

The Pastoral Moment

RICHARD F. HARDIN

The two rustics in Virgil's first eclogue represent the paradox of the simple life in a civilization dominated by "the city": on the one hand leisure, time for friendship and creative life, access to the simple provisions of nature; on the other, the dependency implicit in a complex civilization with ownership of real estate, wage labor, dispossession, exile, separation. Tityrus the happy shepherd is described as "lentus in umbra," relaxed in the shade, protected by imperial favor¹; yet a little later Tityrus himself uses the same word, *lentus*, to describe the plight of the country under Rome. Rome, he says, rises above all other cities as the cypresses stand out among the bending ("lenta") osiers (ll. 24-25). The granting of Tityrus's petition has made him osier-like, pliant, docile; both "lentus" and "umbra" become ominous symbols of the state of man. It is a fading Arcadia that Virgil presents—the happy shepherd is being uprooted, driven to live among thirsting Africans or to freeze in the remote North, while the coarse, *impius* barbarian soldier occupies his place. Meliboeus can only explain his suffering by reference to the greater tribulation of civil war that has destroyed Rome's joy and innocence (ll. 71-72). His sole consolation remains the last night in friendship with Tityrus as they look forward to a frugal supper. The closing images of the eclogue render concisely this sense of transitory joy:

et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant
maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

(And now in the distance the chimney tops of farmhouses are smoking, and longer shadows are descending from the high mountains.)

The shadows in the mountains suggest the huge, inexorable motions of power as contrasted with the small, warm wisps of man-made smoke—cozy as the shepherds' cottages but just as fragile as Meliboeus's happiness in the hands of an inscrutable Rome.

The movement of this poem describes that of much else that has been called pastoral literature, which begins with the flight from a complex world to one of simplicity, usually rustic simplicity. Although the fugitive is usually a fictional character in the narrative, in these eclogues he is the poet

himself. After flight, the pastoral experience requires illumination: in touch with nature, man is instructed in her way, always opposed to the artificial way of the city or court from which he has fled. This instruction will allow the initiate to live well in his complex world after leaving his pastoral retreat. In the final stage of the experience, Arcadia having been abandoned or destroyed, the pastoral initiate finds peace and simplicity embodied within the self.² This is essentially the pattern of the tenth eclogue, which closes with the image of well-fed goats ("saturae capellae") in contrast to the theme of insatiable desire in Gallus's song ("saturantur . . . nec fronde capellae," l. 30). Hence the experience of *Paradise Lost*, where the fallen Adam's plight is not unlike that of Meliboeus, though the instructing angel describes his future in a more affirmative, Christian spirit:

Only add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love
By name to come called charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far. (XII. 581)

The culmination of the pastoral experience in the "paradise within"³ aligns it with Christianity in that both find the chief excellence in life to consist in a wise tranquility of the sovereign soul, regardless of external circumstances.

The concept of pastoral underlying this essay differs somewhat from that of Harold Toliver's valuable book in that Toliver allows two "impulses" in pastoral, one being "to apply the vision of a golden age to the world of politics and history," the other, "to withdraw totally into" that vision.⁴ I would say that the two impulses simply characterize good and flawed pastoral, respectively. This pair of tendencies was in fact identified almost two centuries ago. In his brief treatment of the idyll in his essay, "Simple and Sentimental Poetry," Schiller explained the danger courted by inept pastoralists—and a few good authors, no doubt—in the representing of gratuitous nostalgia. A true pastoral poem should be made, "not to bring man back to *Arcadia*, but to lead him to *Elysium*."⁵ False pastoral appeals to the heart alone—in Toliver's words, total withdrawal into the vision of the Golden Age; ideally, pastoral should appeal to both mind and heart. Let the poet, Schiller says, "lead us on to emancipation, and give us this

feeling of higher harmony which compensates for all his troubles and secures the happiness of the victor!" (pp. 317-318). Although he can find no perfect embodiment of this ideal pastoral, Schiller grants that "Milton gives a higher satisfaction to the mind, in the magnificent picture of the first human pair, and of the state of innocence in paradise;—the most beautiful idyll I know of the sentimental kind" (p. 317). Still, poets must strive toward this ideal: "It is, therefore, of infinite importance for the man engaged in the path of civilisation to see confirmed in a sensuous manner the belief that this idea [of a state of innocence] can be accomplished in the world of sense" (p. 313). Schiller's doubts about actual pastoral, like Dr. Johnson's, must have been conditioned by the hackneyed state of the art then, during the long death throes of the shepherd pastoral. Many of the poets whom Toliver discusses, and those whom I shall consider, have approached Schiller's ideal, especially through the location of the pastoral interlude, the moment in which man discovers nature, in the context of a longer narrative or dramatic action.

My essay is perhaps more at odds with the view of pastoral developed in a stimulating essay by Renato Poggioli, whose ideas on the subject have won almost as many admirers as Empson's.⁶ Poggioli believes that "The psychological root of the pastoral is the double longing after innocence and happiness, to be recovered not through conversion or regeneration, but merely through retreat" (p. 147). As he sees it, because the pastoralist urges withdrawal and self-gratification rather than self-sacrifice in imitation of Christ, "the critical mind can only treat as failures all attempts to Christianize the pastoral" (p. 163).

Retreat as an end in itself, however, is more consistently a trait of what is called primitivism than pastoralism. In the myth or experience of primitivism, such as is found in Gauguin's autobiographical *Noa Noa*, there is no thought of retaining one's identity apart from the spirit of nature. Becoming one with the numinous grove, man loses all his special complexity, his inner self. "Civilization leaves me bit by bit," writes Gauguin in Tahiti, "and I begin to think simply, to have only a little hatred for my neighbour, and I function in an animal way, freely—with the certainty of the morrow being like today." When a woman shows him a beautiful spot near her hut, he says, "I felt a longing to rest there forever, sure that in eternity no one would come and disturb me."⁷

It is equally wrong to say, as Poggioli does, "Man may linger in the

pastoral dream world a short while, or a whole lifetime" (p. 154). To the pastoral writer, his characters, and his readers, it does make a difference whether one stays in Arcadia a whole lifetime. Virgil's pastorals conclude with an imminent departure from the green world: if the shade is bad for plants, what must it do to men (X. 75)? At the end of *As You Like It*, time and nature have wrought their healing magic on lovers and statesmen, and all the old Duke's men—save one primitivist misanthrope—can return to Court.⁸ The protagonist of Melville's *Typee* continually anticipates rescue from a situation that Gauguin would have embraced with abandon. As a pastoral initiate, the young sailor maintains a certain distance from the natives, his suspicions of their cannibalism symbolizing his fear of being absorbed into nature. It is perhaps because of this false narrowing of the pastoral that a recent, influential writer on the Spanish Renaissance "shepherd books," Francisco Lopez Estrada,⁹ has dismissed the work of Poggioli (along with Empson) as not substantial ("aunque no sean aportaciones sustantivas," p. 51). "Pastoral poetry," he writes, "has been one of the means through which attempts have been made to reconcile the two antiquities, pagan and Christian, into new syncretic forms. If the pastoral was courtly, there could also be found in it a germ of ardor for social justice, and it is encountered in the forms of humane poetry at the root of the thinking of Rousseau." Lopez Estrada argues that pastoral literature, in its best forms, offers anything but an irresponsible escape.¹⁰

The difference between escape fantasy and pastoral is recognized in Empson's handling of *Alice in Wonderland*, where the Gnat (in Empson's reading, a mask for Dodgson) intimates that Alice "would like to remain purely a creature of Nature and stay in the woods where there are no names."¹¹ This inclination is that of the typical child-reader whom Empson describes as unwilling to have stories end. Endings are "a sort of necessary assertion that the grown-up world was after all the proper one" (p. 270). But Dodgson, like any responsible pastoralist, does not share the wish to stay in the dream world; after all, he must bring his story to an end, whatever sympathies he may feel with his characters. This ambivalence seems to be a variant of what Empson calls the unique "double feeling" of pastoral: the poet feels both superior and inferior to the simple shepherds (or children, or prelapsarian parents, or beggars) who are his subjects. Such feeling is the natural result of "the pastoral process of putting the complex into the simple" (p. 22), which I take to be a defining concept of pastoral.

One and the same cause underlies both the complexity of the complex man and the transitoriness of his pastoral experience. This cause is defined by a set of assumptions about nature which dictate that nature (the world uncontaminated by man) cannot be accepted merely at face value. In Virgil's first eclogue the world is disturbed by events that would not happen in nature except through death or mishap—loss, cessation of friendship, dispossession. These complexities invading the simple world were products of the human will vested in political strife and imperialism. Christian pastoralists like Spenser and Milton perceived the source of complexity in a somewhat different light. Their world was complicated by the Fall, the corrupt macrocosm being an objectification of the soul blighted by original sin. The ambiguous feelings of English colonists toward the American Indians had their literary counterpart in Spenser's pastoral world of both shepherds and cutthroats; Milton's "Nativity Ode" presents nature as whole and yet supplicant.

Daphnis and Chloe, a model for later European pastoral stories narrative and dramatic, exemplifies the mistake of equating pastoralism with sheer escapism, and the kindred error of over-emphasizing the pastoralist's rejection of city or court. In fact, as later in the denouements of Shakespeare's pastorals, the fourth book of this work brings about a reconciliation of country and city. Both Daphnis and Chloe represent the city dweller's flight from his economically induced predicament: Daphnis's parents married too early, had too large a family, and exposed their youngest child in the wilderness. Chloe's father preferred the stage to his daughter, whom he abandoned in a cave. Both children are raised in the atmosphere of material sufficiency and joyful work that constitutes the shepherd's life; the steps of their illumination or initiation into love and self-knowledge comprise the narrative framework of Books I to III.¹² When at last they acquire the wealth and status of free property holders they continue to partake in the simple life even to the point of resuming their old shepherds' roles from time to time. The act of marriage in itself, as one scholar writes, is intended to satisfy "the claims of both nature and human society," and the repeated images of art complementing nature¹³ foreshadow the outcome of this romance.

Book IV opens with two related episodes showing the insufficiency of the two realms in themselves. The destruction of the garden of Dionysophanes by the jealous cowherd Lampis reveals the contempt for beauty in

men without culture; on the other hand, Gnathon's homosexual overtures to Daphnis typify the perversion of natural love and beauty induced by customs of city life. (In IV. 19 Astylus obliquely associates the city and homosexuality when he tells his father that Daphnis "could soon be taught town ways by Gnathon.") The reconciling of town and country begins at the level of the villains, with Gnathon's rescue of Chloe and capture of Lampis; it concludes with the wedding-night feast, when "the peasants began to sing in harsh grating voices as if they were breaking the soil with hoes instead of singing a wedding song"—here the sophisticated epithalamic tradition is rusticated in a manner strikingly similar to that of the Elizabethans.¹⁴

In Renaissance poetry the fleeting and transitory nature of the pastoral experience often produces the same overtones of nostalgia mixed with skepticism that are found in Virgil. It is this skepticism that, in Schiller's terms, prevents the heart from completely overwhelming the mind. Writing on Tasso's *Aminta*, a French scholar draws attention to Dafne's lines: "Il mondo invecchia / E invecchiando intristisce" (The world grows old, and growing old fades away, II.2). Tasso's shepherds, especially Tirsi, with his Tasso-like "precocious skepticism of a man born old,"¹⁵ reflect a sophisticated awareness of the passing of time and the temporariness of beauty and youth. The "happy ending," says Mia Gerhardt, should not really be taken at face value: "The secret of the last act is in being detached from the happy ending; not for nothing does the chorus dismiss the happiness that the protagonists are about to enjoy" (p. 121). Skepticism on the part of the author rather than of his characters pervades Milton's *Comus*, where the Lady is willing to trust the "Shepherd" (who is, of course, the seducer Comus in disguise). Her lines recapitulate the hackneyed sentiments of naive pastoral:

Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. (ll. 321-26)

In the first half of "Lycidas" the natural world is viewed as ultimately deceptive and empty of hope, preparing us for the Virgilian resolution to seek new pastures. Marvell's "The Garden," although more optimistic in its

view of nature, also exemplifies this transitoriness, especially in the climactic image of the bird in preparation for flight. Here the soul in pastoral seclusion enjoys a momentary glimpse of the eternal, carrying us, as Schiller urged, not back to Arcadia, but forward to Elysium.

The first great English pastoral work, Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, also proposes, in the words of one of Spenser's best readers, "the rejection of the pastoral life for the truly dedicated life of the world."¹⁶ A similar interpretation may be extended to Spenser's last pastoral work, the story of Calidore and Pastorella in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*.

As is generally recognized, the details of Cantos 9-11 incorporate most traditional pastoral motifs, and it would not be fanciful to suggest that this pastoral romance is largely *about* pastoral poetry and its underlying myth, symbolized in the lost princess Pastorella. Pastorella's flight has been allegorical, like the abandonment of Daphnis and Chloe: her birth in captivity represents the state of man in original sin, suffering for the indiscretion of the parents, who stand not only for Adam and Eve, but also for the court, supposedly the "root" of courtesy (VI. 1.1) but now decayed from its pristine state (VI. proem. 4). Only when the parents are released from bondage (VI. 12.10) and live in harmony can Pastorella be returned to them, and the larger social implications of this inner harmony are suggested in the subsequent muzzling of the Blatant Beast. Imprisonments mark the beginning and end of Pastorella's excursion into Arcadia; her symbolic death and rebirth in the brigands' cave (similar to the experiences of Red Cross in Orgoglio's dungeon, Guyon in Mammon's cave, Amoret in Lust's cave) signify a new understanding of the self and the world after the retreat into nature, not to mention the shock of knowing evil in nature. As the story begins, Pastorella's detachment from the merely rustic is the first thing we notice about her:

Upon a little hillocke she was placed
Higher than all the rest, and round about
Environ'd with a girland, goodly graced,
Of lovely lasses, and them all without
The lustie shepherd swaynes sate in a rout,
The which did pype and sing her praynes dew,
And oft rejoyce, and oft for wonder shout,

As if some miracle of heavenly hew
Were downe to them descended in that earthly vew. (VI. 9.8)

Accordingly, her rejection of Coridon is attributed to her aspiring mind ("Though meane her lot, yet higher did her mind ascend" VI. 9.10), indicating the tradition of pastoral as preliminary to epic or heroic poetry. These aspirations culminate in her accepting Calidore after the episode of the tiger, where rustic is identified with unheroic behavior through the pun on Coridon's "cowherd feare" (VI. 10.35). Thus a heroic act liberates the mind from simple nature and eventually returns it to the complex world beyond. After Pastorella's departure and the death of Meliboeë, only Coridon remains—mere rusticity, boorish¹⁷ and low-spirited, the residue of the pastoral moment.

In terms of the pastoral genre, then, Calidore is the initiate and Pastorella his means of enlightenment. Aside from Colin, whom I shall discuss in another context, and the boor Coridon, Spenser's other stock Arcadian figure is the sage, Meliboeë. The sage is not so much a character as a spokesman for nature. Virgil's sage, Silenus in the sixth eclogue, explains the human condition in relation to the cosmos and its origin.¹⁸ In *Daphnis and Chloe* his counterpart is old Philates (II. 5), who gives the young couple the philosophical grounding needed before their love can be intelligently consummated. Meliboeë's pastoral retirement is permanent (VI. 9.24-25) rather than momentary because he is a sage, not an initiate or protagonist; he also typifies the idealized retirement of old age following an active life. As the voice of natural wisdom he teaches that the hero (in Spenser this means the soul in pursuit of virtue) cannot permanently change his lot for the shepherd's (VI. 9.27); rather, the soul must acquire the inner sufficiency that characterizes Meliboeë's own frugal life:

. . . each hath his fortune in his brest.
It is the mynd, that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poore: . . .
For wisdome is most riches; fooles therefore
They are, which fortunes doe by vowes devize,
Sith each unto himselfe his life may fortunize. (VI. 9.28-29)

Calidore's wish to "rest my barcke" (VI. 9.31) recapitulates the traditional argument for retreat upon which the pastoral experience is based.

This dialogue suggests the most notable limitation of pastoral as a vision

of life, its exclusive focus upon the private self. There is truth in Poggioli's observation, "The pastoral concern with private life, and with its two external manifestations, which are love and friendship, means that bucolic poetry is largely indifferent to the lot of man in collective terms" (p. 170). In themselves, however, most literary forms fall short of the whole truth about man; what is more, the Renaissance viewed pastoral as preliminary to, not exclusive of, the poetry of "collective man." In both *As You Like It* and *The Tempest* social injustice has made life at court impossible for virtuous men. Caliban and the rustics in the Forest of Arden, the artless boors of the pastoral enclave, show the inadequacy of the island or forest as anything more than a place to bide time until justice can work its ways.

It is not quite true that "pastoral poetry finally died and disappeared from sight" (Poggioli, p. 176); indeed, one of the objects of the essays in this volume is to discuss its modes of survival. John Lynen has shown how much of Robert Frost's poetry is rooted in the pastoral¹⁹; and if we understand "poetry" in a wider sense pastoral flourishes in modern fiction. In the novel during our century the pastoral moment serves as a means to reenter and reorder the world. Increasingly, however, we find the phases of flight, initiation, departure, and return modulated by the ironies that attend the unprecedented complexities of modern life. In Huxley's *Island*, Arcadia is dispersed by force of arms, but the interlude on Pala has affected the world-weary Farnaby much as the Pastorella episode influences Calidore. Having achieved "luminous bliss" he remains unscathed by the oil-hungry barbarians ravaging the garden.

Tormented by feelings of guilt over his wife's death, numbed by the torpid sexuality of his relationship with Babs, Will Farnaby stumbles into an Edenic island off the Southeast Asian coast. Here he is initiated into the truths of love and death by a sage, Doctor Robert MacPhail, and by the writings of an earlier sage, the Old Raja, who had completed his *Notes on What's What* before his death in 1938. *Libertas* in this most Huxleyan pastoral means "liberation from bondage to the ego," achieved through a drug called *moksha* and through education of the "Mind-body." The aim of educating the whole person suggests the most Arcadian quality of Pala, its purpose being to restore a natural perspective on human life to the unnatural twentieth century: *coitus reservatus* instead of artificial birth control, practical experience in sexual love for the young (we are told that Hitler's war

came about in part because "Adolf was sexually backward"), and "thanatology," the study that can remove all horror from "the Essential Horror." In other words the technology of Pala, unlike that of most Utopias, is conspicuously "natural." *Island* thus occupies a point (as perhaps does William Morris's *News from Nowhere*) where pastoral and utopian intersect; and with the recent changes in our society's perspective on technology and nature, we can probably expect more of this hybrid genre in years to come.²⁰

Neville Shute, like Huxley a transplanted Englishman, seems to have gone on his own pastoral excursion to Australia in search of values that post-war England had lost. His uneasiness with European civilization had already been demonstrated in his wartime *Pastoral*, a novel about night-bombing in the R.A.F. The pilot-hero Marshall alternates between afternoons of trout-fishing in the English countryside and nightmare ventures over Europe. The sage is the owner of the trout pond, Mrs. Carter-Hayes, an aged and bereft war mother who embodies everything that was good in the traditional English gentry. Through his fishing experiences Marshall comes to know and eventually marry his rural Yorkshire shepherdess, Section Officer Gervase Robertson. The quest for a simpler life is in fact a recurrent motif in Shute's fiction. After the horrors of Japanese occupation the lovers in *A Town Like Alice* find it in the Australian out-back. Readers and viewers of Shute's *On the Beach* may recall the pastoral interlude in the Australian bush, but may not remember the large Victorian building in Melbourne called The Pastoral Club (a real place, incidentally). The post-humously published *Trustee from the Toolroom* describes the Pacific voyage of a timid London machine designer with a noble savage, in quest of a family treasure.

At least since Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*, a more ironic perspective on the pastoral experience has characterized American fiction, perhaps because of the increased possibility of retreats and withdrawals in the new world. The earlier chapters of Ellison's *Invisible Man* depict a sham Arcadia in the Negro college—a refuge from white bigotry, presided over by a false sage who offers no *libertas*, only the *otium* of obsequiousness. In a pastoral moment within this pastoral moment, the unnamed narrator escorts an idealistic white knight from New England into the woods. What the aptly named Mister Emerson discovers is that the happy darkies in the woods (the poor farmer and his family) are neither simple nor happy: the shepherd's cottage conceals a terrifying truth about human nature. Emerson's

harrowing flight from the green world precedes and precipitates the narrator's exile from Arcadia; the young ex-student will look back on this banishment as revealing the supreme illusion of his college life in an institution shaped and sustained by the very powers that would deprive him of his freedom. The pastoral virtues—patience, humility, nonchalance—are the self-imposed restraints that have kept his race enslaved. His entry into the active life of the Brotherhood marks the shift to the post-pastoral, “heroic” pole of the narrative. In the last phase of the novel, though, he sets out on a new life that couples action with wisdom. His “going underground” may simply be the discovery of self that completes a legitimate pastoral withdrawal, in contrast to the fruitless retreat of his college days. His closing thoughts echo the Virgilian theme of momentary peace and sufficiency in an ocean of mindless strife: “the mind that has conceived a plan of living must never lose sight of the chaos against which that pattern was conceived.” We recall the closing image of Virgil's first eclogue, smoking cottage chimneys against a background of encroaching mountain shadows.

Yet another sham Arcadia is the rich man's upper-Michigan retreat, the Centennial Club, of Thomas McGuane's first novel *The Sporting Club*. On the opening page, a guidebook reports that the club was founded by lumber barons in 1868, “while the big timber was being converted to pioneer houses on the treeless prairies of the West.” The membership, with its cliquish parvenu mores, epitomizes the hollowness of the “outdoorsman” who withdraws from the city in order to continue doing as he did in the city. The club, one of whose members is a historian named Spengler, assumes increasingly larger dimensions as a mirror of a freaky society of joyless patriots, playgirls with false teeth, rednecks copulating on motorcycles. There seem to be two initiates, although Quinn the narrator, “the calculator,” a businessman and a survivor, may actually be the serpent in disguise. Stanton, his lifelong friend, is an eccentric aristocrat with, at his best, a certain simplicity about him, “an ability to walk in the middle.” But the center cannot hold, and the absurdist hero Stanton's wits have already begun crumbling before the novel begins. In the apocalyptic climax of the novel, as harrowing as that in *Island*, but without the comforts, Stanton presides over the destruction of the club during a wild night of manhunts, duelling, rocketry, and machine-gun fire. It is not clear just what he—let alone Quinn—learns from all of this, though we may take heart in the end when the club property is purchased by Stanton, who under the watchful

eyes of his keepers sets about to put it together again. This time, perhaps, it will not be a sham.

A natural complement of the sham Arcadia is the sham initiation, in which the protagonist cannot even tolerate the simple, let alone understand it. Sinclair Lewis has Babbitt attempt a retreat to the Maine woods, the one place where the uneasy "realtor" had found something like happiness during his fleeting vacation with Paul earlier in the novel. Nearing Maine, Babbitt undergoes a primitivist fantasy, a wish not merely to enter the woods for a moment but to live there forever—to become "a grim and wordless cave-man" (recall Alice's wish to live in the woods where there are no names). But the retreat is frustrating. Joe Paradise (like McGuane's Earl Olive, a boor pretending to be a sage) prefers motorboats to hiking, is as poorly conditioned as Babbitt, does not know the names of the flora, and provides no wisdom for the would-be initiate. Finally it is Babbitt's utter conformism, his impatience with self and nature, that drives him out of the woods. Alone on a stump during the first night's camping, he can only see himself as a misplaced Zenithite: "Gee, I can't seem to get away from thinking about folks." The thought impels him homeward at once, a journey in which "there was no appearance of flight, but he was fleeing." Babbitt runs not so much from himself as from the unpalatable pastoral fare—*otium, libertas*, simplicity, solitude. Unlike other protagonists I have mentioned, he will never acquire that inner paradise that comes only after the external one is left behind. He never reaches this stage, for if anything paradise rejects Babbitt.

The sequence of flight, initiation in nature, abandonment, and return to the world closely resembles what Northrop Frye calls fourth-phase comedy, Shakespeare's "drama of the green world," which "begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into the green world, goes into a metamorphosis there in which comic resolution is achieved, and returns to the normal world."²¹ Of course the comic vision of man is characteristically social, and pastoral often depicts the self in a pre- or extra-societal world ("The Garden," for example, or Virgil's second eclogue). However, it is instructive to look at pastoral as tending toward comedy rather than romance, which is perhaps the more familiar viewpoint. Harold Toliver would insist upon a distinction between the patterns of Shakespearean comedy and Spenser's pastoral "romance" of Calidore. Although Arcadia offers Calidore "more than vegetable comfort," he says, "he is sooner or later expected to

return to a courtly society that has not changed as he has: the two realms, roughly romance and pastoral, inevitably separate. In contrast, in Shakespeare's pastoral comedies, the journey is not an individual, or 'heroic' education but a group exile that transports an entire society into the forest where it undergoes therapy." Yet are these not variations on the same tune? The distinction between individual and group need not be especially significant: either can undergo what Frye calls a metamorphosis. This change is not a matter of education *or* therapy in exile, but education *and* therapy, for both individual (Calidore) and group (Rosalind, Duke Senior, etc.) *in* exile. Toliver continues: the group's "return is to a new integration of its components after exposure to the depths of imagination, primitiveness, or moonlit changes of identity" (p. 113). Both Toliver's "new integration" and Frye's "metamorphosis" can describe Pastorella's return to her parents, an allegory of the protagonist's reintegration before renewing the quest. Pastoral, then, as a literary mode approximating that of the "green world" comedies, displaces the quest-determined romance in Book VI of *The Faerie Queen*, much as the divine comedy of Celia and Contemplation interrupt the Red Cross Knight's quest in Book One. It would accordingly make sense to call works like *Daphnis and Chloe*, Sidney's *Arcadia*, or *Typee* comedy rather than romance, although given the traditional labelling even the most persuasive taxonomist is unlikely to prevail.

I have been describing the pastoral initiate as the activist, the heroic mind in pursuit of virtue or social justice who must temporarily give up his search. A different but analogous case is the artist, who must also retreat into an Arcadia for leisure and solitude. It was to underline the resemblance of the artist's to the hero's situation, and yet maintain their distinction, that Spenser included the account of Colin and the Graces in his pastoral episode.²² The *locus amoenus* described at the outset (VI. 10.5-9) conflates the classical Mount Acidale with the fairy ring of English and Irish folklore; it is a retreat within a retreat. To adorn this place, nature has pillaged all her other works (VI. 10.5), and the "disdain" of the trees for the earth (VI. 10.6), coupled with the references to eternal spring, suggests an idealized nature contrasting with the world of mere rustics. It is the special world of the poet's imagination, what Sidney calls the zodiac of the poet's wit, which he sees as in, but not of, nature. The "soring hauke" is a Platonic image of the wings that carry the soul to God (compare the ascent in "Hymne of

Heavenly Beautie," ll. 22-63). The pure stream (VI. 10.11), a conventional symbol for inspiration by the divine mind uncontaminated by profane experience, is guarded by the spirits who transmit inspiration, "Nymphes and Faeries" (again a yoking of both classical and native culture).

Drawn on by Colin's piping, Calidore hears "many feete fast thumping th'hollow ground, / That through the woods their Eccho did rebound." This important detail looks back to the echo of Spenser's *Epithalamion*, which signifies that the creative act—whether of poetry or marriage and parenthood—resonates in the natural, social, and supernatural spheres of human existence. This image implies such correspondences between levels of being as that (VI. 10.13) between the macrocosmic constellation of Ariadne, the earthly beauty represented in the "goodly band," and the rustic dance of VI. 9.8.²³

Colin's landscape may originate in Boccaccio's *De genealogia deorum gentilium*, the chapter headed "Poets prefer lonely haunts as favorable to contemplation" (XIV. 11). In the forest, says Boccaccio,

the beeches stretch themselves, with other trees, toward heaven; there they spread a thick shade with their fresh green foliage; there the earth is covered with grass and dotted with flowers of a thousand colors; there, too, are clear fountains and argent brooks that fall with a gentle murmur from the mountain's breast. There are gay song-birds, and the boughs are stirred to a soft sound by the wind, and playful little animals; and there the flock and herds, the shepherd's cottage or the little hut untroubled with domestic cares; and all is filled with peace and quiet. Then, as these pleasures possess both eye and ear, they soothe the soul; then they collect the scattered energies of the mind, and renew the power of the poet's genius, if it be weary, prompting it, as it were, to long for expression of high themes, and yearn for expression—impulses wonderfully reinforced by the gentle society of books, and the melodious bands of the Muses moving in stately dance. In the light of all this what studious man would not prefer remote places to the city?²⁴

This is like the active man's withdrawal in that the active man also seeks out the pleasures of the creative imagination, though as observer, not as creator. The Muses show themselves only to those whom they choose (VI. 10.20). Even heroes cannot will themselves to become poets; at best they

can only be good readers (VI. 10.30). The experience with Colin moves Calidore not to further contemplation but to an increased love for Pastorella, as his consequent restlessness indicates (VI. 10.31). Thus poetry bridges the transition between initiation and the return to the world and the quest.

The self-contained atmosphere of Colin's *locus amoenus* signifies Colin's detachment from Calidore's ethical and political concerns. It is a peculiarly pastoral thing to say that a poem can exist without regard to public ends. A few years before Spenser's work another pastoral, Battista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, had ushered in a heated controversy over the value of pastoral poetry, its opponents contending that because it imitates country life it has nothing worthwhile for political man (the anticipation of Dr. Johnson and Poggioli is noteworthy). Guarini replied that poetry and politics have in fact two different ends:

What is the end of the latter? Happiness. And of the former? The plot. If then the end of moral and civil philosophy is none other than public or private happiness, what need does it have, in order to make men happy, of plots?

. . . The poetic action is in such wise different from the moral action that the one is real, the other imaginary; the one true, the other represented.²⁵

Of course neither Guarini nor Spenser followed the logically aestheticist consequences of such a position, but the view that poetry exists in a world apart from experience through its immediate perception of the divine Idea is a notion that helped liberate the poet from servitude to the priest and pedagogue.

For all his friendliness, Colin has little to do with Calidore or the community of shepherds—perhaps in the same way that Spenser was remote from the barbaric and bloody actions going on around him in Ireland. Philosophers since antiquity have enjoined us to follow nature, but in the final analysis that idea is faintly absurd. If peace and sufficiency are found in nature, so are drought and smallpox. Nature's ways are as dark and contradictory as those of art or society, however different may be the life that is offered us. For this reason the critical mind, pre-eminently the mind of the poet, always hesitates at the invitation to take the plunge. The effect of this reluctance in those pastoralists who rise above sentimentalism is an inevitable detachment, as the poet or initiate wears his city clothes under the simple

garb of man in nature. Schiller's domain of the mind, corresponding to the pastoralist's superior knowledge, must imply the confidence of the heart. If today we meet with ironic pastoralists like Thomas McGuane, it argues less for the passing of the myth of pastoral from our culture than for the depleted condition of both mind and heart in the present age.

NOTES

1. A traditional interpretation of "umbra" is Servius's "sub tutela Imp. Aug." (under the protection of Augustus): G. Thilo, ed., *Servii Grammatici . . . Commentarii* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), III, 5. My reading has been strongly influenced by P. L. Smith, "Lentus in umbra," *Phoenix* 19 (1965), 298-304, and Michael C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970).

2. John R. Cooper, *The Art of The Compleat Angler* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1968), p. 74, finds a similar pattern in pastoral: "withdrawal of urban characters from their own complex society into a pastoral setting, where they are temporarily integrated but from which they must return." "Having seen things more clearly by means of the pastoral excursion, the main characters return to their former life, enlightened and refreshed, better able to assume their accustomed roles." For other anticipations of my thesis of which I was unaware, see below, notes 8 and 19.

3. See Louis Martz, *The Paradise Within: Studies in Vaughan, Traherne, and Milton* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964).

4. *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1971), p. 42.

5. Friedrich Schiller, *Essays Aesthetical and Philosophical*, trans. anon. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1875), p. 318.

6. "The Oaten Flute," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 11 (1957), 147-184.

7. *Noa Noa*, trans. Jonathan Griffin (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1961), p. 23.

8. Eleanor Winsor Leach, *Virgil's Eclogues: Landscapes of Experience* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974), writes, "Whether it involves a genuine sojourn in nature or a mere cohabitation with illusions, the pastoral experience is always temporary" (p. 47). See also Eleanor Terry, intro., *Pastoral and Romance: Modern Essays in Criticism* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 2.

9. *Los libros de pastores en la literatura española: La órbita previa*, Biblioteca Románica Hispánica, estudios y ensayos, No. 213 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1974). I am indebted to Prof. George Peale for this reference.

10. "La poesía pastoril ha sido uno de los medios en que se ha intentado reconciliar las dos antigüedades, gentil y cristiana, en nuevas formas sincréticas. Si la obra pastoril fue cortesana, puede también hallarse en ella un germen de afán de justicia social, y se la encuentra en las formas de poesía humanitaria que está en la raíz del pensamiento de Rousseau" (pp. 51-52). "La literatura pastoril queda así considerada en su repercusión cultural, de suerte que se está muy lejos de aquella interpretación que la tenía por una forma de evasión irresponsable" (p. 52). As to the contemporaneity of pastoral, Lopez Estrada quotes with justifiable approval from the American scholar Elias Rivers: "The post-Hegelian concept of 'alienation' is directly relevant to the pastoral myth itself, with its constant implicit, and often explicit, attacks on commercialism, courtly hypocrisy and physical violence of contemporary society" ("Nature, Art, and Science in Spanish Poetry of the Renaissance," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 44 [1967], 264).

11. *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935; rpt. New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 275.

12. H. H. O. Chalk, "Eros and the Lesbian Pastorals of Longos," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 80 (1960), 32-51, sees the two lovers as initiates in the mysteries of Dionysos. My references are to the translation by Paul Turner (1956; rev. trans. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

13. Chalk, p. 49. Important images are the description of the painting in the woods (Prologue), the enclosed garden of Philetas (II. 3), and Lycæon's instructions on sexual love (III. 18).

14. See George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesy*, chap. 26, "The Maner of Rejoysinge at Mariages and Weddings."

15. Mia Gerhardt, *La Pastorale: Essai d'analyse littéraire* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1950), p. 119. On Tasso and pastoral see also Richard Cody, *Landscape of the Mind: Pastoralism and Platonic Theory in Tasso's Aminta and Shakespeare's Early Comedies* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969).

16. A. C. Hamilton, "The Argument of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*," *ELH* 23 (1956), 171-183 (p. 183).

17. The vice usually translated as "boorishness" in Aristotle's *Ethics*, II. 8, is *agroikos*, which also means "the rustic man."

18. This study of nature is also justified on the philosophical grounds of Epicureanism. Epicurus advised a disciple that the chief "objective in learning the science of the *meteōra*, of physical phenomena, as in all else, is the achievement of *ataraxia*, imperturbability and self-confidence" (T. G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1969], p. 66, adding: "The correlation between the study of astronomy and the enjoyment of a country life is, therefore, an Epicurean *topos* . . .").

19. *The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960). Herbert Lindenberger, "The Idyllic Moment: On Pastoral and Romanticism," *CE* 34 (1972), 335-351, sees pastoral less as a genre than as "a kind of island in time" that is found in Renaissance epic and Romantic narrative. The title of my essay was chosen before I knew of this work or of H. Daniel Peck, *A World by Itself: The Pastoral Moment in Cooper's Fiction* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977).

20. Cf. Northrop Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," in *The Stubborn Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 109-134: "The Arcadia of Renaissance pastoral . . . puts an emphasis on the integration of man with his physical environment. The Utopia is a city, and it expresses rather the human ascendancy over nature, the domination of the environment by abstract and conceptual mental patterns" (p. 126). On *Island*, see Robert C. Elliott, *The Shape of Utopia: Studies in a Literary Genre* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 137-153. Although he defines utopian fiction as a form of satire, Elliott also notes that, at its purest, utopian literature might aspire to the condition of idyll as defined by Schiller (p. 107).

21. *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 182.

22. In the terms of Patrick Cullen, the Colin story may be called Mantuanesque, as opposed to Arcadian, pastoral. *Spenser, Marvell, and Renaissance Pastoral* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970).

23. The pastoral poem as echo has precedent in Virgil's first eclogue (Meliboeus speaking): "Resonare doces Amaryllida silvas" ("You teach the woods to echo your songs of Amaryllis"). Servius interprets Amaryllis (l. 5) as allegorical for Rome (see Thilo edition, above, note 1, p. 5).

24. *Boccaccio on Poetry*, trans. C. G. Osgood (1930; rpt. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), pp. 56-57.

25. *Il Verato secondo* (1593), quoted in Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), II, 680-681; see also pp. 1074-1105. The dispute begins with Giason Denores' *Discorso* (1586) and continues into the next century with Orlando Pescetti's *Difesa del Pastor Fido* (1601). Guarini's attack on the stereotyping of country people (p. 1082) anticipates similar gestures by the Romantics and Hardy, as does his wish to see in them human nature "without paints and without . . . those feigned appearances which are the vices peculiar to the city."

26. On the required detachment in pastoral, see Rosenmeyer, pp. 15, 42, and 64.