

Truth and the Pastor's Vision in George Crabbe, William Barnes, and R. S. Thomas

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Whatever the pastoral vision is, we have long been taught to distrust it. From the eighteenth-century attacks by Samuel Johnson and George Crabbe to the recent criticism by Renato Poggioli and Raymond Williams, the essential charge has stayed the same: the vision lies. According to the editors of *A Book of English Pastoral Verse* (1975), it "is, at base, a false vision, positing a simplistic, unhistorical relationship between the ruling landowning class . . . and the workers on the land; as such its function is to mystify and obscure the harshness of actual social and economic organization. . . ."¹ This statement formulates one implication of Raymond Williams' influential study, *The Country and the City* (1973), which indicts "neo-pastoralists" from Drayton and Jonson to Goldsmith and Shenstone for offering a deceptive "idealization of actual English country life"—a deception that Williams would expose by setting poetry against the historical record of enclosures, dawn-to-dusk working hours, miserable wages, and the farm-laborer's diet of bacon-scrap and potatoes. For readers who accept his conclusions, the chief solace is his view that the pastoral tradition died in England almost a century and a half ago (a view shared by Poggioli and Thomas G. Rosenmeyer).² The demise of the tradition should console anyone who believes that "today, more than ever before, the pastoral vision simply will not do."³

But there are other ways of understanding the pastoral tradition. One is to see it as still living, as in fact flourishing throughout most of the Victorian era in the Dorset poems of William Barnes, whom Williams, Poggioli, and Rosenmeyer have virtually ignored. It informs the regional novels of George Eliot, R. D. Blackmore, and the early Hardy; and in cautious, muted tones it survives today in poems by the Welsh priest, R. S. Thomas. Once the tradition is seen as living in these writers, the pastoral vision can be equated less confidently with falsehood. Insofar as any imaginative perception of reality can be truthful, the pastoral has modest claims for validity along with

those larger ones granted to the comic or the tragic vision. Williams himself grants these claims in discussing Virgil's First Eclogue, where Meliboeus contrasts the rural peace of his host with his own condition as "an evicted small farmer," destined to wander in strange lands (p. 16). According to Williams, the "ideal tones and images" of the genre may serve literary truth by creating "tensions with other forms of experience"—with the injustice and anxiety that are also parts of the poet's vision (p. 18). If these tensions were excised during the Renaissance, as Williams argues, the loss meant only that the pastoral vision had become one-sided, not that it was doomed by its very nature to falsify life. The vision recovers its breadth in the work of conscious realists like Crabbe and Wordsworth, and recovers much of its brightness in the poetry of Barnes. Yet with Crabbe before him and Thomas afterwards, Barnes maintains the tensions that Williams admires in Virgil. Writing as poets who may be called "pastors" for their service as rural priests, Crabbe, Barnes, and Thomas set pastoral ideals of the good life against reminders of suffering and defeat. They demonstrate the values of a tradition modified to survive the climate of realism in the post-Augustan world. For all three writers—including Crabbe, the anti-pastoralist—the pastoral vision is a way of dealing with reality, not of avoiding it.

Obviously this claim depends first of all upon a more specific understanding of what the pastoral vision is. To begin by equating "pastoral" with "false" is to beg the question, while to agree with W. J. Keith that pastoralists "make no pretensions to literal truth"⁴ is to see them all as one, writing only in the artificial mode that transplants Arcadian figures to a British landscape. Actually, two more significant kinds of vision were replacing the artificial pastoral by the end of the eighteenth century. A strong mystical element marks the kind produced by William Blake in the *Songs of Innocence*, while circumstantial realism distinguishes the kind that is perhaps most notably represented by Wordsworth's "Michael." Both the mystical and the realistic elements present difficulties for anyone who would equate the pastoral vision with falsehood. The mystical landscapes of Blake's disciple, Samuel Palmer (1805-1881), should give pause to the critic who judges art by its fidelity to historical and sociological fact. Are Palmer's pictures of swains piping to tranquil sheep at fault if the documents prove that English shepherds seldom did such things (and never dozed out-stretched across two fleecy backs)? Though Palmer never herded sheep and

may never have outgrown his nostalgia for an Edenic, Virgilian, or medieval Golden Age ("The past for poets, the present for the pigs"),⁵ only the most prosaic critic would reduce his Shoreham visions to forgeries of rustic happiness. And when Blake writes, "How sweet is the Shepherd's sweet lot," the Marxist may find his teeth on edge, but he must remember that "The Shepherd" is a Song of Innocence. So long as a vision revealing a state of the soul is not mistaken for social realism, it should be exempt from the charge of lying about the economy.

But the realistic, circumstantial kind of pastoral can invite this charge. As Keith notes, Goldsmith in *The Deserted Village* and Crabbe in his attack upon it both claimed to be truthful; their works are filled with alleged fact. By making similar claims for their fictions of rural life, George Eliot and Hardy invite the question that Keith poses concerning the essayists and journalists of the countryside: "What right has anyone to offer us a detailed description that cannot be accepted as 'true'?" (pp. 15-16). The realistic pastoral cannot be thoroughly enjoyed if we believe that it is simply a delicate way of "not looking at the country."⁶ While Blake and Palmer look through particulars toward eternity, the realist grounds his vision in a definite time and place, inviting judgment by some consideration of historical truth. Appearing faithful to the facts, he has the power of deceiving.

To illustrate both kinds of vision and the different response that each invites, we may turn to two novels from the eighteen-sixties. At the end of a great city novel, *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov has a vision of people living in idyllic freedom on the Russian steppes. What he sees cannot be tested against the social history of Siberian nomads, for the author presents it subjectively as a "seeming" within the prisoner's mind. The sound of singing draws his attention to the vast land across the river: "Freedom was there, there other people lived, so utterly unlike those on this side of the river that it seemed as though with them time had stood still, and the age of Abraham and his flocks was still present."⁷ Out of the landscape and his own need for community, Raskolnikov—the one "split" apart—creates an image of the good life under a benign patriarch, away from the confusions of St. Petersburg. The "pastoral moment" (to use Richard Hardin's phrase) is part of the young man's healing; it comes just before he accepts Sonya's love, which restores his communion with humanity. The moment contains the central pastoral themes: *libertas*, a degree of *otium* (the nomads are not too busy to sing), and harmony—three bases of a good life.

This brief scene gives the essential meaning of the “pastoral vision.” The term refers to a picture, literally an “idyll,” that represents at least the possibility of a good rural life. While the vision may express individual illumination, more typically it focuses upon some stage of communal experience, showing people as lovers, friends, families, and neighbors, who tend animals and the land and yet find time to celebrate what matters most to them and to express their feelings without the sophisticate’s fear of sounding silly. Because their lives are not exempt from care and sorrow, the pastoral vision is not of the Golden Age, despite Alexander Pope’s argument in his *Guardian* Essay No. 40 (1713), which eliminated all but two of Virgil’s eclogues and most of Theocritus from the pastoral canon. Both Hesiod in *Works and Days* and Ovid in *The Metamorphoses* describe the Golden Age as a pre-pastoral world in which fields yielded harvests of their own accord and people lived without wars, cities, sorrows, or labor. Such perfection of leisure is beyond the pastoral vision, for as Williams shows (pp. 14-17), shepherds have work to do in ancient pastorals, where untended sheep may teach them a lesson that Virgil insists upon in Book I of the *Georgics*: “a law of nature / Makes all things go to the bad, lose ground and fall away” (ll. 199-200)—unless prevented by vigilant labor.⁸ It is true that an “ideal of the good life” is implicit in pastoral writing, as Hallett Smith asserts in *Elizabethan Poetry*.⁹ But if good lives contain labor and pain as well as happiness, then a pastoral image may represent all these elements and blend with what Rosenmeyer calls the Hesiodic or georgic tradition. Our need to glimpse and know authentic life is more crucial than the need for generic purity. Raskolnikov’s need is for a sense of community, not for singing matches under olive trees; yet there is music with his vision and an air of great peace, while time seems to stand still in a moment of stasis that is worthy of Theocritus.

For the pastoral to survive the post-Augustan demand for realism, it needed either to escape the demand by becoming mystical, as it does in Blake and Palmer, or to blend more fully with the georgic tradition in representing the real pain and labor of rural life. Wordsworth’s “Michael” and Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* at each end of the nineteenth century illustrate the movement toward sober realism. But far more festive blendings of pastoral and georgic are also to be found, as in the harvest chapter (39) of R. D. Blackmore’s *Lorna Doone* (1869). In much greater detail than the passage from Dostoyevsky, it illustrates the pastoral vision, while inviting

(with Theocritean realism) Williams' criterion for assessing its truthfulness. Though Blackmore protested that *Lorna Doone* was a romance, not "an historic novel," it has a definite late seventeenth-century setting on the northern edge of Exmoor, and it is narrated by John Ridd, a legendary hero of the region, who claims to be writing an honest account of what happened in "the parish of Oare" during his youth. By describing harvest customs in rich detail, he invites the reader to accept them as authentic. He tells how the parson, in gown and cassock, "with the parish Bible in his hand, and a sickle strapped behind him," opens the harvest by leading a laneful of farmers, laborers, wives, and children to the first ripe field, where he heaves up the rail across the gate, offers a prayer, reads the Scripture, and then cuts the first three "swipes" of corn. Only after the parish clerk leads the singing of a psalm (despite "a beard of wheat thrust up his nose" by a rival), and the parson takes "a stoop of cider," does the reaping begin, with the men sweeping down the field "like half a wedge of wildfowl." At the harvest supper, the priest again returns to say grace, help with the carving, and keep time with his cup for the singing of the Exmoor harvest-song, roared out to honor a beribboned "neck of corn," the unrecognized emblem of a West Country Persephone, whose myth is paralleled by Lorna Doone's abduction, virtual death, and final restoration.¹⁰ Though the parson leaves as the singing grows riotous, he has done his part in hallowing both the work and the festivity of harvest.

The scene gives full release to the celebrative impulse that often falters in Victorian literature of the countryside. The more famous harvest homes in *Adam Bede* (1859) and *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) lack the ceremonial richness of Blackmore's idyll, partly because no priest has a role in them; and both the Christian and pre-Christian values of harvest escape almost everyone's attention. All reference to the deity is missing from George Eliot's harvest song; the narrator speculates that a "lost line" had been filled in by repetition, as indeed it had if a similar verse quoted by Barnes in 1832 is close to the original.¹¹ In Hardy, no divine spirit, but brute nature, looms over the celebration. While a storm gathers outside the barn, Sergeant Troy corrupts the festivity by serving brandy instead of the traditional ale and cider, and the shouted mirth of the earlier harvest scenes gives way to drunken stupor.¹² More confidently than these novelists, Blackmore could suggest a religious context for celebration, just as Theocritus and Virgil had done in the classical models for the episode in *Lorna Doone*. His

“favourite poet,” Theocritus,¹³ shows three youths on their way to a harvest supper in *Idyll VII*, and the chapter echoes *Idyll X* (with its short hymn to the grain goddess Demeter) when the narrator daydreams of love while he should be reaping. In depicting harvest ceremonies, Blackmore follows the spirit of Virgil’s first georgic, which he had translated a few years earlier:

Let all your farm lads bow at Ceres’ shrine,
And mix her cakes with honey, milk, and wine;
Thrice round the crops the goodly victim bear,
While all the choir and merry neighbours share,
And Ceres’ visit with a shout invoke;
Let no man lay a sickle to the grain
Or ere in Ceres’ honour, crowned with oak,
He foot the unstudied dance and chant the strain.¹⁴

With its interweaving of ancient motifs in a definite Exmoor setting, the harvest chapter offers an image of the good life within a community where both work and leisure become matters for celebration.

But was the “real rural England” ever, anywhere, like this? Because Blackmore’s vision is circumstantial, it invites the question, even though the complexity of rural England may prevent other scholars from sharing Williams’ assumption of knowing the essential reality.¹⁵ At the least, however, the search for the real life of the past can be an antidote to nostalgia. To a skeptic, Blackmore’s echoing of classical models might suggest artifice, a means of idealizing the past to suit his reactionary Tory politics. His narrator invites trust not only by describing customs in detail but also by asserting that his version of the Exmoor harvest song is authentic; yet the five verses with varying refrains seem far too long and literary to be true. No one has ever published a dialect version of the song or even proven that Blackmore watched his father, his uncles, or his grandfather (all rural clergymen) lead the reapers to the fields. He may never have attended a harvest home, a “declining” custom by 1832, according to Barnes, and witnessed only twice by Hardy.¹⁶ Even if such celebrations were once frequent around Exmoor, their value could still be questioned, for Williams sees them as representing only the “charity of consumption” that obscures the real exploitation of farm laborers. From his viewpoint, both the farmer who provides the meal and the writer who idealizes it are pretending that “all uncharity at work . . . could be redeemed by the charity” of the harvest feast

(p. 31). Williams' concern is with the charity of production—with "loving relations between men actually working and producing what is ultimately to be shared." This kind of charity is roughly displayed in the novel when John Ridd leads the men in the task of scything down the corn. Except when he stops to daydream, the young farmer works harder than anyone—by his own report, at least; and throughout the narrative the laborers and their families have enough to eat. But the system gives the farmer the lion's share—except at the harvest supper, where John for once goes hungry while refilling empty plates.

At most, the chapter can be read as an idyll based on customs (of debatable worth) that once existed. By 1889 the priestly blessing of the harvest had become so rare that James Frazer printed a note about it in the *Folk-Lore Journal*¹⁷; still, his report indicates the historical basis for Blackmore's vision, while the testimony of other witnesses shows that in parts of England many harvest customs survived throughout the nineteenth century. An eighty-eight-year-old farmer interviewed by Ronald Blythe in *Akenfield* remembered how "twenty men and boys scythed the corn and sang as they went"; the reaper chosen to be "Lord of the Harvest" sat "atop the last load to leave the field," and after the harvest supper everyone "went shouting home. Shouting in the empty old fields—I don't know why. But that's what we did. We'd shout so loud that the boys in the next village would shout back."¹⁸ No matter how much meaning had been lost, the old man evokes as rich a harvest scene as any found in a literary pastoral, while he reveals one dimension of what rural England, in one of its bleakest eras, was "really like." Both his memory and Blackmore's idyll help to preserve an awareness of what *The Country and the City* could make us either deny or forget.

For in testing literature by his picture of the "real rural England," Williams slights the evidence that rural people were ever happy. While acknowledging certain "lucky exceptions" to the pattern of exploitation, he tells little of the moments of joy and festivity that sometimes came in spite of poverty. He does not mention the Dorset sheep-shearers who as late as 1880 expected "beer and cider to be provided for nightly dances"—after working from five in the morning to eight in the evening.¹⁹ He quotes Stephen Duck's disgruntled lines about the harvest supper as if all laborers took a cynical view of it (p. 32), and he commends Fred Kitchen's autobiography without confronting the mystery of joy in the harshness of a plough-boy's life. At thirteen, Kitchen rose at five each day except Sunday (when he rose at six);

he “golloped” down an interrupted breakfast of boiled bacon and milk, got kicked in the seat as he learned to plough, stayed busy in the stables until nine at night: yet he says he was “perfectly happy.”²⁰ The hard-pressed lad in Barnes’ “Work Buoy o’ the Farm” makes a similar assertion, and Kitchen’s testimony should prevent us from dismissing the poem as a falsification of experience. With all its hardships, rural life has afforded surprising possibilities of happiness, and pastoral writing may be truthful in representing good times as well as bad.

But to emphasize the bad is the surest modern way to gain a reputation for realism. This approach is one of two pitfalls which Keith sees as besetting the “rural tradition” in literature: it must “avoid the idyllic and sentimental, but in acknowledging the harsh and ugly it should not present these as the norm” (pp. 18-19). This statement points to the tensions within the work of Crabbe, Barnes, and Thomas. All three poets felt the pressure to write truthfully; and as priests working among rural parishioners, each had opportunities to face the facts. In varying degrees, each committed himself to the goal of revealing truth. Crabbe was the most outspoken on this point, claiming in *The Village* (1783) to offer a “real picture of the poor.”²¹ Though Barnes sounds idyllic in comparison with Crabbe, he maintained that “everything he had written was true of some one of the class described in the poems—that he was painting, in fact, from life, though the level might be somewhat above the average.”²² R. S. Thomas has spoken less confidently, though his emphasis on rural misery suggests the realism of Crabbe or Hardy. At the end of *Song at the Year’s Turning* (1955) comes this harsh judgment upon his own treatment of pastoral themes:

All in vain. I will cease now
My long absorption with the plough,
With the tame and the wild creatures
And man united with the earth.
I have failed after many seasons
To bring truth to birth . . . (“No Through Road”)

But “the old lie / Of green places” still calls him “From the new world, ugly and evil, / That men pry for in truth’s name.” Where can the poet come closer to truth than in the pastoral genre that has long been accused of lying? By suspecting his own art, he is saved at least from the naturalist’s

illusion of achieving truth with every factual detail and from the scientist's fantasy of finding the essence of life in a test tube. The "new world" that appalls Thomas is ruled by the Machine, an ominous recurrent word in his later volumes: its priests are the scientists and statesmen who travel "To a new Bethlehem . . . with their hands full / Of the gifts that destroy."²³ Insofar as Thomas works at being a truthful pastoralist, his task is to hold winter and the "green places" together in his art, showing rural people as they are—the farmer in fields "With dew embroidered," admirable in his movements, but walking with

The mixen clinging to his heel,
Its brand under the ripped coat,
The mixen slurring his strong speech.
I made him comely but too rich;
The mixen sours the dawn's gold.²⁴

How much of the mixen and how much of the sunlight these poets see is worth studying in their writing, and so are their perspectives on the rural world. Their viewpoints have special importance in the study of modern pastoralism, for these poets are, in a long-accepted sense of the word, pastors, shepherds of human flocks. If pastors of sheep no longer make songs—and we have Crabbe's word for it that "No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse, / Their country's beauty or their nymphs' rehearse"—many rural English vicars from Herbert and Herrick to Keble and Thomas have kept alive the tradition. Though an Anglican priest is separated from the poor by education and class, his role is like a shepherd's with its tasks of ceremonial feeding and washing, seeking strays, and—in the days of the compulsory tithe—shearing the flock as closely as possible. These functions mean that a poet-priest could write partly from inside the pastoral world, though he would be unlikely to live in a cottage or to feel at home with the local dialect. Crabbe and Barnes, however, were raised among folk who spoke rustic dialects, and Thomas taught himself Welsh while serving in a rural parish. With the exception of Barnes, who received ordination and a living rather late in life, these poets had long experience in pastoral care; at times Crabbe even attended "the sick-bed of the peasant, in the double capacity of physician and priest."²⁵ Though Crabbe served briefly as chaplain for the Duke of Rutland at the start of his career and may have been regarded by his parishioners as an "outsider,"²⁶ for none of these writers could the pastor's role be

only symbolic in the way that it was for Virgil, Milton, or Arnold.²⁷

Given their opportunities for insight, what do these poets see? To start with the early Crabbe, what he basically sees and complains of is the lack of community. As Williams shows, *The Village* as “counter-pastoral” retains “a pastoral vision” (p. 93), one built upon the contrast between communal ideals and real vice, oppression, and uncommiserated suffering. Crabbe’s sterile and thirstily coastal landscape discourages husbandry, and his “swains” are far more interested in smuggling or waiting for a foundering ship to break up than in tending crops and cattle. Like most English pastoralists, Crabbe grafts the georgic on to the pastoral, but the work he shows is furtive, done beneath a cliff at night, a parody of honest labor. Though the environment itself is hostile, the roots of evil are human, and they emerge most clearly when the satire modulates into a pastoral lament. An aged shepherd has learned that “The rich disdain him, nay, the poor disdain” (I, 195). His personal worth has been limited to his usefulness; the masters, who cared only for his work and not at all for his leisure, begrudge the poor even their Sabbath day of rest (see II, 21-24). In this society, the shepherd finds no answer to his most bitter question: “who / Feels his own want and succours others too?”

At this point, Williams argues that *The Village* is a case of misdirected satiric energy: “It is the care of paupers, not the creation of pauperism, which holds attention and feeling” (p. 94). From the Marxist viewpoint, the poem should attack rural capitalism rather than simply make an “honourable” protest against the selfishness of individuals whose job is to care for the poor. But until there are “systems so perfect that no one will need to be good,”²⁸ the weak and unfortunate will always need good persons to care for them. For Crabbe, individual morality is crucial. According to Ronald Hatch, the central issue of the poem is whether a “man can rise above himself” or must remain at the mercy of an environment that tends to foster corruption in both rich and poor.²⁹ The much-maligned eulogy of Robert Manners, the brother of Crabbe’s patron, provides one illustration of how a person may rise above himself and achieve nobility—in this case, by giving his life for his country. His positive example allows the poet to end the anti-pastoral on an elegiac note, one which both parallels and contrasts with the account of the pauper’s death at the end of Book I. There the elegiac strain keeps modulating into satire because the people who should care for the poor have no concern. The parish physician visits the poorhouse with “con-

tempt upon his sapient sneer" (I, 287), while the priest is still less responsive to suffering. Too fond of fox-hunting and cards to comfort the dying, he does not even appear when the mourners bear the pauper's body to the churchyard: "And waiting long, the crowd retire distress'd / To think a poor man's bones should lie unblest'd" (I, 315-17). With its procession of mourners and saddened though thoroughly curious children,³⁰ the scene begins like a pastoral elegy; but with the parson's absence the elegiac tone turns bitter, and the sense of community fades from the poet's vision.

In a note, Crabbe insisted that such negligence was "by no means common." Nonetheless, the absentee or irresponsible shepherd is a theme treated in several nineteenth-century pictures of rural life. In her *Grasmere Journal*, Dorothy Wordsworth describes a funeral that begins like an enacted pastoral elegy; only when the singing procession of mourners reaches the churchyard does the scene lose dignity: "The priest met us—he did not look as a man ought to do on such an occasion—I had seen him half-drunk the day before in a pot-house. Before we came with the corpse one of the company observed he wondered what sort of cue our Parson would be in! N. B. It was the day after the Fair."³¹ Dorothy's pastoral vision expands at the cottage and on the sunny hillside, but it cannot survive the sight of a priest with a hangover.

Wider reading brings more examples of what she recorded at Grasmere and Crabbe deplored in Suffolk. One symptom of a priest's failure to be a shepherd was his delight in being a huntsman, a "sporting parson." As a young curate in Leicestershire, Crabbe himself made some unsuccessful attempts at playing this role "in accordance with the usual habits of the clergy in the vale of Belvoir" (*Life*, p. 112). In early nineteenth-century Devon, the Rev. John Froude (an uncle of James Anthony Froude) carried the sportsman's role to extravagant lengths, while as a priest he was famous for trying to teach two farmer's sons to say the Lord's Prayer backwards and for reading the liturgy in a rollicking sing-song manner. Blackmore based his portrait of the demonic Parson Chowne in *The Maid of Sker* (1872) upon Froude, and he long remembered his father's words about this brother clergyman: "Shocking fellow, Richard! Shocking fellow—a disgrace to the Church. The less we say about him the better."³² The effect of pastoral neglect or abuse is documented by the Rev. Henry Moule's recollections of the few surviving church-goers at Fordington in Dorchester when he first came to the parish in the early eighteen-thirties. At the communion service, the sixteen women expected pay for attending; one man receiving the chalice

“touched his forelock and said, ‘Here’s your good health, Sir.’ The other said, ‘Here’s the good health of our Lord Jesus Christ.’” The baptismal rite had fared little better: “one day there was a christening and no water in the font. ‘Water, Sir!’ exclaimed the clerk in astonishment. ‘The last parson never used no water. He spit into his hand.’”³³

Francis Kilvert, the young curate who recorded these words, was a conscientious country priest, providing blankets for the poor and walking miles to visit the sick; sometimes he even helped pitch hay. But if extreme cases have any illustrative value, the scandalous ones may suggest a basis in fact for the absence or minor roles of clergymen in several well-known fictions of rural life in the nineteenth century. No priest comes to advise or comfort Wordsworth’s Michael; no priest but only a kind pedlar hears Margaret confess her misery in “The Ruined Cottage,” though a vicar will eventually have his say in *The Excursion*. In “The Brothers,” the “homely Priest of Ennerdale” mistakes a former parishioner for a tourist and stays locked in the role of a naive swain, unable to understand the sailor from the great world who wants to know his brother’s fate. Higher up the social scale, the Rev. Irwine in *Adam Bede* makes a comparable misreading of the young squire’s purposes. Hardy generally allows the clergy a still less effectual role: in *The Return of the Native*, the lack of community is matched by the lack of reference to any capable pastor; in *The Woodlanders*, no clergyman helps anyone; in *Tess*, a priest refuses the heroine when first asked to give her baby a Christian burial and confirms her sense of the futility of expecting help on this bad apple, our earth. Hardy’s culminating image of the useless pastor comes at the start of *Jude the Obscure* when the schoolmaster leaves Marygreen: “The rector had gone away for the day, being a man who disliked the sight of changes.” Because he intends to absent himself until everything runs “smooth again,” he can have no part in the rough lives of the main characters. Their wanderings, like Tess’s, are the movements of restless, unshepherded souls, comparable to the “Strayed Sheep” at the cliff’s edge in Holman Hunt’s painting.

Crabbe and Thomas show the clergy in no more forceful a role than the priest has in “The Brothers” or *Tess*. But there is a radical difference. If the priest in their poems exerts little influence, he compensates with frightening powers of observation. After two decades of parish work, the loss of five of his seven children, and his wife’s worsening spells of depression, Crabbe published *The Parish Register* in 1807, offering a relentless catalogue

of folly and misery under the headings of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials. Speaking in his own person as pastor of a "flock" (I, 3), he reflects upon the people whom he still sometimes calls "nymphs" or "swains." But "churls" would be a more accurate term for most of them. What he records is usually grim or grotesque. Of the baptized infants, two are illegitimate, one has been orphaned, another is a victim of its parents' botanical erudition:

"Why *Lonicera* wilt thou name this child?"
I asked the Gardener's wife, in accents mild.
"We have a right," replied the sturdy dame—
And *Lonicera* was the infant's name. (I, 611-14)

The event prompts a comment on the desperate need of obscure folk to achieve recognition. Crabbe's insight has recently been amplified by another East Anglian vicar who remembered the laborer's pride in ploughing "the straightest furrow" (I, 678): "Take ploughing or ricking: why should these jobs have had such a tremendous finesse attached to them? The harvest would not have been the less if the furrows wavered a little. But, of course a straight furrow was all that a man was left with. It was his signature, not only on the field but on life. Yet it seems wrong to me that a man's achievement should be reduced to this."⁸⁴ With less compassion, Crabbe lists other by-ways to the rustic's "house of fame":

The bowl that beats the greater number down
Of tottering nine-pins, gives to fame the clown;
Or foil'd in this, he opes his ample jaws,
And lets a frog leap down, to gain applause . . . (I, 680-83)

After the baptisms into a world of drudgery and foolishness, the record of marriages grows so gloomy that the poet lets an impatient voice break in: "But ever frowns your Hymen? man and maid / Are all repenting, suffering, or betray'd?" (II, 384-85). The challenge evokes some glimpses of domestic comfort and a portrait of the Prudent Couple, who keep chaste and save money for a rational marriage. But by the time Crabbe reaches the burials, he has grown self-conscious about his dark vision: "Mine I conceive a melancholy book" (III, 22). In defense, he returns to his role as the dispeller of pastoral illusions: "I've seldom known, though I have often read, / Of happy peasants on their dying bed . . ." (III, 26-27). Nonetheless, after grim illustrations of deathbed realities, the poem becomes elegiac when

Crabbe describes a "noble Peasant" (l. 414) devoted to his family, his work, the land, and the church. These lines prove that the pastoral ideal has stayed alive in the poet's imagination. Surprisingly after his attack on *The Deserted Village*, Crabbe expresses this ideal in a "very Goldsmithian tone,"³⁵ both here and in his long idyllic look at a happy cottage. The prints on its walls contrast the battles and fallen kings of the great world with the ideal of rural peace, while the garden becomes a *locus amoenus* allotted to the cottager by an indulgent lord:

Here on a Sunday-eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem, and gaily they agree. (I, 152-55)

For once the satirist is celebrating *otium* in a green and flowery place, enjoyed by a people in a society that still retains enough sense of the sacred to respect their need for worship, for blessings on their births, unwise marriages, and burials, and for a weekly day of rest. While still professing the role of an anti-pastoralist, neither here nor in *The Village* does Crabbe express his moral vision without invoking pastoral ideals.

Like the poet who puts himself among those destined for a final entry in *The Parish Register*, R. S. Thomas takes a critical view of rustic folk while acknowledging his place among them as a fallible mortal. But he goes a step beyond Crabbe in self-involvement, for instead of sketching characters from a distance, Thomas often speaks to them directly, on the page at least, where his sharp tongue and insight can make the reader wince. The hill people are his unhearing audience; we must squirm for Davies, the Methodist deacon, when the vicar goads him with this imagined address:

Who taught you to pray
And scheme at once, your eyes turning
Skyward, while your swift mind weighs
Your heifer's chances in the next town's
Fair on Thursday? Are your heart's coals
Kindled for God, or is the burning
Of your lean cheeks because you sit
Too near the girl's smouldering gaze?
Tell me, Davies, for the faint breeze

From heaven freshens and I roll in it,
Who taught you your deft poise? ("Chapel Deacon")³⁶

Who but the devil could have taught it, if the breeze that stirs the poet to such scorn be indeed from heaven? Confronting other rustics in his imagination, he can speak just as severely without the sardonic relish. Of an old farmer who cared more for his fields than for his wife, the priest asks:

did you cherish, tend her
As your own flesh, the dry stalk
Where the past murmurs its sad tune?

The conclusion is comfortless: "But now—too late! You're an old tree, / Your roots groping her in vain" ("Age").³⁷ Sometimes he takes on the whole congregation, addressing them all as churls, as in "A Priest to His People":

Men of the hills, wantoners, men of Wales,
With your sheep and your pigs and your ponies, your sweaty females,
How I have hated you for your irreverence, your scorn even
Of the refinements of art and the mysteries of the Church,
I whose invective would spurt like a flame of fire
To be quenched always in the coldness of your stare. (p. 29)

These lines suggest the experience behind Thomas's remarks in an interview in 1958: "I feel very sorry for my parishioners that they should have a poet for a parson"; he wished that they might have had one "more fatherly and perhaps less intelligent. My nose is too sharp."³⁸ But just as these comments reveal sympathy for the people who must endure him, the poem that begins bitterly becomes a confession, revealing how hurt pride drives his deepest feeling into hiding: his "true heart" wanders "in a wood of lies." When it honestly could, his heart would honor the people who "affront, bewilder, yet compel" his gaze. His apparent churls may be swains after all.³⁹

The impulse to honor the hill people links Thomas to Wordsworth (whom he has edited in a small volume), and it creates a recurrent motif in the early poems—the rustic's "Listen, listen, I am a man like you" ("The Hill Farmer Speaks," p. 55). These poems shift the needling focus of his insight back from his rustics to the urban reader. In "The Airy Tomb," a Wordsworthian study of a young shepherd's loneliness, the poet's defense of

his people becomes an attack on the "hypocrite reader" who wants lust or romance to enliven "this odd tale" (p. 41). Despite echoes of Baudelaire and Eliot, the aside follows Wordsworth's example in "Simon Lee," where an apology for an unsensational plot is really a criticism of the "gentle" reader's debased taste. Being himself from a city (Cardiff) and well educated, Thomas faces the weathered hill people and questions our urban awareness of life's essential processes. Away from the ploughed and wind-swept fields, "how shall we know / Earth's ecstasy"?

How shall we quicken again
To the lust and thrust of the sun
And the seedling rain? ("Song," p. 26)

Thomas has described his predicament as a writer living "in the country by choice" amid "agricultural activity, the traditional occupation of man," while addressing an "audience of town dwellers, who are mostly out of touch, if not out of sympathy with nature."⁴⁰ His poems reflect the tension between his own sympathies and his sense of what interests a somewhat alien audience. Years before the editors of the *Book of English Pastoral Verse* declared that "today, more than ever before, the pastoral vision simply will not do," he rejected the assumptions behind their pronouncement: "I don't allow for a moment the superiority of urban to country life. I don't believe that a poet who chooses to write about an agricultural environment is necessarily insular, escapist, or even provincial."⁴¹ But his ruralism has limits. In a Christmas meditation he treats the coming of the shepherds to Bethlehem as a sign of the union of town and country in Christ, whose birth there shows the divine "blessing upon the town as the focus of civilization."⁴² Both religion and skepticism keep Thomas from the near "idolatry of nature" that he sees in the early Wordsworth;⁴³ and if his own attitude ever inclined in that direction, he scolds himself for it after looking into a peasant's vacant face:

You must revise
Your bland philosophy of nature, earth
Has of itself no power to make men wise.
(*"Autumn on the Land,"* p. 106)

To offer a strong pastoral vision of the good life on the Welsh hills, he would need to see his people receiving through religion some of the blessings

that earth "of itself" cannot provide. At times he offers glimpses of this action, and the poems often allude to the church as a redemptive possibility. But his longest poem on the pastor's role in a community shows no sign that Methodist Christianity reaches deep enough to touch where the hill people live. In *The Minister* (1953), a radio play with a narrator, a young preacher, a lecherous deacon (Davies again), and a seductive girl, religion only sustains hypocrisy, serving as a shield from both self-knowledge and expression of delight in life. For the narrator, the villain is "Protestantism,"

the adroit castrator
Of art; the bitter negation
Of song and dance and the heart's innocent joy. (p. 92)

The view comes close to the one held by the Catholic pastor Palinode in "Maye" of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*: instead of adorning the church with May-day flowers, "we . . . sytten" here in Protestant England "as drown'd in a dreame." The festive spirit of ancient pastoral cannot survive in this atmosphere; it can only be glimpsed in a memory of harvest customs of another time, another place:

There was no nonsense
Plaiting the last sheaf and wasting time
Throwing sickles. That was a fad of Prytherch
Of Nant Carfan; but the bugger was dead.
The men took the corn, the beautiful goddess,
By the long hair and threw her on the ground. (p. 87)

Prytherch is a modest, more earthy version of Crabbe's Noble Peasant, but his festive world is dead and silent, something left for the poet to imagine in "Memories" (p. 45) and "Invasion on the Farm" (p. 102). At these moments, the pastoral ideal hovers on the fringes of the poet's vision, as it does in Crabbe, giving just enough light to show how far his characters have strayed from the possibilities of a good life. With a bitter compassion, Thomas draws the contrast between the possible and the actual, Prytherch's festive harvest and the utilitarian one. Meanwhile in the "cramped cell" of Protestant attitudes, the young minister dies without celebrating anything.

Where in British pastorals after Crabbe is the festivity that is missing from Thomas's vision? Though we have seen it in Blackmore's harvest

chapter, a surer stronghold for it is in the poetry of William Barnes. His is the richest pastoral vision of any English writer of the last two centuries. His achievement deserves attention in spite of the language barrier and the recent warning that his poems are "too hopelessly nostalgic to be serviceable."⁴⁴ Rather than dismiss him on these vague grounds ("serviceable" to what?), we would do better to follow the example of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Hardy and treat him as a noteworthy poet. Born in 1801, Barnes became, in Hardy's words, "probably the most interesting link between present and past forms of rural life that England possessed."⁴⁵ His childhood was over before the industrial revolution touched the countryside, but by 1830, after he had left the farm and become a schoolmaster, threshing machines were operating in the Vale of Blackmore, where many were smashed in the farm-laborers' revolt. By the eighteen-seventies, steam ploughs that looked more like locomotives than tractors were lumbering out from Dorchester in an early effort to make the ploughman obsolete. Meanwhile, horse-drawn mowing machines were replacing the scythes of the hay-cutters, despite the stones that certain traditionalists hid in the grass to break the blades of the new machines.⁴⁶ Living until 1886, Barnes saw it all happen, but most of his poetry came from his memories of the old rural life.

He began writing of the countryside at a time of concern for the loss of ancient traditions. John Clare had expressed this concern in *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1827), where he deplored the neglect of "Old customs" and prophesied that "soon the poet's song will be / The only refuge they can find."⁴⁷ But Clare, like Crabbe in *The Parish Register* and Wordsworth's parson in "The Brothers," showed little awareness of the holy days and festivals that once patterned the rural year. Christmas is the only feast day that his *Calendar* describes. By coincidence, John Keble's *Christian Year* also appeared in 1827; and by supplying a poem for every special day on the Anglican calendar, it was aimed at restoring a sense of time's sacred dimension. Further reflecting the concerns of Clare and Keble were William Hone's *Every-Day Book* (1825-26) and his *Year Books*, arranged as almanacs with articles on seasonal labor, folk-customs, holidays, and celebrations. Books were replacing rural memories as the guardians of a once-lively tradition. Barnes contributed to the *Year Book* of 1832, in which *The Shepherd's Calendar* was freely quoted, and he shared Clare's view that old customs were rapidly dying out. But either in spite or because of his sense that "the good wold merry times be gone,"⁴⁸ he went on to arrange his first collection

of Dorset poems (1844) around the seasonal cycle, following the example of Spenser, Pope, and Clare. His cycle not only records the year's work and weather, as Clare's *Calendar* vividly does: it puts special emphasis on the ways of enjoying rural time in games, courtship, parties and chats by the fire, while linking the seasons to the church year with poems on Easter, Whitsuntide, Martinide, and Christmas.

The year's movement is observed by rustic speakers who use the dialect that Barnes cherished and that his Victorian publishers urged him to abandon.⁴⁹ This feature and the dramatized settings link his eclogues and dramatic lyrics to the work of Theocritus; the effect is to bring the (patient) reader inside the world of the rustic speakers. Once inside, the reader can feel their frisky celebrative impulse on special days that mark the year: a boy tosses quoits, leaps and runs with his friends, rings the churchbells, and plays "vives" (an early form of handball) off the church wall for one all-sufficient reason—it is Easter Monday. Another rustic vows to "keep up Martins tide" until he dies; another invites a friend to a party to "keep wold Christmas up." Rustic voices also celebrate the signs of seasonal movement: the leafing out of the woodlands, the blackbird's song, the golden "clote" (water-lily), "corn a-turnen yollow," nutting, and the first frost of winter. The whole cycle evokes wonder at time, showing value in each phase of it while pointing toward the mystery of the "girt Year-Clock" described in a late poem, with hands of sun and moon, starry skyey face, and "mighty wheels a'rollen round / 'Ithout a beät, 'ithout a sound" (I, 447).

If time is hallowed in Barnes' vision, so are the places that are celebrated in his poems. His landscape is marked by special trees, by springs of water, by churches that provide centers for communities lying within sound of the parish bells, and by the lane, gate, and fireside of "Hallowed Pleäces." These homely spots are hallowed by the lives spent there—the hearth "by times of zitten round" (I, 285); the people in Barnes give places sanctity by the work, play, and kindness of day-to-day life. A cottage farmer tells of thatching his hay-rick, of seeing smoke from the chimney and realizing his wife's care as she prepares the meal, of looking down at his two boys at play on the grass and feeling his own blessedness:

An', as the aïr vrom the west
 Did fan my burnen feäce an' breast,
 An' hoppen birds, wi' twittren beaks,

Did show their sheenen spots an' streaks,
Then, wi' my heart a-vill'd wi' love
An' thankvulness to God above,
I didden think ov anything
That I begrudg'ed o' lord or king
(“Thatchen o' the Rick,” I, 130)

Coming with the breeze, his wave of contentment fills the pastoral moment; in the midst of work, it seems right for him at the time, no matter what hardship may be in store for him tomorrow.

In the harsher setting of a winter eclogue that may have been inspired by Clare,⁵⁰ the vision of sanctity in homely things still survives, despite the poverty, the exhaustion, and the less than lyrical speech of husband, wife, and chatty little daughter. A weary hedger comes home to a meatless supper of potatoes and bread-cake; the greetings are uneffusive but to the point:

WIFE

Ah! I be very glad you be a-come.
You be a-tired an' cwold enough, I s'pose;
Zit down an' rest your bwones, an' warm your nose.

JOHN

Why I be nippy: what is there to eat?

As man and wife try to talk, their little girl keeps chiming in, giving the scene its comic credibility:

Well, father; what d'ye think? The pig got out
This mornen; an' avore we zeed or heârd en,
He run about, an' got into the geârden,
An' routed up the groun' zoo wi' his snout!

JOHN

Now only think o' that! You must contrive
To keep en in, or else he'll never thrive.

CHILD

An' father, what d'ye think? I voun' to-day
The nest where thik wold hen ov our's do lay:

'Twer out in orcha'd hedge, an' had vive aggs.
 ("Eclogue: Father Come Hwome," I, 182-83)

Her world and dialect may be remote, but her speech-patterns are as immediate and insistent as those heard on yesterday's return from the office. If the worn-out father can be patient (and he is until a request for cut sticks drives him "out o' the way o' the waggon"), then here too is an image of rustic folk hallowing a cottage fireside.

Unless we assume that misery alone is real, we cannot easily accuse Barnes of falsification. We should not decide that Hardy is the truer voice of rural Dorset without including *Under the Greenwood Tree* among his images of its changing reality.⁵¹ Nor should we mistake Barnes' idyllicism for ignorance or intellectual naïveté. Though largely self-taught, he spent some time at Cambridge finishing the twelve-year program that led to his degree in 1850, while his immense if eccentric knowledge of languages, his studies in aesthetics, local archaeology and folklore, and his schoolmaster's competence in science are the marks of an intelligence at least as educated as Tennyson's or Hardy's. The fact that he did not enter the mainstream of Victorian skepticism or care to discuss theology with Tennyson shows his rejection—not his ignorance—of this tendency in modern thought. What Keith says of Cobbett may be said of Barnes: "He saw no merit in moving with the times if they were headed in the wrong direction" (p. 81).

That he faced his own times is proven by the scattering of darker poems which create more tensions within his work as a whole than a recent critic has recognized.⁵² These poems deal openly with the threats to his pastoral vision. One major threat is the displacement of farm laborers forced by poverty and unrenewed leases to abandon their homes. The theme is as old as Virgil's first eclogue, and it appears in an early one by Barnes, *Rustican Emigrants*, written in 1834 when the Tolpuddle Martyrs were sentenced to exile for trying to organize a farm-workers union. In "Leädy-Day an' Ridden House," as in Hardy's long accounts of such uprootings in "The Dorsetshire Labourer" and *Tess*, March 25 has lost all sanctity as the Feast of the Annunciation and become simply the sad day when leases run out. Landowners' greed keeps the poor on the move and robs them of their communal pasture and playground in "The Common-a-took in"; in "The Leäne," it deprives them even of the grassy shoulders along the road. Rural capitalism takes its toll in the world of the Dorset poems.

Barnes also faces the threat of immorality which Crabbe depicts so gloomily in his record of baptisms and marriages. In "The Love-Child," the speaker winces at a little girl's blush and her words—"they zent me away to be born" (I, 409)—which Barnes himself heard spoken. Instructing more by positive example than by warning, he shares Crabbe's view of marriage as a crucial sacrament in the life of the community, and like Thomas in "Age," he realizes that it can be violated by neglect as well as by adultery. The pastoral sage, Meäster Collins, admonishes a young husband to remember the wedding night, "An' still beheäve as you begun / To seek the love that you've a-won," rather than to sit drinking while the clock ticks off "The chilly hours o' vrost an' snow" ("Treat Well Your Wife," I, 408). More generalized threats occasionally darken his vision—the "venom" of free-thinkers, the restlessness of the age of railways (though Barnes enjoyed riding to London and Cambridge), and, in a late poem, the Tennysonian sense of strife in nature:

We see the hare's last springs
Of fear-strain'd limbs, before the harrier's feet;
We see the sparrow's wings
Flap out, below the hawk, their dying beat.
(*"Life,"* II, 720)

But unlike the distraught speakers in *Maud* and *In Memoriam*, Barnes keeps a balanced vision: birds care for their mates, horses stand "in loving mood" side by side in the shade. Only from one perspective is nature always red in tooth and claw; and if it were always so, Barnes sees no need for people to become slaves to its model. Where Hardy accepts a view of nature which subsumes man, Barnes holds the Christian view of man as a creature whose calling is to enact the loving will of the Creator: "All we are bidden to be kind to all." In Barnes, the mystery lies in the belief that this will is revealed to us; in Hardy and John Stuart Mill, the mystery is how we could ever acquire the ethical insight to condemn and amend nature in a totally naturalistic universe.

Barnes' sense of the divine will supports the principle of imitation that shapes his poetry. "Love has soulfood," he writes in an allegory of the selective process in poetic creation. Both love and hate sift experience through the sieves of memory; hate holds the evil but love lets it go, saving instead "the food of bliss" ("The Sifters," II, 908). The allegory justifies both the writing

and the reading of poems that emphasize goodness. But when Barnes does face oppression, misery, and death, his vision expands and he writes one of the strongest poems of his old age. In "Withstanders," he lists evils that make any signs of rural happiness almost the exceptions that prove the Marxist's rule. After lamenting the tyranny of the rich over the poor, the starved workman, the seduced girl, the poet by an act of faith sees both the oppressor and the oppressed at the Last Judgment:

When there, at last, the good shall glow
In starbright bodies lik' their Seäviour,
Vor all their flesh noo mwore mid show
The marks o' man's unkind beheäviour:
Wi' speechless tongue, an' burnen cheäk,
The strong shall bow avore the weäk,
An' vind that helplessness, wi' right,
Is strong beyond all e'thly might. (I, 464)

Here, as in Virgil's fourth eclogue, pastoral gives way to prophetic vision. Deeper than pastoral nostalgia is something forward-looking in Barnes, a sense of final direction and fulfillment that is more radical than any secular view of history can allow. The poem reveals the faith that enabled him to keep celebrating the life he remembered, even as he saw the opportunities for it vanishing from Victorian England. Ultimately the faith would matter more than the memory, as it does for R. S. Thomas, who warns us away from the search for "that snake-haunted garden"⁵³ of the mythic past and points instead toward the "Kingdom," where "the poor man / Is king" and

industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
By life.

In this poem, all that remains of the pastoralist's green world is a single leaf, an image of what a person offers on the way into the kingdom of heaven upon earth:

It's a long way off, but to get
There takes no time and admission
Is free, if you will purge yourself
Of desire, and present yourself with

Your need only and the simple offering
Of your faith, green as a leaf.⁵⁴

Given the depth of our needs for healing and the urgency of our distractions, the frail pastoral vision may seem as doomed as the grass before another invasion of concrete or asphalt. But it survives. Not only did the vision stay alive in Crabbe, despite his pessimism, and flower in the Dorset poetry of Barnes: it has returned in the nineteen-seventies in a recent volume by Thomas. After the bitterness of *H'm* (1972), two poems from *Laboratories of the Spirit* (1975) express both the mystical and the realistic kinds of pastoral vision. With the title echoing Samuel Palmer's "Bright Cloud," Thomas's "Bright Field" is a step toward the mystical world of the shepherd Moses or a becalmed William Blake:

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.⁵⁵

Remembered here, the "small field" becomes something far greater than the *locus amoenus* of traditional pastoral. It holds the promise of transcendent vision, but only at the price that a mystic pays to see the eternal in time.

The concluding poem from this volume offers a different vision, not mystical at all, yet providing a sense of fulfillment through details of the temporal order. In "Good," an old man comes out on a hillside and reads the signs of ongoing life within a rural community:

He sees the stream shine,

the church stand, hears the litter of
children's voices.

Though death chills his flesh and "The kestrel goes by with fresh prey / in its claws," he accepts everything, even the tractor that "operates / on the earth's body." Watching his grandson plough, the old farmer knows the rightness of his place in the flow of time. To experience the poem is to share the moment with the character and the poet, to sense both mortality and renewal in the movement of seasons and generations, and to agree that "It is well." In giving this experience, the pastoral achieves its end. The vision is momentary, liable to loss in time, though the moment may promise something eternal, as in Thomas's "Bright Field." But when the need for an image of ultimate renewal becomes more than even the brightest field in the green world can satisfy, pastoral may give way to prophetic vision as the poet tries "a somewhat grander theme. / Shrubberies or meek tamarisks are not for all."⁵⁶

NOTES

1. John Barrell and John Bull, eds., *A Book of English Pastoral Verse* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 4.
2. See *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), p. 141; Poggioli, "The Oaten Flute," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 11 (1957), 176; Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1969), p. 26. Subsequent references to Williams will be given in the text.
3. Barrell and Bull, p. 432.
4. *The Rural Tradition: William Cobbett, Gilbert White, and Other Non-fiction Prose Writers of the English Countryside* (North Brighton: Harvester Press, 1975), p. 16.
5. Quoted in David Cecil, *Visionary and Dreamer: Two Poetic Painters, Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones* (London: Constable, 1969), p. 39.
6. Barrell and Bull, p. 4.
7. Trans. Jessie Coulson, ed. George Gibian (New York: Norton, 1975), p. 463. The following emphasis on community as a pastoral ideal is strong also in Williams (see pp. 15, 93, 213) and in Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel: Studies in George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and D. H. Lawrence* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1974), whose basic concept of the modern pastoral as a blending with the georgic is one that I share (cf. pp. 2, 16, 36, 212-213).
8. Virgil, *The Eclogues, Georgics, and Aeneid of Virgil*, trans. C. Day Lewis (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 57. Charles W. Hieatt argues that neither Virgil nor Theocritus emphasizes "nature as the focal point, the desired governing influence in human attitudes and affairs": "The Integrity of Pastoral," *Genre* 5 (1972), 24.
9. 1952; rpt. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1968 (p. 2).
10. See my essay, "The Mythic Appeal of *Lorna Doone*," *NCF* 28 (1974), 435-449.
11. Barnes' version contains the lines, "And I hope to God, wi' all my heart, / His soul in heaven mid rest": see "Dorsetshire Customs" in William Hone's *Year Book of Daily Recreation and Information* (1832; rpt. London: William Tegg, 1878), p. 586 and *Adam Bede*, chap. 53.
12. See Squires, pp. 81-82, for a comparison of the scenes in Eliot and Hardy.
13. "Sicilian Hours," *Dublin University Magazine* 46 (1855), 201. Quincy Guy Burriss notes the classical parallels in *Richard Doddridge Blackmore: His Life and Novels*, Univ. of Illinois Studies in Lang. and Lit., 15 (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois, 1930), 70.

14. *The Georgics of Virgil* (London: Sampson Low & Son & Marston [1871]), l.395 ff. Blackmore's translation of Book I was originally published in 1862.
15. See Keith, p. 98.
16. See Florence Emily Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928* (1928 & 1930; rpt. New York: St. Martins Press, 1962), p. 20.
17. "Note on Harvest Customs" reprinted in *Garnered Sheaves: Essays, Addresses, and Reviews* (London: Macmillan, 1931), p. 178.
18. *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (1969; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 63. Reapers were still lifting up the neck of corn and shouting to honor "the spirit of the harvest" in Devon in 1830, according to Mrs. A. E. Bray in Jack Simmons, *Devon Anthology* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 147.
19. Barbara Kerr, *Bound to the Soil: A Social History of Dorset, 1750-1918* (London: John Baker, 1968), p. 72.
20. *Brother to the Ox* (1940; rev. ed. London: Dent & Sons, 1963), p. 57.
21. *The Village*, l, 5, in *Poems*, ed. A. W. Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1905), I; subsequent references will be to this edition and given in the text. For more on his truthfulness, see George Crabbe (the poet's son), *The Life of George Crabbe*, intr. Edmund Blunden (London: Cresset Press, 1957), pp. 200-201.
22. Quoted from Christopher Wordsworth (Barnes' bishop) in Giles Dugdale, *William Barnes of Dorset* (London: Cassell, 1953), p. 227.
23. "The Hearth," *H'm* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 18.
24. "The Mixen," *Song at the Year's Turning*, intr. by John Betjeman (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955), p. 60; subsequent page references to this volume will be given in the text.
25. *Life*, p. 113.
26. See Rayner Unwin, *The Rural Muse: Studies in the Peasant Poetry of England* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), p. 112.
27. See Heatt, p. 20.
28. T. S. Eliot, Chorus VI from *The Rock*.
29. *Crabbe's Arabesque: Social Drama in the Poetry of George Crabbe* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976), p. 26.
30. See Peter New, *George Crabbe's Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 47.
31. Entry for 3 Sept. 1800, ed. Helen Darbishire (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958), p. 52. For more grotesque examples of clerical behavior in nineteenth-century England, see Piers Brendon, *Hawker of Morwenstow: Portrait of a Victorian Eccentric* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), p. 137.
32. Unpublished letter from R. D. Blackmore to John Blackwood, 3 June [1872], in the Blackwood's Collection of the National Library of Scotland.
33. The Rev. Francis Kilvert, *Kilvert's Diary*, ed. William Plomer (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961), II, 442—entry for 30 April 1874.
34. *Akenfield*, p. 77.
35. New, p. 52.
36. *Poetry for Supper* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1958), p. 17.
37. *Poetry for Supper*, p. 21.
38. Quoted by W. Moelwyn Merchant, "R. S. Thomas," *Critical Quarterly* 2 (1960), 349.
39. See Calvin Bedient, *Eight Contemporary Poets* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p. 62.
40. *Words and the Poet: W. D. Thomas Memorial Lecture* (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales, 1964), p. 23.
41. *Words and the Poet*, p. 23.
42. Quoted by Merchant, p. 349.
43. See his *Choice of Wordsworth's Verse* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 15.
44. Barrell and Bull, p. 431.
45. "The Rev. William Barnes, B. D.," from *Athenaeum* (1886), in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel (Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1966), p. 101.
46. See Kerr, p. 110.
47. *The Poems of John Clare*, ed. J. W. Tibble (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1935), I, 341.
48. "Harvest Hwome," *The Poems of William Barnes*, ed. Bernard Jones (London: Centaur Press, 1962), I, 137; subsequent references to this edition will be given in the text.
49. See Dugdale, p. 187.

50. Clare's account in "January" of *The Shepherd's Calendar* of a hedger coming home is quoted in Hone's *Year Book* for 1832, to which Barnes contributed.

51. See Keith, p. 98. For an excellent account of Barnes' purposes in focusing upon certain aspects of Dorset life, see R. A. Forsyth, "The Conserving Myth of William Barnes," *VS*, 6 (1963), 325-354. But Forsyth's view of Barnes as a "regionalist" rather than a "pastoralist" (350) involves an unnecessary distinction, if we grant that the role of the latter was modified in the nineteenth century.

52. Paul Zietlow underestimates this tension by focusing on isolated poems rather than reading Barnes' total work as an integrated vision of the pastoral life: see "Thomas Hardy and William Barnes: Two Dorset Poets," *PMLA* 84 (1969), 294.

53. "Emerging," *Laboratories of the Spirit* (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 1.

54. *H'm*, p. 34.

55. *Laboratories of the Spirit*, p. 60. Quoted by permission of the Macmillan Company.

56. Virgil, *Eclogue* IV.1-2, trans. C. Day Lewis.