieved within a hundred years." <sup>1</sup>

The gentry formed the most dynamic class. From its ranks came many of the entrepreneurs, privateers, businessmen, whose names are familiar, men like Drake, or Frobisher, or Watts, who were ennobled for their achievements. There were many instances of old noble estates being broken up, there being no heir, leading to the enrichment of lesser families.

Investment in land was the necessary hedge against insecurity. Increasingly the new men became landowners, their estates soon rivalling those of the old landed nobles like the Howards, whose head, the Duke of Norfolk, bitterly resented these nouveaux riches. Lawyers, who gained in influence as a professional class in the last decades of the sixteenth century, increasingly bought up land. Sir Edward Coke left fifty-eight manors in his will when he died in 1634. Crown officials, too, invested their gains in land. Rowse mentions the astronomical rise of Sir William Petre, the younger son of a yeoman family, who became Secretary of State to both Henry VIII and Edward VI and left vast estates to his heirs. Merchants, too, were quick to appreciate the importance of land. Adam Winthrop (d.1562) had begun as a Lavenham clothier. He made his family's name and fortune and was given the freedom of the city of London. His grandson was to become the Governor of Massachusetts.

In his book on Elizabethan privateering, Kenneth R. Andrews reveals the extent of the profits made through war itself. <sup>2</sup> The war with Spain "marks the entry of the merchants into the sphere of state finance for the

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.226.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabethan Privateering: English Privateering During the Spanish War 1585-1603 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964).



first time on any considerable scale".<sup>1</sup> Many ruined themselves but others, particularly the London merchants, profitted enormously. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, among many traders, there were a mere handful of great magnates - men like Sir Thomas Gresham - whereas, by the end of the century, the community of magnates was large. John Watts, who was born ca.1550, reveals the possibilities open to an enterprising businessman. He began as a member of the Clothworker's Guild. He increasingly ventured into trade and then into privateering. He became Governor of the East India Company and was knighted by James. In 1606-7 he was Lord Mayor of London. His interests in East India, Guiana, and Virginia were extensive and, at his death in 1616, he left a vast fortune and numerous estates.

Significantly, it is during these Elizabethan decades that the College of Arms grew in importance as an institution. The scramble up the social scale was the subject of many a satirist. Philip Stubbes writes of "every man crying with open mouth I am a gentleman, I am worshipful, I am Honorable, I am noble, and I cannot tell what: my father was this, my father was that; I am come of this house, I am come of that."<sup>2</sup>

It is against this flux that one can begin to appreciate the concern on the part of the Queen and her Councillors to retain the old, identifiable class divisions, the blurring of which could lead to a dangerous instability.

The new discoveries, geographical and scientific, the new theories of man and his position as a social and political animal, were gradually but inexorably undermining centuries-old attitudes and beliefs. It would not be long before Donne would so ably express the tensions of this state of flux in An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary (1611):

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.122.

<sup>2</sup>Anatomy of Abuses (ed. Furnivall), p.29. Cited by Rowse, p.245.



'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone;  
All just supply, and all Relation:  
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,  
For every man alone thinkes he hath got  
To be a Phoenix, and that then can bee  
None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee.

In such a vibrant and questing period, pastoralism, in which the traditional values are paramount and the naturalness of the social system is asserted, had a strong appeal. Professor Joel Hurstfield, in a recent lecture on the search for the good society in Shakespeare's day, maintained that "Shakespeare reflected and responded to his contemporary society of rapid change, instability and violence, in which men became hostile to popular and radical movements and moved away from any desire for experiment and change towards the desire for order and containment".<sup>1</sup> If this is a correct assessment it explains much of the appeal of the pastoral and the golden age, those "artistic metaphors of order".<sup>2</sup> Such "metaphors of order" would be powerful in a cultural environment which, despite the erosion of such features, treated the concept of order in the state, in nature, and in the individual, as of paramount importance.<sup>3</sup> This pre-occupation with order had its more superficial and less admirable side in the increasing class disparity and the subtler class differentiations during Elizabeth's reign. Such was the concern for knowing and keeping one's place in the social hierarchy that Elizabeth even attempted to enforce certain statutes of apparel passed during her reign.<sup>4</sup> This concern for the outward depiction of the supposedly natural hierarchy is revealed

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<sup>1</sup>Reported in The Times (London), October 7, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>Humphrey Tonkin, Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of the Faerie Queene (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p.202.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Ulysses' speech in Troilus and Cressida I.iii.83-137.

<sup>4</sup>Joel Hurstfield and Alan G.R. Smith eds., Elizabethan People: State and Society (Edward Arnold, 1972), p.30.

in the portraiture of the period where the aim was to reveal little else but the social status of the sitter. The backgrounds of Tudor portraits are filled with coats of arms and insignia, both real and allegorical. Decorum is essentially a class concept, too, and one recalls the Elizabethan emphasis on the need for a king to speak like a king and a commoner like a commoner. In the pastoral there is at least a pretence at social equality, an appealing sentiment given this very rigid class structure. Likewise in the pastoral there is no mention of government or hierarchies - an attractive alternative to the absolutism of the reign.

There was deep interest in the reports from the New World of a life style so very different from that of Europe, a life style which seemed to many to prove the validity of the golden age/earthly paradise beliefs which had had such force for so many centuries.<sup>1</sup> This view of an alternative came at the very moment of rapid and unprecedented urban growth and allowed the Elizabethan to anchor his escapist dreams on to an empirical base.

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<sup>1</sup>"... they seeme to live in that golden worlde of the whiche olde writers speake so much, wherein menne lived simply and innocently without enforcement of lawes, without quarrelling, judges and libelles, content onely to satisfie nature, without further vexation for knowledge of things to come." Peter Martyr, De Novo Orbe, or the Historie of the west Indies, trans. Richard Eden and Michael Lok (London, 1612), p.15. Quoted in Levin, Myth of the Golden Age, p.61.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PASTORAL AS EULOGY

#### (i) The Propagandist Cult and the Genuine Impulse Towards Praise

The theory that, from ancient times, one of the functions of poetry had been to praise the praiseworthy, was repeatedly mentioned during the Renaissance. George Puttenham in Ch. XVI of The Arte of English Poesie sees this as one of the duties of poets, "the Poets, being in deede the trumpetters of all praise and also of slaunder... were in conscience and credit bound next after the divine praises of the immortall gods to yeeld a like ratable honour to all such amongst men as most resembled the gods by excellencie of function, and had a certaine affinitie with them, by more then humane and ordinarie vertues shewed in their actions here upon earth".<sup>1</sup> For Sidney, the lyric is the natural vehicle for giving "praise, the reward of vertue, to vertuous acts."<sup>2</sup> He ends his Apology with the playful argument that, since poets have power to confer immortality on one, it is wise to patronise them:

Thus doing, your name shall florish in the Printers shoppes;  
thus doing, you shall bee of kinne to many a poetickall Preface;  
thus doing, you shall be most fayre, most rich, most wise, most  
all; you shall dwell upon Superlatives.<sup>3</sup>

So deep went the idea that praise is a definite function, especially of the lyric genres, that, in 1601, a tract that appeared in reaction to the vogue for satire could categorically state, not only that satire was un-Christian, but that the true function of the poet is rather to celebrate

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<sup>1</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays, II, 36-37.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., I. 178.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., 206.



heroic actions.<sup>1</sup> An acknowledgement of a golden world, which is so much a part of the pastoral, can lead to both eulogy and satire - depending on whether, in describing the delights of the golden world or Arcadia, one declares that these are present here and now, or one implies the contrast between the dream as described and the drab reality. During the Elizabethan era there was much flattery and praise, whether for pure or ulterior motives, and the suitability of the pastoral and its corollary, the golden age, as a vehicle for eulogy was soon realized and exploited. Pastorals, both in Latin and the vernaculars, intended as panegyrics, were extremely numerous on the Continent. The English poets combined the wish to imitate a Continental vogue with the realization that herein lay a useful means of praising the most powerful one in the land.

The natural tendency to praise and flatter the powerful was deliberately encouraged by the authorities during Elizabeth's reign. MacCaffrey notes that, as there was no professional army, no paid bureaucracy, no coercive power at all, so it was a deliberate policy to make obedience to the sovereign into a cult in order to ensure the stability of the system.<sup>2</sup> It was a highly successful policy, and, despite the increased rumblings against authority in the later years of the reign, Elizabeth retained, to the end, the charisma which had been carefully nurtured throughout her reign. The pageants, festivals, progresses, and processions were all means of channelling emotions and diverting attention from any troubles or changes. Very soon after Elizabeth's accession deliberate emphasis was placed on her birthday, September 17, and on the day of her accession, November 17, especially as the popular feast days of the old religion had been drastically reduced. After 1588, November 19 was also celebrated as a day of rejoicing

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<sup>1</sup>The Whipping of the Satyre cited in Hallet Smith, Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp.250-1.

<sup>2</sup>"Place and Patronage", p.97.



and thanksgiving for the defeat of the Armada. The extent of the ceremony surrounding the Queen was commented on by all foreign visitors. Realizing that, in the eyes of her subjects, she represented England, she made deliberate use of this symbolical identification to increase personal loyalty to herself and the fervent nationalism that was its corollary. Her portraits reveal her symbolical role. As John Buxton comments, they "proclaim not the features of an ageing woman, but the splendour of a youthful England".<sup>1</sup>

Despite the fact that the writers were deliberately encouraged to praise and flatter in order to nurture this politically expedient cult, there was enough of a genuine impulse towards praise to ensure that the cult seldom became a mere exercise in propaganda. On Elizabeth's accession England had just been through a period of great instability, civil strife, religious controversy, and religious insecurity as Catholic Mary succeeded Protestant Edward. In a report to the Venetian Signory, probably written in 1559, Michiel Soriano wrote "a greater number of insurrections have broken out in this country than in all the rest of the world... during the last twenty years three Princes of the blood, four Dukes, forty earls, and more than three thousand other persons have died by violent death".<sup>2</sup> The accession of a young, single woman hardly augured well as an answer to these endemic problems but Elizabeth soon gave positive proof of her ability, with the help of able advisers, to achieve peace, prosperity, and power within a few decades. A prolonged economic crisis, going back to the last years of Henry VIII's reign, was resolved. Elizabeth stabilized the currency and a period of economic growth ensued during which taxes were light, the Crown's debts were reduced, and increased wealth led to increased patronage of the arts. Elizabeth's immediate achievement of a tolerant

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabethan Taste, p.116.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Elizabethan People, eds. Hurstfield et al., pp.32-33.



religious settlement was of profound importance to a nation which had lived through the religious reversals of the past few decades. Her excommunication in 1570 served primarily to increase chauvinistic fervour. In the popular mind, her apparently miraculous preservation from the plots against her, and her recovery from a dangerous attack of smallpox in 1572, served to show that she was God's chosen one and that England under her guidance was divinely blessed.

The increasing political power of England vis-à-vis the rival European powers also stimulated patriotic feeling. A high point was reached in 1588 when the Armada was defeated and, although the war with Spain was to drag on until 1604, this dramatic victory had a psychological importance far in excess of its strategic importance.

The sheer length of her reign was an undeniable advantage in inculcating a feeling of security and peace and it was not an incongruous idea at all to liken life in England to that during the golden age. Much was made of the internal harmony, the restoration of order, the increased prosperity - all characteristic aspects of the golden age myth. Robert Naunton, the translator of William Camden's History of England, wrote in the Preface to the Reader in 1630:

Before her birth (as some say), even while  
shee was in Her Mothers Wombe, were those  
Golden dayes which wee so many yeares  
enjoyed under her Gracious Gouvernement,  
foretold of in these Verses following...  
"Queene Anne, thou bringest forth a Daughter,  
Begotten by a Royall King,  
And to thy people that come after,  
Thy Wombe shall golden ages bring."  
Such was the goodnesse of God towards her,  
who thus succeeding her sister came as a  
fresh Spring, after a stormy Winter, and  
brought the Shippe of England from a troublous  
and tempestuous Sea, to a safe and quiet Harbour. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>'To the Reader' R. [obert] N. [aunton]. The Historie of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse Elizabeth, Late Queene of England by William Camden, trans. by Robert Naunton. (London, 1630).

With a similar benefit of hindsight, Henry VIII, dating from the early years of the seventeenth century, ends with Cranmer's prophecy at Elizabeth's christening. The playwright puts into Cranmer's mouth a description of her reign, her longevity and celibacy, and the general distress at her death:

..... but she must die;  
She must; the saints must have her; yet a virgin,  
A most unspotted lily shall she pass  
To the ground, and all the world shall mourn her.  
V.v. 59-62.

A tribute to the new king is included by means of the phoenix image. All her qualities and achievements shall pass to him.

So commonplace was the golden age/England equation that the idea could be used ironically as by Nashe "such is this golden age wherein we live, and so replenisht with golden asses of all sortes....", and alluded to bitterly by Puttenham who maintains the presence of its opposite "and peradventure in this iron and malitious age of ours...."<sup>1</sup>

Virgil had associated the idea of the golden age and the imminent coming of a particular figure in his Fourth Eclogue and this short piece had a prolonged influence on all subsequent panegyric pastoral. Virgil was gracefully complimenting the expected child of the consul, Pollio, but the idea of a particular figure whose return will restore such an age had been evolved very much earlier by the Greek astronomical poet, Aratos. He had equated the constellation Virgo with the maiden Justice who had fled from Earth to Heaven at the advent of the iron age. Given this traditional legend, the pastoral was especially suited to praise the Virgin Queen of a verifiable golden age.

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<sup>1</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays, II, 227, 22.

(ii) The Personae of the Queen

It was as Astraea that Elizabeth could be most closely identified with the new golden age. Sir John Davies writes of

The Mayd, which thence descended;  
Hath brought againe the golden dayes,  
And all the world amended.<sup>1</sup>

This appears in his Hymns to Astraea, written for the 1599 accession day celebrations, which cover almost every aspect of the cult of the Queen in her role as the just virgin. As Astraea was Justice and Justice is the virtue which was theoretically supposed to include all others, the use of varied associations was easily accomodated.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth could appear in any guise to suit the occasion, the audience, or the material. Dekker attests to the numerous personae by which she was eulogised in his play, Old Fortunatus (1599). Two old men enter:

1. Are you then travelling to the temple  
of Eliza?
2. Even to her temple are my feeble limmes  
travelling. Some call her Pandora:  
some Gloriana, some Cynthia: some  
Delphoebe, [sic] some Astraea: all by  
severall names to expresse severall  
loves: Yet all those names make but one  
celestiall body, as all those loves  
meete to create but one soule.
1. I am one of her owne countrie, and we  
adore her by the name of Eliza.<sup>3</sup>

Astraea, the golden age, and the pastoral were brought together in an extraordinary image which Peele devised for his pageant Decensus Astraeae (1591) where the imperial Astraea appears at the top of the pageant as a shepherdess with a sheephook. The appearance of a classical figure in an

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<sup>1</sup>Hymne I "Of Astraea".

<sup>2</sup>See Frances A. Yates, Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Wilson, England's Eliza, p.114.

uncompromisingly popular guise was especially suited to a pageant which was written to welcome the new Lord Mayor and which would thus have attracted a large and varied audience. This figure has affinities with the image of the Queen in a broadside of the period which begins "God save her Grace that holds the plow".<sup>1</sup> Here the image recalls Piers Plowman, that traditional figure who was so closely identified with the needs and aspirations of ordinary people.

Elizabeth appeared in so many guises that it is not fanciful to see allusions to her whenever a laudable female figure appears in the literature of the period. As Wilson has stressed, so much did she dominate the imagination of the age that one needs to be constantly receptive to the possibility of these allusions when reading Elizabethan literature. A lyric like Nicholas Breton's "A Pastorall of Phillis and Coridon" gains immeasurably when read with an awareness of the double entendres. Phrases such as "a Bower,/where the heavenly Muses meete", "a chaire,/frindged all about with gold", "the fairest faire", "the Sheepheards joy" have unmistakeably a double reference so that, although at one level it is Phillis, the shepherdess, Coridon's love, at another, it is England's shepherdess, who is the subject of the poem. The central stanza, with its Latin phrase and allusion to the phoenix, is proof of this reading:

This is she, the wise, the rich,  
That the world desires to see:  
This is ipsa quae the which,  
There is none but onely shee.

The extravagance of the imagery ("who would not this Saint adore?") is perfectly in tune with the hyperboles of the cult. The poem ends with a very striking image. On one level it is a rather commonplace, extravagant Petrarchan compliment but on another level it becomes a shrewd reference to the Queen's very real power over her subjects:

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<sup>1</sup>By William Elderton, quoted in Wilson, *ibid.*, p.14.

Thou that art the Sheepheards Queene,  
    looke upon thy silly Swaine:  
By thy comfort have been seene  
    dead men brought to life againe.

Obviously this poem can be read and enjoyed as a superb example of pastoral lyricism but it gains depth and resonance when the gracefully concealed praise of the Queen is perceived.<sup>1</sup>

As it was realized that the pastoral world could, without incongruity, accomodate the vogue for mythological allusions, Elizabeth in her classical guises appeared increasingly among the Arcadian or indigenous shepherds.

"Dorons description of his faire Sheepheardesse Samela", a short lyric from Greene's Menaphon (1589), is saturated with mythological allusions -

"Like to Diana... As faire Aurora... Like lovely Thetis." The poem ends:

        thus faire Samela  
Passeth faire Venus in her brightest hew,  
And Juno in the shew of Majestie:  
        for she's Samela.  
Pallas in wit, all three if you well view,  
For beauty, wit, and matchlesse dignitie,  
        yeeld to Samela.<sup>2</sup>

"The Sheepheards praise of his sacred Diana", first printed anonymously in The Phoenix Nest (1593), is built around the familiar Elizabeth-Diana equation.<sup>3</sup> "Rowlands Song in praise of the fairest Beta" by Michael Drayton, which originally appeared in Idea, The Shepheards Garland (1593) repeatedly associates Beta with various mythological figures. These associations serve to attach to Beta the qualities of the mythological figures alluded to in the poem.

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<sup>1</sup>Englands Helicon, ed. Hugh Macdonald, The Muses' Library (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1950), p.31.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., pp.62-63.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., pp.101-102.



Trim up her golden tresses with Apollos sacred tree,  
O happy sight unto all those that love and honour thee,  
The blessed Angels have prepar'd  
A glorious crowne for thy reward,  
Not such a golden crowne as haughty Caesar weares:  
But such a glittering starrie crowne as Ariadne beares. <sup>1</sup>

(iii) The Pastoral Content of the Eulogistic Plays, Pageants, and Entertainments

In the progresses of Elizabeth one has a very clear illustration of just how easily a propagandist exercise became a means of emphasising the suitability of the pastoral as a mode of eulogy. With pastoral so much a fashionable literary form, especially during the last two decades of the century, the progress of the Queen from her court into the country was naturally celebrated in terms of the contrast between the two settings, the praise of the country life, and an emphasis on that which the country could offer to its important visitor.

The entertainments provided for these progresses were usually an amalgam of all that was most popular at the time. The form combined songs, dances, spectacular devices, masque-like shows, while the content was usually a blend of historical, allegorical, mythological, and indigenous folk lore - all attuned to praising the Queen.

On a visit to Leicester at Wanstead in May 1578 (or May 1579) there was presented one of the earliest pastoral entertainments - Sidney's Lady of the May. A shepherd and a forester present their contrasting life styles and the Queen is asked to choose between them. Although it has been suggested that, in Sidney's terms, the Queen made the wrong choice, so commonplace was the idea that the pastoral life was of positive value that the Queen chose the shepherd.

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., pp.24-27.

Sidney had probably been present at Lord Leicester's lavish entertainment in 1575 at Kenilworth. One part of it, devised by Gascoigne, which was not actually presented owing to bad weather, reveals an early association between the Queen and Diana. "Dyana, passing in chase with her Nymphs, taketh knowledge of the countrie, and thereby calleth to mind how (neere seventeen yeares past) she lost in those coastes one of the best-beloved Nimphs, called Zabeta. She describeth the rare virtues of Zabeta...." <sup>1</sup>

In 1578 Elizabeth visited Norwich. Although the entertainments presented by towns were always more akin to the medieval pageants and tableaux vivants, a masque presented then involved the ridicule of Venus and Cupid and the exaltation of Diana. The mythological emphasis here contrasts significantly with the lack of classical content in the heavily allegorical pageant during Elizabeth's progress through London before her Coronation and this change clearly indicates the growth of the classical influence. By 1591 Peele could combine the classical and the pastoral in a pageant for the town. <sup>2</sup>

The pastoral content of the entertainments increased yearly. In 1591 at Elvetham in Hampshire on the third day, in the morning, under the Queen's window "there were three excellent Musicians, who being disguised in auncient countrey attire, did greet her with a pleasant song of Coridon and Phyllida... it pleased her Highness... to command it againe." <sup>3</sup>  
The Queen obviously enjoyed such conceits as, on the next day, the Faerie

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<sup>1</sup>John Nichols, The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth (London: John Nichols & Son, 1823), I, 502.

<sup>2</sup>See Decensus Astraeae.

<sup>3</sup>Nichols, III, 116.

The song, "In the merry moneth of May/In a morne, by breake of day", was subsequently published in Englands Helicon (1600).

Queen appeared beneath her window "dauncing with her maides about her".  
The Queen "commanded to heare it sung and to be danced three times over".<sup>1</sup>

At Bisham in 1592, there was an elaborate conflation of pastoral, mythology, and folk lore. A wild man greets the Queen. Pan and two virgins tend sheep on a hill and praise the virtues of "the Queene of the Islande, the wonder of the world, and Nature's glory". Finally Ceres lays down her crown before the more worthy Elizabeth.<sup>2</sup>

In the same year at Sudeley stylized pastoral devices appeared in an actual pastoral setting. Seldom did the two come together at all but what more appropriate for a visit to the pastoral Cotswolds than a pastoral entertainment? First spoke an old shepherd.<sup>3</sup> Then followed a playlet featuring Apollo, Daphne, and a shepherd who woos Daphne despite her vows of chastity. Inevitably she appeals directly to the "Queen of chastity" for help. After this, the high Constable of Cotsholde "clothed in sheepes-skins, face and all" was to have addressed the Queen through an interpreter as he himself "speaks no language but the Rammish tongue". "Our Constable commaundes this to be kept holliday: all our shepheards are assembled; and if shepheards pastimes may please, how joyful would they be if it would please you to see them".<sup>4</sup> Finally, Meliboeus, Nisa, and a "Cutter of Cotsholde" appear in a playlet.

In addition to these entertainments there were the eulogistic plays written for presentation at Court. Many of these, for instance, Endimion by Lyly presented at Court in 1586, were essentially mythological with incidental pastoral scenes and characters. The pastoralism gradually

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<sup>1</sup>Nichols, p.119.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.134.

<sup>3</sup>See above, Ch.II, Section (iii).

<sup>4</sup>Nichols, III, 140.

increased and eventually pastoral plays were recognised as a distinct genre. One of the earliest surviving pastoral plays is Peele's Arraignement of Paris (1581) which used the judgement of Paris legend to eulogise the Queen. In the legend this particular incident occurs while Paris is a shepherd and inevitably the pastoral is an important ingredient in the play. Colin, Hobbinol, Diggon, and Thenot mingle with Paris, Oenoene, Faunus, Silvanus, and the major Olympian deities. Peele also became closely associated with the pageants for the inaugural ceremonies for the new Lord Mayor. In these, too, pastoral was used as a eulogistic device. Decensus Astraeae written for the new mayor, William Webbe, seems to concentrate on praise of the Queen rather than the new mayor who is alluded to only briefly. Typical of the eulogistic tone and pastoral sentiments are the following lines:

Long may she live, long may she governe us  
In peace triumphant, fortunate in warres  
Our faire Astraea, our Pandora faire,  
Our faire Eliza, or Zabeta faire.  
Sweet Cynthias darling, beauteous Cyprias peere  
As deere to England and true English heartes,  
As Pompey to the Citizens of Rome:

. . . . .

Astraea with hir sheehook on the top of the pageant

Feed on my flocke among the gladsome greene  
Where heavenly Nectar flowes above the banckes.  
Such pastures are not common to be seene,  
Pay to immortall Jove immortall thanks: <sup>1</sup>

During the nineties Peele was again employed by the Court to write poems for November 17. Since 1559 there had been an annual mock tournament on that day before which speeches and poems were recited. For the accession day tournament of 1595 Peele wrote a blank verse poem Anglorum Feriae, the first half of which praises England and Elizabeth, alluding particularly to several recent attempts on her life, the second half being devoted to the introduction of the jousts. Some extracts will reveal the patriotism and

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<sup>1</sup>The Life and Minor Works of George Peele, ed. David H. Horne (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p.215.

the pastoralism.

Proclayme the day of Englandes happines  
The daies of Peace the daies of quietnes,

. . . . .

Leade Englandes Lovely Shepherdes in a daunce  
Ore hill and dale and downes and daysie plotts

. . . . .

Yeares that for us begett this golden age  
Wherein we live in safety under hir

. . . . .

wherein by mercy and by miracle  
she was reserved for Englandes happines,  
and comferte of the longe afflicted flock  
That straide lyke skattered sheep skard fro the folde: <sup>1</sup>

Pastoralism was wont to appear in almost all the literary forms of the last two decades as a means of eulogising the golden world of Elizabeth. The pastoral which traditionally had involved singing matches and in which the love interest had been an important ingredient, was particularly suited to lyrical treatment. In the lyrics of the eighties and nineties one finds an extensive use of pastoral as eulogy. The numerous song books and anthologies published throughout this period attest to the quantity of these lyrics and their popularity. One of the earliest of these deliberately eulogistic lyrics was the one that appeared as Colin Clout's song in the "Aprill" eclogue of The Shepheardes Calender which was published anonymously in 1579. Even if it did not start the vogue for the eulogistic lyric it at least presaged the lyrical outburst that followed.

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., pp.266-267.



(iv) An Analysis of Pastoral as Eulogy - Spenser's "Aprill" Eclogue

"This Aeglogue is purposely intended to the honor and prayse of our most gracious sovereigne, Queene Elizabeth." <sup>1</sup> With these words E.K. categorically reveals the eulogistic purpose. April, the month which so strikingly reveals the blessings of the returning Spring, is an appropriate choice for praise of the Queen whose presence had brought back the fabled golden age, a time, described by Ovid, when:

Spring was eternal, and the placid Zephyrus with warm breezes lightly touched the flowers, born without seeds, untilled the earth bore its fruits and the unploughed field grew hoary with heavy ears of wheat. Rivers of milk and rivers of nectar flowed, and yellow honey dripped from the green oaks. <sup>2</sup>

April is also associated with the refreshing showers which benefit the earth much as God's grace refreshes mankind. Grace proves an important element in this lyric as it does again in Canto X Book VI of the later work, The Faerie Queene.

The eclogue is linked firmly with one of the Calender's major themes - Colin as poet and lover - because this song is given as an example of Colin's poetic ability, an ability which is being stifled by his infatuation for Rosalind. Colin's friendship with Hobbinoll, which also lends narrative continuity, is stressed here too as it is Hobbinoll who gives us Colin's song. Another theme of the Calender, suggested by the very title, is that of change, ageing, and death, both in nature and in man. In this lyric there is, conversely, a deliberate suggestion of stasis. Not once is change mentioned. The pictorial imagery - we are shown Elisa on the

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<sup>1</sup>The Argument introducing 'Aprill' The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, eds. J.C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1932).

<sup>2</sup>Metamorphoses i. 107-112.

"greene" - tends to emphasise this sense of permanence.<sup>1</sup> The use of the present tense ("See, where she sits upon the grassie greene") also gives the impression that this image of Elisa is continually present and immutable. Elizabeth made much of her motto, semper eadem, to emphasise the permanence and security of her reign. In this lyric, Spenser has managed to convey a sense of a moment crystallized in time. In Elisa's presence it is forever April.<sup>2</sup> However, the vicissitudes of the sublunar world form part of the framing dialogue of Thenot and Hobbinoll. References to Colin's present unhappy state as contrasted to his former equilibrium, and to approaching night, not only link the eclogue to the Calender in mood and theme but serve to highlight one of the major ideas of the lyric - the extraordinary ability of Elisa to negate the effects of time.

The introductory dialogue between Hobbinoll and Thenot, often omitted when the song is anthologised, plays an important part in providing a rustic frame for the "silver song". Not only does it link the song to the rest of the Calender but the alternately rhyming decasyllabics provide the maximum contrast to the formal artifice of the stanzas that follow. Colin's song is made to stand in contrast to Thenot and Hobbinoll's dialogue for the very reason that its maker is Colin, it is a "laye", and its subject is the Queen. It is a "silver" song about a golden age. Perhaps the implication is that Elizabeth's reign is the closest approximation to the fabled Golden age that is humanly possible. In addition, silver is the metal which ranks next to gold and which is characterized in a

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<sup>1</sup>In almost every other eclogue there is talk of time past or time future which of itself betokens mutability. See, for example, "Januarie" ll. 21-23; "Februarie" ll. 1-2, 11-14; "Maye" ll. 152-155.

<sup>2</sup>cf. Dekker's lines from Old Fortunatus. The Prologue at Court. "I weepe for joy to see the world decay,/Yet see Eliza flourishing like May", ll. 48-9. The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. Fredson Bowers, 4 Vols. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1953), I, 114.

pure state by its lustrous white colour, an appropriately virginal connotation. During the sixteenth century the word was also used to describe sound, "a clear, gentle resonance... soft toned, melodious (1526) ... eloquent, persuasive, sweet-spoken (1594)".<sup>1</sup>

The lyric opens with a miniature invocation to the Muses. The poet calls upon the Nymphs and the Muses to sing in praise of the one whom he then goes on to praise. Throughout the lyric, Spenser acclimatizes the mythological figures to the native English pastoral setting and here the Nymphs and Muses are described in deliberately simple terms. "Ye daynty Nymphs, that in this blessed Brooke/doe bathe your brest" (ll.1-2). The impressive and rather imposing qualities of the Muses are softened by their being described as "Virgins" (l.41) which suggests innocence and youth. The slightly archaic phraseology ("Ye", "eke") which appears throughout serves to enhance the chivalric tone of the eulogy and to increase the sense of artifice.

In the second stanza the saintly qualities of Elisa are emphasised. She is the "flowre of Virgins" to Protestant Englishmen. Spenser was aware that Marot had depicted Francis I as Pan, and here Pan and Syrinx not only allude to Elizabeth's actual parents but, in mythology, the child of Pan and Syrinx was Song. This equation of Elisa with Song relates to the qualities of order and harmony which Elizabeth as Queen had imposed on the chaos that she inherited just as Song (Art) creates order from chaos. The vocabulary is rich and dense. "The flowre of Virgins" (l.48) can mean the most perfect example of virgins as well as referring specifically to the Rose - the symbolic flower of virgins. The Rose reappears later as the traditional Tudor symbol. Similarly the phrase "so sprong her grace/"

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<sup>1</sup>The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Third Edition Revised. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959).

Of heavenly race" (l.52) has a double meaning. The words "her grace" might refer merely to "she", the Queen, or they might refer to her particular quality of grace in its deepest religious sense - a meaning which is reinforced later in the song. She is not subject to change, decay, or death, semper eadem. Like the Virgin Mary, lack of original sin ensures her immortality, "No mortall blemishe may her blotte".

After these rather profound theological allusions, Spenser deliberately emphasises the rural "Queen of the May" image in stanza three. The imperative "See" directs our attention to this scene just as deliberately as the technical devices of Botticelli focus our eyes on his Primavera. Informality is stressed. The "mayden Queene" is sitting "upon the grassie greene" (l.55). The stanza combines the sense of artifice and the natural. "Embellish" suggests an artificial means of beautifying. The use of the colours and appendages of heraldry, and the archaisms ("Yclad", "Scarlot") give the scene a pomp and formality which is, however, successfully linked with rural simplicity. This is effected by the particularized naming of the uncultivated flowers of the English countryside. The mention of particular flowers and specific colours enhances the pictorial quality of the scene. The flowers are those of all seasons - as all seasons are present in this golden age where nothing decays or changes. Bay leaves are particularly appropriate for a virgin Queen as Daphne was transformed into a Bay tree to preserve her virginity from Apollo's ardour. This virgin Queen can, without incongruity, be compared with Venus as well. The "Cremosin coronet" (l.59) recalls Venus who was traditionally crowned with red roses.

The imperatives and demands of stanza four heighten the enthusiastic tone which has already appeared. In this stanza, words such as "angelick" (l.64), "heavenly", "grace" (l.66) again emphasise the divine qualities of God's representative on earth. The allusion to the dynastic union of



the Houses of York and Lancaster is neatly combined with a compliment to Elisa's complexion (ll.68-9).

Stanzas five and six compare the Queen to golden Phoebus and silver Cynthia, a comparison greatly to the Queen's advantage. "Golden" and "silver" ensure that we think not only of the colours traditionally associated with these two heavenly bodies but of their magnificence and splendour and, by extension, the splendour of the brighter Elisa. One thinks, too, of the actual metals here introduced into a fragile natural setting. As in stanza three ("Embellish the sweete Violet" l.63), Spenser, the artist, like an engraver or an enameller, inlays the ingredients of the natural scene. The artifact is given permanence.

Spenser infuses a commonplace Renaissance conceit with fresh charm. The monosyllabic "thrust" (l.73) reveals the assurance of Phoebus. The length of the pentameter line 75 suggests the breadth and extent of Elisa's brightness whereas l.76 "it did him amaze", although a short trimeter, has a ponderous quality which befits the amazement of Phoebus. The brevity of "blusht" suggests well the embarrassment of the hitherto self-assured sun god. "Thrust" and "blusht" are linked by internal rhyme which serves to emphasise the contrast between the two actions. Likewise the plosives of the monosyllabic "dasht" (l.85) emphasise the finality of Cynthia's displacement.

Significantly, although the poet alludes to the major Olympian deities, they do not actually gather around Elisa on the green. This pastoral scene is reserved for those whose presence will not destroy the essentially simple nature of the gathering.

After the mythological heightening of effect, Spenser once again concentrates on the simplicities of pastoral life. In stanza seven, Pan and Syrinx appear as any proud father and mother, and the poet, Colin Clout



the shepherd, enters to honour his "godesse plaine" (l.97). The deliberate use of the artless "Bellibone" (l.92), "younglings" (l.95), and "forswonck and forswatt" (l.99) anchors the silver song to the rural setting.

In stanza eight we are again asked to look at the particular scene "where my Goddesse shines" (l.101). Given the cluster of religious associations which have already gathered around Elisa we read the lines "where my Goddesse shines" and "That it a heaven is to heare" as more than mere hyperbolic sentiment. Calliope, the muse of poetic inspiration, leads the other Muses into the presence of Elisa in answer to the poet's initial request to help him celebrate her in song. The sibilants and actual speed of the pentameter line 100 befit Calliope's swiftness. The word "trace", too, suggests, by means of its sibilant, speed, as well as the more precise image of their footprints marking their passage through the undergrowth.

The colloquial "can it foote" (l.109) of stanza nine ensures that this dance of the Graces has close affinities with the dances of country folk. The classical figures are perfectly acclimatized to the indigenous rural setting. The dance here described is an informal version of the more rarefied dance of the Graces in the sixth book of The Faerie Queene. Although the dance is presented simply, as if it were an ordinary country dance, and the tone is deliberately casual ("Wants not a fourth grace, to make the daunce even?/Let that rowme to my Lady be yeven"), the stanza, with its audacious concept, forms the climax of the lyric. During the sixteenth century the three Graces formed a favourite pictorial and literary subject. In Classical mythology these three lovely sisters were associated with gentleness, kindness, youth, innocence, purity, gaiety, and friendship. Beautiful themselves, they conferred beauty on others. They were closely associated with the Muses and were able to add grace and beauty to literature and the other arts. Their special function was to attend Venus and adorn her with sweet scented flowers. Pictorially they were

always represented with hands and arms lovingly intertwined. Of all the figures of Classical mythology, the three Graces were most easily assimilated into a Christian framework. In Christian terminology, Grace was that particular expression of God's benevolence to man which allowed for his salvation. Grace could be freely sued for. As the unmerited favour of God is was closely linked to that supreme Christian quality, Charity. Indeed the three Graces were frequently referred to as the Charities. In a Christianised mythology the three Graces become the bearers to mankind of the unmerited bounty of God.

Given the connotations and traditional significance of the Graces, to suggest that Elisa become one of their number is to apotheosize her. The Christian apotheosis is described in terms of classical mythology in keeping with the Classical tenor of the rest of the lyric. Here, too, an audacious concept is stated in informal, unpretentious terms.

The glittering qualities of the scene are emphasised in *l.*118 where "bright" recalls "blaze" (*l.*43), the brilliance of stanzas five and six, and "shines" (*l.*101). The "Ladies of the lake" were traditional figures of medieval romance who had been evoked at Kenilworth in 1575. Chloris, whom Ovid had identified with Flora, brings the foreign olive into the English scene to emphasise one of the most striking aspects of Elizabeth's reign. The olive was an emblem of peace and fecundity. There had been no war for almost twenty years and this virgin Queen had proved most fruitful both in the material and spiritual spheres. The scene here described could easily be part of one of the actual entertainments presented before the Queen on her progresses. Indeed the whole lyric resembles a tableau from one of these elaborate entertainments in which figures from Classical mythology, folk lore, and the actual countryside assemble to entertain and venerate the Queen.

In stanza eleven, the poet addresses the virginal "shepherds daughters" whose unsophisticated manner is suggested in the poet's reminder about their appearance. They are to bring the flowers of all seasons to adorn the already flower-bedecked Elisa. The flowers are referred to by their colloquial names, the names by which these simple maidens would know them.

The final stanza begins with an imperative which emphasises the sense of occasion which has been evoked despite the rural setting. The gratitude of "dame Eliza" is gently requested, and the poet dismisses the many figures he has evoked. The simplicity of the final image brings the song to a quiet close. Thenot and Hobbinoll reappear briefly speaking in an unpolished verse form which again frames the metrical sophistication of Colin's song. They are convinced of Colin's foolishness in deliberately abjuring a talent great enough to produce such a song. The reference to the approaching darkness, although indeed a traditional pastoral close, gains poignancy from its very contrast to the glittering, static world evoked in the lyric. The Calender is firmly set in the, often harsh, realities of a finite world. The emblems provide a final tribute to the virgin goddess eulogised in the song.

Spenser's metrical achievement in this eulogy is very impressive especially given the experimental nature of the Calender. He was obviously inspired by the rhythms of native songs, by Ronsard's metrical experiments, and by the varied line lengths of the madrigals and ayres, the vogue for which had recently arrived from Italy. Hobbinoll describes how the song was "tuned... unto the Waters fall" (l.36), an ability which Colin shares with the birds ("June" ll.7-8). Contemporary references to Spenser often made use of this conceit to suggest his distinctive lyrical qualities. The varied line lengths ensure the changes in speed and rhythm which closely echo the sense. On the printed page the stanzas seem to be

made up of identical units but, within a basic pattern, there is much variety. The initial line of each stanza is sometimes a pentameter, sometimes a tetrameter. One can contrast *ℓ.1* and *ℓ.143* -

"Ye dayntyē Nym̄phs, thāt īn thīś blēssēd Brōoke" //

"Nōw r̄yse up Ēlīsa, deked ās thōu ārt".

The second line of each stanza, although generally a dimeter (that blēssēd wīght" *ℓ.47*), becomes, at times, a trimeter ("whēre m̄y Gōddēssē shīnes" *ℓ.101*). The concluding line of each stanza is a tetrameter except for the final line of the lyric which is a trimeter. These serve to bring each elated stanza to a dignified close.

Despite this variety of stress within the lines, all appear to have the same duration. The pentameters are deliberately quickened and this enhances the sense, especially of such lines as "I see Calliope speede her to the place", and "And whither rennes this bevie of Ladies bright" (*ℓℓ.100* and *118*), where the sibilants and palatals increase the fluency. In contrast, the dimeters are given extra weight and length, with varying iambs and anapaests, again to enhance the sense. "Helpe mē tō blaze" (*ℓ.43*) has the emphasis on "blaze", so important a function here. The seriousness of the request calls for a slow and purposeful measure, to which the long vowels contribute. Anapaests are present when the number of syllables is increased ("Let hīm, īf hē dare *ℓ.79*) so that the duration of the line remains constant to suit the technical requirements of a musical accompaniment.

One only has to compare the differences in sound between "Nōw shē īs ā stōne/And makēs dāyly mōne" (*ℓℓ.88-9*) and "Sō sweetely thēy plāy,/ And sīng āll thē wāy" (*ℓℓ.106-7*) to appreciate the variation achieved within the same metrical structures.



The pentameters and tetrameters are mainly iambic but the lines begin with a stressed syllable whenever imperatives call for emphasis, for instance, in lines 55, 64, 82. These imperatives, the rhetorical questions, the speed of the pentameters, the choice of evocative vocabulary, all ensure that the elated tone, and the mood of wonder and delight, are sustained throughout. As the lyric progresses the song-like quality increases. In the penultimate stanza the initial tetrameter with its increased number of unaccented syllables ("Ye shepheards daughters, that dwell on the greene,"), and the trimeter in the second line ("hye you there āpace") emphasise the lilting rhythm. This jocund rhythm had appeared in the seventh stanza where, for the first time, the second line had been formed by a trimeter rather than a dimeter, ("such ā Bellibone"). This trimeter in the second line is retained until the final two stanzas where the dimeter is substituted to emphasise the stateliness and ceremony ("in royall āray:"), and to decelerate the rhythm. The final line ("I will part them all you āmong"), a trimeter, whose duration is extended by long vowels, echoes the closing cadences of a musical composition.

The use of adjacent and interlaced rhymes was an innovation in English poetry and in this elaborate stanza form Spenser reveals the concern for sound which was to lead to the intricacies of the stanzas in The Faerie Queene.

One must remember that this was the first example of lyrical pastoral eulogy in English. By 1600, Englands Helicon could include a great number of metrically elaborate eulogistic lyrics. There is no doubt that even where Spenser's song was not directly imitated, as it was by Drayton in his third Eclogue, the influence of this lyric was enormous. Spenser chose to eulogise the Queen in a lyric revealing much formal artifice. Given the deliberately subdued and plain manner of the rest of the Calender,



the artifice is itself seen to be part of the eulogy.<sup>1</sup> Just as art can impose order on the chaos of words, sounds, rhythms, so such a ruler as Elizabeth can, by her presence bring "a resolving harmony to the conflict and disorder of the real world".<sup>2</sup> Spenser describes, in this lyric, a golden world of harmony and order wherein nature is both sympathetic and beautiful, and time and change have no place.

(v) The Death of the Queen - Pastoral Lament

So deeply ingrained was the adulation of Elizabeth in pastoral terms that on her death in 1603 it would be surprising not to find this event discussed in these terms. Obviously the death of any renowned person called for expressions of grief however perfunctory. The length of her reign, the undoubted achievements during those forty-four years, and the care with which she had nurtured the adulation of her subjects, lead one to suppose that some, at least, of the laments were more than conventional. In many of these eulogistic elegies, grief at the death of the Queen was shrewdly tempered by the joyful welcome to the new King, but in even the most trite, there often appears an expression of genuine dismay.

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<sup>1</sup>Only "November" has a similarly ornate form befitting its elegiac function. These two eclogues are deliberately complementary. Spenser was aware of the achievement of this eulogy. See "Daphnaida" ll.227-232 where he alludes to it.

<sup>2</sup>Patrick Cullen, Spenser, Marvell, and the Renaissance Pastoral (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p.112. The attitude towards the poet as artist in the Acidale episode in Canto X of The Faerie Queene, Bk.6, is a further development of this early idea. It is no wonder that "Aprill" and stanzas 6-17 of Canto X have marked similarities.

Yet gracious Queene, needes must we hold thee deare,  
And evermore thinke on thy Virgin raigne:  
In peace thou ruld us foure and fourtie yeare,  
Spight of proude Rome, and ambitious Spaine.  
Oh Heavens! why fround you on this sinfull earth,  
In taking from us Queene Elizabeth. <sup>1</sup>

The expressions of grief took many forms and direct references or allusions to her death appeared in prose and verse. All the varied guises in which she had traditionally been praised reappear in these elegiac writings. Dekker expresses eloquently the effect of the loss of her many-faceted personality on her various subjects:

To report of her death (like a thunderclap) was able to kill thousands, it tooke away hearts from millions: for having brought up (even under her wing) a nation that was almost begotten and borne under her; that never shouted any other 'Ave' than for her name, never sawe the face of any Prince but her selfe, never understood what that strange out-landish word 'Change' signified; how was it possible, but that her sicknes should throw abroad an universall feare, and her death an astonishment? She was the Courtiers treasure, therefore he had cause to mourne: the Lawyers sword of justice, he might well faint: the Merchants patronesse, he had reason to look pale: the Citizens mother, he might best lament: the Shepheards Goddesse, and should not he droope? <sup>2</sup>

Indeed her "Shepheards" soon showed that they did "droope" and immediately after her death there appeared laments couched in pastoral terms. An Elegie upon the death of the high and renowned Princesse, our late Soveraigne Elizabeth by I.L. refers throughout to Elizabeth as Beta, Deborah, Astraea, and Esther, but concentrates on her pastoral role.

Lament the Lady of the Faiery-land

. . . . .

Lament, lament, you Sheepeheards daughters all,  
And eke you Virgins chast, lament her fall  
The Godesse of your sports is lapt in lead,

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<sup>1</sup>Stanza twenty-four of a thirty stanza lament entitled Anglorum Lacrimae. Dedicated by Richard Johnson to Robert Lee, Lord Mayor of London, and the Knights and Aldermen of London. Imprinted at London, 1603. Bodleian Library, Malone, 294 (6).

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Dekker, The Wonderfull Yeare, 1603, ed. G.B. Harrison, Elizabethan and Jacobean Quartos (Edinburgh University Press, 1966), p.19.

Then sing her Requiem in some dolefull Verse  
Or do the songs of Colin Clout rehearse.

. . . . .

Raine ever there on that Elyzian greene:  
Eliza, well may be Elyziiums Queene. <sup>1</sup>

An extensive pastoral lament in verse and prose, with a diplomatic welcome to James, by Henry Chettle, appeared in 1603. His inclusion of a description of the funeral was certain to ensure the sale of his work. On the title page appeared the following description of the work:

Englandes Mourning Garment: Worne here by plaine Shepheardes; in memorie of their sacred Mistresse, Elizabeth, Queene of Vertue while shee lived, and Theame of Sorrow, being dead. To which is added the true manner of her Emperiall Funerall. After which foloweth the Shepheards Spring-Song, for entertainment of King Iames our most potent Soveraigne. Dedicated to all that loved the deceased Queene, and honor the living King. <sup>2</sup>

In the dedication the author writes "the manner is handled betweene Shepheardes, the forme of speach like the persons, rude: Affection exceedeth Eloquence, and I have not shewne much Arte." <sup>3</sup> One notes the emphasis on decorum and the description of the welcome to James as a "Spring-Song". James did succeed in Spring but, in pastoral literature, praise of a new ruler inevitably dwelt on the return of Spring with the accession. The work reveals a combination of stylized pastoral sentiments in verse and the journalistic reporting of events in prose. One is left with the impression that the pastoral content is there for convention and not because Chettle felt much inherent interest in the pastoral mode as such.

The work begins with a dialogue in verse between two shepherds, Thenot and Collin, in which they express their dismay at Eliza's death.

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<sup>1</sup>Bodleian Library, Malone, 294 (10), pp.A3, B2.

<sup>2</sup>Malone 294 (12).

<sup>3</sup>p. A ii.

There follows a prose passage describing Collin's grief and his swooning, which causes the Nymphs and shepherds to gather around. He recovers and tells the company that "they had lost that sacred Nymph, that careful Shepheardesse Eliza, but if it pleased them to lend attention, he would repeate something of her worth, memorie, that should live in despite of death".<sup>1</sup> There follows a prose account of her reign. In the midst of this, comes the following:

I want but the Arcadian Shepheards inchaunting phrase of speaking, that was many times witnesse to her iust mercies, and mercifull iustice: yet rude as I am, I have presumed to handle this excellent Theame, in regard the Funerall hastens on, of that sometime most Serene Lady, and yet I see none, or at least past one or two that have sung anything since her departure worth the hearing; and of them, they that are best able, scarce remember her Maiestie.<sup>2</sup>

There follows another passage in verse reproaching contemporary poets, mentioned either by their nom de plumes or by allusions to their works, for their tardiness in bewailing Eliza's death. More prose follows, and the work ends with "The Funerall Song Betweene Collin and Thenot; Dryope and Chloris, upon the death of the sacred Virgin Elizabeth". Finally, "these Epitaphs ended, the Nymphs and Shepheards led by Collin and Thenot, who afore plaide heavy tunes on their oaten pipes, gotte to their severall cottages, and spent their time till midnight, mourning for Eliza".<sup>3</sup>

A rather pedestrian poem of lament by Henry Raymonde concentrates on the pastoral-rural attributes of Astrabonica.<sup>4</sup> The metrical variety

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.A.3.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.D.2.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p.F.

<sup>4</sup>The Maiden Queene. Entituled The Britaine Shepheardes teares for the death of Astrabonica. London, 1607. Bodleian. Facs.e.47.



of its twenty-one cantos clearly reveals the influence, on even the least talented, of the metrical experiments which Spenser had made almost a quarter of a century earlier. Canto IX, entitled, "An Ode. Descriptive of the Dead Queene", consists of ten six-lined stanzas of tetrameters and trimeters, rhyming a a b c c b.

Come gentle Flora to our Queene  
Bring Dill and Ladie-lases greene,  
To deck our rurall glory.  
Here gladent lies the splendent Sunne,  
Whose influence our day begun,  
That all the meades are sory.

The little Goates do learne to weepe,  
So do the Wolves, so do the Sheepe  
The Signets as in dying  
Warble upon Meanders shore,  
The Vultures for her losse deplore,  
In their unlucky crying.<sup>1</sup>

One of Canto X's twenty-four stanzas makes use of the conventional phoenix image to introduce reference to the new King. This conceit appeared frequently as it neatly combined a favourite symbol of the Queen with the acceptance of death and a new order.

A Phoenix thy dead cinders gave,  
From thee a roiall king we have,  
Good angels be his guider,  
And Monarchs his posteritie,  
Til time the day of doome descry  
He is our cares devider.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.B.3.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.C.

The prosaic, James, was immediately given appropriate mythological personae, to link him with the cult of Elizabeth. In A briefe and Familiar Epistle Shewing His Maiesties Most Lawfull, Honourable and iust title to all his Kingdomes by Robert Fletcher, printed in London, 1603 (Bodleian Malone 294 [2]) there appears the following:

"Our Cynthia in the evening set,  
or after midnight tooke her rest:  
Dan Phoebus straight did not forget  
to thinke his mansion must be blest."

Echoes of Spenser's "Aprill" appear in this canto too:

Yet wil I tell although a Swaine,  
The golden age was in thy raigne.  
It was an Aprill season.  
Thy bountie seem'd the verdant showers,  
Thy vertues rare a wreath of flowers,  
As sun-beames bright thy reason.

The final canto, entitled "Britans Ode", in rhyming tetrameter couplets, ends with an extraordinary image which reveals well the permeation of modes of thought by pastoral imagery:

So the rose-bud of our spring,  
Died like every pleasant thing.  
So the Lilly of our field,  
Presently her life did yeeld.

. . . . .

O Astrabonica I crid,  
And eccho halfe the name repli'd.  
Bonica is gone to keepe,  
A flocke of heavens golden sheepe. <sup>1</sup>

Henry Chettle had pointedly reproached the best poets of the age for not having shown alacrity in mourning Elizabeth. It does seem rather strange that, despite many publications in prose and verse by minor, and often anonymous, writers, there did not appear a formal collection of elegiac verse as there had done in memory of Sir Philip Sidney. <sup>2</sup> Given the conventional pastoral treatment of Elizabeth, this would have seemed an ideal opportunity for the publication of pastoral elegies. The pastoral elegy, sanctioned by Virgil in his Fifth Eclogue which was itself based on Theocritus' First Idyll, had become known in English poetry through Spenser's "November" eclogue and his "Astrophel". Indeed two poets who were consciously imitative of Spenser and who remained so despite the new poetic fashions, Giles and Phineas Fletcher, did produce pastoral elegies

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<sup>1</sup>The Maiden Queene, p.D.3.

<sup>2</sup>Oxford and Cambridge published miscellanies of, mainly, Latin poems but no collection appeared independent of these institutional contributions.

but, even in their work, the pastoral is used in rather a different way from the pastoralism of "Astrophel". "A Canto Upon the Death of Eliza" by Giles Fletcher, purports to be the lament of a Nymph on this occasion.<sup>1</sup> Despite the conscious echo of Spenser, "And to the waters fall thy musicke fit'st", the fact that a nymph is the mouthpiece for the lament, and the final mention of a shepherd, the poem is very different from "Astrophel" or Bryskett's "A pastorall Aeglogue upon the death of Sir Phillip Sidney Knight". It concentrates on aspects of nature, often noted with careful empiricism, as in the lines on the violets ("Tell me ye velvet headed violets/That fringe the crooked banke with gawdie blewe,") as if it is this which interests the poet rather more than the lament over Eliza. The deliberately optimistic ending, although by now an elegiac convention, emphasises the impression that this poem is really a vehicle for the writer's own poetic interests rather than a vehicle for praise of Elizabeth. Pastoral writing, even in the hands of a Spenserian, was already very different in tone, manner, and content from that of the eighties.

Phineas Fletcher's contribution, which like Giles Fletcher's appeared in an academic miscellany published at Cambridge in 1603, is more consciously pastoralised.<sup>2</sup> The singer is now Coridon, "a cruel heard-groomes boy", but, once again, the pastoral is not used to lament an essentially pastoral Eliza. She is mentioned and mourned without being made one with the pastoral setting. The poem is essentially a clever means of welcoming James, a change of purpose heralded by the following conceit:

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<sup>1</sup>The Poetical Works of Giles Fletcher and Phineas Fletcher, ed. Frederick S. Boas, 2 vols. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1908-9), I, 1-3.

<sup>2</sup>The collection was entitled Sorrowes Joy, Or, A Lamentation for our late deceased Sovereigne Elizabeth, with a triumph for the prosperous succession of our gracious King, James.

Is death the cause of life? or can that same  
Be my great'st blisse, which was my great'st annoy?  
Eliza's dead, and can it be  
Eliza's death brings joy to me?  
Hell beeing the cause, why heavenly is the joy? <sup>1</sup>

There is again an echo of Spenser ("and turning all/Unto the humming rivers fall,") but here too we are far from the spirit of "Astrophel". The final stanza unsurprisingly consists of pastoral's conventional mention of the hour and the elegy's conventional change of mood. The true purpose of the poem is emphasised in the rather incongruous reiteration of the unpastoral name, James.

By this the old nights head gan to be gray,  
And dappled round with many a whited spot,  
So that the boy through ruinous nights decay,  
Saw the first birth of the new infant day,  
So up he rose and to his home he got;  
And all the way of James he lowdly sang,  
And all the way the plaine,  
Answered James againe;  
That all the woods of James and th' heaven lowdly rang. <sup>2</sup>

Michael Drayton, another consciously Spenserian poet, welcomed James, but, strangely, did not lament Elizabeth, an omission which apparently surprised his contemporaries and led to a check in his poetic career. <sup>3</sup>

Samuel Daniel, the only other major poet who produced a work on the events of 1603, concentrated on the politic welcome of James although he did wisely include, among his seventy-three stanzas, three (stanzas eight to ten) which treat of Elizabeth. <sup>4</sup> The poem is not a pastoral.

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<sup>1</sup>Poetical Works, I, 92.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.94.

<sup>3</sup>See ll.17-36 of his poem "To Master George Sandys".

<sup>4</sup>"A Panegyrike Congratulatorie to the Kings most excellent Maiestie." The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel, ed. Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, 5 vols. (Printed for Private Circulation Only, 1885-1896), I (1885), 143-167.



It does seem that the major practising poets of the day, one thinks particularly of Jonson and Donne, and those who were influenced by them, did not consider either the cult of Elizabeth or the pastoral - one of the cult's major sources of material - as a source of interest or inspiration. The pastoral lament of the dead Queen was not a preoccupation of the intellects who were forging a new poetry.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PASTORAL AS COMMENT

#### (i) The Satirical Possibilities of Pastoral

The consciously moral aim of poetry had resulted in the feeling that if one could not praise the good, one should, at least, attack the bad. The pastoral genre was suited to either of these functions especially as it was considered allegorical both by nature and by tradition. In Webbe's words, the pastoral poets:

under these personnes, as it were in a cloake of simplicitie, ... would eyther sette foorth the prayses of theyr freendes, without the note of flattery, or enveigh grievously against abuses, without any token of bytternesse.<sup>1</sup>

Under this "cloake" or "veil" one could say what would otherwise be embarrassing or even foolhardy. At the most superficial level the allegorical mode enabled one to comment on, or criticize, any matter under the guise of talking about something else. Pastoral terms acted as a set of counters. At a deeper level the pastoral encompassed a satirical attitude as the accepted values of the pastoral world stood in stark contrast to those of the urban-court world. By advocating the values of the pastoral world, one necessarily implied a criticism of the opposing values. In this way, the pastoral was the means of a certain freedom of comment during a period wherein comment on religious, political, or social questions was strictly controlled. Evelyn May Albright has pointed out that the authorities in England during the sixteenth century were usually fearful of satire and epigram or of personalized attacks.<sup>2</sup> If sedition, treason, or heresy were suspected, the action against both author and publisher/

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<sup>1</sup>Eliz. Crit. Essays, I, 262.

<sup>2</sup>Dramatic Publication in England, 1580-1640 (New York: Gordian Press, 1971).

printer was prompt and thorough. Even ballads were scrutinized and censored if they contained satirical or even humorous comment on current affairs. The ecclesiastical authorities formed one of the bodies of censorship and their authority extended beyond the licensing of religious or political works to that of pure literature. With such risks and severe penalties, self-censorship was imposed on the frank discussion of taboo subjects. Significantly King James, himself one of the suspicious authorities, advocates self-censorship in a treatise on the rules of "poesie":

Ye man also be war of wryting any thing of materis of commoun weill, or uther sic grave sene subiectis (except Metaphorically, of manifest treuth opinly knawin, yit nochtwithstanding using it very seindil), because nocht onely ye essay nocht your awin Inventioun, as I spak before, bot lykewayis, they are to grave materis for a Poet to mell in.<sup>1</sup>

In the face of such pressures, the popularity of satirical eclogues during the sixteenth century is easily accounted for. Hallet Smith has pointed to the suitability for comment and criticism of the actual pastoral machinery.<sup>2</sup> Shepherds had traditionally met together, discussed matters, debated issues, and broken into complaints, since the pastoral genre first developed. The parallels between pastoral and religious language ensured that the pastoral could be a powerful satirical weapon against ecclesiastical abuses in spite of the ecclesiastical censors. Direct personal comment or criticism, which was so likely to invoke the action of the authorities, was easily avoided.

The pastoral world could function either as a microcosm or as an alternative. As a microcosm, the world it presented could be as bad (or as good) as the real world, the object being to simplify and clarify the issues. As such it contains shepherd protagonists who are either proud

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<sup>1</sup>Ane Schort Treatise conteining some Reulis and Cautelis to be Observit and Eschewit in Scottis Poesie, Eliz. Crit. Essays, I, 221.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabethan Poetry, p.42.

or humble, either fools or simple, wise men. Nature is harsh or gentle, life is pleasant or troubled. Most satirical eclogues during the sixteenth century treated the pastoral world as a microcosm in which allegory functioned at its simplest level.

Where the pastoral world was seen as an alternative, it was not necessarily idealized. Colin Clout comes home to a harsh, but essentially more attractive life, just as Diggon Davie realizes his mistake in thinking that another way of life would be necessarily better.<sup>1</sup> If a shepherd comments that, although his life is a hard one, it is still a better option, the veiled satire is harsh indeed.

We live in sorowe I will it not deny,  
But in the Court is the well of misery.<sup>2</sup>

Alternatively, as a habitué of a golden pastoral world, in praising one's world one necessarily implies some criticism of the other (real) world. Also, from a golden world standpoint, one can directly attack or criticize the other world from which one has returned after an unwise sojourn. In either case the "dynamic of pastoral satire is contrast".<sup>3</sup>

Nostalgia or longing for a golden world, distant either in time or place, or even a desire merely for the peace and solitude of an alternative life in the country, can easily become a bitter attack on one's present "ungolden" existence. Disgusted with the court, one might write escapist pastoral lyrics or satirical pastoral eclogues.

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<sup>1</sup>Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, ll.656-9. "September", ll.56-61.

<sup>2</sup>The Eclogues of Alexander Barclay, ed. Beatrice White (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), The First Egloge, ll.337-8, p.10.

<sup>3</sup>Tonkin, Spenser's Courteous Pastoral, p.283.



(ii) Satire and Pastoral

Although the pastoral was used for the purposes of comment and satire, it was always recognised as a genre distinct from the Satire. This distinction is made clear whenever any of the critical theorists discuss the various kinds of poetry. However, a close affinity between the two genres was acknowledged and this affinity strengthened the propriety of using the pastoral for satirical purposes.

Through an etymological confusion the original Latin meaning of "satura" - a medley or mixture - was lost, and the "satyre" was thought to be related to the "satyrus" - a hybrid animal of Greek mythology. Satire was defined as an attack on vice delivered by a satyr who, because of his rough nature, could attack with vehemence and "bring the rude observations of his simple life to bear upon the faults of humanity." <sup>1</sup>

The satyr could also serve as a mask for the poet in order to avoid ill will and more directly point out vice and folly. It is not surprising that when Drant first translated Horace in 1566, the Journey to Brindisi (I,v.) was omitted, for the Renaissance definition of satire was "the rebuking of vice", a function which this particular example of Horace's Sermones did not fulfil. Significantly Drant emphasised the moral aim of the collection in his English title - "A Medicinable Morall, that is, the two Bookes of Horace his Satyres, Englished according to the prescription of saint Hierome:... Quod malum est, muta; quod bonum est, prode." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Macdonald Alden, The Rise of Formal Satire in England under Classical Influence (1899; rpt. University of Pennsylvania: Archon Books, 1961), p.38.

<sup>2</sup>The Elizabethans would have been familiar with Jerome's own diatribes which, though in prose, were significantly close in tone and manner to the Roman satirists' verse, especially Juvenal's.

Satire and pastoral shared a base subject matter which called for an appropriately low, plain style. The satirist was traditionally a plain man who attacked vice. Even such a baroque rhetorician as Juvenal had affected the pose of the plain man, a pose which proved increasingly incongruous given the highly mannered delivery. A shepherd figure, however, could most fitly combine the character of the plain man with a plain manner in the style of the traditional native English satirist - Piers Plowman.

The satire and the pastoral likewise shared a basically conservative attitude to life. The suggestion in both the satire and satirical pastoral is that present depravity is outrageous, life was not always like this. Both satire and satirical pastoral attack the evils of the city and the court. Juvenal had deliberately incorporated the pastoral world into his Third Satire to emphasise the wickedness of Rome. Umbricius, the spokesman of this satire, represents an older, healthier, society - the Golden Age of Republican Rome. He constantly contrasts the horrors of urban life with the rural areas where the old virtues remain:

Who at cool Praeneste, or at Volsinii amid its leafy hills, was  
ever afraid of his house tumbling down? Who in modest Gabii, or  
on the sloping heights of Tivoli? (ll.190-192).  
Happy were the forebears of our great-grandfathers, happy the  
days of old... (ll.312-313).<sup>1</sup>

Although it was only towards the end of the century that the Juvenalian satire ousted the native English satire, the targets remained much the same. It was the tone and style which changed.

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<sup>1</sup>Juvenal and Persius, trans. G.G. Ramsay, The Loeb Classical Library, eds. Page, Capps, Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1928), pp.47, 55-57.

(iii) The Native Tradition of Satire and its Suitability for Pastoral Treatment

Alvin Kernan points out that "throughout most of the sixteenth century, authors of satire continued to work in the satiric tradition established in the fourteenth."<sup>1</sup> This satiric tradition had many features which were suited to pastoral treatment and which strengthened the satirical element in sixteenth century pastoral. Only towards the end of the century did a new, classically inspired, formal verse satire predominate at the expense of the older, native satirical modes and the satirical pastoral.<sup>2</sup> John Peter has also carefully distinguished between the older native modes and the new formal verse satire but he insists on labelling the former "Complaint" and the latter "Satire".<sup>3</sup> Complaint is "akin to and yet distinct from Satire".<sup>4</sup> It certainly contains a satiric impulse but, because of its essentially Christian ethos, its targets and its methods are prescribed by Christianity. Sin is rebuked and vices are corrected in a serious but impersonal manner. Sharing much of the aims and methods of homilies and sermons, Complaint also abounds in moral exempla.

Given Peter's analysis one can see Spenser's moral eclogues as lying midway between pure Complaint and the new Satire. Clearly, they closely resemble the medieval material. Their deliberately archaic style, the tone, the use of exempla, the shepherd-complainant himself, all point to their medieval models. Yet there is a sense in which they do illustrate the gradual change which was taking place in the ideas as to what constitu-

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<sup>1</sup>The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1959), pp.48-49.

<sup>2</sup>See below, Chapter VI.

<sup>3</sup>Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1956).

<sup>4</sup>ibid., p.53.

ted satire. At certain points, especially in "September", there is a particularized and biting attack on specific abuses which differs from Complaint's generalized statements. Yet the pastoral framework and their ecclesiastical targets ensure that they remain within the Complaint tradition which was, after 1579, soon to be rejected as inadequate to express the more secular and individualist attacks against personally repellant abuses.

The favourite targets of medieval complaint were the courtly and ecclesiastical ruling class. The complainant was typically a member of the poor, oppressed class and he spoke as a representative of his class and not as an individual.<sup>1</sup> Public evils, class morals, and religious abuses were the main areas for attack. Kernan describes how the hitherto despised, simple, plowman figure became the champion of Christian social ideals and the critic of all who transgressed the Christian values. This Piers-type figure was a "plain, unlettered, common-sensical rustic, speaking bare truth," a "plain man with plain morals addressing plain people in plain terms on plain matters."<sup>2</sup> This humble complainant, with his humble desire for correction, spoke in a serious, often pessimistic tone. His plain speaking and unsophisticated person allowed for a large amount of direct rebuke sanctioned by the professed impersonality.

Given these traditional features, the shepherd figure was soon recognised as an ideal spokesman directly in the Piers tradition. The shepherd could speak plainly and simply, advocating the values of a plain, simple, and natural life in contrast to that of the sophisticated ruling classes. His naivety formed a cloak from behind which he could comment directly on everything. Religious comment was ideally expressed in pastoral language. Such traditional targets of the native satire as ambition

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<sup>1</sup>The satirist assumed this persona, whether literally one of the poor and oppressed or not.

<sup>2</sup>Kernan, pp.44, 43.



and the corruption of the court, as well as the specifically Christian and contemptus mundi tone, well suited a pastoral framework.<sup>1</sup> The very topography of a pastoral-rural landscape could play a part, the hills suggestive of wordly pride and the valleys of Christian humility. The nostalgic attitude to the past, frequent in Complaint literature, found a satisfactory outlet in pastoral's myth of the golden age. Finally, the simple man who lives close to nature and is impervious to the seductions of wealth and ambition can most suitably comment on the follies and vices of the world.

One has only to look at Skelton's Colin Clout to recognise the affinities between the native traditions of satire and satirical pastoral eclogues, between the traditional satirist and the shepherd.<sup>2</sup> Colin Clout is a naive, simple countryman, one of the people, who gives an account of what he sees and hears during his travels:

Thus I, Colin Clout,  
As I go about,  
And wandering as I walk  
I hear the people talk.  
Men say, for silver and gold,  
Mitres are bought and sold;<sup>3</sup>

The choice of this persona was a means of allowing for sharp, direct satire under the guise of disarming innocence. Colin Clout is constantly shocked but he is able to protect himself because he is always quoting what others say:

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<sup>1</sup>The popularity of the figure of the "upstart" as a target in medieval complaints suited well pastoral's traditional emphasis on being content with one's lot.

<sup>2</sup>Despite Peter's distinctions I have retained the words "satire" and "satirist" when discussing the native tradition as it is the satiric impulse in the tradition and its affinities with pastoral's satiric impulse with which I am concerned. The use of the capital letter will distinguish the classically inspired Satire.

<sup>3</sup>The Complete Poems of John Skelton Laureate, ed. Philip Henderson, 3rd ed. (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1959), p.258. Compare too, the Prologue to Piers the Plowman, ll.1-4 "I...went wyde in this world, wondres to hear."

The prelates ben so haut,  
They say, and look so high,

. . . . .

Laymen say, indeed,  
How they take no heed  
Their silly sheep to feed,  
But pluck away and pull  
The fleeces of their wool, -  
Unneth they leave a lock  
Of wool among their flock! <sup>1</sup>

Spenser, too, realised the powerful weapon of a pretence of innocence and naivety. In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe the naivety of Colin's shepherd audience allows Colin to explain in full the vices he has seen at Court, and the shepherds' shocked reaction emphasises the moral tone. Skelton's poem consists mainly of a generalized attack on ecclesiastical abuses made by the simple, Christian Colin, despite the fact that Wolsey is often the main target of the satire. The style is deliberately plain with no courtly ornamentation to detract from the straightforward narration. <sup>2</sup> Proverbs and alliteration abound but these elements are entirely suited to the popular voice that Colin represents. <sup>3</sup> Skelton deliberately emphasises the unpolished nature of the verse:

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.252.

<sup>2</sup>This plainness is deliberate. Contrast the rhetoric and courtly diction of the elegy for the Duke of Northumberland (1489).

<sup>3</sup>Proverbs remain a feature of the satirical eclogue.  
cf. Googe's third Eclogue:

"A proverbe olde, hath ofte ben harde  
and now full true is tryed:  
An Ape, wyll ever be an Ape,  
thoughe purple garments hyde."

For though my rhyme be ragged,  
Tattered and jagged,  
Rudely rain-beaten,  
Rusty and moth-eaten,  
If ye take well therewith,  
It hath in it some pith.<sup>1</sup>

The pastoral was immediately recognised as an entirely suitable mode for attacking the old targets. In the satirical pastoral eclogues of the later sixteenth century we find a strong element of traditional native satire. The tone (serious, moralistic, Christian); the style (plain, unpolished, with alliteration and proverbs as its chief ornamentation); the form (often allegorical, otherwise no fixed form); the speaker (one of the oppressed, or at least, humble, speaking as a representative, not as an individual); the themes (general miseries of the human condition, public morals, class evils, ecclesiastical abuses); - all these aspects were the property of both the native medieval satirist and the sixteenth century pastoral satirist.

(iv) Sixteenth Century Pastoral Satire - The Shepheardes Calender

Frank Kermode has stated that "in Spenser alone one may study almost every aspect of Renaissance Pastoral."<sup>2</sup> In his first published work, The Shepheardes Calender (1579), Spenser was already exploring the potential of the pastoral. The twelve eclogues, besides being linked thematically in an original manner, cover all the themes and uses of the pastoral to date. Spenser later utilized the pastoral for even more sophisticated purposes until, finally, in the sixth book of The Faerie Queene, he was to use the pastoral in order to assess critically the pastoral's norms and values.

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<sup>1</sup>Skelton, p.251.

<sup>2</sup>English Pastoral Poetry: From the Beginnings to Marvell  
(George G. Harrap, 1952), p.41.

According to E.K., the Calender consists of three types of eclogue. The four plaintive eclogues deal with love and its usually deleterious effects on the human psyche, the three recreative eclogues treat of the joys of love and companionship with a eulogy of Elizabeth in the midst, and the five moral eclogues examine, in a serious and moralistic manner, the state of the Church, the state of poetry, and the relative values of youth and age. Of these moral eclogues the three which treat of ecclesiastical matters are the most satirical. These three - "Maye", "Julye", and "September" - are heavily imitative of Mantuan in whose eclogues satire, directed at the Church authorities, was a predominant feature. Spenser undoubtedly knew well the eclogues of Mantuan which had been influential in the vernaculars of Italy, France, and England. Barclay had freely rendered two of his eclogues into English. Barnabe Googe in his Eglogs (1563) had imitated Mantuan closely and, in 1567, George Tuberville published his translation of Mantuan's first nine eclogues.

If one looks at the extent of the pastoral eclogue in English before 1579 one sees that the particular subjects of these eclogues were usually complaints of love, praises of love, discussions on the various stages of human life, and satire directed at the political and religious authorities. It was Spenser's formal arrangement of such diverse material into a coherently linked whole which was a supreme innovation. Added to this sophisticated treatment of traditional material were his experiments and achievements in metrical variety which resulted in poetry far in advance of the pedestrian attempts of his predecessors.

Alexander Barclay's first three eclogues are an adaptation of Aeneas Sylvius' Miseriae Curialium. Wynkyn de Worde had published Virgil's Eclogues in 1512 and 1514 and it was probably these that had directed Barclay's attention to the suitability of the pastoral mode to highlight Sylvius' points. He therefore gave the Miseriae Curialium a



pastoral framework. Two shepherds meet, have time to talk, and Coridon asks Cornix for information about life at court.

Coridon: I pray thee Cornix, procede,  
tell by and by.

Cornix: Of court and courtiers the payne  
and misery?  
That were a longe matter and very  
harde to do.

Coridon: This is best remedy, take longer  
time thereto.  
Here is a plesaunt shadowe, here  
is a plesaunt coole,  
Take banke and floures for cushen  
and for stoole.<sup>1</sup>

Although most of the three eclogues consist of Cornix's straightforward accounts of the miseries and iniquities of court life, Barclay does make use of Coridon's innocence and naivety to underline the satire. Coridon often interrupts with expressions of astonishment and horror ("This life is beastly and utterly damnable" [II, 571]), or with questions as to the truth of rumours he has heard about the pleasures of court life. Cornix quickly disillusion him:

Thou art disceaved and so be many mo,  
Which for suche pleasour unto the court will go,  
(II, 269-270)

. . . . .

Thou art abused, forsooth it is not so,  
Lovers in court have moste of care and wo.  
(II, 399-400)

Much is made of the contrast between the shepherd's life and the courtier's life; simplicity and extravagance; ambition and contentment; friendship and rivalry.

Better it is with chese and bread one to fill,  
Then with great dayntie, with anger and ill will.  
Or a small handfull with rest and sure plesaunce,  
Then twenty dishes with wrathfull countenance.  
(II, 951-954)

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<sup>1</sup>The Eclogues, ed. White, p.18. First Egloge, ll.565-570.

At the beginning of the third eclogue Coridon asks Cornix to talk to him to keep him awake as he has had a night interrupted by nightmares:

I was so drenched with dreames, a dread so sore,  
I trowe never man was troubled so before.  
Me thought in the court I taken was in a trap,  
And there sore handled, God gave it an ill hap.  
(III, 13-16)

Cornix says he will continue his tales of court life. Coridon cannot believe there is more to tell. After hundreds more lines Coridon has been rendered quite immune to the seductions of the court:

Believe me Cornix thou turned hast my minde,  
Farewell all courting, adewe pleasour unkinde,  
Thou playne hast proved that all they fooles be  
Which folowe the court seking captivitie,  
And might els where an honest life purchase,  
Having suffisaunce and moderate solace.  
(III, 757-762)

They both agree that, despite the hardships of their shepherd's life "poore life is surest, the court is but torment" (l.822).

Barclay's final two eclogues are derived from Mantuan and treat of the poet and his patron and the countryman and the citizen. In the latter, Faustus, like Cornix, had visited the city to sell his wares during which time he had witnessed its vices. Amintas cannot believe that all is as black as Faustus paints it. But Faustus replies:

Heare me Amintas one clause with brevitie:  
As many todes as breede in Irelande,  
And as many Gripes as breede in Englande,  
As many Cuckowes as sing in January,  
And Nightingales as sing in February,  
And as many whales as swimmeth in the fen,  
So many be there in cities of good men.  
(V, 938-944)

It is such rural comparisons and folk proverbs which give these verbose eclogues a certain charm. Again much of the eclogue is straightforward castigation of the sins of the city with many Biblical exempla. Amintas' reactions serve to emphasise the satire as Faustus is thereby given the opportunity to elaborate or stress a point.

Barnabe Googe published his Eglogs in 1563. Of the eight, six are concerned with love and its deleterious effects on the lover. The final eclogue is an exhortation to lead a godfearing life. The only eclogue which is satirical is the third which is an attack on the town and also on the Marian persecutions. After a brief introduction concerning a wounded ram, which is probably allegorical, Menalcas and Coridon pass the time in conversation:

In yonder busshe of Juniper,  
the Beasts shall fede hereby.  
A pleasaunt place here it to talke:  
good Coridon begyn,  
And let us knowe the Townes estate,  
that thou remaynest in.

(Coridon) The Townes estate? Menalcas oh  
thou makste my harte to grone,  
For Vice hath every place posseste,  
And Vertue thence is flowne.<sup>1</sup>

Here Menalcas does not provide the pastoral contrast. Rather, the particular features of town life that Coridon condemns are those which are traditionally alien to the shepherd's lifestyle. Coridon spends some time in commenting on the lack of true gentility among those who consider themselves noble. With a marvelously concrete image he castigates these ignoble nobles:

For syr John Straw, and syr John Cur,  
wyll not degenerate.  
And yet, they dare account them selves  
to be of Noble bludde.  
But Fisshe bred up, in durtye Pgoles  
wyll ever stynke of mudde.<sup>2</sup>

There follows a lengthy allegory which describes the behaviour of an infamous Coridon towards the "simple shepe" and the "shephardes"

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<sup>1</sup>Eglogs, Epytaphes, and Sonettes, ed. Edward Arber, English Reprints (Southgate London, 1871), p.39

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.40.

good".<sup>1</sup> Presumably the allegory treats of the Marian persecutions once more. Coridon maintains that he has seen enough of the town to ensure that he "wolde not leave, the plesaunt fyelde/for all the Townysh Landes" (p.42). The eclogue ends rather abruptly with the conventional reference to a storm and the offer of shelter and food to his companion and his flocks.

Although these eclogues show a marked improvement on those of Barclay - and not only in their greater brevity - they also serve to emphasise Spenser's greater achievement. Googe had revealed a slight interest in some sort of thematic link. The concentration on the theme of love and the repeated references to the fates of Daphnis and Dametas reveal an awareness of the need for a certain continuity, but the eclogues remain a medley.

Satire was thus obviously one of the major Renaissance uses of the pastoral and Spenser, in his concern to explore all the major pastoral avenues, inevitably included pastoral satire in his Calender. For Spenser the state of the church was both a sanctioned topic and a vital concern. He devotes three eclogues to the satirical exploration of ecclesiastical mores.

"Maye" - the merry month - appropriately involves a discussion between the pleasure loving Palinode and the sober Piers.<sup>2</sup> Initially Palinode's plea for the enjoyment of life's pleasures is compelling, especially as he gives a very attractive description of the May festivities. However, we soon realize that Piers is not merely against pleasure as such for, as he speaks, the allegorical implications of shepherding become the

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<sup>1</sup>This Coridon is carefully distinguished from the speaker, "no kynne to me". Such a deliberate choice of the same name seems to indicate a particular allegorical point.

<sup>2</sup>With the renewed popularity of Piers the Plowman the name, Piers, had come to stand for the committed Christian.



main subject:

Thilke same bene shepeheards for the Devils stedde,  
That playen, while their flockes be unfedde.  
(ll.43-4)

Piers is seriously dismayed by the rapacious self interest of the ecclesiastical authorities. Churchmen cannot behave like other men as their function of shepherding souls is one of the most serious pursuits there can be:

But shepheard must walke another way,  
Sike wordly sovenance he must foresay.  
(ll.81-2)

To stress the point that no compromise is possible, that the two differing lifestyles are irreconcilable, Piers tells Palinode the fable of the Fox and the Kid. A fable has also appeared as the climax in "Februarie" and, in the more sophisticated "September", a fable is incorporated very smoothly into the body of the eclogue. In all three eclogues the fables serve to underline the moral as they commonly do in native satire and homilectic literature.<sup>1</sup> For a shepherd to illustrate his remarks with a beast fable seems entirely appropriate given the shepherd's leisure for expansion and his expected knowledge of folk lore.

The manner in which the fable is related shows greater sophistication than the tale of the Oak and Briar in "Feburarie". It not only arises more naturally from its context but its use of parenthesis for careful elaboration, and the stronger grasp of dramatic technique do point to a deliberate progression. Despite this advance on the technique of "Februarie", the style of "Maye" is still archaic. The repetitious technique of the old orally influenced literature is found in such circumlocutions as:

The time was once, and may againe retorne,  
(For ought may happen, that hath bene beforene)  
(ll.103-4)

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<sup>1</sup>cf. Piers the Plowman. The Prologue ll.146-207 The fable of the Cat and the Rats.

Palinode's careful enumeration of examples following "Three thinges to beare, bene very burdenous,/But the fourth to forbeare is outrageous" (ll.132-3), is derived from the medieval homilectic tradition. Palinode's remarks after Piers has ended the fable and his perfunctory acknowledgement of its moral lesson serves to ensure that the fable seems a mere appendage to the eclogue.

The rhyming couplets have here little of the satiric force of the lines in "September" where they reveal much of the power which led to their adoption as the medium of Augustan Satire.

The matter, too, is relatively simplistic. The subject is the distinction between good and bad pastors and the impossibility of compromise. Although the more involved themes of "Julye" and "September" are hinted at in ll.121-129, the emphasis here remains on this simple distinction with the accretion of examples rather than an elaboration of the basic idea.

When we turn to "Julye" and "September" we can appreciate just how deliberate was this artlessness. Spenser reveals a progressive sophistication of theme and presentation, together with an increase in the force of the satire, so that "September" forms the climax of the three moral eclogues.

In the "Julye" eclogue the emblematic significance of hill and valley, which was a sixteenth century commonplace and which was used by Mantuan in his eighth eclogue, forms the basis of a discussion of two differing ecclesiastical approaches.<sup>1</sup> In Thomalin's first words the dice are heavily loaded against the shepherd on the hill. The words "prowde", "astraying", "rancke", point to the moral condemnation of the ambitious pastor who puts earthly rewards and fame before his pastoral duties.

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<sup>1</sup>Kitty W. Scoular, Natural Magic: Studies in the Presentation of Nature in English Poetry from Spenser to Marvell (Oxford, 1965), p.154.

Morrell's greeting is a little too hearty:

What ho, thou iollye shepheards swayne,  
come up the hyll to me:  
Better is, then the lowly playne,  
als for thy flocke, and thee.  
(ll.5-8)

We immediately sense Spenser's affiliations. However Morrell, like Palinode in "Maye", is given some quite sound arguments. Spenser was aware of the ambiguities of life. However, when Thomalin describes the condition of the Papal court, the satire is direct and forceful:

Theyr sheepe han crustes, and they the bread:  
the chippes, and they the chere:

. . . . .

What neede hem caren for their flocks?  
theyr boyes can looke to those.  
(ll.187-8, 195-6)

The alliteration serves to increase the bitterness of Thomalin's scorn:

These wisards weltre in welths waves,  
pampred in pleasures deepe,  
They han fatte kernes, and leany knaves,  
their fasting flockes to keepe.  
(ll.197-200)

Spenser ends on an ambiguous note as the emblems attributed to each speaker are both acceptable adages. However, given the traditional pastoral assessment of the virtues of the middle way, the pastoral framework of the eclogue points to a judgement in favour of the lowly Thomalin. There is a distinct advance in both technique and subject matter on "Maye". There is no need for a fable to provide an exemplum for the very positioning of the two speakers and their distinctive tones serve to underline the differing attitudes to the ecclesiastical life which forms the main theme. Thomalin's serious tone differs radically from Morrell's jauntiness. Morrell's lines contain a preponderance of short vowels which ensures swiftness. He talks in a more casual manner too, ("Now sicker I see, thou doest but clatter" ll.207). Thomalin's speech is ponderous with a

majority of long vowels and many "Ahs" and "Ohs" which contribute to this serious, plaintive tone. His arguments are more thoroughly worked out and he presents them carefully and methodically with much parenthetical elaboration. One gains the undeniable impression that most of Morrell's arguments are specious. His final words, in response to Thomalin's warning about Algrin's mishap, reveal a basically shallow attitude, "Ah good Algrin, his hap was ill,/but shall be better in time" (ll.229-230). His parting words reveal that he has hardly attended to Thomalin's counter arguments and is obviously never going to reassess his position at all seriously, "Now farwell shepheard, sith thys hyll/thou hast such doubt to climbe" (ll.231-2). Although the method is still the relatively archaic one of an accumulation of examples to support one's argument, it is the separation of the two speakers both physically and stylistically which forms the cornerstone of Spenser's theme.

The metre is still rather old fashioned being the 4-3 4-3 ballad measure. In the satire, however, there is progression. In "Maye" the satire had consisted merely of the straightforward mention of certain abuses. Here the use of irony, albeit of a rather crude form, reveals a more sophisticated approach:

But now (thanked be God therefore)  
the world is well amend,  
Their weedes bene not so nighly wore,  
such simplesse mought them shend:  
(ll.169-172)

The satire, too, is much more vehement (see especially ll.185-202).

I have chosen "September" for a more detailed analysis as here one finds a combination of the two major targets of Renaissance pastoral satire - the abuses of the Church and the iniquities of the other place. The eclogue combines Mantuanesque comment on ecclesiastical abuses with the reiteration of the traditional pastoral values of contentment and restraint as opposed to restless ambition. Although based on Mantuan's ninth eclogue,



with ultimate roots in Virgil's first eclogue, Spenser has deliberately altered the position of the one who is disillusioned. In Mantuan it is Faustulus, settled near Rome and aware of its evils, who relates these evils to the naive, upcountry, Candidus. Spenser, in order to incorporate the traditional pastoral concepts of the return from an unfortunate sojourn in the city/court to the non-golden but infinitely preferable pastoral world, gives the disillusioned role to the returned prodigal son figure, Diggon Davie. In this way the eclogue is an attack on ecclesiastical abuses using the traditional equations shepherd-priest, flocks-laity, as its machinery. It is also a satire on the values and doings of the other place as the shepherd voluntarily returns to his native territory. This pastoral scenario forms the basis for the satire in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe.

In "Maye", "Julye", and "September" there is an increased use of archaisms and provincialisms. The four-stress line of "September" had long been used in English and had come to have rustic associations.<sup>1</sup> The lines have an accentual rhythm which was already considered old fashioned when Spenser wrote and was considered the medium of "ordinarie rimers".<sup>2</sup> Spenser was deliberately aiming for a rough, rustic effect. This is entirely in keeping with contemporary views of decorum in relation to "satyricall" subject matter. Harsh matter calls for a harsh manner.

The satire is bolder than in "Maye" and "Julye". The recreative pastoral contest of "August" is placed between the satirical "Julye" and "September". September was often considered analogous to the mature age of man when an assessment of one's life, its achievements and mistakes, is possible. Diggon Davie reflects on his errors and is finally able to advise

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<sup>1</sup>As in the pseudo-Chaucerian, anti-clerical satire, The Plowman's Tale, a professed favourite of Spenser's.

<sup>2</sup>Puttenham, Eliz. Crit. Essays, II, 75.

Hobbinoll. The zodiacal sign of the month is libra, the scales.<sup>1</sup> The month is suited to the weighing up of the relative values of the pastoral versus the "other" life, and the contrasting of good and bad pastors.

Spenser's concern at the current ecclesiastical abuses was far more than a mere imitation of Mantuanesque subject matter. The Shepheardes Calendar was written during a period in which fears of the growth of Spanish and French influence at the expense of Protestant England were legitimate. Elizabeth appeared to be considering a match with the French Duc d' Alençon which could easily have posed a threat to the continuance of Protestantism in England. Simultaneously the Jesuits were increasing their attempts at subverting the faith and loyalty of Englishmen. Whatever the extent of Spenser's Puritanism, he was certainly fully aware of the dangers of quarrels and abuses within the Established Church which could open up the way for Rome to subvert England. Spenser's puritanism certainly encompassed a preference for devout and humble living, for simple virtue as opposed to pride and pomp, be it High Church Anglican or Papist. The pastoral mode was ideally suited to present these values. Shortly afterwards Spenser attacked the same ecclesiastical abuses, without the veil of pastoral allegory, in Mother Hubberds Tale (published 1591).<sup>2</sup> This work seems to have been suppressed or at least "called in" by the authorities. In 1611 the Complaints volume, of which Mother Hubberd had formed part, was republished without Mother Hubberd, which only appeared again in 1612, after Robert Cecil's death. Obviously, certain of the "bigge Bulles of Basan" took offence when attacked directly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>May Parmenter, "Spenser's 'Twelve Aeglogues Proportionable to the Twelve Monthes'," ELH, III (1936), 190-217.

<sup>2</sup>See ll.122-135, 475-9, 515-540.

<sup>3</sup>"September", l.124.

Diggon Davie's first words set the mood of disillusionment and despair which is mirrored in the shortening days and lengthening nights of September:

He was her, while it was daye light,  
But now her is a most wretched wight.  
For day, that was, is wightly past,  
And now at earst the dirke night doth hast.  
(ll.3-6)

Diggon, like Skelton's Colin Clout, has wandered and Hobbinoll thus feels that Diggon is equipped to give the latest information about the outside world. He had gone out into the world to seek his fortune and he has returned with less material wealth but greater knowledge:

In forrein costes, men sayd, was plentye:  
And so there is, but all of miserye.  
(ll.28-29)

Diggon, a pastor, concentrates on the abuses of pastoral shepherding which have made the other place so repugnant to him. Throughout the eclogue there seems to be a deliberate attempt at mystification. It is unclear whether Diggon's "forrein costes" (l.28) and Hobbinoll's remark about Diggon having "wandred... about the world rounde" (l.22) are meant to suggest a visit to Rome. Perhaps like Palinode, referred to by Thomalin in "Julye", he had been on "Pilgrimage/To Rome" ("Julye" ll.182-3). The reference to "holy water" (l.89) seems, too, to point to Roman practice and to the Roman clergy as the apparent target of Diggon's satire. E.K. talks of "Popish prelates" which is, in itself, ambiguous. Does "Popish" mean "like the Popish" or is it an ordinary descriptive adjective? This ambiguity seems to be a deliberate attempt by Spenser to veil his satire for, despite the ambiguity, it is obvious that he is hitting at the abuses in the Anglican Church too. To attack the abuses in another Church inevitably implies an assessment of one's own Church. Given that many of the abuses mentioned were notoriously known to be present in the Anglican Church too, it is obvious that, despite the deliberate blurring of the

satiric target, Spenser's concern is with his own, supposedly reformed, Church. One must remember that references to far-off countries in pastoral writing need not be taken literally for it was a convention to express any place distant from the speaker's home ground in such terms. In his later distinction between Wolves and Foxes, Diggon more clearly focusses on the infiltration of the English Church by Roman seminarists.

In lines 32-46 he concentrates on the infamous traffic in livings and fines, and the pride of the ecclesiastical authorities. The tone, the alliteration, and the metric emphasis of such lines as "They <sup>u</sup> setten <sup>u</sup> to <sup>u</sup> sale <sup>u</sup> their <sup>u</sup> shops <sup>u</sup> of <sup>u</sup> shame" (l.36) recall the current puritan tracts against these same abuses. At times the rhyming couplets have a powerful force as in lines 40-41 where the combination of the couplet and the brutal image emphasises Diggon's bitter tone:

Or they will buy his sheepe out of the cote,  
Or they will carven the shepheards throte.

As in traditional native satire much use is made of proverbs, alliteration, and rural similes. The princes of this supposedly reformed Church "looken bigge as Bulls, that bene bate" (l.44) or "as cocke on his dunghill, crowing cranck" (l.46). The fact that such language as "Bulls" and the later "Bulles of Basan" (l.124) was traditionally descriptive of the Roman clergy does not necessarily limit the satire to the Roman Church. It is Spenser's whole contention that it is precisely in the affinities between the Anglican hierarchy and the Papist hierarchy that the evil lies. The satirist skilfully protects himself from censure.

Hobbinoll interrupts to suggest that they settle themselves comfortably, away from September's cold "Westerne wind" so that he can hear all Diggon's complaints.



There follows, in ll.56-79, dialogue between Diggon and Hobbinoll in which Diggon regrets his lack of contentment and restraint and Hobbinoll repeats the philosophy of the tried estate. The sentiments found in the poems of Tottel's Miscellany are here appropriately espoused by the shepherd figures. Diggon has been forced to "come home agayne" (l.67) and, like Colin Clout in the later poem, he can well tell of the corruptions he has seen and escaped.

In ll.80-101 the idleness, ignorance, and corruption of the ordinary clergy is attacked. Asked by Hobbinoll to be more explicit, Diggon, in ll.104-135, vehemently itemises some of the abuses. Like other native satirists he is careful to quote what others have said to protect himself against allegations of personal animosity. ("They sayne" [l.108] and "Other sayne, but how truely I note" [l.110]). In l.112 the parenthesis, which emphasises Diggon's incredulous attitude, neatly serves to underline the satire while carefully masking the satirist - "Somesticke not to say, (whote cole on her tongue)". When discussing the rapacity of the patrons of the clergy, at whose door lie many of the abuses, the imagery, drawn from suitably pastoral sources, emphasises their moral and physical grossness:

But they that shooten nearest the pricke,  
Sayne, other the fat from their beards doen lick:  
For bigge Bulles of Basan brace hem about,  
That with theyr hornes butten the more stoute:  
But the leane soules treaden under foote.  
And to seeke redresse mought little boote:  
(ll.122-7)

Hobbinoll once again interjects with his policy of moderation - this time he advocates moderation in satire. The explicit advice to conceal the worst, serves to emphasise these evils.

After attacking the clergy, Diggon attacks the moral degradation of the laity. Both are opening up the way for the success of the Catholic seminarists, the ravenous wolves, who are aided, often unwittingly, by the

foxes of protestantism. The allusion is to the Biblical warning in Matthew 7:15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves". This reference was an important source for much Renaissance pastoral-ecclesiastical analogy. The discussion of wolves, sheepdogs, and wary shepherds leads up to the fable which forms a climax to the eclogue. This fable is not a mere appendage as in "Februarie" and "Maye", but is itself part of the whole pastoral context. It is a fable and yet it is also an account by one shepherd of what happened to another shepherd and his dog. As Hallet Smith remarks "the fable this time is a genuinely poetic idea".<sup>1</sup>

Finally it is the untested Hobbinoll who turns to the experienced Diggon for advice. Diggon's message is the same as Piers' in "Maye" - constant watchfulness to guard one's flocks against open or concealed dangers.<sup>2</sup> The religious and pastoral metaphors coalesce completely. Hobbinoll, in words very close to Palinode's in "Maye", objects at the insuperable difficulties of constant watchfulness. He, who has consistently put forward a philosophy of moderation, feels that this road is too hard and narrow. Spenser does not openly support either position. Once again he presents two perspectives on life. However, perhaps already there is a slightly critical assessment of pastoral's philosophy of moderation in that Spenser here gives Hobbinoll a viewpoint which is totally denied by Diggon's experience of the dangers of shepherding. Like Melibee, in Book Six of The Faerie Queene, Hobbinoll would perhaps be unable to survive an outside onslaught on his pastoral values. Significantly, however, Diggon does not counter Hobbinoll and the eclogue ends with the traditional invitation to share hospitality. Here the need for shelter is doubly vital in the face of Diggon's indigence and the approaching winter. Hobbinoll, in

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabethan Poetry, p.45.

<sup>2</sup>"Maye", ll.75-82.

an unthreatened pastoral world, can cater for Diggon's needs.

The tone of the closing lines is one of lament emphasised by the reiteration of "Ah". "September" appropriately presents the dispiriting loss of youthful illusions in the face of the realities of the moral baseness of the world. Complaint and satire blend in the manner of the native medieval tradition.

(v) The Conflation of Eulogy and Satire - Colin Clouts Come Home Againe

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe was published in 1595, having presumably been written after Spenser's 1589-90 trip from Ireland to England. Spenser once again chose the pastoral form for this work which both resembles, and significantly differs from, the Calender. As in the Calender we find the combination of satire and eulogy, the theme of love with particular reference to Rosalind, and the values of the mean estate and the pastoral life put forward as admirable. There are echoes of "September" as a Hobbinoll asks a returned wanderer for information about the other place. This time we hear about both a heaven and a hell - a paradox which informs the whole poem.

However, Colin Clouts differs radically from the Calender. Despite the frequently sharp and bitter satire, the poem has a tranquil tone which captures well the quality of Virgil's eclogues. Nowhere is it rough or ungainly. Spenser seems to have taken cognizance of Sidney's strictures on his language for, although the diction seems entirely appropriate to the pastoral setting, it is actually extremely polished and urbane. Dialect and archaisms here find little place.

The poem achieves a remarkable synthesis of the personal and the formal. It has often been pointed out that every episode in the poem is a well known poetic device with Classical precedents and yet Spenser uses

these formal literary setpieces in an entirely personal way. So much do they form part of the poem that it is with some shock that one isolates them and recognises their Classical prototypes.

In this work one can examine the appropriateness of the pastoral as a mode of both eulogy and satire. Although the main object of eulogy is the Queen, Colin Clout eulogises, too, her attendant poets and ladies, and his own Rosalind. The satire is directed at the court in a manner which recalls the directness of Mother Hubberds Tale.<sup>1</sup> These two disparate elements are cleverly united, mainly by means of using a pastoral setting, a pastoral speaker, and a pastoral audience. I shall now try to examine the ways in which these pastoral elements of the poem contribute to its success.

To have a shepherd figure as both the eulogist and the satirist of the Court has a number of significant advantages. As a eulogist, Colin Clout brings an element of unspoilt wonder to his assessment of the marvels of Elizabeth Regina. Unlike a jaded sophisticate, he makes much of his astonishment:

Since that same day in nought I take delight,  
Ne feeling have in any earthly pleasure,  
But in remembrance of that glorious bright,  
My lifes sole blisse, my hearts eternall threasure.  
(ll.44-47)

In his self-effacing profession of an inability to describe the Queen in her glory, he concentrates on a celebration of her rather than a depiction of her in much the same manner as her portrait painters

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<sup>1</sup>John Peter points out that in The Transformed Metamorphosis (1600) Cyril Tourneur "shrewdly blended 'Satyre' with a eulogy of the Tudors, thus effectively preserving the book from official displeasure". Complaint and Satire, p.151.

Is Spenser here similarly ensuring that his work did not suffer the fate of Mother Hubberds Tale? Having mentioned this, one must, however, remember that the conflation of eulogy and satire suited Spenser's perennial theme of the distinction between the potential and the actual.



depicted her symbolic presence rather than her actual appearance:

Whose glorie, greater then my simple thought,  
I found much greater then the former fame;  
Such greatnes I cannot compare to ought;  
(ll.333-5)

As a satirist, the shepherd, Colin, retains all the pastoral values and norms with which he judges the opposing values and norms of the Court. He is an experienced and wise shepherd who can distinguish quite clearly between good and evil. As such he makes great play of feined humility for purposes of irony. "We poore shepheards" do not know of such ways, or such love, as is found at court.

A naive shepherd audience also has inestimable value as a means of emphasising certain points and introducing others. The shepherds ask pertinent questions which Colin answers, their lack of experience of another world allows for expansion, they express astonishment and horror at the tales of wonder and corruption and thereby highlight these tales. Their naivety allows Colin to make his points with vigour and their certainty of the value of their pastoral ethos allows them to evaluate what Colin relates unequivocally.

Finally, and most obviously, the pastoral setting forms a contrast to the place to which Colin has journeyed. Both worlds are placed in perspective by the contrast. Colin has gone forth and returned and, despite the manifold advantages of the court in worldly terms, he has chosen to "come home again", to the setting in which he, with his particular values and ideals, belongs.

The attitude towards the court and the country shifts throughout the poem. Spenser often reveals in his work an ambivalent attitude to these contrasting settings. The court is a place of infinite potential where all the glories of civilization and art can be found in their highest form, a place from which true courtesy derives its name, a place where art

and nature have combined to the advantage of both. The first stanza of Canto one of Book Six of The Faerie Queene describes this ideal place:

Of Court it seemes, men Courtesie doe call,  
For that it there most useth to abound;  
And well beseemeth that in Princes hall,  
That vertue should be plentifully found,  
Which of all goodly manners is the ground,  
And roote of civill conversation.  
Right so in Faery court it did redound,  
Where curteous Knights and Ladies most did won  
Of all on earth, and made a matchlesse paragon.

Spenser, however, knows full well that this platonically ideal court exists nowhere but in Faeryland. The realities of court life fall far short of this ideal. His most poignant comment on these harsh realities comes in Mother Hubberds Tale in ll.891-914. The description of a suitor's fate ends with these lines:

Who ever leaves sweete home, where meane estate  
In safe assurance, without strife or hate,  
Findes all things needfull for contentment meeke;  
And will to Court for shadowes vain to seeke,  
Or hope to gaine, himselfe will a daw trie:  
That curse God send unto mineemie.  
(ll.909-914)

There was, thus, an apparently insurmountable problem for one who wished to eulogise the monarch without denying the ubiquitous corruption. Spenser solves this dilemma by clearly distinguishing between the potentiality of the court and the awful reality:

For end, all good, all grace there freely growes,  
Had people grace it gratefully to use:  
For God his gifts there plenteously bestowes,  
But gracelesse men them greatly do abuse.  
Colin Clouts ll.324-7

Spenser's attitude to nature is equally ambivalent and realistic. Like many of his contemporaries he had too much respect for the advantages of civilization and too great a belief in educability to be a primitivist. Post-lapsarian nature was flawed. To many Renaissance thinkers a judicious balance between nature and nurture, nature and art, seemed the most advanta-

geous position. As Seneca had perceived, "nature giveth not vertue; it is an art to be made good".<sup>1</sup> During the Renaissance nature was often opposed to grace. As Tayler remarks "fallen nature required the discipline of Art and the gift of Grace".<sup>2</sup> Of course in Eden nature had been perfect without the addition of art but Spenser is seldom interested in describing a perfect golden world. In The Faerie Queene the knights journey through an imperfect world although their ultimate home is the perfect court of Gloriana. This attitude to nature informs his version of pastoral. His shepherds do not inhabit a golden world. Nature is harsh although often preferable to a corrupt "civilization". In Colin Clout this attitude appears in his treatment of Colin's native territory. It is, materially and physically, a "desart" (l.91), a "waste" (l.183), for an ambitious artist and a shepherd. In ll.312-321 he feelingly describes the horror with which civilized Englishmen viewed savage Ireland. Thestylis presents the reverse side of the pastoral dream world when he asks Colin why he returned "to this barreine soyle,/Where cold and care and penury do dwell:/ Here to keep sheepe, with hunger and with toyle" (ll.656-658). And, yet, this is a "quiet home" (l.686) which Colin warns young shepherds not to leave and to which he chooses to return.

Thus one finds the peaceful pastoral world contrasted with the savageries of the Court, and the barren wasteland contrasted with the superb world of Elizabeth, her poets, and satellites. Again it is a "dynamic of contrast" which supports the poem.

Having discussed the ambivalent attitudes which allow for the conflation of satire and eulogy in the poem, one can now examine these passages of eulogy and satire in more detail.

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<sup>1</sup>Ad Lucilium epistulae morales X.c.44-45. Quoted in Edward William Tayler, Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p.21.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.86.

The eulogistic episodes are concentrated in the first part of the poem, the satirical passages increase as the poem progresses. The first reference to Elizabeth comes immediately after Hobbinoll's request to Colin to relate his adventures. Colin is delighted to share the wonder of his experience of her presence with his friends. In ll.40-47 Elizabeth is described in the most effusive terms. To Colin, the simple shepherd, she is a divine being. The religious content of the language is not only a product of Colin's rapture but a serious description of Elizabeth as God's divine instrument on earth. Elizabeth is not described, only the effects of her presence. Images of light, combined with religious connotations, abound:

And since I saw that Angels blessed eie,  
Her worlds bright sun, her heavens fairest light,

. . . . .

But in remembrance of that glorious bright,  
My lifes sole blisse, my hearts eternall threasure.  
(ll.40-41, 46-47)

In ll.186-191 the shepherd of the Ocean praises his Cynthia as shepherdess-poet. The epithets are all superlatives. In the phrase "whose grace was great" (l.187) the alliteration emphasises the quality, here both secular and religious, which Spenser is to repeatedly attribute to Elizabeth in references of ever increasing resonance.

The account of the sea voyage leads to a passage in which Elizabeth is glorified as shepherdess of the ocean (ll.236-263). Her pastures are not confined to land.

In ll.308-327, sparked off by Cuddy's amazement that there can be another land - can it, too, receive heaven's grace? - Colin is given the opportunity of describing the magnificence of England where the Arts and the true Religion flourish. The seeds of the later satire are, however, carefully planted (ll.324-327). It is in the denial of grace, which is the



quality par excellence of an ideal court, that the corruption lies.

There follows an account of Colin's arrival in Elizabeth's presence and here, appropriately, the eulogy is at its height (ll.332-351). The shepherd cannot describe the Queen. He can only use symbols in order that the coarse human senses can grasp something of the ineffable. His similes are all appropriately pastoral. She is like a "crowne of lillies" (l.337) adorned with roses, "Goolds", and daffodils for a virgin bride. The crown does not actually adorn her, as it does in "Aprill". She is compared to the iridescent band around a dove's neck, to the rainbow, and the moon's aureole. Yet all these images do present a concrete picture despite their stated symbolic use. Spenser was adept at conjuring up a picture without actually describing the precise components. In The Faerie Queene Mercilla is presented in a similar way. He describes the canopy over her throne in terms of the sun's rays peeping through the clouds. This description in turn conjures up a picture of a dress and hence of Mercilla in such a dress:

Whose skirts were bordred with bright sunny beams,  
Glistring like gold, amongst the plights enrold,  
And here and there shooting forth silver streames,  
Mongst which crept litle Angels through the glittering gleames.  
(V, ix, 28)

A glance at Elizabeth's portraits reveals just such elaborate garments. Similarly, in Book Six Canto X Stanza 13 Ariadne's crown extends beyond its use as a simile.

All the similes of this passage have powerfull symbolic connotations of peace, purity, beauty, and holiness. The lines recall the Rainbow portrait at Hatfield House where the symbolism forms the essence of the whole. Once again Colin worships her, not as an idol, but as God's anointed. The language and ideas may seem extravagant until one recalls the depth of Spenser's Platonism. Human beauty is a reflection of divine beauty:

More fit it is t'adore with humble mind,  
The image of the heavens in shape humane.  
(ll.350-351)

After a lengthy tribute to the shepherds and shepherdesses at Court, Colin gives his final praise of Elizabeth (ll.590-647). The passage strongly recalls the similes of the Song of Solomon. She is compared to honey, grapes, sunbeams, the odour of frankincense. This is once again a celebration rather than a description. The rhetorical devices of repetition and accumulation lead up to the climax of:

There she beholds with high aspiring thought,  
The cradle of her owne creation:  
Eamongst the seats of Angels heavenly wrought,  
Much like an Angell in all forme and fashion.  
(ll.612-615)

She has become almost a god, able to create the harmony and bounty of her world. This dazzling rhetorical tribute sounds strange from a shepherd's lips, as Cuddy remarks, but Colin explains that it is she who has inspired him to these unpastoral flights. He reverts to his native pastoral setting as he allegorically describes how he will evermore sing her praises and teach the woods, the stones, the trees, the rivers, the lambs, and the shepherds' daughters to echo them.

There is a significant hush after this fervent outburst and all "stood awhile astonisht at his words" (l.650). The silence is broken by Thestylis who asks the significant question "why didst thou ever leave that happie place" (l.654) and thereby ushers in the satire which is to predominate from this point on.

At first Colin adopts a mild tone towards "those wretches" (l.675). The shepherd realises that such a life is not for him. The satire is present but still veiled. The tone soon becomes more vehement as Colin sees fit to warn the innocent that "it is no sort of life" (l.688). The vocabulary reinforces the bitterness - "malice", "strife",

"foule disgrace", "deceitfull wit", "subtil shifts", "sleights",  
"slaundring", "leasings lewd, and fained forgerie", "blot of blame",  
"hollow hart". The outburst recalls the direct manner of Mother Hubberds  
Tale. It is the lack of true courtesy, a denial of the essence of a  
court, which most arouses Colin. True courtesy and true nobility are not  
found:

Masked with faire dissembling curtesie,

. . . . .

Ne is there place for any gentle wit,

. . . . .

For highest lookes have not the highest mynd.  
(ll.700, 707, 715)

The similes and proverbs are drawn from the countryside and the  
allegorical description of the mendicant Truth and Honesty in ll.727-730  
recalls the depiction of such abstract qualities in numerous medieval works.

Hobbinoll thinks Colin is too sweeping in his condemnation. Colin  
replies with the perennial disclaimer of the satirist - "blame do light on  
those that faultie bee" (l.756). This leads to a final attack on the  
strutting courtiers. Alliteration contributes to the scornful tone -  
"puffed up with pride" (l.759), "pleasures wastefull well" (l.762),  
"vaine votaries of laesie love" (l.766). The last description ushers in  
the discussion of true and false love with which the poem ends. Corylas,  
speaking more perceptively than he realizes, is amazed that love, surely  
the prerogative of shepherds, is also found at court. Colin assures him  
that "love most aboundeth there" (l.775), but it is a perversion of true  
love. The irony is heavy and the imagery nicely captures the absurdities  
of the courtly love ritual. The court is "all full of love, and love,  
and love my deare" (l.777) and all proper courtiers "swim in love up to  
the eares" (l.782). However, love should be serious and sacred and Colin's  
bantering irony changes to serious moralizing. His assumed humility, "we

poore shepheards" who know nothing of such love, underlines the contrasting values of the pastoral and the courtly worlds. The attack on false love leads to a paeon to true love. Colin, the perfect lover, eulogises his Rosalind in terms recalling his eulogy of Elizabeth earlier. Rosalind, too, in the perfection of her beauty, partakes of divinity. The other shepherds are too limited to fully appreciate her distinction from the ordinary shepherds' daughters. She, too, is endowed with grace, a quality which links her inextricably with the divine. The poem has come full circle - the satire is enclosed within a hymn to perfection, and the potential for perfection even in a fallen world.

The final elegiac lines, though a traditional pastoral ending, recall the elegiac opening speech of Hobbinoll. The poem ends quietly. The "glooming skies" (l.954), remind one that this is an imperfect world although Colin has glimpsed perfection.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### PASTORALISM AS A STATEMENT OF VALUE

Given the great preoccupation with the pastoral as a literary form and with pastoralism as a metaphor, it is not surprising that some attempts were made to assess pastoralism itself and examine the validity of its values. In an age which put great value on achievement, action, and the extending of the boundaries of all forms of knowledge, how could a philosophy of moderation and quietism be justified? Was nature sufficient for the development of full human potential? Did man not need nurture? Did art corrupt nature or did nature need the discipline of art to control it? Was nature opposed to Grace? Would someone living in a state of nature be a bestial savage or a noble innocent? Did civilization corrupt or enhance human nature? Wherein did happiness and fulfilment lie - in a life dedicated to action or to contemplation? These were some of the vital concerns which were explored through the medium of pastoralism.

#### (i) Some Aspects of Pastoralism in Three of Shakespeare's Last Plays

Both Shakespeare and Spenser turned their attention to just these problems. Indeed, as Edwin Greenlaw has pointed out, "Shakespeare's historical plays and tragedies reflect a pregression from the Renaissance idea of glory to a conviction that happiness does not depend on place and power".<sup>1</sup> His final romances reveal a deep interest in all the above questions and an exploration of their relative merits. Spenser, too, devoted much of The Faerie Queene, especially Book VI, to the same debates. Frank Kermode stresses "the importance of the relation between the Romances [i.e. Shakes-

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<sup>1</sup>"Shakespeare's Pastorals", Studies in Philology, XIII (1916), p.151.

peare's] and The Faerie Queene, especially Book VI".<sup>1</sup> After an initial analysis of the attractions and drawbacks of pastoralism in As You Like It, Shakespeare explored the whole pastoral ethos more deeply in Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, and The Tempest.<sup>2</sup> All these plays revolve around the theme of withdrawal and return. The noble protagonists, for various reasons, spend a crucial period in a rural setting removed from the court. Withdrawal into such a landscape brings with it spiritual refreshment and self-knowledge. Refreshed from their contact with the natural, the protagonists finally return to the world of the court.

Although it is only in The Winter's Tale that the alternative setting is specifically pastoral, in both The Tempest and, to a lesser extent, in Cymbeline, emphasis is placed on a period of sojourn far from the turmoils of the court. This period is of positive value and is the means for an exploration of particular themes. In Cymbeline, Belarius, Arviragus, and Guiderius inhabit a cave in the depths of the Welsh mountains. Belarius, who has seen service at court and action in the field of battle, contrasts his hard, but preferable, present life to his former life at Court:

O, this life  
Is nobler than attending for a check:  
Richer than doing nothing for a robe,  
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk:  
(III.iii.21-4)<sup>3</sup>

However, the two young men, brought up in this setting, have a rather different attitude to the contrasting worlds. They wish to improve themselves. They have not gained honour in a life of action and therefore a life

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<sup>1</sup>Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne: Renaissance Essays (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), footnote to p.231.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of ASY see below, Ch.VI.

<sup>3</sup>All quotations are from the Arden Edition. Edited by J.M. Nosworthy (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1955).

of retirement, far from the possibilities of honourable action, is not attractive to them:

Gui. Out of your proof you speak: we poor unflegd'd,  
Have never wing'd from view o' th' nest; nor know not  
What air's from home. Haply this life is best  
(If quiet life be best) sweeter to you  
That have a sharper known, well corresponding  
With your stiff age; but unto us it is  
A cell of ignorance, travelling a-bed,  
A prison, or a debtor that not dares  
To stride a limit.

(III.iii.27-35)

Shakespeare does not denounce their ambition. It seems that he holds the popular contemporary view that it is only after a life of action that a hermit-like withdrawal from the world can be an acceptable moral choice.

Given that Belarius knows the truth about the young men's birth, he is able to put forward the theory, popular at the time, that true nobility will always reveal itself however much it might be concealed by outward circumstances:

How hard it is to hide the sparks of Nature!  
These boys know little they are sons to th' king,  
.....  
..... and though train'd up thus meanly,  
I' th' cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit  
The roofs of palaces, and Nature prompts them  
In simple and low things to prince it, much  
Beyond the trick of others.

(III.iii.79-80, 82-86)

Arviragus and Guiderius can be compared in this respect with all the other characters in Shakespeare who, although truly noble, have been brought up far from the court - Perdita, Miranda, Marina, (whose true nobility cannot be corrupted by her misfortunes), and, in Spenser, Pastorella, and Tristram. Belarius attributes this characteristic to the goddess, Nature, whose inherent influence cannot be undone by mere circumstance. Heredity was believed to be of greater import than environment:

O thou goddess,  
Thou divine Nature; thou thyself thou blazon'st  
In these two princely boys: . . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . . 'Tis wonder  
That an invisible instinct should frame them  
To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,  
Civility not seen from other, valour  
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop  
As if it had been sow'd.

(IV.ii.169-171, 176-181)

Two further themes, which also appear in Spenser, arise from this rural setting. Imogen discovers that true courtesy is not the prerogative of the court:

These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies I have heard!  
Our courtiers say all's savage but at court;  
Experience, O, thou disprovs't report!  
Th' emperious seas breed monsters; for the dish  
Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish:

(IV.ii.32-36)

The popular belief was that only the noble can reveal courtesy in its most complete form. Spenser, too, subscribes to this view for he frequently stresses that, despite tendencies towards courteous behaviour in natural man, tendencies which show up the often very discourteous behaviour of "civilized" man, it is only when these natural feelings of pity and righteousness are deliberately nurtured and combined with all the graces of true civilization, that perfect courtesy is displayed. Therefore the salvage man, though revealing a naturally humane attitude to the beleaguered Calepine and suffering Serena, an attitude ironically contrasted with the assailable knight, Turpine's, behaviour - still reveals the drawbacks of the lack of nurture. His attack on Turpine is like that of a violent animal ("Like to a Tygre that hath mist his pray,/And with mad mood againe upon him flew") and nature has only been able to "teach" him "But a soft murmure, and confused sound/Of senselesse words" to express his compassionate feelings. Without the resources of civilization he can only imitate animals even when attempting to show his human fellow feelings:



Came to her creeping like a fawning hound,  
And by rude tokens made to her appeare  
His deepe compassion of her dolefull stound,  
Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground;  
(VI.iv.11)

Rather significantly, even when he dons Calepine's armour (but not his sword) the result is uncouth, albeit well intentioned:

Those warlike armes, which Calepine whyleare  
Had left behind, he gan efstoones prepare,  
And put them all about himselfe unfit,  
His shield, his helmet, and his curats bare.  
(VI.v.8)

Compassionate and filled with a natural sense of right and wrong, he is still far removed from being the flower of perfect courtesy. The seeds of civility planted in him by nature have, without the benefit of nurture, not prevented his being "mis-shapt" and "undisplyned" (VI.vi).

Spenser remains slightly unclear about the distinction between "gentle blood", by which he seems to mean natural tendencies towards civility, pity, and righteousness, and "noble blood", by which he apparently means one's civilized ancestry. This confusion of terms is revealed in VI.v.2.:

Yet shewd some token of his gentle blood,  
By gentle usage of that wretched Dame.  
For certes he was borne of noble blood,  
How ever by hard hap he hether came;  
As ye may know, when time shall be to tell the same.

By first using one term and then the other, he confuses the issue and leaves the reader (and himself?) unclear as to whether the salvage man, like Tristram, is really of noble blood as well as of noble manner. Hence the hint that we will hear the truth about his background. We never do - perhaps because the work is unfinished, perhaps because Spenser just forgot about it, or perhaps because Spenser realized that, having clearly revealed his views on the relative merits of nature and nurture, it was not necessary to "explain" the salvage man's unsavage behaviour by giving him an aristocratic background.

In Cymbeline we find, too, the suggestion that life in a rural setting in some ways resembles that in the golden age. This appears in the reaction of the two brothers to Imogen's offer of payment for hospitality:

Gui: Money, youth?  
Arv: All gold and silver rather turn to dirt,  
As 'tis no better reckon'd, but of those  
Who worship dirty gods.  
(III.vii.25-28)

In the golden age there was no need of money, "thou" and "mine" were unknown words, property was held in common. In the Sixth Book of The Faerie Queene, Meliboe's reaction to Calidore's proffered gold is exactly the same:

. . . Sir knight, your bounteous proffer  
Be farre fro me, to whom ye ill display  
That mucky masse, the cause of mens decay,  
That mote empaire my peace with daungers dread.  
(VI.ix.33)

Both Imogen and Calidore, although equally sensitive and courteous, come from a world in which everything is bought and sold. They have been influenced by its materialist philosophy.

Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus return to the world of the court which is their rightful setting. Although nothing is openly stated about the positive value of their sojourn in Wales, it has proved a place of necessary refuge for Belarius and of a worthy upbringing for the two young men. Their withdrawal from the world has paradoxically fitted them for a life of action.<sup>1</sup>

In The Winter's Tale the lengthy fourth scene of the central fourth act is specifically pastoral. Once again there is the favourite Elizabethan device of a noble protagonist who either knowingly (Calidore, Musidorus in Sidney's Arcadia), or unwittingly (Perdita, Pastorella)

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<sup>1</sup>cf. Calidore.

becomes a shepherd. Other nobles (here, Polixenes and Florizel), for a variety of reasons, have recourse to this rural setting. Given the motif of the courtier in the country, all the favourite theories about the relative values of these two contrasting settings can either be aired or can underlie the action. Shakespeare uses this pastoral interlude to explore the themes of nature and nurture, nature and art, the source of true nobility and, to a lesser extent, the nature of the real, as opposed to the ideal, court. The pastoral setting, besides being an ideal means of exploring these issues, is presented, by its very position in the play, as an environment of positive value from which the protagonists derive the means (literally, Perdita) to bring about a resolution of all the problems at the court. The pastoral world traditionally held as valuable just "those human values which Leontes had banished from his court: love, joy, trust, hospitality, good fellowship".<sup>1</sup> Nature, and the fertility of the pastoral setting, is contrasted with the barrenness and unnatural behaviour at the court. Significantly it is in specifically pastoral terms that Polixenes recalls the untroubled, innocent boyhood that he and Leontes shared. The pastoral life is associated with youth and innocence from which one necessarily, but tragically, departs. After an initial reference to the natural, pastoral world ("Nine changes of the watery star hath been/The shepherd's note since we have left our throne/Without a burden" I.ii.1-3 ), he again brings to the court a breath of the pure, natural air of the country:

We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' th' sun,  
And bleat the one at th' other: what we chang'd  
Was innocence for innocence: we knew not  
The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd  
That any did. Had we pursu'd that life,  
And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd  
With stronger blood, we should have answer'd heaven  
Boldly 'not guilty', the imposition clear'd  
Hereditary ours.

(I.ii.67-75)

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<sup>1</sup>Ernest Schanzer, "The Structural Pattern of The Winter's Tale", A Review of English Literature, V (April, 1964), 72-82.

In the first three acts the potentially tragic aspects of the plot have been stressed. There seems to be no possibility of a resolution which will disperse the gloom and alter the essentially disillusioned view of man's nature. In the final scene of Act III the setting changes to "the deserts of Bohemia" (III.iii.2).<sup>1</sup> These deserts are to prove fertile, the source of spiritual regeneration for the civilized world of the court.<sup>2</sup> With the Shepherd's words to the Clown, "Now bless thyself: thou met'st with things dying, I with things new-born" (III.iii.112-113), a change of mood is signalled. Act IV, set wholly in Bohemia, follows. In the significant fourth scene the focus on the essentially joyous sheep-shearing celebration ensures that the mood of the whole play is altered.<sup>3</sup> Pafford remarks, "after the misery in the hate, strife, death, and decay at the court in the first part of the play, it is with masterly rhythm that the play moves on to happiness in the love, life, youth, growth, and power of beauty in the floral countryside in the second part".<sup>4</sup> Despite the set-back following the self discovery of Polixenes and Camillo, it is now obvious that, somehow, all the difficulties and disasters of the first three acts are to be resolved. The protagonists return to the court of Leontes with the means of both reconciliation and resolution.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>All quotations are from the Arden Edition. Edited by J.H.P. Pafford (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1963).

<sup>2</sup>Was it perhaps to stress this irony that Shakespeare departed from his source, Greene's Pandosto, and changed the Arcadian scene from Sicily (a traditional Arcadia) to Bohemia? Many critics have emphasised the fertility of the rural scenes.

<sup>3</sup>Shakespeare expanded this from a mere hint in Greene.

<sup>4</sup>Intro. p.lxix.

<sup>5</sup>The reconciliation and resolution is total. Again Shakespeare departed significantly from Pandosto in which the Queen dies after her trial and the King commits suicide.



The symbolic importance of Perdita is stressed. Apart from this fourth scene, she plays very little active role in the play. Shakespeare wished to emphasise the importance, not only of self knowledge and repentance, but of Grace, in bringing about reconciliation. Perdita's beauty, grace, and virtue are repeatedly mentioned.<sup>1</sup> It is these qualities which impress all who see her. Like Spenser, in his treatment of Pastorella and the Graces in Book VI, Shakespeare places great importance on the beneficial influences of beauty and purity. Indeed the parallels in the presentation of Perdita and Pastorella are close. The grace and beauty of both is described in religious terms. Both stand out from their surroundings and are universally admired.<sup>2</sup> Important, too, in the play, is the innocence and revitalizing influence of the young on the older, experienced characters. Appropriately the two young lovers first appear in a pastoral setting - the pastoral being traditionally associated with spring and the first golden age of the world.

In addition to the importance of the pervading atmosphere of the pastoral episode and the symbolic role of Perdita, some specific issues are also examined. The debate as to the source of true nobility and the paradox of the ignobly noble as contrasted to the noble but lowly born, arises naturally from a situation in which nobles pretend to be shepherds and a shepherdess is really of royal blood. Perdita displays all the advantages of both nature and nurture. She combines the graces of the truly noble with the simplicities of unadorned nature and the basic goodness of her foster father, the old Shepherd. Despite being apparently of lowly birth, her inherent nobility shines forth. Florizel's words "no shepherdess, but Flora/Peering in April's front" (IV.iv.2-3), unwittingly reveal a deeper truth. Perdita acts nobly and even Polixenes feels that therefore she is

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<sup>1</sup>See especially IV.i.24; IV.ii.43; IV.iv.32, 143-146, 157-159.

<sup>2</sup>See especially Book VI, ix.8-9.

truly noble:

. . . . . nothing she does or seems  
But smacks of something greater than herself,  
Too noble for this place.

(IV.iv.157-159)

Perdita likewise acknowledges Florizel's noble behaviour which arises naturally from his noble birth:

. . . . . your youth,  
And the true blood which peeps fairly through't,  
Do plainly give you out an unstain'd shepherd,

(IV.iv.147-149)

Noble birth does not always lead to noble behaviour and it is the apparent discrepancy between his birth and his behaviour which Polixenes castigates in Florizel. Despite Perdita's sound argument in favour of equality ("The selfsame sun that shines upon his court/Hides not his visage from our cottage, but/Looks on alike" <sup>ll</sup>445-7), sixteenth century opinion firmly advocated the drawing of clear social and class distinctions. Autolycus expresses the likely contemporary reaction to any blurring of these distinctions, "Draw our throne into a sheepcote! All deaths are too few, the sharpest too easy" (IV.iv.780-782).

Shakespeare also reveals an interest in the popular nature/art debate. During the Renaissance Nature and Art were seen as either complementary or opposed. Yet many felt that both Nature and Art were "necessary to any accurate, complete view of the world". <sup>1</sup> It was agreed that Nature was the Art of God and Art was the work of Man and thus natural too, so the two were not necessarily opposed. Of course Art could pervert Nature but post-lapsarian Nature generally required the discipline of Art. Ideally Art would complement and perfect Nature. The famous debate between Perdita and Polixenes presents the contrary arguments (IV.iv.80-103). Perdita, herself essentially natural, rejects the grafted flowers because Art has

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<sup>1</sup>Taylor, Nature and Art, p.35.

meddled with Nature in their creation. Polixenes counters her argument by maintaining that Art has rather improved on Nature. Nature herself is the Art of God and all Art has its source in Nature. The irony lies in the fact that each is actually arguing against his or her own interests in terms of the plot. There is even greater irony in that it is Perdita who, though apparently merely "natural", is herself, by her birth, the product of the civilized, "artificial" court. She herself is a "gentler scion" grafted to the "wildest stock" although her foster father is more gracious and gentle than Leontes has proved to be. In Perdita, Art and Nature are inextricably mixed and achieve a perfect balance.<sup>1</sup> The court needs the sober virtues of the country and the country needs the social graces of the court. In Perdita, the best qualities of the two combine.<sup>2</sup>

Polixenes' slight amendment of his phraseology reveals the awareness of the general distrust of that which merely sophisticates Nature without need or benefit:

. . . . . This is an art  
Which does mend nature - change it rather - but  
The art itself is nature.

(IV.iv.95-97)

Yet Polixenes has, philosophically, the better argument. Perdita cannot but agree (l.97) yet she is too much a product of her natural upbringing, to relinquish her view. To her, cosmetics and hybridization are equally an unnecessary addition to the natural - a deformation rather than a completion.

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<sup>1</sup>In Book VI Spenser reveals in the Graces the "ideal union of Nature and Art" (Tayler, p.117) and we have already noted the similarities in the treatment of Perdita and Pastorella - herself a prefiguring of the fourth Grace.

<sup>2</sup>cf. Mason, Humanism and Poetry, p.280. "Here [in a country arbour i.e. Nature and Art] Man and Nature meet on the most advantageous ground, for man was thought to be most civilised where he had thrown over the artificial extravagance of the City and the Court."

Closely linked is the apparent opposition between nature and nurture. Again the ideal is the perfect balance. Nurture does not always improve nature and nature is sometimes in need of nurture. It is Perdita who illustrates the apparent efficacy of nurture for she appears perfect despite her lowly birth:

Flo. . . . My good Camillo,  
She is as forward of her breeding as  
She is i' th' rear' our birth.  
(IV.iv.580-582)

However, the audience knows that she combines the best of nature with the best of nurture.

Finally, given the penetration of the country by the courtiers, a chance to satirize both country and, particularly, court is not wasted. Both Autolycus and the Clown in IV.iii, satirize the court. Autolycus maintains that his fictional kinsman was expelled from court on account of one or other of his virtues, but the Clown caps this satire by arguing that he must have been expelled for vice because the court would never expel virtue, so rarely is it found there at all. In IV.iv, Autolycus pretends to be a courtier for the benefit of the Shepherd. Autolycus characteristically ridicules everyone but in his description of the marks of a true courtier, we have Shakespeare's irony too (ll.730-739).

The country folk are not idealized either. It is part of Autolycus' role to reveal their artlessness and gullibility. Shakespeare's pastoral world is seldom a completely idealistic one however much the true essence of pastoralism is revealed as of positive value.

In The Tempest Shakespeare explores these same themes with even greater emphasis on their complexity and ambivalence. Once again the plot revolves around nobles far from their true home, the court, in a natural environment devoid of the sophistications of civilization. In this play the exile from the court is not a voluntary one. In the case of Prospero



it was partly the result of a flaw in his character. To a certain extent, his exile has been deserved. Prospero himself admits his culpable neglect of his proper duties as ruler. He abjured his responsibilities, became too involved in his studies and so upset the necessary balance between an active and a contemplative life.<sup>1</sup> One must remember that during the sixteenth century there was a firmly held belief in the essential dangers of "neglecting wordly ends, all dedicated/To closeness" (I.ii.89-90).<sup>2</sup> Not only did a too solitary life bring with it all the dangers of melancholia, but contemplative study was to be justified by the service it could render to the state.<sup>3</sup>

The exile on the island, away from the false values of a corrupt society brings self knowledge to all who seek for it. The exiles return to civilization refreshed and morally rearmed. In Prospero's deliberate choice to return, to forsake the very real attractions of a hermit's life, Shakespeare seems to be emphasising that man belongs in society. To be truly human one must learn to interact positively with one's fellow men.

Prospero, though initially culpable, has grown in moral awareness and he is finally able to abjure his magic and forgive his enemies. He has practised the art of the magician and succeeded in taming the forces of nature and commanding its spirits. His art is not like the black magic of the "damn'd witch Sycorax". Tasso, too, had carefully distinguished the two types of magician in his epic. The old man of Ascalone, like Prospero,

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<sup>1</sup>As such he makes himself as morally suspect as Basilius in Sidney's Arcadia, Ruggiero in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso or Rinaldo in Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata.

<sup>2</sup>All quotations are from the Arden Edition. Edited by Morton Luce, Rev. ed. (1902; rpt. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1926).

<sup>3</sup>cf. Genesis 2:18, "Non est bonum esse hominem solum." Quoted in Rice, Renaissance Idea of Wisdom, p.38.

uses his magic powers for good, whereas Armida and Sycorax practise their magic for evil ends.

Prospero is both parent and teacher of Miranda. As knowledgeable magus and pedagogue he has brought to the island the advantages of civilization and has produced in Miranda the ideal union of nature and nurture.<sup>1</sup> Miranda is contrasted with Caliban who, too, was once Prospero's pupil. However in Caliban, a creature of post-lapsarian nature and thus devoid of the essential "ground of goodness", the teaching has merely led to further depravity.<sup>2</sup> Prospero is depressingly aware of the inefficacy of his attempts at civilizing this child of fallen nature:

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature  
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,  
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;  
(IV.i.188-190)

Although Caliban is a product of nature, the unnaturalness of his birth is stressed. He is the offspring of a witch and a devil, a product of sinful nature not of the ideal nature that is the art of God. Prospero, for all his art and knowledge, cannot really subvert the laws of Nature. He can work in collaboration with Nature. Caliban will remain ever bestial, Miranda and Ferdinand will work out their destiny, and Alonso and Sebastian will remain beyond Prospero's influence, true to their "nature" whether in Naples or on an enchanted island.

Yet Caliban, though lacking the graces of true civility, also lacks the vices of civilization. In this he forms a contrast to Antonio and Sebastian who reveal the perversions of civilized man.<sup>3</sup> They behave

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<sup>1</sup>It is just such a union that Spenser advocates in the ideal figure of courtesy.

<sup>2</sup>The phrase is Tonkin's.

<sup>3</sup>See IV.i.231-2, 249.

unnaturally in denying all the advantages of both birth and nurture and, in so doing, they are doubly culpable.<sup>1</sup> Both Shakespeare and Spenser recognised the ambivalence in the idea of the savage. To many Christian Europeans the savages of the New World were unreclaimed souls with bestial habits. Yet they could also appear as innocents, unspoilt by the real curses of the "civilized" world. Shakespeare knew Montaigne's views. The idea of the noble savage had had a long and tenacious history. Juvenal, looking at "civilization" with cynicism, had felt that savages, however ugly and coarse, were our moral superiors.<sup>2</sup> Richard Bernheimer has shown that throughout the Middle Ages the wild man was felt to be in many ways superior to civilized man.<sup>3</sup> Like Montaigne, Shakespeare is critical of much of "civilization". Caliban does reveal a knowledge of nature and an awareness of its wonders. He can hear Ariel's music. Yet, despite these indications of natural worth, it is in Prospero's severe condemnation of him that we hear Shakespeare's judgement. Shakespeare fully believes in the necessity for the cultivation of the graces that make natural man truly human. It is no wonder that Miranda greets the flawed examples of humanity with such amazement:

O, wonder!  
How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,  
That has such people in 't!  
(V.i.181-184)

Despite the irony of her naivety, she correctly distinguishes them from Caliban. The glories of true civilization arise from the combination of Nature and Art. Nurture is essential, for, after the fall, Nature alone

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<sup>1</sup>cf. The Brigands in The Faerie Queene, Book VI, x.

<sup>2</sup>Satire VI, 1-24; Satire XIII, 28-59.

<sup>3</sup>Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology (Harvard University Press, 1952).

The Salvage Man in Book VI.iv. of The Faerie Queene is a clear example.

will not suffice. In Tonkin's words "art controls nature (fallen nature) and imposes order upon it, even as it derives its authority in turn from nature (the ideal nature)." <sup>1</sup>

Given this realistic attitude to both the civilized and the savage, Gonzalo's dream of a golden world is shown to be untenable. Before the Fall, in the golden world of Eden, society might have been able to function without restraints, for nature, then, both human and non-human, did not need art and order to be perfect. But in Tayler's words, "the Garden is closed to man, and he must assume his proper responsibilities in the fallen world." <sup>2</sup> However, given the essential worthiness of Gonzalo and the context of his speech (interspersed with the sneers of Antonio and Sebastian), this illusion is presented with sympathy. Like Spenser, Shakespeare, although essentially disinterested in the depiction of a conventional golden world, was aware of its perennial attraction to the human spirit and himself used it as a paradigm of the ideal after which man should constantly strive despite the impossibility of its attainment.

(ii) The Faerie Queene Book VI

It is in Book VI of The Faerie Queene that Spenser most deeply examines the values of pastoralism. His tale of a hero who, while on a particular quest, spends some time in an attractive natural (in this case, pastoral) landscape, closely resembles the plots of the popular and influential epics of Ariosto and Tasso. In these Italian models the hero has to resist the seductions of an earthly paradise. His duty lies elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup>Spenser's Courteous Pastoral, p.211.

<sup>2</sup>Tayler, Nature and Art, p.113.



In Ariosto's Orlando Furioso (1576) the courtesy of the hero, Ruggiero, is stressed but its essential limitations are also revealed. He is faced with the test of resisting the attractions of Alcina and her beautiful garden. Alcina can pervert Nature's laws and she and her garden are essentially artificial. In succumbing to these artificial lures man reveals his self deception and acceptance of false values. At first Ruggiero is literally and spiritually disarmed. He gradually learns the truth about Alcina and rearms himself. Alcina is finally vanquished but, significantly, cannot be killed. Self deception remains ever part of human nature. After vanquishing Alcina, Ruggiero comes to Logistilla's garden which, in contrast to the artificiality of Alcina's, is completely natural, though tended lovingly and carefully by Logistilla. "Here one is oneself."<sup>1</sup> Although the garden offers everlasting peace, Ruggiero and his companion knights choose to leave. Ariosto stresses that man, to fulfil his true nature, needs to be active. The possibility of achieving honour and glory is worth any amount of peace and ease.

Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata, completed in 1575, stipulates more clearly the opposition between Nature and the City. As the epic takes as its subject the recapture of Jerusalem, the City is seen as the centre of duty and honour, action and true moral value. Contrarily Nature represents an alternative way of life which is seen as escapist. As this is a very Christian poem, escapism is revealed as a morally inferior choice. Rinaldo's duty lies in the City. The garden in which he dallies with Armida (Book XVI) represents love, relaxation, and an evasion of duty. Armida's garden is also essentially artificial and, in accepting it as real, Rinaldo reveals his acceptance of false values. Rinaldo is "errante" - both a "wanderer" and "in error". Tasso carefully stresses that, while

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<sup>1</sup>A. Bartlett Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p.163. I am indebted to Giamatti for this analysis of the works of Ariosto, Tasso, and Camoens.

in the garden, Rinaldo is in spiritual exile. The garden is undoubtedly very attractive especially as a source of rest and ease away from the cares and difficulties of the world. Yet the garden reveals art dominating over nature instead of working hand in hand with nature ("And that which beauty most, most wonder brought,/Nowhere appeared the art which all this wrought").<sup>1</sup> As in Acrasia's Bower (The Faerie Queene, Book II), this results in an unnatural perfection and superabundance:

Nature would craft in counterfeiting pass,  
And imitate her imitator art:  
Mild was the air, the skies were clear as glass,  
The trees no whirlwind felt, nor tempest smart,  
But ere the fruit drop off, the blossom comes  
This springs, that falls, that ripeneth and this blooms.  
(XVI,10)

In a post-lapsarian world perfection, as found in the golden age, is impossible to achieve and where it appears the appearance is immediately suspect. The Christian knights, approaching Armida's garden, experience an unnaturally perpetual Spring:

Not as elsewhere now sunshine bright now showers,  
Now heat now cold, there interchanged were,  
But everlasting spring mild heaven down pours, -  
In which nor rain, nor storm, nor clouds appear, -  
(XV,54)

Like Guyon in Book II of The Faerie Queene they are tempted by bathing nymphs, who, in their pretence at modesty, gratuitously embellish nature with art. Their song, (XV,63) describes their golden world free from conflict and care, and, as such, a great temptation to the world-weary knights. To Christian readers the implausibility of the wonderland they describe is sufficient warning of its actual moral squalor.<sup>2</sup> Like

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<sup>1</sup>All quotations are taken from Edward Fairfax's translation of 1600, ed. Henry Morley in The Carisbrooke Library Series, VII (London: George Routledge and Sons.Ltd., 1890).

<sup>2</sup>Given this conventional attitude to an apparent golden world in the post-lapsarian world, the compliment given by Elizabethan writers to a monarch who restores a genuine golden world becomes double effective.

Guyon, the knights resist the nymphs' enticements, and discover Rinaldo in the arms of Armida - completely spellbound. They have with them a magic shield in which Rinaldo is able to see himself as he is. He realizes that self-fulfillment lies not in sterile selfindulgence with Armida but in fulfilling his duty in the City. Duty and action take precedence over love and personal comfort. Tasso rather spoils the allegorical significance of Armida by finally redeeming her. She is saved from her own garden by Rinaldo's love and accompanies him to the City.

To choose a life of ease and love when one is thereby forsaking one's proper role and duty, is obviously morally wrong. Yet Tasso presented in Book VII an entirely sympathetic depiction of the "pastoral oasis".<sup>1</sup> In this section, Erminia, a victim (unlike Calidore), is a "fugitive from the ordeal of life".<sup>2</sup> She finds peace and spiritual restoration with the old shepherd, his wife, and their three sons. Poggioli distinguishes between the "pastoral of innocence" and the "pastoral of happiness".<sup>3</sup> This interlude is an example of the former. There is no mention of any sexual element attracting Erminia to the shepherds. Indeed she rather finds solace with them from her unrequited passion for Tancred. Nor are there any young shepherdesses present to create possible love complications for the three sons. There is only the serene, domestic love of the old husband and wife.

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<sup>1</sup>The term comes from Renato Poggioli, The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.226.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., Chapter I.

After Erminia's dreadful ordeal (she has been pursued by the Christian knights who have mistaken her for the female warrior, Clorinda), she awakes in a benevolent natural setting. The locus amoenus description heralds a pastoral interlude:

The birds awoke her with their morning song,  
Their warbling music pierced her tender ear,  
The murmuring brooks and whistling winds among  
The rattling boughs and leaves, their parts did bear;  
Her eyes unclosed beheld the groves along  
Of swains and shepherd grooms that dwellings were;  
(VII,5)

Tasso stresses the peace and contentment of the shepherd's life. Like Meliboeus, the old man had once harked after a grander life and had been a royal gardener. The abuses he had witnessed at court and his own discontent had caused him to return to his native home:

But when my youth was spent, my hope was vain,  
I felt my native strength at last decrease;  
I grieve my loss of lusty years complain,  
And wished I had enjoyed the country's peace;  
I bade the court farewell, and with content  
My latter age here have I quiet spent.  
(VII,13)

Erminia is immediately calmed by his "wise discourses" (14) and begs to be allowed to remain for a while. Although she appropriately dons "a poor pastoral's gear" (17) and dutifully tends her flocks (18), there is no suggestion that she considers this a permanent stay:

Within those woods to dwell was her intention,  
Till Fortune should occasion new afford,  
To turn her home to her desired lord.  
(VII,14)

Indeed the next mention of her is in Book XIX aiding Vafrine, the spy in the pagan's camp, and tending the wounded Tancred. Tasso clearly reveals that a rest from adventures or passions is salutary but necessarily impermanent. Clearly Spenser, in the pastoral interlude of Book VI, is drawing on both the Erminia and the Rinaldo episodes. Unlike Erminia,



Calidore is the protagonist who is seduced not only by the peace of the shepherd's life but also by the specifically sexual attraction, as is Rinaldo. Like Rinaldo too, he is apparently planning a permanent stay and, again like Rinaldo, is completely unmindful of his proper duty while with the shepherds. When reminded he, too, suffers remorse and shame:

Tho gan Sir Calidore him to advize  
Of his first quest, which he had long forlore,  
Asham'd to thinke, how he that enterprize,  
The which the Faery Queene had long afore  
Bequeth'd to him, forslacked had so sore;  
(VI.xii.12)

This closely recalls Rinaldo's shame:

His looks he downward cast and naught he said,  
Grieved, shaméd, sad, he would have diéd fain,  
And oft he wished the earth or ocean wide  
Would swallow him, and so his errors hide.  
(XVI,31)

Many other specific details reveal the influence of Tasso's epic on Spenser. Both Meliboeë and the old shepherd have once been gardeners. Both Rinaldo and Calidore have "hungry eyes" which betoken their morally suspect sexual arousal (F.Q. VI.xxvi; G.L. XVI.19). Spenser draws heavily on both the Erminia and Rinaldo episodes for passages in Books II and VI of The Faerie Queene.

A rather different presentation of the paradisaical garden appears in Camoens' Os Lusíadas (1572). Here the garden of sensual delight is a reward for the mariners after the accomplishment of their voyage to India. After action, one is entitled to the rewards of sensual delights and ease, although Camoens carefully maintains that the garden, so lovingly described, is an allegory of the delights of honour and fame.

Both Ariosto and Tasso seem to have considered that the pastoral pursuit of pleasure is directly opposed to the Christian pursuit of active virtue. The Protestant Spenser, for whom active moral virtue would have been of paramount importance, would surely have reached a similar conclusion.

Indeed in The Shepheardes Calender the moral and recreative eclogues are distinct and the two modes themselves appear incompatible within such eclogues as "Maye" and "Julye". Certainly in this earlier work Spenser does seem to have thought of the two modes of behaviour as incompatible and to have favoured the hard and narrow way of active virtue. Yet in The Faerie Queene the choices are presented in all their complexity and ambivalence. Spenser no longer distinguishes between virtuous action and pleasure as such. Rather, he seems more concerned to reveal that each is equally part of a fulfilled Christian life.

Spenser followed Ariosto and Tasso closely in the Bower of Bliss episode in Book II. Guyon, the knight of Temperance, has to prove himself, not only by resisting the seductions of Acrasia's Bower, but by destroying it. Spenser emphasises its beauties and attractions but stresses that, within the garden, Art has so vied with Nature that the result is a cloying excess of artificial beauty. Art has distorted Nature. All is beautiful but a little overdone:

. . . . . goodly beautifide  
With all the ornaments of Floraes pride,  
Wherewith her mother Art, as halfe in scorne  
Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride  
Did decke her, and too lavishly adorne,  
When forth from virgin bowre she comes in th' early morne.  
(II.xii.50)

At the heart of Acrasia's bower, in her arms, there lies a young man who, like Tasso's Rinaldo, has succumbed to the very real temptations which Guyon, with the help of the Palmer, resists. The young man has neglected his duties, doffed his armour. Spenser's judgement of him is unequivocal:

His warlike armes, the idle instruments  
Of sleeping praise, were hong upon a tree,  
And his brave shield, full of old moniments,  
Was fowly ra'st, that none the signes might see;  
Ne for them, ne for honour cared hee,  
Ne ought, that did to his advauncement tend,  
But in lewd loves, and wastfull luxuree,  
His dayes, his goods, his bodie he did spend:  
O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend.  
(II.xii.80)

Similarly, in Book VI, it seems at first as if Calidore, too, is seduced from his quest. In the Pastorella episode (Canto ix. ff.) he doffs his armour and is compared with the culpable Paris:

And doffing his bright armes, himselfe addrest  
In shepheards weed, and in his hand he tooke,  
In stead of steelehead speare, a shepheards hooke,  
That who had seene him then, would have bethought  
On Phrygian Paris . . . . .

(VI.ix.36)

The description of his initial reaction to Pastorella is full of words which suggest moral condemnation of his motives:

Whylest thus he talkt, the knight with greedy eare  
Hong still upon his melting mouth attent;  
Whose sensefull words empierst his hart so neare,  
That he was rapt with double ravishment,  
Both of his speach that wrought him great content,  
And also of the obiect of his vew,  
On which his hungry eye was alwayes bent;  
That twixt his pleasing tongue, and her faire hew,  
He lost himselfe, and like one halfe entraunced grew.

(VI.ix.26)

Yet it becomes clear that Calidore's stay among the shepherds is not a dereliction of duty. For it is in this pastoral setting that the knight of Courtesy discovers the deeper meaning of courtesy and, armed with this knowledge, he can go forth and renew his quest for the Beast. Spenser, like Shakespeare, seems to view the pastoral world not as a place of simple escapist retreat but as a "place of education and retirement" from which one returns to do one's duty morally armed and spiritually refreshed.<sup>1</sup>

In the opening stanzas of Canto X, although reference is made to Calidore being "Unmyndfull of his vow and high beheast/Which by the Faery Queene was on him layd" (Stanza 1), Spenser, with his realistic awareness of the bitterness of a courtier's life can sympathise with Calidore's decision to "set his rest amongst the rusticke sort" (Stanza 2). The delights

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<sup>1</sup>Tonkin, p.279.

of the retired life in contrast to the miseries of the court are vividly evoked:

Ne certes mote he greatly blamed be,  
From so high step to stoupe unto so low.  
For who had tasted once (as oft did he)  
The happy peace, which there doth overflow,  
And prov'd the perfect pleasures, which doe grow  
Amongst poore hyndes, in hils, in woods, in dales,  
Would never more delight in painted show  
Of such false blisse, as there is set for stales,  
T'entrap unwary fooles in their eternall bales.  
(VI.x.3)

Yet this episode is to prove far more than a mere contrast between the life of contentment and the life of action. Spenser emphasises the positive value of this retreat in preparing Calidore for his success in the quest. Rosemary Freeman notes that Calidore "although truant, earns the right to see the Graces by his decision to remain among the shepherds."<sup>1</sup>

In this pastoral interlude Spenser can also explore the themes of nature/nurture, nature/grace, and nature/art. The tenor of the whole book suggests that a balance between these alternatives is not only possible but necessary. Courtesy is presented as the virtue which essentially encompasses aspects of all these contrarities.

Book VI is entitled "The Legend of Sir Calidore or of Courtesie" for, despite the fact that Calidore plays very little part in the early cantos, various manifestations of courtesy and discourtesy are presented. Although most of the protagonists are from the court, the actions take place in natural surroundings removed from the court. Spenser wishes to show that courtesy, although in its essence belonging to the ideal court, has its roots in nature. The worlds of the court and of nature must interpenetrate so that each can partake of the best aspects of the other. Man has his roots in nature but his full flowering takes place in civilized

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<sup>1</sup>The Faerie Queene: A Companion for Readers (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p.325.



society. Courtesy, the supremely social virtue has to have "the advantages of gentility and the training that can be got only in courts, but is must avoid the vices of courtliness and perfect itself in simplicity."<sup>1</sup>

Briana and Crudor obviously act ignobly and discourteously despite their noble birth and training, but Calidore is able to recognise true gentility and courtesy in Tristram even though he lives in straitened circumstances. In Canto iii Calidore literally leaves the scene in pursuit of the Blatant Beast and it is not until the pastoral episode itself that he reenters. In the interim Spenser shows us various examples of courtesy and incivility. It is quite easy to assess the spiritual and moral value of the various characters in these early cantos. Turpine negates his noble origins by his ignoble behaviour. Mirabella, although not of noble birth, has abused all the "wondrous giftes of nature's grace" which were hers and is, therefore, justly punished.

A Salvage man rescues Calepine from Turpine. Spenser hereby illustrates his view that courtesy is not confined to the civilized world of the court. Indeed he has shown in the behaviour of Turpine, Briana, and Crudor that such an equation is simplistic. Like Una's lion and the fauns and satyrs who rescue her from Sansloy, the salvage man, though untaught, instinctively does right.<sup>2</sup> He owes this instinctive nobility of behaviour to his closeness to nature in the manner of the wild men of medieval folk lore. However, he does lack nurture and so will ever remain "wyld", crude and rather comic - certainly not an image of ideal courtesy.

Spenser qualifies this image of innate goodness by revealing the less pleasant aspects of undisciplined nature and the lack of nurture in the

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold Williams, Flower on a Lowly Stalk: The Sixth Book of the Faerie Queene (Michigan State University Press, 1967), p.79.

<sup>2</sup>See Book I.iii.5-9; Book I.vi.7-19.

"salvage nation". In their cannibalism and their perverted religious ceremonies they reveal the dark side of uncivilized man. Unlike the salvage man whose life away from civilization has freed him from the corruptions of society they, lacking the restraints of civilization, have become like beasts and, as such, have abused their human nature. Like Caliban, they reveal the poet's awareness of the dark side of the primitivist argument. Spenser and Shakespeare had too much respect for the very real value of education and civil society in curbing man's animalistic nature to be able to agree wholly with Montaigne's radically primitivist theories.

One more figure of note appears in these early cantos - the hermit. Spenser, in the pastoral episode, is to examine the whole active/contemplative debate and, before doing so, he presents the morally admirable figure of the hermit who was once

Some goodly person, and of gentle race,  
That could his good to all, and well did weene,  
How each to entertaine with curt'sie well beseene.  
(VI.v.36)

The only other hermit of note in The Faerie Queene has been the morally base hermit in Book I Canto i - the disguised Archimago - and readers might justifiably pause before accepting this new hermit for what he seems. Yet this hermit is presented without irony. He is truly religious - a representative of all that is best in the Christian tradition of withdrawal and solitary contemplation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Spenser, writing a Romance in the Medievalist tradition, often uses the stock figures of Roman Catholicism merely because they are part of that Medieval Romance tradition. Yet as a Protestant he, at times, cannot resist an attack on such Romanist habits, cf. Book VI.xii.24, where the Blatant Beast viciously despoils a monastery. Spenser carefully inserts "And searched all their cels and secrets neare;/In which what filth and ordure did appeare,/Were yrksome to report." So while denouncing the destruction of the monastery and church, as they are places of true religion, he reveals that these institutions are not always truly religious.

He has doffed his armour but he has done this, deservedly, only after a life of action and achievement and in the face of oncoming age. Like the conventional shepherd figure he lives close to nature, away from the city and court. However, he resolves the active/contemplative dilemma, unlike the shepherd figure who merely avoids it. Having earned the right to withdraw from "all this worlds incombraunce" (Stanza 37), he proves a most fitting adviser to those still embroiled in the cares and dilemmas of the active life. Indeed Frances A. Yates has shown that the hermit as adviser of knights was a standard figure in the popular chivalric romances.<sup>1</sup> Readers of The Faerie Queene would not only have known of these literary prototypes but would have heard of the use of just this conventional figure by Sir Henry Lee in his entertainment for the Queen at Ditchley in 1592. Lee, since about 1560, had organised and been the leading challenger in the annual accession day tournaments. In an entertainment at Woodstock in 1575 Lee was depicted as a knight, Loricus, advised by a hermit. After his actual retirement as the Queen's official champion, Lee, at Ditchley, depicted Loricus as having become, in turn, the experienced, wise hermit, the adviser of the younger generation of knights.

Traditionally in Romance literature hermits expounded the philosophy of the golden mean, a philosophy which not only suited pastoral's own ethos but arose directly from the hermit's experience in the active world. Such a philosophy gains credence when it is the product of experience. Unlike Hobbinoll's platitudes in the "September" eclogue, this philosophy has been chosen in full knowledge of the alternative attitudes to life.

The hermit in Book VI is also the Protestant equivalent of the physician-confessor figure which was popular in Medieval devotional literature. The hermit, who retains many of the features of the contemplative monk of

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<sup>1</sup>"Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts," J.W.C.I., XX (1957), 4-25.

the old religion, has however achieved spiritual and intellectual wisdom through experience. He is sustained in his present solitude by his wholesome contact with the natural world. Like the traditional wild man he derives strength from his simple, natural lifestyle, but he has the added advantages of civilization. The natural world, in Spenser's work, either forms a preparation for life (the forests in which Belpheobe and Artegall are educated in Book V, the pastoral world in Book VI), or a temptation to truancy from the responsibilities of life (Acrasia's Bower which is, however, nature perverted). Here, for the hermit, it is a deserved place of retirement after the rigours of the active life.

The hermit reveals "grave beseeching grace", that characteristic of true courtesy which the whole book is intent on revealing. His dwelling, although superficially "like a little cage", is a place of joy and sufficiency where he lives "like carelessse bird in cage".<sup>1</sup> Similarly his philosophy, though apparently austere, is shown to be the source of true contentment. He shares this philosophy with Meliboeus but, although the two old men have much in common, they are deliberately contrasted primarily to reveal the flaws in Meliboeus's attitude which render his world ultimately unviable.

The hermit treats the physical wounds of Calepine and Serena and is able to advise them as to the treatment of their spiritual wounds. Because they have been wounded by the Blatant Beast, that supreme embodiment of discourtesy, health will only return to them with self-knowledge and restraint:

Abstaine from pleasure, and restraine your will,  
Subdue desire, and bridle loose delight,  
Use scantied diet, and forbear your fill,  
Shun secresie, and talke in open sight:  
So shall you soone repaire your present evill plight.  
(VI.vi.14)

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<sup>1</sup>cf. Lear's words which also reveal an awareness of the lack of affinity between material possessions and true fulfilment, "We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage" (King Lear, V.iii.9).



Spenser repeatedly emphasises that the courtesy he is discussing is not the artificial show of manners which one usually finds at court but a condition of the mind, a moral principle, a product of inner grace which "defined one's relations both to God and one's fellow men".<sup>1</sup> Thus the Blatant Beast is the perpetrator of serious moral wounds, an enemy whom Calidore can at best subdue, never totally destroy. Frail humanity can only continually strive to achieve, rather incompetently, a quality which in its perfection is one of the distinguishing features of God's relation to man.

After all these varied incidents which quite clearly reveal some of the characteristics of courtesy and discourtesy, Spenser returns to Calidore and to an exploration of the essence of courtesy rather than its mere effects. The rather undefined physical settings of the earlier cantos give way to a particularized pastoral landscape where live Meliboeë, his presumed daughter, Pastorella, her suitor, Coridon, and their companion shepherds. This setting is to prove a place of rest but also of education for Calidore, a place where he, the knight of Courtesy, is rewarded by a glimpse of the nature of ideal courtesy - a sight which strengthens him and enables him to pursue and subdue the Beast. From this pastoral setting he and Pastorella return to their proper home, the world of the court, taking with them (he, by acquisition; she, in her essence) spiritual grace and rejuvenation for the "civilized" world. The gifts of nature must blend with the gifts of civilization.

Why did Spenser specifically choose a pastoral setting for this episode? The reasons are manifold. Obviously the vogue for pastoral was a factor. The popularity of the theme of the noble among the plebeian is attested to by numerous works both in prose and verse. More significantly,

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<sup>1</sup>Tonkin, pp.238-9.

for Spenser, the pastoral had already proved a sound metaphor for a complex body of thought. Pastoralism was, by tradition, a statement of value and an ideal mode of behaviour sanctioned by philosophical theories and myths. In addition Kathleen Williams has revealed that pastoralism itself mirrors the theme which Spenser is presenting.<sup>1</sup> Having emphasised that Calidore, like all the knightly protagonists of the other Books, learns more about the particular virtue of which he is a worthy exponent, she describes what he has to learn as "the art of simplicity".<sup>2</sup> This art, "the most sophisticated of all though also the most spontaneous",<sup>3</sup> is one of the distinguishing features of the pastoral itself, as it is of courtesy. For in the simplicities of pastoral "nature is artfully expressed".<sup>4</sup> Nature and art blend as they do in poetry itself. The vision of the perfect union of art and nature on Mount Acidale, a vision of courtesy in its essence, is conjured up by the poet-shepherd, Colin.

The pastoral setting, although with its base Coridon and the need for vigilance in the duty of tending the flocks not wholly without reference to the problems and crises of the larger world, is obviously attractive and idyllic. As such it partakes of many of the aspects of the natural settings both of the Italian epics and of the earlier books of The Faerie Queene. It forms a temptation to Calidore to renounce his true role as a knight but it is also a place of necessary rest and refreshment and learning before which there can be no successful action. As such it presents the Classical ideal of otium - the inner contentment and self realization derived from a quiet life - an ideal made explicit in the life and works of

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<sup>1</sup>Spenser's Faerie Queene.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.199.

<sup>3</sup>ibid.

<sup>4</sup>ibid.

Horace. The final destruction of Meliboee and his world in no way negates their inherent value.

Calidore, in pursuit of the Beast, arrives among the shepherds who claim that they have never seen the Beast. They courteously offer him food and drink. Calidore then sees Pastorella. The first description of her (ix.8) recalls the description of Elisa in "Aprill" both in its tableau effect and in the emphasis on her seemingly divine origin:

Upon a little hillocke she was placed  
Higher then all the rest, and round about  
Environ'd with a girland, goodly graced  
Of lovely lasses, and them all without  
The lustie shepheard swaynes sate in a rout,  
The which did pype and sing her prayes dew,  
And oft reioyce, and oft for wonder shout,  
As if some miracle of heavenly hew  
Were downe to them descended in that earthly vew.  
(my italics)

The whole scene is a foreshadowing of the Mount Acidale grouping - the central figure, who is paradoxically a simple shepherd lass and a divine being, with the concentric circles of lovely lasses and piping shepherds. Pastorella combines perfect beauty with perfect grace. In her, as in Perdita, nature and nurture combine to produce "a miracle of heavenly hew". Calidore immediately recognises her inner nobility, despite her lowly setting.

In stanza 12 there is a description of Calidore as he becomes ensnared in Love's "subtile bands". He lacks the will power to break away and pursue his quest. There is a crucial emphasis on the contrast between the inexorable passing of time and Calidore's deliberate delaying tactics:

So stood he still long gazing thereupon,  
Ne any will had thence to move away,  
Although his quest were farre afore him gon;  
But after he had fed, yet did he stay,

And sate there still, untill the flying day  
Was farre forth spent, discoursing diversly  
Of sundry things, as fell, to worke delay;  
(VI.ix.12)

Significantly Calidore's "kind courtesies" fail to impress Pastorella. She despises his courtly manners and "courteous guize" and is only moved by "Colin's carolings" (Stanza 35). Not only is Calidore essentially out of place in her world but Spenser seems to be emphasising the essentially superficial nature of his courtly behaviour in a naturally courteous setting. In all his actions so far he has revealed a concern for the externals of courtesy, an awareness of how to act in situations in which the way to act courteously is well defined. Here he must learn something more about what true courtesy implies. Paradoxically it is through his apparently enervating love for Pastorella that he learns. Not only is this because Pastorella is a symbol of true courtesy but, given Spenser's Platonic belief in the civilizing effect of beauty, her beauty and grace inevitably lead to a love of that higher beauty and grace of which they are the earthly manifestation.

Calidore doffs his armour and adopts a shepherd's dress and crook. Although this action immediately likens him to the fateful Paris (and Ruggiero and Rinaldo), this is to prove, like Paris' subsequent action in judging Venus to be the most worthy of the three goddesses, a happy fault.<sup>1</sup> As long as it is not a permanent renunciation of his true knightly role, it will prove a necessary lesson in simplicity for one so civilized. In stanza 37 his active help is stressed in contrast to his former mere pleasant-ries. It is this complete adoption of all the shepherd's responsibilities and chores which is to impress Pastorella. Yet he remains a knight, with a behest from the Faerie Queene, and his masquerade as a shepherd, however plausible the motives, puts him in a false position. His disarming is a

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<sup>1</sup>Paris' fateful choice of Venus led directly to the Fall of Troy, but this led eventually to the founding of Rome and of Britain.



denial of his knighthood and he, by imitating the shepherds in dress and behaviour, is as helpless as they, should their world be threatened by external forces of evil. Calidore can use natural courage and strength to protect Pastorella against the lion but he realizes that it is only as a knight that he can succeed against the Brigants. Calidore and Coridon seek out the Brigants "Both clad in shepherds weeds agreeably,/And both with shepherds hooks: But Calidore/Had underneath, him armed privily" (VI.xi.36).

In the stanzas describing Meliboe's reception of Calidore our initially high assessment of Calidore is again qualified. Like the shepherd in The Winter's Tale, Meliboe has "by fortune" found Pastorella and reared her as his own. In stanza 15 her complete obedience to him is stressed as well as the mutual help and care with which the shepherds pursue their tasks - quite unlike the individualist approach at Court. Meliboe courteously provides food and lodging for Calidore, a retreat from the "salvage fields". Calidore, with his eye on Pastorella, enthuses over the shepherds' life style. He envies them who are free from worldly cares and commitments. Meliboe immediately curbs Calidore's naive enthusiasm. Although Meliboe stresses that his simple life, devoid of ambition and material wealth, is the basis of his contentment, he significantly emphasises that true happiness is a condition of the mind, that the means to its attainment differ for everyone:

But fittest is, that all contented rest  
With that they hold: each hath his fortune in his brest.  
(VI.ix.29)

Calidore will finally realize that his duty, and thus his self-fulfilment and resulting contentment, lies elsewhere.

Meliboe, like the hermit, has experienced life at court. Like Diggon Davie, too, he had initially harked after a grander life but soon realised his mistake. "Deluded/with idle hopes" like many an aspirant courtier, and self exiled from his "native home", he had finally decided,

like Diggon and Colin Clout, to come home again. The court had not revealed the courtesy which he finds among the shepherds for they, lacking envy and ambition, have no need to exploit each other. Exploitation of another is the supreme discourtesy.

Calidore, with "greedy eare" and "hungry eye", presents a morally suspect demeanour as he listens to the utterly guileless Meliboeë. Calidore is wrong to dismiss alternative pursuits as "vaine shadowes" (Stanza 27) and to hanker after Meliboeë's life. After Meliboeë has revealed to him the folly of such envy, Calidore asks merely for time to determine his own true vocation:

Since then in each mans self (said Calidore)  
It is, to fashion his own lyfes estate,  
Give leave awhyle, good father, in this shore  
To rest my barcke, which hath bene beaten late  
With stormes of fortune and tempestuous fate,  
In seas of troubles and of toylesome paine,  
That whether quite from them for to retrate  
I shall resolve, or backe to turn againe,  
I may here with your selfe some small repose obtaine.  
(VI.ix.31)

The pastoral interlude will enable Calidore to make the right decision.

It is deeply ironic that Calidore, who is struck by the contentment and lack of strife among the shepherds, himself brings into their world, albeit unintentionally, such unpastoral vices as the jealousy and competitiveness stirred in Coridon by his presence. On many other occasions his actions, well-intentioned as they are, reveal an ineptness in the very situations which call for perfect courtesy. He blunders upon Serena and Calepine and is embarrassingly aware of his indiscretion:

Them much abasht, but more him selfe thereby,  
That he so rudely did uppon them light,  
And troubled had their quiet loves delight.  
Yet since it was his fortune, not his fault,  
Him selfe therof he labour'd to acquite,  
And pardon crav'd for his so rash default,  
That he gainst courtesie so fowly did default.  
(VI.iii.21)

Again, he impetuously approaches the group on Mount Acidale and causes the vision to vanish, much to Colin's displeasure and disappointment. This, too, he blames on "ill fortune" (VI.x.20). Yet the point is that courtesy, in its fullest sense, is one of the most difficult of virtues to attain and Calidore, like the protagonist knights in the other books, must continually learn more about the implications of the virtue of which he is the exemplar.

Spenser opens Canto x with both a criticism of, and an excuse for, Calidore's behaviour. To ignore a "high beheast" laid on him by the Faery Queene herself, to be "entrapt" and "betrayd" by mere earthly love, is obviously reprehensible. Yet such are the very real delights of love and the attractions of the pastoral life as compared with the vanities and corruption at Court, that his decision to remain among the shepherds is completely understandable. In stanza 4 Spenser provides the final vindication for the whole pastoral interlude. Calidore, in that setting, glimpses the true nature of courtesy - that fair flower growing in the "sacred nourserie/Of vertue" which the poet had asked the Muses to help him reveal (Book VI, Prologue, 3). This vision is of inestimable worth:

For what hath all that goodly glorious gaze  
Like to one sight, which Calidore did vew?  
The glaunce whereof their dimmed eies would daze,  
That never more they should endure the shew  
Of that sunne-shine, that makes them looke askew.  
Ne ought in all that world of beauties rare,  
(Save only Glorianaes heavenly hew  
To which what can compare?) can it compare;  
The which as commeth now, by course I will declare.  
(VI.x.4)

Calidore, by chance, comes to a place which has been beautified by nature's art. It is a magical place where the trees of "matchlesse hight", ignoring the seasonal changes, provide a continual haven for the birds. It is a sacred place, of access only to the pure and gentle. Traditionally it is a place that Venus and the Graces were supposed to frequent, and it is

here that Calidore is to witness the essence of love, virtue, and courtesy.

As in much native fairy lore a mortal, intruding on dancing immortals, gains some specific knowledge. As Calidore approaches he hears shrill piping and thumping feet - an aural description which combines an image of a rural dance with the eeriness of the other worldly. In a series of concentric circles Calidore sees a "troupe of Ladies", a piping Shepherd, a hundred naked maidens, the three Graces and, as the still point of these revolving circles, Colin's divine shepherdess. The poet elaborates the description of these concentric circles by using two images which combine the circular form with the suggestion of artifice and ordered patterning. Ariadne's crown, now a constellation, is the pivot around which the other stars move - their ordered movement revealing the cosmic harmony which is a pattern for order, control, and civilization on earth. The central figure is likened to the central and most brilliant stone in an elaborately worked ring. The setting enhances the gem as the gem forms the worthy centrepiece of the whole ring. The imagery of the "Aprill" eclogue and of Pastorella's first appearance coalesce to form this symbolic tableau. As in these two prefigurations of a similar idea, the stasis of the central figure is emphasised amid the encircling motion. Elisa "sits upon the grassie green", Pastorella (like this shepherdess) "was placed" amid a garland of maidens and piping, singing shepherds. This heightens the symbolic aspect of the central figure who, in each case, combines the human and the divine.

The Graces, who traditionally bedeck Venus with flowers and perfumes, here scatter them over the shepherdess, herself both the object and the symbol of Love. The dance, the music, the Graces - the whole tableau - illustrates the ideal union of nature and art which has been prefigured in Pastorella and which is the essence of both the pastoral and the poetic. Calidore sees an image of courtesy in its absolute form. The Graces not



only symbolize the gracious reciprocity which is the essence of courtesy, and the civilizing influence of beauty, but they also introduce the specifically Christian notion of grace and the Classical image of perfection. In their traditional iconography, arms linked, two facing towards, one away, they epitomise the eternal giving and receiving which we mean by truly courteous behaviour. Spenser's description of their attitude and movement and their significance closely parallels their depiction in numerous Renaissance paintings. Sir Kenneth Clark has traced the origins of their traditional pose to Greek choreography where rows of dancers appeared with arms intertwined, facing in opposite directions.<sup>1</sup>

The depiction of just three of these women who came to symbolize beauty, grace, and order, dates from Graeco-Roman times. Clark sees the significance of their nudity in the deliberate combination of "the most purely rational concept of which mankind is capable, mathematical order" and sensual delight inspired by the human body.<sup>2</sup> Spenser's literary evocation of the Graces is remarkably similar to Botticelli's pictorial depiction in his Primavera (1477). Botticelli was patronised by the Medicis in whose circle Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola expressed their Neo-Platonist views. Pico writes of Venus and the Graces: "She has as her companions and her maidens the Graces, whose names in the vulgar tongue, are Verdure, Gladness, and Splendour; and these three Graces are nothing but the three properties appertaining to ideal Beauty".<sup>3</sup>

Clark points out how Botticelli's Graces revive the sense of movement found in their choreographic origins. Their slightly veiled nudity

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<sup>1</sup>The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art (1956; Rpt; Pelican Books, 1960), p.85.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.22.

<sup>3</sup>Cited by Clark, p.92.

ensures that these figures, symbols of a rarefied philosophical idea, yet have a touchingly human and vulnerable quality. "They are immortal on account of their harmonious perfection, yet they are fragile." <sup>1</sup>

With the same intention Spenser depicts them, not only as the symbols of ordered perfection, but as ordinary dancers in a rural setting. <sup>2</sup>

The vision is a product of the love and art of the poet-shepherd, Colin. It is, by its very nature, fragile and fleeting but of enduring influence. It can be evoked through the medium of Colin's art, it is destroyed by the approach of the knight. Is Spenser perhaps suggesting that the pastoral world of the poet Colin is essentially closed to the knightly Calidore? The two lifestyles are essentially distinct however perfect their fusion would be?

Having given us a vision of perfection, Spenser reveals the tragic impossibility of its attainment on earth. The golden pastoral world can exist only in the imagination. Meliboe's world is destroyed by the Brigants. Calidore must return to the imperfect world where the forces of discourtesy remain forever ineradicable.

In the Brigants and the Cannibals, Spenser contrasts the absence of nurture in "civilized" and "uncivilized" man. The cannibals have revealed that nature needs nurture, that the lack of civilizing influences can lead man to behave in a bestial manner. This is very close to the thought of Vives writing in 1531 in De Disciplinis. For him, training and discipline were essential: "This is what draws our life from the ways and habits of animals and puts us back into the human condition and lifts

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.96.

<sup>2</sup>cf. Spenser's deliberate conflation of the symbolic and the native rural in "Aprill".

us up to God himself." <sup>1</sup>

The Brigants are, in a sense, more culpable for they are perversions of civilized man. Shakespeare likewise suggests that Antonio and Sebastian are essentially more debased than Caliban. They, unlike him, have no redeeming features. They have rejected the advantages of civilization. Their "civilization" has merely resulted in their being sophisticated in crime. The Brigants invade the rights of others which is the essence of discourtesy. They "fed on spoile and booty, which they made/Upon their neighbours" (Stanza 39).

Meliboeoe and his philosophy cannot survive an onslaught which rejects the basic premisses of his philosophy. However Pastorella, the symbol of courtesy, and love, and civilization, does survive and Calidore takes her away from her pastoral isolation to his imperfect world. She is recognised by her parents as their long lost daughter. She, like Perdita, brings with her rebirth and rejuvenation. She is symbolic of the "bestowal of God's grace on mankind". <sup>2</sup> As the perfection of beauty, and grace, and love, her true home is the court for, in Spenser's terms, it is only the combination of nature and art, nature and nurture, nature and grace, which make for perfection.

Despite the impossibility in terms of the plot of Calidore remaining in the ravaged pastoral land, his deliberate decision to return to his true role and duty is emphasised. He courteously restores all the stolen flocks to the undeserving Coridon and, having ensured Pastorella's safety, he turns again to his quest. He now recognises this task as his duty and is ashamed of his earlier doubts. Neither carefree eroticism nor the deserved retreat

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Mason, Humanism and Poetry, p.258.

<sup>2</sup>Tonkin, p.280.

of a hermit can come before the fulfilment of one's duties. Yet we, the readers, know that his dalliance was not without significance.<sup>1</sup> Spenser has revealed that there is no essential dichotomy between contemplation and action. The one leads necessarily to the other and each is incomplete without the other. Action requires knowledge, and knowledge is essentially sterile unless it leads to action. Spenser had absorbed well the humanist philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup>In Sannazaro's Arcadia (1504), too, the hero necessarily enters Arcadia so that he can ultimately leave it.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE DECLINE OF THE

### RENAISSANCE VERSION OF THE PASTORAL

#### (i) Conditions which Inspired the New Realism<sup>1</sup>

The study of some aspects of the Renaissance pastoral in this thesis has concentrated on the last two decades of the sixteenth century partly as a necessarily circumscriptive device but, more importantly, because the end of the Elizabethan era can be seen as a definite watershed for the pastoral convention itself. Obviously the popularity of the pastoral as a literary kind and as a literary metaphor continued well into the seventeenth century - one has only to point to the republication of Englands Helicon in 1614, the numerous sub-Spenserian publications of which the works of Browne and Drayton are the most worthwhile examples, and the rise in popularity of the pastoral drama both at court and in the increasingly popular indoor theatres. However, it is in this very output that one can clearly see the definite changes in content, purpose, and style which makes the Elizabethan pastoral easily distinguishable from its Jacobean and Carolingian counterparts. It is also demonstrable that, despite the pastoral continuum, the poets who

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<sup>1</sup>By "new realism" is meant not only a change in the way of looking at the world but also a change in the manner of expressing one's thoughts about the world. Undoubtedly the factors touched on in this section did contribute to an increasingly jaundiced, critical or, at least, rigorous analysis of contemporary life. The satirical spirit of Marston or Donne, the ironic exploration of contemporary mores in Jonson's city comedies, the Baconian investigative essay, are all part of this attempt at expressing the truth about life in a new direct, uncompromising manner. This is not to deny the continued existence of much pure fantasy in the literature of the period. Nor is it to suggest that the very writers mentioned above - Donne, Marston, Jonson, or even Bacon - were solely denotative in their method or manner. Indeed the baroque extravagances of Marston, or the intricacies of Donne's prose with its Ciceronian periods and rhetorical density are not, in themselves, realistic. Yet to compare Lyly's Euphues with Donne's Sermons or with Burton's Anatomy is to be aware of a change in mental attitude despite the stylistic affinities.

were to prove of lasting influence deliberately eschewed the pastoral mode which carried with it just the kind of literary and cultural implications which they were intent on rejecting.

Reasons for this rejection lie in both the socio-political and literary spheres. Undoubtedly the actual conditions of the early seventeenth century contributed to the sense of disillusionment and frustration which in turn necessitated a change in literary style and tone. After the boom years of the 1580s prosperity had declined and by the end of Elizabeth's reign the economic situation was serious. The harvests of the last seven years of the century failed and there was both famine and plague in 1592, 1602, and 1603. The long drawn-out war with Spain (1585-1604) eventually strained the country's resources and the increased involvement in Ireland further reduced the national reserves.

The patriotic fervour and unity following the defeat of the Armada waned with the century. The Queen and her closest advisers were ageing and becoming increasingly distanced from the young, ambitious men who resented Elizabethan autocracy. In 1598 Burghley who, since 1588, had worked unceasingly to unite all the potentially disparate factions behind Elizabeth, died. Although his son, Robert, continued his father's efforts, his more intractable personality increased the tensions and antagonism between the various factions. The abortive Essex plot (1601) did serve to consolidate the new professional politicians - Greville, Robert Sidney, the Bacons - and the Cecil faction, behind the Queen, but the rise and fall of Essex itself epitomised the new and alarming instability of the old, stable order.<sup>1</sup> The Queen's

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<sup>1</sup>Many, too, were shattered by Essex's execution.

Donne's harshly satiric The Progress of the Soul dates from 16 August 1601, six months after this event. The poem reveals much of the bitterness towards Robert Cecil as the power behind the throne. ("For the great soule which here amongst us now/Doth dwell, and moves that hand, and tongue, and brow,/Which as the Moone the sea, moves us;" The Progresse VII, ll.61-63). It also reveals the prurient and disgusted attitude towards sex which appears in the works of Marston and Guilpin and, to a certain extent, in the roughly contemporaneous Hamlet.

adamant refusal to name an official heir added to the insecurity of her subjects to whom civil war seemed an inevitable result. Indeed there were at least a dozen likely contenders for the throne by the end of the century.<sup>1</sup> The Elizabethan legend itself was obviously becoming more difficult to maintain. Joel Hurstfield refers to an incident which strikingly illuminates the increased rejection of the whole, carefully nurtured, propagandist cult. When, in 1601, Thomas Holland - the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford - printed his Accession Day sermon of two years earlier, he prefaced it with "An Apologetical Discourse" directed at those who were antipathetic to the custom of treating 17 November as a feast day.<sup>2</sup> The idea of England as witness to a returned golden age - an idea which had formed the basis of much eulogistic praise of Elizabeth - was increasingly losing its force. Although belief in the various ages of the world and its corollary, the progressive decay of the universe, had had a long and independent history, during the Elizabethan period the association of the pastoral with the old golden age had meant that each had formed part of both the eulogy and the comment that was couched in pastoral terms. Victor Harris notes that changes occurred towards the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Although the idea of a decaying universe had been the property of theologians, philosophers, and scientists for many decades, Harris points out that "not until very near the end of the century ... does the image of a decaying world become a common property (or even a common device) of the imagination" (pp.118-9). Indeed Francis Bacon was "almost alone in the early decades of the [seventeenth] century in his opposition to the belief in decay"

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<sup>1</sup>See Joel Hurstfield, "The Succession Struggle in Late Elizabethan England," Elizabethan Government and Society, pp.369-396.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p.370.

<sup>3</sup>All Coherence Gone: A Study of the Seventeenth Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1966).

(p.132). Obviously changes were occurring and being seen to occur. The disillusionment, now no longer confined to the fulminations from the pulpit against man's sinful nature, and the effects of sin on the universe, was beginning to penetrate literature. A belief in the possibility of a restoration of the golden age waned. No longer could one's decaying world be adequately described in innocent pastoral terms.

In addition to these factors there was also a change in the balance of power. The gentry, and particularly the legal profession, became increasingly prosperous and influential. The new men from the Inns of Court were politically and stylistically opposed to the men of the Court:

By the last decade of the sixteenth century the public acceptance of the power of the State, arising from the harmony between all the supporters of the Tudor settlement and expressed in the intellectual dominance of the courtiers and State functionaries, was less absolute than before. With the defeat of the Armada the need for national unity under the Sovereign was less, and disagreements were coming into the open. The Puritans were moving into opposition . . . <sup>1</sup>

Such changes are inevitably reflected in literature.

Douglas L. Peterson has distinguished between the plain and the courtly style in the verse of the sixteenth century. <sup>2</sup> He points out that in Wyatt's lyrics the plain style "becomes for the first time consistently associated with an anti-courtly attitude, an attitude it will continue to be identified with throughout the century". <sup>3</sup> He, too, notes the emergence of the Inns of Court in the nineties as the intellectual and cultural centre of the nation as against the court. This led to the increased emphasis on the plain style as it was the style traditionally identified with non-courtly or anti-courtly attitudes. This style involved the deliberate avoidance of eloquence

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<sup>1</sup>Eric Mercer, English Art 1553-1625 Vol.VII of The Oxford History of English Art, ed. T.S.R. Boase (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1962), p.208.

<sup>2</sup>The English Lyric.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p.118.



as an embellishment and the use of violent and direct diction which could most lucidly express the increased complexity of thought and theme. Indeed, Peterson is emphatic: "During the last decade of Elizabeth's reign the emergence of the plain style as the dominant lyric tradition marks the end of the Court's domination of the lyric."<sup>1</sup> One has only to compare the lyrics of Donne with the lyrics of Thomas Lodge to grasp immediately Peterson's dichotomy.

(ii) The New Satire

Not only did the lyric reflect a dramatic change in style and tone, there was now an increased interest in the Classical genres of the Silver Age. As with the anti-Virgilian poets of the first century A.D., the dominant genres now became the Satire, the Epigram, the Ode, and the Epistle - genres traditionally either abusive or reflective. Inevitably the pastoral, essentially Virgilian, conservative, and quietist, suffered a decline. As a means of comment - its most typical Renaissance guise - it could not survive in the face of the new realism. Classically inspired Satire ousted the old methods and manner of comment and complaint which had survived since Medieval times and with which the pastoral had had a close affinity.

A brief analysis of the new mode of Satire will reveal just how radically it differed in tone and purpose from the satiric comment contained in Renaissance pastoral.

To a large extent the vogue for the formal Satire which arose in the last decade of the century is attributable to the well-worn Humanist emphasis on imitation of the Classics. Quite understandably the early Humanists, like their Victorian successors, had concentrated on the works of the golden Latinists - Cicero, Virgil, Horace - as the exemplars of what was finest in

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.356.

the Classical corpus. Inevitably, attention gradually turned to the later writers - the silver Latinists like Tacitus, Juvenal, Martial, Persius, and Petronius - who were temperamentally suited to the new generation of the late nineties. It is significant that the major Satirists of the decade were young men - Hall, Donne, and Marston were in their twenties - writers who wanted to experiment with new forms, who were reacting against the Virgilian and Petrarchan modes of the older generation, and who were also influenced emotionally by the tensions and disillusionments of the fin de siècle.

That the new Satire was also a symptom of changed literary norms can be seen by noting the simultaneous change which occurred in the prose and lyric poetry of the period. The elaborate rhetoric characteristic of Euphuism sounded old fashioned to those imitating Senecan and Tacitean prose.<sup>1</sup> The ellipses, violent effects, colloquialisms, concern for realistic analysis of emotions and events, and scorn for traditional rhetorical flourishes, which characterised this prose appeared, too, in the lyrics which were later to be designated "Metaphysical". Despite the suitability of these particular modes for the prevailing zeitgeist, the experimental nature and the mere fashionability of the new style must never be underestimated. Even the older generation was affected. Drayton (b.1563) recast his pastorally inspired Endymion and Phoebe (1595) into "The Man in the Moone" (1606), a revision which reveals the new satirical spirit. Not only does the changed title reveal a completely new approach but a comparison reveals significant differences. The early poem is much longer. To look at the descriptive passages is to sense much of the change. In Endymion and Phoebe (hereafter referred to as Endymion) the initial description of Phoebe is highly ornate and overcharged with precise details of physical ornamentation:

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<sup>1</sup>This is not to deny the point about style made above, Chapter VI, Section (i), footnote 1.

About her neck a chayne twice twenty fold,  
Of rubyes, set in lozenges of gold;  
Trust up in trammels, and in curious pleats,  
With speary circles falling on her teats.  
(*ll.*117-120) <sup>1</sup>

The actual description of Cynthia in the later poem is quite brief.

Particular echoes of the early poem are illuminating:

Her brothers beames now had she layd aside,  
Her horned cressent and her full-fac'd pride:  
(*Endymion*, *ll.*105-6)

Her Brothers Beames inforc'd to lay aside,  
Her selfe for his sake seeming to divide.  
("The Man in the Moone," p.478) <sup>2</sup>

A dainty smock of cipresse, fine and thin,  
Or'e cast with curls next to her lilly skin:  
Throgh which the purenes of the same did show  
Lyke damaske-roses strew'd with flakes of snow,  
Discovering all her stomach to the waste,  
With branches of sweet circling veynes enchaste.  
(*Endymion*, *ll.*121-126)

Gracing her broad Brest curiously inchaste,  
With branched Veynes all bared to the Waste. <sup>3</sup>  
Over the same she ware a Vapour thin,  
Thorow the which her Cleere and dainty Skin  
To the beholder amiably did show  
Like Damaske Roses lightly clad in Snow.  
("The Man in the Moone," p.479)

What elaboration there is in the description of Cynthia in the later poem is made up of similes and metaphors which become extended digressions in nautical and ornithological particularities. Cynthia's mantle is apparently illustrated with:

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<sup>1</sup>All *Endymion* quotations are from *Poems of Michael Drayton*, ed. John Buxton, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953), I.

<sup>2</sup>Quotations from "The Man in the Moone" are from *Michael Drayton Poems (1619)*, A Scholar Press Facsimile (Menston, England: The Scholar Press Ltd., 1969), pp.476-487.

<sup>3</sup>In comparing *ll.*126 of *Endymion* with the "branched Veynes" of the later poem one is reminded of Keats' frequent use of the present participle in his *Endymion* with his later preference for the stronger past participial epithet in *Hyperion*.

The greedie Sea-Maw fishing for the fry,  
The hungry Shell-fowle, from whose rape doth flye  
Th' unnumbred sholes, the Mallard there did feed.  
The Teale and Morecoot raking in the Weed.  
(p.480)

Both the choice of imagery and the language reveal a change from the prettinesses of Endymion. Similarly, luscious description of Endymion himself (ll.139-152) finds no place in the later poem.<sup>1</sup>

Phoebe's lengthy lyrical descriptions of her influence (Endymion, ll.175-224) become technical descriptions derived from contemporary astronomical knowledge:

Quartered thereby, first of which Seven my Prime,  
The second Seven accomplisheth the time  
Unto my Fulnesse, in the third I range,  
Lesning againe, the fourth then to my change:  
The which foure Sevens the Eight and Twenty make,  
Through the bright Girdle of the Zodiake.  
("The Man in the Moone," p.484)

Endymion finally enjoys eternal love and youth with Phoebe. The Man in the Moone is also ever with Cynthia but his function is to peep into all the dark secrets of the world. Drayton's description of the miser is very close to Marston:

And the base Churle, the Sunne that dare not trust,  
With his old Gold, yet smelling it doth rust,  
Layes it abroad, but lockes himself within  
Three doubled lockes, or ere he dare begin  
To ope his Bags, . . . . .  
. . . . .  
And with a Candle in a filthy stick,  
The grease not fully covering the wick;  
(Pores o'r his base God) forth a flame that fryes,  
Almost as dimme as his foule bleared eyes: . . . .  
(p.487)

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<sup>1</sup>See the description of his eyes:

"The balls which Nature in his eyes had set,  
Lyke diamonds inclosing globes of jet:  
Which sparkled from their milky lids out-right,  
Lyke fayre Orions heaven-adorning light."  
(ll.149-152)



The earlier poem ends with a lofty address to the "sweet mayd" who might "read this story". The later poem ends with Rowland (who has told the tale) causing much mirth among his shepherd audience with his suggestion that the Man in the Moon even tells him that "Some of you here, when you should tend your Fold,/A Nights were wenching."

Drayton's "The Moon-Calf" too, although appearing only in 1627, shows the influence of Marston. Even Nicholas Breton (b.circa 1551), a typically "Golden" poet, to use C.S. Lewis' term, produced Pasquils Mistressse (1600), the first of a number of satires - albeit "toothless" ones. This work consists of a lengthy enumeration of all the faults and vices of women followed by a briefer section detailing the advantages of the companionship of a good woman. Typical of Breton's deliberate attempts at scurrility are ll.358-364:

If that her eyes be bleer'd, and runne a water,  
Her nose hang dropping all the Summer long,  
Her mouth doe slaver, and her teeth doe chatter,  
Her breath be for the swinish nose too strong,  
And ban, and cursing be her howrely song,  
With such a Beldame who is forc't to dwell,  
Needes in this world to have no other hell.<sup>1</sup>

This is altogether removed from "Astrophell his Song of Phillida and Coridon", or "A Pastorall of Phillis and Coridon", or the two or three lyrics which are his in Brittons Bowre of Delights (1591).

The classically inspired Satire differed from the native satiric modes most radically in style, tone, and purpose. Not only was it recognised as a fixed literary form but a fixed metre was adopted in imitation of the hexameters of Horace, Juvenal, and Persius. The increased secularism enabled the satirist of the nineties to identify with the Classical satirist in his insolent, abusive attitude and his scabrous manner - a morally unte-

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted from Poems by Nicholas Breton (not hitherto reprinted), ed. Jean Robertson (Liverpool: At the University Press, 1952).

nable position for the serious, moralistic, Christian satirist of the intervening centuries. A new subjectivity prevailed. The targets were now specifically private evils, private morals, or, merely ridiculous, foolish fashions. The satirist spoke as an individual about the subjects that irked him personally, not as the representative of a larger group concerned about the major abuses of a Christian society:

But roome for Tuscus, that iest-mounging youth,  
Who nere did ope his Apish gurning mouth  
But to retaile and broke anothers wit.<sup>1</sup>

This is not to imply that the satirists of the late sixteenth century abandoned, necessarily, their specifically Christian beliefs. Indeed Donne's Satire III is a heartfelt cry about the state of religion and men's souls - a theme common to many medieval satires. Yet despite the completely orthodox views expressed, Donne's tone and manner do reveal the changes that had appeared in the satiric mode. He is personally moved to write about the irreligious behaviour he sees but he is sceptical about the efficacy of his attack ("Can railing then cure these worne maladies?" ll.4). In keeping with the new satirical approach he selects particular examples to illustrate his points:

. . . Carelesse Phrygius doth abhorre  
All, because all cannot be good, as one  
Knowing some women whores, dares marry none.  
ll.62-4.

The similes, too, extend the vision of depravity:

So the worlds selfe, thy other lov'd foe, is  
In her decrepit wayne, and thou loving this,  
Dost love a withered and worne strumpet;  
ll.36-9.

Despite the fact that the new Satire presented the point of view of the individual writer about particular instances of man's foolishness, what

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<sup>1</sup>Marston, The Scourge of Villanie, Satire XI, ll.74-76. Quoted from The Poems of John Marston, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool University Press, 1961), p.169.

personal satire there was in the works of Donne, Marston, Hall, or Guilpin was still carefully veiled. This is partly attributable to the censors' keen suspicion of personal attacks but it also might derive from an attempt to follow Juvenal closely, even to the adoption of the names of his satirical targets, for instance, Masso, Matho, Eppia, and Carus. Where types are satirized they are given names suited to their characteristics. Marston writes of Luxurio, the Sensualist; Martius, the Man of War; Sylenus, the Lecher; Hall mentions Matrona, a Courtesan. Hall derives his "Matho", (although probably an allusion to an actual person), directly from Juvenal. In Juvenal, Matho appears to be the actual name of a contemporary figure but, even when Juvenal uses descriptive names, they appear realistic because they are Latin names in a Latin text. Jonson grasped this point and mingled his Sir Politic Would-Bes with his Volpones. The Latinate names in the satires of Hall and Marston serve to add to their formally imitative air even when we sense a personal allusion behind the adopted name.

Significantly it was Juvenal, whose "saeva indignatio" most closely fitted the mistaken "satyr" etymology, who was the major model for the late Elizabethan satirist. Horace, though admired, was too urbane and reflective. The bitterness and savagery of the Juvenalian persona suited the pessimistic melancholia of the age. His sensationalism and baroque style attracted those reacting against the melodic fluidity of Virgil.

One of the most radical differences between indigenous satirical writing and the new Satires was the frequent lack of a genuine moral aim in the new Satire. The abuses were often described for their own sake, often for mere titillation. John Peter notes that it was considered old fashioned to regard satire as the "correction of vices" - hitherto its professed aim and raison d'être.<sup>1</sup> Often the most prurient would initially lay claim to

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<sup>1</sup>Complaint and Satire, passim.

a moral aim to excuse the close examination of the more disgusting vices or foibles of mankind. Thus Hall, in his Prologue to the first book of his Satires writes: "Go, daring Muse, on with thy thanklesse taske,/And do the ugly face of Vice unmaske." Marston is more vehement:

I beare the scourge of iust Rhamnusia,  
Lashing the lewdnes of Britania.

. . . . .

Quake guzzell dogs, that live on putred slime,  
Skud from the lashes of my yerking rime.<sup>1</sup>

In Satyre II he reveals a near pathological delight in his self appointed task, "O what dry braine melts not sharp mustard rime/To purge the snottery of our slimie time?". These avowed aims are soon forgotten as the inherent delight in the abuses appears. Frequently, in the works of Hall, Marston, and Guilpin particularly, one senses the relish with which the debasements are described:

Whiles hee lies wallowing with a westie hed  
And palish carkasse, on his Brothel-bed,  
Till his salt bowels boyle with poysonous fire,  
Right Hercules with his second Deianire.<sup>2</sup>

But now, mong furious garboiles, he doth spend  
His feebled valour, in tilt and turneing,  
With wet turn'd kisses, melting dallying.<sup>3</sup>

Talke bawdery and Chrestina spets and spals,  
So much her chaste thoughts hate it, tut that's false,  
She loves it well, wherefore then should she spet?  
Her teeth doe water but to heare of it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Scourge of Villanie. Proemium in librum primum, ll.1-2, 19-20, Poems, p.102.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Hall, Virgidemiarum, Book IV, Satire I, ll.158-161. The Collected Poems of Joseph Hall, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool: At the Univ. Press, 1949), p.53.

<sup>3</sup>Marston, Satire VIII, ll.59-61., Poems, p.152.

<sup>4</sup>Everard Guilpin, Skialetheia, Epigram of Chrestina.51. Quoted from Skialetheia, ed. D. Allen Carroll (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p.53.



Donne, whose formal satires are the most restrained in tone and content, openly admits that they are presentations of his own moods without any pretensions towards moral reform:

. . . But (Oh) we allow,  
Good workes as good, but out of fashion now,  
Like old rich wardrops; but my words none drawes  
Within the vast reach of th' huge statute lawes. <sup>1</sup>  
(Satyre II, ll.109-112)

Again, in Satyre III he writes:

Kinde pittie chokes my spleene; brave scorn forbids  
Those teares to issue which swell my eye-lids;  
I must not laugh, nor weepe sinnes, and be wise,  
Can railing then cure these worne maladies?  
(ll.1-4)

and in Satyre IIII:

. . . Preachers which are  
Seas of Wit and Arts, you can, then dare,  
Drowne the sinnes of this place, for, for mee  
Which am but a scarce brooke, it enough shall bee  
To wash the staines away; . . .  
(ll.237-241)

Given the increasing political instability during Elizabeth's last years and the proliferation of secret intrigues as the manoeuvres for the crown began, together with the definite stimulus towards satirical writing at the time, the authorities naturally took an increasingly hard line towards any criticism or comment. Yet, given the nature of these new satires and the fact that it was a Bishop, John Whitgift, who issued the proclamation on 1 June 1599 against the Satires of Hall and Marston and the correspondence between Harvey and Nashe, it was probably their indelicacies as well as their iconoclasm which caused their suppression. The satirical spirit was to find its outlet increasingly on the stage as the new realism penetrated dramatic writing. In 1599 alone there appeared three plays which featured the new-style satirist - As You Like It, Every Man Out of his Humour, and

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<sup>1</sup>All quotations from Donne are taken from The Poems of John Donne, ed. Herbert J.C. Grierson, 2 vols. (1912; rpt, Oxford University Press, 1951).

Dekker's Satiromastix. Marston increasingly expended his satirical energies in dramatic works. In the early years of James' reign non-dramatic satirical works did reappear, often protected by the omission of the suspect word "Satire". Samuel Rowland's works, Look to It, for I'll Stab Ye (1604) and Humour's Looking Glass (c.1605), contain the same satirical spirit amid a wealth of anecdotes and jests.<sup>1</sup>

(iii) The Effects of the New Realism on Attitudes to the Country

Not only did the new realism appear in poetry and in prose, and on the stage, most notably in the "city" comedies of playwrights like Jonson and Middleton, it also penetrated other areas such as painting. Aesthetic historians have repeatedly commented on the change in the attitude to the portrait in England at the turn of the century, and the rise of an interest in landscape for its own sake which mirrored the changed attitude to the rural in the seventeenth century consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Sir Kenneth Clark, writing about the treatment of landscape, notes that, after Bellini in the late fifteenth century, the "landscape of fact" disappears, not to reappear until the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> Sixteenth century artists like Giorgione, Veronese, and Titian were not interested in landscape for itself. "Landscape had to carry with it some literary association, or scenery be

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<sup>1</sup>Rowlands' first two volumes of Satires and Epigrams A Merry Meeting, or 'Tis Merry when Knaves Meet and The Letting of Humour's Blood in the Head Vein were both publicly burned soon after publication in 1600.

<sup>2</sup>One notes this trend in all the decorative arts. A study of the collection of sixteenth to eighteenth century majolica ware in the Ashmolean, Oxford, shows that the favourite decorative device throughout the sixteenth century was the figure in a landscape. Majolica-ware decorated solely with landscape scenes begins to appear in the late seventeenth century.

cf. too, the eighteenth century interest in amateur botany, zoology, and the walking tour.

<sup>3</sup>Landscape into Art (London: John Murray, 1949), p.25.

intensified to heighten some dramatic effect." <sup>1</sup> The human figure was the important ingredient and the landscape provided merely a setting or, more importantly, a means of mirroring the human drama or emotion which was the raison d'être of the painting. This trend illuminates the use of the rural background in Renaissance pastoral. There, too, the human figures are the primary focus, the natural setting is usually a standardised pastoral scene, incorporated because of its symbolic role or as a means of emphasising certain aspects of the human drama and/or emotion. The pastoral does not involve an interest in nature or the country per se and it was the rise of interest in this very aspect which contributed to the split between the rural and the pastoral.

In portraiture, changes reveal both the new interest in psychological realism, and the new interest in the country as the setting of the sitter who is, increasingly in seventeenth century England, a gentleman among his rural estates. The typical Tudor portrait reveals the sitter, usually half length, with only his or her coat of arms and other real or allegorical insignia as a backdrop - the emphasis in portraiture being on the social status of the sitter, his position in the strict Elizabethan hierarchy. There is little interest in psychological exploration, the portrait rather fulfills much the same purpose as the head on a coin or stamp - a likeness for symbolic purposes. Portraits of Elizabeth are notoriously without realism, whether psychological or, in her later years, physical. Indeed, as she aged, her portraits lost more and more touch with reality. They were like icons, the symbolic representations of the

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<sup>1</sup>ibid.

whole cult of Elizabeth as the essence of England.<sup>1</sup> Gradually the same interest in realism penetrated portraiture as it did the other arts. Roy Strong comments on the innovations of painters like Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger and Isaac Oliver who, from about 1590 onwards, in large scale and miniature respectively "express a new mood pervading late Elizabethan and Jacobean society which saw itself besieged by 'sable coloured melancholy'. It is they who transmit into paint this new world of pensive gloom and psychological introspection, a visual parallel to developments in literature."<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the century full length portraits became the vogue and the subject was placed in real space, whether against a landscape or in an interior. Portraits like that of Sir Thomas Lee,<sup>3</sup> Essex,<sup>4</sup> and the "Persian Lady"<sup>5</sup> depict sitters in the open air amid landscapes.<sup>6</sup> Increasingly the distant scene became a particularized rural setting.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The same attitude is revealed in the literature, cf. "To the Spring" from Sir John Davies' Hymns of Astraea in Acrostic Verse (1599). The second verse reads as follows:

"Reserve, sweet spring, this nymph of ours  
Eternal garland of thy flowers  
Green garlands never wasting;  
In her shall last our State's fair Spring,  
Now and for ever flourishing,  
As long as heaven is lasting."

<sup>2</sup>The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p.21.

<sup>3</sup>Dated 1594. At present on loan to the Tate Gallery, London.

<sup>4</sup>ca.1596, owned by the Duke of Bedford.

<sup>5</sup>ca.1590-1600, owned by H.M. the Queen. At Hampton Court.

<sup>6</sup>Strong remarks that "in this Gheeraerts is the fount of a tradition in England that leads directly to Gainsborough." English Icon, p.23.

<sup>7</sup>See the portrait of Queen Anne of Denmark 1617, by Paul van Somer (Windsor Castle) which has a view of one of the palaces (believed to be Oatlands) in the background.



Psychological realism appeared in the treatment of the subject and, by 1616, there appeared portraits where the sitter was caught in a private moment.<sup>1</sup>

The rise both in melancholia and an interest in its clinical symptoms, as well as the conventional identification between melancholia and a natural setting, probably contributed to this change in some portraits.

Sir Thomas Overbury's Characters (1614) contains a description of a melancholy man as being one who will "seldome be found without the shade of some grove, in what bottome a river dwels". The solitary melancholic in a natural setting is in itself a subject which is totally un-pastoral. As Poggioli has shown, the pastoral, either in the sixteenth century or before, did not naturally treat of solitude.<sup>2</sup> The pastoral praised the values of a Horatian-style retirement but never a melancholic sequestration. Even the depressed, unrequited lover assembled with fellow shepherds to lament his lot.

In funerary sculpture the same movement towards realism is seen. More emotional freedom appears. The expression of grief among the sculpted survivors is freely depicted in contrast to the formal rows of praying descendants which characterize sixteenth century tombs.

In the changed attitude to the country itself which appeared in these years there lies a crucial explanation for both the declining interest in the pastoral, which is not an essentially rural form, and for the changed output of the pastoral writing that still did appear. As revealed

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<sup>1</sup>Closely related to these tendencies towards "realistic" portraiture in the city comedies, the satires, and the painting of the period is the growth of popularity of the Theophrastian character. Theophrastus had written his Characters just when the New Comedy in Athens was concentrating on the realistic portrayal of urban types and manners. The opportunities for satire, wit, dramatic observation, and realism are sufficient to explain the immense popularity of the form in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

<sup>2</sup>The Oaten Flute, pp.182-184. The change did come in the seventeenth century. See Abraham Cowley's poem "Of Solitude" and Marvell's "The Garden".

in the paintings, there arose an increased interest in the country setting. The latter was now no longer merely a metaphor for the innocent life as opposed to the sophisticated life of court and city, a function which it had performed in most Renaissance pastoral, but it was increasingly presented as an actual place to live. Literary historians like Raymond Williams have documented this change in attitude and have traced it to the growth of the landed gentry class, often of middle class background, whose country estates were both their natural abode and their source of wealth and power.<sup>1</sup> This closer attention to the actual countryside as a possible place to live resulted in an outburst of rural poetry which, in contrast to the pastoral, depends, in W.J. Keith's words, on "a verifiable connection with an existing countryside".<sup>2</sup> Although the country was still often seen, unrealistically, as the source of peace, simplicity, innocence, and contentment (as in the pastoral convention), the new rural poetry was "at pains to create not a countryside but the countryside".<sup>3</sup>

(iv) Changes in the Perception of the Pastoral and its Functions

In 1575 Abraham Fleming translated the "Bucolikes" of Virgil. In 1589 there appeared, from the pen of A[braham]F[leming] "The Bucoliks of Publius Vergilius Maro. Together with his Georgiks conteyning foure bookes." Perhaps the Georgics appeared then merely as yet another sample for English readers of the works of the popular Virgil. However, their

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<sup>1</sup>See especially Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973). Many of the great sixteenth century mansions were built primarily as status symbols, intended for receiving the court during the sovereign's progresses, never for continuous occupation. See Alastair Fowler, "The 'Better Marks' of Jonson's 'To Penshurst'," RES, XXIV (1973), p.267.

<sup>2</sup>The Rural Tradition, p.4.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p.32.

translation did presage the increased interest in empirical rural poetry which grew swiftly in the seventeenth century to the detriment of the pastoral. The pastoral was gradually losing its allegorical role - a role which had been its primary purpose and its strength during the Renaissance. No longer would it function as a means of comment when more direct comment was the vogue. No longer would it function as a serious means of eulogy when its serious allegorical premisses were denied. The Jacobean and Carolingian monarchies might still be prettily flattered in numerous pastoral masques but the pastoral content of these was often merely an excuse for pseudo-classical masquerades. The symbolism of the pastoral no longer expressed the realities of the monarchy and its ethos as it had done in Elizabeth's reign. Douglas Bush, having noted that the general poetic anthologies "provide an index of changing taste", points out that "Davison's Poetical Rhapsody (1602), which reached a final edition in 1621, was the last predominantly Petrarchan and pastoral collection".<sup>1</sup>

Fleming's preface to his 1589 translation carefully distinguishes between Virgil's "pastoralls" and his "ruralls", for the distinctions between the two were still clear. As the seventeenth century progressed these distinctions were to become increasingly blurred. It was to the detriment of the whole pastoral genre that pastorals were soon to be judged against the standards of rural poetry and to be found wanting. Dr. Johnson denied the premisses of the pastoral convention and thus found pastoral poetry to be a ridiculous perversion or rural poetry. The Romantics further equated the two until the terms "pastoral" and "rural" were interchangeable. J.E. Congleton concludes, "when the Romantic critics pushed pastoral theory into the realm of realism, they exceeded the bounds of the genre . . . . Critical opinion has generally agreed with W.W. Greg:

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<sup>1</sup>English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century. 1600-1660 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1945), p.102.

'Only when shepherd-songs ceased to be the outcome of unalloyed pastoral conditions did they become distinctly pastoral.'" <sup>1</sup>

The most significant change which came over the pastoral was the general disapproval of making it a vehicle for allegory. As early as 1595 Francis Sabie published Pan's Pipe: Three Pastoral Eclogues, with other Verses in which he carefully stated his non-allegorical purposes. <sup>2</sup> In 1597 in "His Defiance to Envie" prefixed to Virgidemiarum, Joseph Hall, referring to the pastoral, mentions only its function as a means of discussing one's personal affairs ("To sound our love" ll.83; "Come Nymphs and Faunes, that haunt those shadie Groves,/Whiles I report my fortunes or my loves" ll.101-2). <sup>3</sup> His remarks are interesting, his purpose in this Preface being not to conceal the true motive of his pastorals (which is often the case when an Elizabethan poet asserts that his pastorals have no hidden meaning) for the remarks preface his collection of satires. He is merely stating that the pastoral mode is not for him ("Would we but breath within a wax-bound quill" ll.79), his present purpose is satire ("But now...." ll.109 ff).

There is much convoluted allegory in the poetry of the Spenserians - those poets like Drayton, Browne, Wither, the Fletchers, who consciously imitated Spenser - but the allegory tends to be predominantly personal and private, no longer treating of politics or ecclesiastical affairs. One notes Poggioli's point that, although the pastoral as a form is always in

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<sup>1</sup>Theories of Pastoral Poetry, p.315.

<sup>2</sup>"... here plainly have I presented unto your view rusticke Tyterus, rehearsing in rude countrey tearmes to his fellow Thirsis his happy blisse, and luckie fortune in obtayning the love of his desired Phillida: or clownish Coridon, one while taking and giving quaint taunts and privy quips of and to his froliking Copemates: One while againe contending for superiority, in tuning rurall ditties on Pans pastorall pipe." Eds. J.W. Bright and W.P. Mustard, Mod.Phil., VII (April, 1910), 433-464.

<sup>3</sup>ll.79-102. Collected Poems, ed. Davenport, pp.9-10.



one sense "allegorical" as it seldom treats of literal shepherds, the Renaissance version of the pastoral was allegorical "in a specific and restricted sense". It is this latter specific allegorical role which was being rejected despite the continuation of using "the shepherd's disguise to give an idealized representation of the withdrawn artist, or the retired poet, of the solitary lover, or . . . the man for whom private life is the highest value on earth".<sup>1</sup>

By the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries allegorical pastoral was neither condoned nor produced. Congleton distinguishes the two directions taken by the pastoral in the early seventeenth century as the artificial and the empirically realistic. The former was to lead inevitably to the absurdities of eighteenth century shepherdess/milk maid poetry, while the latter, whose earliest exponents were Sabie, Browne, and Drayton, was to become inextricably fused with rural poetry. Indeed the Romantics, with their interest in particularized description and the idealization of actual country dwellers, particularly admired Drayton and Browne for their indigenous qualities. Likewise, Theocritus was preferred to Virgil as being more realistic.

Inevitably as the allegorical content of the pastoral declined, so the actual scene and figures became of increased significance. An interest in realistic and particularized descriptions of the actual English landscape grew as the seventeenth century progressed. The shepherd figures gradually lost their Golden Age remoteness, a quality favoured by the Neoclassicists, and became more realistic, more indigenous, with only their coarser aspects omitted. The end result of this tendency was to be a figure like Wordsworth's Michael, a true English shepherd, albeit slightly idealized.

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<sup>1</sup>Poggioli, p.122.

With the decline of the specifically allegorical purpose of the typical Renaissance pastoral, the pastoral gradually acquired new functions. In the changing perception of the functions of the pastoral can be seen the increased blurring of the "pastoral" and the "rural". The Neo-Classicists in England, poets like Pope, Gay, and Swift, closely followed Rapin, whose influential treatise of 1659 on the pastoral was translated into English in 1684. For them the purpose of the pastoral was to depict the pleasures and virtues of the Golden Age to the present iron age. In Pope's words, Nature was to be to "advantage dress'd".

Pastoral is an image of what they call the golden age. So that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceived then to have been; when the best of men followed the employment. <sup>1</sup>

Virgil was their model. The allegorical tendencies of Mantuan and Spenser were deplored.

The Rationalists, who looked rather to Theocritus than Virgil as a model, and who particularly admired Spenser's indigenous qualities, if not his allegory, emphasised that the purpose of the pastoral was to portray the pleasures of the pastoral life for those embroiled in a necessarily sophisticated and arduous existence. The inherent ruralism was not the attraction, rather it was the quietness and leisure of the shepherd's life. According to the arch-Rationalist, Dr. Johnson, nature and life were to be represented.

If we search the writings of Virgil for the true definition of a pastoral it will be found a poem in which any action or passion is represented by its effects upon a country life. . . . In this definition . . . there is no mention of the golden age. I cannot indeed easily discover why it is thought necessary to refer descriptions of a rural state to remote times. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry, 1717. Quoted in The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse, p.252.

<sup>2</sup>The Rambler, 1750. Quoted in The Penguin Book, p.301.

Hence there was an attempt at realistic and particularized description although only the more pleasing and virtuous aspects of the pastoral life were to be presented, for Dr. Johnson noted that, as the subject is the poet's own choice, the poet ought always to consult the interest of virtue.

In both the Neoclassic and Rationalist approaches the pastoral retains the distinctively cathartic purpose which it fulfills for a sophisticated society. Aspects of this cathartic function had obviously been present in the Renaissance pastoral and it seems to be one of the distinguishing features of pastoralism. To the Romantics the purpose of the "pastoral" was to present the beauties of natural scenery and to depict the lives of those who live among them.

To a just taste, and unadulterated feelings, the natural beauties of the country, the simple manners, rustic occupations, and rural enjoyments of its inhabitants, brought into view by the medium of a well-contrived dramatic fable, must afford a much higher degree of pleasure, than any chimerical fiction, in which Arcadian nymphs and swains hold intercourse with Pan and his attendant fauns and satyrs. <sup>1</sup>

This attempt at a truthful depiction of rural life and manners would also have cathartic properties. As Wordsworth writes in his "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads (1800):

Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language: because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended; and are more durable; and lastly because in that situation the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Fraser Tytler, "Remarks on the Genius and Writings of Allan Ramsay," 1800. The Penguin Book, p.451.

<sup>2</sup>The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, eds. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974), I, 124.

However, in attempting to recreate in words the essence of rural life, the Romantic poet consciously denied the "double attitude" which Empson singles out as one of the distinguishing features of the pastoral. The Romantic writer tried to avoid the distancing effect of admitting, in Empson's words "I am in one way better, in another not so good".<sup>1</sup> With a belief that rural life and rural man was undoubtedly "better", there was an attempt at a neutral and objective depiction of the realities of rural life (however flawed such an attempt might be) which, though it might be described as "rural", is certainly not "pastoral". The pastoral is, by definition, neither neutral nor objective.

(v) Early Seventeenth Century Pastoral Writing

If one looks at some of the overtly pastoral writing of the early seventeenth century one sees the pastoral, no longer a specifically allegorical medium, now appearing in at least three different forms. There is the straightforward non-allegorical pastoral which, as we have noted above, gradually merged with the increasingly prolific rural poetry and eventually lost its distinctively pastoral features. There were a few mock pastorals which could still draw on a knowledge of the pastoral's allegorical vocabulary for the purposes of satire or irony. Finally, there were the pastoral masques, in which pastoral conceits were used primarily for eulogistic purposes. These masques became increasingly artificial and conventional and, although the masques themselves did not survive far into the seventeenth century, their artificial conventions were used ad nauseam, mainly in the lyric, far into the next century. It was this type of pastoral inanity which added fuel to Dr. Johnson's anti-pastoral outburst, and was to be forcefully rejected by Crabbe.

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<sup>1</sup>Some Versions of Pastoral, p.15.



Drayton's Poly-Olbion probably most clearly illustrates the new empirical tendencies in the literary treatment of nature. The work reveals an interest in the actualities of topography which has little to do with the pastoral. To see what this Spenserian poet, who had published pastoral eclogues and was still to publish the "Quest of Cynthia" (1627), "The Shepherds Sirena" (1627) and "The Description of Elysium" (1630), did in Poly-Olbion with inherently pastoral material one has only to turn to the Cotswold section. In this section ("The Fourteenth Song"), although there is a slight tendency to approach the shepherd in the old, idealizing, "pastoral" way, there is also a serious attempt at empirical realism. The idealizing tendencies come to the fore in these lines:

But Muse, returne to tell, how there the shepherds king,  
Whose flock hath chanc't that yeere the earliest lambe to bring,  
In his gay bauldrick sits at his lowe grassie bord,  
With fawns, curds, clowted-creame, and country dainties stored:  
And, whilst the bag-pipe playes, each lustie jocund swaine  
Quaffes sillibubs in kans, to all upon the plaine,  
And to their country-girles, whose nosegayes they doe weare,  
Some roundelayes doe sing: the rest, the burthen beare.  
(ll.271-278) <sup>1</sup>

The conscious empiricism reveals itself in the lines just preceding where the poet is describing one of the Cotswold's famous sheep:

The staple deepe and thick, through, to the very graine,  
Most strongly keepeth out the violentest raine:  
A body long and large, the buttocks equall broad;  
As fit to under-goe the full and weightie load.  
And of the fleecie face, the flanke doth nothing lack,  
But every-where is stor'd; the belly, as the back.  
(ll.259-264) <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Quotations from Poly-Olbion are taken from Poems of Michael Drayton, ed. John Buxton, Vol. II.

<sup>2</sup>Attempts at empirical description could at times descend to the level of Wordsworth's "I've measured it from side to side:/'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide." "The Thorn". 1798 version.

Given the Cotswold setting one is conscious of a deliberate avoidance of the fullscale "pastoralization" of such material which had hitherto been the norm. The actual pastoral economy of the Cotswolds had, in the previous few decades, often led to the incongruous blending of the economic realities with the conventions of the literary pastoral.<sup>1</sup> An example of such incongruity occurs in a pamphlet published in 1604, Londoners Their Entertainment in the Countrie. Or the whipping of Runnawayes, reputed to be by Richard Milton.<sup>2</sup> This is a tract castigating the sins of England, and especially London, which have caused the plague, denouncing the Londoners who have run away from the plague-ridden city, and attacking the (understandably) hostile attitude of the country folk towards these runaways. The pamphlet is written in declamatory prose which is suddenly interrupted, following the mention of the author's arrival among the pastoral "downes of Buckingham", by a pastoral interlude which is stylistically and psychologically opposed to the surrounding material. One passage is sufficient to give an indication of the overall style of the tract:

Therefore woe worth<sup>3</sup> thee Londoner, saith the Country, hadst not thou beene, we had beene free. I answere no: for assure thy selfe thou Country-man or Townes-man, whosoever thou be, that if thou be visited, it is thy sinne that causeth visitation, for else thou shouldest accuse God of iniustice, and improvidence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See the Sudeley Entertainment where the two coalesce rather successfully. See above, Ch. II, Section (iii).

<sup>2</sup>Bodleian Malone 659 (7).

The full title reads - Londoners Their Entertainment in the Countrie. Or the whipping of Runnawayes. Wherein is described Londons Miserie The Countries Crueltie and Mans Inhumanitie.

<sup>3</sup>Presumably from Middle English worp or wurðen = become, will be.

<sup>4</sup>ibid., fol B<sub>2</sub>

The author then describes his travels into the country where he sees London gentlemen lying dead in the road and he finds that no inns will take in Londoners. He reminds the Countrymen that they are not immune from re-tribution:

Let not her affliction be thy securitie, let not her plagues flatter thee, and make thee thinke that thou art free from sinne, because thy visitation is the lesse; For well maist thou perceave, that the selfe same scourge (though not in such terrible manner) yet in some measure, it stealeth upon thy Townes and Villages. <sup>1</sup>

Suddenly the style changes:

But to proceed, no sooner had I mounted the usuall walks for shepherds, the downes of Buckingham, but I might heare a Swayne tuning on his harsh pipe such notes of sorrow, and withal singing to the same so sad an Elegie, that his pretie ewes left grazing and would not feede for mourning: the effect whereof followeth. . . . <sup>2</sup>

There follows an "Elegie" in which a shepherd relates his sorrow and his flocks' unnatural despondency on hearing of London's scourge.

This passionate dittie was no sooner ended, but I drewe neere the place, whence I heard that unexpected lamentation, where on a banck of mosse I found a true love knot of Shepheardes all woe begon, even all strooken unto an extacie, of whom I demaunded the cause of sorrowe . . . . <sup>3</sup>

One of the shepherds explains the reason ending with "'Oh London': and there made a colon, whereuppon all the rest of the Shepehards ioyntlie with him did beare severall parts in this sad following Eglogue . . . ." <sup>4</sup>

There follows an eight-line stanza, the theme of which is "Heavens blesse faire London, or poore Shepheards die". The author then reverts to a realistic vein and describes the particular sorrows of various groups of people.

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., fol. C2ff.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., C2.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., C3.

<sup>4</sup>ibid.

The reasons for this pastoral interlude are probably complex. Was it to give light relief to the pamphlet as a whole in the form of a popular convention? Or, given the vogue for pastoral interludes in various literary products of the period, was it a means of popularizing the work as a whole? Perhaps the answer lies in the saturation of the late sixteenth century mind in the pastoral convention. A reference to actual pastoral country immediately calls for a conventional tableau of shepherds. In the light of such pastoral effusions, Drayton's restraint, given the opportunity for conventional pastoral elaboration, is indicative of the changed interests towards rural matters in literature.

Drayton in his last pastorals, "The Shepherd's Sirena" and "The Muses Elizium" largely abandons the conscious empiricism of Poly-Olbion. Despite some felicitous natural details, the overall setting is remote from the real world of the countryside.<sup>1</sup> These works reveal some of the graces and faults which Drayton shares with the other Spenserian poets - Browne, Wither, the Fletchers. Their versification is melodious but, finally, repetitive in its smooth continuity. Lines like the following which form the predominant metre in The Muses Elizium do not survive well great length:

When Phoebus with a face of mirth,  
Had flong abroad his beames,  
To blanch the bosome of the earth,  
And glaze the gliding streames.

(The First Nimphall ll.1-4).

The pastoral allegories and digressions in the works of these poets are often merely confusing. Where there is a concern for direct observation, a love revealed for the indigenous English countryside, a particularity of description, the poetry is striking. Lines like these, from Browne's Britannia's Pastorals (1616) reveal the strength of direct observation:

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<sup>1</sup>Drayton's poetry, throughout his career, contains carefully observed natural details, details which give strength and charm to much English pastoral lyricism.



. . . the slimy Snayle  
Might on the wainscot, (by his many mazes  
Winding Meanders and selfe-knitting traces)  
Be follow'd where he stucke, his glittering slime  
Not yet wipt off.

(Book II, Song 2).

Yet often the works deteriorate into mundane, conventional pastoralization, the type of verse that retains its charm within the confines, and with the melodic subtleties, of a short lyric (as can be seen in most of the lyrics of Englands Helicon) but which lacks the inherent strength to succeed in a longer work. George Wither's The Shepherd's Hunting (1614) consists of five eclogues in which Wither, under a pastoral guise, writes of himself and his friends. An extract, though brief, will give a fair indication of the banality into which much of this verse dwindled: Philarete (Wither) is countering Willy's (Browne's) argument that the time is not ripe for singing:

Yea, but no man now is still,  
That can sing or tune a quill.  
Now to chant it were but reason;  
Song and music are in season.  
Now in this sweet jolly tide  
Is the earth in all her pride;  
The fair lady of the May,  
Trimmed up in her best array,  
Hath invited all the swains  
With the lasses of the plains  
To attend upon her sport  
At the places of resort.

(The Fourth Eclogue, ll.71-82).

In much of the work, as here, the pastoral element has no inherent value. The way was laid open for the triviality of much eighteenth century pastoral writing.

(vi) Effects of the New Realism on the Pastoral Convention with Special Reference to Shakespeare's As You Like It and to Some Selected Works of Ben Jonson and John Donne

Towards the end of the sixteenth century the pastoral convention felt the effects of the tendencies in the literature of the period to adopt an increasingly realistic, or merely cynical, attitude to the three traditionally opposed places - the country, the court, the city. This attitude denied the validity of the favourite Renaissance debate as to which constituted the best life. In keeping with the new realism there was an attempt, by some, to examine each fairly and without illusions. Although this attitude obviously does appear even at the height of the pastoral vogue,<sup>1</sup> most often the pastoral scheme of values had retained its force. The country was a place of unadulterated pleasure and beauty, innocence, and peace. This convention was gradually challenged. Donne's verse letter to Sir Henry Wotton "Sir, more then kisses . . . " was written as part of a literary debate on the familiar subject "Which kind of life is best?" which took place in the late nineties. Each of the poems known to have resulted from this particular debate reveals the same disparaging attitude. The country is no longer the inevitable choice. Donne writes:

. . . But Oh, what refuge canst thou winne  
Parch'd in the Court, and in the country frozen?  
Shall cities, built of both extremes, be chosen?  
Can dung and garlike be'a perfume? or can  
A Scorpion and Torpedo cure a man?  
Cities are worst of all three; of all three  
(O knottie riddle) each is worst equally.  
Cities are Sepulchers; they who dwell there  
Are carcases, as if no such there were.  
And Courts and Theaters, where some men play  
Princes, some slaves, all to one end, and of one clay.  
The Country is a desert, where no good,  
Gain'd (as habits, not borne,) is understood.  
There men become beasts, and prone to more evils;  
In cities blockes, and in a lewd court, devills.  
(ll.14-28)

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, The Faerie Queene, Book VI.ix.29, and Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, ll.657-9, 688-730.

In the face of such disillusionment, he can only offer Stoicism; "Be thou thine owne home, and in thy selfe dwell" (l.47).

Wotton's own contribution to the debate, "To J.D.: from Mr. H.W." echoes Meliboeus' "It is the mynd that maketh good or ill" (VI.ix.30):

Tis not a coate of gray or Shepheards life,  
Tis not in feilds or woods remote to live,  
That adds or takes from one that peace or strife,  
Which to our dayes such good or ill doth give:  
It is the mind that make the mans estate  
For ever happy or unfortunate.  
(ll.1-6) <sup>1</sup>

The perennial idea that ambition and desires are the root of all evil appears, but no longer is the country proffered as the cure for these passions as it had so recently been:

Then first the mind of passions must be free  
Of him that would to happiness aspire;  
Whether in Princes Pallaces he bee,  
Or whether to his cottage he retire;  
For our desires that on extreames are bent.  
Are frends to care and traitors to content.  
(ll.7-12)

The wheel has come full circle for these are the very sentiments found in Tottel's Miscellany (1557). The belief in the panacea of a pastoral escape, which had become current in the intervening decades, is being eroded.

The poem attributed to Bacon in this debate, "The world's a bubble", reveals the cynical disillusionment without the philosophical answer. In its disillusioned realism it is reminiscent of Raleigh's "The Lie" (c.1595). <sup>2</sup>

In "The Wood-mans walke" by 'Shepherd Tonie' (Anthony Munday?) a total withdrawal is advocated in the face of the moral turpitude to be found in Court, City, and Country. Having sampled the iniquities of the

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in The Poems of John Donne, ed. Grierson, II, 141.

<sup>2</sup>See below.

Court and the City, the wood-man remembers the conventional appraisal of the country, "And to the Country then I goe,/to live in quiet state." He is quickly disillusioned:

But Lord how Country-folks can glose,  
when they speake most soothly.  
More craft was in a buttond cap,  
and in an old wives rayle:  
Then in my life it was my hap,  
to see on Downe or Dale.  
There was no open forgerie,  
but under-handed gleaning:  
Which they call Country pollicie,  
but hath a worser meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Withdrawal from society is the only solution:

Back to the woods I got againe,  
in minde perplexed sore:  
Where I found ease of all this paine,  
and meane to stray no more.

The advice is the same as that given to Raleigh in the face of his extreme disillusionment:

And so my counsaile is,  
for that you want a name,  
to seeke some corner in the darke,  
to hide your self from shame.<sup>2</sup>

Raleigh himself not only exploded the pastoral dream but made bitter satiric use of the whole pastoral machinery in his "Epitaph on the Earl of Salisbury" (ca.1612).<sup>3</sup> If the poem is correctly ascribed to Raleigh, it is the poet

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse, pp.70-72.

<sup>2</sup>Answer to 'The Lie' from MS. Chetham 8012, p.107. Cited by Agnes M.C. Latham in The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh, The Muses' Library (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), pp.135-137.

<sup>3</sup>This is to assume that both the Answer to Marlowe's "Come live with Me" and this Epitaph are by Raleigh, although doubt as to their ascription does not negate the argument that this was what was happening to the pastoral at this time. Poems in the "Come live with Me" tradition subsequent to Marlowe's have usually aimed at exposing the gap between the dream and the reality. A twentieth century example is C. Day Lewis' version published in A Time to Dance (1935).



who was, in the glorious eighties, the Shepherd of the Ocean, who is now disenchanted and filled with the prevailing melancholia of the age, and who now uses the old pastoral conceits for new cynical purposes:

Here lies Hobbinall, our Pastor while ere,  
That once in a Quarter our Fleeces did sheare.  
To please us, his Curre he kept under Clog,  
And was ever after both Shepherd and Dog.  
For Oblation to Pan his custome was thus,  
He first gave a Trifle, then offer'd up Us:  
And through his false worship such power he did gaine,  
As kept him o' th' Mountaine, and us on the plaine.  
Where many a Horne-pipe he tun'd to his Phyllis,  
And sweetly sung Walsingham to's Amaryllis.  
Till Atropos clapt him, a Pox on the Drab,  
For (sight of his Tarbox) he died of the Scab. <sup>1</sup>

Frequently the pastoral and pastoralism were neither merely cynically rejected nor satirically exploited but use was made of the general familiarity with the pastoral metaphors and machinery in order to assess the validity of the dream as well as to reveal its flaws. As You Like It dates from ca.1599. The play reveals both Shakespeare's awareness of the popularity of the pastoral vogue as well as his realization that the pastoral convention could be used for some very particular purposes. At the same time he felt justified in satirizing aspects of the convention itself. As always he succeeds in giving his audience just what they would have wanted but manages, at the same time, to bring to bear, on the popular pastoral convention, the new critical spirit of the age. Lodge, Shakespeare's source, had carefully stayed within the pastoral convention and had accepted it at its face value. However, to his source, Shakespeare added two characters, Jaques and Touchstone, both of whom are commentators. As Helen Gardner has pointed out, they add nothing to the story and a précis of the plot could quite easily omit them. <sup>2</sup> Yet for Shakespeare, unlike Lodge, it is

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<sup>1</sup>The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh, p.53.

<sup>2</sup>"As You Like It", More Talking of Shakespeare, ed. John Garrett, 1959. Reprinted in Shakespeare's Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism, ed. Laurence Lerner (Penguin Books, 1967), pp.245-262.

not the story which is of prime importance but the evaluation of the various assumptions inherent in his source. Although they both, Touchstone through parody and Jaques through satire, undermine the pastoral dream, they themselves are critically assessed and shown to be unreliable judges. It is rather through Rosalind's attitude that Shakespeare is able to show the weaknesses of the pastoral premisses without destroying the pastoral idea.

Harold Jenkins has described the technique of the play as the "art of comic juxtaposition".<sup>1</sup> At almost every encounter, and the play is largely made up of encounters, opposing views contradict each other but, significantly, neither is cancelled out. We, the audience, are given the necessary insight to extract the valuable and discard the specious in the attitudes of each of the characters.

One of the major themes of the pastoral - the distinction between Court and Country - forms the basis of the play. The corrupt, disordered, self-seeking atmosphere at Duke Frederick's Court is contrasted with the atmosphere in the forest of Arden. As in Shakespeare's later Romances, two environments are placed in opposition. The characters move from one to the other where they either gain spiritual, moral, or material benefits, or all three, before returning to their initial environment which, in turn, benefits from their presence. Shakespeare carefully reveals that Arden, which, in terms of the pastoral convention, would necessarily be a Golden world, is not unequivocally Golden. It is only from the distance of the corrupt Court and on the basis of hearsay that it can be so described:

Charles: They say he is already in the Forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world.  
(I.i.114-119).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"As You Like It", *Shakespeare Survey* 8., ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1955), pp.40-51.

<sup>2</sup>All quotations are from the Arden edition. Edited by Agnes Latham (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1975).

Arden presents an ambivalent aspect and Shakespeare shows that it is through the essentially civilized virtues of courtesy, fellow-feeling, gentleness, and selflessness, that Arden proves not to be the savage, uncouth place that it first appears to the gentle exile, Orlando, "If this uncouth forest yield anything savage, I will either be food for it, or bring it for food to thee" (II.vi.6-7). At the end, the nobles leave Arden to re-establish the old, ideal order which Adam and Orlando remember. The action thus moves from a corrupt court, to Arden, and back to the potentially ideal court of Duke Senior. At its most perfect the world of the Court is infinitely more attractive than mere rusticity. Like Spenser, Shakespeare could movingly contrast the corrupt, real court with the delights of withdrawal into the country but, in its ideal form, it is only at Court that nature and nurture can reach their combined perfection.

The first act, set wholly within Frederick's court, serves to emphasise the disorder within the family (the conflict between two pairs of brothers) and within society (Frederick's usurpation) which is the source of much of the ills and evils presented. The courtier, Le Beau, a prototype Osric, recommends the wrestling match to Rosalind and Celia. The insensitivity towards others rampant at this court is thereby neatly illustrated and further underlined by Touchstone's perception: "Thus men grow wiser every day. It is the first time that ever I heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies" (I.ii.127-129).

Yet this disillusioned portrait of court life is not necessarily typical. Orlando and Adam can reminisce about the old order and Adam himself is living witness to the very different values which have been denied by the "new court".

The action moves to Arden and initially we receive an impression which severely qualifies the golden world description given by Charles.

It is true that the Duke prefers this life to that at a corrupt court but he and his companions still know themselves to be "in exile" (II.i.1), the winter wind is chill, and it is only through a conscious effort of will that one can appreciate the "uses of adversity" (l.12) and "translate the stubbornness of fortune/Into so quiet and so sweet a style" (ll.19-20). Orlando and the Duke share an appreciation of the value of true civilization which demands the synthesis of nature, nurture, and grace, which Arden, in itself, cannot achieve:

Orlando: If ever you have look'd on better days;  
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church;  
If ever sat at any good man's feast;  
If ever from your eyelids wip'd a tear,  
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,

. . . . .

Duke Senior: True is it that we have seen better days,  
And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church,  
And sat at good men's feasts, and wip'd our eyes  
Of drops that sacred pity hath engender'd;  
And therefore sit you down in gentleness . . . .  
(II.vii.113-117, 120-124)

Although their life in Arden is suggestive of the carefree, companionable ways of Robin Hood and his merry men, the romanticism is curbed by Jaques who, with his ever detached and cynical eye, emphasises that the Duke, far from being native to this environment, is exploitive of it and as much an usurper as Duke Frederick.<sup>1</sup>

Rosalind and Celia, too, find that their initial optimism about Arden needs qualifying. Contentment must be striven for. Weary as they are, physically and emotionally, they have to organise accommodation in a world where nature does not provide spontaneous food and shelter.

Orlando, too, despite his escape from the savagely corrupt court, initially sees only the savage, inhospitable Arden, a place in which Adam is in real danger of death.

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<sup>1</sup>Tales of Robin Hood often provided, for a popular audience, just the psychological outlet provided for a more refined audience by the pastoral.



However, Shakespeare again qualifies all these views. Orlando soon finds true hospitality, Rosalind's spirits are soon to rise without check, and Jaques is increasingly revealed as an essentially limited commentator. The flashbacks to the really savage and inhospitable court serve to emphasise Arden's value. It is a place which can become positively attractive through the civilizing agency of love and gentleness. Although it is not an unequivocally golden place, it obviously has symbolic force as a place of refuge and restoration. The report given by Jaques de Boys of the wicked Duke's conversion at "the skirts of this wild wood" by an "old religious man" (V.iv.158-9), although having its source in many a fairy tale, derives significance from the accumulative effect of the references to this wood as essentially benign despite its apparent wildness. Arden is one of those charmed places which, like the "Wood near Athens" in A Midsummer-Night's Dream or Belmont in The Merchant of Venice, favourably affects the future of those who sojourn there.

With the confidence of one well-versed in the various aspects of the pastoral convention, Shakespeare introduces, as the native inhabitants of Arden, three very different groups.<sup>1</sup> Phebe and Silvius are the conventionalized shepherdess and shepherd of literary Arcadia. William and Audrey - the deliberate contrasts to Silvius and Phebe - derive from the equally conventional tradition of the country yokel - the "real" country bumpkins of the townsman's/courtier's viewpoint. Corin, midway between these two extremes, has also a literary origin. He is the shepherd-philosopher, the exponent of the golden mean, akin to the shepherds in Spenser's moral eclogues. However, despite these conventional traits, he

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<sup>1</sup>Helen Gardner points out the different forms of the pastoral which appear in the play:

"The pastoral romance of princesses playing at being a shepherd boy and his sister is combined with the pastoral love eclogue in the wooing of Phebe, with the burlesque of this in the wooing of Audrey, and with the tradition of the moral eclogue, in which the shepherd is the wise man, in Corin." "As You Like It", p.245.

is firmly rooted in the actual English pastoral economy.

These three pastoral types blend without incongruity. Their respective interactions with the courtly characters serve to expose their limitations as conventions as well as to emphasise the validity of these conventions as artistic metaphors.

In the interchange between Touchstone and Corin their opposing views are given equal status. Touchstone's foolish riddling is basically sound. The shepherd's life is a good life and yet, to a sixteenth century courtier, pious sentiments about the pastoral life did not negate the fact that shepherding was spoken of in the lowest possible terms. A solitary life has its advantages but there are dangers in privacy. The fields are traditionally attractive but they cannot compete with the attractions at court. The country, though having all the advantages of unspoilt nature, can very easily be merely dull and provincial. William and Audrey are as much part of it as any Horation recluse.

Touchstone's witty quibbling does not nullify Corin's reasonable views. He points out the common humanity shared by all, and the necessity for behaviour appropriate to one's circumstances. He gives expression to the pastoral philosophy of the golden mean - a philosophical ethic further sanctioned by Rosalind's own attitude. Contentment lies within, it has little to do with one's environment or status. Selffulfilment leads to contentment whether one is a native of the country or the court.

Touchstone's wooing of the goatgirl, Audrey, both parallels and parodies Silvius' wooing of the shepherdess, Phebe. It also reveals the artificiality of traditional pastoral sentiment just as Phebe and Silvius' affair leads the audience to accept, as basically realistic, the love of Rosalind and Orlando. Yet Touchstone's view of "loving" as the mere gratification of sexual urges, "As the ox hath his bow sir, the horse his curb, and the

falcon her bells, so man hath his desires, and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling" (III.iii.71-73), is obviously as incomplete as Silvius' ethereal definition:

It is to be all made of sighs and tears,

.....

It is to be all made of fantasy,  
All made of passion and all made of wishes,  
All adoration, duty and observance,  
All humbleness, all patience and impatience,  
All purity, all trial, all observance;  
(V.ii.83, 93-97)

Rosalind wisely realizes that love partakes of both to the exclusion of neither. She does not ridicule Silvius ("Alas, poor shepherd, searching of thy wound,/I have by hard adventure found mine own", II.iv.41-2) and she is not repelled by Touchstone, but she rejects both these incomplete views. The sentiments inherent in the pastoral tradition of love do serve to elevate human love from the level of mere animal procreation.

Jaques' presence in the play is attributable largely to the contemporary vogue for the cynical satirist. Despite there being real cause for disillusionment and melancholia towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, the pose of the melancholy satirist was often affected in deference to its fashionability.<sup>1</sup> Jaques enjoys his lack of enjoyment. Even the potentially ideal court of Duke Senior cannot attract him and he joins the hermit Frederick in his deliberate seclusion. To the debate of what constitutes the better life he can only contribute a negative denial of the worth of either the pastoral or the courtly. He deliberately affects the cynical disillusion which is feelingly revealed in Francis Bacon's poem, "The Life of Man":

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Spencer in his essay "The Elizabethan Malcontent" in Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies, eds. Mac Manaway, Dawson, Willoughby (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948), pp.523-535, distinguishes the various types of melancholy man. The "artificially melancholy man" adopts this pose "for melancholy was considered an attribute of excellence, and as such was assumed by people who wanted to be distinguished" (p.528).

Yet since with sorrow here we live oppressed,  
What life is best?  
Courts are but only superficial schools  
To dandle fools.  
The rural parts are turned into a den  
Of savage men.  
And where's a city from all vice so free,  
But may be termed the worst of all the three? <sup>1</sup>

This cynicism was to prove completely destructive of the pastoral premisses and it is part of the inclusiveness of the play that Shakespeare presents both the dream and the cynicism.

Significantly Jaques never comes into contact with Phebe and Silvius. Phebe and Silvius, and Jaques are themselves dramatic manifestations of the two opposing attitudes which underlie Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd to his Love" and Raleigh's "Answer" respectively. In the poem attributed to Raleigh, the realism and ultimate rejection of the pastoral premisses accompanies an undeniably affectionate attitude to these very premisses. In Jaques there is no room for affection - the conflict would be too unequal, the destruction too complete.

It is Rosalind who is the most searching critic of the pastoral dream and yet she is not wholly destructive of the dream. In her absorption of multifarious attitudes she indicates the need for compromise, the very interdependence of the natural and the artificial which is the basis of Arden, of the pastoral, of poetry, and indeed, of the human personality itself. When Corin, in unusually literary terms, presaging the artificiality of the imminent scene, invites her to view the spectacle of the wooing of Phebe by Silvius we, the audience, are able to share her amusement at the artificiality as well as her enjoyment of the charm of the scene. Although she breaks up this artificial tableau and stresses the basically physical aspects of love as an antidote to their romantic sentiments ("I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfied man, and you shall be married tomorrow")

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse, pp.793-4.



[V.ii.109-111]), it is not before she has identified herself with Silvius as one similarly subject to love's tyranny. However she wisely advocates the golden mean. She gives love its proper place, unlike Touchstone to whom love is a mere animal coupling, or Phebe and Silvius to whom it is a sentimental effusion. She makes fun of Orlando's Petrarchan sentiments and is instrumental in his adopting a more human and realistic attitude to love. Yet although Shakespeare, through Rosalind, reveals that, despite romantic opinions, love is not the be all and end all of life, he very clearly depicts the truth that, to the lover, it does seem to be such. Rosalind recognises this truth as she joins in the patterned responses with Phebe, Silvius, and Orlando in V.ii.83ff. and yet she can step aside and judge it too, "Pray you no more of this, 'tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon" (ll.110-1).

Finally, if one looks at the songs in the play - all, significantly, sung in Arden - one sees how they mirror some of the themes. The early songs are melancholy reminders of the purposefulness of human cruelty and the contrasting impartiality of Nature's blows. Amiens' first song concentrates on the contrast between the harshness of one's fellow beings and the infinitely more bearable harshness of the elements. The second song more precisely alludes to particular examples of man's inhumanity to man which make an ungolden exile a sweeter choice. "Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly" (II.vii.181, 191) would appear merely cynical were it not sung immediately after the generous and courteous welcome of Orlando and Adam to the Duke's banquet. The final song, sung immediately before the joyous finale, is derived from the pastoral tradition itself. The lovers, the Spring, the rural setting - all contribute to the festive spirit in which the play ends. It is indicative of Shakespeare's sympathy for the sweetness and charm and validity of the pastoral impulse that this final song in a play which has gently satirized the whole pastoral convention, is itself

a typical example of a conventional pastoral lyric.

In his later Romances Shakespeare was to reiterate his awareness of the value of the pastoral impulse. In this play, which appeared at the end of a decade (1599) in which the pastoral vogue had reached its apogee, Shakespeare showed that, despite being fully aware of the absurdities of the genre, his was the gentle satire of one who recognised the basic truths underlying the pastoral impulse.

To look at the works of two of the most influential poets of the early seventeenth century - Ben Jonson and John Donne - is to perceive something of what happened to the pastoral and pastoralism at this time. Obviously interest in the genre and its metaphors did not disappear overnight - even in the work of consciously innovative poets. It is easy to see how Jonson manipulated the pastoral. Not only did he write the scripts for the elaborate, eulogistic, "pastoral" masques presented at Court, but even his eulogies of the Penshursts or the Wroths draw on the pastoral tradition despite the fact that the country-house poem, of which these panegyrics were the first examples in English, was to develop, in the seventeenth century, into a genre completely divorced from the pastoral.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in the works of Donne too, although there are no straightforward pastorals in the manner of Spenser or his followers, there are poems which, for specific effects, either rely on aspects of the pastoral tradition or invert aspects of that tradition. Indeed it is in Donne's whole attitude to the pastoral genre and the pastoral dream that one sees the erosion of the pastoral as a serious medium for poetic expression.

Despite a frequent impression to the contrary, Jonson's masques are not predominantly pastoral. Of his approximately three dozen "entertainments" written for the Court, only a handful have any pastoral element at all.

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<sup>1</sup>The eighteenth century topographical poem (e.g. Denham's "Coopers Hill") is related to this country house genre rather than to the pastoral.

This is mainly confined to the use of the conventional "Golden Age Restored" theme and to the use of the traditionally pastoral mythological deities for the sole purpose of eulogising the Royal audience. Only once does a "Shepherd" appear, in the late Pan's Anniversary; or, the Shepherd's Holiday (1625) and his role is minor and conventional. Indeed the pastoral elements that do appear in Jonson's masques are strikingly different from those in Elizabethan entertainments. In the latter, although much was conventional, there was often an attempt to blend convention and actuality. Partly this arises from the fact that the entertainments before Elizabeth were frequently presented in the open air, in a rural setting, so that the rural elements in the literary composition could have specific reference to the actual surroundings. When James or Charles were entertained on progresses, at Theobalds in 1607, at Kenilworth in 1626, and at Bolsover in 1634, to name a few instances when the Court was not at Whitehall, the entertainments were repeatedly presented indoors, "The King and Queen being set at a banquet" (Bolsover), or "The King and Queen . . . being entered into the Gallery" (Theobalds). Obviously these Jacobean and Carolingian masques required an indoor setting both because of their elaborate stage effects and the importance in them of the carefully rehearsed dance. Repeatedly one finds the direction "The King and Court being seated, and in expectation" (my italics). This differs from many of the Elizabethan entertainments which often took place quite without forewarning as the Queen proceeded towards her destination - often seriously upsetting the planned schedules. This frequent alfresco setting was made possible, too, by the fact that the Elizabethan entertainments were not yet full-scale Masques although they contained masque-like elements.

Another explanation for the small amount of pastoralization in Jonson might lie in the fact that the pastoral elements (apart from the "Golden Age Restored" theme) were less suited to celebrating James and Charles than

they were to celebrating Elizabeth, a large part of whose cult took a deliberately pastoral form.<sup>1</sup>

One must finally conclude that the pastoral convention per se lacked inspiration for Jonson. His entertainments and masques, with their predominantly allegorical personages, like Genius, Delight, Fame, Truth, have greater affiliations to the old tableaux vivants than to the Renaissance pastoral tradition.

In the rest of Jonson's oeuvre there is only one piece that uses conventional pastoral machinery and that is, significantly, also for Royal consumption, being his "New Year's Gift, Sung to King Charles" (1635) where Charles is eulogised as Pan by a chorus of shepherds.<sup>2</sup> Another poem from Underwoods entitled "The Musical Strife - A Pastoral Dialogue" is a love duologue between "She" and "He". The explanation for the subtitle of this totally unpastoral love song lies probably in its amoebaeian form, associated with Theocritus.

The Sad Shepherd: or, A Tale of Robin-Hood, dating perhaps from as late as 1635, and left unfinished at Jonson's death, bears little resemblance to sixteenth century pastoral drama, despite the presence of shepherds. As its subtitle intimates it draws more fully on indigenous folk lore and popular tales of witchcraft. The plot revolves around Robin and Marian and their harrassment by Maudlin, the witch. The Sad Shepherd himself, Aeglamour, is (at least in the three acts extant) the centre of the rather tedious subplot. The knockabout humour, the tricks and confusions, the natural descriptions and identifiably English references, all suggest that the play is deliberately allied more to the native tradition of farce than

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<sup>1</sup>The reasons for this have been discussed above, Ch. III.

<sup>2</sup>It appears in Underwoods.



to the classically inspired pastoral drama of Guarini or Tasso.<sup>1</sup> Indeed pastoral sentiments are gently ridiculed. Karolin, the Kind Shepherd, tells, with a smile, how Aeglamour "now conceives/That my lost Sister, his Earine,/Is lately turn'd a Sphere amid the seven:/And reades a Musique - Lecture to the Planets!" (III.iii.10-13).<sup>2</sup> Jonson, in his Prologue, dismisses the sacrosanct attitude to the pastoral:

But here's an Heresie of late let fall;  
That Mirth by no meanes fits a Pastorall;  
Such say so, who can make none, he presumes:  
Else, there's no Scene, more properly assumes  
The Sock. For whence can sport in kind arise,  
But from the Rurall Routs and Families?  
Safe on this ground then, wee not feare to day,  
To tempt your laughter by our rustick Play.  
(ll.31-38)

With a pointed reference to the current effete pastoral drama he further adds:

But that no stile for Pastorall should goe  
Current, but what is stamp'd with Ah, and O;  
Who judgeth so, may singularly erre.  
(ll.53-55)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See particularly the list of rivers in I.v.51-55:

" . . . Doe not I know,  
How the Vale wither'd the same Day? How Dove,  
Deane, Eye, and Erewash, Idell, Snite, and Soare,  
Each broke his Urne, and twenty waters more,  
That swell'd proud Trent, shrunk themselves dry; . . .

and the detailed natural description in such lines as:

Greene-bellied Snakes! blew fire-drakes in the skie!  
And giddie Flitter-mice, with lether wings!  
The scalie Beetles, with their habergeons,  
That make a humming Murmur as they flie!"  
(II.viii.48-51)

<sup>2</sup>All quotations are taken from The Complete Works of Ben Jonson, eds. C.H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1925-1952), VII (1941.rpt.1952), 5-49.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Daniel's pastoral plays, especially Hymen's Triumph (1615), where "Ah" and "O" are used frequently. Jonson was here refuting Daniel's assertion that the pastoral should deal only with the loves of shepherds.

In the elegiac collection which appeared in 1638, six months after Jonson's death, one can again perceive the decline in the popularity of the classically inspired pastoral as a poetic form. Of the twenty-six English elegies, only one takes a pastoral form.<sup>1</sup> The pastoral elegy had traditionally been considered an ideal means of lamenting one who was also a poet. For this there were Classical and Renaissance precedents.<sup>2</sup> In Falkland's poem there is a startlingly new conceit for, despite the pastoral mourners, Jonson is not mourned as a fellow shepherd:

Alas, that bard, that glorious bard is dead,  
Who, when I whilom cities visited,  
Hath made them seem but hours, which were full days,  
Whilst he vouchsafed me his harmonious lays:  
And when he lived, I thought the country then  
A torture, and no mansion, but a den.<sup>3</sup>

The few masques and lyrics mentioned above form the sum total of Jonson's pastoral output - a factor in itself indicative of a decline in interest in the pastoral per se. "To Penshurst" and "Sir Robert Wroth" generated an emergent English genre, the country house poem, which was clearly distinct from the pastoral.<sup>4</sup> Yet these poems do themselves rely on certain basic pastoral premisses which I wish to adumbrate here. For Jonson, who was widely read in the Classics and in recent English literature, was inevitably affected by the pastoral, and pastoral sentiments reveal themselves in his attitude to the country.

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<sup>1</sup>"An Eclogue on the Death of Ben Jonson, Between Meliboeus and Hylas" by Falkland.

<sup>2</sup>See Theocritus' First Idyll; Moschus' Third Idyll or "Lament for Bion," Virgil's Fifth Eclogue, and, during the sixteenth century, (to choose but one example), Spenser's "Astrophel".

<sup>3</sup>The elegiac collection Jonsonus Virbius: or, The Memory of Ben Jonson. Revived by the Friends of the Muses, 1638, is reprinted in The Works of Ben Jonson, ed. William Gifford (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1860), pp.791-806.

<sup>4</sup>Both poems appeared in the collection The Forest selected and published by Jonson himself in 1616.

These two poems present, in literature, a parallel to the tendencies that were simultaneously being revealed in the fine art of the period, namely, an increased interest in the country scene per se and in the inhabitants (inevitably upper class) of the country.<sup>1</sup> Yet, as with the pastoral, these poems are the products of a city dweller who chooses to emphasise the contrast between city and country. In significant contrast to much Elizabethan pastoral, the rural details in these poems are of inestimable importance. One critic has written of "To Penshurst" that "the description is the poem".<sup>2</sup> Despite the inclusion of Classical deities, and unlike the conventional pastoral, it is the real country that is described and "no fantastic and conventional Arcadia".<sup>3</sup>

In "To Sir Robert Wroth" the life of a country gentleman is celebrated in explicit contrast to the life of the courtier and the citizen.

But canst at home, in thy securer rest,  
Live, with unbought provision blest;  
Free from proud porches, or the gilded roofs,  
'Mongst lowing herds, and solid hoofs:

Although this contrast is not openly stated in "To Penshurst", the whole poem is a celebration of a country house and its permanently resident owner. Over and above this contrast is the contrast between these particular men and other country house owners. In these panegyrics Jonson is at pains to reveal the distance between the ideal worlds of Lord Penshurst and Wroth and the empirical reality of the world he lives in. To emphasise this contrast Jonson utilizes one of the major metaphors of the pastoral world. Penshurst and the home of Wroth are paradigms of the Golden age and as such

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<sup>1</sup>See above, Chapter VI, Section (iii).

<sup>2</sup>John Wilson Foster, "A Redefinition of Topographical Poetry", J E G P, LXIX (1970), 398.

<sup>3</sup>T.K. Whipple, "Martial and the English Epigram from Sir Thomas Wyatt to Ben Jonson," University of California Publ. in Mod.Phil., X (1925), 391. Cited by Paul M. Cubeta, "A Jonsonian Ideal: 'To Penshurst,'" P.Q., XLII (1963), 23.

are in sharp contrast to the contemporary norm characterized by deteriorating manners and mores:

And I not fain to sit (as some this day,  
At great men's tables) and yet dine away.  
("To Penshurst")

Such and no other was that age of old,  
Which boasts t' have had the head of gold.  
("To Sir Robert Wroth")

To underline the compliment that it is in these two settings that the earlier golden age still exists, Jonson introduces the Classical deities amid the topographical, architectural, and natural details which comprise the poems. As Alastair Fowler notes, "Jonson presents Penshurst not only as locus amoenus - a necessary motif in the country-house poem - but also as an equivalent of the golden age."<sup>1</sup>

Thy mount, to which thy Dryads do resort,  
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,  
Beneath the broad beech, and the chestnut shade;  
That taller tree, which of a nut was set,  
At his great birth, where all the Muses met.  
There, in the writhed bark, are cut the names  
of many a sylvan, taken with his flames;  
And thence the ruddy satyrs oft provoke  
The lighter fauns, to reach thy lady's oak.  
("Penshurst")

Thus Pan and Sylvan having had their rites,  
Comus puts in for new delights;  
And fills thy open hall with mirth and cheer,  
As if in Saturn's reign it were;  
Apollo's harp, and Hermes' lyre resound,  
Nor are the Muses strangers found.  
("Wroth")

Drawing on the same golden age tradition, Jonson can further celebrate the patron by depicting nature and her creatures giving spontaneously of themselves (or their time and effort):<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"The 'Better Marks' of Jonson's 'To Penshurst,'" p.280.

<sup>2</sup>This man-centred view of nature reached extraordinary lengths in later poems in the same genre. In "To Saxham" by Thomas Carew (1640) one reads:

"The willing Oxe, of himself came  
Home to the slaughter, with the Lambe,  
And every beast did thither bring  
Himselfe, to be an offering."



The painted partridge lies in evr'y field,  
And for thy mess is willing to be kill'd.  
("To Penhurst")

The ripened ears, yet humble in their height,  
And furrows laden with their weight;  
The apple-harvest, that doth longer last;  
The hogs return'd home fat from mast;  
("Robert Wroth")

These seminal poems obviously do not fit a Renaissance definition of pastoral and, as such, in this thesis can only be introduced to show one of the directions taken by an urban poet writing on a rural topic. Yet it is clear that a satisfactory reading of them is impossible without some awareness of the formal pastoral tradition which lay behind them and on which Jonson undoubtedly drew.

In the following brief analysis of Donne's work in relation to the pastoral tradition of the sixteenth century, I will attempt to show the ways in which Donne drew on contemporary knowledge of the pastoral tradition. Clay Hunt notes that Donne's love poems are "in part a fresh handling of some of the standard materials of Elizabethan love poetry".<sup>1</sup> The pastoral was undoubtedly one of these standard materials and one finds that Donne used the pastoral sometimes straightforwardly in order to enhance or put into perspective what he was saying but often, by inverting its values, to show their fallaciousness and unsuitability for his purposes. He obviously knew the pastoral tradition deeply, he played with it, manipulated it, assessed it, and finally rejected it as being ultimately totally alien in its premisses and assumptions to the truths as he saw them about man's relations to woman and man's relations to God. Hunt contrasts Spenser and Donne and remarks "Spenser's work embodies, in fact, almost everything in the dominant tradition of Elizabethan verse which Donne was reacting against in his own poetry, and it thus reflects many aspects of the dominant sensi-

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<sup>1</sup>Donne's Poetry: Essays in Literary Analysis (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1954), p.53.

bility of his age from which Donne was estranged".<sup>1</sup> Having quoted some lines from Spenser's "Epithalamion", Hunt cites one of these attitudes as being "the happy response, in Spenser's lines, . . . to the evoked scene of the idyllic pastoral loveliness".<sup>2</sup>

"The Baite", written probably ca.1597, perhaps earlier, is a deliberate imitation of "The Passionate Shepheard to his love" which appeared as a poem by "Chr. Marlow" in Englands Helicon (1600) and which had appeared the previous year, unattributed and in a shorter version, in The Passionate Pilgrim. Donne's poem has the same metrical scheme - octosyllabic iambics rhyming in couplets and grouped in stanzas of four verses. In writing this poem modelled on an already popular lyric, Donne was consciously making a foray into traditional pastoral, for Marlowe's poem derives from a pastoral source and deliberately stresses the delights of a distinctly pastoral escape.

Marlowe seems to have been indebted for the theme of the invitation to love accompanied by promises of pleasures and gifts to the Polyphemus-Galatea episode in Ovid's Metamorphoses Book XIII, ll.789ff.<sup>3</sup> This, in turn, was derived from Theocritus' XI Idyl and although Theocritus' Idyls were translated into English in 1588, the poet probably followed Ovid. The invitation to love and promise of gifts formed the basis of many contemporary Italian and Latin poems but the Elizabethan poet seems to have worked independently of these. The theme had appeared in Sidney's The May Lady in which Espilus and Therion vie for the lady's affections, and also in Spenser's "Januarie" eclogue (where there is the promise of gifts without

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p.122.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

<sup>3</sup>I am indebted for much of this information to R.S. Forsythe, "'The Passionate Shepherd' and English Poetry", P M L A, XL (1925), 692-742.

the love element), which was in turn derived from Virgil. Marlowe's plays are filled with similar invitations and bribes.<sup>1</sup> The poem seems to date from ca.1588 because in The Jew of Malta, written ca.1591, allusion to it is used for satiric effect, the allusion being made by the foolish slave, Ithamore, addressing a courtesan, Bellamira:

Thou in those groves, by Dis above,  
Shalt live with me, and be my love.  
(IV.iv.104-5)

This allusion was swiftly followed by numerous direct imitations or allusions. Sir Hugh Evans in The Merry Wives of Windsor (written ca.1597) sings some of its lines with his own variations (III.i.17-29). It was imitated in broadside ballads and in courtly verse. It was frequently set to music and its influence has lasted into this century.<sup>2</sup>

The editor of Englands Helicon, wishing to emphasise its inherent pastoralism, printed a lengthened version. In the version in The Passionate Pilgrim the pleasures offered are already rural-pastoral but in Helicon two heavily pastoral stanzas (four and six) are included together with the title. The "Nimphs reply" in Helicon is an extension of the single stanza "Loves Answere" already found in The Passionate Pilgrim. Helicon has yet another lyric modelled on the original "Another of the same nature, made since". This is more overtly sexual:

The Ring-Doves wooings will provoke  
A colder blood then you possesse,  
To play with me and doo no lesse.  
.....  
We will out-weare the silent night  
.....

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<sup>1</sup>See especially Tamburlaine and Dido.

<sup>2</sup>To mention only four poems derived from it - Herrick's "To Phillis To love, and live with him", Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso", and, in this century, C. Day Lewis' rendering.

Then in mine armes will I enclose  
Lillies faire mixture with the Rose,  
Whose nice perfections in loves play:  
Shall tune me to the highest key.

The emphasis on distinctly sexual pleasures, the riverside setting, and the reference to the fishes succumbing to the mistress, all point to Donne's poem:<sup>1</sup>

Over some River in a tree,  
Where silver sands, and pebbles sing,  
Eternall ditties with the spring.

. . . . .

The fishes gliding on the sands:  
Offering their bellies to your hands.

Donne must have been fully aware of the literary tradition in which Marlowe's poem was written, and of its current popularity and influence, yet he, who deliberately eschewed the traditional pastoral, chose, too, to imitate the poem. Although "The Baite" differs radically from "The Passionate Sheepheard" in tone and attitude, it is not true to suggest that it is merely a parody of the original. It is a genuine invitation to love which uses the rural-piscatorial setting and imagery as a serious conceit. The irony lies in the inversion. Here the mistress and lover are not merely the observers of the rural-piscatorial delights - they are the bait and the fish. Their delight derives from the act of catching and being caught and the delight is mutual; "Gladder to catch thee, then thou him."

The first two stanzas appear close to Marlowe in mood and language (the "courtly" epithets, "golden", "christall", "silken", "silver"). In retrospect, phrases like "new pleasures" (cf. "all the pleasures" in Marlowe), "silken lines" and "silver hooks" do hint at a less straightforward rendering of the theme. The title, too, points to an ambivalent attitude towards the nature of love. Here the love is decidedly sexual -

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<sup>1</sup>Which poem influenced which is not really important here. Donne's is a distillation of aspects of these poems and, as such, would seem to be the later.



indeed the whole central conceit, the mistress as the bait towards whom lovers like fish gladly swim, is an explicitly sexual one:

When thou wilt swimme in that live bath,  
Each fish, which every channell hath,  
Will amorously to thee swimme,  
Gladder to catch thee, then thou him.

Despite the acceptance of the pastoral background on which the poem draws for its effects, the language is far removed from conventional pastoral lyricism. Intricate grammatical structures revivify conventional Petrarchan conceits:

If thou, to be so seene, beest loath,  
By Sunne, or Moone, thou darknest both,  
And if my selfe have leave to see,  
I need not their light, having thee.

The language throughout contributes to the ambivalences of the whole poem. The epithet "live" in stanza three evokes the sense of the bursting vitality of organic forms in their procreative activity. The conventional mistress is seen as a rapacious captor whether her devices be openly treacherous ("strangling snare") or disarming ("wirdowie net"). However, with such a mistress as this one, the fish-lover welcomes his equally inevitable extinction.

The lines, "Let coarse bold hands, from slimy nest/The bedded fish in banks out-wrest," suggest the violent and offensive nature of much sexual conquest. The methods of this mistress are quite the reverse.

The description of the intricate ("curious"), beautiful, apparently delicate "fly" which is really a disguised fishhook ("curious traitors, sleevesilke flies") recalls the "silken lines, and silver hookes" - seductive but fatal. The whole mistress-bait analogy, despite its initial extraordinariness, gradually unfolds as a sharply perceived truth about the force of sexual attraction.

This poem reveals just how antipathetic Donne would be to the current pastoral tradition as a means of expressing the realities of love between man and woman - his prime objective in all his Songs and Sonets. Despite having deliberately chosen to write a lyric in a currently fashionable and recognised pastoral format, he reveals his distinctive gift of inverting the norms and revitalising the clichés.

In "The Canonization" he deliberately rejects the premisses of the conventional lover-poet who extravagantly idolizes his mistress in verse and treats his private love as cataclysmic:

What merchants ships have my sighs drown'd?  
Who saies my teares have overflow'd his ground?  
When did my colds a forward spring remove?  
When did the heats which my veines fill  
Adde one more to the plagueie Bill?

In "The Triple Fool" he acknowledges the basic self love of much love poetry, "I am two fooles, I know,/For loving, and for saying so/In whining Poetry". With such an attitude it is not surprising that he shunned the pastoral as a vehicle for love poetry. In his general rejection of most of the literary conventions of his time, Donne was indeed exceptional. Yet the pastoral tradition was still useful to him if only as a thoroughly familiar frame of reference in which to hang his inversions. His mode of rejecting conventional tradition often took the form of playing with those traditions and consequently adding new dimensions to them. The allusion to the "countrey pleasures" in "The Good-Morrow" draws on a knowledge of the pastoral tradition for its success as a pointer to the banalities and insipidities, the "naïve diversions", of their lives "till we lov'd".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase is Hunt's. A second version of the poem reads "But suck'd on childish pleasures seelily". "Countrey pleasures" appears to be the revised version and the change reveals the new ambivalence to the country. Hunt argues (p.58) that the "pleasures" refer to the merely lustful sex enjoyed before the advent of the present mistress but, whatever the reference, the "pleasures" are rejected now as inadequate.

Donne's poetry and prose repeatedly reveals his "interest in the problem of decay".<sup>1</sup> Frequently he alludes to the golden age as to a remote time from which the present world has irrevocably declined. Although the sentiments are commonplace, their presence in works like the Satyres, Metempsychosis, and An Anatomie of the World, helps to emphasise the great and horrifying contrast between past and present.

In his Satires he makes use of the pastoral mythology for his effects. Like Juvenal who had incorporated references to specifically rural pleasures as a contrast to the present reality of urban life (Satire III) and who had alluded to the myth of the various ages to emphasise the presence of the debased age now (Satire XIII), Donne in Satyre V makes use of the same references to gain his effects. In this Satyre he attacks the corruptions of the suitor/patron system at court. Having judiciously exonerated Elizabeth from blame ("Greatest and fairest Empresse, know you this?/Alas, no more then Thames calme head doth know/Whose meades her armes drowne, or whose corne o'rflow" ll.28-30), he describes the times:

O Age of rusty iron! Some better wit  
Call it some worse name, if ought equall it;  
The iron Age that was, when Justice was sold; now  
Injustice is sold dearer farre.  
(ll.35-38)

Deriving the conceit from Juvenal, he designates the present age as worse than the most debased age in the traditional four ages scheme.<sup>2</sup> As in the Juvenalian source, the assertion derives its bitterness from a full awareness of all that the golden age implied.

The same effect is striven for in The First Anniversary, ll.425-6, where because "our age was Iron, and rustie too," she (the archetypal per-

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<sup>1</sup>Harris, All Coherence Gone, p.124.

<sup>2</sup>Juvenal Satire XIII ll.28 ff. "We are living in a ninth age; an age more evil than that of iron - one for whose wickedness Nature herself can find no name, no metal from which to call it." (Loeb Classical Library).

fect woman), who, "though she could not transubstantiate/All states to gold, yet gilded every state" could not achieve more now given such intransigent material.

There are other examples of these passing allusions to this major sentiment of pastoralism - allusions necessarily brief for Donne was not primarily concerned with the myth as such but realized its potency as a symbolic referent. In Elegie IX "The Autumnal" he can idealize the ageing Mrs Herbert by maintaining that she has retained the gold from the golden age of her youth.

One might conclude with a brief mention of the extract from "Ecclogue" which introduces Donne's "Epithalamion" for the marriage of the Earl of Somerset and which, together with "The Baite", is rather significantly selected to introduce the section on the seventeenth century pastoral in The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse. This extract reveals Donne's basically realistic attitude, an attitude which inevitably explodes the pastoral sentiment which treats the country as perennially warm and attractive. This attitude has already appeared in the verse letter to Wotton ("Sir, more than kisses . . .")<sup>1</sup> and again in his prose letter to Sir H[enry] G[oodyer] (ca.1609) where he asserts that contentment depends on inner fulfilment, not on arbitrary surroundings:

but neither of our lives are in such extremes; for you living at Court without ambition, which would burn you, or envy, which would devest others, live in the Sun, not in the fire: And I which live in the country without stupefying, am not in darknesse, but in shadow, which is not no light, but a pallid, waterish, and diluted one . . . . all retirings into a shadowy life are alike from all causes, and alike subject to the barbarousnesse and insipid dulnesse of the country: onely the employments, and that upon which you cast and bestow your pleasure, businesse, or books, gives it the tincture, and beauty.

The extract from "Ecclogue" reads:

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<sup>1</sup>See above.



Unseasonable man, statue of ice,  
What could to countries solitude entice  
Thee, in this yeares cold and decrepit time?  
Natures instinct drawes to the warmer clime  
Even small birds, who by that courage dare,  
In numerous fleets, saile through their Sea, the aire.  
What delicacie can in fields appeare,  
Whils't Flora' herselfe doth a freeze jerkin weare?  
Whils't windes do all the trees and hedges strip  
Of leafes, to furnish roddes enough to whip  
Thy madnesse from thee; and all springs by frost  
Have taken cold, and their sweet murmure lost;  
If thou thy faults or fortunes would'st lament  
With just solemnity, do it in Lent.  
(ll.1-14)

The mention of the waters' "sweet murmure[s]", by acknowledging the very real attractions of the country in summer, emphasises the reality of a rural winter, with its very real disadvantages. The lines above form part of a contrast between the court and the country in which the court is preferred, and thereby flattered, as being a place where "spring already advanced is". Here Donne is using the old court/country opposition, the basis of the whole pastoral convention, but he is using it in a rather different way. The commonplaces of the convention are inverted for "Idios" does not deny the superiority of the court which "Allophanes" has asserted - indeed in the country, by contrast, he, "Idios", is "dead, and buried". Despite its rather suspect flattery, this introduction to the Epithalamion proper is of interest in showing once again how Donne used poetic conventions for his own very particular purposes.

Despite the selection of these two poems for The Penguin Book, it is precisely these two that Clay Hunt singles out when he comments on Donne's essentially anti-Spenserian qualities:

When one notes Donne's strong inclination to attitudes of retired contemplation, his settled aversion to the literary mode of the pastoral is surprising. That rich myth of the contemplative life, in which the Elizabethan imagination found so commodious a vehicle for the expression not only of the attitudes of romantic love and of delight in the beauties of the natural world, but also of the temper of religious contemplation and of thoughtful criticism of the materialism and venality of the way of the world, seems to have made no appeal to Donne. He was evidently more essentially a man of the City than even Ben Jonson, and when he wished to say that the world

was well lost for a love more ideal than anything which worldlings could understand, his thoughts never dallied with Arcady. The mechanically written piece entitled "Eclogue", which introduces Donne's "Epithalamion" for the marriage of the Earl of Somerset, is bare of pastoral machinery and void of the pastoral mood; and Marlowe's "Come live with me and be my love" became in Donne's hands a witty love poem on the circumstantial details of catching fish.<sup>1</sup>

Although one might demur at the concluding remark, Hunt correctly sums up Donne's attitude to, and use of, the pastoral. Hunt goes on to discuss the various ways in which Donne differed so radically from Spenser and those poets who seem essentially Elizabethan - Sidney, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, and even "that belated Elizabethan, John Milton" (p.125).<sup>2</sup> In particular he singles out in the work of these latter poets the characteristically romantic response to nature and to myth, the enthusiasm over Classical civilization, and the delight in the sense of community with that culture, all of which are largely lacking in Donne. Lacking too, is the Elizabethan taste for ritual, ceremony, and tradition. Donne's interests lay elsewhere. Helen Gardner describes the Donne of the Songs and Sonets as "a young man whose tastes led him to satire, Ovidian Elegy and Anacreontic lyric, and who wrote for his own and his friends' pleasure, and not for publication . . . he was not a courtier . . . or a professional poet".<sup>3</sup> These factors would be sufficient to explain, not only his lack of interest in the traditional conventions per se, but also his rejection of the pastoral in particular. The pastoral, in its Renaissance version, was deeply dependent on a positive response to myth, Classicism, and nature. Given its particularly Elizabethan functions as a means of eulogy and satire, it would furthermore not appeal to one for whom eulogy of the monarch was not a coercive factor, nor to one who consciously sought to imitate the Roman

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<sup>1</sup>Donne's Poetry, p.123.

<sup>2</sup>This is not to deny that these poets have certain "Metaphysical" qualities.

<sup>3</sup>T.L.S. 25 May, 1956, p.320.

satirists, and who had an extremely ambivalent attitude to the Court. Interested as he was in "the idea of a decaying world [as] a symbol and an inspiration for the discontent which prefaced the great intellectual changes of the seventeenth century," <sup>1</sup> his rejection of Renaissance pastoral, with its close association with the golden age, could only be total.

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<sup>1</sup>Harris, p.123.

## APPENDIX

### PASTORAL ELEMENTS

#### IN A FEW SELECTED POETIC MISCELLANIES

In this Appendix I will look briefly at certain popular poetic miscellanies of the period in order to reveal the extent of the pastoral vogue both as a popular medium of lyric expression and as an index of popular taste. I hope that this analysis will reveal that the vogue for pastoral lyric reached its apogee with the publication of Englands Helicon in 1600 and that the succeeding miscellany A Poetical Rhapsody, and the 1614 re-issue of Englands Helicon, despite their pastoral elements, both reveal a decline in the amount of pastoralization deemed necessary to cater for public demand.

Hyder E. Rollins has edited seven of the most popular Elizabethan poetical miscellanies and, although only three of these directly concern the study of the pastoral, it is of relevance to describe briefly the general contents of these seven, if only to reveal the gradual rise of the pastoral vogue in the closing years of the sixteenth century with a corresponding decline in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>I am heavily indebted in this Appendix to Rollins' editorial comment in the seven miscellanies under discussion. These are:

Tottel's Miscellany (1557), ed. Hyder E. Rollins, 2nd ed. rev. 2 vols. (1928; rpt. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1966).

The Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576), ed. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1927).

A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions (1578), ed. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1926).

A Handful of Pleasant Delights (1566?), ed. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1924).

The Phoenix Nest (1593), ed. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1931).

Englands Helicon (1600), ed. Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1935).

A Poetical Rhapsody (1602), ed. Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1932).

The bracketed dates refer to the initial printing.



Tottel's Miscellany appeared in eight editions between 1557 and 1587.<sup>2</sup> Although there is only one pastoral poem in the whole miscellany (it treats of a herdman and his unrequited love), the miscellany does contain a number of poems the themes of which could be, and in later decades were to be, treated in pastoral terms.<sup>2</sup> What is interesting is that these themes, so aptly pastoralized a few years later, were not yet given pastoral treatment. The majority of poems concern love, and are mainly lover's complaints. The traditionally unquiet state of the lover appropriately gives rise to frequent discussions about the unquiet state of mankind generally which leads to debate as to what constitutes a contented life. The answer in Tottel is most frequently "the meane estate". Six poems deal directly with this topic and a further three treat of the golden mean, "The meanes to attain a happy life", and, most specifically, the "pore estate".

Most of the poems dealing with the advantages of the mean estate differ from later pastoral treatments by placing greater emphasis on the dangers of ambition, the high estate, and the life at court, than on the specific advantages of a simple, non-urban, non-courtly existence. One must shun the false promises of the court although, as yet, the alternatives are not dwelt upon.

One of the first poems in the collection to deal explicitly with the advantages of the mean estate and to emphasise the dangers of ambition is entitled "Praise of meane and constant estate" (No.28).<sup>3</sup> "Of the

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<sup>1</sup>The anthology was named thus by Edward Arber in his edition of 1870. The original title page reads Songes and Sonettes, written by the ryght honorable Lorde Henry Haward late Earle of Surrey, and other.

I shall refer to Rollins' edition hereafter as Tottel.

<sup>2</sup>No.181 "Harpelus Complaynt of Phillidaes love bestowed on Corin who loved her not and denied him, that loved her." I shall discuss this below.

<sup>3</sup>Numbered thus by Rollins in his edition.

meane and sure estate" (No.118), while still concentrating on the dangers of the "slipper whele,/Of hye astate," advocates the life in "hidden place," "unknowen in court." Details about this "life in quietnesse" are not supplied but the closeness of the sentiments here to the later advocacy of a specifically pastoral retreat is obvious.

"Of the meane and sure estate written to John Poins" (No.124) reveals clearly the distance from the later pastorals, for in this poem the tale of the town mouse and country mouse is used to point the moral that "Ech kinde of life hath with him his disease" and, consequently, that one must be content, rather than to stress the superior advantages of a country life. The format of this poem and the moral stance adopted serve to underline the medieval origins of its content and style. The animal fable used to point a moral had innumerable medieval precedents, and it is important to remember that most of the themes being discussed derive from both medieval and classical sources. Indeed classical writings abound in injunctions to follow the golden mean, to shun ambition, and to be content with one's lot, while Christianity, inspired by the message of the Sermon on the Mount, promulgated, in addition, such sentiments as "the pore estate is best." The anti-court attitudes had also been commonplace in medieval writing. In later decades these traditional sentiments were to find perfect expression in the newly fashionable, classically-inspired pastoral.

Of particular interest is a poem entitled "They of the meane estate are happiest" (No.170) for, although it once again concentrates on the advantages of the quiet, contented mind as opposed to the false rewards of ambition, power, and wealth, in it a "herdman" is introduced to reveal the specific pleasures of his way of life:

I hard a herdman once compare:  
That quiet nightes he had mo slept:  
And had mo mery daies to spare:  
Then he, which ought the beastes, he kept.

Another anti-ambition poem which pragmatically advocates the "meane assurance" in contrast to the "doubtfull pleasance" is entitled "The meane estate is best" (No.191). Here, as often in Tottel, one senses the very real attractions of power, ambition, and the life at court despite the admonitions against them. The active versus the contemplative dilemma of the Elizabethan courtier - as witnessed in the lives and writings of men like Sidney, Spenser, Fulke Greville, Raleigh - arose from just such contradictory impulses.

A poem which nicely reveals just how far the average Elizabethan was from advocating a severely rigorous austerity is "The meane estate is to be accompted the best" (No.194):

Who waiteth on the golden meane  
.....  
Hides not his head in sluttishe coates,  
    ne shroudes himself in filthines.  
Ne sittes aloft in hye estate,  
.....  
But wisely walkes betwixt them twaine.

The comforts of the pastoral version of the simple life would ideally suit these prudent sentiments.

"Of the golden meane" (No.295), too, does not advocate the harsh realities of true poverty. To live "a wretched wight,/In carlish coate" would be as extreme as to live in pomp and proud estate. The sentiments in this poem are of particular interest for it is of the very nature of the pastoral that it does not treat of the pinching poverty and harshness of the herdman's life but rather romanticizes that mode of labour as one which illustrates the Aristotelian golden mean - sufficient for one's needs, with neither conspicuous consumption nor soul-destroying penury.

The very ingredients of the pastoral dream - "the quiet mynde," "No charge of rule, nor governance," "the meane diet" and "Trew wisdom ioyned with simplenesse" - are detailed in "The meanes to attain happy

life" (No.27). Also very close to the romanticizing tendencies of the pastoral is the attitude betrayed in "The pore estate to be holden for best" (No.200). The poet obviously discusses the apparent joys of the poor from a distance, "the crab with mirth they rost" (my italics). The final lines reveal the patronising air of one for whom poverty, despite its assumed ethical value, is not a reality:

Serve God therefore thou pore, for lo, thou lives in rest,  
Eschue the golden hall, thy thatched house is best.<sup>1</sup>

Closely related to the poems sanctioning the mean estate and denouncing ambition in Tottel are the poems which specifically criticize the court. On the surface most describe the courtier's life in denunciatory terms but often these denunciations appear slightly half-hearted.

Wyatt's "Of the Courtier's life written to John Poins" (No.125) is openly satirical. The poet lists the various requirements of a courtier which he just cannot bring himself to fulfil. Hence he must needs be "at home . . . in kent and christendome." Once again the poem, despite its closeness to later pastoral poems satirizing the courtier's life, still differs sharply from these poems for, in it, the self exile of the poet from the court is not revealed as a positive good. He does not dwell much on the joys of his sojourn in the country, away from the court, as later pastoralists were to do.

"A comfort to the complaynt of Thestylis" (No.234) deserves mention for in it one can see the extent of the distance separating Tottel from the pastoralism of the last decades of the century, despite the many themes

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<sup>1</sup>Crabbe exposed the fallaciousness of romanticizing the poor. See *ll.*168-171, Book I, The Village.

"Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,  
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;  
Homely, not wholesome, plain, not plenteous, such  
As you who praise would never deign to touch."



in common. This poem is written as an answer to "The complaint of Thestilis amid the desert wodde" (No.201). "The desert wodde" is mentioned in the first few lines of this love complaint, possibly as a setting suited to the psychological state of the forsaken lover. In the answer, Thestilis is reminded that his depression will not last. He is finally exhorted to leave the "desert wodde" and journey to the town, the attractions of which will no doubt prove sufficiently distracting. Rollins comments:

The country is not yet a place of peace, contentment, but a lonely, depressing place - the 'country' as pictured in many a prosperous citizen's mind. There was to be a great swing of attitude until, within a few decades, the country was to be the shimmering shangrila of many a thwarted courtier, tired businessman, or bored aristocrat.

No.181 "Harpelus complaynt of Phillidaes love bestowed on Corin, who loved her not and denied him, that loved her" appeared in the very first edition. It is the only one of the numerous love complaints to have pastoral features. Harpelus and Corin are herdsmen. Harpelus' complaint makes use of some specifically rural/pastoral analogies:

The Ewe she hath by her the Ramme  
The yong cow hath the Bulle:  
The calf with many a lusty lamme  
Do feede their honger full.

The pastoralization is otherwise as arbitrary as that in many of the lyrics of Englands Helicon. The poem does, however, stand out as quite distinct in the overall context of the miscellany.

The next miscellany to be published proved to be the most popular of the Elizabethan period. Between 1576 and 1606 The Paradise of Dainty Devices appeared in at least eight, perhaps ten, editions. Despite four poems in the tradition of the mean estate or quiet mind, this anthology, so much more serious and dour than Tottel, has nothing in it of a remotely pastoral flavour.<sup>1</sup> Rollins remarks that its popularity in the sixteenth

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<sup>1</sup>The four poems mentioned treat these themes in a highly moralistic manner.

century can only astound modern readers for it certainly balances the popular view of "Merrie England".<sup>1</sup>

The next poetic miscellany to appear was A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions (1578) which, by its complete lack of anything remotely pastoral, serves at least to show the lack of pastoral writing in the year before the publication of The Shepheardes Calender. Not even in its own day was this "derivative and backward-looking" miscellany popular, and it appears not to have reached a second edition.<sup>2</sup>

A Handful of Pleasant Delights edited by Rollins from the only surviving edition dated 1584, possibly appeared first in the 1560s. There are extant fragments of editions dating from 1575 and 1595 and the miscellany appears to have enjoyed great popularity. Like The Paradise of Dainty Devices its popularity stemmed from its musical usage, its contents being the popular ballads of the time, many with specific tunes assigned to them. Again, although the songs are almost entirely about love, its joys and sorrows, none is cast in pastoral guise. By the late 1590s we see that just such sentiments were treated in specifically pastoral terms. What is of interest in this miscellany is the number of classical references, some songs being specifically about various classical lovers ("A new sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie", "The Historie of Diana and Actaeon," and numerous references to Helen and Paris). This reveals the extent of the familiarity with the popular classical figures among even the readers of broadside ballads.

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<sup>1</sup>Winifred Maynard in a note in RES, XXIV (1973), 295-300, "The Paradyse of Daynty Devises Revisited", suggests that its popularity was due to many of its verses being set as part-songs and some being designed specifically for the newly popular consort song of five parts.

<sup>2</sup>Maynard, p.295.

With The Phoenix Nest (1593) one comes to the first miscellany which has direct relevance for a study of the pastoral in this period, for it is from this work that the editor of Englands Helicon borrowed nine poems. These poems were either already of a vaguely pastoral nature or were suited to pastoralization, and the editor of Englands Helicon further doctored them by the addition of pastoral titles or by verbal changes which increased their pastoral tone. Rollins feels that these changes were a debasement of the texts of The Phoenix Nest which was "one of the most carefully printed books of the period".<sup>1</sup>

Most of the borrowed poems were entirely neutral love poems which were rendered superficially pastoral by the insertion of "Sheepheard", "Nymph" for "he" or "she" and the addition of appropriately pastoral names (e.g. "Melibeus" and "Faustus" in No.54) wherever there was dialogue. At least four poems were taken without any change except the addition of the pastoral title. These poems were in The Phoenix Nest vaguely pastoral, or at least rural. No.53 "Alas my hart mine eie hath wronged thee" contains the pastoral names "Phyllis" and "Coridon" and references to "nymphs". No.71 "Praised be Dianas faire and harmles light", also unchanged in Englands Helicon<sup>2</sup> except for the addition of the title "The Sheepheards praise of his sacred Diana", has as its subject one of the traditional goddesses of the pastoral world. No.124 "Muses helpe me, sorrow swarmeth", although not really pastoral, does mention shepherds, swains, sheep, and ewes, making it a certain choice for selection by the editor of Helicon who merely added a title, "The Sheepheard's Sorrow, being disdained in love". No.77 "O woods unto your walks my bodie lies", although not pastoral at all, appeared in Helicon, with an added title, presumably on the strength of its rural setting.

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<sup>1</sup>The Phoenix Nest, p.xxxi.

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter referred to as Helicon.

This miscellany, attractive in itself and of particular interest for a study of the editorial policy behind the compilation of Helicon, is also an important pointer to the gradual rise in the popularity of the pastoral in this decade. It is the first of the miscellanies which shows any pastoral tendencies at all.<sup>1</sup> One must remember that the compilers of miscellanies drew their material from poems for the most part already in print or at least in popular circulation and, as such, the poetical miscellanies, far from being in the vanguard of poetic fashion, rather reflected popular taste which of itself takes time to assimilate any new trends. By the nineties the pastoral had penetrated well the popular imagination.

The existence of Englands Helicon (1600) in itself indicates the great vogue that the pastoral enjoyed during the last years of Elizabeth's reign, for its editor obviously set out with the deliberate intention of compiling a pastoral anthology. Its pastoral nature would ensure its success and, because of the popularity of the pastoral, the editor deliberately ransacked all the known sources of pastoral verse and, where necessary, altered poems not inherently pastoral to fit into his scheme.<sup>2</sup> Of the hundred and fifty poems more than three-quarters had already appeared in print.<sup>3</sup> From Tottel, "Harpalus complaynt on Phillidaes love" was an obvious choice. Also from Tottel "The complaint of Thestylis amid the desert wodde" attracted the editor's eye and with a title, "The Complaint of Thestylis the forsaken Shepheard", and the alteration of "man" to "Swaine", "lady" to "Nymph", the pastoralization is complete.

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<sup>1</sup>Always remembering the single "pastoral" in Tottel.

<sup>2</sup>Many poems are taken from Sidney's Arcadia, Greene's Menaphon, Lodge's Rosalynde, Bartholomew Yong's translation of Diana, The Shephear-des Calender, and from the published versions of the entertainments given during the Queen's progresses.

<sup>3</sup>Helicon, ed. Macdonald, p.xxi.



As Rollins comments, "his ideas of what makes a pastoral were not at all rigid. To him the mere mention of a shepherd or a shepherdess, a nymph or a swain, was the test of admission."<sup>1</sup>

A poem from The Phoenix Nest, "Like desert Woods, with darksome shades obscured", has the addition of the marvelously uncompromising title "The Shepherds dumpe" and a change in the final line from "My faithful love by you might be rewarded" to "Your Shepherds love might be by you regarded", to render pastoral a rather old fashioned complaint of love's pangs. Another from The Phoenix Nest, "Sweet Violets (Loves Paradise) that spread", which itemises various flowers in order to flatter the mistress receives the completely arbitrary title "The Shepherds to the flowers".

Helicon appeared again in 1614, edited by Richard More, with the addition of nine poems - poems which are themselves indicative of a change in editorial policy. As this is, however, a chronological survey of the miscellanies for the precise purpose of tracing the graph of the pastoral vogue, I shall postpone a discussion of this second edition until after a brief account of A Poetical Rhapsody (1602).

This miscellany which appeared in four editions, the last being in 1621, was extremely popular. It is of interest to a study of the pastoral, not only for the reason that Richard More took from it seven poems for the 1614 edition of Helicon, but also because of its own "pastoral" content. The first section of the miscellany is itself entitled "Pastorals and Eclogues", and although not all the eleven poems in this section are inherently pastoral, its presence does indicate that the compiler thought it worthwhile to make a separate collection of "pastorals" and "eclogues" when faced with the task of compiling a marketable miscellany.

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<sup>1</sup>Englands Helicon, II, 63.

The first poem "made by Sir Philip Sidney, never yet published" is the only one from this pastoral section which More took for his edition of Helicon. The poem entitled "Upon his meeting with his two worthy Friends and fellow poets, Sir Edward Dier and Maister Fulke Grevill" is not really pastoral at all. However, it presumably qualifies for this section because it uses the conventional vocabulary of the poetic calling - "Let Pan our good God see", the poets' god is "Apollo", their instruments are "reeds", Orpheus is the poets' model. This familiar poetic/mythological analogy reaches its climax in the sixth stanza with the equally conventional poet/shepherd analogy:

Give leave your flocks to range,  
Let us the while be playing,  
Within the Elmy grange,  
Your flocks will not be straying.

This is the whole extent of its pastoral content.

The second poem, also attributed to Sidney, is the old familiar anti-court, mean estate poem now recast as a pastoral. It is a former shepherd, now a courtier, who laments his present lot. Obviously his former calling adds piquancy to his present distress for the two modes of life have, by now, acquired their traditional opposition in the contemporary mind.

The third poem is really a type of the epyllion but as the three characters are Cupid, a Nymph, and a Shepherd it, too, is deemed sufficiently "pastoral" for this section.

The Countess of Pembroke's poem in praise of Astraea is in the form of a dialogue, with the two speakers being the shepherds Thenot and Piers. For this reason the poem, with no other pastoral features, is included here.

The next three poems, a Roundelay, a Palinode, and "Urania's Answer in inverted Rimes, Staffe for Staffe", are entirely un-pastoral, their inclusion apparently explained by the vaguely "pastoral" names of the

speakers, Strephon and Klaius, and by their forms, sanctioned in recent eclogue collections.

The final four poems in this section are the "Eclogues". The first is a pastoral lament at bad fortune closely modelled on Spenser's "Januarie" and "November" eclogues. The second is a lament on the death of Sidney, the mourners being Thenot and Perin. The third is a contention between a Heard-man and a Shepheard about the shepheard's aspiring love. The final eclogue is a discussion on old age between Perin and Wrenock in a deliberately archaic style.

What is noteworthy in this classification is that, for the most part, the "Eclogues" qualify most fully as "pastoral" - an indication, perhaps, of the extent of the popularity and the influence of the Elizabethan eclogue sequence and, most particularly, of The Shepheardes Calender. The "Pastorals" are, on the other hand, only superficially pastoralized renderings of popular themes or poetic genres. Of course this, in itself, points to the extent of the pastoral vogue in the late sixteenth century.

When one comes to the 1614 edition of Helicon one notes that, of the nine newly added poems, "only two (Nos. 153, 157) would have met with the approval of the original compiler".<sup>1</sup> These are the superficially pastoral "upon three friends meeting" by Sidney, taken from The Phoenix Nest, and "Thirsis praise of his Mistresse" by William Browne, first published here, a poem in praise of "Astra" very much in the tradition of Breton's "On a hill there growes a flower", but lacking Breton's extra dimension of reference.

Six of the remaining seven poems have been taken from A Poetical Rhapsody and yet none of these are from the "Pastorals and Eclogues"

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<sup>1</sup>Rollins, Helicon, II, 70.

section. None of them are remotely pastoral - yet they are all about love - and More has made no attempt to render them pastoral, in the manner of the first editor. The ninth poem is completely unlike any of the poems in either the 1600 or the new edition, it being a lengthy Epithalamium by Christopher Brooke, first published here.

The fact that there is so little concern with the pastoral by someone re-editing a miscellany of alleged pastorals seems to indicate, without doubt, an awareness on the part of More of a decline in the interest in the pastoral. Englands Helicon did not appear again. Davison's Poetical Rhapsody appeared for the last time in 1621. Douglas Bush's comment on this fact has already been noted.<sup>1</sup> Hugh Macdonald comments on the paucity of anthologies of lyrical poetry in the seventeenth century although collections of poetical satires did appear after the Restoration.<sup>2</sup> This is despite the lyrical output of the undoubtedly popular poets Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and Herrick. The manifold reasons for this change in public demand are beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice be it to say that within the Elizabethan and earlier Jacobean period, when poetic miscellanies were both numerous and popular, the pastoral and pastoralism proved attractive both to compilers and readers.

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<sup>1</sup>See above, Ch. VI, Section (iv).

<sup>2</sup>England's Helicon, pp.xv-xvii.



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