

IZAACK WALTON'S THE COMPLEAT ANGLER

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PREFACE

This study evolved from my research in a seminar in seventeenth-century English literature under the direction of Dr. Charles E. Walton, Chairman of the Department of English at Kansas State Teachers College. In the course of my investigations of the writings of Izaak Walton, I became interested in the long tradition of pastoral literature which dates from the time of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus. I was encouraged by Dr. Walton to determine the influences of the significant pastoral writers upon the so-called pastoral conventions of English literature in order to establish the conventions that Walton may have inherited at the time of the composition of The Compleat Angler. This present thesis is the outgrowth of my subsequent investigations.

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Walton, who directed my project; and to Professor Richard L. Roahen, who was the second reader. I am especially grateful to them for their critical suggestions and kind encouragement during the composition of my thesis. To all others who directly or indirectly contributed to this project, I offer my sincerest thanks.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	111
Chapter	
1. A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PASTORAL TRADITION FROM THEOCRITUS TO WALTON	1
2. IZAAK WALTON'S PASTORAL CONVENTIONS IN <u>THE COMPLEAT ANGLER</u>	34
3. AN ASSESSMENT OF WALTON'S POSITION IN THE PASTORAL TRADITION AND CONCLUSION	53
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	83

Chapter 1

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PASTORAL TRADITION FROM THEOCRITUS TO WALTON

The pastoral tradition begins with Theocritus of Syracuse, who lived in the first half of the third century B.C., and who, in western literature, is known both as the father of pastoral poetry and the originator of the pastoral convention.¹ This poetry simply "illustrates the labor, the songs and loves, and the sufferings of more or less simple shepherds."² Theocritus represented his feelings for nature in his use of setting, choice of characters, and manipulation of dramatic action which he developed through dialogue and song. The resulting form established a tradition for the pastoral poets who followed him.

Settings of the pastoral are to be found, of course, in nature--in the meadows, laden with flowers; in a stream, sometimes quiet, sometimes rippling; and in landscapes of wooded hillsides dotted with snow-white lambs and sheep. Theocritus "sought and found in the world of nature a higher and hitherto unguessed solace for the thwarted cravings of the soul."³ For the first time, he made nature more than a

¹Gilbert Lawall, Theocritus' Coan Pastorals, p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 6.

³Buckner B. Trawick, World Literature, I, Greek, Roman, Oriental, and Medieval Classics, p. 89.

mere background for human action; now, in his hands, the natural world became important in and of itself.⁴ In his choice of characters, his deep appreciation for the life style of the third-century B.C. Sicilian peasants is apparent, as he depicted them in "sunshine and light-heartedness."⁵ Their love for dance and song is a predominant characteristic of his use of the form.⁶ In his accounts of the charm of this peasant life, he developed a pastoral genre.⁷ Moreover, since his attitude is also that of these peasants, his work remains free of bitterness or disillusionment.⁸ For instance, in his first Idylls, the atmosphere is sunny.⁹ He describes the herdsmen and their loves; he tells of their singing contests; and he presents "the frank coarseness" of the peasants and "their child-like charm."¹⁰ His pointing out of the natural beauty attracts the reader to the exact place in which the dramatic event occurs and stresses an appreciation of nature.

⁴Ibid.

⁵J. M. Edmonds, trans., The Greek Buccolic Poets, p. ix.

⁶Trawick, op. cit., p. 89.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹All quotations are taken from Henry Harmon Chamberlin. Late Spring. Since lines are not numbered in this translation, citations are made by title and page only, pp. 55-80.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 57.

Secondly, Theocritus frequently used the contest device which evolved out of the dialogue and song of these characters. For instance, in Idyll VII, he establishes a pattern when he has the narrator and two friends, Eucritus and Amyntas, leave the city for the countryside to attend the harvest feast of Deos. En route, a goatherd, Lycidas, and a fellow herdsman, Simichidas, are observed by the trio. An exchange of dialogue between the two ensues concerning the question of whose song is the better. Lycidas' song tells of the jealousy of an evil lord toward Comatas, a poetic goatherd, who sings beautiful songs. Comatas is loved by all living things of Nature; but, because of the secret jealousy of the evil lord, he is placed alive in a coffin and abandoned to death. However, because of Comatas' kinship with Nature, some bees learn of his difficulty and bring honey from the flowers and place it on his lips, thus sustaining his life until he has regained his freedom.¹¹ Clearly, this incident illustrates Theocritus' belief that, if man is to have peace and security, he must find it in Nature. In contrast to this song of rural pleasure, Simichidas' song, on the other hand, describes a shepherd's disapproval of his friend, a city dweller, who finds pleasure in his love for the young boys about him. When the

¹¹Ibid.

songs are finished, a herdsman's crook is awarded to Lycidas as a symbol of excellence; and a rabbit stick is given to Simichidas as a token of friendship.¹² Consequently, Theocritus suggests that the established forms of Greek poetry--epic, lyric, and dramatic--represent the ancient times and that only new forms can fit the new times that are developing. Hence, Theocritus apparently gives unity to his rustic poems by fitting them into a new and different form which still retains some elements of the ancient drama.¹³ For example, following dramatic conventions, he presents his world in one place, within a limited space of time, and usually in dialogue between two characters who must settle an issue or decide a contest.¹⁴ Although each work is a unity within itself, each is also a part of a larger unity. The name Idylls, meaning "little poems," was not applied to Theocritus' poems until the first century before Christ.¹⁵ The entire collection of the Idylls is composed of thirty separate verses. According to Gilbert Lawall, Theocritus "seems to be trying to compose the whole history of archaic and classical Greek poetry into a single creation, which, as a combination of all earlier traditions and as a pastoral form, is unprecedented."¹⁶ It is true that this form of

¹²Ibid., p. 58.

¹³Edmonds, op. cit., p. x.

¹⁴Ibid., p. xi.

¹⁵Trawick, op. cit., p. 89.

¹⁶Lawall, op. cit., p. 2.

short poems within a single framework is the legacy that Theocritus leaves to the pastoral writers who followed him.

The pastoral tradition is continued by two other classical poets, Bion of Smyrna and Moschus of Sicily.¹⁷ Of these two successors, Bion is best remembered for his lament for Adonis, and Moschus for his elegy in honor of Bion.¹⁸ Although the Greeks considered Bion as the third Buccolic poet, the obvious fact that Moschus wrote "The Lament for Bion" indicates that Bion must have died before Moschus. Bion's lament, however, is his particular major contribution to the developing pastoral tradition, expressing an intense personal grief and, in tone, much different from the light-heartedness of Theocritus' earlier poetry.¹⁹ In connection with this grief, Bion, as do his imitators, refers to immortality and complains about death, the fate of man. The "lament" of Bion differs in several other ways from the "pastoral" of Theocritus. For example, Bion makes his major character a god who begins immediately to wail of his sorrow. Whereas Theocritus provided two characters who at once enter into a dialogue to introduce a debate or an issue to be decided, Bion, after his lament for the death

¹⁷J. H. Hallard and M. A. Oxon, trans., The Idylls of Theocritus with the Fragments Bion and Moschus, p. 11.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁹H. S. V. Jones, A Spenser Handbook, p. 54.

of Adonis, invokes the Muses of Love, inviting them to share his sorrow in telling the sad familiar tale of the death of the god. In the lament, Bion makes use of a device, later identified by Ruskin as pathetic fallacy, in that the mountains, trees, springs, and rivers share in Aphrodite's sorrow for the lost Adonis, and the flowers flush with pain.²⁰ Bion not only identifies the place in Nature wherein the dying Adonis is lying and points out the natural beauty of Nature, but also expresses his belief that Nature sympathizes with man in grief.

Upon Bion's death, it was natural that Moschus, a fellow Greek poet, eulogize him. Moschus adopts the form used by both Theocritus and Bion and makes a shepherd of the poet.²¹ Hallard, who considers one of the most beautiful passages in all Greek literature to be Moschus' "Lament for Bion,"²² recognizes Moschus as the second Buccolic poet after Theocritus, "a poet of fine quality, but inferior to Theocritus."²³

Whereas Bion is responsible for the lament in the pastoral tradition established earlier by Theocritus, Moschus

²⁰George Norlin, "The Conventions of the Pastoral Elegy." American Journal of Philology, XXXII (1911), 297.

²¹Ibid., p. 296.

²²Hallard and Oxon, op. cit., p. 213.

²³Ibid.

introduces the elegy. Thus, the elegiac convention in western literature begins with him. In his model in Theocritus' "The Dying Daphnis," the subject was a shepherd or a herdsman, and probably the song was "an idealized version of folk-songs which the Sicilian shepherd sings in honor of their rustic hero."²⁴ However, the hero of Moschus' elegy is not a shepherd, but specifically the poet Bion, whose only relationship with the pastoral life is that he wrote poetry in the pastoral vein.²⁵

Moreover, in Moschus' elegy, as in Bion's lament, nature's elements are personified. According to Chamberlin, "the pastoral form is used to express in a poetic metaphor the sorrow of those who loved a singer and a friend," and the rivers and woods are among the mourners.²⁶ In later literature, this practice is conventional. The bucolic element, pointing to the natural beauty of Nature, is dominant in Moschus' use of personification. Moschus' view of Nature, however, differs from those of Theocritus and Bion in that he sees the elements of Nature as even more personified as actual mourners of the dead poet. Here, again, one is reminded that, if sought out, Nature can comfort the grieving individual.

²⁴Norlin, op. cit., p. 296.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Henry Harmon Chamberlin, Late Spring, pp. 50-58.

The fourth important poet in the history of the pastoral was the Roman poet Vergil, probably the first Latin poet to utilize the pastoral convention,²⁷ composing ten eclogues in the pastoral manner in 37 B.C.²⁸ According to Frederic J. De Veau, the most accurate and descriptive title for these poems is the term buccolics, for they are the songs of shepherds and herdsmen. Although following the tradition of pastoral poetry, Vergil arrived at a new form within which he was able to achieve a grace and eloquence of diction, indeed capturing the freshness of the landscape so well that his poems became the chief means by which the pastoral tradition was carried to the English, French, and Italian Renaissance.²⁹ The rural setting of Vergil's eclogues is that of his own boyhood on his father's land near Mantua.³⁰ Geoffrey Johnson points out that Vergil adopted the characters but not the setting of his Greek predecessors, insisting, however, upon fitting Greek shepherds with the Greek names that Theocritus gave them and placing them in an Italian setting of eternal

²⁷Jones, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁸Herbert Jennings Rose, The Eclogues of Vergil, p. 22.

²⁹Frederic J. De Veau, ed., The Buccolics of Vergil, p. xix.

³⁰Ibid.

beauty.³¹ The Eclogues, of course, are modeled on the Idylls of Theocritus, whom Vergil acknowledges as his master.³² Perhaps, Vergil's most important development was his introduction of personal and political allegory to the pastoral. According to Ward and Waller, "pastoral poetry lends itself freely to allegorical use; the comparison of country innocence with the venality and falsehood of city and court life leads, naturally, to moralizing."³³ For instance, in Eclogue I, Vergil alludes to a personal experience; here, his character, Daphnis, is thought to be allegorical, and some readers have equated him with Julius Caesar.³⁴ In Eclogues V, VII, and VIII, two shepherds, Mopsus and Menalcas, vie with each other in singing of their sorrow over the cruel death of Daphnis.³⁵ Moreover, Vergil refers to a current confiscation of land in a dialogue between Meliboes and Tityrus during which Meliboes, a shepherd, laments the loss of his farm, while Tityrus rejoices that Octavius has restored his farm to him.

³¹Geoffrey Johnson, The Pastorals of Vergil, p. 9.

³²Robert T. Kerlin, "Vergil's Fourth Eclogue: An Overlooked Source," American Journal of Philology, XIX (1898), 449-460.

³³A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, The Cambridge History of English Literature, VI, Part a, p. 226.

³⁴Jones, op. cit., p. 55. ³⁵Johnson, op. cit., p. 6.

Melioboes cries out:

. . . it's I must leave my homeland and the fields I love so; mine's farewell and exile.³⁶

In addition, the type of melancholy which Bion and Moschus expressed is also found in Vergil, when a shepherd voices the sorrow that overwhelms him as he thinks of another's working the land that he loves. Rose argues that, "where the Greeks had allegorized a little, Vergil found means to convey in his buccolic poems more than one serious message; apart from this, he made several technical experiments, combining after the Alexandrian fashion things which had before been separate."³⁷ Even Horace is sure that the Muses themselves had given Vergil the flexibility that enabled him to adapt older forms to his newer purposes.³⁸ Indeed, Vergil also alludes to prominent men, either patrons of literature or poets themselves, and often violates the pastoral illusion.³⁹ Hamblin further observes that Vergil transfers to the herdsmen his own experiences that stimulated his extensive system of allegorical interpretation.⁴⁰ Because of the social and political conditions of

³⁶De Veau, op. cit., p. xviii.

³⁷Johnson, op. cit., p. xviii.

³⁸Ibid., p. 14.

³⁹Frank Russell Hamblin, The Development of Allegory in the Classical Pastoral, p. 1.

⁴⁰Ibid.

his time, the problem of a restoration of the traditional way of life was of vital importance to Vergil. In his Eclogues, he expresses his fervent belief in the longing for a return of the older stable order after so many generations of civil war in his country. After Vergil, the pastoral was never to be the same.

In the fourteenth century, Petrarch, the next important pastoral poet, wrote his pastorals as social satire to attack violently the papal court.⁴¹ Apparently, well educated for his time, he wrote both in Latin and in Italian.⁴² His Buccolics, which include twelve eclogues, are written in Latin.⁴³ Of these, the sixth and seventh are violent attacks, in terms of pastoral allegory, upon the corruption of the papal court in Avignon under Clement VI.⁴⁴ Whereas Vergil had been concerned with civil strife in the country and, thus, used pastoral allegory in which to expose the practice of the authorities who took away land from the farmers, Petrarch was concerned with the choice of cardinals made by Clement VI. It was Petrarch's desire that

⁴¹Maud F. Jerrold, Francesco Petrarca, Poet and Humanist, p. 30.

⁴²Thomas Campbell, The Sonnets, Triumphs, and Other Poems of Petrarch, p. xv.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ernest Hatch Wilkins, "Petrarch's Seventh Eclogue," p. 48.

the papal seat be restored to Rome rather than be allowed to remain in Avignon.

Hence, the glory of Rome and the primacy of Italy were Petrarch's central ideas. He desired to revive former greatness and ancient customs. He wished to re-clothe the Roman story and its literature with former grandeur and customs: "history fills his horizon, and it was to him inspiration."⁴⁵ For example, the characters in his Eclogue VI are a former shepherd, Pamphilus, who represents St. Peter, and a shepherd Mitio, who represents Clement.⁴⁶ Pamphilus reproaches Mitio for the sorry state of his flock, for his traffic in holy things, and for his shameful way of life.⁴⁷ There are also references to Epy, Mitio's paramour, who represents the Avignonese papal court.⁴⁸ Mitio answers Pamphilus with an insolent defense which is, in effect, a shameless confession, and at the end, Pamphilus warns Mitio that there will yet come One who will turn his kind of joys into mourning.⁴⁹

Eclogue VII, a continuation of VI, entitled Grex infectur et. suffectus, is Petrarch's bitter review of the College of Cardinals.⁵⁰ The characters are Mitio and Epy.

⁴⁵Jerrold, op. cit., p. 329.

⁴⁶Wilkins, op. cit., p. 48. ⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid. ⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 49.

Mitio refers to the reproaches and the warning of Pamphilus and suggests that they review the flock.⁵¹ Epy replies that the flock has been reduced by death and pestilence, and, as for the rest, Mitio has but to look around him.⁵² Mitio insists that Epy proceed. In the Seventh Eclogue, Epy characterizes twelve of the twenty-five cardinals, referred to as goats, and ends by offering to give advice to Mitio, which he asks for, in order to deceive Pamphilus.⁵³ Mitio agrees to add the twelve cardinals or goats, to the flock. It is clear that Petrarch was displeased with the fact that the College of Cardinals, throughout the year of 1347, contained twenty-one Frenchmen, three Italians, and one Spaniard.

It is almost a universal trait to associate a kind of mystic feeling with certain locales in Nature. For Petrarch, the forests evoked a special response. His submission to Nature was so complete that he refused to allow doctors to treat him in his final illness.⁵⁴ Though Nature was not the setting of his Eclogues, he expressed a love for Nature different from that of the previous pastoral writers in that it means for him the love of association which distinguishes certain scenes and places from all others, not

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Wilkins, op. cit., p. 48.

because of what they are, but for what they suggest and embody. When modern man thinks of Petrarch, he remembers the poet's special feeling for Nature and probably his sonnets that immortalized "Laura." This spontaneous love of Nature for her own self, a Nature which does not look for sympathy but imparts it, does not ask to be understood, but understands. In this particular concept, Petrarch is considered a pioneer.⁵⁵ Like Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, he expresses his concept of Nature in the social criticism of the time in which he lived. These two achievements place him firmly in the pastoral tradition.

Boccaccio is a second fourteenth-century poet to be recognized for his allegorical pastoral work. According to Hutton, "[he] was the most human writer that the Renaissance Period produced in Italy,"⁵⁶ known as "the father of classic Italian prose," because of his collection of one hundred novella, the Decameron, first published in 1353.⁵⁷ The Papacy, at this time, was threatening a new tyranny under the absolute rule of the Pope, and Boccaccio, like Vergil, wanted a new life for his people.⁵⁸ It was

⁵⁵Jerrold, op. cit., p. 30.

⁵⁶Edward Hutton, Giovanni Boccaccio, p. xii.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. xvi.

⁵⁸Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Boccaccio on Poetry, p. xix.

Boccaccio's fervor, his intense curiosity, and his extraordinary powers in humanizing literature that provided this new life for his people.⁵⁹ During this period, the Church was rotten to the core; and Boccaccio felt that the corruption of the people proceeded from that of the clergy. He satirized what he considered to be bad--the customs of ecclesiastics and of fools--but he excused the acts of the people because of the "misfortunes of the times," and above all, he understood the entire situation.⁶⁰ He wrote Buccolicum Carmen, a series of allegorical eclogues on contemporary events,⁶¹ in which he follows the classical example used by Dante and Petrarch.⁶² He credited Petrarch as his "master, father, and teacher."⁶³ According to Hutton, he had been swayed by Petrarch in intellectual matter; thus, from a "creative writer of splendid genius, he gradually became a scholar of vast reading but of mediocre achievement."⁶⁴ His Latin Eclogues were used as source books by subsequent writers like Chaucer, Shakespeare, and D'Annunzio.⁶⁵

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Hutton, op. cit., p. 310.

⁶¹Francis MacManus, Boccaccio, Petrarch, p. 141.

⁶²Encyclopedia Britannica, VIII, 832.

⁶³MacManus, op. cit., p. 142.

⁶⁴Hutton, op. cit., p. 223. ⁶⁵Ibid.

As with previous pastoral writers, gardens were his joy. However, he was to change the pastoral style into the novelist trend with his composition of *Ameto*, in which he is the first to combine prose and poetry.⁶⁶ Boccaccio also differs from Petrarch in that he did not assemble his scattered poems in a collection; rather, he intended to destroy them. He was convinced that he could not hope to rival Petrarch, and he was unwilling to be known as but second-best.⁶⁷ He contributed to the pastoral in satirizing the tyranny of the church, in humanizing literature so as to touch the lives of the people, and in combining prose and poetic forms, thus becoming a model for later pastoral writers.

The Virgilian tradition of the allegorical pastoral is continued in the sixteenth-century by Baptista Mantuanus.⁶⁸ Next to Petrarch, he is the most famous Italian writer of new Latin Eclogues.⁶⁹ Eight of his ten Eclogues were written during his student days at Padua and the last two were completed after he had become a monk.⁷⁰

⁶⁶Webster's Biographical Dictionary, op. cit., p. 162.

⁶⁷MacManus, op. cit., p. 107.

⁶⁸Jones, op. cit., p. 58.

⁶⁹Douglas Bush, ed., George Tuberville, trans., The Eclogues of Mantuan, p. 1.

⁷⁰Wilfred P. Mustard, ed., The Eclogues of Baptista Mantuanus, p. 30.

He wrote with great fluency and speed, and reports verify that he published more than 55,000 verses.⁷¹ He possessed a proficiency in both Latin and Greek and achieved distinction in the fields of prose and verse.⁷² His Eclogues, which surpasses all of his other writing in its popularity, for two hundred years was commonly used in Italy, France, Germany, and England, as a textbook in schools.⁷³ By this time, the people were ready to welcome a Christian poet who made "the pagan art the medium for materials which was innocuous or, quite often, positively Christian and edifying."⁷⁴ Douglas Bush cites Michael Drayton as saying that Mantuan would never have achieved such fame if he had been nothing more than a Christian writer; but he was not without humor and satirical force, and he could coin epigrams and aphorisms which appealed mightily to the humanistic appetite for shrewd adages.⁷⁵ Thus, Mantuan had the advantage of being a "modern," and in general, in life and manners was much better related to the young sixteenth-century student than Vergil had been to his young contemporaries.⁷⁶

⁷¹Ibid., p. 36. ⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Bush, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷⁴Mustard, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷⁵Bush, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷⁶Ibid.

The themes of Mantuan's Eclogues are varied and attractive; thus, to future writers he passed on an "elastic conception of the pastoral genre."⁷⁷ For instance, his first Eclogue reflects a true pastoral tradition in "The Argument between Fortunatus and Faustus:"

As Shepherds custom is when they do meet and hear,
To talk of this or that, and tell the news they hear:
So Fortunatus craves of Faustus to begin
Of ancient loves to treat, while flocks feeding by
When friendly Faustus saw his earnest friend's request
To tales of honest the Shepherd him addressed.⁷⁸

In typical pastoral manner, Faustus repeats to Fortunatus the story of his love, courtship and marriage, the moral of the tale being that honorable love concludes with a happy ending. Further evidences of his varied themes are to be found in the second and third Eclogue as Mantuanus deploras the fatal end of extravagant and lawless passion. According to Jones, Mantuan will be remembered as a "rough satirist of ecclesiastical abuses, the corruption of the Papal court, and the vices of women."⁷⁹ Bush thinks that probably Mantuan's fourth, sixth, and ninth Eclogues are his most effective.⁸⁰ The fourth Eclogue is an encyclopedic catalogue of the waywardness of women: the sixth Eclogue laments the corruption of town life, and the ninth Eclogue,

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 1.

⁷⁹Jones, op. cit., p. 58.

⁸⁰Bush, op. cit., p. 111.

doubtless based on Mantuan's personal knowledge, exposes the ecclesiastical abuses in Rome.⁸¹ Bush also feels that the ninth Eclogue would have been approved by many good Catholics of the time, and suggests that in England this unit became a model for Protestant attacks on Popish prelates.⁸² According to Mustard, Mantuan has several models for his pastoral: the chief model for Mantuan is Vergil, whose influence may be traced on almost every page, but there are also passages in Eclogue I, 12-13; III, 17-27, 32-33; V, 46-136, which imitate Eclogues of Petrarch and Boccaccio.⁸³ Mustard also credits the Ecclesiastical writers and the language of the Latin Bible.⁸⁴

Finally, probably the greatest impact of Mantuan's work lies in his satirical writing against ecclesiastical abuses, the corruption of town-life, and the vices of town life. Bush says, "Vergil had planted, Petrarch and Boccaccio had watered, and Mantuan give the increase, so that the buccolic poem had become a dramatic vehicle for anything, especially in the way of satire, that the author wished to say."⁸⁵

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Mustard, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Bush, op. cit., p. 11.

As a young man, Clement Marot, French poet of the fifteenth century, was invited to the court of Margaret of Valois in the capacity of valet de chambre.⁸⁶ It was, here, that he found himself one of that group of artists, poets, and scholars who were in sympathy with the Reformation.⁸⁷ He was charged ultimately with heresy and was committed to prison.⁸⁸ A short time after his release, he was saved from a second imprisonment by the intercession of Marguerite and her husband, the King of Navarre.⁸⁹ Marot, charged as a Calvinist, eventually saved his life by taking exile in Italy, and once again through the influence of Marguerite he was permitted to return to France.⁹⁰ At this time, a new form of truth, calling everything by its real name, in harmony with the spiritual life of the time spread rapidly in France and England.⁹¹ Marot, however, took no part in doctrinal controversy, but simply cherished the pure spirit of religion.⁹² The poet, courteous, gay, armed only with jest and song, expressed his love for God in simple and fit thoughts natural to the occasion.⁹³ He sought to make

⁸⁶Jones, op. cit., p. 62. ⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid. ⁸⁹Ibid. ⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Morley Henry, Clement Marot and Other Studies, pp. 86-87.

⁹²Ibid., p. 170. ⁹³Ibid., p. 89.

religion a reality.⁹⁴ He reproached the established church with her want of fidelity to her first vow.

In 1536, Marot was permitted to return to his own country; but, in 1544, not yet fifty years of age, he was exiled once more. This time, he took refuge in Piedmont, where he could live among shepherd worshippers, whose faith was simple, and who learned their duty "from the Sermon on the Mount."⁹⁵ It was here in the last days of his sickness and exile that "his head was uplifted to sing with them, as he had taught them to sing, the praise of the great Father of all."⁹⁶ Though war and persecution were still about him and he was cast out of France, Marot said, "There remained to him only, his Muse which yet lives and his faith in Divine Mercy."⁹⁷

Perhaps, the first of Marot's pastoral writings can be credited to Vergil. While Marot was very young, he translated the first Eclogue of the Buccolics of Vergil into verse.⁹⁸ By Marot's use of wit and song, combined with allegory, he sought to make religion a reality. He was most anxious for France to enjoy peace, and for the conditions of the church to be improved. Another contribution was his use of the device known as the motto, in literary fashion at the time.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 108.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 64.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

Marot's pastoral elegy on the death of "Madame Loyse de Savoy" was later to serve as the definite model for Spenser's "November," and Spenser was to make the pastoral elegy as popular in England as it had been in Italy.

Edmund Spenser, the great Protestant poet of the sixteenth century, employed the established conventions of such pastoral poets as Theocritus, Vergil, Petrarch, Mantuan, and Marot.⁹⁹ Singlehandedly, he raised England poetically from the almost insignificant literary position into which she had fallen since the death of Chaucer to one of a major power in the literary world.¹⁰⁰ He labored to restore the rightful heritage, the "good and natural English words" that had long been out of use or almost obsolete.¹⁰¹ His pastoral, The Shepheardes Calendar, which ushered in the great age of English poetry, was printed in 1579 for private circulation and numbered only one hundred fifty copies.¹⁰² It was dedicated to the versatile Philip Sidney, the maintainer of all kinds of learning.¹⁰³ Spenser, as did Theocritus,

⁹⁹Paul E. McLane, Spenser's Shepheardes Calendar, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰Philip Henderson, ed., and intro., Edmund Spenser, The Shepheardes Calendar and Other Poems, (introduction).

¹⁰¹Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser, p. 25.

¹⁰²Jones, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁰³Grosart, op. cit., p. 33.

Vergil, Petrarch, Mantuan, and Marot, used satire and allegory to express his feelings about the period. However, the evils that he attacks and the matters of arguments with which he deals are those of his own age and not of the times of other pastoral poets. For instance, he flatters Elizabeth I, but he is a sharp critic of her reign.¹⁰⁴

By the time Spenser came to write, the literature of the pastoral was immense and diverse; it had lost the quality of the earliest days when an "idyll was a direct rendering of real life, and had crystalized into a system of conventional symbols, which might still be used by a master with living imaginative effect, but without a radical reversion, could hardly again render real life."¹⁰⁵ Out of this literature, Spenser adopted types and definite themes with studied care for variety. The poet's grievances are expressed covertly by his shepherds, and the allegorical doings of his animals point out the public ills of the time. For instance, Grosart identifies the shepherds of Spenser's Calendar as parsons in disguise who talk about heathen divinities or points in Christian theology.¹⁰⁶ He adds that the "July Aeglogue" was "made in the honor and

¹⁰⁴R. E. Dodge, ed., The Complete Works of Spenser, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵Jones, op. cit., p. 42.

¹⁰⁶Grosart, op. cit., p. 33.

commendation of good shepherds, and to the shame and dispraise of proud and ambitious pastors."¹⁰⁷

According to Jones, the plan of The Shepheardes' Calendar, to follow the months of the year in succession, is original with Spenser.¹⁰⁸ Edward Kirke, a fellow-collegian of the poet, characterizes the eclogues as "Plaintive," those pertaining to love, sorrow, and melancholy; "Recreative," those relating to love, or praise of special personages; and "Moral," those which for the most part are mixed with satirical bitterness.¹⁰⁹ The earlier pastoral poets made mention of the seasons; for example, Daphnis in the ninth Idyll of Theocritus alludes to the "scorching summer," and Cornix in the sixth eclogue of Mantuan refers to the "winter winds" and the "sleeping earth."

In The Shepheardes' Calendar, Spenser is the first of the pastoral poets to follow the seasons, month by month, through the year. However, Jones feels that this plan for The Shepheardes' Calendar was derived from Marot's Eglogue au Roy, the source of "December," where a parallel between the human life and the progress of the year is developed."¹¹⁰ Jones finds that Spenser uses this same parallel at critical points in his Eclogue; for instance, in "January," the Colin

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Jones, op. cit., p. 43.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

Clout is a young lover; in "June," he is a middle-aged man; and in "December," he has become an old man.¹¹¹

The words and the "talk" of the Calendar are the "common speech" of the time.¹¹² For example, Colin Clout, a shepherd boy, complains of his unfortunate love for a country lass, Rosalinde; he compares his case to the sad season of the year, winter, to the frost-filled ground, to the frozen trees, and to his own winter-weary flock.¹¹³

The Aeglogue "June" is devoted completely to the complaining of Colins' ill success in his love. In Aeglogue I, he holds hope of favor to be found in time, but in this Aeglogue, he is rejected; thus, he turns to despair, renouncing comfort and hope of goodness to come. Colin is middle-aged now and moans to Hobbinol of his misfortune.¹¹⁴

The "December" Aeglogue also reveals a parallel between the human life and the progress of the year. Once again, Colin complains to the God Pan, as weary of his former ways, he now reveals his life to be like the four seasons of the year. First, spring finds him a youth, when he is fresh, and free from the folly of love. Second, his manhood is compared to summer, consumed with great heat and excessive drowth, caused through the Comet Love. Herein,

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 29.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹⁴Grosart, op. cit., p. 272.

passion is compared to flames and excessive heat. Third, as Colin reaches a riper age, he resembles an unseasonable harvest, wherein the fruits fall before they are ripe; and fourth, he compares his later age to winter chill, and frosty season, now drawing near to his end of life.¹¹⁵

In The Shepheardes' Calendar, Spenser completes the cycle of life. He shows death to be cold and bleak with loss of illusions when the shepherd experiences the harsh, bitter realities of winter. He portrays the lightning gaiety of spring: rebirth, fresh beginning, joy, and life from death. He shows a growth of promise of spring: a maturing development with warmth, and long days of ease. The first half-sad hint of coming death is felt in the midst of summer's fulfillment, and after fulfillment must come death, in the cycle of life. The mellowness is prophetic of Keats' figure of Autumn.

Spenser's work itself offers one a summary of the total development of pastoral poetry to its culmination when he refers to "young birds as writers newly crept out their nests must first prove their tender wings before they make a greater flight":

So flew Theocritus, he was already full fledged.
 So flew Vergil, as not yet well feeling his wings.
 So flew Mantuane, as not yet being full formed.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

So Petrarque.
 So Boccace.
 So Marot, and also diverse other excellent
 both Italian and French poets, whose
 footing this author everywhere followed.

Spenser refers to himself as "a new bird whose principals he scarce has grown out, but yet as one in time shall be able to keep wing with the best."¹¹⁶

In the same century, English prose writers, especially John Lyly, were to adapt pastoral traditions to their own genre. Lyly, sixteenth-century English euphuistic prose writer, provided the bridge between the poetic pastoral writers and later prose pastoral writers. Some characteristics in the works of earlier pastoral poets may also be traced in Lyly's Euphues and His England, and Endimion. In spite of the fact that his euphuism provides the main interest in his prose, his works are further significant because they reveal a continuing development of the pastoral tradition.

According to the true pastoral tradition, when two shepherds meet, they either tell a tale of personal or national interest or sing a song related to the same two sources. Usually, a contest takes place between them, and the victor receives an award. So it is that in Lyly's Euphues and His England, two young men, Euphues, of Greece,

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 30.

and Philautus, of Italy, set sail for England.¹¹⁷ After they have been in England for a period of time, they spend an evening with a group of people, and it is here that Euphues tells his tale. Included in his story is a typically pastoral discourse on honest love, reference to Nature in a description of the English countryside, allegory in allusions to the Court, and a discussion of the manners of the courtiers.¹¹⁸ Perhaps, the contest or dialogue, which really amounts to a debate, on the definition of honest love is the best reminder of the pastoral tradition. Three young couples in love are the contestants, and Euphues is the judge.¹¹⁹ Euphues listens to the debate, and when "time is called," he grants that each couple entertain an idea, but designates no victor because his definition of love rests upon four factors:

. . . time to make trial, by observation and experience to build and augment his desires; reason, that all his doings and proceedings seem not to flow from a mind inflamed with lust, but a true heart kindled with love; favor, to delight his eyes, which are the first messengers of affection, and virtue, to allure the soul, for which all things are to be desired.¹²⁰

He designates no victor because none has taken into consideration these four factors.

¹¹⁷R. Warwick Bond, M.A., The Complete Works of John Lyly, III, 13.

¹¹⁸M. R. Best, "Euphues and His England." Notes and Queries, VIII (1859), 165.

¹¹⁹Bond, op. cit., pp. 173-180. ¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 181-182.

Lyly's Endimion is the age-old story of the mortal who falls in love with Cynthia, the Moon Goddess:

It is an elaborate and ingenious allegory of the tender relation between Leicester and Elizabeth . . . ; also figuring in the allegory are Mary, Queen of Scots, the Earle and Countess of Shrewsbury, and Sir Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew. Endimion has been put to sleep because of the jealousy of Telles (Mary, Queen of Scots). He has slept forty years and he can only be awakened by a kiss from Cynthia, the Moon Goddess.¹²¹

Lyly's use of song and dialogue embodied in a contest on the subject of love in a setting of Nature and his use of allegory in reference to the figures of the Court of his day, with elegiac overtones, definitely establish his position as a pastoral writer. Lyly exerted a definite influence upon later writers and upon the language itself. Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, for example, is often traced to his influence.¹²² Also, in spite of the since-discarded affectations of Lyly's prose, he contributed to the actual growth of modern English in that his work "contains, with all its affectations, a great multitude of acute observations, and just and even profound thoughts, and it was these striking qualities, not less than the tinsel of its style, which commended it to the practical good sense of contemporary England."¹²³ He made the language actually richer by

¹²¹Ibid., p. 9.

¹²²Ibid., p. 65.

¹²³Thomas Nashe, Pierce Pennilesse, p. 426.

having his courtiers use the "old language" in a fresh way, producing "a sparkling currency, the very counters of Court compliments."¹²⁴

Lyly's "Poet, Painter, and Musician" illustrates another facet of his contributions to the pastoral tradition. The three characters--the poet, the painter, and the musician in dialogue describe and defend their separate vocations. They maintain conversational tone in their banter about the attempt of each artist to create a true image of the incomparable Queen Elizabeth. Although the form is inherited from the pastoral poets, this easy-going debate seems entirely natural in prose dialogue. As it was with the shepherds in the earlier pastoral works, each character, here, reaches a decision. For example, the musician decides that his music is unworthy of the perfection of the Queen; the painter decides that his painting is only for the taste of a country mistress, who does not care how she is to be painted, and the poet concludes that his lines are shallow, that when he needs words to express his feeling concerning the Queen, he is "driven to commend the taylor that made the garment in steed of the mistress who wears it."¹²⁵ The prose dialogue, as exemplified by Lyly,

¹²⁴George P. Marsh, Lectures on the English Language.

¹²⁵John Lyly, "Poet, Painter, and Musician," pp. 20-28.

was also, the perfect vehicle for Izaak Walton in The Compleat Angler, in which he has the fisherman, the hunter, and the falconer describe and defend their separate avocations.

Many additions and changes of the tradition of pastoral writing has evolved since the time of Theocritus, the originator of his genre. The charm of peasant life prompted Theocritus to express in the form of short poems within a framework, his feelings of nature in his use of setting, in his choice of characters and in the dramatic action developed through the dialogue and song of his characters. Pastoral poetry continued in this same century by two classical poets, Bion and Moschus. Bion's contribution to the pastoral works is his lament, which usually expresses an intense personal grief. Instead of the simple shepherds used by Theocritus, Bion makes a god his major character. Moschus adds the elegy to pastoral tradition. The poet makes a shepherd of Bion and adopts him as his hero. Moschus differs from Theocritus and Bion in his view of nature in that the elements of nature are more personified as actual mourners of the dead poet, Bion. The next major contributor to pastoral tradition is Vergil, the first Latin poet to use this convention, but in a new form. Vergil introduces personal and political allegory through the songs of shepherds and herdsmen. Where Vergil had been concerned

with the civil strife within his country, and thus used the pastoral allegory to expose the practice of authorities who took land from the farmers and gave it to someone else for use, Petrarch, the Italian poet of the fourteenth century used the pastoral form to try to revive the former greatness and ancient customs of his country. Like former pastoral poets, he expressed his concept of Nature's relationship to man, and like Vergil, he combined this concept of Nature with social criticism of the time in which he lived. Boccaccio, the second fourteenth century poet to be recognized for his allegorical pastoral work, was the most humanistic writer of the period. Although the poet satirized the tyranny of the church, his humanizing literature enriched the lives of the people and, thus, became a model for later pastoral writers. The allegorical pastoral tradition of Vergil is continued in the sixteenth century by Mantuanus. One of his greatest contributions to the pastoral is that his eclogues were read in grammar schools to the time of Shakespeare. Another of the poet's contributions, and probably the greatest, is that Mantuanus provided a dramatic vehicle to display a satirical writing against ecclesiastical abuses, and the corruption and vices of town life. French writer of pastorals, Clement Marot, used his wit and song, combined with allegory, to try to improve the conditions of the church. Another contribution of the poet was the use of the motto, "La Mort Ny Mord," which was

appended to all his printed works. The motto was a literary fashion of the time. Marot's pastoral elegy served as a model for Spenser's "November," by which this form became as popular in England as it had been in Italy. Spenser, the great Protestant English poet, uses satire and allegory in his pastoral work, The Shepheardes' Calendar, to express his feelings about the period. Though Spenser uses shepherds to express his grievances, however, by this time, the pastoral form has changed from a direct expression of daily living into a swirl of symbols. From here, the style of pastoral writing changed to prose through the English euphuistic prose writer, John Lyly. Lyly's use of song and dialogue embodied in a contest on the subject of love in a setting of Nature and his use of allegory in reference to the figures of the Court of his day, with elegiac overtones, established him as a pastoral writer. However, through the cumulation and swirl of pastoral tradition, Izaak Walton emerges to carry on pastoral tradition in his prose form, The Compleat Angler.

Chapter 2

IZAAK WALTON'S PASTORAL CONVENTIONS IN THE COMPLEAT ANGLER

Izaak Walton wrote The Compleat Angler in the form of a five-day sequence of dialogues. These dialogues take place when the members meet to spend their nights in a friendly inn in the country where they discuss angling and life as they walk over the green landscape and fish the clear streams. Thus, the key to Walton's The Compleat Angler and its most significant link to the pastoral tradition is Walton's dialogue, since the entire book is couched in this form. Before any detailed analysis of the dialogue, one offers a summary of the action, the frame for the dialogue. The first day's dialogue, or Chapter I, illustrates best the traditional debate or contest concerning the merits of the three debaters' favorite sport, as the fisherman walks toward Ware, the falconer toward Theobalds, and the hunter toward Thatcht House in Hodsew.

Following this best-known first day's debate occurs the second day's dialogue, which takes place as Piscator and Venator meet after spending the night at separate inns. At the conclusion of this chapter, Piscator makes an unforgettable mention of the honest ale-house with lavendered sheets, the inn where the two will spend the night.

On the third day of dialogue, Piscator continues the practical instructions about how to fish for and dress the chub, and the two men continue their trek back to the honest ale-house. In Chapter IV, the fisherman observes the nature and breeding of trout and discourses upon the art of fishing. The two return to the ale-house, again, where they meet Piscator's brother, Peter, and friend, Coridon, and the hostess prepares and serves the trout. In Chapter V, Walton ends the third day. Here, he shows Piscator giving "more directions how to fish for, and how to make for the Trout an artificial Minnow and Fly, and some merriment."¹²⁶ Thus, the third day ends with some merriment in the form of song.

At the close of Chapter V, Walton begins the fourth day of dialogue which he continues into Chapter XVI. Though these chapters contain wit, merriment, and song, their chief concern is for practical observations about different types of fish. The fifth day of dialogue begins at the close of Chapter XVI and continues to Chapter XXI, the end of the book. In these concluding chapters, Peter, Coridon, Venator, and Piscator partake of breakfast. After this meal, Coridon and Peter go their separate ways, and Piscator and Venator walk back toward London. These final units contain more instructions for catching special fishes,

¹²⁶Izaak Walton, The Compleat Angler, p. 105.

descriptions of lures to be used in catching them, notations about the seasons, and descriptions of favorable places. Piscator offers such practical advice as "directions for making of a line, and for the coloring of both rod and line."¹²⁷ But in this concluding chapter, perhaps the most memorable element is Walton's dictacticism that permeates the songs and the several quotations which he cites in order to convey his final message: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord, and let the blessing of St. Peters Master be with mine," and "upon all that are fishers of Virtue, and all that love to be quiet, and go a fishing."¹²⁸

From the foregoing synopsis, it is obvious that the basic dramatic action is revealed through the dialogue faithful to the pastoral tradition, which points out (1) setting with all its pastoral association, (2) more detailed dramatic action, (3) the traditional contest or debate, with (4) the wit, song and verse which are often parts of the contest. In addition to these traditional elements, Walton's dialogue also unveils (5) elements unique to him; among them (a) his practical instructions for catching and cooking fish, (b) his real life imagery which brings sudden unforgettable insights to the seventeenth-century countryside, and (c) the totality of effect which he achieves, or

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 254.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 264.

his philosophical intent in writing The Compleat Angler-- that is, whether he is satirizing his times, whether he is allegorizing contemporary events and personages, or whether he is writing--seriously, simply, and straightforwardly-- for the mere enjoyment and edification of his readers.

Walton's setting for the dialogue is the "wooded inland valleys, where the waters run quietly, where the sunshine falls upon leaf and grass, and where there is a willow tree under which we may sit and read."¹²⁹ This is a scene that forms a perfect background for the reasoned and serene conversation that subsequently takes place. Walton, however, uses no real major settings for The Compleat Angler; the first being Tottenham-hill, on a "fine fresh May morning," is a typical pastoral setting in which for Piscator, Venator, and Auceps to meet for the first time.¹³⁰ This outdoor scene parallels the kinds of pastoral settings that Theocritus and Vergil provided their shepherds. The realm for Auceps' recreation is the sky and he combines the wonders of the air with myth as he explains, "in the Air my troops of Hawks soar up on high, and when they are lost in the sights of men, then they attend upon and converse with the gods."¹³¹ The hawk which Auceps is to acquire on the following day is now placed in the following mythical

¹²⁹Charles Hill Dick, The Complete Angler of Walton and Cotton, p. xviii.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 39.

¹³¹Ibid.

situation: "she heeds nothing, but makes her nimble Pinions cut the fluid air, and so makes her high way over the steepest mountains and deepest rivers, and in her glorious career looks with contempt upon those high Steeples and magnificent Palaces which we adore and wonder at."¹³² It is obvious that Walton compares the splendor of Nature with the values set upon material things by people. Finally, Venator is asked by Auceps to defend his recreation and his setting (for the hunter) is the earth. Similarly, Walton has Venator depict the grandeur of nature: "the earth is a solid, settled element, an element most universally beneficial both to man and beast; the earth feeds man, and all those several beasts that both feed him, and afford him recreation."¹³³ Both mythical and folklore are included in Venator's setting. For instance, "Hunting is a game for Princes and noble persons; it hath been highly prized in all Ages; it was one of the qualifications that Zenophon bestowed upon his Cyrus, that he was a hunter of wild beasts."¹³⁴ Once again, Walton points out the good qualities of the earth as an element of nature that feeds man, provides recreation for man, shows earth to be a bountiful mother, and through its animals sets an example of how men should live on earth.

¹³²Ibid., pp. 44-45. ¹³³Ibid., p. 46.

¹³⁴Richard Le Gallienne, ed., The Complete Angler, p. lxix.

Piscator's setting for his recreation is the element of water, the eldest daughter of creation and from which God brought forth life. Walton reflects the thought of the time in stating that all bodies are made of water and may return only to water. Once again, his setting emphasizes the greatness of nature and shows how the fruitfulness of the earth depends upon the element of water. For example, the advantages of water in different settings comprise the cures of the baths; food for man's bodies, and transportation and travel. As with his other two characters, Walton concludes that, in the setting of Piscator, God showed more favor to inhabitants of the water than to those of the earth. Le Gallienne remarked of Walton, "He followed angling, indeed any such sport is most intelligently followed, as a pretext for a day or two in the fields, not so much to fill his basket as to refresh his spirit, and store his memory with the sweetness of country sights and sounds."¹³⁵ Piscator defends his own recreation so eloquently that for two days he persuades Venator to catch fish and instructs him in the nature and breeding of various kinds of fish while they are walking in the country.

Walton introduces his next pastoral setting at the beginning of the second day of dialogue when he has Venator say, "Look down at the bottom of the hill there in that

¹³⁵Ibid.

meadow, chequered with water-lillies and lady-smocks."¹³⁶
 Here, Walton employs Theocritus' method in pointing out that this natural beauty gives the reader a new appreciation of nature. This moralizing now occurs near a broad beach-tree under which Piscator and Venator wait for the rain to stop. It is here that

The birds in the adjoining Grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an Echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hallow tree, near the brow of Primrose-hil, there I sate viewing the silver-streams glide silently towards their center, the tempetuous Sea; and sometimes I beguil'd time by viewing the harmless Lambs, some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the chearful Sun; and saw others craving comfort from the swoln Udders of their bleating Dams.¹³⁷

Walton, as did Theocritus and Vergil, depicted lambs as part of the pastoral scene; and even Petrarch used lambs and goats for his pastoral allegory to expose the personnel of the College of Cardinals. Dewar observes that Walton "is always among meadows and wild flowers, sweet scented hedges and shady trees; if rain falls, it does so in a benign shower; the sun is never hidden for long; the wind is a soft breeze; the birds are always singing; and the streams, though fresh and pure, flow quietly."¹³⁸

¹³⁶Walton, op. cit., p. 74.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 99.

¹³⁸George A. B. Dewar, ed., The Complete Angler, or The Contemplative Man's Recreation, p. 11.

A third significant and beautiful pastoral setting is the Primrose-bank where Piscator says, "And so (if I might be Judge) God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than Angling."¹³⁹ Piscator adds that, when "I sate last on this Primrose-bank, and look'd down these Meadows; I thought of them as Charles the Emperour did of the City of Florence: That they were too pleasant to be look'd on, but onely on Holy-Dayes,"¹⁴⁰ The following picturesque and intimate dialogue about the setting tends to make the work imaginative and dramatic.

During the long walk back to Tottenham, Walton illustrates in pastoral form, the "clean and cool" of an Arbour where they can refresh themselves with a bottle of "Sack, Milk, Oranges, and Sugar, which all put together, make a drink like Nectar, indeed too good for any body but us anglers."¹⁴¹ This relaxing atmosphere inspires Venator to recite the verses by Sir Henry Wotton describing "Country-Recreations," which he has enjoyed since he has been in the company of Piscator.

As the synopsis has already exemplified, the basic movement or dramatic action of the book is revealed through dialogue. For example, on the first morning when Piscator overtakes Venator and Auceps, he says, "I have stretched my

¹³⁹Walton, op. cit., p. 137.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 257.

legs up Tottenham-hill to overtake you, hoping your business may occasion you towards Ware this fine fresh May morning."¹⁴² Not only movement, but a "special kind" of action is thus revealed in Piscator's dialogue, which provides the reader with a complete account of his ascent of Tottenham-hill. When Venator says, "And I am a lover of Hounds, I have followed many a pack of dogs many a mile, and heard many merry men make sport and scoff at Anglers."¹⁴³ Again, Walton illustrates the dramatic action of a group of merry sportsmen as they cover miles of countryside, and while they walk, one gleans specific information from their speeches. Moreover, vivid representation is achieved by Walton as he describes the action of the hawk in the air, "it stops not the high soaring of my noble generous Falcon; in it she ascends to such an height, as the dull eyes of beasts and fish are not able to reach to; their bodies are too gross for such high elevations."¹⁴⁴ Stauffer has pointed out that Walton has a gift for vivid presentation and is able to gain "added vividness" because of his subjective treatment.¹⁴⁵ He further observes that, since Walton is master of his subjects, they move only under his

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁴⁵Donald Alfred Stauffer, English Biography before 1700, p. 113.

guidance.¹⁴⁶ However, each speaker gives his individual reaction to a scene rather than utters the reaction of Walton. When Piscator defends his recreation, the action of God is described as He "brought forth living creatures abundantly."¹⁴⁷ The poet describes the action of the water that "runs under ground, whose natural course carries them to the tops of many high mountains, as we see by several springs breaking forth on the tops of the highest hills."¹⁴⁸ Dramatic action or movement of Piscator and Venator are revealed through dialogue as they travel over the countryside to fish in the clear water; for instance, Venator asks Piscator where he will begin to fish, and Piscator says that they have not yet come to a likely place, but that they will have to walk a mile further before they can begin to fish.¹⁴⁹ Thus, by his dialogue, Walton illustrates the movement of his characters.

Another pastoral characteristic in The Compleat Angler is the debate and contest. The principal debate takes place on the first day between Piscator, Auceps, and Venator as each defends his preferred recreation. Each takes his turn in the debate; and, although he cannot win a specified prize, each defender gains a certain reward in the form of

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁴⁷Walton, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 77.

satisfaction in having expressed his convictions eloquently. Walton's contest differs from those of the earlier pastoral poets. The shepherds of Theocritus and Vergil were invariably two who competed for a prize to be awarded for the best tale or song; whereas each of Walton's three characters is in contest with the other two, each of whom advocates his own recreation. The contest is among the three as to which recreation--falconry, hunting, fishing--yields the greatest satisfactions and profits to the sportsman. For instance, Auceps, the first of the debaters, lauds the birds in the air and explains the rewards of falconers. He describes not only the high qualifications and ability of his falcon, but also the wonders of other birds "with which Nature hath furnished them to the shame of Art."¹⁵⁰ In true pastoral fashion, Walton, through the character of the falconer, illustrates his belief that nature's art, rather than man's, provides true beauty, and that this true beauty is the natural reward that is Auceps' trophy.

Venator lays claim to the same personal reward when he boasts of the capacity of the earth to foster men and beasts and a mutual understanding between them. Of his hounds, he says, "He knows the language of them, and they know the language and meaning of one another as perfectly

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 41.

as we know the voices of those with whom we discourse daily."¹⁵¹ Here, again, Walton points out the joys for man in nature.

Piscator enters the contest with a dialogue upon the fishes of the waters and a recounting of the rewards available to the patient fisherman. He prefaces his argument with a philosophical discourse in which he declaims upon the function of water as the primary element of the universe, "the eldest daughter of creation."¹⁵² Following Piscator's dialogue, the three reach Park-wall, where Auceps leaves the other two, saying, as he does so, "I assure you, Mr. Piscator, I now part with you full of good thoughts, not onely of your self, but your Recreation. And so Gentleman, God help you both."¹⁵³ Venator, then, urges Piscator to continue his discourse on the art of angling, and Piscator enlarges upon the subject, finally stating, "Angling is an Art, an Art worth your learning: the question is whether you be capable of learning it?"¹⁵⁴ Walton has Piscator further expound on the peripheral advantages gained, such as "hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the Art itself; but having once got and practis'd it, then doubt not but Angling will prove to be so pleasant, that it will prove like Vertue, a reward to itself."¹⁵⁵ Just as nature

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

abundantly rewards Auceps and Venator, so she also amply rewards Piscator, the fisherman of the streams. Piscator completes his part of the contest with more philosophical pondering, observing "that in ancient times a debate hath risen (and it remains yet unresolved) whether the happiness of man in this world doth consist more in Contemplation or action."¹⁵⁶ Piscator resolves this question by reciting a poem, George Herbert's "Divine Contemptation on Gods," by which quotation he tacitly awards the prize to contemplation. Providence, as will be seen later, more and more is to become, at least for the modern reader, the main thesis of Walton's work. Throughout the three-way debate, Walton allows each speaker the privilege of uninterrupted argument, thereby making each dialogue a separate and complete entity which yields its own satisfaction to the speaker and to the reader, although, in the end, Piscator clearly wins the victor's prize. After having considered Piscator's defense of angling, and after having spent a second day angling with Piscator, Venator tells the fisherman that he wishes to become his scholar or disciple. Thus, Chapter I, which takes place in the morning of the first day, is devoted to the foregoing contest. The element of wit, important in the pastoral tradition, becomes more apparent in the following

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 55.

chapters, as Venator and Piscator stroll over the fields, fish in the streams, and sup at the inn with the lavendered sheets. Through the centuries, this same element of wit had enabled the pastoral writers to expose, by allegory or satire, corruption in the papal court, in the church itself, or in the royal court, and to discourse upon the vast differences between life in the city and life in the country. Walton also acknowledges his own reliance upon wit as a leaven: "I have made myself a recreation of a recreation; and that it might not prove so to [the reader], and not dull and tediously, I have in several places mixt (not any scurrility, but) some innocent, harmless mirth."¹⁵⁷ Except in the more expository passages in which he directs the fisherman in his sport, Walton is consistently witty, but not sharply satiric, and never scurrilous. He has Piscator tell Venator and Auceps, for example, that "a little wit mixt with ill nature, confidence, and malice results in the person being a scoffer, and therefore, an enemy to all who love virtue and angling."¹⁵⁸ Stauffer points out that Walton's use of a quiet kind of mirth is a "quality peculiarly his, and it is continually at work."¹⁵⁹ An

¹⁵⁷John R. Cooper, The Art of "The Compleat Angler," p. 5.

¹⁵⁸Walton, op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁵⁹Stauffer, op. cit., pp. 112-115.

example of this quiet wit occurs when Venator counters Piscator's defense of angling, saying, "I will not be so uncivil to Mr. Piscator, as not to allow him a time for the commendation of Angling, which he calls an Art, but doubtless 'tis an easie one: and Mr. Auceps, I doubt we shall hear a watry discourse of it: but I hope twill not be a long one."¹⁶⁰ Replying in this vein and prefacing to it the Herbert quotation already described, Piscator assures him, "But Sir, lest this Discourse may seem tedious, I shall give it a sweet conclusion out of that holy Poet, Mr. George Herbert his Divine Contemptation on God's Providence."¹⁶¹

The hunter's plea to "fish a bit longer" is another example of this wit and of the speaker's own appreciation of that element: "Nay, good Master, one fish more, for you see it rains still, and you know our Angles are like mony put to usurie; they may thrive, though we set still and do nothing but talk and enjoy one another."¹⁶² Finally, as Venator and Piscator finally leave the stream and walk toward the inn, Venator remarks that Piscator has "angled me on with much pleasure to the Thatcht house."¹⁶³ Thus Walton, as did Marot, used wit and mirth to enrich and further his pastoral philosophy.

¹⁶⁰Walton, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁶³Ibid.

Walton achieved his own adaptation of traditional song and verse out of the elements originally employed by traditional pastoral poets in their use of various forms. For example, Theocritus used such forms to represent the labors and loves of his simple shepherds; to express his concept of nature, thereby establishing the tradition for the pastoral poets who followed him; to express his deep appreciation for the life-style of the third century B.C. Sicilians, who lived in "sunshine and light-heartedness." Thus, the contests and debates were expressed in the song and verse. Bion, on the other hand, using song and verse to eulogize the lost one, pointed out the sympathetic beauty of nature, and expressed his belief that nature can provide a solace for man's grief if man will only trust the healing powers of nature. Moschus used song and verse to create the elegy. By personification the bucolic element, or the pointing to the natural beauty of nature is illustrated. Vergil put song and verse into the mouths of his shepherds and herdsmen in true rustic fashion. Also, at this time, allegory was adapted to the verse, and Petrarch not only used the verse form to allegorize the papal courts but also to associate a kind of mystic feeling with certain places in nature. Boccaccio also made use of verse as well as prose to satirize the tyranny of the church. Moreover, in his use of verse and song, Mantuan returned to the true pastoral tradition of two shepherds, of one

shepherds' telling of his love, courtship, and marriage, and giving a moral at the end. Later, Marot, courteous and sophisticated, used song and verse to express his humanistic feeling for the Queen's sorrow, and also to tell his love for God in a realistic manner. Though Spenser's shepherds discuss the poet's own grievances, a shepherd boy in the work also makes an analogy of his unfortunate love to the seasons of the year. As pointed out previously, Walton makes a characteristic adaptation of song and verse in his work. In typical seventeenth-century fashion, he quotes from poets without crediting them for his borrowing. In so doing, he gains some suspense and sets a scene of true buccolic atmosphere, as when he has the maid sing Marlowe's romantic statement. Later, in her wisdom, the maids' mother replies to Marlowe in Raleigh's words with a realistic, satiric view of pastoral perfection. In addition, Coridon's song, with its lyrics by Jo Chakhill, continues the mild debate in a setting of buccolic joy, as Chakhill contrasts the innocence of country life with the wantonness of life in the city and court, inserting in his refrains touches of light-hearted mirth, "high trolollie lollie loe, high trolollie lee."¹⁶⁴ When Coridon concludes his song, Piscator expresses a love for the "kind of mirth that causes

¹⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 108-110.

persons not to be ashamed to see each other again," expressing his conviction that "a companion that is chearful, and free from swearing and scurrulous discourse, is worth gold."¹⁶⁵ Apparently, by means of Coridon's speech Walton is voicing his own preference for innocent, kindly humor over both biting, satiric wit and lewd unseemly mirth.

The "Angler's Song," which Piscator sings after Coridon finishes his song, mentions a hunter, a falconer, a tennis player, cupid, and an angler. He sings of the joys and dangers of each sport, with angling being the preferred sport because of the contemplation allowed the angler while he fishes. The theme of religion concludes the thought of the song with the statement that the Lord made fishers of men, and that it is His desire to follow in this chosen path.¹⁶⁶

Thus, in The Compleat Angler, Walton cites verses by Herbert, Wotton, Dubortas, and Jo Davors. Each work is pastoral extolling the beauty of nature and the joy of being a part of nature and of angling, and finally describing the pleasures of sitting next to God in contemplation. Finally, as Walton sat on the Primrose-bank, he apparently quoted from one of his own poems, saying, "I turned my present thoughts into verse,"¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 111-112.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 138-139.

I in these flowery Meades wo'd be:
These Christal streams should solace me;
To whose harmonious bubbling noise,
I wish my Angle wo'd rejoice.
Sit here and see the Turtle-dove,
Court his chaste Mate to acts of love.
Or on that bank feel the West wind
Breathe health and plenty, please my mind
To see sweet dew-drops kisse these flowers
And then washt off by April-showers.

Chapter 3

AN ASSESSMENT OF WALTON'S POSITION IN THE PASTORAL TRADITION AND CONCLUSION

As a conclusion to the study of Izaak Walton, an estimate of Walton as a pastoral writer is in order. In the preceding chapter, through a study of Walton's dialogue, it has been established that, in his use of debate, setting, dramatic action, wit, song, and verse, Walton is placed in the tradition of the pastoral. But, specifically, what does the dialogue of The Compleat Angler reveal of style and content that is particularly Walton's own? Since style and subject are, in a sense, the man, before answering any questions about style or content, one should perhaps ask the following questions: Who was the man? What was the life in which he lived and from which he wrote? Although no attempt has been made here at detailed biography, it is necessary to know the man and his life before assessing the total impact of The Compleat Angler, even in a limited way.

Charles Hill Dick, perhaps, has given the best analysis of Walton when he says that "[He] sought no quarrel with any; he was careful in business, but yet he counted the business of living greater than that of acquiring gold." adding that he was possessed of the "healthy vigor and

manliness that always belongs to the true sportsman."¹⁶⁸

He refers also to Walton's physical attributes, combined with the

. . . pleasant urbanity of mind and manner with which he had been gifted to characterize him in spite of the experiences which must have been gained in many years of troublous history and vicissitude of things, and a like placidity of thought pervades all his writings, as if he had made a long journey and finally came to a calm anchorage.¹⁶⁹

Apparently, the main interest in Walton's mind was his independence, and apparently he found a release in the rustic life that preserved this independence. According to Major,

Walton did really and substantially enjoy, in his own person, that true happiness which he would teach us all to acquire: with that genuine, philosophical spirit which is worthy of universal imitation, he sought his beloved independence in stoic limitations of his wants, rather than aiming at the acquirement of large possessions; his book, as he himself tells us is a picture of his own mind, and had the book been called, "The Divine Art of Contentment," or "The True Christian Philosopher," its principal contents would have justified either of those titles, equally with that in which his modesty dictated its setting forth.¹⁷⁰

Although it seems that Walton's thoughts run only in a light vein, in Chapter V, he approves a definite plan for recreation, when Peter remarks: "I will promise you I will

¹⁶⁸Dick, op. cit., p. vii. ¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. vii.

¹⁷⁰John Major, ed., The Complete Angler, or The Contemplative Man's Recreation, p. 17.

sing another song in praise of angling tomorrow night, for we will not part till then; but fish tomorrow and sup together, and the next day every man leave fishing and fall to his business."¹⁷¹ This minor admonition is perhaps uttered to remind one that he should fix requisite limits to his pleasures, even before they begin. In other words, Walton is saying that man cannot pass his days in idle enjoyment of nature; rather, he must return to the business of the world. The philosophy which Walton expresses, thus, is basically Stoic rather than Epicurean, in spite of his keen enjoyment of nature's beauty, and the enjoyment is thoughtful rather than abandoned. This quiet appreciation of nature places Walton firmly in the pastoral tradition, while his greater concern for religion sets him apart from other pastoral writers.

David Novarr observes that the author is "down-to-earth," and he refutes the popular belief that

Walton is only a displaced Elizabethan, a man who, during the interregnum and after, led the retired life of an honest and peaceable Christian and angler, and who created an idealized Elizabethan world in which all milkmaids sang like nightingales and in which all fishermen had the holiness of primitive Christians.¹⁷²

Novarr adds that the Walton who emerges, here, is "neither so peaceable nor so honest nor so simple as has been

¹⁷¹Walton, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁷²David Novarr, The Making of Walton's Lives, p. viii.

frequently thought, but he is one who gains in stature as we see his concern for craftsmanship and his involvement in the prime issues of his time."¹⁷³ This, then, is the kind of man Walton was, the man who lived through the execution of one king, the restoration of another, in the midst of all that blood and violence, yet wrote so serenely of "studying to be quiet." He was involved in the affairs of his day; he was a Royalist; he did not withdraw from public life. He was a seventeenth-century man.

This study is not intended to present a complete analysis of Walton's style, but rather to give consideration to the following stylistic elements in his work: (1) sentence length, (2) word accumulation and alliteration, (3) digression, and (4) allegory.

Throughout The Compleat Angler, Walton makes use of the long sentence somewhat like that of Lyly's writing. Stauffer notes that Walton's sentences are "dignified and supple, with a tendency to rhetorical balance. . . ." ¹⁷⁴ The following is an example of a typical long sentence. This statement occurs in Piscator's dialogue as he defends the character of the angler to the falconer and to the hunter:

If you mean such simple man as lived in those times when there were fewer Lawyers; when men might

¹⁷³Ibid., p. x.

¹⁷⁴Stauffer, op. cit., p. 96.

have had a Lordship safely conveyed to them in a piece of Parchment no bigger than your hand (though several sheets will not do it safely in this wiser age) I say, Sir, if you take us anglers to be such simple men as I have spoke of, then my self and those of my Profession will be glad to be so understood: But if you mean to express a general defect in those that profess and practise the excellent art of Angling, I hope in time to disabuse you, and make the contrary appear so evidently, that if you will but have patience to hear me, I shall remove all the Anticipation that discourse, or time, or prejudice have possess'd you with laudable and ancient art; for I know it is worthy the knowledge and practise of a wise man.¹⁷⁵

In this long sentence, peculiarly Walton's, there is balance, an equal length of clauses, parallel grammatical structures in the repetition of "if" and in parallel thoughts. Walton's long sentence differs from Lyly's euphuistic sentence in that in the latter there is much ornamentation, especially from folklore and mythology. For example, Euphues instructs Philautus:

When we come into London, we shall walke in the garden of the worlde, where among many flowers we shall see some weeds, sweet Roses and sharp Nettles, pleasant Lillyes and pricking Thornes, high Vines, and low Hedges: All things (as the fame goeth) that may either please the sight or dislike the smell eyther feede the eye with delight, or fill the nose with infection.¹⁷⁶

As in the Walton passage, Lyly's sentence, though not as long, contains balance, parallel grammatical structure, and parallel thoughts. In their total effect, Walton's sentences

¹⁷⁵Walton, op. cit., p. 38.

¹⁷⁶Bond, op. cit., p. 81.

are polished and gentle, as would suit the subject of angling; they move at a leisurely pace, that of a man carefully walking up a trout stream in a true pastoral fashion.¹⁷⁷ The elaborate embellishment of Lyly's sentences would, here, be entirely out of character. Dick has characterized The Compleat Angler as "an imaginative work describing a journey into the country outside London."¹⁷⁸ Again, the subject matter would not justify, excessive ornamentation or elaboration.

Stauffer also points out Walton's "fondness for coupled adjectives and alliteration."¹⁷⁹ Examples of coupled adjectives and of terms piled upon terms reminiscent of Lyly's painfully constructed style are frequent in The Compleat Angler: "a fine fresh cool morning,"¹⁸⁰ "a heavy contemptible, dull recreation,"¹⁸¹ "an inquiring, searching, observing wit,"¹⁸² and "prudent, and peaceable men."¹⁸³ The last example of plural adjectives also illustrates the alliteration which echoes that in Lyly's writing, as does the following passage: "like a Hermite dwells there alone, studying the wind and weather."¹⁸⁴ Examples

¹⁷⁷Dick, op. cit., p. xx. ¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. xviii.

¹⁷⁹Stauffer, op. cit., p. 96.

¹⁸⁰Walton, op. cit., pp. 34-64.

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 64. ¹⁸²Ibid., p. 53. ¹⁸³Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 60.

are also frequent of the use of multiple nouns and verbs, such as, "so noted for his meek spirit, deep learning, prudence and piety, that the then Parliament and Convocation both, chose, injoyned and trusted him."¹⁸⁵

Walton's device of piling words upon words, somewhat like Lyly's extravagant use of words, still remains clear and simple, probably because of the clarity and simplicity of the ideas that Walton is expressing as well as the choice of words which he combines clarify his meaning.

Another important characteristic of Walton's style is his use of digression. Stauffer speaks of "the philosophy and observations, side excursions which in large manner explain the charm, the life, and the individuality of his work."¹⁸⁶ A good example of this form of digression occurs in the dialogue of the hunter as he sits under the willow-tree by the water side and thinks of what Piscator has told him about the surrounding meadow. First, Venator speaks of the owner of the meadow who has a plentiful estate. Then, he alludes to the beauty of the countryside, comparing the meadow to a similar place in Sicily, where perfumes from the flowers cause the hunting dogs to lose their scent. And, finally, he reverts again to the subject of the owner of the meadow, and at this point the speaker expresses

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁸⁶Stauffer, op. cit., p. 102.

thanks to the Lord for the joy of being able to appreciate the fact that the "meek possess the earth." Then, he remembers that Anglers are of the group who possess the earth and concludes his digression with a verse written by Phineas Fletcher and "The Angler Song."¹⁸⁷ Thus, in this one dialogue, Walton expresses his philosophy, shares his observations on the rustic beauty of the countryside, and adds a religious moralistic note to the discussion.

One recalls that early pastoral writers like Vergil, Petrarch, and Marot made notable use of allegory. Coon notes that Walton, too, expresses his attitude toward the troublous times and their events by means of allegory.¹⁸⁸ As an example, Venator asks if Piscator would have the "Foxes of the Nation destroyed."¹⁸⁹ Probably, here, the Royalist Walton is alluding to such rebels as Cromwell and his adherents as destructive foxes. Another example of Walton's allegory occurs in his reference to the laborious Bee, of "Prudence," "Policy," and "Regular Government" of "their own Commonwealth." Major said that the following work was doubtless in Walton's memory when he wrote,

The Feminine Monarchie: or the Historie of the Bees. Shewing their admirable nature and properties,

¹⁸⁷Walton, op. cit., pp. 223-227.

¹⁸⁸Arthur Munson Coon, The Life of Izaak Walton, p. 155.

¹⁸⁹Walton, op. cit., p. 35.

their generation and colonies, their government, loyalty, art, industry, enemies, wars, magnanimity, etc. Together with the right ordering of them from time to time, and the sweet profit arising therefrom.¹⁹⁰

Although Walton uses the term, Commonwealth, applied to Cromwell's government, the "law and order of the Bee-Hive" probably represents Walton's leaning toward the Royalist way of life rather than to that of the rebellious Puritans. The Bees probably represent the legal and highly organized citizenry which the monarchy meant to him.

Perhaps, imagery is the most significant element of style in the pastoral tradition. In his dialogue, Walton makes the reader see a specific sight or suggests a sound or a scent, a touch, or even a taste. Of these, probably the lavender scent is best remembered in The Compleat Angler. From Piscator's promise to lead Venator to an "honest Ale-house where we shall find a cleanly room, Lavender in the windows, and twenty Ballads stuck about the wall," the scent has come down through the ages to enchant and haunt many an attentive reader.¹⁹¹ After the second day of fishing, Piscator says, "I'll now lead you to an honest Ale-house where we shall find a cleanly room, Lavender in the Windows, and twenty Ballads stuck about the wall;

¹⁹⁰Major, op. cit., p. 404.

¹⁹¹Walton, op. cit., p. 81.

there my Host is (which I may tell you, is both cleanly, and handsome, and civil) hath drest many a one for me, and shall now dresse it after my fashion, and Iawwant it good meat."¹⁹² Walton's use of imagery is so pervasive, here, that a reader wonders if the sportsmen enjoy their recreations more than they enjoy the "fresh sheets that smell of Lavender"; and the "meat" and "usage" afforded by the hospitable inn keeper.

Some of Walton's imagery, however, is not attractive. For example, his realistic description of a newly dressed chub is not for the squeamish:

A newly drest Chub is so much better than a chub of a days keeping after he is dead--he is compared to cherries newly gathered from a tree, and others that have been bruised and layen a day or two in water. Being thus used and drest presently, and not washt after he is gutted, (for note that lying long in water, and washing the blood out of the Fish after they be gutted, abates much of their sweetnesse) you will find the Chub to be such meat as will recompence your labour.¹⁹³

The imagery, here, is so vivid that the reader actually sees the changing color of the cherries and of the chub.

Although imagery was basic to the earliest pastoral writing, Walton gave to his imagery the strong stamp of the English countryside, unlike Vergil, who placed his Greek characters in an Italian setting, and unlike Lyly, who placed Euphues in Greece. Most modern readers would share

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 86.

Walton's belief that his English characters could be understood only in their native English setting.

Other examples of Walton's imagery occur in his description of birds. For instance, he divides them into several categories. Birds for pleasure, such as the Lark, Black-bird, Thrassel, Leverock, Tit-lark, Linnet, Robin, and Nightingale, he places in the category, "Musicians of the Air." Here, each bird fulfills a special responsibility: the Lark rejoices when she sings, the Nightingale, another "Airy Creature," breathes such sweet lowd musick out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think Miracles are not ceased."¹⁹⁴ In the second category, "Birds of Political Use," are swallows taught to carry letters between two armies and Pigeons trained to carry and redeliver letters when the Turks beseiged Malta or Rhodes. His third category, Birds of Religion, includes the Dove which Noah sent from the ship to give him notice of land and which proved to be a reliable messenger. Another in this same category is the Raven, which, when ordered by God to provide meat both morning and evening for Elijah, did so. Another and still more impressive image of the dove occurs: "The Holy Ghost when he descended visibly upon our Saviour, did it by assuming the shape of a Dove."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 42.

This inquiry into Walton's style--his use of long sentences, his use of more than one word to express the same meaning, his use of digressions, of allegory, and of imagery--leads to the conclusion that, by means of this style, he has achieved his remarkable effects of clarity and simplicity. The effects had been traditional in pastoral writing, although some of the more sophisticated writers, like Vergil and Lyly, had departed somewhat from the tradition. According to Major, "Walton's unsophisticated language was beautiful: truly, indeed, it may be termed the well-spring of English, pure and undefiled."¹⁹⁶ Modern readers, at least, find Major's statement true; and fishermen can understand and enjoy Walton's The Compleat Angler. Major also cites John Hawkins, Walton's chief biographer, who penned the following encomium:

And let no man imagine, that a work on such a subject must, necessarily, be unentertaining, or trifling, or un instructive; for a perusal of this excellent piece, when we consider the elegant simplicity of the style, the ease and unaffected humor of the dialogue, the lovely scenes which it delineates, the enchanting pastoral poetry which it contains, or the fine morality it so sweetly inculcates, has hardly its fellow in any of the modern language.¹⁹⁷

This simplicity of prose was a developing characteristic in the seventeenth century, and Walton's work might be looked upon as a link between Milton's ornamented Elizabethan style and Dryden's clearer, more modern style.

¹⁹⁶Major, op. cit., p. 19. ¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 21.

Lest readers consider Walton's The Compleat Angler as mindless simplicity, Stauffer reminds them that, although Walton's writing is characterized as "unique for apparent simplicity, it is really an elaborated studied art."¹⁹⁸ For "Trust me, good Master, you shall not sow your seed in barren ground, for I hope to return you an increase answerable to your hopes; but however you shall find me obedient, and thankful, and serviceable to my best abilitie."¹⁹⁹ The above example in its simplicity could well be understood by any literate Englishman of Walton's period. However, such simplicity is not arrived at naturally and easily, but rather, like, Casal's apparently effortless cello virtuosity, is achieved only by studied art and tireless revision.

This brief study of Walton's style and the effects of that style leads inevitably to a further consideration of his subject matter. However important a man's style may be, and however inseparable style and subject may be, in the final analysis it is what a writer has to say rather than the manner in which he says it that determines the final measure of his popularity. Therefore, the following questions arise, What is The Compleat Angler? Is it an instruction book on fishing? Le Gallienne answers negatively, as he points out:

¹⁹⁸Stauffer, op. cit., p. 115.

¹⁹⁹Walton, op. cit., p. 106.

Angling was simply an excuse for Walton's artless garrulity, a peg on which to hang his ever fragrant discourse of stream and meadow. He followed angling, indeed any such sport is most intelligently followed, as a pretext for a day or two in the fields, not so much to fill his basket as to refresh his spirit, and store his memory with the sweetness of country sights and sounds.²⁰⁰

Again, Le Gallienne remarks,

But anyone can catch fish--can he, do you say?--the thing is to have so written about catching them that your book is a pastoral, the freshness of which a hundred editions have left unexhausted--a book in which the grass is forever green, and the shining brooks do indeed go on forever.²⁰¹

Stephen agrees with La Gallienne that Walton is not best read as an instructor; he sees Walton as an idyllist, and one who is unmatched in English prose.²⁰² One recalls, here, that an idyll--a description of a simple, pleasant pastoral life--can be prose as well as poetry, a form that harks back to Theocritus, who described the pastoral life of Sicily, as Walton describes that of England.

Le Gallienne continues his sensitive judgments of the contents of The Compleat Angler:

So much nature was never got into a book without a corresponding outlay of art--and has any one else brought the singing of birds, the fragrance of meadows, the meditative peace of the river-side, into a book, with so undying a freshness as he? Is it not

²⁰⁰Le Gallienne, op. cit., p. lxix.

²⁰¹Ibid., Preface.

²⁰²Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, eds., The Dictionary of National Biography, XX, 732.

simply that the soul of a good man still breathes through its pages like lavender?²⁰³

Perhaps, Walton did allow himself a recreation that would provide time for walking in the pastoral countryside; however, the dialogue of The Compleat Angler is so filled with the Art of Angling, the charm of nature, the characteristics of men, and moralistic allusions that the book continues to please many kinds of readers.

As with the study of style, this study of content will not be a complete analysis of Walton's message, but rather a consideration of some topics of content which explain its special appeal for its readers. Why is the book remembered? In order to answer this question it is profitable to summarize what different critics have said as to what the book is and as to why it has continued to charm readers throughout the years. Five editions of The Compleat Angler appeared during Walton's lifetime.²⁰⁴ One source estimates the number of editions to be three hundred that have been printed since 1653. According to the Stephen brothers, Dr. Johnson was drawn to Walton as a Royalist and Churchman.²⁰⁵ Wordsworth, according to Cooper, found "The Compleat Angler a congenial work," and new editions appeared frequently

²⁰³Le Gallienne, op. cit., p. lxxiv.

²⁰⁴Stephen, op. cit., p. 731.

²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 732.

throughout the nineteenth century.²⁰⁶ Cooper admires Walton "for a piety similarly derived from close observation of natural objects," adding that "the Romantics usually praise Walton as a pastoral writer in this special sense of the word pastoral."²⁰⁷

Since fishing is a recreation, and since a spirit of calm accompanies it, any reader who has ever fished understands Dick's remark:

It is not unnatural that the book should have speedily become a favorite among a section of Englishmen; for in these evil times, when there was no court in England, every Royalist gentleman must needs fall back upon a sport to fill the empty days.²⁰⁸

The gentlemen of the court were mostly wealthy men who depended upon court life to fill up their spare time. Naturally, when this avocation was removed with the fall of the monarchy, time must have been heavy for them. Since many English gentlemen were sports minded and involved with the fox-hunt, it would have been a natural thing for them to have become avid anglers.

Dick explains the appeal of The Compleat Angler as follows:

The very spirit of kindness and good will to God, and men is present in the book. Whether Walton is talking of the fish and the way to catch them, or

²⁰⁶Cooper, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 4. ²⁰⁸Dick, op. cit., p. xvi.

indulging in a little moral homily, or reflecting some river-side scene upon his pages, he is always singularly pleasant to read, and we cannot but agree with Venator that "his discourse seems to be music, and charms one to attention."²⁰⁹

Doubtless, this kindness and good will to God and man is a chief appeal of The Compleat Angler and Walton's peculiar contribution, for in the long history of pastoral writing, there is no tradition for kindness and simple piety. Probably, Coon best explains why The Compleat Angler is a remembered favorite:

The persons of the book doubtless actually existed, though they can hardly be identified now, except Piscator, who certainly represents Walton. As he says, the whole work gives a picture of his disposition, and so kindly, honest, humorous and companionable a disposition it was that one can understand the book's immediate and continued popularity. The style conveys the personality, and most feel that it is in Walton's personality that the charm and value of the book lie. Fishermen find an idyllic celebration of their sport. But one does not need to be a fisherman to love The Compleat Angler.²¹⁰

Another important appraisal for the success of Walton's writing is that of Dewar: "Happiness is one of the prime secrets of the success of The Compleat Angler."²¹¹ Here, again, happiness is one of the chief goals of life, and most readers respond to the happiness of The Compleat Angler with admiration and liking. When a reader can associate with the content of a book, he immediately feels

²⁰⁹Ibid., pp. xix-xx.

²¹⁰Coon, op. cit., p. 210.

²¹¹Dewar, op. cit., p. xvi.

the book's appeal. Dewar substantiates this observation as follows:

Walton found what he loved best within easy reach, and it made him so content that he did not care to explore in the spirit of adventure. He is always amongst meadows and wild flowers, sweet scented hedges and shady trees; if rain falls, it does so in a benign shower: the sun is never hidden for long; the wind is a soft breeze; the birds are always singing; and the streams, though fresh and pure, flow quietly.²¹²

Some of the elements of the book which readers as well as critics have found appealing are Walton's scientific observations and his technical skill, the lovingly described details of his English settings, his views of friendship and companionship, and his philosophical observations.

The Compleat Angler is not only the world's best text on the art of fishing; Walton's beautiful settings make the book something more, as when the anglers walk the countryside and then, from a hilltop, Venator commands, "Look down at the bottom of the hill in that meadow, chequered with water-lillies and lady smocks. . . ." ²¹³ The men descend a hill to "walk the Meadow by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the Lillies." ²¹⁴ Walton continuously is depicting a beautiful, restful picture of the meadows, that quiets and charms a restless reader:

²¹² Ibid., p. liii.

²¹³ Walton, op. cit., p. 74.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 263.

But turn out of the way a little, good Scholar,
towards yonder high hedge: We'll sit whilst
this shower falls so gently upon the teeming
earth, and gives yet a sweeter smell to the
lovely flowers that adorn these verdant Meadows.²¹⁵

Both rivers and streams are important to anglers for fishing, but Walton also feels that solitude and peace exist by the water, a feeling that is apparent when he describes the river as "part of the pleasant pleasure as he sate quietly in a Summers evening on a bank Fishing. . . ." ²¹⁶ The lonely figure is almost a part of the landscape itself. Dewar is convinced that Walton possesses an unusual love for the countryside:

He is always amongst meadows and wild flowers,
sweet scented hedges and shady trees; . . . Let us
all love all this, and yet find our pleasure not only
in the smile of Nature, but in every aspect of her,
and in all variety of country. . . . he urges us to
go out into the open air taking with us "a heart that
watches and receives."²¹⁷

Probably, Dewar captures the meaning that Walton strives for in the expression, "a heart that watches and receives" the beauty of the countryside.

The concern that Walton has for man apparently impresses the reader and provides an added depth to The Compleat Angler. Since friendship or companionship is almost universally prized by man, it is natural that Walton should

²¹⁵Ibid., p. 99.

²¹⁶Ibid.

²¹⁷Dewar, op. cit., p. liii.

wish to share his pleasure in angling. Stauffer notes, "Friendship for [Walton] was sacred . . .". An illustration of this desire for companionship occurs when, on the first morning, Piscator hurries to overtake Venator and Auceps to share with them the walk up Tottenham-hill.²¹⁸ Throughout the succeeding five days, an air of friendliness exists between Venator and Piscator. The two form a bond as master and disciple after Auceps goes his own way to pursue his own avocation. That Piscator is pleased to have a companion with whom to share his knowledge of the art of angling is apparent when he confides in his brother Peter, "I find my Scholar to be so suited to my own humor, which is to be pleasant, and civilly merry, that my resolution is to hide nothing that I know from him."²¹⁹ For an angler to divulge his secrets of success can only mean the joy of sharing this knowledge with a companion.

The honest Ale-house with the fireplace provides an atmosphere of friendliness for the two companions each evening as they return from their day of angling. It is always to this same Ale-house that they return when they complete their day--to be with the pleasant hostess who serves the good food and ale beside the cheerful hearth. However, all of these references to happy a companionship

²¹⁸Walton, op. cit., p. 33.

²¹⁹Ibid., p. 106.

contain no hint of the grief and loneliness which Coon thinks that Walton must have felt. Coon points to the Latin proverbs written on the fly-leaf on Walton's own copy of the 1655 edition of The Compleat Angler (now owned by Dr. Samuel W. Lambert, New York City, who let Coon examine it). In Walton's own hand, there is the following:

Happy in misfortune. Go alone	<u>In infaelicitate</u> <u>felix val soli</u> 1656
Never less alone than when alone	<u>Numquam minus solus</u> <u>quam cum solus</u>
Who endures well, lives well	<u>Qui bene latint,</u> <u>bene vixit</u> 1656
The fisherman feels the thrust	<u>Ictus piscator</u> <u>sapit</u> ²²⁰

Thus, Coon concludes that Walton's retirement was not as happy as he might have wished it to be. Remembering the events of Walton's life, one readily shares Coon's view, for Walton's first wife bore him six children, all of whom died in infancy, and one of the three children of his second marriage, a son, also died. By the age of sixty-nine, Walton had been twice a widower.²²¹ It was at the age of sixty that he wrote The Compleat Angler, which literally reflects none of the grief which he must have experienced by that date. It is interesting to speculate why he spared the readers of his book the sorrow which he probably alluded to in the fly-

²²⁰Coon, op. cit., p. 176.

²²¹Walton, op. cit., p. 3.

leaf notation. He seems to have carried none of his grief with him to the happy fields, or perhaps he left it in those fields.

Although some of Walton's science is pseudo or even of the nature of old wives' tales, some of his facts and classifications survive the examination of modern biologists. For example, he sometimes refers to the medieval "natural philosophy" borrowed from the Greek philosophers. Indeed, one proposes that Walton completed his analogy of the four elements (often cited by Greek philosophers and persisting through the Middle Ages) in referring to the fire which transformed the creatures of air, the earth, and the water so as to make them acceptable gifts of nature to man.

The Compleat Angler contains much elaborate technical knowledge in the art of angling. For example, he instructs Venator about the kinds of bait for the different months of the year: in March and April, a fish is usually taken with worms; in May, June, and July, a fish will bite any fly, or at cherries or at beetles with their legs and wings cut off. For August, he recommends the use of a yellow paste made of the strongest cheese pounded in a mortar with a little butter and saffron; and in the winter months, he prescribes a paste made of forked bones, turned into gristle, especially if it is baked with a paste made with cheese and turpentine. Walton is also technical in his instructions for the kinds

of flies to be used, making twelve kinds of artificial flies for the different months of fishing.²²² He instructs his student how to make each fly and informs him about the month for which it is to be used. Since, originally, March was considered to be the first month, he lists his flies accordingly. For March, he advocates the dun-fly; for April, the stone-fly; for May, the red-fly; for June, the moor-fly; for July, the wasp-fly; for August, the drake-fly; and he advocates the cloud-fly, flay-fly, and the vine-fly for the remaining months of the year.²²³

A group of fish which Walton thinks his protege should know about is that which is "fit for contemplation."²²⁴ This group holds special interest for the reader because he gives distinctive characteristics for each fish, and, as will become evident later in this study, because "contemplation" is a key word to the understanding of Walton's chief purpose in writing The Compleat Angler. The cuttle-fish, for example, called Sea-angler, casts a long gut out of her throat and lets small fish nibble on the gut while she slowly draws nearer, and then suddenly catches and devours the fish. The Hermit resides in dead fishes' shells and lives alone. From here, he studies the wind and weather,

²²²Ibid., p. 89.

²²³Ibid.

²²⁴Ibid., p. 60.

and when it is necessary for his protection, he turns the shell. The Adonis, called the Darling of the Sea, is so-named because she is loving and innocent and at peace with all other fish. Walton compares her disposition with that of the angler. The Sargus, a lustful fish, is best illustrated by the following verse:

The Adult'rous Sargus doth not only change
 Wives every day in the deep streams, but (strange)
 As if the honey of Sea-love delight
 Could not suffice his ranging appetite,
 Goes courting she-Goats on the grassie shore
 Horning their husbands that had horns before.²²⁵

The opposite of the Sargus is Cantharus:

But contrary, the constant Cantharus,
 Is ever constant to his faithful Spouse,
 In nuptial duties spending his chasts life,
 Never loves any but his own dear wife.²²⁶

Walton is a thorough instructor in his field, giving advice as to what kinds of water are best for certain fish and the names and locations of rivers and streams suitable for various kinds of fishing. He also describes many other kinds of fish and gives suggestions for catching and preparing them for the table. His organization of the seasons according to fishing is similar to Spenser's use of the months in The Shepheardes Calendar, in that both are arranged chronologically by months of the calendar year.

Walton also makes use of mythological, biblical, and historical allusions, and he often refers to authors of

²²⁵Ibid., p. 61.

²²⁶Ibid.

ancient days and to those of his own time. One recalls that pastoral writers also made allusions to the myths of Greece and Rome. One has to search for mythological allusions in The Compleat Anglers although nearly every page in the work features several Biblical allusions. One of the rare instances of Walton's mythological allusions occurs in Auceps' discourse on birds. The falcon, Auceps says, deserves the same title as the Eagle, "Jove's faithful servant in Ordinary" because the falcon flies as high as did Icarus, son of Dedalus, whose lack of fear caused him to fly so near to the sun that the wax of his wings melted.²²⁷ In addition, Walton alludes to the myth of Deucalion in speaking of the art of angling: "some say it is as ancient as Deucalion's Flood."²²⁸ Walton also refers to Echo to describe "the birds in the adjoining grove," that "seemed to have a friendly echo whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree."²²⁹ Although his work contains few mythological allusions, Walton clearly adapts them to the English scenes that he pictures.

On the other hand, with reference to Walton's Biblical allusions, the problem is not in finding them, but in choosing from the many that abound in The Compleat

²²⁷Ibid., p. 39.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 54.

²²⁹Ibid., p. 99.

Angler. For example, Walton makes several allusions to Mosiac Law: "It may be fit to remember that Moses (Lev. 11.9. Deut. 14.9) appointed Fish to be the chief diet for the best Common-wealth that ever yet was."²³⁰ In one short section, he calls attention to the wonders that can be reached by sailing on the water: "But what pleasure is it to be a devout Christian to see there the humble house in which Saint Paul was content to dwell; and to view the many rich statues that are made in honor of his memory? nay, to see the very place in which St. Peter and he lie buried together? These are in and near to Rome."²³¹

Walton also refers to the Bible and Christianity in the interests of practical morality rather than to heighten the meaning of a particular passage. For instance, the following homily against profanity is such a recommendation:

Gentlemen, let not prejudice prepossesse you. I confesse my discourse is like to prove suitable to my Recreation, calm and quiet; we seldome take the name of God into our mouths, but it is either to praise him or pray to him; if others use it vainly in the midst of their recreations, so vainly as if they meant to conjure. I must tell you it is neither our fault or our custom; we protest against it.²³²

²³⁰Ibid., p. 50.

²³¹Ibid., p. 51.

²³²Ibid., p. 47.

Again, Walton advises against scoffing in any way:

Lucian well skilld in scoffing, this hath writ,
 Friend, that's your folly which you think your wit:
 This you oft, void both of wit and fear,
 Meaning another, when yourself you jeer.²³³

In life, as in The Compleat Angler, Walton jibed at no man, preferring to speak out plainly for the good and against the evil.

In this general area of allusions to religion and morality, Walton has a few passages that might be called his "philosophical observations on the art of contemplation." All anglers believe that fishing yields profound insights to those who sit patiently practicing their art; in its simplest form, they refer to what Walton meant to convey when he quoted the prophet David as saying, "They that occupy themselves in deep waters see the wonderful works of God."²³⁴ Also, to point out the effect of this contemplation upon men's lives, Walton cites the apostles who were fishermen:

And that they be fit for the contemplation of the most prudent, and pious, and peaceable men, seems to be testified by the practice of so many devout and contemplative men, Patriarchs and Prophets of old, and of the Apostles of our Saviour in these later times; of which twelve he chose four that were Fishermen, whom he inspired and sent to publish his blessed Will to the Gentiles, freedom from the incumbrances of the Law, and a new way to everlasting life; this was the employment of these Fishermen.²³⁵

²³³Ibid., p. 36

²³⁴Ibid., p. 64.

²³⁵Ibid.

Finally, he carries his discussion of contemplation to its highest application when he discusses the contemplation of God himself. He also refers to the old debate about whether thought or action is the most acceptable offering to God:

That the nearer we mortals come to God by way of imitation, the more happy we are. And they say, That God enjoys himself onely by a contemplation of his own infinitnesse, Eternity, Power, and Goodness, and the like. And upon this ground many Cloystered men of great learning and devotion prefer Contemplation before Action. Both together do most properly belong to the honest, ingenuous, quiet, and harmless art of Angling.²³⁶

Perhaps, the most impressive and unforgettable statement of his faith in the contemplation that comes to the quiet fisherman is contained in one of Walton's favorite mottoes (not included in The Compleat Angler but cited by biographers), "Study to be quiet." Such quiet, Walton believes, leads to the deep contemplation that helps fishermen to become good and wise men. Dewar comments, as follows, upon Walton's belief:

When Walton says, "Study to be quiet," he is not warning us against excitement, for excitement there must be in angling, but reminding us not to be so carried away by it as to lose the balance of spirit and independence, and forget to observe, to contemplate, to rejoice, and to be grateful.²³⁷

The reader who learns from The Compleat Angler to practice the art of "studying to be quiet" has doubtlessly

²³⁶Ibid., p. 56.

²³⁷Dewar, op. cit., p. liv.

gained the most important message that Walton meant to impart in his masterpiece, for he believed that, when man opened up his heart and senses to the world about him, nature would reward him with the gifts of goodness and wisdom. Perhaps, more than any other belief expressed in The Compleat Angler, Walton's belief in Nature's power to soothe and comfort mankind places him firmly in the pastoral tradition and is his greatest contribution to the tradition, since he carried the idea into the realm of Christianity as no pastoral writer before him had done.

The Compleat Angler, more than any other pastoral written since Theocritus, is an Idyll, the purest form of the pastoral. Although Walton observed such conventions as natural setting, detailed dramatic action, contest and debate, and song and verse all revealed in the dialogue of his characters, he introduces these conventions so naturally that one tends to forget that they are conventions. Moreover, he added his own particular contributions to the tradition in style and content, and he adapted all of these elements to his purpose so that his pastoral is a natural outgrowth of the English rustic scene.

This, then, was Walton's chief contribution to the pastoral tradition. As brought out previously in the study of Spenser, by the time that poet began to write, there was a wealth of varied pastoral literature, but "it had lost

the quality of the earliest days when an 'idyll' was a direct rendering of real life, and had crystalized into a system of conventional symbols, which might still be used by a master with living imaginative effect, but without a radical reversion, could hardly again render real life." It has been noted that Spenser's genius enabled him to use this "system" effectively. Walton, however, radically reversed the trend and returned the pastoral to a "direct rendering of real life," with his contemplative fisherman seated under the honeysuckle hedge, studying to be quiet.

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