# CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY

VOLUME LXVI, NUMBER 3

*July 1971*

## MAN IN A POETIC LANDSCAPE: HUMANIZATION OF NATURE IN VIRGIL'S *ECLOGUES*

ZOJA PAVLOVSKIS

THE purpose of this essay is to study Virgil's originality in his attitude toward nature, and specifically his humanization of nature in connection with his expectation of a coming Golden Age. We shall limit ourselves to the *Eclogues*, for in pastoral poetry man's natural background readily lends itself to so imaginative a treatment. There is something artificial, although attractive, about the pastoral landscape as well as the loves of the shepherds who live in it; it is not difficult for the poet to color such a landscape with his dreams and aspirations. Virgil's later poems differ in this respect from the *Eclogues*. In the *Georgics* nature must be faced as part of reality rather than as a dream world;[1] the aim of the *Georgics* is to speak about practical matters, and nature in these poems is the object of *labor*—a keynote of the *Georgics*—while in the *Aeneid* the forces of nature appear for the most part as anthropomorphic divinities, quite consistently with the demands of the epic tradition.

We shall, then, pay attention to the *Eclogues* only and, as we do so, shall examine the descriptions of nature that Virgil has borrowed from Theocritus,[2] in order to see how he has changed the setting of his borrowings and their emotional coloring.[3] Theocritus is foremost among

1. R. Poggioli, "The Oaten Flute," *HLB*, XI (1957), 152, says: "It is this triumph of the 'days' over the 'works,' rather than the mere replacement of a rural with a pastoral setting, that marks the difference between the bucolic and the georgic." Humanization of natural objects is frequent in the *Georgics* (1. 47–48, 2. 263, 3. 518 are only a few examples, picked at random). Yet the *Georgics* employ humanization in less fanciful ways than do the *Eclogues*. A treatment of the *Georgics* falls outside the scope of this essay.

2. It is not my intention to list all the instances in which Virgil imitates Theocritus. The lists of *loci similes* can be found elsewhere: principally in C. Hosius, *P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica cum auctoribus et imitatoribus* (Bonn, 1915), and in the additions to Hosius compiled by C. Weyman, "Similia zu Vergils Hirtengedichten," published in *WkP*, XXXIV (1917), 137–41, 209–14, 232–40, 865–75; XXXV (1918), 187–91, 211–16, 519–24; and subsequently in *WS*, XLII (1920–21), 169–73; XLIII (1922–23), 98–100; XLIV (1924–25), 114–17; XLV (1926–27), 122–26, 248–51; XLVI (1928), 101–2; XLVIII (1930), 212–17; XLIX (1931), 142–48. The somewhat earlier compilations made by G. A. Gebauer, *De poetarum graecorum bucolicorum inprimis Theocriti carminibus in eclogis a Vergilio expressis* (Leipzig, 1861), the same author's *Quatenus Vergilius in epithetis imitatus sit Theocritum, Gymnasium-Jahresbericht* (Zwickau, 1862–63), and P. Jahn, *Die Art der Abhängigkeit Vergils von Theokrit, Programme des Kölnischen Gymnasiums* (Berlin, 1897, 1898, 1899), also deserve to be mentioned here. These are important landmarks in the study of *loci similes*, although one can do without Jahn's comments on the presumed absurdity of some of Virgil's adaptations, while Gebauer is thorough but unimaginative. A somewhat more favorable attitude characterizes still another compilation, that of Lünzner [*sic;* no first name or initial given], *Ueber Personificationen in Vergils Gedichten, Programm des evangelischen Gymnasiums* (Gütersloh, 1876), esp. p. 4. E. Büttner, *Ueber das Verhältnis von Vergils Eklogen zu Theokrits Idyllen, Programm des Königlichen Gymnasiums* (Insterburg, 1873), also lists correspondences but for the most part does not evaluate the passages which he lists.

3. That Virgil has indeed changed the Theocritean pastoral into something different, but equally beautiful, has been recognized since antiquity. We read in Aulus Gellius 9. 9. 4: "Sicuti nuperrime aput mensam cum legerentur utraque simul Bucolica Theocriti et Vergilii, animadvertimus reliquisse Vergilium, quod Graecum quidem mire quam suave est, verti autem neque debuit neque potuit. sed enim, quod substituit

Virgil's models in the field of bucolic verse; Virgil himself implies his debt to the Greek poet.[4] Of course, we must not neglect the influence on Virgil of some other pastoral poets as well, notably the unknown authors of some idylls which in antiquity were ascribed to Theocritus and were probably known to Virgil under that name.[5]

Virgil does not use the word *natura* in the *Eclogues*, just as Theocritus never mentions φύσις. And yet the word *natura* had not been neglected by Latin poets; Lucretius, a great influence on Virgil, constantly speaks of *natura gubernans* or *natura creatrix*. Virgil, however, follows the Greek pastoral tradition in speaking of separate objects and phenomena of nature without drawing them together under one name. Since, therefore, one frequently cannot speak of nature in the *Eclogues* of Virgil or the *Idylls* of Theocritus without risking a misunderstanding, I shall on occasion use in my discussion the more cumbersome expressions, "natural objects" and "natural phenomena."

As a matter of fact, both Virgil and Theocritus are specific rather than general. This is one of the reasons why their poetry is effective. They speak of particular plants or animals: cassidony and chestnut, sheep and swans; sometimes of groups, such as flocks or flowers; but they do not deal in more general classifications, such as plants or animals. Apparently they do not choose to regard nature as a part of the world antithetic to man, and therefore never make the attempt to generalize under group names the various particular natural

---

pro eo, quod omiserat, non abest, quin iucundius lepidiusque sit." The classical scholars of the nineteenth century were, on the whole, unfavorable to Virgil. One example of this attitude will be sufficient: Conington in his famous edition of Virgil, (5th ed; London, 1898), p. 5, speaks of "numberless instances of close and indeed servile imitation" on Virgil's part. The present century has been more just to Virgil. At the beginning of it F. Leo, "Vergils erste und neunte Ekloge," *Herme s*, XXXVIII (1903), 18, observed that it is relatively unimportant to compare Virgilian and Theocritean passages without searching to discover the poetic intention that lies behind them and differs so much in the case of each poet. Another significant effort in this direction was that of G. Jachmann, "Die dichterische Technik in Vergils Bukolika," *Neue Jahrb.*, XXV (1922), 101–20, esp. 101. Jachmann pointed out that the compilation of parallels between Virgil and Theocritus can only be undertaken as preliminary preparation of material for interpretative studies. We have now come to recognize with the ancients the beauty peculiar to Virgil's *Eclogues* and residing in the poet's "eigene, fast lyrische Stimmung und Gefühl" (Schanz-Hosius, *Gesch. röm. Lit.*, II[4] [Munich, 1935], 47), "a degree of sensitivity and muted sorrow which we have come to regard as characteristically Virgilian" (R. D. Williams, *Virgil, G and R*, Suppl. I [1967], 8). General studies devoted to the love of nature in the ancient world do not pay much attention to the differences between Theocritus and Virgil, although A. Biese, *Die Entwicklung des Naturgefühls bei den Griechen und Römern*, II (Kiel, 1882), 54–60, does touch on this subject. He speaks of Virgil's inferiority to Theocritus but grants that no other Roman poet has so much "sympathetisches Naturgefühl" as does Virgil. He then briefly lists instances of friendly closeness between man and nature in the *Eclogues*.

4. *Ecl.* 4. 1, 6. 1, and 10. 1.

5. In the opinion of F. Klingner, *Virgil, Fondation Hardt, Entretiens* II (Geneva, 1953), 132, Virgil prefers to imitate Theocritus himself, the great master of the pastoral, rather than his weaker successors. Virgil's models are those poems which were either actually written by Theocritus or were in antiquity considered Theocritus' work. Yet Klingner thinks (p. 137) that Virgil's *Eclogues* resemble the late Greek bucolic in their failure to observe well the details of the real world. See, however, J. Hubaux, *Le Réalisme dans les Bucoliques de Virgile* (Liège, 1927). Hubaux's thesis is that Virgil's direct observation of nature was a very important factor in the creation of the *Eclogues*. Hubaux finds that even the language of the shepherds reflects the real idiom of spoken Latin (see also *Probi qui dicitur in Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica commentarius*, ed. G. Thilo in *Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica commentarii*, III [Leipzig, 1887], 327). Hubaux states (p. 137) that of the Theocritean poems Virgil imitated only the ones numbered 1–9 and 11. Similarly, L. E. Lord, "Vergil's Theocritus," *TAPA*, XLVII (1916), xxi, says: "... Vergil used only those *Idyls* usually numbered 1–11. Supposed imitations from later *Idyls* are similarities in commonplace ideas or else consist of material which came into the *Eclogues* and the later *Idyls* from *Idyls* 1–11." Jachmann, "L'Arcadia come paesaggio bucolico," *Maia*, N.S. V (1952), 161–74, thinks that it was the post-Theocritean bucolic poetry to which Virgil was indebted for the concept of Arcadia as the ideal country of shepherds. (See more on Arcadia below.) In "Die dichterische Technik," p. 103 (cf. n. 3), Jachmann points out that sentimentality was not foreign to Hellenistic Greek poetry but was absent from Theocritus. According to him, the pseudo-Theocritean *Idyll* 8 is full of sentimentality and is spiritually close to Virgil. On pastoral strains in Latin literature before Virgil, see H. Goelzer, "La poésie pastorale et Virgile," *AAM*, N.S. XXII (1931), 3–22, and A. Rostagni, *Virgilio Minore* (Rome, 1961), pp. 344–50, who discusses the possibility that Messalla Corvinus wrote pastoral poetry which influenced Virgil. According to Hubaux, *Les thèmes bucoliques dans la poésie latine*, *MAB*, *Classe des Lettres*, 2nd ser. XXIX, 1 (1930), 3–22, Virgil was the first Latin poet to write Theocritean pastoral but (23–34) the Latin epigram, influenced by Meleager, was important to the development of the pastoral. See also Jahn (n. 2), *Abhängigkeit* (1899), pp. 66–116.

objects that surround man. Thus far, Virgil and Theocritus are quite alike.

The new feature which Virgil introduced into the writing of the pastoral is an extensive use of humanization and pathetic fallacy.[6] On comparing him with Theocritus, the reader cannot help noting the frequency with which Virgil attributes human qualities and emotions to natural objects—not only to animals, but also to inanimate objects, such as plants and rocks. To illustrate this tendency, I shall quote passages from the two authors and analyze them to show the difference in approach.[7] The ways in which Virgil varies from Theocritus are for the most part subtle, but we know that the public for whom Virgil intended his poems knew Greek literature very well, and we can be certain that Virgil's readers delighted in recognizing

6. B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*[3] (Hamburg, 1955), pp. 371–400, views Arcadia as a never-never land of lovers and singers, invented by Virgil, whose pastoral scene is different from that of Theocritus in that he makes it pathetic and tragic. J. Bayet, "L'évolution de l'art de Virgile des origines aux Géorgiques," *RCC*, 1st ser. XXXI (1930), 380–84, believes that Virgil stood at the head of a literary circle called the Arcadians, who were instrumental in reviving the myth of Arcadian immigration into Italy. This renewed interest in the Arcadian forebears of the Romans was, according to Bayet, characteristic of the times; Julius Caesar gave evidence of it when he revived the cult of the Luperci. Bayet's theory found followers. L. Herrmann, "La topographie des Bucoliques virgiliennes," *Rev. Arch.*, 5th ser. XXXI (1932), 235–36, suggests that the Palatine, where Evander first settled with his Arcadians, *is* Virgil's Arcadia, and that Virgil expects the Golden Age to come from it. P. Grimal, *Les Jardins romains à la fin de la république et aux deux premiers siècles de l'empire* (Paris, 1943), pp. 404–10, follows Bayet in speaking of an Arcadian circle. He sees the idea of Arcadia expressed in the Roman gardens of the time and speaks of Epicurean influence on such expression. More recently Bayet's theory has been resurrected by J. Perret, *Virgile: L'homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris, 1952), pp. 32–36, and by M. Dolç, "Sobre la Arcadia de Virgilio," *EClás*, IV (1958), 242–66. Klingner, *Römische Geisteswelt*[1] (Wiesbaden, 1953), pp. 143, 161–65, 186–90, and *passim*, comments perceptively on the character of Virgil's Arcadia as a dreamland which was born of the universal destruction of the Civil Wars. Most writers on the *Eclogues* do not choose to center their attention on the humanization in the Virgilian pastoral. One of the few who detect Virgil's vision of "the spirit that pulsates in everything that is, and makes a harmony of man, tree, beast, and rock," is E. V. Rieu, who uses these words in the brief but perceptive introduction to his Penguin translation of the *Eclogues*, titled *Virgil, The Pastoral Poems* (Harmondsworth, 1949), pp. 14–15. Rieu goes on to say: "It is easy to dismiss these personifications and pathetic fallacies as the pretty conceits that a Roman poet took over from the teeming world of Greek fancy. But I think it would be wrong. It is at such points that Virgil adds significance to beauty, contacts reality most closely, and expresses his vision and his very self most clearly. It is here that he is most tender and most playful. He invites us to enjoy these touches, not as meretricious adornments, but because they are openings on an unseen and delightful world. The truth he saw is not only a solemn awe-compelling thing, but something that can pierce the trees and rocks with ecstasy, and also make a poet smile. It is an outlook on the world which more than one modern philosophy might not repudiate, even if it failed to recognize the idiom in which Virgil spoke." At p. 163 he says, "It is Virgil at his best to take the sheep's view of the beauty of the morning dew on the grass." T. J. Haarhoff, "Virgil's Garden of Flowers and His Philosophy of Nature," *G and R*, XXVII (1958), 67–82, offers some observations on Virgil's humanization of plants. F. Trisaglio, "Le bucoliche virgiliane come momento idillio-estetico," *RSC*, VIII (1960), 289–310, speaks of Virgil's tenderness and his subjective attitude toward nature not for its own sake but for the creation of a poetic atmosphere. He says: "Virgilio si abbandona alla natura ma se ne sente assolutamente distinto: intercorre un abisso tra un Virgilio ed un Pascoli . . . questi parla con la natura, Virgilio parla dinanzi alla natura; il primo sente nella natura un cuore che palpita con il suo, il secondo vi vede solo l'ambiente propizio per il suo squisito riposo" (p. 310). E. K. Rand, *The Magical Art of Virgil* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), is very conscious of pathetic fallacy in Virgil's art but distrusts the phrase "pathetic fallacy" and attempts to show that it is not applicable to Virgil, pp. 97, 146, and 165. In the present essay the phrase "pathetic fallacy" is used as a term neither of opprobrium nor of commendation. Ruskin, with whom it originated (*OED*, *s.v.* "pathetic"), gives the following definition of his concept, *Modern Painters*, III, 4, 12: "All violent feelings . . . produce . . . a falseness in . . . impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the 'Pathetic fallacy.'" I am using the phrase "pathetic fallacy" to apply to man's illusion that animals, plants, and other natural objects are capable of sharing his feelings, and the term "humanization" to mean that they behave like human beings. E. Paratore, *Virgilio*[3] (Florence, 1961), pp. 96, 121–27, and *passim*, is another critic who is conscious of Virgil's feeling of kinship to everything in nature. Paratore connects Virgil's humanization of nature with the Epicurean ideal of universal φιλία, which embraces nature and man. According to him, nature for Virgil is (p. 124): "trasfigurata dalle mistiche, universalistiche aspirazioni delle anime più sensibili, più assetate di giustizia e di eterno." In the process of transfiguring nature Virgil disregards the minute particulars of reality but achieves a higher reality instead. V. Pöschl, *Die Hirtendichtung Virgils* (Heidelberg, 1964), pp. 85–86, sees as one of the keynotes of the Virgilian pastoral the ideal of *humanitas*, which embraces all the creatures, animals as well as plants. Another keynote (pp. 55–56) is the presence in Virgil of "Gemüt," a soulful quality absent from Theocritus. Still another (*passim*) is the ever-recurring motif of the power of the singer over nature: the poet makes natural objects happy by his song and they show their appreciation by echoing his words (p. 40). In connection with this last motif, see also M. Desport, "L'écho de la nature et la poésie dans les Églogues de Virgile," *REA*, XLIII (1941), 270–81; the echo in the *Eclogues* is but a perceptible indication of harmony between the poet and nature.

7. There are in both authors some passages not very significant for the subject of this investigation, although these passages do give human attributes to natural objects. Quite

the ways in which their compatriot had purposely changed what his Greek predecessors had to offer. Virgil is original not only in imaginatively adapting the particulars of the Theocritean pastoral but even more so in creating a distinctly different picture of nature than does Theocritus. We shall turn to particulars first and give some thought to their cumulative effect later.

Poets have always drawn on natural phenomena to illustrate the appearance or the actions of human beings. Theocritus follows this tradition. Usually his comparisons are quite conventional, but they fit pleasingly into the pastoral scene. Flowers, birds, and fountains are charming in themselves but also add another dimension to what men do. Much of the charm of pastoral poetry lies in the impression we receive from it of human beings living in close connection with nature. Similes and metaphors involving natural objects are some of the means employed to create such an impression. Theocritus likes to compare the songs of his poet-shepherds to the sounds of nature:[8] "Sweeter, shepherd, falls thy song than yonder stream that tumbles plashing from the rocks" (1. 7–8); "thy singing outdoes the cicada" (1. 148). An envious poet, on the other hand, is like "a wasp buzzing against a cicada" (5. 28–29), like a jay contending with a nightingale or a hoopoe opposing a swan (5. 136–37).

Theocritus' rustic lovers also are likened to the things around them. A young man's beard is like the helichrysum (2. 78); various girls are like various flowers; a mower in love daydreams and is left behind his comrades like a sick sheep (10. 3–4); a nymph flees her admirers like a frightened sheep (11. 24), and a shepherdess like a swallow (14. 39); the shepherd Daphnis wastes away like melting snow (7. 76–77). Some of these comparisons must go back to prehistory and have a proverbial quality about them, as do the lines, "Cicada is dear to cicada, ant to ant, hawk to hawk; and to me the Muse and minstrelsy . . ."

---

frequent is the appearance on the pastoral scene of particular rivers, mountains, and constellations, such as Eurotas, Olympus, or Vesper. All these at the same time are both natural objects and divinities. When Virgil speaks of them as animate beings, he may think of them in either capacity. The dividing line between the two can be tenuous, as in the lines: "omnia quae Phoebō quondam meditante beatus / audiit Eurotas iussitque ediscere lauros" (6. 82–83). Virgil humanizes the river Eurotas by giving to it the ability to hear Phoebus and to teach the trees to sing. It is poetic license to call Eurotas *beatus*, a characteristic that should properly belong only to one who can be conscious of his beatitude. The use of the word here is a humanizing touch. (Ps.-Probus, p. 347, says: "Beatum [Eurotam] dixit ob potentatum Lāconum"; consequently, it must have been unusual for the word *beatus* to be thus employed. If it were usual, there would be no need for elucidation on the part of an ancient commentator.) Yet we may consider Eurotas not only a river but also a river god, who is quite capable of hearing and speaking and is *beatus* because of his godhead. The two meanings of Eurotas are difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish, and both may be equally important. Because of this difficulty of distinguishing between a god and a natural object, I shall for the most part omit such passages from my discussion, except when it is quite clear that the poet is speaking about a natural object, not about a god. (6. 82–83 is discussed in this essay for the sake of the human behavior not of Eurotas but of the trees.) One can also attach little significance to portents or predictions that natural objects produce for the benefit of the herdsmen, since we may assume some divine power behind each miracle; it is a god who makes natural objects behave in unusual ways when portents are involved. (Once, however, a prediction seems to proceed directly from a bird, with no apparent credit given for it to the gods: 9. 14–16.) In addresses to natural objects, humanization is also sometimes apparent rather than real. The *Eclogues* contain a great number of such addresses, ranging in significance from "partem aliquam, venti, divom referatis ad aures" (3. 73) to "atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater" (5. 23). In the first instance Galatea's lover speaks to the winds as creatures that can hear him and fulfill his plea by carrying her words to the ears of the gods. We assume that he expects the winds to understand him, but they are hardly divine. They are humanized. In 5. 23, on the contrary, we read about the mother of Daphnis, who reproaches the gods with the early death of her son. The stars here are divine powers influencing the destinies of men. They are inscrutable astrological agents, while the winds of 3. 73 seem to be addressed as man's equals on whose cooperation he can rely. Addresses to the powers of nature may almost always be at least tinged with pathetic fallacy but will be discussed here only when it is relatively clear that they are instances of humanization. On the occurrence of such addresses in Greek poetry, see G. Soutar, *Nature in Greek Poetry* (London, 1939), pp. 176–217.

8. The English versions of Theocritus are those of A. S. F. Gow in his edition of this poet (Cambridge, 1965). The word "shepherd" is often used loosely in the present essay and denotes the typical inhabitant of the pastoral world.

(9. 31–32);[9] or, "Milon might . . . persuade the very wolves to go mad at once" (4. 11). Theocritus does not mean that Milon has a sympathetic bond with the wolves and can persuade them to listen to his bidding. The expression "to persuade the wolf" and the notion that one ant likes another are commonplaces, popular sayings which Theocritus may have picked up from the country folk.

It is remarkable that most of such traditional comparisons, implicit or explicit, keep man as the focus of their attention, and even more remarkable that, when the picture may well be Theocritus' own invention, the human interest is still kept in the foreground, the natural objects are still subordinate to man. A lover says: "Would I might become yon buzzing bee, and come into thy cave through the ivy and the fern that hides thee" (3. 12–14). No direct comparison exists here between the speaker and the bee, but the lover envies the insect's size, which allows it to penetrate where man cannot. He does not wish to become a bee permanently, but only for the time that it would take him to enter his love's dwelling. Afterward, we suppose, he would wish for his human shape again. He hardly has a feeling of kinship for the animals. His words express not love of the bee's life but man's perpetual longing for wings, to get easily where his feet will not take him. Another countryman, who contrasts[10] the perpetually unsatisfied thirst of human beings with the blessedness of a frog, who always has enough to drink in hot weather (10. 52–53), is only jesting when he compares man and frog. So, probably, is the god Priapus when he says about a goatherd: ". . . he, when he sees the nannies at their sport, weeps that he was not born a goat" (1. 87–88). Even if the goatherd may wish for some of his animals' capacities, he does so only to further his own interests.[11] Never does Theocritus dwell on the animals longer than it takes to make his point.

His treatment of inanimate nature is also incidental. In the lines, "Lo, still is the sea, the breezes still; yet not still the torment in my breast . . ." (2. 38–39), the description of the sea and the wind pictures the feelings of the lovesick girl; but, strikingly beautiful as the words are, the sense of the passage would be still the same without this glimpse of the peaceful nocturnal landscape.[12]

In Theocritus, natural objects are natural objects, and no more. He attributes to them no human feelings other than those of love and strife, but these ever since Empedocles had been generally acknowledged as elemental powers governing the whole universe, not man alone. We are not surprised that even birds are capable of a feeling of emulation when they sing (5. 136–37);[13] but, in general, strife among the animals amounts only to ordinary fighting. Passages referring to love are even less frequent and refer only to a selfish appetitive attraction at work among the animals, and to the animals' desire for food. "Goat follows after the moon-clover, wolf after goat, crane after plough, and I for thee am mad" (10. 30–31), says a shepherd. We know well that the wolf feels no tenderness for the goat, only a desire to devour it and satisfy his hunger. When the poet compares a man in love

9. Hes. *Works* 25–26 comes to mind. Such sayings are probably not much younger than mankind.

10. Contrast is a kind of negative comparison. It occurs several times in both Theocritus and Virgil.

11. This is a delicate problem. In all likelihood, he wishes to use the animals' capacities as a man, not as a goat. If not, this is probably the only instance in the *Idylls* of Theocritus of any degree of empathy felt by men for animals.

12. See H. J. Rose, *The Eclogues of Virgil* (Berkeley, 1942), pp. 32–33, on this passage as an instance of "inverted pathetic fallacy" and on Virgil's imitation of it in *Eclogue* 2.

13. By saying, as in this passage, that natural objects are under some circumstances incapable of some human action, a poet implies that they can be capable of it under different conditions.

to these animals, he puts him on their level but does not humanize the goat and the wolf and the stork. Only once does Theocritus make animals delight in what they love, without trying to satisfy an appetite, but this delight is an instinct common to almost all creatures: they long for the warmth of the sun. The love of a countryman for a girl is like this love of the goats for springtime: ". . . he, poor soul, loves Myrto as dearly as goats love the spring" (7. 97).

We see that while Theocritus frequently speaks of natural objects, he does not pay much attention to them for their own sake but uses them to illustrate the human situation. Nature stays in the background.

Virgil's *Eclogues* take us into an altogether different world. Poets are still compared to birds (9. 35–36) and the beloved to flowers (7. 37–38); goats still fight and are possessed by the same appetitive urge about which Theocritus spoke (10. 29–30),[14] but, more often than not, the Theocritean picture is changed in some very important respects. Let us examine a few instances of such change.

When a girl in love describes the passionate search of a heifer for a bull,[15] Virgil puts these words in her mouth:

talis amor Daphnim, qualis cum fessa iuvencum
per nemora atque altos quaerendo bucula lucos
propter aquae rivum viridi procumbit in ulva
perdita, nec serae meminit decedere nocti,
talis amor teneat, nec sit mihi cura mederi
[8. 86–90].

Virgil's lines are quite different from the Theocritean passage which he is imitating: "Coltsfoot is an Arcadian weed, and for it all the foals, all the swift mares run mad upon the hills. So may I see Delphis, and so like one maddened may he come to this house from the bright wrestling-school" (2. 48–51). Virgil chooses a specific illustration, a particular cow, and goes into detail describing her lovesick condition. Theocritus speaks only of the properties of a medicinal herb and its effect on animals: a statement of fact, without Virgil's implication that an animal can suffer from the pangs of love.[16]

Another line of Theocritus which Virgil imitates is 11. 43. The Cyclops has fallen in love with the nymph Galatea and is trying to persuade her to leave the ocean for the dry land and him. Polyphemus says: *τὰν γλαυκὰν δὲ θάλασσαν ἔα ποτὶ χέρσον ὀρεχθεῖν* (11. 43). The verb *ὀρεχθεῖν* may mean "struggle," "swell," but also "roar." It usually refers to animate beings and thus may be slightly figurative when applied to waves, although it does not humanize the waves. Most likely, Theocritus uses it for an onomatopoeic effect. Virgil also uses a verb meaning "strike," *ferire*, but in addition he uses an adjective that has distinctly human connotations: "huc ades; insani feriant sine litora fluctus" (9. 43). The lover seems to project his own emotions onto the insensible sea, for one thinks of madness in connection with men and their passions, not in connection with the sea.[17]

Elsewhere too, when Virgil compares the feelings of shepherds to a situation existing in the world of natural phenomena, he speaks of natural objects as if they were

14. Virgil introduces the inanimate *gramina*, while Theocritus (10. 30–31) speaks only of animals. In other respects these two passages are similar.

15. See Lucr. 2. 355–66, in which a cow is looking for her calf, a passage which Virgil is probably imitating. According to Rose, *Eclogues*, p. 251, n. 57, Virgil's *bucula* is also a mother cow that has lost her calf.

16. Jachmann (cf. n. 3), "Die dichterische Technik," p. 103, n. 3, sees in the Theocritean passage a completely worked out simile, in the Virgilian one a vagueness which, however, effectively establishes a mood exquisite in itself. In general, Jachmann contrasts "das ätherisch-abstrakte" in Virgil with "das anschaulich-konkrete" in Theocritus (p. 107).

17. LSJ, *s.v.* *ὀρεχθέω*. A. Cartault, *Étude sur les Bucoliques de Virgile* (Paris, 1897), p. 372, comments on this passage: ". . . il [Virgile] a rendu le vers plus vigoureux en substituant à l'épithète pittoresque '*γλαυκάν*' une épithète pathétique, 'insani.'" Cartault is here following the opinion of Gebauer (cf. n. 2), *Quatenus Vergilius*, p. 4. Servius also notes *insani*: "id est magni," which suggests that this usage of the word cannot have been ordinary.

able to experience apprehension: "hic tantum Boreae curamus frigora, quantum / aut numerum lupus aut torrentia flumina ripas" (7. 51–52). Since these lines emphasize that the wolf and the rivers are not afraid, we may infer that they have the capacity for feeling fear. Even if we grant that wolves may be frightened, it is poetic license to say the same about streams. Besides, Virgil makes the wolf able to estimate numbers—it is unimportant whether these are the numbers of sheep or of pursuers.[18] Theocritus in similar passages uses parallels from human experience rather than from the world of nature: "And as much for summer when it scorches care I as a lover cares to heed his father's bidding or his mother's. . . . No heed at all give I to winter—no more than the toothless man to nuts when spongecake is by" (9. 12–13, 20–21).

It may be generally said that the occasions when Virgil compares man to natural objects are rare, but his comparisons of natural objects to man are very numerous. Here he strikingly differs from Theocritus, who seldom avails himself of such comparisons. What is more, on such occasions Virgil avoids similes. He prefers metaphors or words merely hinting at a resemblance between an animal or a plant on the one hand and a man on the other. Simile is an obvious means of comparison. By preferring the more subtle devices, Virgil succeeds in effectively humanizing natural objects. It is more surprising to hear that mountains and forests speak (5. 28), than that mountains and forests are *like* men who are speaking. Such words as "like" would make for more careful and matter-of-fact expressions, but they would destroy the illusion that nature is indeed alive.

The terms which Virgil employs in speaking of various natural objects are often the same as the terms he uses for men. Some words, such as verbs of motion, must necessarily be used in speaking of beasts as well as men. But when Virgil puts other, humanizing words in the immediate context, the verbs of motion also assume a humanizing function. Thus in the lines, "cogere donec oves stabulis numerumque referri / iussit et invito processit Vesper Olympo" (6. 85–86), the verb *processit* is not particularly significant by itself but becomes so because the evening star "orders" the shepherds to their task and because the mountain[19] is unwilling to see the star depart.

When one of Virgil's countrymen says to another: "formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas" (1. 5), the verb *resonare* means merely "echo," not an unusual word to describe the sounds of the forest.[20] But the word *doces* follows it, and we learn from other passages of the *Eclogues* that trees can indeed sing the praise of a man or learn songs from him: "te nostrae, Vare, myricae, / te nemus omne canet . . ." (6. 10–11). Or again: "omnia, quae Phoebo quondam meditante beatus / audiit Eurotas iussitque ediscere lauros, / ille canit—pulsae referunt ad sidera valles" (6. 82–84). In the light of such passages we see that the shepherd of *Eclogue* 1 takes it for granted that the forests can be taught. What is more, while man has a desire to share his feelings with the natural objects

18. G. Stégen, "Non curat numerum lupus (Buc. VII, 51–52)," *BACILg*, II (1954), 19–21, holds this passage to mean that, while a shepherd is careful to count his animals, a wolf has no such interest.

19. Conington, *ad loc.*, explains that Olympus here stands for heaven rather than the mountain. He has no comment on Vesper, which may be a divinity or a natural object. Since no divine functions of Vesper are prominent in this passage, it may be best to regard it as a natural object.

20. Cartault (cf. n. 17), *Les Bucoliques*, p. 325, n. 1: "On a supposé récemment que Tityre enseignait à Amaryllis à jouer de la flûte, ce qui aurait l'avantage qu'au v. 36 sq. . . . mais on n'a pas d'exemple de 'doces Amaryllida resonare silvas.' En outre, ce qui serait à sa place chez un contemporain du peintre Boucher ne l'est pas chez Théocrite et chez Virgile, où l'on ne voit jamais une bergère jouant de la flûte."

surrounding him, Virgil gives the trees and the streams an ability to speak and express human feelings toward their human friends: "ipsae te, Tityre, pinus, / ipsi te fontes, ipsa haec arbusta vocabant" (1. 38–39).[21] A hedge does not speak directly to Tityrus, but it too has the power of persuasion: "saepes / Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti / saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro" (1. 53–55).[22]

We must grant that Theocritus also occasionally refers to the sounds of nature in seemingly human terms. He speaks of the whisper (ψιθύρισμα, 1. 1) of the pine and makes the cock's crowing at dawn deliver up (διδοίη, 7. 124) a lover to numbness, as if the cock were crowing on purpose, to spite the wretched man who has been kept out of doors all night by his unsatisfied passion. But such instances of humanization are rare and fairly conventional: the whispering of trees is not an unusual metaphor in Greek, and the verb δίδωμι is used in a great variety of idiomatic expressions.[23] Such passages do not strike the reader as special efforts on the part of the poet to make the tree or the bird like men.[24]

Although Theocritus only once mentions the whisper of the pine, Virgil's woods and mountains raise their voices and shout in exultation, while his streams listen to rustic singing matches, and the wild beasts and the oaks dance to the measure:

pastorum Musam Damonis et Alphesiboei,
inmemor herbarum quos est mirata iuvenca
certantes, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces,
et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus,
Damonis Musam dicemus et Alphesiboei
[8. 1–5].[25]

ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera iactant
intonsi montes; ipsae iam carmina rupes,
ipsa sonant arbusta: "deus, deus ille, Menalca"
[5. 62–64].[26]

. . . incipit ipse.
tum vero in numerum Faunosque ferasque videres
ludere, tum rigidas motare cacumina quercus:
nec tantum Phoebo gaudet Parnasia rupes,
nec tantum Rhodope miratur et Ismarus Orphea
[6. 26–30].[27]

21. Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, p. 348: "Dans Théocrite [4.12] il s'agit d'un troupeau de vaches qui regrettent leur maitre absent: le regret de la nature inanimée pour Tityre est une simple hyperbole poétique. Le passage qui se rapprocherait le plus . . . est peut-être . . . Bion I 31 sq . . ." Conington, *ad loc.*, observes: ". . . there is a playfulness in the passage, which Virg. doubtless meant as a piece of rustic banter . . . that all nature sympathized . . . [is] an image which would be too great for the present occasion." As elsewhere, so here Conington misunderstands Virgil's poetic intention.

22. Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, p. 332: "'Hyblaeis,' v. 54, est une épithète géographique d'excellence . . ."

23. LSJ, *s.v.* ψιθύρισμα.

24. Sometimes Virgil's touch is exceedingly subtle. A mere reversal of the position of the subject and the objects in a sentence can result in a strikingly different view of things. Thus Theocritus' Thyrsis asks the nymphs where they were at the death of Daphnis and puts his inquiry in the form of a straightforward question:

πᾷ ποκ' ἄρ' ἦσθ', ὅκα Δάφνις ἐτάκετο, πᾷ ποκα, Νύμφαι;
ἢ κατὰ Πηνειῶ καλὰ τέμπεα, ἢ κατὰ Πίνδω;
οὐ γὰρ δὴ ποταμοῖο μέγαν ῥόον εἴχετ' Ἀνάπω,
οὐδ' Αἴτνας σκοπιάν, οὐδ' Ἄκιδος ἱερὸν ὕδωρ [1. 66–69].

The nymphs are the subject of these sentences and the reader's attention is devoted to them. Virgil introduces a similar question in a similar situation:

quae nemora aut qui vos saltus habuere, puellae
Naides, indigno cum Gallus amore peribat?
nam neque Parnasi vobis iuga, nam neque Pindi
ulla moram fecere, neque Aonie Aganippe [10. 9–12].

The stress has shifted to objects of nature, *nemora* and *saltus*. They are now the grammatical subjects of the sentence, the agents that—can it be consciously?—detain the nymphs. In Theocritus the nymphs ἔχουσι the natural objects, in Virgil these *habent* the nymphs. Gow says on these lines of Theocritus that Virgil ". . . either misses T.'s point . . . or makes the different one that the Dryads were away from their posts of duty like the Homeric gods when they visit the Ethiopians . . . and were therefore out of touch with human affairs." Such statements are typical of Gow's conviction that Virgil, because he achieves an effect different from Theocritus', is therefore the inferior poet. See Gow on Theocr. 1. 136, where he speaks of Virgil's presumed superficiality.

25. Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, p. 288: "Virgile réunit donc ici les deux conceptions de la nature, qui alternent dans les Bucoliques, la nature vraie et la nature fantastique, qui, bien que fort différentes, paraissent lui plaire également." On p. 289, Cartault expresses the opinion that in 8. 1–5 it is the magical power of poetry that influences nature. See also Pöschl, *Hirtendichtung*, p. 15.

26. Servius thinks it necessary to explain *intonsi* as *silvosi, incaedui*; we may assume, then, that Virgil's use of this word here is a rather bold metaphor. Conington, *ad loc.*, says: ". . . it is possible that we may be meant to conceive of them [the mountains] as exulting in their shaggy strength now that a state of nature is restored, as in Isaiah XIV 7, 8 . . ." but also observes: "Virg. means to attribute the joy to the mountains themselves, as in X 15 they are made to weep; but there may be a secondary reference to the actual mourners."

27. In this passage the singer is Silenus, who obviously possesses supernatural powers not at the command of an ordinary shepherd, but shepherds elsewhere in the *Eclogues*

Nowhere in the *Idylls* do natural objects pay so much attention to what happens among men. In the *Eclogues* nature does not merely provide sustenance—she is a friend. Natural objects rejoice with man; they are sad when he leaves them and joyful at his return:

stant et iuniperi et castaneae hirsutae;
strata iacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore
poma;
omnia nunc rident; at si formosus Alexis
montibus his abeat, videas et flumina sicca.
aret ager; vitio moriens sitit aeris herba;
Liber pampineas invidit collibus umbras;
Phyllidis adventu nostrae nemus omne virebit,
Iuppiter et laeto descendet plurimus imbri
[7. 53–60].[28]

In Theocritus' poems the cows make only such sounds as one may expect to hear from them. In the *Eclogues* objects that are always silent raise their voices. While Theocritus' cows low but do not actually call their master,[29] the fountains and the trees in Virgil's landscape are calling Tityrus to come: "ipsae te, Tityre, pinus, / ipsi te fontes, ipsa haec arbusta vocabant" (1. 38–39). Here we have not cattle but pines and fountains, senseless things. Yet in their relation to man they behave like living beings.

If we return to the first line of *Eclogue* 1 (a significant line, of course, since it establishes the setting for the whole book), we find Tityrus reclining *sub tegmine fagi*. *Tegmen* is not the usual word for "shade." The verb *tego*, from which the noun *tegmen* is derived, sometimes has connotations of protecting, not only covering.[30] A simpler way of expressing the same thought might be, "Tityrus is lying in the shade of a tree." Theocritus might have said only that and yet, in the economic way of Greek poetry, still have conveyed a picture of rustic indolence on a hot summer day. Virgil's wording, however, seems to suggest that the shepherd Tityrus has spent much of his life near the tree whose shade he is now enjoying; presumably he has for a long time been caring for this tree. The word *tegmen* implies that the tree, in its turn, protects its master from heat.[31] Only an implication this, and a subtle one; yet it may very well have been intended by

---

enjoy an equally impressive rapport with nature. Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, p. 265, observes the fine antithesis between the words *rigidas* and *motare*.

28. Theocritus' herdsmen almost never address inanimate things. In *Idyll* 8, which was not written by Theocritus, although known to Virgil under that name, the shepherds Daphnis and Menalcas do, indeed, speak to the streams and forests and ask them to listen to their singing match, and they mention the blossoming of the fields when Milo and Nais, their loves, come by (8. 41–48). Menalcas also addresses the wolf, appeals to his sense of decency, and asks him to spare the flock (63–64). Still, such passages are not typical of Greek pastoral, and the humanization which we detect in them is not so extensive as Virgil's. Let us compare some of the lines in the Greek and in the Latin passages:

ἔνθ' ὄϊς, ἔνθ' αἶγες διδυματόκοι, ἔνθα μέλισσαι
σμήνεα πληροῦσιν, καὶ δρύες ὑψίτεραι,
ἔνθ' ὁ καλὸς Μίλων βαίνει ποσίν· αἱ δ' ἂν ἀφέρπῃ,
χὠ ποιμὴν ἥρως τηνόθι καὶ βοτάναι [8. 45–47,44].

stant et iuniperi et castaneae hirsutae;
strata iacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma;
omnia nunc rident; at si formosus Alexis
montibus his abeat, videas et flumina sicca [7. 53–56].

We note that Virgil's plants laugh—a purely human reaction—while those of *Idyll* 8 thrive under the good influence of the herdsman's beloved but display no human characteristics. (Gow and some other editors change the order of lines 8. 44–47 as they appear in the MSS. Gow's order is: 45, 46, 47, 44. I am quoting these lines in his arrangement.)

29. It is true that they want him to come, 4. 12, but this is the longing of a domestic animal for the person who takes care of it.

30. Forcellini, *s.v. tego*.

31. Elsewhere too Virgil humanizes trees by putting carefully chosen words in the context. When he says, "aurea durae / mala ferant quercus" (8. 53–54), the word *durae* means primarily that the texture of the trees is hard. But Virgil frequently uses this word in a different meaning, "unyielding," "stern," "heartless." (To choose examples from the *Eclogues* only, see 10. 44 and 47.) He is conscious of the long association which words like *durus* have had with human actions and emotions. Here the word *durae* gives a human touch to the picture. Apple wood is hard also, yet here we learn that it is the hard oaks, not the hard apple trees, that bear fruit; and the word attracts even more attention because it stands last in a line. Virgil's purpose is to show how strange it is for grim oaks to bear apples, and golden ones at that. In another poem he says that song can make trees move: "videres / . . . rigidas motare cacumina quercus" (6. 27–28); "ille solebat / cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos" (6. 70–71). It may seem quite natural that Virgil calls trees rigid. Yet the word *rigidus* is superfluous in a description of trees, since they can never move from the spot where they grow and thus are always rigid. Why then did Virgil use this

the poet, for we learn from another Eclogue that trees and fountains can be expected to protect the flocks. The goatherd Corydon says: "muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba, / et quae vos rara viridis tegit arbutus umbra, / solstitium pecori defendite . . ." (7. 45–47).[32] In still another passage man comes to trees for consolation in his grief: "tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos / adsidue veniebat—ibi haec incondita solus / montibus et silvis studio iactabat inani" (2. 3–5).[33] As Corydon seeks solace among the mountains and the trees, he resembles a romantic poet and is spiritually closer to Wordsworth than to one of Theocritus' countrymen.[34] Shepherds like Corydon teach the woods to sing the praises of their loves: "formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas" (1. 5). When in the final poem of the collection the author declares, "non canimus surdis, respondent omnia silvae" (10. 8), he expresses a sentiment present throughout the *Eclogues*: the woods are not deaf to man's song.

In the *Idylls* men almost never address inanimate nature, and even when they do their words have no humanizing connotations. When the shepherd Daphnis says, "Now violets bear, ye brambles, and, ye thorns, bear violets" (1. 132), his words strike the reader as a rhetorical device and not an actual address to the brambles. As a matter of fact, as Daphnis continues lamenting his own death, he keeps referring to natural objects in the third person: ". . . and let the fair narcissus bloom on the juniper. Let all be changed, and let the pine bear pears since Daphnis is dying. Let the stag worry the hounds, and from the mountains let the owls cry to nightingales" (1. 133–36). Daphnis considers his death unreasonable and cruel. Because he is dying, he does not care if other unnatural events happen around him, if everything in nature is reversed. He is thinking only about himself.

Virgil imitates this passage. Damon, a lover like Daphnis, after complaining about the unfaithfulness of his beloved, says:

> nunc et oves ultro fugiat lupus, aurea durae
> mala ferant quercus, narcisso floreat alnus,
> pinguia corticibus sudent electra myricae,
> certent et cycnis ululae, sit Tityrus Orpheus,
> Orpheus in silvis, inter delphinas Arion . . .
> omnia vel medium fiat mare. vivite, silvae:
> praeceps aerii specula de montis in undas
> deferar; extremum hoc munus morientis habeto
> [8. 53–57, 59–61].[35]

word? The trees find it difficult to follow the musician's call; they seem to make a half-hearted attempt to refuse it. In the end, however, they cannot help reacting to the power of song.

32. In ps.-Theocritus 8. 33–40, there is a similar address to rivers and valleys, springs and pastures, but from the start the tone is different. θεῖον γένος is the name Menalcas gives to the valleys and the rivers. The implication is that his words are directed at the divine powers inherent in the natural objects. It should also be noted that Menalcas asks them to feed his animals and make them fat. Virgil's Corydon shows more tenderness for his goats in asking the fountains, the grass, and the tree to keep the animals comfortable in the summer heat. See Haarhoff (n. 6), "Virgil's Garden," pp. 68–69, on Virgil's application of the epithets *mollis* and *tener* to plants.

33. The word *inani* may be argued to denote that the mountains and the forests pay no attenton to the lover and do not respond to him. It is relatively unimportant whether they do or not. For our purposes it is sufficient to see Corydon turning to nature for solace. He is not talking to himself in the solitude but addressing his complaint to the mountains and the forests, and he does this time and again (*adsidue*), perhaps finding some consolation in the opportunity for expressing his feelings. (*Studio inani* may also refer to his hopeless passion, rather than his complaint directed to natural objects.)

34. A. J. Raymer, "Virgil and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Romanticism," *G and R*, IX (1939), 13–25, and Rieu, *The Pastoral Poems*, pp. 15 and 130, discuss the similarities between Virgil on the one hand and Wordsworth and Housman on the other.

35. Gow, in commenting on Theocr. 1. 132–36, says: ". . . the figures are of a kind common especially in Latin poetry. Such reversals of nature as are there mentioned are predicted or prayed for in the event of something deemed impossible occurring." Conington observes that Virgil's lines here speak of changes characteristic of the Golden Age, while those of Theocritus involve only "a reversal of the order of nature." F. Klingner, *Virgil* (Zurich, 1967), pp. 28, 93–94, and 142, comments on the differences between these two passages and perceptively emphasizes the beauties of Virgil's version. (Part of his comments previously appeared as "Virgils erste Ekloge," *Hermes*, LXII [1927], 129–53.) Conington, *ad loc.*, discusses Elmsley's suggestion that the words πάντα δ' ἐναλλα γένοιτο (1. 134) were mistranslated by Virgil, who took ἐναλλα as if it were ἐνάλια. Rose, *Eclogues*, p. 249, n. 38, refutes this suggestion with some acerbity. B.

The words of Daphnis express, on the whole, nothing very different from those of Damon.[36] A new touch, however, is introduced in the words *vivite, silvae*, an unusual formula of leave-taking. Theocritus' shepherd, when he parts with his animals, uses χαίρετε, the normal word of farewell: ὦ λύκοι, ὦ θῶες, ὦ ἀν' ὤρεα φωλάδες ἄρκτοι, / χαίρεθ'· ὁ βουκόλος ὔμμιν ἐγὼ Δάφνις οὐκέτ' ἀν' ὕλαν . . . (1. 115–16). The dying lover Damon does not merely take leave of the forests; he wishes that they may continue even after he is dead.[37] His words, *munus morientis*, also point to his beneficent attitude, although it is difficult to determine exactly what he means by this phrase. Perhaps the vagueness is appropriate, for these are the last words of Damon before, as we assume, he kills himself.[38] Theocritus has none of this exaggerated tenderness toward nature, but with Virgil it becomes a standard feature of pastoral poetry.

Elsewhere Virgil introduces another curious reference to trees, again involving a sympathetic relationship between a human situation and the surrounding natural objects. Gallus, sick with love for Lycoris, says: "certum est in silvis, inter spelaea ferarum / malle pati tenerisque meos incidere amores / arboribus: crescent illae, crescetis, amores" (10. 52–54).[39] He despairs of ever gaining her affection again and is about to rush out into the woods to seek forgetfulness in the pleasures of hunting. Like Damon, who wished that the forests might live on after his death, Gallus also feels some pleasure in his pain when he thinks that the trees will grow together with his love, now that the seal of his affection, his carving, is on them.[40] A sympathetic bond is established between Gallus and the trees—pathetic fallacy at its most striking. Virgil seems to find this notion appealing, for at the end of this Eclogue he speaks of his own love for Gallus in similar terms, comparing it to a growing tree: "Gallo, cuius amor tantum mihi crescit in horas, / quantum vere novo viridis se subicit alnus" (10. 73–74).

Virgil implies that natural objects in their relation to one another also behave like human beings. We learn of something very much like moral responsibility on the part of the air when we read: "vitio moriens sitit aeris herba" (7. 57). By itself the word *moriens* might not be significant, for in Latin it is possible to speak of the death of plants.[41] Yet in conjunction with the verb *sitire*, the participle *moriens* becomes a humanizing device. *Sitire* can be used in speaking of plants,[42] but the combination of these two words, usually associated with animate beings rather than vegetation, impresses us as an instance of humanization. And while *vitium* can mean

---

Otis, *Virgil* (Oxford, 1964), p. 117, thinks that the woods in line 59 of Virgil's poem stand for the shepherd himself: "His woods, his Arcadian landscape can *now* indeed become sea: suicide by drowning is the final expression of the complete revolution in his soul and of his own immersion (the woods really stand for *himself*, for his rural way of life) in a wholly different element—water and death."

36. Except for the words κύνας ὤλαφος ἔλκοι, which contain a shade of cruelty absent from Virgil's passage.

37. Servius explains that *vivite silvae* means "valete: nam non bene optantis est, sed renuntiantis." Can his comment perhaps mean that some ancient readers may have understood these words in the sense which he rejects? The verb *vivere* seems to have been quite usual in formulas of leave-taking: see Hor. *Serm.* 2. 5. 110 and *Epist.* 1. 6. 67, where *vive* is joined with *vale*.

38. Rose, *Eclogues*, p. 153, thinks that *munus* is the last love-gift to Nysa, very much like the suicide's noose in ps.-Theocritus 23. 21, which also will supposedly delight the cruel beloved. This Greek parallel is mentioned also by Conington, who takes *munus* to refer either to the shepherd's song or to his death. Klingner, *Virgil*, p. 143, expresses a view similar to Rose's.

39. Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, p. 401, and Conington, *ad loc.*, discuss two possible interpretations of these verses: the literal (the carvings will grow with the trees) and the figurative (Gallus' love will grow with the trees).

40. Is Gallus perhaps thinking in terms of sympathetic magic? The growth of the trees may, then, make Lycoris' love for him grow.

41. For instance, see Cic. *De fin.* 5. 39.

42. *Sitire* can be used of plants; see Cic. *Or.* 24. 81.

any kind of fault, even a bodily defect or a crack in the wall,[43] in this case it seems to stand for the moral fault of which the dry air is guilty. The cumulative effect of all these words is extraordinary: the air appears to murder the grass.[44]

Another passage also reveals a strikingly sentimental attitude toward vegetation. Menalcas responds to some abuse he has heard from Damoetas by confessing ironically to a nasty deed: "me arbustum videre Miconis / atque mala vites incidere falce novellas" (3. 10–11). His point is that it is Damoetas who has been guilty of this crime. The words he uses express sentimental pity for the young shoots. The word *mala*, used to describe the knife wielded by the vicious shepherd, and the diminutive (and therefore quite possibly affectionate) word *novellas* referring to the vines, suggest the atrocity of wounding plants so tender.[45]

In yet another poem the waves are held responsible for the cruel fate of some fish: "freta destituent nudos in litore pisces" (1. 60). The word *destituent*[46] in conjunction with *nudos* suggests defenseless fish abandoned on the shore by waves which, we are led to suppose, could have chosen not to abandon them.[47]

After studying Virgil's humanization of inanimate nature, we may expect of him a sentimental attitude toward animals as well. We shall not be mistaken in such an expectation. Theocritus treats animals in a matter-of-fact way; Virgil, with affection.

One of the most charming passages in Theocritus' *Idylls* deals with a fox scheming to steal a little boy's lunch. She is crafty and determined: "[She] brings all her wit to bear upon his wallet, and vows she will not let the lad be until [she has raided his breakfast-bread]" (1. 49–51).[48] Yet the tone of this episode, which is not an integral part of the Idyll,[49] makes us think of Aesop's fables rather than a goatherd's direct observation and reaction to nature.

Both poets present countrymen engaged in poetic contests. They usually wager prizes. One of Theocritus' herdsmen offers as a prize the chance to milk his goat: ". . . then will I let thee milk three times a goat that has borne twins, one that, for all she has two kids, yet yields two pails

43. See Cic. *Fam.* 1. 9. 15 and Conington's note on this passage.

44. Trees seem humanized when they yield to one another in 5. 16–18: "lenta salix quantum pallenti cedit olivae, / puniceis humilis quantum saliunca rosetis, / iudicio nostro tantum tibi cedit Amyntas." Although it is difficult to point to one particular expression in these lines and call it an instance of humanization, the total impression is that of trees giving in to one another. The word *lenta* suggests that the willow is bending its drooping branches before the olive. The word *humilis*, used in conjunction with *cedit*, gives some appearance of inferiority felt by the plant. Elsewhere Virgil bestows upon natural objects the ability to glory in their adornment: "vitis ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus uvae, / ut gregibus tauri, segetes ut pinguibus arvis, / tu decus omne tuis . . ." (5. 32–34). The implication is that Daphnis' friends are proud of him (he is not an ornament to them, *decus* taken in its literal sense), and in like fashion the trees glory in their vines, the flocks in their bulls. Ps.-Theocritus 8. 79–80 is somewhat similar: "Acorns are the glory of the oak, apples of the apple-tree, calf of the cow, and of the neatherd his cows alone." Still, we note that man is not so prominent in these lines as in Virgil's, where the relationship between Daphnis and his friends is the high point of the picture. Nor do the natural objects listed in the Greek passage appear to be more than a series of attractive glimpses of country life, while in the Latin the natural objects are presented in such a way as to make a human situation better understood. In Theocr. 1. 30–31, the ivy glories in its fruit (almost all of the instances of ἀγάλλω in LSJ seem to involve exultation, rejoicing, and other, similarly human, emotions and states of mind), and Virgil's rejoicing fields resemble this happy plant: "ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum, / astrum, quo segetes gauderent frugibus et quo / duceret apricis in collibus uva colorem" (9. 47–49). But even here the two poets are not alike. Virgil's fields are gladdened by Caesar's power even after his death. They are conscious of political events. (Of course, they also stand under Caesar's divine influence.) Theocritus' vine rejoices in its fruit but does not take note of any events among men or among gods.

45. Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, p. 112: "diminutif fait pour exciter la pitié."

46. Servius finds it necessary to comment that *destituent* means *relinquent*; but Livy uses this metaphorical word in speaking of waves, 1. 4. 6. *Destituere* may be one of those verbs of motion which very easily pass from the realm of human endeavor into references to natural objects capable of movement.

47. Conington makes at this point a rather strange comment: "Virg. doubtless means to date the new life of the fishes from its [their presence on land] commencement."

48. The second pair of brackets is Gow's; the first, mine.

49. It is pictured on a cup which the goatherd describes to Thyrsis.

besides" (1. 25–26). Virgil makes the stake much more valuable. A young cow will be given to the winner: "ego hanc vitulam— ne forte recuses, / bis venit ad mulctram, binos alit ubere fetus— / depono" (3. 29–31).[50] The goat will be *given* to the winner to be milked, but the cow *comes* (*venit*) to her master, as if of her own accord, to give her milk to him. The word διδυματόκος, used in connection with the goat, is a term denoting that she has two kids. Virgil puts more emotion into his description when he says that the cow nurses (*alit*) her calves: she is feeding them, bringing them up, as it were. She is at the center of attention, whereas the goat has no qualities that engage the reader's sympathy, for Theocritus uses none but the prosaic terms of the marketplace.

Apart from the scene of Daphnis' death, there are in Theocritus no passages worth mention that speak of the animals' love of man; and Daphnis, it must be remembered, is a case somewhat apart, for he is semidivine. In the other Idylls there seem to be only two instances in which animals take some interest in man. In *Idyll* 4 the heifers are longing for their neatherd, so that another countryman observes, ". . . the heifers here miss their master; that's why they low." His companion says, "Poor beasts, it's a sorry herdsman they found." And he hears in reply: "Poor beasts indeed; they don't care to feed any more" (4. 12–14). This distress of the cows, however, is not out of the common order of things. Animals as intelligent, relatively speaking, as cows do become dependent on one particular person who takes care of them. They will low to attract attention if they have not been milked at the proper time.[51] Such behavior is natural and can be observed on any farm.

In the second instance, bees are feeding a poet who has been imprisoned without food: ". . . the blunt-faced bees came from the meadows to the fragrant chest of cedar [in which the poet was imprisoned] and fed him on tender flowers because the Muse had poured sweet nectar on his lips" (7. 80–82). This action of the bees takes on an almost supernatural character. Probably because of their highly systematized society, bees were believed to be endowed with a great, almost human, intelligence.[52] They were commonly associated with poets such as Pindar.[53] Anything unusual that they achieve must therefore not be taken to represent other animals' capabilities.[54]

The animals of the *Eclogues*, unlike those of Theocritus, express interest in the actions of the countrymen and observe them. Damoetas says to Menalcas: "novimus et qui te, transversa tuentibus hircis, / et quo—sed faciles Nymphae risere— sacello" (3. 8–9). Bulls and goats look sideways before attacking an enemy. Here, however, we have no indication that the goats will attack. Instead, the word *transversa* gives the goats an air of knowing

50. In his amplification, Virgil speaks of a cow with two calves. It is unusual for cows to bear more than one young at a time, although goats frequently have two kids.

51. See Jachmann (n. 3), "Die dichterische Technik," pp. 102–3: "Die Sehnsucht nach dem wahren Hirten bei Theokrit ist ein durchaus naturwahrer Zug. An seine Stelle setzt Vergil den sentimentalen, dass der Stier verliebt ist wie sein Herr [*Ecl.* 3. 100–1] . . . bei Theokrit . . . würde man derartiges vergeblich suchen." Similarly, G. Rohde, "De Vergili eclogarum forma et indole," *Klass. Philol. Stud.*, V (1925), rpr. in *Studien und Interpretationen zur antiken Literatur, Religion und Geschichte* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 48–49, notes that, while it is quite ordinary for animals to refuse food when they are disturbed, Virgil goes much farther than Theocritus in attributing characteristically human emotions to animals. Rohde thinks that in this Virgil imitated the post-Theocritean pastoral poets.

52. See Haarhoff, "The Bees of Virgil," *G and R*, 2nd ser., VII (1960), 155–70, on the belief in the sacred character and the spiritual qualities of bees in various lands and at various times.

53. The sources for this legend are listed by Schwenn, "Pindaros," *RE*, XL (1950), 1607.

54. For the same reason, when Theocritus mentions halcyons calming the sea (7. 57–60), we must not think that the birds are doing anything extraordinary beyond the powers that ancient superstition gave them.

all about the insult, although they keep their thoughts to themselves.[55]

In *Idyll* 25, not a pastoral poem, yet one which antiquity attributed to Theocritus, a shepherd gives lodging to Heracles and apologizes for his barking dog: "'Heavens!' said he, 'what a creature is this the gods that rule us have made to be man's companion, and how hasty. Were but his wits as keen, and did he know with whom to quarrel and with whom not, no beast could vie with him for credit; but as it is he is too savage and too ill-tempered altogether'" (25. 78–83). These lines show a very different and less friendly attitude toward animals than does Virgil's picture of a dog defending his master's property: "non ego te vidi Damonis, pessime, caprum / excipere insidiis, multum latrante Lycisca?" (3. 17–18). The Greek passage makes the dog a creature of no great intelligence. Virgil recognizes his natural abilities and lets him distinguish thieves from honest people.[56]

Addresses to cattle occur fairly often in Theocritus, for instance: "And you she-goats be not so frisky lest the he-goat rouse himself" (1. 151–52). However, unsupported by any other references to the animals as intelligent creatures, such addresses do not indicate that men regard them as such. Occasionally such addresses may mean that the shepherds talk to their animals for want of better company; at other times they are intended to be taken as jests. When one of Theocritus' personages speaks to a goat as ὦ τράγε, τᾶν λευκᾶν αἰγῶν ἄνερ (8. 49), he is making fun of the animal by applying to him a word used of men only, ἄνερ.[57] Virgil follows this precedent in one of his poems when he says: "vir gregis ipse caper deerraverat" (7. 7). He mentions the goat in the third person and in a more serious way than did Theocritus. By these means he indicates that the goat is, indeed, the husband of his flock, while in Theocritus the animal is called a husband in jest.[58]

Generally when one of Virgil's countryfolk speaks to an animal, the address is to be taken seriously.[59] When Meliboeus, the exile, says to his flock, "ite meae, felix quondam pecus, ite capellae" (1. 74), it is implied that goats experience human emotions. Meliboeus projects his own feelings onto the flock when he calls it *felix quondam*. But he is not thinking only of himself; he also has compassion for his animals. He says about a mother goat that has lost her kids: "gemellos, / spem gregis, a, silice in nuda conixa reliquit" (1. 14–15). Meliboeus humanizes his flock, for he indicates that the goats had set their hopes on the young kids. Now they are unhappy, probably both because they are leaving their old pastures and because they are conscious of their master's unhappiness. The feelings of the herdsman and those of the goats are here inseparable. Both are downcast, both have lost their hopes.[60]

55. Servius *ad loc.*: "... transversa tuentibus hircis, id est vestram turpitudinem indignantibus." On Virgil's finesse in this passage, see Jachmann (n. 3), "Die dichterische Technik," p. 104.

56. I am not implying that Virgil here imitated *Idyll* 25. My point is that the spirit of the Greek Idyll and that of Virgil's Eclogue differ.

57. Among the examples of the use of ἀνήρ given in LSJ, only one refers to an animal, aside from this occurrence of the word in Theocritus.

58. Servius *ad loc.*: "vir gregis abusive; tantum hominum est." *Abusive* certainly in Theocritus, hardly so in Virgil, although one should not refuse to see some humor in the use of the word *vir* here. The dictionaries quote no use of *vir* with reference to animals before Virgil.

59. Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, p. 442: "Les pâtres de Virgile sont moins intimes que ceux de Théocrite avec leurs bêtes; ils ne les interpellent que rarement. Il faut pourtant noter l'affection touchante, que Mélibée témoigne à ses chèvres dans la I^re^ Églogue. Virgile n'a que deux noms d'animaux: ce sont des noms de chiens, Égl. III, 18: ... Lycisca ... VIII, 107: ... Hylas ..." (But see Servius on 3. 18 for the possibility that *Lycisci* was a generic name for mongrels. Conington on 3. 18 also quotes Isidore on this meaning of *Lycisci*.) Although Virgil's shepherds do not address their animals so often as do the shepherds of Theocritus, it does not follow that there is less intimacy between man and beast in Virgil.

60. Conington follows Servius in observing: "The kids, being dropped on the stony soil, not on grass, would die soon after birth. Comp. G. III 297 ... 'Conixa,' stronger than the

Theocritus' herdsmen do not speak of their animals' sense of propriety, but Virgil's Thyrsis says to his bullocks in the evening: "ite domum pasti, si quis pudor, ite iuvenci" (7. 44).[61] The sheep of *Eclogue* 10 are also capable of shame:

> . . . indigno cum Gallus amore peribat . . .
> stant et oves circum—nostri nec paenitet illas,
> nec te paeniteat pecoris, divine poeta:
> et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis
> [10. 10, 16–18].

This passage is not easy to interpret, for it is unclear why the sheep are not ashamed of the scene, but for our purposes it is sufficient to say that the sheep are humanized.[62]

We have now discovered how Virgil treats natural objects in his pastoral poetry. Instances of humanization are not frequent in the *Idylls* of Theocritus and those of his Greek successors,[63] but in Virgil's *Eclogues* humanization and pathetic fallacy occur regularly, both explicitly and in more subtle, implicit ways. Besides, Virgil brings nature into the picture whenever he can, while Theocritus mentions it only in passing, when natural objects are necessary for establishing the pastoral setting.

It would seem that Virgil's attitude toward nature is connected with, and perhaps even born of, his belief in the approach of the Golden Age.[64] His natural objects

ordinary 'enixa,' denotes the difficulty of the labour." See also Pöschl, *Hirtendichtung*, p. 32, for a perceptive discussion of this passage.

61. Conington calls this line "an appeal at once to their moderation in eating, and to their regard for him." For a more detailed and interesting reading of this line, see Pöschl, *Hirtendichtung*, pp. 123–24.

62. This might be called an instance of inverted humanization: shame being a feeling peculiar to human beings, sheep cannot be capable of it; but since we are here told that the sheep are not ashamed (although they seem interested in what is going on), we may assume that these pastoral sheep on other occasions do indeed feel shame.

63. 7. 74 seems to be the only place in which Gow detects the pathetic fallacy, although in his comment there he also gives a cross-reference to 1. 71 and mentions the pathetic fallacy in some later pastoral poems, Bion 1. 31 and ps.-Moschus 3. 1, as well as in non-pastoral Greek poetry. The latter instances, however, all come from Dionysiac contexts, and even so are criticized by Longinus (15. 6) as examples of undesirable exaggeration. E. R. Dodds, to whom Gow makes a reference, also quotes no parallels except passages illustrating the influence of Dionysus on things animate and inanimate (*ad vs.* 726, *Bacchae*[2] [Oxford, 1960]). As for pathetic fallacy and humanization in the poems of Bion and Moschus, it may be observed that, in Bion 1, mountains and trees commiserate with Aphrodite, a goddess, but we read of no such empathy between natural objects and man. In *Idyll* 2 of Moschus, Europa and other girls go picking flowers. They take great delight in the beauties of nature, but the only instance in which there is anything resembling humanization is line 59, which speaks of a bird rejoicing in its plumage. Dolphins and other sea beasts frolic around Zeus disguised as a bull; yet Zeus is a god, and ancient dolphins often perform unusual actions—one need only think of the story of Arion. Their behavior, like that of bees or halcyons (see above), need not attract much attention. In ps.-Moschus 3, everything weeps for Bion's death. Not only birds but also flowers and rivers shed tears. The poet is copying Theocritus' account of the death of Daphnis, where it is chiefly animals that express their grief, although some trees join them in *Idyll* 7. The difference between the *Lament for Bion* and its prototypes is that Theocritus, in representing the death of Daphnis, uses all the supernatural apparatus that goes with it, while the author of the *Lament* is writing about a mortal, Bion, and finds it appropriate to place this pastoral poet in a pastoral setting. There seems to be a progress in this poem toward the Virgilian harmony between shepherds and animals, the Virgilian empathy that the animals display for their masters, and the tender care that the herdsmen of the *Eclogues* devote to them. The Bion of this poem is one of the first shepherds to combine the vocation of a poet with that of a keeper of animals; he rules, as it were, his cattle by song (81–83). Theocritus' shepherds reserve singing for their leisure moments. The *Greek Anthology* has some references to natural objects that remind the reader of the post-Theocritean pastoral. Most natural objects are mentioned in the *Anthology* rather superficially, with no attempt, as a rule, to present a tree or a sheep in human terms. There are, however, a few exceptions: some of the highly rhetorical sepulchral epigrams address the earth (*Anth. Pal.* 7. 321) and speak of rocks weeping for a man's death (7. 328). Still, these passages are not particularly significant, for the poems of the *Anthology*, written for the most part in a florid style, feature many addresses, directed at almost anyone or anything imaginable: the dead (7. 254 and many others), passers-by (7. 249 is perhaps the most famous of these, but others abound), Charon (7. 365), even sickness (7. 515). Other poems express sentimental grief for dead pet animals (7. 207, 211, and others). Occasionally a tree speaks in an epigram (9. 130) or a man addresses goats (9. 217). Meleager sometimes gives indications of humanization bolder than what we find in Theocritus: he makes natural objects smile and laugh at the approach of spring (9. 363). Yet neither he nor the other poets of the *Anthology* make a consistent attempt to humanize nature as Virgil does. In connection with Meleager, see Hubaux, "Virgile et Méléagre de Gadara," *MB*, XXV (1921), 149–63, where *Ecl.* 8. 17 and 50 are explained with the help of parallels from Meleager, and the same author's *Le Réalisme dans les Bucoliques*, pp. 65–71. On pp. 19–20, Hubaux deplores the failure of editors and commentators to take note of other than Theocritean influence on the *Eclogues*.

64. The standard collection of ancient texts dealing with the Golden Age is A. O. Lovejoy, G. Boas, *et al.*, *A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas*, I: *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1935). See also

demonstrate a great interest in man, but nowhere so much so as in *Eclogues* 4 and 5, the poems that deal with the Golden Age to come and with the deification of Daphnis, who is traditionally taken to stand for Julius Caesar.[65] Theocritus' best and most striking instances of pathetic fallacy, perhaps his only ones, occur also in connection with Daphnis, a strange being not typical of shepherds but semi-divine and therefore capable of supernatural powers,[66] as were other mythical figures, such as Orpheus: "For him [Daphnis] the jackals howled, for him the wolves; for him dead even the lion of the forest made lament. . . . Kine in plenty about his feet, and bulls, many a heifer and many a calf lamented" (1. 71–72, 74–75). Even the gods weep for Daphnis. In another Idyll we read, ". . . how once Daphnis the neatherd loved Xenea, and how the hill was sorrowful about him and the oaktrees which grow upon the river Himeras' banks sang his dirge . . ." (7. 73–75).

Virgil's Daphnis enjoys a bond with nature entirely like Virgil's other shepherds, the difference being only one of degree. If we assume that Daphnis stands for Julius Caesar, his deification and subsequent beneficent influence on peace and harmony among all creatures foreshadow the better times to come, the Golden Age:

nec lupus insidias pecori, nec retia cervis
ulla dolum meditantur; amat bonus otia Daphnis.
ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera iactant
intonsi montes; ipsae iam carmina rupes,
ipsa sonant arbusta: "deus, deus ille, Menalca"
[5. 60–64].

The whole universe rejoices in the apotheosis of Caesar, as in *Eclogue* 4 it delights in the prospect of the approaching happy times: "aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum, / terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum; / aspice, venturo laetantur ut omnia saeclo" (4. 50–52). This great outburst of happiness does not surprise us, for in the other Eclogues, too, Virgil makes natural objects capable of empathy at various happy occasions in the lives of the shepherds. In *Eclogue* 4, with the coming of the Golden Age, the earth begins to pour forth her gifts to man of her own accord. The happiness and harmony between man and nature, indications of which have been plentiful in the other Eclogues, find their fullest expression here:[67]

. . . nullo munuscula cultu
errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus
mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.
ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae
ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones.
ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores
[4. 18–23].

As in *Eclogue* 5, so here Virgil emphasizes the peace among animals as an important part of the Golden Age. He is partly influenced by the gathering of animals, both domestic and wild, around the dying Daphnis in *Idyll* 1 of Theocritus and partly, perhaps, by Eastern prophecies about universal peace. To a large extent, however, statements like these illustrate his great love of animals and his concern for their well-being.

Earth breaks into blossom while the

K. J. Reckford, "Some Appearances of the Golden Age," *CJ*, LIV (1958), 79–87, on the development of the idea of the Golden Age in Latin literature before Virgil.

65. This is one of the identifications proposed by Servius, and perhaps the most widely accepted one.

66. See Gow's preface to his commentary on *Idyll* 1 for some valuable comments on Daphnis. Jachmann (n. 3), "Die dichterische Technik," p. 103, says that the animals mourning for Daphnis are not characteristic of Theocritus' concept of nature: "das ist grandiose Phantastik wie die Trauer der Natur um Baldur . . ." Rohde (n. 51), "De Vergili eclogarum forma et indole," p. 49: "et est res mirabilis bestias plangere, mirabilior montes silvasque narrare, quantopere leones mortem Daphnidis ploraverint. sic artificiosissime rem per se grandem alia re grandi adiecta etiam auget poeta exaggeratque . . ." See also Cartault, *Les Bucoliques*, pp. 172–73, who discusses Bion's influence on Virgil's *Ecl.* 5. 28: and Rose, *Eclogues*, p. 123, who does not believe that ". . . hills are quite inanimate in ancient poetry, which seems dimly to remember the times when a mountain was also a mountain-god or daimon . . ."

67. See C. Becker, "Virgils Eklogenbuch," *Hermes*, LXXXIII (1955), 341, on the close connection between the bucolic world of *Eclogue* 4 and the rest of the *Eclogues*. Rohde (n. 51),

hero of *Eclogue* 4 is still an infant. As he grows up, nature's gifts to him increase and become more substantial. He receives from the earth not only fragrant plants and blossoms, but also food to sustain him. Gradually he and, we suppose, all of mankind come to the point where no one need toil in the fields:

molli paulatim flavescet campus arista,
incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva,
et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella. . . .
hinc, ubi iam firmata virum te fecerit aetas
. . . omnis feret omnia tellus.
non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem;
robustus quoque iam tauris iuga solvet arator
[4. 28–30, 37, 39–41].

Such is the culmination of the kindness and goodwill of nature which the rustics of the other Eclogues enjoy even before the advent of the Golden Age.[68] They still have to work, but there is no need for them to take their tasks very seriously. Instead, they abandon themselves to their musical pastimes whenever the opportunity arises.[69] "Posthabui tamen illorum mea seria ludo" (7. 17), says one of them, Meliboeus, when he hears other shepherds calling him to a singing contest. He admits that there is work to do: the myrtles must be covered before cold weather sets in, the flocks demand attention. But he has heard of an opportunity to hear some songs, and practical considerations are forgotten. Nature does not mind his carelessness, however. We assume that nothing goes really wrong because Meliboeus has spent an afternoon in idleness. He resembles a poet whose practical needs are taken care of by his patron—in this case, the patron is nature. Trees, we may imagine, listen avidly to the contest along with Meliboeus, for trees, as we have learned, love song.[70]

The leisure which seems to come so easily to shepherds throughout the *Eclogues* will be complete when the predictions of *Eclogue* 4 fulfill themselves. No work at all will be necessary, and not only necessities but even luxuries will be commonly available: lambs will be born with their wool already dyed in appropriate shades (4. 42–45). The word *otium* does not occur in this poem, but it appears in significant contexts in some of the other Eclogues. It indicates a happy condition close to nature. In *Eclogue* 1 Tityrus, lying under his tree and teaching the woods to respond to his song, says about his freedom from worry: "o Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit" (1. 6). According to the standard interpretation,[71] Tityrus stands for Virgil himself, and the god who lets him keep his farm and enjoy the country life is Augustus. We may here have an indication that one of the characteristic features of the Golden Age, leisure, is already possible at the beginning of Augustus' sovereignty.[72]

"De Vergili eclogarum forma et indole," pp. 53–64, also emphasizes that Virgil expresses his idea of the Golden Age not only in *Eclogue* 4 but also in the others, notably in connection with Daphnis. See also Paratore, *Virgilio*[3], p. 126, on "età dell'oro—*Leit-motiv* sommesso, ma costante della bucolica virgiliana." Pöschl, *Hirtendichtung*, pp. 130–37, compares the propitious influence of the beloved on the poet-shepherd's natural surroundings to the influence of the marvelous child on nature in *Eclogue* 4. In both instances he sees at work a divine influence residing in human beings.

68. Numerous passages in the *Eclogues* express this goodwill. Many of them have been cited above, but it is appropriate to quote at this point a line not referred to previously. The countryfolk regard the earth as a keeper of the seed they have sown: "grandia saepe quibus mandavimus hordea sulcis" (5. 36). We note some similarity to the words of the enchantress in *Eclogue* 8, who puts the earth in charge of her lover's clothes: "has . . . exuvias . . . pignora cara . . . terra, tibi mando" (8. 91–93). But we must not attach much importance to humanization occurring in a context dealing with magic.

69. See Trisoglio (n. 6), "Le bucoliche virgiliane," p. 293, for some comments on this carelessness.

70. Snell, *Entdeckung*[3], pp. 382–85, comments on Virgil's longing for peace and his attempts in the *Eclogues* to fit contemporary politics into the pastoral. According to Snell, Virgil remains essentially a dreamer hoping for the miracle of the Golden Age, even while he is speaking of political reality. Such a combination of fantasy and politics had never been accomplished before.

71. This interpretation goes back to Servius.

72. In the *Georgics* (1. 121–59), Virgil takes a different attitude. There he tells how Jupiter put an end to the Golden Age, with good results for man. In *Eclogue* 4 too there may be some feeling that an excessively benevolent nature is not good for man. See M. E. Taylor, "Primitivism in Virgil," *AJP*, LXXVI (1955), 277.

But when the Golden Age comes to its full fruition, *otium* will be universal and embrace not only man but his natural surroundings as well, for Daphnis has sanctioned the happiness of animals: "nec lupus insidias pecori, nec retia cervis / ulla dolum meditantur; amat bonus otia Daphnis" (5. 60–61). Virgil sees the contemporary political situation preparing the way for a Golden Age in which all natural objects will find it possible to express themselves as living creatures and to serve man joyfully.[73]

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, BINGHAMTON

73. The germ of this essay was an undergraduate paper written several years ago under the direction of Professor A. K. L. Michels, to whom I should like to express my gratitude.