THEOCRITEAN ELEMENTS IN VIRGIL'S *ECLOGUES*

MUCH of the early scholarship on Virgilian borrowings from Theocritus offered mere lists of parallel passages and, where criticism was attempted at all, the *Eclogues* often attracted such uncomplimentary labels as 'cento' or 'pastiche'. In more recent scholarship the tendency to concentrate on insoluble problems and arithmetical correspondences lingers and, while some critical works of the sixties are characterized by a welcome upsurge in sensitivity, one occasionally suspects that Virgil has had attributed to him concepts which are two millennia ahead of his time. To redress the balance, the following pages adhere to the text of Virgil and aim at being fairly conservative. Despite the volume of literature on the *Eclogues*, ample scope remains for differing interpretations, for the filling in of details and for a more methodical approach to the specific subject of borrowings from Theocritus. These are the lines along which it is hoped now to contribute, but it will sometimes be necessary briefly to re-state points already made by others in order to present a reasonably comprehensive picture. The accent in this article is on the mechanics of Virgilian composition, and *Eclogues* 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8, in which Theocritean elements are all-important, will be treated in detail. Where there is a meaningful parallel or contrast, occasional observations about echoes from Theocritus in *Eclogues* 1, 9, and 10 appear in footnotes.

The Polyphemus idylls are the most obvious source of the second eclogue. Echoes occur in the opening words of the lament (cf. *Ec.* 2. 6 and *Id.* 11. 19); in the lover's boasts about his material wealth (cf. *Ec.* 2. 19–22 and *Id.* 11. 34–7), about his musical accomplishments (cf. *Ec.* 2. 23–4 and *Id.* 11. 38–40), and about his physical appearance (cf. *Ec.* 2. 25–7 and *Id.* 6. 34–8). Both lovers invite their beloved to share life together (cf. *Ec.* 2. 28–34 and *Id.* 11. 42–9 and 63–6); offer gifts of animals (cf. *Ec.* 2. 40–2 and *Id.* 11. 40–1) and flowers (cf. *Ec.* 2. 45–55 and *Id.* 11. 56–9); and, finally realizing their madness, they seem to recover their reason (cf. *Ec.* 2. 69–73 and *Id.* 11. 72–6). Yet, with all these correspondences, Virgil's basic conception of this poem of lamentation and wooing is totally different from Theocritus', and he contrives to make even his most literal renderings of the Greek subservient to his different design.

Corydon's literary ancestor is, in the deepest sense, Simaetha, not Polyphemus. It is only in the second idyll that Theocritus portrays a serious and irresistible passion in which poet and reader alike are involved. Polyphemus in the eleventh idyll serves as a *παράδειγμα* to Theocritus, Nicias, and the reader. He is the living proof that love, even *ὀρθαὶ μανίαι*, may be assuaged by song. He is regarded with detachment all round. Occasional sympathy is tempered with amusement at the incongruity of his suit. He is always the monster, and he understands his situation no better at the end of the poem than at the beginning. Corydon, like Simaetha, is presented directly to the reader. His psychic contortions, like hers, illustrate no evident moral. They are traced by the poet for their own sake. There is no grotesqueness about Corydon's appearance or his being. He is an ordinary man suffering, and the sensitive reader will suffer with him. The second eclogue, like the second idyll, is almost

a drama of an all-consuming passion, whose futility is realized but not heeded. Yet Simaetha differs from Corydon in that she is hopeful at the beginning. She passes from hope to despair, from acts of magic to bring Delphis back, to a bitter recollection of past joys and to an acceptance of her defeat. Polyphemus, of course, is hopeful throughout. He sings looking towards the sea, from which he expects Galatea to emerge. His boasts and ruses are directed towards a very tangible result. But Corydon has no real hope at any stage—*nec quid speraret habebat* (2). All the while he is wooing a distant beloved; his only communion is with Nature (3–5), and when his fancy, ever more impassioned, raises him to hope (esp. 51–5), his sudden awareness of his own inadequacy shatters his brief illusion (56–9).

It is a mark of Virgil's ingenuity as a craftsman that, with all these contrasts, he has been able to use so much of the eleventh idyll, which may be regarded as the *leitmotiv*. It supplies the opening and closing strains of Corydon's song as well as substantial sections of the middle. But the very first echo underlines the difference between the two poems: ὦ λευκὰ Γαλάτεια (19), an acknowledgement of Galatea's beauty, which is the prize to be won, *o crudelis Alexi* (6), the despairing cry of a man slighted in love. Polyphemus praises the appearance of the fawns he is keeping for Galatea—πάσας μαννοφόρως (41). Corydon in *praeterea duo nec tuta mihi ualle reperti | capreoli . . .* (40–1) adds the point that he risked his life to obtain the gift for Alexis. Polyphemus says that if only he could swim he would bring Galatea snowdrops or poppies, and he apologizes clumsily for not being able to bring them together, as they flower in different seasons (56–9).[1] The emotional climax of Virgil's poem is reached where Corydon lovingly describes the fruit he fancies he will bring Alexis, and the flowers he will arrange for him. In this section Virgil concentrates his poetic devices—the pregnant use of *honos*, the address to the bays and the myrtle, which he sees in his mind's eye as already arranged in the basket so as to give Alexis most pleasure (note the proleptic use of *proxima* in 54), the sweetness of *sic positae quoniam suauis miscetis odores* (55), which comes so soon after *mollia luteola pingit uaccinia calta* (50)—a uniquely beautiful impression of texture and colour.

Hamlet is no less serious a play because Polonius and others provide comic relief. Scholars have been signally humourless in not seeing Corydon's three boasts (about his wealth, his musical accomplishments, and his beauty) as being comic relief in an essentially sombre poem. Virgil often wrote ἀτρέμας σεσαρώς in the *Eclogues*. There is no reason to doubt the truth of Polyphemus' boast that he tends a thousand head of cattle (*Id.* 11. 34), or that he is outstandingly good at piping (38). Even his claim to attractiveness in Damoetas' song (6. 34–8) is a subjective one and sincerely expressed. The humour, which is tinged with pathos, lies in Polyphemus' failure to realize that Galatea cannot be won over by these attributes. Virgil's adaptations of the above passages at *Ec.* 2. 19–27 has more often than not drawn grim comment of the following nature: Corydon is speaking as though his master's flocks belonged to him; Virgil is mistaken in placing Aracynthus in Attica; the sea cannot act as a mirror—Corydon must have gone to a rock-pool. But surely the point is that in his hopeless soliloquy Corydon allowed himself the luxury and comfort

[1] The reader is taken even further away from the romance that lay behind the original thought by an ironic reference which Theocritus chooses to make to Polyphemus' subsequent encounter with Odysseus (61).

of fanciful exaggeration, even untruth. One is meant to smile at the incongruity of any one, especially Corydon, having a flock so vast that its female lambs alone number one thousand. Or that an unlettered shepherd should not only associate his musical skill with that of Zeus' son Amphion, who actually built the walls of Thebes by the power of his music, but even utter a neoteric line like *Amphion Dircaeus in Actaeo Aracyntho*, complete with Greek hiatus and doubly learned allusion in *Dircaeus*.[1] Amid such incongruity the misuse of *Actaeo* is more likely to be Corydon's than Virgil's. Finally, Daphnis was the ideal shepherd, and so Corydon's claim to equal him in beauty was unutterably extravagant. Bearing this in mind, we do not need to send him off to a rock-pool to see his face. If he says he saw it in the unruffled sea, let us take the location of his mirror only as seriously as the boast itself.[2]

Touches of humour are not confined to these echoes of Polyphemus. Corydon's strains are described as *incondita* ('artless') in line 4, yet Virgil, the budding poet, knew full well that his learned readers would not fail to notice and appreciate the elaborate construction of the poem—its ordered progression of thought as opposed to Polyphemus' rambling soliloquy, its attunement of sound and sense, its formal balance,[3] its inherent antitheses of theme.[4] Another touch of humour is a pun in line 18. When Virgil writes *uaccinia nigra leguntur* he is echoing ἀλλ' ἔμπας ἐν τοῖς στεφάνοις τὰ πρῶτα λέγονται (*Id.* 10. 29), referring to violets and hyacinths, but λέγονται in this context is much more likely to mean 'are accounted' than 'are gathered'.

The Polyphemus echo concluding the second eclogue (69–73: cf. *Id.* 11. 72–6) is troublesome. The Theocritean version is relatively straightforward, as Polyphemus must recover his sanity and, moreover, do so by means of song in order to fit in with the lesson Theocritus is offering Nicias. In answer to the possible objection that the change of tone is, none the less, too sudden and not psychologically motivated, one could seek refuge in the supposition that Polyphemus is only trying a ruse in order to whet Galatea's appetite. In the Virgilian poem the change of feeling is, if anything, more sudden. Various suggestions have been made in order to explain it, e.g. that Virgil was still fumbling in his art and a slave to the Theocritean tradition; that he was seeking to illustrate the same point as Theocritus, namely that singing cures lovers; that Corydon, the experienced lover (see lines 14–15), would readily come to the conclusion that there were lots of fish in the sea; that Corydon returns to weaving baskets out of loyalty to the countryside which he loves so much. These theories vary in their degree of implausibility. It is here suggested, very tentatively, that Corydon may be indulging in self-deception. At line 17 Corydon believes that he can overcome his devotion to Alexis, and at 43–4 he thinks of turning to Thestylis, but the sequel, especially 51–5, 58–9 and 68,

[1] The epithet refers to the killing of Dirce by Amphion, and also geographically to Thebes, near which Dirce became a fountain.

[2] The extravagance of the boast is actually more akin to *Id.* 20. 19–27 (probably not by Theocritus) than to anything said by Polyphemus.

[3] 5 lines of introduction, 13 lines of lament, 37 lines of wooing, 13 lines of lament, 5 lines of supposed renunciation.

[4] The siesta at noon/Corydon's frenzied activity; the setting of the sun/the blazing of Corydon's passion; town/country; white skin/dark skin; hyacinths/marigolds, etc. The first two contrasts were suggested in general idea by *Id.* 2. 38–40, of which there is a very close imitation at *Ec.* 9. 57–8. Rather interestingly, this latter passage involves no contrast at all, as the stillness of nature is used by Lycidas only as a reason for sitting down to sing.

proves that he has underestimated Alexis' hold over him. The most natural explanation would be that in the last lines of the poem Corydon has regressed into self-deception, which would be in keeping with the rapidly changing moods of the last third of the poem. The reader is, then, left to imagine that this self-deception will again give way to a realization of hopeless love. The cycle will continue. The painful drama will be re-enacted innumerable times—*assidue ueniebat* (4).

When Corydon invites Alexis to come and live with him and share his pursuits (28–34), one naturally thinks of Polyphemus' invitations to Galatea (*Id.* 11. 42–9 and 63–6), even though the details of the invitations must of necessity be different. Polyphemus is inviting Galatea to give up her life in the sea for what he depicts as the greater comfort of life on land, while Corydon even at this stage of his soliloquy suspects that Alexis would require greater sophistication than life in the country could offer. The connotation of *sordida rura* and *humilis . . . casas* would differ in Corydon's eyes and Alexis'. In developing the idea of this great gulf between the two Virgil almost certainly had the twentieth idyll in mind. It opens with a city girl's insolent speech of rejection to a cowherd (2–10, and see especially *οὐ μεμάθηκα / ἀγροίκως φιλέειν, ἀλλ' ἀστικὰ χείλεα θλίβειν*). He in return reflects that in the country he is found desirable—*καὶ πᾶσαι καλόν με κατ' ὥρεα φαντὶ γυναῖκες, / καὶ πᾶσαί με φιλεῦντι* (30–1), and he uses a contemptuous neuter, *τὰ ἀστικά* (31), of Eunica who rejects him. He goes on to give examples from mythology of loves enjoyed by gods in the woodland (34–41), and he taunts Eunica bitterly—*Εὐνίκα δὲ μόνα τὸν βουκόλον οὐκ ἐφίλασεν, / ἃ Κυβέλας κρέσσων καὶ Κύπριδος ἠδὲ Σελάνας* (42–3). The main difference in the handling of the theme by Virgil is that the action takes place only in Corydon's mind. After imagining so lovingly all the rustic gifts he would give Alexis, suddenly he becomes aware that he himself, along with his gifts, is inadequate for Alexis—*rusticus es, Corydon* (56). *Rusticus* means 'countryman' to Corydon, 'boor' to Alexis. Corydon then uses an argument similar to that of the cowherd in the twentieth idyll to prove the value of the country, namely that the gods have dwelt there (60–1), but he does so more briefly, more in sorrow than in anger. And with a quiet dignity he reasserts his loyalty to the countryside—*Pallas quas condidit arces / ipsa colat; nobis placeant ante omnia siluae* (61–2).

Intimately linked with the town/country antithesis is that of white skin resulting from life in the city and the swarthy skin of country folk. In Theocritus' tenth idyll Bucaeus sings of Bombyca's charms: while others call her *ἁλιόκαυστον*, he finds her *μελίχλωρον* (27); then he points out that violets and hyacinths, which are dark, are particularly sought after for garlands. Virgil has taken this theme and adapted it to the antithetical pattern of his poem: *quamuis ille niger, quamuis tu candidus esses?* (16), and *alba ligustra cadunt, uaccinia nigra leguntur* (18). It is, also, fitted into his recurrent theme of competition, especially between lovers. Here Corydon compares the swarthy Menalcas favourably with the white Alexis. Elsewhere there is rivalry or implied rivalry between Iollas and Corydon for Alexis, Daphnis and Corydon for superior beauty, Amyntas and Corydon for Damoetas' pipe, Thestylis and Alexis for the two goats, Alexis and 'another Alexis' for Corydon's love. An obvious difference between Bucaeus' words and Corydon's is that the former are a tribute, whereas the latter are a warning. In this connection it is worth pointing to *Id.* 23. 28–32, where a desperate lover warns the boy he loves that his beauty

will fade, like that of flowers: note especially λευκὸν τὸ κρίνον ἐστί, μαραίνεται ἀνίκα πίπτει (30). The finished product in the second eclogue is evidently a fusion of the two passages.

Immediately after Bucaeus' tribute Theocritus introduces the following simile: ἁ αἶξ τὰν κύτισον, ὁ λύκος τὰν αἶγα διώκει, / ἁ γέρανος τῶροτρον· ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ τὶν μεμάνημαι (10. 30–1). Virgil seems to copy this quite closely: *torua leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam, / florentem cytisum sequitur lasciua capella, / te Corydon, o Alexi: trahit sua quemque uoluptas* (2. 63–5). However, his alterations are noteworthy. He has introduced true symmetry in sense (cf. Theocritus' scheme AB, CA, DE and Virgil's AB, BC, CD). He has made the picture more vivid by the addition of epithets. He has eliminated the contrast inherent in Theocritus' simile (i.e. the crane follows after the plough, *but* I am mad over you). Virgil is concerned not with differing degrees of feeling, but rather with its naturalness: *trahit sua quemque uoluptas*. Corydon has just sworn allegiance to the country, and his emotions, like those of the beasts around him, are irresistible. The simile is thus adapted to illustrate the gulf between the unspoiled rustic and the sophisticated city-dweller. It is at the next stage of his poem that Virgil passes more specifically to the intensity of Corydon's feelings by means of the antithesis of sunset and blazing love, and this leads to the equation of love and madness (69 and cf. Theocritus' μεμάνημαι at 10. 31 as well as 11. 72). In lines 60–9 Virgil has in turn adapted themes from *Idylls* 20, 10, 2, and 11, and Corydon has passed from calling Alexis *demens* for misprizing the country, to regarding his own passion for Alexis as *dementia*.

We have already observed the double use of the stillness/turmoil contrast (*Ec.* 2. 8–13 and 66–8). Each antithesis singly was suggested by *Id.* 2. 38–40, though Virgil's details are his own. The double occurrence gives the poem a better balance of form as well as emphasizing the continuity of Corydon's passion. It is, further, interesting to note that while the sunset motif serves to bring several eclogues, including the last, to a neat conclusion, Virgil has here superimposed on this more conventional use the refinements of formal and thematic antithesis. Finally, one of the details of the first antithesis—*nunc uiridis etiam occultant spineta lacertos* (9) recalls ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐν αἱμασιαῖσι καθεύδει (*Id.* 7. 22). It is likely that Virgil is here hinting at a further contrast, namely that between the light-hearted walk to the harvest festival[1] and Corydon's frenzied quest for Alexis. The use of echoes from the third idyll, a trivial serenade which lacks any depth of feeling, is similarly pointed (cf. *Ec.* 2. 7 and *Id.* 3. 9; *Ec.* 2. 43–4 and *Id.* 3. 35–6).

Antithesis plays a part not only within given poems but also outside them. In turning from the second to the third eclogue the reader passes from a sorrowful monologue relieved by occasional humour to a light-hearted singing contest at the fringes of which lie hints of Virgil's more serious bent. The most obvious source of *Eclogue* 3 is Theocritus' fifth idyll. Both poems are in the form of an amoebaean contest in couplets preceded by abuse and followed by an umpire's verdict, and the number of verbal borrowings is very great indeed. However, in substituting the good-humoured banter of Menalcas and Damoetas

[1] The setting of the ninth eclogue is clearly based on that of Theocritus' Θαλύσια, but the sorrow of the dispossessed and the convulsions of the state are in stark contrast to the pleasant diversions of Simichidas and his companions. Compare *Ec.* 9. 1 and *Id.* 7. 21; *Ec.* 9. 32–6 and *Id.* 7. 37–41; *Ec.* 9. 59–60 and *Id.* 7. 10–11 for close imitations in this poem.

for Comatas' and Lacon's expressions of deep animosity, Virgil has made a happy poem out of an idyll which leaves a distinctly unpleasant after-taste. Presumably in the cause of bucolic realism Theocritus makes Comatas allude to homosexual acts between himself and Lacon in quite specific terms. Both before the contest (5. 41–2) and in the course of it (5. 116–17) he gloats over the discomfort he has caused Lacon. Virgil's *nouimus et qui te transuersa tuentibus hircis / et quo—sed faciles Nymphae risere—sacello* (3. 8–9) is infinitely more delicate, with its aposiopesis probably suggested by *Id.* 1. 105, and since the act did not involve the protagonists of the poem there is no legacy of resentment as in the Greek version. Instead, we have the charming touch of the he-goats, those sexually incontinent animals, looking askance, and the nymphs laughing indulgently over the profanation of a holy place. Similarly, Virgil has altered the accusations of theft and envy which he has taken over from his Greek model. The fifth idyll begins with Comatas accusing Lacon of stealing his goatskin, and Lacon countering that Comatas stole his pipe. Much less conspicuously in Virgil's poem (3. 17–18) Menalcas claims that he saw Damoetas sneaking up on Damon's goat.[1] At *Id.* 5. 12–13 Comatas uses strong language of Lacon's feeling of envy towards himself, whereas at *Ec.* 3. 14–15 Daphnis, who does not appear in the poem, is the object of Menalcas' alleged envy.[2] It is significant, too, that Virgil dispenses with the prolonged wrangling over the choice of a spot for the contest (cf. *Id.* 5. 45–61). These lines contain some enchanting details in themselves, but as nothing seems to please both contestants, the feeling of well-being which they might otherwise have created is destroyed. Virgil simply makes Palaemon the umpire, who has been chosen without bickering (cf. *Id.* 5. 63), describe the surroundings with such loving enthusiasm that the reader cannot but be affected by it: *in molli consedimus herba / et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos, / nunc frondent siluae, nunc formosissimus annus* (55–7). Virgil has set the stage by translating the minutiae of several Theocritean descriptions into more general terms.[3] The beauty of the whole countryside and of the season, so succinctly described, is in keeping with the happiness of the occasion. It is noteworthy, too, that Palaemon praises both contestants at the end and refuses to rate one more highly than the other, whereas in *Id.* 5. 141–4 Comatas mocks his defeated rival.

As Virgil has eliminated and compressed so much from the introduction to *Idyll* 5, he supplements it with themes from *Idylls* 4, 8, and 1. The opening lines of the third eclogue echo those of *Idyll* 4 so closely[4] that one must assume that Virgil is throwing his one real innovation—*cuium*—into relief. He is too

[1] Virgil has not only toned down *Id.* 5. 1–4, but has actually used the idea to help his poem structurally. Damoetas retorts that Damon was withholding the goat which he, Damoetas, had won in a singing match, and when Menalcas doubts whether this were possible, Damoetas proposes the competition which is the main point of the poem. The Greek version has no such neat transition from abuse to song.

[2] In his own way Virgil, too, uses strong language: cf. *dolebas, / et si non aliqua nocuisses, mortuus esses* and ἐτάκευ / βασκαίνων.

[3] Cf. *Ec.* 1. 51–8, where Virgil reproduces many individual details from *Id.* 7. 131–46 and acknowledges his Theocritean legacy by the addition of *Hyblaeis* (54). But Virgil's tone is, again, different. The Theocritean passage is pure description, bringing a happy poem to a fitting close, while in the first eclogue Menalcas is wistfully alluding to the joys that await Tityrus, but not him. Virgil has thus imbued the passage with intense emotion as well as integrating it into what is essentially a political poem.

[4] Cf. *Dic mihi, Damoeta, cuium pecus? an Meliboei? / Non, uerum Aegonis; nuper mihi tradidit Aegon* and Εἰπέ μοι, ὦ Κορύδων, τίνος αἱ βόες; ἢ ῥα Φιλώνδα; / οὔκ, ἀλλ' Αἴγωνος·

conscious, too Augustan an artist to allow himself at all times the greater naturalism of Theocritus, or to rival the easy flow of *Idyll* 4, with its rambling dialogue. But *cuium*, an uncommon lapse into real rusticity of language,[1] serves as a keynote to the reader, who is then left to supply other provincialisms in his own imagination while enjoying a poem of Augustan polish. Several other themes taken over from the fourth idyll are significantly altered: the flock in *Eclogue* 3 is neglected because Aegon is away making love (3–4),[2] and love is a recurrent theme in this poem, whereas in Theocritus Aegon's only love is for a victory in athletics (*Id.* 4. 27). The bull at *Id.* 4. 20 is thin through neglect, whereas in Virgil he is wasting away through being in love (*Ec.* 3. 100–1), and incidentally he has turned up within the actual amoebaean contest. Another theme from *Idyll* 4, that of excessive milking, is exaggerated by Virgil for comic effect (cf. *κρύβδαν . . . ἀμέλγες* at *Id.* 4. 3 and *bis mulget in hora* at *Ec.* 3. 5), but the pathetic possibilities are exploited as well: *et sucus pecori et lac subducitur agnis* (6). A similar exaggeration with heightened emotional overtones occurs where the stakes are discussed: cf. *οὐ θησῶ ποκα ἀμνόν, ἐπεὶ χαλεπὸς ὁ πατήρ μεῦ / χὰ μάτηρ, τὰ μῆλα ποθέσπερα πάντ' ἀριθμεῦντι* (*Id.* 8. 15–16) and *de grege non ausim quicquam deponere tecum: / est mihi namque domi pater, est iniusta nouerca; / bisque die numerant ambo pecus, alter et haedos* (*Ec.* 3. 32–4).

From *Id.* 1. 27–60 Virgil borrows the idea of describing a cup[3] and indeed some of the decoration is similar: cf. *Ec.* 3. 38–9 and 45 and *Id.* 1. 27–31. (For the fact that the cup has not been used cf. *Ec.* 3. 43 and *Id.* 1. 59–60.) There are several possible justifications for the length of Theocritus' description: he was an Alexandrian; he was influenced by the epic tradition (cf. Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 18); he wanted a counterweight to Thyrsis' song. But Virgil was intent on not straying too far from his subject, and so the representations within his cups take up only a few lines (40–2 and 46). Instead of Theocritus' sheer delight in description for its own sake, description full of charm and human interest, we find the quintessence of Virgil's thought at this time: natural science and agriculture, which were soon to preoccupy him in the *Georgics*; song and its emotive power, a theme recurrent in the *Eclogues*.[4] It is

βόσκειν δέ μοι αὐτὰς ἔδωκεν. Another very close imitation, at *Ec.* 9. 23–5 (cf. *Id.* 3. 3–5), may be explained as follows: the various snatches from Menalcas' poetry are representative of different facets of Virgil's art. *Ec.* 9. 23–5 symbolizes Virgil still finding his feet, while the second Theocritean echo (cf. *Ec.* 9. 39–43 and *Id.* 11. 42–9) shows him as being much more emancipated from his model. The address to Varus (*Ec.* 9. 27–9) represents the Italian elements as well as the personal and political ones in the *Eclogues*, while the final quotation from Menalcas' works (*Ec.* 9. 46–50) blends pastoral and Roman elements together.

[1] *Cuium* occurs in comedy, and it is worth drawing attention also to lines 49–53, which have a comic flavour in language, in Menalcas' deliberate misunderstanding of Damoetas' remarks, and in Palaemon's incredibly opportune arrival. *Quin age, si quid habes* is actually an echo from a discarded section of *Id.* 5 concerning the talkativeness of Comatas. At *Id.* 5. 78 *εἶα λέγ', εἴ τι λέγεις* is an expression of impatience, whereas Virgil's echo of it begins Damoetas' answer to Menalcas' charge that he is seeking to avoid the contest.

[2] Virgil introduces an interesting complication by making Aegon and Menalcas rivals for Neaera. Menalcas' *ac ne me sibi praeferat illa ueretur* shows a rather delightful self-confidence, which may even be a compensation for defeat.

[3] The naming of the craftsman at *Ec.* 3. 37 is, however, suggested by *Id.* 5. 105.

[4] e.g. 8. 2–4, but the power of song is illustrated most graphically in *Eclogue* 9, where Lycidas' and Moeris' utter despondency about their dispossession and the upheaval in the state is dispelled by their loving recollection of Menalcas' poetry.

hardly surprising that Virgil had pruned his Theocritean model of its obscenity and extremes of vituperation before introducing so solemn a note, a note which is later echoed in Damoetas' opening couplet on the pervasiveness of Jupiter.[1] Menalcas' answering couplet (62–3) reintroduces the bucolic tone, but it is worth noticing that Virgil succeeds in retaining some rustic simplicity even when he adumbrates the most profound themes. In line 40 Menalcas is made to forget the name of one of the scientists, and in 48 Damoetas compares his cups unfavourably with his heifer, a comparison which leads very neatly to the 'comic' lines 49–53.

Reference has already been made to two delightful touches of characterization: Menalcas being a little vain over his attractiveness to Neaera (4), and his deliberate misunderstanding of Damoetas (49). But the most memorable characterization in this poem is of Palaemon. In *Idyll* 5 the umpire Morson shows no colourfulness of character beyond asking Comatas for a piece of the lamb he has awarded him (140). Palaemon, however, is a poet *manqué*, depicted with some humour: he shows himself most sensitive to the joys of nature (55–7), and his rhetorical anaphorae are charmingly incongruous on the greensward; his skilful Romanization of *Μουσάων θ', αἳ ἄειδον ἀμειβόμεναι* (*Il.* 1. 604) in *amant alterna Camenae* (59) must have been close to Virgil's heart. His closing remarks show his versatility in metaphor: *tantas componere lites* (108) and *claudite iam riuos* (111). And he could not have predicted what trouble he would cause scholars with his cryptic and not altogether relevant lines on sweet and bitter love (109–10). Had he just been carried away by his own thoughts, so that he was not listening? The gently humorous Virgil apparently chose to keep his readers wondering.

Even within the amoebaean contest Virgil introduces fleeting but memorable touches of characterization which are not present in his model. At 3. 64–5 he adopts the theme of pelting with apples from *Id.* 5. 88–9. The strength of the Theocritean passage lies in the onomatopoeic and inviting *ποππυλιάσδει*. Virgil does not seek to rival this, but with somewhat greater subtlety he makes Galatea hide behind the willows only after she has been seen—perhaps the most charming illustration of the adjective *lasciua* in Latin literature. When Damoetas and Menalcas sing of the presents they have for their darlings we are reminded of Theocritean passages (cf. *Ec.* 3. 68–9 and *Id.* 5. 96–7; *Ec.* 3. 70–1 and *Id.* 3. 10–11). But Comatas' description of his present is factual and dull, whereas Damoetas chooses his words most carefully to emphasize the trouble he has been to (especially *parta*, *ipse*, and *aëriae*). The answering couplet, likewise, is much more vivid than its original. Although *δέκα μᾶλα* have become *aurea mala decem*, Menalcas pretends to disparage his gift in *quod potui*. The question arises, also, whether Virgil intended a pun in *aurea*, since *αὔριον* occurs nearby in the Greek.

From the examples immediately above it emerges that Virgil could take couplets from two different poems and make them responsive. Similarly, the balancing couplets at *Ec.* 3. 80–3 owe something to three unrelated passages

[1] Although Theocritus' sycophantic seventeenth idyll begins *Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα*, Virgil here plainly harks back to the opening lines of Aratus' *Phaenomena*: *Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδέποτ' ἄνδρες ἐῶμεν / ἄρρητον· μεσταὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαί, / πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί, μεστὴ δὲ θάλασσα / καὶ λιμένες· πάντῃ δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες.* Ironically, the young Virgil could hardly have known that this hint of Stoicism in the *Eclogues* foreshadowed in part the spirit of his third great work.

(*Id.* 8. 57–9; ib. 76–8; 9. 31–2), which Virgil has drawn together and disciplined in structure, while using original details. Also, in *mella fluant illi, ferat et rubus asper amomum* (3. 89) Virgil has combined two elements which occur in balancing couplets in his model (cf. *Id.* 5. 125/126).

We have noticed incidentally how Virgil has arranged his matter so that the singing match arises logically and naturally from Menalcas' accusation of theft (3. 17–18). The placing of *non tu in triuiis, indocte, solebas / stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?* (3. 26–7 and cf. *Id.* 5. 6–7) is, likewise, superior in Virgil. These disparaging remarks about Damoetas' musical ability immediately precede the challenge to the contest, whereas in Theocritus Comatas' equivalent comment is just part of the general abuse. Another change in Virgil is his incorporation into the actual amoebaean contest of themes from the surrounding dialogue in Theocritus: cf. the 'wide berth' motif in *Ec.* 3. 92–9 and *Id.* 5. 1–4, and note that from Comatas' exultation over his victory (*Id.* 5. 146) Virgil has taken the detail of washing goats (97), which is integrated most ingeniously into the remodelled 'wide berth' theme. Finally, Virgil has extended the love motif so that it comes close to unifying the poem. Apart from the conventional preoccupation with love in the amoebaean contest, Virgil has introduced the Aegon–Neaera–Menalcas triangle (3–4), the amorous bull (100–1), and the romantic Palaemon (109–10). By a clever shift in the meaning of *amare* (84 and 88) Virgil has taken the opportunity of glorifying Pollio and vilifying Bavius and Maevius.[1]

The emphasis in this treatment of *Eclogue* 3 has been on its decorum, its wit, its flashes of inspiration. Alongside these qualities one should recognize the calculated and painstaking rearrangement of Theocritean motifs essential to this poem whose 'simplicity' could so easily beguile.

One's interpretation of Theocritean adaptation in *Eclogue* 5 will depend on whether one believes the poem is about Daphnis *per se* or about Caesar. Virgil's innovations would obviously be more daring in the latter case. To the arguments so often repeated on either side nothing new can be added here beyond recording a vote firmly on the side of allegory. To deny allegory because of some factual discrepancies seems a trifle insensitive to the political and emotional atmosphere in which Virgil wrote, the pattern of his work, and the nature of poetry in general, but as doubts will always linger, this treatment will be confined to an examination of parallel passages, and will disregard the new dimension which Virgil almost certainly meant to give his poem through allegory.

After a study of *Eclogues* 2 and 3, Virgil's greater independence of Theocritus in 5 is very marked. A fair proportion of the similarities are in ideas rather than verbal reminiscences. *Eclogue* 5 is amoebaean in the sense that there is balance of form and theme, but the songs of Daphnis' death and deification are not presented within the framework of a competition; there is no rivalry or abuse, only the courteous exchange of compliments and gifts. A similar atmosphere prevails in *Idylls* 1, 6, and 7. *Idyll* 1 begins with an exchange of compliments about their musical skill between Thyrsis and the goatherd, and this leads ultimately to Thyrsis' song about Daphnis. In the opening lines Thyrsis likens the goatherd's piping to the whispering of a pine tree (*Id.* 1. 1–3), and the goatherd likens Thyrsis' singing to a plashing stream (7–8). The

[1] For contemporary literary allusions in bucolic poetry Virgil had a precedent in *Id.* 7. 39–41 and 45–8.

corresponding sections in the fifth eclogue occur after the respective songs of Mopsus and Menalcas. Menalcas praises not the mere sound of Mopsus' song, but rather its refreshing effect on the soul. The beauty of its presentation and feeling has transcended its sorrowful subject, and hence the simile of refreshment (*Ec.* 5. 45–7) is a compliment in the most profound sense. In the Virgilian passage alone human emotions are brought to the forefront, and the similarity of idea between τὸ καταχές / . . . καταλείβεται ὑψόθεν ὕδωρ and *dulcis aquae saliente . . . riuo* is almost incidental. It is likely that Virgil had in his mind also *Id.* 12. 8–9 where Theocritus compares his eagerness to be with his boy-love to the eagerness of a traveller to be under a shady oak when the sun is scorching. Mopsus' praise of Menalcas' song (*Ec.* 5. 82–4) does concentrate on sound, and it combines ideas from Thyrsis' and the goatherd's expressions of praise (cf. *sibilus* and ψιθύρισμα; *saxosas inter decurrunt flumina uallis* and τὸ καταχές / τᾶν' ἀπὸ τᾶς πέτρας καταλείβεται ὑψόθεν ὕδωρ).

Compliments over songs are common enough in bucolic poetry, but the praise of Mopsus at *Ec.* 5. 16–18, which owes something to Theocritus in form (see below), arises from a situation which Virgil himself invented with wit and delicacy. Menalcas, under-estimating his young companion's sensitivity in the matter, has mentioned Amyntas' claim to sing as well as he does (8). Mopsus' annoyance is very evident in line 9, and it still rankles at 15, after which Menalcas, presumably sorry about his *faux pas*, feels constrained to humour him in the following simile: *lenta salix quantum pallenti cedit oliuae, / puniceis humilis quantum saliunca rosetis, / iudicio nostro tantum tibi cedit Amyntas.* The closest parallel in Theocritus is *Id.* 5. 92–5, where Comatas and Lacon each disparage the other's choice in love, with some obscurity. One should compare also *Id.* 12. 3–8 where the simile, likewise in a love context, involves an infelicitous juxtaposition of measures of difference and an absolute quantity. Virgil has eliminated the obscurity of the one passage and the imperfect logic of the other, and the details are mainly original in a simile which forms a neat conclusion to the delicate social situation invented by Virgil.[1]

Mopsus' song is in effect a continuation of Thyrsis' in *Idyll* 1. The nymphs, who were absent while Daphnis was dying and who, by implication, might have saved him, are now foremost among the mourners (cf. *Id.* 1. 66–9 and *Ec.* 5. 20–1); the animals which lamented while Daphnis was dying continue to mourn and lament after his death (cf. *Id.* 1. 71–5 and *Ec.* 5. 24–8). The reversal of nature which Daphnis called for, perhaps figuratively, in his last words is a *fait accompli* in Mopsus' song, however different the details (cf. *Id.* 1. 132–6 and *Ec.* 5. 34–9).[2] And Virgil had the subtlety to detect the lapidary style of Δάφνις ἐγὼν ὅδε τῆνος ὁ τὰς βόας ὧδε νομεύων, / Δάφνις τὼς ταύρως καὶ πόρτιας

[1] *Ec.* 5. 1–19 is much more than a mere fusion of Theocritus and Virgil. *Tu maior; tibi me est aequum parere, Menalca* (4) could be spoken by one of Socrates' interlocutors, and the decorous tone of the conversation which takes place as the two men are walking along together in such pleasant surroundings is reminiscent of the philosophical dialogue in general. Such an introduction adds great dignity to Virgil's poem, whether it is meant as a tribute to Caesar or not.

[2] Formally, *Ec.* 10 owes more to *Id.* 1 than does Mopsus' song: cf. *Ec.* 10. –12 and *Id* 1 66–9; *Ec.* 10. 18 and *Id.* 1. 109; *Ec.* 10. 19–30 and *Id.* 1. 77–85. Gallus, like Daphnis, is wasting away through love, and all Nature is in sympathy with him. Virgil's daring manifests itself in putting Gallus, the soldier-poet, into a bucolic setting. The Virgilian poem alone has considerable psychological complexity. The reader follows the stages of Gallus' struggle against the realities of his life, how he tries hard, but vainly, to fit into the dream-like world which Virgil has created for him.

ὧδε ποτίσδων (*Id.* 1. 120–1) and to transform it into Daphnis' epitaph (*Ec.* 5. 43–4). His addition of *hinc usque ad sidera notus* is a hint of the deification which follows in Menalcas' answering song.[1]

Menalcas' song owes nothing significant to Theocritus. The hearty giving of gifts after it has Theocritean parallels (cf. *Idylls* 6. 43–4 and 7. 128–9), but Menalcas' mention that the pipe taught him '*formosum Corydon ardebat Alexis*' and '*cuium pecus? an Meliboei?*' (86–7) is a purely Virgilian touch. It emphasizes the unity of the collection of poems, and Virgil is at the same time indulging in a little quiet self-flattery.

The seventh eclogue has been treated as a problem poem. Great ingenuity has been expended on rival theories to explain the victory of Corydon in the amoebaean contest. From these some interesting facts, especially in connection with Thyrsis' alleged metrical flaws, have come to light, but serious doubts must remain whether Virgil intended his readers to take his poem so seriously. Even if he did, arguing about the reason or reasons for Corydon's victory is at best enlightened guesswork, whereas the view that Virgil meant to delight and amuse his readers is not open to doubt. The strength of the poem lies in its formal excellence, its characterization, and its delicate wit, which so often springs from incongruity. And this strength is not to be found in Virgil's models.

At first glance *Eclogue* 7 may seem to be markedly Theocritean.[2] The introduction is a fusion of the opening lines of *Idylls* 6 and 8 (cf. *Ec.* 7. 2 *compulerantque greges . . . in unum* and *Id.* 6. 1–2 εἰς ἕνα χῶρον / τὰν ἀγέλαν . . . συνάγαγον; *Ec.* 7. 4–5 *ambo florentes aetatibus, Arcades ambo, / et cantare pares et respondere parati* and *Id.* 8. 3–4 ἄμφω τώγ' ἤστην πυρροτρίχω, ἄμφω ἀνάβω, / ἄμφω συρίσδεν δεδαημένω, ἄμφω ἀείδεν); there is a narrator, as in *Idyll* 9; the amoebaean contest is in quatrains, as in *Idyll* 8; its main themes are the Theocritean ones of love and nature, and there are specific echoes which may seem a little pale (cf. *Ec.* 7. 37–8 and *Id.* 11. 20–1; *Ec.* 7. 45 and *Idylls* 8. 37, 5. 51, 15. 125).

It is after the introduction of Corydon and Thyrsis that Virgil shows his originality and wit. Meliboeus explains how he came to judge the contest. It all happened by chance, because of a he-goat which had strayed to the place where Corydon and Thyrsis were about to sing. In the contest of *Idyll* 8 Menalcas humorously addresses a he-goat as τᾶν λευκᾶν αἰγῶν ἄνερ (49), which Virgil echoes in *uir gregis ipse caper* (*Ec.* 7. 7). However, there is additional point here, as the implication is that an animal of such eminence should have known better than to lose the way. Furthermore, this one mock-heroic phrase which Virgil has borrowed from Theocritus blends with the tone of the ensuing narrative, or perhaps that tone was even suggested by the phrase. After the straying of the goat, Daphnis (deified?) appears like a *deus ex machina* (note the vivid construction *deerrauerat; atque . . . aspicio*), utters a prophecy about the salvation of Meliboeus' flock, and instructs him, in effect, to judge the singing match.[3] Meliboeus is in a quandary because of his obligation towards

[1] The only point at which Mopsus' song echoes Theocritus outside Thyrsis' song is 32–4. Here the construction reflects *Idylls* 8. 79–80 and 18. 29–31, but the details are different without being very novel.

[2] The fact that two of the sources, *Idylls* 8 and 9, are nowadays generally considered spurious is here irrelevant.

[3] Daphnis' words contain a surprise for the reader as well. The two 'Arcadians' turn out to be Arcadians only in spirit, worthy disciples of Pan. They are seated by Virgil's own Mincius! It is not that Virgil is reckless of geography, or that Corydon and Thyrsis are descended from slaves brought from Arcadia, as some have seriously suggested. Virgil has gently misled his readers, who should take the hint and not be too humourless about the rest of the poem.

his flock, and Virgil's description of his thought process is engagingly ponderous: *quid facerem? neque ego Alcippen nec Phyllida habebam / depulsos a lacte domi quae clauderet agnos, / et certamen erat, Corydon cum Thyrside, magnum. / posthabui tamen illorum mea seria ludo* (14–17). After this resolution of Meliboeus' inner conflict, the actual singing match is introduced in a markedly spondaic rhythm.

Corydon's epithet for the Muses in his opening quatrain is *Libethrides*, alluding to a fountain in Macedonia with which the Muses were occasionally associated. To regard this as a vulgar display of learning on Virgil's part is to underestimate him grossly. The poet is aiming at incongruity in order to amuse. After the errant goat, the elevation of the pastoral genre, and the shock of finding himself by the Mincius, the reader should be in the mood for a goatherd of incredible erudition. In *paruus* / . . . *Micon* (29–30) the same Corydon is Virgil's mouthpiece for an etymological pun involving the Doric form μικκός. But the great novelty in this eclogue, which is not foreshadowed in Theocritus or in Virgil's other amoebaean poems, is the starkly contrasted characterization of the contestants in the actual songs. Corydon is modest and self-effacing—witness his generous tribute to Codrus (21–4)—while Thyrsis has an opinion of himself which is belied both by Meliboeus' verdict and by occasional imperfections in his improvisations. Virgil depicts the extreme nature of his conceit with humour: *crescentem . . . poetam* (25), *uati . . . futuro* (28). His exaggerated promise of a golden statue of Priapus, whom he has addressed with some condescension (33–6), is entirely in character. He has a great gift for unpleasant details (41–4), and from his final quatrain (65–8) it appears that his love is less unconditional, less tender than Corydon's. Virgil has sketched two characters in miniature, with indulgence and good humour. In this he has given the amoebaean form a new dimension.

Finally, some details deserve brief consideration. Thyrsis' sketch of a domestic interior in winter (49–52) is modelled on *Idd.* 11. 51 and 9. 19–21, but Virgil's actual simile in *hic tantum Boreae curamus frigora quantum / aut numerum lupus aut torrentia flumina ripas* owes no detail to ἔχω δέ τοι οὐδ' ὅσον ὥραν / χείματος ἢ νωδὸς καρύων ἀμύλοιο παρόντος. In view of the rustic mentality of Thyrsis in *Eclogue* 7 and Menalcas in *Idyll* 9, we need not linger over the logical flaws in the similes which have been pointed out by hardened classicists: the cold is an evil against which Thyrsis and Menalcas must protect themselves, whereas a wolf is not on the defensive, and nuts are a pleasure to be forgone by the toothless, not an evil. Perhaps it is more to the point to observe that Theocritus' simile has a quaint charm which is absent in the Virgilian one. Thyrsis' inspiration is here at a low ebb. Were he invariably accomplished as a poet, then the insolent boast of his opening quatrain might appear to be justified, and Meliboeus could turn out another Palaemon, unable to decide between the contestants. If Virgil intends us to be in the least serious about the relative merits of the two contestants, Thyrsis' simile is the one obvious place in which he betrays his inferiority. Otherwise, Virgil has given him an ample talent. One need only compare *Id.* 8. 41–8 with *Ec.* 7. 53–60 to see how Thyrsis transforms a fairly conventional conceit by the refinement of chiasmus, or consider his masterly capping of Corydon's *hedera formosior alba* (38) with *proiecta uilior alga* (42).

Eclogue 7 ends with a colourful phrase from the lips of Meliboeus. Instead of the factual κὴκ τούτω πρᾶτος παρὰ ποιμέσι Δάφνις ἔγεντο (*Id.* 8. 92) we have *ex illo Corydon Corydon est tempore nobis* (*Ec.* 7. 70). Corydon has come into his

own, he has become a symbol of excellence in Meliboeus' eyes. And Virgil is juggling with words. The sound recalls *a, Corydon, Corydon* (*Ec.* 2. 69), but the grammar and, happily, the situation for Corydon are very different.

If *Eclogue* 2 is akin to the Simaetha idyll, 8 is its direct descendant. Broadly speaking, the first part of *Idyll* 2 consists of Simaetha's incantations to get Delphis back and the second of her lament and her recollections of her blighted love. Each part has its own refrain. In *Eclogue* 8 Virgil has taken up the themes of incantation on the one hand and lament and recollection on the other, but he has reversed the order and put them into separate amoebaean songs with refrains.

Damon's song,[1] like the second part of *Idyll* 2, is introspective and wholly serious, being a lament over a frustrated passion, with recollections of a happier past. But whereas scholars look to the genre of mime for the sources of the second idyll, in the case of *Eclogue* 8 one must consider both epic and tragedy as the genres with which Virgil has sought to ennoble what he culled from Theocritus. Virgil's intention of writing a monumental poem is evident in its opening where the wonderment of all Nature is framed between two similar lines with an identical ponderous rhythm: *Pastorum Musam Damonis et Alphesiboei, / immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuuenca / certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces, / et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus, / Damonis Musam dicemus et Alphesiboei.* And in the immediate introduction to Damon's song there is a blend of epic and pastoral features: *Frigida uix caelo noctis discesserat umbra, / cum ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba: / incumbens tereti Damon sic coepit oliuae* (14–16). Finally, while the idea at 43–5 that Amor has no natural mother but was born of Tmaros or Rhodope or the distant Garamantes may owe something superficially to *Idylls* 3. 15–16 and 7. 76–7, one is reminded most forcibly of *Il.* 16. 33 f., where Patroclus says rocks and sea are Achilles' mother.

Among other tributes to Pollio, Virgil praises his accomplishments as a writer of tragedy (*Ec.* 8. 10), and it is probable that tragic themes are introduced into this poem partly as a compliment to him. However that may be, the eighth eclogue undoubtedly gains in profundity thanks to these themes. Nysa is characterized by ὕβρις (32, 35, and 19–20, the last implying that she broke solemn vows). *Me malus abstulit error* (41) is reminiscent of the blind infatuation of such tragic heroes as Ajax. Both Damon and Ajax recognize their *error*, and take their lives in consequence of it. The cruelty of Amor is not treated in a superficial Alexandrian way, but the seriousness of Virgil's treatment of it may even recall *Antigone* 781 f. And, however unrealistically for a shepherd, Damon uses Medea as an example of a human being overpowered by love, and he questions whether Man or God is responsible for evil: *saeuus Amor docuit natorum sanguine matrem / commaculare manus; crudelis tu quoque, mater: / crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille? / improbus ille puer; crudelis tu quoque, mater* (47–50). These lines, so often condemned for their unloveliness, not only touch on the problem at the heart of so many Greek tragedies but, on a personal level, convey the feeling of one distraught, a man who has through wishful thinking come close to clearing his faithless love of blame, but who at the last moment cannot do it entirely.

Woven into the fabric of this poem are hints of Theocritus' *Liebestod* idylls (1 and 23), but the differences are marked. The emphasis in *Idyll* 1 is on

[1] It is quite likely that Damon is not singing in his own person, but it is convenient to call the lover Damon.

Daphnis' death, not his love, while Virgil concentrates on Damon's love, using the suicide motif only as a kind of frame (20 and 58–60). However, Virgil twice adapts the reversal of nature idea from *Id.* 1. 132–6. Each use has its own justification, and together they lend the poem a formal unity. Nysa's marriage to Mopsus provokes from Damon the embittered outburst *iungentur iam grypes equis, aeuoque sequenti | cum canibus timidi uenient ad pocula dammae* (27–8). At this stage of his lament Damon is stressing the grotesqueness of the union,[1] and Virgil's choice of griffins to mate with mares is particularly apt, as griffins themselves are half lion and half eagle. In τὰς κύνας ὤλαφος ἕλκοι Theocritus has presented a reversal of nature in its most literal sense, i.e. the attacker has become the attacked, but Virgil has in *cum canibus timidi uenient ad pocula dammae* adapted his source to the idea of an unlikely union. The change of grammatical mood, too, is noteworthy. Daphnis' words in *Idyll* 1 have been differently interpreted: he says either that if even he is to die anything can happen or, according to the rival interpretation, that since he is dying he does not care what happens. The reversal of nature is in the optative. However, Damon represents Nysa's marriage as a brutal fact and, in a world already so rotten, he says, grotesque unions will continue to take place. Virgil has attuned his matter to a mood of utter disillusionment.[2] The dying words of Daphnis reappear just before Damon's suicide (52–8). Here some of the alterations are slight. Virgil's subjunctive is equivalent to Theocritus' optative, and cf. ἁ δὲ καλὰ νάρκισσος ἐπ' ἀρκεύθοισι κομάσαι and *narcisso floreat alnus*; κὴξ ὀρέων τοὶ σκῶπες ἀηδόσι γαρύσαιντο and *certent et cycnis ululae*. It is Virgil's progression of thought from this last example that gives the adaptation his individual stamp. The addition of *sit Tityrus Orpheus* leads naturally in the next line to a recurrence of the 'emotive power of song' theme from 2–4, and also neatly introduces a contrast between land and sea which is elaborated on two planes: the next reversal of nature is *omnia vel medium fiat mare*,[3] and Damon is about to forsake land for sea: *uiuite siluae: | praeceps aërii specula de montis in undas | deferar* (58–60).

Damon describes his suicide as his last gift to Nysa (60), just as the lover at *Id.* 23. 21 offers his halter as a gift to the boy who has spurned his love, but otherwise Damon's song has nothing in common with this shallow and unattractive idyll. One must compare, if only to dismiss, *Id.* 3. 25–7, where the threat of the unhappy lover to jump from a rock is not followed up at all, and even the last words of the poem in which he says he will lie down where he has fallen and let the wolves eat him should probably be taken no more seriously. His passion is totally lacking in depth. The whole spirit of his serenade to Amaryllis is different from that of Damon's solitary lament.[4] It is from the

[1] A little later, however, his mood has changed and he exclaims with bitter irony that she got the husband she deserved (32).

[2] Cf. *Ec.* 1. 59–63, where Virgil gives the reversal of nature theme yet another original twist. Tityrus in fact says that all nature will be topsy-turvy before he forgets Octavian, i.e. he will never forget him. The individual details are Virgil's own, and he has given the passage an appropriately political flavour by referring to Rome's enemies and the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Moreover, the hypothetical, or rather impossible, migrations of Tityrus' lines are immediately matched by the very real ones gloomily foreshadowed by Meliboeus in his reply.

[3] The theory that Virgil misunderstood πάντα δ' ἔναλλα (or ἄναλλα) γένοιτο is now, happily, unfashionable. Scholars suggest with rather greater plausibility that the *sound* of the Greek made Virgil think of the sea.

[4] A similar distinction was drawn above between Polyphemus' song in *Id.* 11 and Corydon's in *Ec.* 2.

third idyll, also, that Virgil has taken *nunc scio quid sit Amor* . . . (43 and cf. *Id.* 3. 15–16), but we have already observed how Virgil has altered and developed the remarks about the parentage of Amor into something wholly his own, with epic and tragic overtones. In addition, Virgil has deepened the significance of *nunc*. In Theocritus *νῦν* is fairly otiose. The only hint of better days occurs in *τί μ' οὐκέτι . . . / . . . καλεῖς* (6–7), whereas in *Eclogue* 8 the passage comes just after a beautiful recollection of the first meeting with Nysa. *Nunc* marks the contrast between earlier hope and present despair. Damon's recollection of his first meeting with Nysa (37–40) clearly echoes Polyphemus remembering how he first saw Galatea (*Id.* 11. 25–7), but Virgil is describing the beginning of young love: *paruam te . . . / . . . uidi . . . / alter ab undecimo tum me iam acceperat annus, / iam fragilis poteram a terra contingere ramos*. The conspicuous elisions may represent Damon's youthful hesitation. Damon's love has been nurtured hopefully over the years, whereas nothing indicates that Polyphemus was at an impressionable age when he met Galatea, that the meeting was other than a recent one, or that he ever had grounds for hope. There is a difference, too, in the lovers' explanation of their rejection (cf. *Ec.* 8. 32–5 and *Id.* 11. 30–3). While echoing Polyphemus slightly, Damon says with bitterness that Nysa is haughty and impious, she despises not just his appearance but his whole way of life. The assonance and alliteration of gloomy sounds in this part of Damon's lament widens the gulf between him and the comic, pathetic, grotesque giant.[1]

The emotional pitch of Damon's song is consistently high. By way of contrast Alphesiboeus' song seems to be deliberately drained of emotion. The incantations, unlike Simaetha's, are not interrupted by passionate outbursts. The suicide of Damon contrasts with the happy ending of Alphesiboeus' song where the incantations have their effect and Daphnis comes home. (At the end of *Idyll* 2 Simaetha is still alone and resigned to her lot.) Acts of sympathetic magic are taken over wholesale from *Idyll* 2, with few alterations significant in a literary study: cf. *Ec.* 8. 73–8 and *Id.* 2. 2 (wool); *Ec.* 8. 82 and *Id.* 2. 18, 23–6, 33 (cereals and bay-leaves); *Ec.* 8. 91–3 and *Id.* 2. 53–4 (clothes of the beloved); *Ec.* 8. 95–6 and *Id.* 2. 59–62 (herbs). The instruction about throwing ashes into the stream without turning round (*Ec.* 8. 101–2) comes from Tiresias' speech at *Id.* 24. 93–6. Virgil has elaborated *ὡς τοῦτον τὸν κηρὸν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίμονι τάκω, / ὣς τάκοιθ' ὑπ' ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δέλφις* (*Id.* 2. 28–9) into *limus ut hic durescit, et haec ut cera liquescit / uno eodemque igni, sic nostro Daphnis amore* (*Ec.* 8. 80–1). We need not linger over the symbolic significance of the clay, which scholars have interpreted variously. The important point is that Virgil has introduced an antithesis with a jingle which is characteristic of such rituals in real life.

Two more radical alterations concern the setting of the poem and its refrain.

[1] It is interesting that Damon's song contains only one obvious verbal reminiscence of Simaetha's lament with which it has so much in common in tone and subject-matter: cf. *Ec.* 8. 41 *ut uidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error* and *Id.* 2. 82 *χὠς ἴδον, ὣς ἐμάνην, ὣς μοι πυρὶ θυμὸς ἰάφθη* as well as *Id.* 3. 42 *ὡς ἴδεν, ὡς ἐμάνη, ὡς ἐς βαθὺν ἅλατ' ἔρωτα*. Virgil's daring linguistic innovation in *ut . . . , ut . . . , ut . . .* presupposes his readers' acquaintance with the Greek idiom in his models. Also, his hiatus is clearly inspired by the one at the same point in the second Theocritus passage. However, this hiatus together with the preceding heavy elision gives Virgil's line a unique emotional quality. Finally, note how Virgil's line, and especially the introduction of *error*, acts as a bridge between the preceding romantic passage and the following epic/tragic one.

It is presumably to blend his poem with the rest of the collection that Virgil has transferred his action from the city to a rural décor. Even the eclogues with the loftiest tone and not specifically rural themes are studiously integrated into the collection: *Ec.* 4. 3 *si canimus siluas, siluae sint consule dignae*, and the various instances of life in the Golden Age are set in the country; and the actual setting in which Silenus sings in *Eclogue* 6 is purely rural. In the refrain of Alphesiboeus' song Virgil has, significantly, substituted *carmina* for *ἴυγξ*. Although we may distinguish between *carmen* in the sense of 'poem' or 'song' on the one hand and 'incantation' on the other, to a Roman the meanings merged. Thus Virgil's choice of *carmina* in the refrain (cf. 69–71) is in keeping with the 'emotive power of song' theme recurrent throughout the Eclogues.[1]

Virgil's equivalent of Theocritus' *ἱππομανές* simile (*Id.* 2. 48–50) is the simile of the heifer at *Ec.* 8. 85–9. Owing something to Lucretius 2. 355–66, this passage is remarkable for its pathos and sympathy as well as its evocative natural description. Finally, in producing his own counterpart of Theocritus' macabre section about Hecate (*Id.* 2. 12–14) at 97–9, Virgil has altered the details completely and included a Roman allusion, as the charming away of crops was specifically prohibited in the Twelve Tables.

The above alterations do not destroy one's impression that as a whole Alphesiboeus' song is remarkably like a replica of Simaetha's incantations without her emotional turmoil. But if it had been as deeply felt and as complex in structure as Damon's song the contrast would have been destroyed and the eighth eclogue would have been overloaded. This seems to be the most plausible explanation why Virgil was, for once, content to be almost blatantly Theocritean.

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[1] In Damon's refrain Virgil's remodelling of *ἄρχετε βουκολικᾶς, Μοῖσαι, πάλιν ἄρχετ' ἀοιδᾶς* from *Idyll* 1 as *incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, uersus* looks forward especially to *Eclogue* 10, with its dream-like setting in Arcadia.