VIRGIL AND THEOCRITUS

Text of a lecture read to the Virgil Society, 16th January, 1971.

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"I will give you a deep bowl, washed in sweet wax, newly made, with two handles, still smelling of the knife. Round its edge at the top is trailing ivy, ivy sprinkled with golden flowers, and along it winds the tendril, glorying in its yellow fruit. Inside the cup is depicted a woman, such as the gods might form, wearing a cloak and a circlet. Beside her two men with lovely long hair are arguing together from either side. But she is quite unmoved: but now she looks at one man and smiles, and now she turns her attention to the other. But they have long been hollow-eyed with love, and are wasting their effort.

Next to these is engraved an old fisherman, and a rugged rock, on which the old man enthusiastically draws back his large net for the cast, giving the impression of a man making a great effort. You would say he was fishing with all the strength of his limbs, to see his sinews standing out on his neck, old and grey as he is. His strength is like a young man's.

And just a little away from the sea-beaten old man there is a vineyard loaded with red clusters: and a little boy is guarding it, sitting on a dry-stone wall. Round him are two foxes; one is going along the rows of vines stealing the ripe grapes, the other exercises all her guile on the knapsack, swearing she will not let the youngster go until she lays hold of his breakfast. But the boy is plaiting a cricket-cage, fitting it together with asphodel and rushes: and he is not so interested in his bag or the plants as in the pleasure of plaiting ...."

Many of you will recognize the bowl proffered as a gift by the goatherd in Theocritus' first Idyll (11.27-54). I quote it firstly because it is always a pleasure to recall this passage, but also because it shows the Greek poet as the poet of charming description, with an expansiveness and a detachment which appeal particularly to those readers who find these properties lacking or less evident in the Eclogues. And indeed Virgil's imitation of this passage stands in marked contrast. In Eclogue 3 Menalcas and Damoetas discuss stakes in their projected singing-match, and both propose cups:

M. pocula ponam
fagina, caelatum diuini opus Alcimedontis:
lenta quibus torno facili superaddita uitis
diffusos hedera uestit pallente corymbos.
in medio duo signa, Conon et - quis fuit alter,
descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem.
tempora quae messor, quae curuus arator haberet?
necdum illis labra admoui, sed condita seruo.

D. Et nobis idem Alcimedon duo pocula fecit,
et molli circum est ansas amplexus acantho,
Orpheaque in medio posuit siluasque sequentis;
necdum illis labra admoui, sed condita seruo.

(Eclogue 3, 36-47).

Virgil is more compact and restrained. There is also a difference in the pictures engraved on his shepherd's cups: instead of vignettes of life and love in the pastoral landscape[1] we have two scientists from Alexandria, Conon and presumably Eudoxus, though they are associated by Virgil, it is true, with the agricultural world: and Orpheus, the patron of poetry. These are highly sophisticated shepherds who are as interested in the world of literature and learning as in their homely craft. In addition, Virgil introduces a self-conscious note: shepherds in Arcadia may exhibit knowledge and interests which we would not expect from ordinary shepherds - and Theocritus' shepherds discourse very learnedly about mythology and legend in particular: it is one aspect of the guilelessness of Theocritus that he allows his characters to know all that they need to know, without drawing attention to the incongruity of this knowledge in the untutored rustic: but Virgil as the self-conscious artist chooses to confront us with the incongruity by making Menalcas fail to remember the name of the second astronomer.

It is possible to contrast the two poets in terms of simplicity and naiveté as against complexity and sophistication; expansiveness and inconsequentiality as against tightness and balanced structure, detachment and objectivity set against social and personal commitment. These are the polarities which serve to throw into relief the differences in aims and methods between the two poets: and a concentration on these differences produces on the one hand the view that Virgil is the corrupter of the true pastoral, who compromised the detachment of Arcadia by involving it in the affairs and persons of contemporary Italy, and on the other the fiction that the Virgil of the Eclogues already possesses all the characteristics of the poet of the Georgics and the Aeneid, so that Corydon has a 'sensibility almost as great as Virgil's, and his suffering is realised from within':[2] or to quote Putnam:

"At the start of his poetic career, Virgil is already master of an allusive strength which beggars final analysis for its forceful combination of emotion and restraint, and has already succeeded in transforming pastoral poetry from a mask for idyllic escape to one for tragedy."

Both views represent an emotive response and a distortion of the truth, based on devotion to the Theocritean model on the one hand, or admiration of the poetry of Virgil's maturity on the other.

In this lecture I am not attempting a synthesis of Virgil's debt to Theocritus, nor shall I draw general conclusions about the relationship between the two poets. In the present company I thought it would be pleasant - and I hope instructive - simply to look at Virgil's borrowings on a very narrow front so as to be confronted by the text of the two poets side by side, concentrating on only one eclogue in the hope that the

adaptations, omissions and accretions may throw light on Virgil's methods and aims. And I have chosen what is generally regarded as the earliest of the imitations, where Virgil's adherence to his model might be expected to be closest, namely the second eclogue. In this poem Virgil has not progressed to the definitive form of the eclogue, which presumably is represented by the first poem in the collection: and it will be interesting if even here we find significant differences both in the general tone and function of the poem and also in the details of the expression. I must confess that Eclogue 2 has been frequently analysed with reference to its model, and I shall not attempt to advert to all the analyses which have been presented except to mention some of the principal examples for reference.[3] I shall try to limit my comments to more or less precise details in the text, in the hope that we may see the poet at work, choosing and adapting the Theocritean material to suit his own purpose. You should have before you, not a complete text of Eclogue 2, but a collection of passages in the eclogue side by side with the passages of Theocritus of which they are a reflection:[4] but before I discuss the individual borrowings I shall make some more general observations.

For the eclogue as a whole Virgil is largely indebted to Idylls III and XI, the κῶμος in which an unnamed goatherd sings a kind of παρακλαυσίθυρον to Amaryllis, and the song of the Cyclops Polyphemus wooing the sea-nymph Galatea. The idea of a hopeless love for a loved one who is unresponsive and who will not listen reflects the situation of Idyll III: but by and large Corydon is identified with Polyphemus and Virgil clearly invites a comparisom between the two, so that some of his effects depend upon the reader's recognition of the allusion. It is of course a commonplace that in imitating their Greek predecessors the Latin poets (just as much as the commentators) emphasise rather than underplay their debt, and expect the percipient reader to derive added pleasure from the reminiscence, and from the application of the words of their model to a changed context [e.g. Catullus 51 which shows a change from homosexual to heterosexual love just as Eclogue 2 replaces the sea-nymph by a *puer delicatus*.] That Polyphemus is clearly in the forefront as Corydon's model is demonstrated by Lines 19-22 (*Siculis in montibus* is a precise reference to the habitat of the Cyclops - which makes it all the more surprising that one scholar at least thinks this a reference to *foreign* possessions of the absentee Roman landlord Corydon!): lines 25-7 lend even more support to this view, since they come not from Idyll XI but from Idyll VI, yet still with reference to Polyphemus: and of course line 72 is the clearest of echoes, *O Corydon, Corydon* rendering ὦ Κύκλωψ, Κύκλωψ. Virgil's intention is that, whatever the effect this may have on the personality of Corydon, he should invite comparison with Polyphemus. We shall look at the individual passages in a moment, but the differences between the two poems *as a whole* is relevant to our purpose. Given that Corydon is modelled in *some* respects on Polyphemus, why is he not like the Cyclops completely? Why is he called Corydon and not Polyphemus?

Polyphemus is a figure from mythology, and in writing of his love for Galatea Theocritus is following a common practice among the Alexandrian Greek poets: he is dramatising an episode from myth, basically for entertainment and partly as an illustration of a theme which he explains in his introduction to Nikias, namely the power of the Muse to console and give relief from the

wounds of love: and Klingner is no doubt right in suggesting that Nicias was expected to be amused and to smile at the incongruity of the one-eyed monster who terrified Odysseus' crew hoping to entice the sea-nymph with his song. And there is no lack of humorous play in the Idyll. His realisation of his own ugliness (Id. XI, 30-33) is at once pathetic and ludicrous:

> γινώσκω, χαρίεσσα κόρα, τίνος οὕνεκα φεύγεις·
> οὕνεκά μοι λασία μὲν ὀφρὺς ἐπὶ παντὶ μετώπῳ
> ἐξ ὠτὸς τέταται ποτὶ θὤτερον ὧς μία μακρά,
> εἷς δ' ὀφθαλμὸς ὕπεστι, πλατεῖα δὲ ῥὶς ἐπὶ χείλει.

"I know, pretty maiden, why you shun me: it's because I have one big shaggy eyebrow stretching right across my forehead from one end to the other, and one eye below it, and a broad nose above my lip. Yet in spite of my looks I tend a thousand head ... "

Again there is his forlorn wish that he could have been born even more monstrous than he is, with a fish's gills, so as to swim down to Galatea and kiss her hand. And when he finally gives up hope he tries to arouse jealousy and console his injured feelings:

> πολλαὶ συμπαίσδεν με κόραι τὰν νύκτα κέλονται,
> κιχλίζοντι δὲ πᾶσαι, ἐπεί κ' αὐταῖς ὑπακούσω.
> δῆλον ὅτ' ἐν τᾷ γᾷ κἠγών τις φαίνομαι ἦμεν.
>
> (Id. XI.77-79.)

"Lots of girls invite me to spend the night in sport with them: and they all titter when I listen to them: clearly on land I am somebody."

Polyphemus is not only an individual with a history: he is an extraordinary individual - a one-eyed Caliban in love. Virgil clearly did not wish even at this stage in his development to write a mere παίγνιον, a playful variation on a mythological theme. By giving his shepherd-wooer the faceless name of Corydon (a name from Theocritus of course, but not a developed personality) he made it possible for the reader to identify at certain points with Corydon, and for Corydon possibly to act as the poet's mouthpiece in a way that Polyphemus was precluded from doing. I am not saying that Corydon does speak for Virgil or that he is a universal figure: but Virgil, by substituting Corydon for Polyphemus, allows himself freedom to develop the character of Corydon and to develop the theme of the poem as he wishes. What the actual development is we shall consider as we go through the poem.

> Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexim,
> delicias domini; nec quid speraret habebat.
> tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos
> adsidue veniebat. ibi haec incondita solus
> montibus et silvis studio iactabat inani.
>
> (Eclogue 2, 1-5).

ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον εὗρε, καθεζόμενος δ' ἐπὶ πέτρας
ὑψηλᾶς ἐς πόντον ὁρῶν ἄειδε τοιαῦτα·

(Id. XI. 17-18).

The eclogue, unlike Theocritus' Cyclops Idyll, comes straight to the point wihtout any introductory patter, with the balanced restraint and directness of the first line: Corydon is a shepherd and Alexis is beautiful - the two epithets come in sharp contrast to hint at the incompatibility which is immediately specified by nec quid speraret habebat. Theocritus had prefaced his Idyll with a moralising address to Nikias the physician, and the song of Polyphemus is presented as an illustration of the power of the Muses, ταὶ Πιερίδες, as providing the only remedy for love. Polyphemus has been severely wounded by Aphrodite, but he found the remedy - ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον εὗρε - sitting high on a rock looking out to sea, and singing his song. His song in effect was a sublimation of his passion, which brought him relief, and he enjoyed the activity. This is emphasised at the beginning and at the end by Theocritus:

οὕτω γοῦν ῥᾷστα διᾶγ' ὁ Κύκλωψ ὁ παρ' ἁμῖν,
ὡρχαῖος Πολύφαμος, ὄκ' ἤρατο τᾶς Γαλατείας,

(Id. XI. 7-8).

οὕτω τοι Πολύφαμος ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα
μουσίσδων, ῥᾷον δὲ διᾶγ' ἢ εἰ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν.

(Id. XI.80-81).

Corydon at this point stands in sharp contrast, and of course he is more akin to the snub-nosed goatherd of Idyll III whose love is a hopeless one. The words tantum (all he could do was keep wandering off to the beech-woods) and studio inani indicate the absence of relief in his case: inanis is regularly used by Virgil (and also by Catullus in the well-known phrase at his brother's tomb - inani munere) to indicate utter hopelessness and frustration. Whether there is ultimate relief for Corydon at the end of the poem is a point we can put off for discussion at the appropriate time.

Perhaps the setting too indicates something of the difference between Corydon and Polyphemus: there is a certain serenity about Polyphemus, high up on a rock, and looking out to sea which is after all the habitat of Galatea who may even be listening. Corydon's setting suggests darkness and restless wandering: there is constant movement, the beech-trees are close packed and shadowy (they do not even provide the relief of shade, as we find in lines 8-13) and Corydon flings his words - iactabat where Theocritus uses the colourless word ἄειδε - uselessly at the woods and mountains. The dense beech-trees suggest that Corydon is lost in his wanderings, looking for Alexis - tua dum vestigia lustro - and this is an image Virgil uses elsewhere of another victim of frustrated love:

inter quas Phoenissa recens a vulnere Dido
errabat silva in magna.

(Aeneid vi, 450-1.)

A hint of the self-conscious artist too is given by the further elaboration

on the simple ἄειδε - haec incondita. Virgil gives indications elsewhere of his interest in poetry as the shepherd's art: and in one sense of incondita here he is slyly suggesting to the reader that this is one of the functions of pastoral poetry - the shepherds are unsophisticated and untutored but the poetry which Virgil puts in their mouths conforms to the highest standards of contemporary poetic technique: Virgil does not generally introduce the touches of coarse realism and banality which Theocritus sometimes admits. But in another sense Corydon's song may be confused and disordered, a point which I will return to later.

There remains one phrase in the introductory passage which is unique to Virgil - delicias domini: this tells us at once that Alexis is a puer delicatus and the favourite of another, and also presumably that Corydon has a dominus and is therefore either a slave or a hireling; and these raise interesting elements in the poem which have no reference to Idylls XI or III or to any other Theocritean Idyll so far as I have been able to observe. The introduction of the rich rival - presumably alluded to as Iollas in line 57 - seems gratuitous, and the triangular situation is not kept before the reader throughout the poem: and this might seem to lend credence to the tradition that there existed a real Alexis or Alexander who was the favourite of Pollio (or according to Martial, 8.56, Maecenas). But the real impact of the master's favourite is that it introduces into the poem a town/country tension, since the favourite is conceived of as living the luxurious life of the town (1.61 Pallas quas condidit arces ipsa colat) and regarding the country as sordida rura (1.28). A further point I should like to suggest is that the rich rival is a convention of love-elegy; and the song of Corydon has clear affinities with Latin love-elegy which is most often concerned with hopeless love. Lines 28-30 -

> o tantum libeat mecum tibi sordida rura
> atque humilis habitare casas et figere cervos,
> haedorumque gregem viridi compellere hibisco!

invite comparison with Tibullus, and I feel that the tone of Tibullus' poetry is very close to that of the eclogues: and when we also think of Virgil's close relationship with Gallus, and his references elsewhere to Gallus' love-poetry, we should be alive to similarities between the two genres.

The master/servant relationship implied in domini raises doubts about the unity of the poem. Clearly the boasts in lines 20-22 are inconsistent with the lowly station of Corydon: if Polyphemus' similar boasts in Idyll XI are exaggerated, Corydon's are even more so: and when we add to this the aspects of Polyphemus which are somewhat incongruously applied to Corydon (I am thinking particularly of lines 25-7) I feel that Virgil does not wish to give too much credibility to Corydon as a person. He is a dramatic presentation of the lover who is not a balanced and dispassionate observer (quis enim modus adsit amori). Klingner, Brooks Otis and others regard him as completely serious, where Polyphemus is ludicrous. He illustrates, says Klingner[5], what Virgil frequently feels: "Ohnmacht und Würde der unbedingten unerfüllbaren Liebe," - the impotence and the dignity of unconditional but unfulfilled love. I believe, however, that Corydon partakes of the pathetic/ridiculous aspects of Polyphemus: and just as Polyphemus is not entirely ludicrous, so Corydon is not entirely a tragic figure. Let us not forget

Horace's adversion to the facetum as an element in the eclogues. There are deeply serious elements in the eclogues, but I think we should not be too concerned to find them here. Virgil is able to give a detached picture of Corydon's hopeless love with which we can sympathize but at which we can also smile.

O crudelis Alexi, nihil mea carmina curas?
nil nostri miserere? mori me denique cogis?

(Eclogue 2, 6-7).

Ὦ χαρίεσσ' Ἀμαρυλλί, τί μ' οὐκέτι τοῦτο κατ' ἄντρον
παρκύπτοισα καλεῖς, τὸν ἐρωτύλον; ἦ ῥά με μισεῖς;
ἦ ῥά γέ τοι σιμὸς καταφαίνομαι ἐγγύθεν ἦμεν,
νύμφα, καὶ προγένειος; ἀπάγξασθαί με ποησεῖς.
(Id.III.6-9).

Virgil seems to have both his main sources in mind here. Crudelis is appropriate to the despair of the opening - and incidentally it is a common word in love-elegy - compared with ὦ χαρίεσσ' Ἀμαρυλλί (Id. III) and ὦ λευκὰ Γαλάτεια (Id.XI) nihil mea carmina curas has affinities with τὶν δ' οὐ μέλει, οὐ μὰ Δί', οὐδέν (XI.29) and οὐχ ὑπακούεις (III.24); and nil nostri miserere? with ἦ ῥά με μισεῖς; but closest of all is the Theocritean ἀπάγξασθαί με ποησεῖς (III.9). Reference to Corydon's looks here would be out of place although they figure in Theocritus: on the other hand it is worth noting the emphasis Virgil places on the shepherd's powers of song. As Rohde remarked, 'poeta magis quam pastor videtur esse'. And when Corydon invites Alexis to the country (lines 28-39) the main attraction of the shepherd's life is represented as playing on the Pan pipe: in fact lines 31-39 have no parallel in Theocritus and Virgil's symbolic mention of poetry here indicates his preoccupation with the technique of poetry, and perhaps with the rivalries of poets hinted at in the mention of Amyntas in that passage.

Light is thrown on a textual variant in line 7 by the Theocritean parallel: P has cogis, R has coges, and ποησεῖς must give some weight to coges.

nunc etiam pecudes umbras et frigora captant;
nunc viridis etiam occultant spineta lacertos.

(Eclogue 2, 8-9).

at mecum raucis, tua dum vestigia lustro,
sole sub ardenti resonant arbusta cicadis.
(Ibid.12-13).

Σιμιχίδα, πᾶ δὴ τὺ μεσαμέριον πόδας ἕλκεις,
ἁνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐν αἱμασιαῖσι καθεύδει,
οὐδ' ἐπιτυμβίδιοι κορυδαλλίδες ἠλαίνοντι;
(Id. VII.21-3).

Here Virgil uses an idea from Idyll VII which he applies to a quite different use. In the Idyll the goatherd Lycidas is surprised at the vigorous pace

of the poet and his friends at mid-day, 'when even the lizard is sleeping on the dry-stone walls and not even the tomb-haunting larks are wandering abroad'. In Theocritus the image is clear and simple. Virgil uses the illustration, which he enlarges and makes more specific, to underline Corydon's intensity of feeling which sets him at odds with nature: his passion is disturbing the natural order: when everything takes shade and coolness and refreshment, Corydon is still burning with passion and bewailing his unhappy love: and his song is like the hoarse croaking of the cicadas. The contrast is presented again in reverse in a balancing couplet towards the end of his song, lines 66-8: the sun in its downward course brings other creatures to rest and coolness: but Corydon is still burning - *me tamen urit amor*.

> o formose puer, nimium ne crede colori!
> alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur.
> (Eclogue 2, 17-18)
>
> Βομβύκα χαρίεσσα, Σύραν καλέοντί τυ πάντες,
> ἰσχνάν, ἁλιόκαυστον, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος μελίχλωρον.
> καὶ τὸ ἴον μέλαν ἐστί, καὶ ἁ γραπτὰ ὑάκινθος·
> ἀλλ' ἔμπας ἐν τοῖς στεφάνοις τὰ πρᾶτα λέγονται.
> (Id. X.26-9).

Virgil neatly reverses an illustration from Idyll X. Bombuka is dark, but then so are the violet and hyacinth, and they are first to be picked for garlands. Alexis may consider himself superior to Menalcas, who had a dark skin: but white privet is allowed to fall, and black hyacinth is picked. The Virgilian imitation is so concise as to be slightly obscure, and this may be why so many commentators refer to another passage of Theocritus, XXIII 28-31, which speaks of beauty withering with age:

> καὶ τὸ ῥόδον καλόν ἐστι. καὶ ὁ χρόνος αὐτὸ μαραίνει·
> καὶ τὸ ἴον καλόν ἐστιν ἐν εἴαρι, καὶ ταχὺ γηρᾷ·
> [λευκὸν τὸ κρίνον ἐστί, μαραίνεται ἁνίκα πίπτει·
> ἁ δὲ χιὼν λευκά, καὶ τάκεται ἁνίκα †παχθῇ·]

Here we have no reference to the withering process of time, but a simple statement that in nature black is sometimes preferred to white.

> despectus tibi sum, nec qui sim quaeris, Alexi,
> quam dives pecoris, nivei quam lactis abundans.
> mille meae Siculis errant in montibus agnae,
> lac mihi non aestate novum, non frigore defit.
> (Eclogue 2, 19-22).
>
> ἀλλ'οὗτος τοιοῦτος ἐὼν βοτὰ χίλια βόσκω,
> κἠκ τούτων τὸ κράτιστον ἀμελγόμενος γάλα πίνω·
> τυρὸς δ' οὐ λείπει μ' οὔτ' ἐν θέρει οὔτ' ἐν ὀπώρα,
> οὐ χειμῶνος ἄκρω· ταρσοὶ δ' ὑπεραχθέες αἰεί.
> (Id. XI.34-7).

The resemblance to Idyll XI, 34-37 is close: and of course Corydon's boast is inconsistent with his status. Surely it is not simply that Virgil in imitating Theocritus forgot the incongruity: even at this stage of his career we have seen sufficient evidence of his careful workmanship. He wishes to draw attention to the Polyphemus passage and Siculis in montibus, a phrase which does not figure in Theocritus, is put there in order to make the reference to the Cyclops unmistakable. Love not only puts Corydon at odds with nature, it also makes him slightly ridiculous - and he tells lies to the beloved in the manner prescribed by Ovid in the Ars Amatoria.

> canto quae solitus, si quando armenta vocabat,
> Amphion Dircaeus in Actaeo Aracyntho.
>
> (Eclogue 2, 23-24).

> συρίσδεν δ' ὡς οὔτις ἐπίσταμαι ὧδε Κυκλώπων.
> (Id. XI. 38).

Again the Cyclops is imitated: but he merely pipes better than any other Cyclops. Corydon goes much further in his extravagant claims. He can sing like Amphion, a hero of Boeotian legend. The language is pompous and 'epic' , not entirely suited to a shepherd: in fact it is one of Virgil's entirely Greek lines with nothing but proper names and a Greek rhythm with hiatus; and it may of course be taken straight from Greek, though not from Theocritus. Servius defends Virgil's faulty geography [Actaeo means Attic] by suggesting that actaeo is a Greek borrowing - ἀκταίῳ, from ἀκτή - meaning on the coast. But he records that some people think Virgil is being clever and intentionally making his shepherd a poor geographer - ut ostendatur rustici imperitia: I rather think Virgil was showing a poet's indifference to strict scientific accuracy. It would also be amusing to speculate that Virgil was teasing his learned readers by forging his own Greek 'borrowing', and being more Greek than the Greeks.

> nec sum adeo informis: nuper me in litore vidi,
> cum placidum ventis staret mare. non ego Daphnim
> iudice te metuam, si numquam fallit imago.
>
> (Eclogue 2, 25-27.)

> καὶ γάρ θην οὐδ' εἶδος ἔχω κακὸν ὥς με λέγοντι.
> ἦ γὰρ πρᾶν ἐς πόντον ἐσέβλεπον, ἦς δὲ γαλάνα,
> καὶ καλὰ μὲν τὰ γένεια, καλὰ δέ μευ ἁ μία κώρα,
> ὡς παρ' ἐμὶν κέκριται, κατεφαίνετο, τῶν δέ τ' ὀδόντων
> λευκοτέραν αὐγὰν Παρίας ὑπέφαινε λίθοιο.
>
> (Id. VI. 34-38).

> γινώσκω, χαρίεσσα κόρα, τίνος οὕνεκα φεύγεις·
> οὕνεκά μοι λασία μὲν ὀφρὺς ἐπὶ παντὶ μετώπῳ
> ἐξ ὠτὸς τέταται ποτὶ θὤτερον ὡς μία μακρά,
> εἷς δ' ὀφθαλμὸς ὕπεστι, πλατεῖα δὲ ῥὶς ἐπὶ χείλει.
>
> (Id. XI. 30-33).

The passage in Idyll XI where Polyphemus describes himself, which I quoted earlier, was obviously unsuited to Virgil's purpose: it is not only

uniquely applicable to a Cyclops, it is also partially ludicrous. But it is significant that Virgil, in looking for a suitable passage, lighted upon a passage from Idyll VI which also has reference to Polyphemus. Virgil is underlining the resemblances between Corydon and the Cyclops. The representation of a shepherd seeing his reflection in the sea while standing on the shore, nuper me in litore vidi is a flight of fancy which helps to reinforce the fantasy element in Corydon's situation: the Cyclops is huge, is the son of a sea-nymph, and is represented as simply looking into the sea ἐς πόντον ἐσέβλεπον. Virgil also refrains from specifying in what Corydon's beauty consists, paying more attention to the natural description (cum placidum ventis staret mare corresponding to the plain ἦς δὲ γαλάνα) ; and there is a pathetic diffidence about Corydon's bolstering of his ego - si nunquam fallit imago - which demonstrates perhaps Corydon's realisation that he is out of tune with his environment; perhaps even his reflection is playing him false. iudice te seems to me to have little point beside the Theocritean phrase ὡς παρ' ἐμὶν κέκριται which is an amusing comment on Cyclopean beauty - to a Cyclops his one eye was lovely . Virgil might well have used here the enormously appealing description (XI.25-9) of how Polyphemus fell in love with Galatea, a phrase he recalled in Eclogue 8,37-41: if he really wanted to make Corydon sympathetic and tragic, here was his opportunity: but he deliberately chose the passage from Idyll VI.

> o tantum libeat mecum tibi sordida rura
> atque humilis habitare casas et figere cervos,
> haedorumque gregem viridi compellere hibisco!
> (Ecloge 2, 28-30).
>
> ποιμαίνειν δ' ἐθέλοις σὺν ἐμὶν ἅμα καὶ γάλ' ἀμέλγειν
> καὶ τυρὸν πᾶξαι τάμισον δριμεῖαν ἐνεῖσα.
> (Id . XI. 65-66).

Corydon wishes, like Polyphemus, that he could entice his love to the delights of country life. One is reminded of a similar desire on the part of Tibullus, and again of the similarities between this eclogue and love-elegy. The changes Virgil introduces are interesting: Polyphemus' invitation is a specific one suited precisely to his situation, shepherding sheep and goats. Corydon has the goats, and rather surprisingly talks of hunting in his desire to indicate the relaxations and pleasures of the shepherd's life: but again we have a discordant note, since hunting is not normally an adjunct of the pastoral pleasures, and it is incongruous for the hireling shepherd to be also a hunter: on the other hand there are numerous references in love-elegy to the very different figure of the Roman lover out hunting with his mistress.

More significant still is the introduction of a discordant note in sordida rura and humilis casas in portraying the delights of the country: Corydon is himself judging the countryside from the point of view of Alexis the townsman, enjoying a different standard of living; and Virgil is introducing as he does at various points the tension between town and country which is a theme underlying the eclogue. The land/sea confrontation of Polyphemus/Galatea is at a much more superficial, not to say jocular, level.

Polyphemus thinks about learning to swim and joining Galatea in the sea: it is unthinkable that Corydon should contemplate deserting the country for the town.

Lines 31-39, which continue the same theme, are interesting in not having their parallel in Theocritus. Virgil resumes the theme already introduced at lines 23-4, with the solitary hint in Idyll XI.38 of Polyphemus' prowess in piping. A mere three lines outlining the delights of the country in hunting and herding, are followed by nine lines about piping and singing. Alexis could learn to play on the pipe which Damoetas passed on to Corydon to the jealous chagrin of Amyntas. References to shepherd performances as a metaphor for poetic composition seem frequent in the Eclogues. Eclogue 7 in particular seems to be an amaebœan dialogue on poetic technique: and in it Virgil perhaps alludes to his own dilemma in choosing between his conflicting interests in farming and poetry:

> 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.
>
> (Eclogue 7, 14-17).

Theocritus' pastoral is a study of a particular idyllic shepherd-life which provides its own atmosphere and interest as an escape from other topics. Virgil's eclogue is a milieu for the introduction of other conflicting or contrasting themes rather than concealing their existence: the counter-attraction of town-life, the adjustment of man to his environment, the role of the poet are introduced: and subsequently vital issues of contemporary life and politics find their place.

> praeterea duo nec tuta mihi valle reperti
> capreoli, sparsis etiam nunc pellibus albo;
> bina die siccant ovis ubera; quos tibi servo.
> iam pridem a me illos abducere Thestylis orat;
> et faciet, quoniam sordent tibi munera nostra.
> huc ades, o formose puer: tibi lilia plenis ....
>
> (Eclogue 2, 40-45).

> τράφω δέ τοι ἕνδεκα νεβρώς,
> πάσας μαννοφόρως, καὶ σκύμνως τέσσαρας ἄρκτων.
>
> (Id. XI. 40-41).

> ἦ μάν τοι λευκὰν διδυματόκον αἶγα φυλάσσω,
> τάν με καὶ ἁ Μέρμνωνος ἐριθακὶς ἁ μελανόχρως
> αἰτεῖ· καὶ δωσῶ οἱ, ἐπεὶ τύ μοι ἐνδιαθρύπτῃ.
>
> (Id. III. 34-36).

> ἀλλ' ἀφίκευσο ποθ' ἁμέ. καὶ ἑξεῖς οὐδὲν ἔλασσον,
> τὰν γλαυκὰν δὲ θάλασσαν ἔα ποτὶ χέρσον ὀρεχθεῖν·
> ἅδιον ἐν τὤντρῳ παρ' ἐμὶν τὰν νύκτα διαξεῖς.
>
> (Id. XI. 42-44).

Virgil's gifts are slightly less outlandish than the Theocritean, since the bear-cubs are omitted. The description of the finding of the roebucks gives an added picturesque illustration in the eclogue, although I am not certain what is the force of nec tuta mihi valle reperti: perhaps Corydon indicates a tricky descent into a valley to secure these roebucks, thus adding to the value of the gift - he risked his neck to get them, but he is keeping them for Alexis - quos tibi servo underlining the special sacrifice he is making rather more than the casual τράφω δέ τοι of Polyphemus.

Does sparsis pellibus albo indicate Virgil's translation of μαννοφόρως or some other variant? The Mss. have ἀμνοφορως which is impossible metrically and also inappropriate: Pollux indicates a reading μαννοφόρως - with a collar - which could possibly refer to natural markings and be vaguely represented by the Latin. μηνοφορως has been conjectured - 'with moon markings' - presumably to resemble the Latin more closely: but I doubt whether Virgil can be used to supply an emendation here.

Both lovers mention a rival who would welcome the gift: whereas Theocritus uses the word ἐνδιαθρύπτῃ - 'you turn up your nose at me' - Virgil returns to the idea in sordida (1.28): sordent tibi munera nostra. Alexis with his town-bred tastes and refinements finds the shepherd's gifts sordid, tawdry: and so the town/country tension is reintroduced.

The end of the invitation in the two poems provides a striking and not unexpected contrast. Polyphemus' invitation is terse and frankly physical - ἅδιον ἐν τὤντρῳ παρ' ἐμὶν ταν νύκτα διαξεῖς : Virgil, unlike Tibullus in a similar context, is reticent in dealing with homosexual love - and therefore is all the less deserving of the strictures of Conington. "We should be glad," he says, "with Ribbeck, to believe the eclogue to be purely imaginary, though even then it is sufficiently degrading to Virgil." In actual fact Virgil refrains from physical descriptions and anything that might give offence: the reader is apt to forget that Alexis is a man. And it may well be that Virgil uses a relationship between males to make the feelings of Corydon more spiritual than physical. At any rate at this point Virgil is expansive for once, and gives a long list of flowers and plants and fruits with which he will shower Alexis: he takes the opportunity to give a beautiful catalogue of the ruris honores, ending with the symbolic mingling of Venus' myrtle with Apollo's laurel: Alexis' acceptance of the beauties of the country would produce a union of poetry and love. But this is an idle dream for Corydon, and he returns to reality with a surprising address to himself,

> rusticus es, Corydon; nec munera curat Alexis,
> nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas.
> heu heu, quid volui misero mihi? floribus Austrum
> perditus et liquidis immisi fontibus apros.
> (Eclogue 2, 56-59).
>
> ὤμοι ἐγών, τί πάθω, τί ὁ δύσσοος; οὐχ ὑπακούεις.
> (Id. III. 24).
>
> βουκόλος ὢν ἐθέλεις με κύσαι, τάλαν; οὐ μεμάθηκα
> ἀγροίκως φιλέειν ἀλλ' ἀστικὰ χείλεα θλίβειν.
> (Id. XX.3-4).

Corydon is literally a rustic, and Alexis rejects rusticity: to this extent his cry is like the rebuff of the neatherd by Eunica in Idyll XX - "you want to kiss me, indeed: you, a neatherd. I have not been brought up to kiss rustics but to press townsmen's lips." ἀστεῖος in Greek - and presumably ἀστικός too - has some of the connotations of the Latin urbanus; but in the Theocritean passage there is a simple contrast between town and country. In Corydon's case rusticus es is a condemnation of himself: you are boorish, clownish, stupid. He is applying to himself the pejorative epithet which the smooth cultured Alexis would use, just as he characterized the country as sordidus. He is once more demonstrating the threat which his hopeless and unrestrained passion poses to the normal values of the country: Corydon should be happy to be a rustic, and his appeals to Alexis have stressed the charms of the countryside: but now he no longer believes in them himself, and he goes on to express this metaphorically. He has allowed the rainy south winds to ruin his flowers and wild bears to defile his springs. I doubt whether Corydon is conceived as having flowers which he tends, but this is irrelevant: the phrase is presumably a proverbial country phrase for 'ruining everything'; and it is particularly appropriate here since Alexis was a moment ago being placed among the flowers: Alexis in the flower-beds is like letting in the Scirocco.

misero and perditus are reminiscent once again of the language of the elegiac lover.

> torva leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam,
> florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella,
> te Corydon, o Alexi: trahit sua quemque voluptas.
> (Eclogue 2, 63-65).

> ἁ αἶξ τὰν κύτισον, ὁ λύκος τὰν αἶγα διώκει,
> ἁ γέρανος τὤροτρον· ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ τὶν μεμάνημαι.
> (Id. X. 30-31).

Here we have a very close and obvious imitation of Theocritus, and it is interesting to see the slight adaptations made by Virgil, although we may not agree on their effects. The illustration comes originally from Plato (Phaedrus 241D)

> ὡς λύκοι ἄρν' ἀγαπῶσ', ὣς παῖδα φιλοῦσιν ἐρασταί

(although no doubt Plato is himself quoting) and Theocritus expands it to fit a pastoral context even more: but typically inconsequential is the crane following the plough which is unlike the previous examples in that the crane is in no sense in love with the plough or anxious to eat it: it provides a vivid picture from the farmer's life, with the crane as scavenger following the plough for the worms and grubs it turns up. Then the term διώκει is made more explicit and dramatic with ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ τὶν μεμάνημαι. Virgil is more balanced, one might even say regimented, with a descending order of nature: lion/wolf, wolf/goat, goat/clover, Corydon/Alexis: the sequence is so ordered that we lose the sharpness of μεμανημαι ; in fact Corydon and Alexis have no verb at all to

express their relationship except the pale echo of sequitur. Virgil's orderliness involves him in distributing epithets (where Theocritus has none) to give a completely balanced statement including a near-golden line.

> florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella,

indicating perhaps a too great interest in formal aspects of his poetry. The adjectives seem conventional and unnecessary unless we are meant to apply them to Corydon and Alexis: Corydon's love makes him fierce like the lion, and out of place in the pastoral scene: but more convincingly he is full of desire like the goat as Alexis is 'blooming' like the clover. But perhaps this is fanciful. Again unlike Theocritus Virgil introduces a sententia - trahit sua quemque voluptas - which I consider weakens the impact of the illustrations.

> aspice, aratra iugo referunt suspensa iuvenci,
> et sol crescentis decedens duplicat umbras:
> me tamen urit amor: quis enim modus adsit amori?
> (Eclogue 2, 66-68).

> ἠνίδε σιγῇ μὲν πόντος, σιγῶντι δ' ἀῆται·
> ἁ δ' ἐμὰ οὐ σιγῇ στέρνων ἔντοσθεν ἀνία,
> ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τήνῳ πᾶσα καταίθομαι ὅς με τάλαιναν ...
> (Id. II.38-40).

It is a strange coincidence that Virgil, having deviated from the Theocritean image of the crane following the plough, turns to a picture of the plough drawn home by the bullocks as the sun sinks in the sky: was he led on to this idea by association? The scene at the end of the farmer's day is a very satisfying balance to the early description of the noonday heat: but not even nightfall gives a respite to Corydon's love, just as Simaetha's passion is burning while the rest of nature is peaceful.

> a Corydon, Corydon, quae te dementia cepit!
> semiputata tibi frondosa vitis in ulmo est:
> quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus,
> viminibus mollique paras detexere iunco?
> invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexim.
> (Eclogue 2, 69-73).

> ὦ Κύκλωψ Κύκλωψ, πᾷ τὰς φρένας ἐκπεπότασαι;
> αἴ κ' ἐνθὼν ταλάρως τε πλέκοις καὶ θαλλὸν ἀμάσας
> ταῖς ἄρνεσσι φέροις, τάχα κα πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔχοις νῶν.
> τὰν παρεοῖσαν ἄμελγε· τί τὸν φεύγοντα διώκεις;
> εὑρησεῖς Γαλάτειαν ἴσως καὶ καλλίον' ἄλλαν.
> (Id. XI.72-75).

With the coda to the poem we are brought back very firmly to the Corydon/Polyphemus equation, with an obviously close imitation. The

Cyclops parallel makes it impossible to accept the punctuation proposed by a minority of scholars so as to make Corydon's song end at line 68, and make of the last five lines an address by Virgil to the lovesick swain, advising him to 'snap out of it': but we shouldn't require the example of Theocritus to help us avoid that banality. Are we to assume on the other hand that Corydon realises his madness and returns to more rewarding tasks? Does the poem end with the resolution of his conflict and his return to a conformity with nature? I think not, and basically for two reasons. Virgil made his point crystal-clear in his introduction that, unlike Polyphemus, Corydon *merely* hurled his song at the mountains and woods, and his effort is vain. At the end of his song he is trying to persuade himself to do something more useful - *quin paras*? why not prepare? At the most we are left in doubt as to his response. Also, we would expect a clearer attempt to differ from Polyphemus. Secondly, if Virgil had intended to leave us with a feeling of relief from the frustration involved in this passion for an unattainable and in effect unsuitable partner, he would surely not have ended with the suggestion that Corydon would find *another* Alexis. Polyphemus, it is clear, wants *a* girl: and it is appropriate that in hoping for another Galatea he should hope to find a prettier. Another Alexis will show the same *fastidium* as the present one, since town and country, luxury and simplicity are incompatible; and it is right that Virgil should end with a point which Theocritus omits - *si te hic fastidit* - , that Alexis cannot accommodate himself to the pastoral situation.

There are other differences too. Theocritus has a homely proverb with which to turn Polyphemus' thoughts away from Galatea: a proverb akin to 'there's lots of fish in the sea' but more expressive if somewhat crude - 'milk the ewe that's handy: why run after the one that runs away?' Virgil tends to avoid 'country bumpkin' language: and also, if we think the image unsuitable to Corydon we must feel that he is engaging our sympathies here, as I think he does.

Polyphemus tries to apply himself to pastoral tasks, and they are entirely appropriate to the shepherd, weaving cheese-baskets and bringing greens to the lambs. But Corydon turns first to an idea which does *not* suit the shepherd: the vine has not been pruned and the supporting elm has too many leaves. We must presume that he is using a proverbial expression to indicate in general terms that his work is being left undone. The fact remains, however, as we have seen throughout the poem, that Virgil has not been at pains to draw a consistent dramatic picture of Corydon's situation and status: he has been more concerned with the unity of other themes throughout the poem. This corresponds to his general treatment in other eclogues of the scenery of his Arcadia: a consistent setting is not important, unity of theme is. Now Corydon has described his song as *incondita*, and in many ways what he says is disorganised and contradictory; and it is not because of Virgil's lack of structural ability that it is so. The song is neatly constructed, with balancing elements and recurrent themes. But Corydon as a personality is not totally credible: some parts of the love theme are sympathetically treated: in other parts we are reminded of Polyphemus and we smile - *pace* Klingner and others. The love-song in Eclogue 2 is not tragic: it has elements of pathos and of humour, and the lover himself sometimes realises what a sorry figure he presents - *rusticus*

es Corydon. Love-elegy frequently indulges similarly in fantasy and revels in inconsistency: and I feel that in general treatment as well as in points of detail and of course in subject-matter, Virgil is composing a lusus which has affinities with the chosen genre of his friend Gallus. And of course because he is Virgil we find undertones of deeper feeling - the incompatibility of luxury and sophistication found in urban society with the simplicity and satisfactions of country life, the problem of man's place in his environment, the function and technique of poetry: but these are not dealt with at length or in depth. In writing the Eclogues Virgil was learning his trade, and he regarded his involvement in poetry, as he implies in Eclogue 7.17, as subordinating the seria of the countryman's life to the ludus of making poetry.

NOTES

1. The pictures in Theocritus may certainly have special significance, e.g. as disturbing the idyllic peace of the pastoral scene, exhibiting tension and conflict in the coy mistress, struggling fisherman, boy being robbed by foxes - see Rosenmeyer, p.91.

2. D.E.W.Wormell in Virgil, ed. D.R.Dudley. Klingner, also speaking of Corydon, says 'dafür spricht er etwas ans, was offenbar für den Dichter wesentlich und wichtig ist: Ohnmacht und Würde der unbedingten, unerfüllbaren Liebe.'

3. There is a full bibliography in AJP 87(1966) p.427 in an article called 'Nature and Art in Virgil's second eclogue' by Eleanor W. Leach. To the references there I would add Klingner and others in Entretiens sur l'antiquite classique II(1953). L'influence Grecque sur la poesie latine de Catulle a Ovide, pp. 131-55, Klingner, Virgil (Zurich 1967) pp. 34-41, La Penna, La seconda ecloga e la poesia bucolica di Virgilio, Maia 15 (1963) pp.484-92, Putnam, Virgil's Pastoral Art (Princeton, 1970), T.G.Rosenmeyer, The Green Cabinet (Berkeley 1969) esp. pp. 60-1, Brooks Otis, Virgil, p.141, Gordon Williams Tradition and Originality.

4. In the published version of the lecture I have incorporated the Greek passages in the text.

5. F. Klingner, Virgil, p.40.