

Locus amoenus: Pastoral Atmosphere of Virgil's Eclogues

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In the reception history of Virgil's *Eclogues*, few concepts are so tightly bound up with the text as that of the *locus amoenus*—the pleasant place, the place of amenity—the landscape or backdrop against which the shepherds of the poems bucolicise.¹ In his influential formulation, E. R. Curtius argues that the *locus amoenus* “forms the principal motif of all nature description” in the period from the Roman Empire to the sixteenth century, and is the foremost idealisation of landscape inherited by the middle ages from antiquity.² It consists of “a beautiful, shaded natural site,” and “its minimum ingredients comprise a tree (or several trees), a meadow, and a spring or brook.”³ The etymology of *amoenus* indicates it is a place both without walls (*moenia*) and without business or obligations (*munia*); in the words of Virgil's fourth-century commentator Servius, *amoenus* is *uoluptatis plena*, “full of pleasure,” but *sine fructu*, “without profit.”⁴ However, upon looking into the text of the *Eclogues*—putative originary locus of the concept—the *locus amoenus* seems strangely elusive in spite of the reception history from Servius to Curtius and beyond that continually attempts to attribute it to Virgil. While this reception history provides an inevitable point of departure that colours all subsequent readings, the explanations it offers seem to me ultimately inadequate. For as we shall see, Virgil's text only ever provides the sparest of details, and “*locus amoenus*” is thus purely critical terminology. This essay works towards an answer to the question of the nature (in more senses than one) of the *locus*

amoenus. In Virgilian bucolic,⁵ what precisely constitutes this central concept? If we accept the formulation given to us by literary history and uphold a relation to nature, the question of the *locus amoenus* becomes one of representability: Firstly, how and to what extent does the *locus amoenus* represent nature? And, secondly, what is the nature being represented? But in a way these questions are misguided, for as we shall see, the particular relationship between text and nature that *locus amoenus* names is not one of representation. I argue that the *locus amoenus* emerges in present reading experiences of the *Eclogues* as an aesthetic *atmosphere* (a term I theorise at length below) and never takes form through realist landscape description. My reading is not historicist, making no claims about Virgil's intention or the text's reception among its initial Roman readers; rather, it constitutes an inquiry into the way the *Eclogues* are read now, which nevertheless bears an inescapable relation to how they have been read in the past, and takes the *locus amoenus* as a constitutive aspect of such a reading experience in the present.

This essay comprises two parts: I begin with the theory of aesthetic atmospheres developed by the contemporary German philosopher Gernot Böhme, formulating a method for reading the *Eclogues* with the help of his predecessors Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, thereby sketching a genealogy of atmosphere in the earlier philosophers' uses of *aura*. Following this, I consider the relationship between pastoral and nature and look closely at some passages from the *Eclogues* in an attempt to activate this atmospheric *locus amoenus*. My reading of Virgil is both affective and philological, moving in and out from the text through the dialectical space in which the strange alchemy of atmospheres occurs.

Atmosphere and textuality

In the aesthetic theory of Gernot Böhme, the primary object of the bodily experience of space is atmosphere.⁶ In ancient Greek, ἀτμός means "gas" or "vapour," and σφαῖρα means "ball" or "sphere"; the word "atmosphere" was invented in the seventeenth century to refer to the gaseous sphere that envelops planets such as earth. Its figurative use, as an aesthetic rather than merely scientific term, to describe an ambient, spatial mood, was established by the nineteenth century. The essay "Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics," from the book *Atmosphäre*, contains Böhme's manifesto for atmospheres.⁷ Böhme's atmospheres are ontologically indeterminate quasi-objects of perception that lie between subject and object, literally in the medium. This means that they resist precise conceptualisation but can nevertheless be characterised. As the

medium of aesthetic experience, they emerge from the “and” that relates environmental qualities or physiognomies *and* human states or dispositions (A 23, “AFC” 114). Böhme makes the point that atmosphere has gained widespread colloquial currency, but its use in aesthetics is frequently untheorised and hence “embarrassed” (A 21, “AFC” 113). This situation stems from the fact that aesthetics, in spite of Baumgarten’s early formulation of it as a deliberately broad theory concerned with the sensory acquisition of knowledge, developed into a theory of judgement and of the semiotics of fine art (A 23–25, “AFC” 115–16). Böhme argues, however, that aesthetics should be a theory of perception that treats “the experience of the presence of persons, objects and environments” via atmospheres (A 25, “AFC” 116). A phenomenological aesthetic of atmospheres asks for a suspension of qualitative judgment, at least initially (A 41). Nevertheless, it should be noted here that in Böhme’s work aesthetics is not *just* perception; it is the reflexive theorisation of perception as that which establishes relationality to the world (A 177). While perception grounds aesthetics, the atmospheric cannot be experienced outside of the cultural context that determines the process of aesthetic reflection. As Walter Benjamin states in his well-known essay “The Artwork in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,”⁸ perception is determined not only by nature, but also by historical specificity (GS 1.478, / 222). The medium of perception, too, changes over time, and in Böhme’s aesthetic theory, the medium of contemporary Western perception is atmosphere.

Benjamin pertains here because his work occupies an important place in Böhme’s genealogy of atmosphere. Benjamin’s concept of the aura as the perception of aesthetic distance, Böhme argues, begins as a general type of atmosphere (A 26–27, “AFC” 117). In Latin, *aura* commonly means “breeze” or “air,” but can also refer more vaguely to a “gleam,” “tone” or “mist”; the word first occurs in Benjamin’s work in “A Small History of Photography,” wherein he describes it as “a strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance of distance, no matter how close the object may be.”⁹ Benjamin theorises the concept in greater detail in the “Artwork” essay, where aura arises in the space between a receptive viewer and a unique work of art and generates a feeling of that space’s magnification (GS 1.477–80, / 221–23). While an artwork may be reproducible, its unique existence in time and space (*hic et nunc*), its authenticity (*Echtheit* rather than Heideggerian *Eigentlichkeit*) is not: “The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning [*Ursprung*], ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced” (GS 1.477, / 221). Mass reproduction eliminates the aura produced by authenticity by detaching the object from tradition and

actualising it for the viewer or listener (GS 1.477, / 221). Benjamin's position vis-à-vis aura appears ambivalent; nevertheless, the loss of aura is figured as desirable as it intends towards the revolutionary potential of politicised, aura-less art, as against the fascist aestheticisation of politics.¹⁰

Despite the efforts of the avant-garde, however, art has been unable to shed its aura, and many have questioned the claims of Benjamin's essay. Antoine Hennion and Bruno Latour, for example, point out that the history of art refutes many of Benjamin's major assumptions: there is no original, and multiplication is not impoverishment.¹¹ "Paradoxically," Hennion and Latour remark, "Benjamin appears to be a prisoner of the Romantic idea of the artist he sets out to critique."¹² It seems that the technological mass reproducibility of artworks provided by the industrial revolution itself provides the conditions for the discourse of authenticity. Prior to this (in ancient and mediaeval times), reproducibility was a basic characteristic of the artwork; *technological* reproduction, however, comes with significantly greater powers of massification.

While aura seems at first to be the defining feature of art (the excess that makes art art), Benjamin originates the concept in nature. Here aura recurs as "the unique appearance of a distance, however close it may be" (GS 1.479, / 222; translation modified). In the experience of nature, one "breathes" in aura.¹³ For Böhme, nature is itself technologically reproducible—as external nature in practices such as industrialised agriculture, and as the nature which humans are (the body) in medical technologies such as in vitro fertilisation—and such reproduction is destructive towards natural aura. Böhme argues that the relationship between art and nature in the history of Western philosophy is such that a change in the meaning of one term already means a change in that of the other.¹⁴ As a result, technological reproducibility has become a definitive quality of both art and nature. Indeed, Böhme maintains that the natural and the artistic are rarely differentiated in aesthetics, and that aesthetic desire for nature is most commonly satisfied through reproduced nature.¹⁵ We will see this relationship again with regard to the *Eclogues*, in readings of which nature always figures as a ghostly presence intricately tied up with textuality.

In David Roberts's reading of Böhme, ecological aesthetics becomes a critical project involving not only the revision of the relationship between humans and nature, but of the concepts of humans and nature themselves. Not only is the human body naturalised through the concept of *Leib* ("die Natur, die wir selbst sind"), but moreover nature is humanised, becoming "the extended body of man which directly affects his well-being."¹⁶ Benjamin's aura, Roberts argues, is "the aesthetic experience which

humanizes nature”; and as such is also “the experience of a mimetic or reciprocal relationship.”¹⁷ In Benjamin, the destruction of the artwork’s aura in its mechanical reproduction also dissolves the mimetic aura that links humans and nature. Roberts points to this as an instance of the dialectic of enlightenment: aura becomes “the emblem of the infinite closeness and distance of the impossible object of desire—reconciliation with nature.”¹⁸ Dialectical nature seems so close yet so far; aura becomes a trace. Roberts’s is a thoroughly Adornian take on Benjamin and Böhme. Before returning to Böhme’s concept of atmosphere, I want to explore Adorno’s use of Benjamin’s aura in his aesthetic theory.

Adorno’s reflections on aura occur fleetingly throughout his *Aesthetic Theory*.¹⁹ For Adorno, aura must be conceived dialectically, rather than in antithesis to mass-production, in order to save it in the era of technological reproducibility: “Aura is not only—as Benjamin claimed—the here and now of the artwork, it is whatever goes beyond its factual givenness [*Gegebenheit*], its content [*Gehalt*]; one cannot abolish it and still want art” (AT 73/45). In Adorno, unlike Benjamin, art’s aura cannot be totally destroyed. Yvonne Sherratt glosses aura’s “pointing beyond factual givenness” as indeterminacy.²⁰ Aura—indeterminacy—is experienced as the “atmosphere of the artwork” and “escapes its factual reality [*Dinghaftigkeit*],” but can nevertheless “be objectivated in the form of artistic technique” (AT 408/274). Moreover, “the artwork is more deeply related to nature in this element [i.e., aura] than in any other factual similarity to nature” (AT 409/274). Art and natural beauty are not antithetical but always refer to each other (AT 98/62). Aura seems to be lodged materially in the form of art or nature and yet remains enigmatic. In her discussion of Adorno’s use of aura, Sherratt identifies four characterisations of the term:

1. The “appearance of distance” is a distance from conceptual interpretation; that is, aura is uninterpretable.
2. “Pointing beyond givenness” refers to the attribute of indeterminacy, specifically, an indeterminacy of indefiniteness rather than undecidability.
3. The dialectic of “proximity through distance” occurs by an intensification of receptivity (and diminishment of interpretation) that unifies subject and object.
4. The auratic object “looks back,” by which it communicates its meaning non-conceptually.²¹

So while, on the one hand, the feeling of distance established by aura cancels interpretability (a key component of aesthetic experience in

Adorno's philosophy, involving the application of concepts to an artwork, intending on a judgement of meaning); on the other hand, receptivity (the other key component) is intensified in the face of uninterpretability, creating a feeling of closeness. Benjamin makes this point by presenting aura as intersubjective: "Experience of the aura thus rests on the transposition of a response common in human relationships to the relationship between the inanimate or natural object and man.... To perceive the aura of an object we look at [*Erscheinung*] means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return."²² It is fitting that Adorno's aesthetic theory argues for the primacy of the object. Nevertheless, "like the appearance of art, the aesthetic experience of nature is that of images [*Bilder*]" (AT 103/65); accordingly, "what becomes perceptible in nature no more coincides with empirical reality than does ... the thing itself with the world of 'phenomena'" (AT 104/66). The mediatedness of aesthetic experience both results from and gives rise to aura. Adorno refers to aura in passing as the "atmosphere of the artwork"; aura is thus the atmosphere that characterises artistic and natural experience. This presages in part the line that Böhme will take in his theorisation of the concept of atmosphere.

Böhme extrapolates directly from Benjamin and redraws aura as atmosphere: "an indeterminate spatially extended quality of feeling" that is absorbed into the bodily economy of a receptive percipient (A 27, "AFC" 117–18). Adorno's emphasis on receptivity in the experience of aura confirms Böhme's inclusion of disposition. Even though Böhme's theory of atmosphere posits it as something that is usually perceived instantaneously, this requirement of receptivity in aesthetic experience overcomes the objection of Christoph Weber, who points out that the atmosphere of artworks requires concentration and conscious redirection of perception and cognition, in contradistinction to the atmosphere of a space or setting.²³

Böhme is not the first, however, to elaborate the concept of atmosphere, and draws much from Hermann Schmitz's neo-phenomenological philosophy of the body, in which "perception is affective and sympathetic interaction" (A 29, "AFC" 118; translation modified), and atmospheres are "affective powers of feeling, spatial bearers of moods" (A 29, "AFC" 119). In Schmitz's philosophy, perception occurs in situations held together by meaningfulness, making "meaningful impressions" its primary object; examples of atmospheres in Schmitz include the weather, silence, and emotions "regarded as spatially extended powers able to affect the felt body."²⁴ Feelings become atmospheres that affect the body to produce moods. Böhme identifies a fundamental problem with Schmitz's atmospheres, namely, that they are free-floating, independent miasmas,

rather than the physiognomic products of objects and environments, the ecstatic products of the qualities of things (A 30–31, “AFC” 120). There could be in Schmitz a denial of nonhuman agency that Böhme wishes to circumvent, but this also points to Böhme’s desire to ground atmospheres materially. Böhme’s aesthetic theory of nature provides for the ecstatic and affective unfolding of a thing into the space of its presence. Böhme’s formulation of atmosphere extends aura as it occurs in Benjamin and Adorno in the same way that Böhme extends aesthetics by making it a general theory of perception. Atmosphere pertains not only to instances of artistic or natural beauty as aura does, but to every kind of aesthetic experience; indeed, beauty itself is one among many atmospheres. While, like aura, atmosphere is medial and as such establishes both a distance of uninterpretability in the face of things and a closeness of absorption of and by them, Böhme’s emphasis on the ecstatic unfolding of things into this medium adds a phenomenological dimension lacking in the description of aura. In short, Böhme’s concept of atmosphere is both more general and more phenomenological than the concept of aura in Benjamin and Adorno.

Atmosphere, as “the common reality of the perceiver and the perceived” (A 34, “AFC” 122), is now, Böhme argues, the first “thing” modern Western subjects perceive in their encounters with a thoroughly aestheticised reality. In *Anmutungen*, Böhme discusses several atmospheres in detail, such as light (brightness and half-light: twilight and the dim light of churches), smell (as the characterising atmosphere of cities), and sound (music and silence). The theory of atmospheres makes it possible to formalise the elements required for a space or a work of art to produce a particular atmosphere. Böhme describes atmosphere as mediating between the aesthetics of reception and the aesthetics of production: “An aesthetics of atmospheres pertains to artistic activity that consists in the production of particular receptions.”²⁵ He names one method for creating atmospheres in this way “staged materiality” (*inszenierte Materialität*), which refers to the pure appearance of building materials: “Wood, glass, steel, marble as features of architecture and design no longer denote the materials worked upon, but qualities of appearance.”²⁶ The physiognomy and cultural signification of materiality induces atmospheres in which materiality is experienced synaesthetically (e.g., the warmth of rough-hewn timber’s texture, perceived visually). The production of atmospheres *by design* demonstrates one potential application of Böhme’s theory. Many elements within environments (particularly what might be called natural environments), however, cannot be said to be designed. In contradistinction to architectural design, in a forest materiality is synonymous with material. So long as this is noted, the move from the

discussion of atmospheres of designed environments to those of pre-given environments seems straightforward enough. Not so, however, when the question of textuality arises. Is atmosphere itself representable? If one takes Virgil to be representing the natural world in the *Eclogues* (something critics in the past have done), at what point does atmosphere enter and leave the text?

Böhme suggests that works of art can “conjure up” (*beschwören*) the atmospheres they describe (A 38, “AFC” 124). It seems straightforward enough to speak of the atmosphere encountered in a given environment—a forest or a football stadium, for example—as the result of physiognomic ecstasis. But what happens when I attempt to describe such environments from outside them, that is to say, when I attempt to represent them? Böhme himself writes that a work of art in a way only represents itself, and to forget this is to deny the material presence of the artwork and hence also its atmosphere (A 24, “AFC” 115). I read Böhme’s “conjuring” as a recognition of the differential process of signification that has become broadly understood since Saussure, rather than as an argument for a mimetic function in language or other means of artistic representation. Indeed, to *conjure up* something is to summon only a shadow, a ghost, like magic. Texts produce an atmosphere that is a product of both their own materiality and their signification. Given that he mentions design as aesthetic work directed at producing atmospheres, it is surprising that Böhme does not mention the materiality of written texts when discussing linguistic atmospheres, focusing instead on the materiality of the voice.²⁷ It is precisely this tension between textuality and orality that Brian Breed takes as the central structuring problem of the *Eclogues*: the fiction of spontaneous pastoral song and the frequency of echoes contra Virgil’s relentless intertextual references and the recurrent trope of inscription.²⁸ Whether written or vocalised, however, textual atmospheres unfold spatially through signification.

One way of textually producing certain atmospheric spaces is through *insignia*, a term Böhme adopts from the poet Gottfried Benn. An *insigne* is a particular kind of mark or sign that is connotatively overloaded and concentrated. Böhme argues that certain words or phrases in poems can act as insignia that produce conventionally constituted effects, and hence can be organised to generate textual atmospheres (A 77–79). Insignia conjure up an atmosphere, I suggest, by their constellation. Atmosphere cannot be represented per se. Naming a certain atmosphere does not suffice to produce it textually. Rather, following the line of Adorno’s aesthetic theory, poetry configures insignia around the unrepresentable concept—atmosphere—and from such a constellation it bodies forth.²⁹ It is

a matter of coherence rather than mixture. Constellation depends upon perspective. It is necessarily paratactical; its elements, like those of a star sign, are separated by darkness. As Shierry Weber Nichol森 writes: "The configuration ... is formed from the crossconnections of interrelated equivocal terms with their penumbrae of associations brought to them in the subjective experience of the thinker."³⁰ The idea of constellation as Adorno uses it originates in Benjamin's study of the origin of the German mourning-play. In the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" to this text, Benjamin writes that concepts mediate ideas and phenomena through constellation.³¹ The constellational appearance of ideas means that they are not definable except as an arrangement. Similarly, atmospheres occur when the spatiotemporal arrangement of the concrete elements of phenomena becomes perceptible. Here these elements are non-essential perceptible aspects. The constellation figures the spatiality of language in a way not explicated by Böhme, but it also figures language's temporality (stars, after all, are separated by light years).³² Adorno notes that the elements of a constellation mutate, meaning that the concept also changes: "The concept of art is located in a historically changing constellation of elements; it refuses definition" (*AT* 11/2). Thus too with atmospheres, which are historically contingent and open to reconfiguration.

In discussing Böhme's theory I have already noted that an atmosphere generated by words cannot be identical to that of a location, but that it can nevertheless recall it, even if only to defer it. Böhme is not overly concerned, however, with establishing a strict separation between environmental and textual atmospheres. He does not, by any means, efface their difference by claiming a mimetic function for language: Böhme considers it naive that nature poetry should be description or expression in order to give voice to nature and the experience thereof (*A* 69–70); moreover, he rejects the idea that the same relations should exist between the elements in a representation as those which prevail between the elements of what is represented.³³ Nevertheless, his theory does allow for the production of the same atmosphere by different means, and I would want to make a stronger case for the necessity of distinction. On the one hand, Lawrence Buell acknowledges this difference when he writes, "Language never replicates extratextual landscapes, but it can be bent toward or away from them."³⁴ On the other hand, the anxiety of Timothy Morton over the problem of what he calls ecomimesis (the attempt at authentic representation) rightfully points to the great care that needs to be taken in approaching texts that claim (or are claimed) to deal with nature or the environment (including the *Eclogues*). Any attempt to textually reproduce the atmosphere of an environment, to generate it by infinite

detail, would be guilty of Morton's ecomimesis: "The more convincingly I render my surroundings, the more figurative language I end up with. The more I try to show you what lies beyond this page, the more of a page I have."³⁵

Adorno argues that natural beauty is unrepresentable: "nature, as something beautiful, cannot be copied [*abbilden*]. For natural beauty as something that appears is itself an image [*Bild*]. Its portrayal [*Abbildung*] is a tautology[;] ... natural beauty cannot be copied [*Unabbildbarkeit*]" (AT 105/67). Natural beauty—that is, the aesthetic experience of nature—is already representation in Adorno (again, the dialectic of closeness and distance). Aura then becomes a trace of "the unique and the non-identical" and the relationship of the modernist artwork to nature is one of sublime negativity (representation of the unrepresentable); in art, "nature is sublimated to the point of disappearance, leaving only its aura."³⁶ For Morton, that nature is already representation is problematic, as it signifies a process of identification with non-identity. Nature, he argues, is ideological, "an arbitrary rhetorical construct, empty of independent, genuine existence behind or beyond the texts we create about it."³⁷ In spite of Morton's rejection of the term "nature," such argumentation does not necessarily go against the theory I have been outlining here: atmospheres such as beauty mediate material phenomena and are not themselves claimed as true nature. I agree that the history of the term's usage begs problematising, yet Morton's polemical critique overheats: while a certain amount of hallucination is required for a reader to imagine what a text describes, it is usually not of such intensity that the hallucinated is taken for the real. What is so enjoyable about texts is their artifice, their distance from what they represent. Words mediate phenomena and through their constellation conjure atmospheres. The second part of this essay will treat what I believe to be the most distinctive of pastoral atmospheres, the *locus amoenus*.

The insignia of shade

Virgil's *Eclogues*, whose principal intertext is the *Idylls* of the Hellenistic poet Theocritus (wherein the basis of the *locus amoenus* might also be found), were written around 42 to 38 BCE (a time of great political uncertainty in Rome) and popularised bucolic poetry in the classical Roman world.³⁸ Though pastoral emerges only in the neoclassical Renaissance (first being used in a literary sense in the sixteenth century), Virgil's text occupies a key place in the term's genealogy. Nevertheless, defining pastoral has not been an easy task for literary critics. In *What Is Pastoral?* Paul Alpers argues that pastoral is not a genre in the sense of a historical

phenomenon defined by form and content but, more loosely, a mode, a way of relating form and content through a certain ethos and style that cuts across genres.³⁹ Such an understanding might seem to entail an exceptionally broad definition of pastoral; Alpers, however, criticises the miscellaneous usage that would name any literary treatment of landscape or nostalgia as pastoral. Certainly, not just any nature poetry or writing falls within the term's horizons. To define the pastoral mode, Alpers searches for its "representative anecdote," which he finds crystallised in Virgil's *Eclogues*: "the poet represents (himself as) a shepherd or shepherds."⁴⁰ This is the formula that establishes pastoral, but which also allows for its historical variety as the meanings of the terms change. The themes of landscape and Golden Age, along with others such as nostalgia, the leisurely yet contemplative life, hostility to the city, Epicureanism, and the relationship between art and nature, may occur frequently in pastoral texts; however, according to Alpers, their presence is insufficient for defining a work as pastoral.

Other critics take a broader approach than Alpers. Raymond Williams elaborates precisely the kind of definition that Alpers argues against. In *The Country and the City*, Williams associates pastoral, in contradistinction to Alpers's allegorical definition, as nostalgia for an idyllic past: "the perpetual retrospect to an 'organic' or 'natural' society," which emerges from the tension between country and city.⁴¹ Terry Gifford, unlike Williams or Alpers, provides a descriptive rather than prescriptive analysis of pastoral. In his book *Pastoral*, Gifford identifies three primary senses of the term: firstly, pastoral as a historically specific literary form; secondly, pastoral as any text that "describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban"; and thirdly, pastoral as a critical or pejorative term for idealistic or ideological representations of non-urban life.⁴² More broadly, he sees pastoral as dealing with the ideas of retreat and return.

While I have not resolved the problem of the definition of pastoral (a feat beyond the scope of this document), the brief survey of some of the forms of its characterisation provides a sense of what is at stake in reading Virgil, whose name literary history has loaded with the greatest responsibility for pastoral's abundance. Even if pastoral has no "clear validating point of origin," its history consistently gestures towards Virgil; even if the *Eclogues* were not conceived as pastoral, as Martindale points out, "they are pastoral now."⁴³ Moreover, much has been made, particularly in the recent studies of Jones and Karakasis, of the generic self-consciousness of the *Eclogues* (a feature common to Augustan poetry), whereby the text's status as bucolic is simultaneously reinforced and problematised.⁴⁴ What I hope to have illustrated through this brief review is

the persistent uncertainty in scholarly discussion of pastoral texts of the status of nature. As Breed argues, a major figure for the relation between text and nature in the *Eclogues* is the echo, which problematises questions of causality and origination because of its uncertain ontology: nothing, least of all nature, is ever present in the echo, which here figures the bucolic text.⁴⁵ For the critics discussed, nature hovers on the edges at all times, but any definition of the pastoral that would put it at the centre would fail to convince. While Alpers stridently refutes the centrality of nature in the pastoral, even he cannot disavow its role completely.

While few critics now would argue that the *Eclogues* provide realist descriptions of nature, such readings do exist. Eleanor Winsor Leach, for example, appears to expound a realist reading: “The variety of Vergil’s landscapes equals the variety of nature.”⁴⁶ While Virgil’s settings are without argument diverse—and Leach makes an interesting point in characterising this variety as a specifically Roman way of seeing nature, related to the remarkable development during the late Republic of realist landscape painting—such a statement nevertheless takes a breathtaking sweep. The argument seems spurious even if one accepts its logic: Virgil does not represent every landscape (or ecosystem) on earth. But it is the logic itself which must be questioned. For how is it possible for Virgil to adequate the *Eclogues*—whose very name exhibits the text’s fragmented partiality (*ecloga* means “selection”)—to the totality of nature in its variety even if we wanted him to? Ecomimesis, as Morton insists, embarrasses itself by always falling short of its aim. By contrast, Virgil’s landscapes are elusive (despite their being saturated with allusion⁴⁷): they do not aim at an impossible representational totality. And yet there may be another way of reading Leach’s remark, a reading against it that might redeem it. Virgil’s non-realist indeterminacy and the readability in the text of atmospheric insignia mean that the experience of the text entails a theory of the experience of nature as atmospheric, as something aesthetic, both allusive and elusive. Atmosphere is not an objective property, but nor is it merely subjective. It has the characteristics of both categories but falls into neither. Could the variety that Leach refers to be read atmospherically, then, not as quantifiable biodiversity but as indeterminate undecidability—as *aura*? Thus only negatively (and non-empirically) can the *Eclogues* be said to approach the world’s variety. But if nature is experienced non-representationally in the *Eclogues*, it cannot be experienced as present, it cannot be pinned down (the word *natura* does not occur at all in the text); as the definitions cited above attest, pastoral is not about nature. And yet, the experience of the text of the *Eclogues* throughout the history of its reception bears a recurrent relationality to discourses of nature. We have

already seen that atmosphere names a non-representational relationality between texts and the natural world. This, then, is what I intend *locus amoenus* to mean here: it is an atmosphere of pastoral texts that relates them to nature, which in Virgil's bucolic I take to be the aesthetic experience of the material world.⁴⁸

While readings of nature in the *Eclogues* such as Leach's were once reasonably common, more recent studies have taken a different approach. Timothy Saunders, for example, in his *Bucolic Ecology*, opposes his study to earlier nature-focused readings of Virgil that tend to present bucolic space conservatively as a site for nostalgia or melancholy, that is to say, for reflection upon the loss of (some kind of holistic relationship to) nature. Romantic readings along these lines have already been convincingly critiqued by Paul Alpers, who in *The Singer of the Eclogues*⁴⁹ turns his back on bucolic nature to focus on the figure of the herdsman. Saunders argues, however, that the relationship between poetry and nature is "wide-ranging and pervasive" in the *Eclogues* and so should not be ignored. In his introduction, Saunders presents an ecology of literary production and transmission, structured by a recursive temporality of responson. Unlike so much classical philology which treats texts as cryogenically preserved remains, an ecological approach of the kind Saunders outlines allows for "new and potentially destabilising elements [such as] later readers, texts and events."⁵⁰ The relationship presented by the *Eclogues* (as Saunders reads them) between text and universe is such that in relinquishing the idea of a fixed, stable text outside of history, we also give up on attributing such qualities to nature. While Saunders's concept of bucolic ecology could include the *locus amoenus* (an atmosphere of relationality), he has very little to say on this important aspect of Virgil's reception.

Thomas G. Rosenmeyer sees the *locus amoenus* as exclusively a stage-setting: "The *locus amoenus*, then, is, at least in its origins, not a reduced picture of the world as a whole, not an emblem concealing all of nature, a pinpointing of all that determines man, or all that he must face. On the contrary, the *locus amoenus* is a highly selective arrangement of stage properties."⁵¹ I agree with Rosenmeyer up to a point. I share entirely his rejection of realist and symbolic readings of the *locus amoenus*.⁵² And, as we shall see, the *locus amoenus* has its textual basis in a very limited array of specific terms. Yet, the *locus amoenus* is not itself a setting; rather, it is the atmosphere of a specific textual experience, not a consistent background like a setting but a characteristic infusion that emerges at certain points in the poems. Accordingly, it cannot be made to appear by description, for to describe the *locus amoenus* in detail leads to over-qualification, and inevitably to the restriction of atmospheric potential.

Lorenz Rumpf has already noted this quality in the materials of the *Eclogues*: “Virgil’s bucolic words can thus not be reduced to their function as conveyors of specific semantic content each and every time they are used, but the way in which they are systematically made to ‘float’ makes them assume an emblematic value of their own.”⁵³ Rumpf describes in other words something similar to the theory of reading I developed above: the constellation of insignia to conjure atmospheres. Similarly, Frederick Jones rightly insists that “bucolic poetry” cannot be located in any particular lines of the *Eclogues* but infuses the whole.⁵⁴ The indefiniteness of the *locus amoenus* allows Leach to contend that there is no single, uniformly idyllic Virgilian setting: “The poems have no consistent landscape. No one image stands out as typically pastoral.”⁵⁵ This is because the *locus amoenus* is not an image or a landscape but an atmosphere of natural beauty. My question is, then: What linguistic elements (what I have called insignia) constitute the Virgilian *locus amoenus* and how are they constellated in the *Eclogues*?

If there is one indispensable element of the *locus amoenus* in Virgil’s *Eclogues*, it is *umbra*, “shade,” the condition for leisurely bucolic *poesis*. In the words of Peter Smith: “The most prominent pattern of visual imagery in Vergil’s *Eclogues* is that associated with ideas of shade and repose—*umbra* and *otium*.”⁵⁶ More than just a setting, for Smith, “shade is the *sine qua non* of pastoral repose,” usually associated with coolness, moisture and greenness.⁵⁷ Likewise, Arnaldo Benedetto’s twee remarks: “The coolness of thickly-foliaged trees, the banks of meandering streams, and the delightful interior of some shady grot give a suitable background to the pictures of the shepherds and create the proper atmosphere for their lightsome music.”⁵⁸ Shade may well be a distinctly Virgilian atmosphere: according to Clausen, Virgil introduced shade and shadows into the pastoral landscape, and Negri Rosio similarly describes *umbra* as a “Virgilian expression.”⁵⁹ In the remainder of this essay I explore what characterises this “proper atmosphere” and how the *Eclogues* conjure it.

In its association with trees and forests, *umbra* constitutes a very common trope in Roman poetry, where it often describes the mood of a place.⁶⁰ Julie Nováková notes a progression in the classical period from *umbra* as a motif associated with human work to an aesthetic end in itself; by the reign of Nero, the trope becomes purely ornamental.⁶¹ While *umbra* covers many of the senses of the English words “shade” and “shadow,” Nováková’s thorough study provides more detailed definitions of the various meanings; however, precise distinction of the various senses in individual instances of *umbra* will always be undecidable (and moreover undesirable). Nevertheless, the manner in which *umbra* is constellated with

other insignia determines which of its senses is seen to shine brightest. On its own, *umbra* does not render a *locus amoenus*. Indeed, by the end of the *Eclogues*, shade no longer provides the *locus amoenus* but even signifies its absence (10.75–77).

The customary place to start in discussion of the *Eclogues* is at the beginning, where a shady scene is set right at the outset with Meliboeus's address to his fellow shepherd Tityrus:

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
 siluestrem tenui Musam meditaris auena;
 nos patriae fines et dulcia linquimus arua:
 nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra
 formosam resonare doces Amaryllida siluas. (1.1–5)

Tityrus, reclining beneath the spreading beech's cover,
 you rehearse the sylvan muse on your slender reed-pipe;
 we are leaving the borders of our homeland and its sweet fields.
 We are fleeing our homeland; you, Tityrus, easy in the shade,
 teach the woods to echo "lovely Amaryllis."⁶²

While a reader such as Rosenmeyer might firstly establish the *locus amoenus* as the setting, the background, and then go on to discuss the narrative content as foreground (Tityrus's music-making [ll. 2, 5] and Meliboeus's lamentation [ll. 3–4]), an atmospheric reading collapses this background–foreground distinction. The *locus amoenus* is not the setting in which the content takes place but, on the contrary, a production precisely of the narrative, of Tityrus playing and Meliboeus lamenting. The forests (ll. 2, 5) and fields (l. 3), for example, are not established as the setting but as elements of experience. In this sense, perhaps unexpectedly, the echoing of "lovely Amaryllis" provides the key to the *locus amoenus* as the atmosphere, since it relates nature (the woods) and text (Meliboeus's quoting of the forest echoes sung by Tityrus).

Meliboeus names only one concrete element that might be taken as a component of the setting: the spreading beech tree (*patula fagus*), which itself spreads out over the first line through the hyperbaton of *patulae ... fagi*, and which is marked out for its protective covering (*tegmen*), so activating a metaphorical sense in *umbra*. Through such a hyperbaton the beech, rather than being relegated to the background, is woven through the first line, along with Tityrus the reclining shepherd. The important role of the beech in the *Eclogues* has been well noted (particularly as a generic marker),⁶³ but the way it functions with respect to the *locus amoenus* at this critical place in the poem has not been adequately explored. It is not that the beech simply appears as an element of the pastoral setting and thereby

establishes a generic background; rather, *fagus* organises the relation of narrated events to the insignia of pastoral shade (which also themselves signify natural phenomena: forests, fields and so on), thereby conjuring in a reading experience of the opening of *Eclogue* 1 a highly specific atmosphere, the *locus amoenus*. Wherever *fagus* occurs in the *Eclogues* (1.1, 2.3, 3.12, 5.13, 9.9), in addition to acting as an insistent reminder of the book's status as bucolic (as Jones argues), it is figured with respect to its potential as the site of poetry (whatever its generic form), that is, as an organising insigne for the *locus amoenus*.⁶⁴ In *Eclogue* 2, for example, Corydon goes often among the shady treetops of dense beeches (*inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos*) to sing his unrequited love for Alexis to the forests and mountains, which constellate around the singing shepherd, who now sings in the atmospheric space of the *locus amoenus* (2.3–5). In *Eclogue* 9, the two shepherds Lycidas and Moeris, rather than bucolicising in repose as in most other *Eclogues*, walk despondently through a countryside devastated by civil war and land confiscation, in which the tops of the old beeches are broken and so unable to provide shade (*ueteres, iam fracta cacumina, fagos*) (9.9). Without the beeches, there can be neither *umbra* nor *recubans* in this poem; in this instance, the insignia of shade do not occur in association with *fagus* and so cannot be appropriately constellated; accordingly, there is no *locus amoenus* here, and thence, in *Eclogue* 9, the viability of pastoral itself becomes doubtful.

It is not only under the beech that we find the atmospheric shade of the *locus amoenus*. In *Eclogue* 5, a mixed forest of elms and hazels provides the shelter under which the shepherds Mopsus and Menalcas meet: *hic corylis mixtas inter consedimus ulmos?* ("Shall we sit together here among the hazel-mixed elms?" 5.3). Mopsus's answer to Menalcas's question characterises the setting in more detail:

siue sub incertas Zephyris motantibus umbras,
 siue antro potius succedimus: aspice, ut antrum
 siluestris raris sparsit labrusca racemis. (5.5–7)

Either beneath the shadows unsteady with moving Zephyrs
 or rather let us go into this cave. Look how the wild forest vine
 has diffused the cave with scattered bunches of grapes.

In this forest of elm trees and hazel bushes the breezes of Zephyrus—the west wind and the gentlest of the winds—move gently through the canopy, effecting from the rustling of the soft, round leaves an indeterminate, flickering shade (*incertas ... umbras*); a perfectly idyllic spot. But Mopsus suggests an alternative: a cave, likewise characterised by dappled light. Here the description is knottier, however. The wild vine of the forest

(*siluestris labrusca*) has strewn the cave with its scattered berry clusters (*raris racemis*). This does not mean that the floor of the cave is covered in rotting grapes, but that, with its scattered bunches, the vine, like the elms and hazels, casts a dappled shade. As Coleman points out, the word order of line 7 (adjective₁ adjective₂ verb noun₁ noun₂) suggests the intertwining of the vines.⁶⁵ Either way, both choices provide an indefinite blurring of light and shade. In scattering its bunches, the vine produces for the shepherds (i.e., with respect to their bucolicising experience of it) not just grapes but an atmosphere, and in this case it is atmospheric inasmuch as it provides for them a *locus amoenus*. The central atmospheric sign—*umbra*—constellates with those of the plants, the wind, and their effects to infuse the whole setting with the required pastoral atmosphere, thereby generating the *locus amoenus*, which requires only three lines out of a 90-line poem.

If the experience of reading is the perception of atmospheres, the task of criticism is to actualise an atmosphere rather than freeze it (by making definitive claims about its character) or exhaust it (by over-qualification through the multiplication of signifiers). Certainly, I have not rendered the atmosphere of *Eclogue* 5 any more precisely than it appears in the text. This is because all we have here is an atmosphere *in textu*, as it were. Once again, what might be called the setting only appears in the poem through its creation in the narrative content; the wild vine is not an ornament to the setting but an actor in the unfolding of events, namely the event of shade, which is an archetypally atmospheric aesthetic effect. An event that has congealed into a noun (*umbra*), which it must have done in order to function atmospherically, “shade” is as shady as its referent. This is further indicated in the analysis of the imperative “look” (*aspice*, 5.6), which might be construed as addressing not only Menalcas but anyone who reads the poem, thereby inviting the reader to experience the atmosphere inscribed. But how do we look? The irony of the imperative is the irony of atmospheres. One cannot look at an atmosphere, least of all a textual atmosphere. Moreover, while we can look at a spot that is shady (i.e. atmospheric), we cannot look at shade (i.e. an atmosphere), because shade is not a thing but a condition or an effect. However, just as Mopsus tells Menalcas to look not at the cave or vines but at *how* the vines have dappled the cave, so he instructs us to look not at the signifiers *antrum* and *labrusca* but at *how* they conjure an atmosphere of shade, through their relation to each other (weaving and scattering—themselves metaphors for poetic production and dissemination) and to other insignia in the preceding lines, but also allusively through their relation to the pre- and post-history of shade in pastoral poetry, allusion not as concrete imitation but as

intertextual responson.

Unlike the Latin word *umbra*, the actual shade of a real beech tree or a viny cave is not an insigne for the *locus amoenus*; insignia only become such in language.⁶⁶ The *locus amoenus* has no existence outside of pastoral literature. Rather than representing nature (the unrepresentable), the *Eclogues* conjure an atmosphere—what we have called the *locus amoenus*—through the elements of a reflexive poetry whose self-composition it does not precede, and which has no existence beyond a reading experience. The *locus amoenus* cannot occur outside of poetry as bucolicisation, and nature appears here only as the aesthetic experience of the material world.⁶⁷ The text itself teaches this, as in *Eclogue* 9, where Lycidas reacts to the news of Menalcas's near-death:

quis caneret Nymphas? quis humum forentibus herbis
spargeret aut uiridi fontis induceret umbra? (9.19–20)

Who would sing the Nymphs? Who would scatter the ground
with flowering herbs or clothe the springs in green shade?

In the bucolic sphere, *poesis* as making becomes the production of atmospheres by the overlaying of the world with insignia such as *umbra*; the materials of the *Eclogues* are literary. In the words of Ernst Schmidt, Virgilian bucolic is the pure poetry of poetry.⁶⁸ So, as the product of reading (of the text reading itself), and of the reception history of pastoral, the *locus amoenus* is an exclusively literary phenomenon: the only sites it mediates are textual loci. And yet, nature, that most complex of terms, lingers as a ghostly presence. For as Jones intimates, the *Eclogues* reveal not only the artificiality of representations of nature, but the artificiality of nature itself.⁶⁹ In the final analysis, an atmospheric reading reveals that nature as an aesthetic experience is just as present in the *locus amoenus* of Virgil's *Eclogues* as it is in any actual shady grove or grotto.

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NOTES

¹ I would like to thank Kate Rigby, Andrew Milner, Jane Montgomery Griffiths and David Blencowe for their advice on several aspects of this paper and comments on various drafts. I should also thank the journal's anonymous reviewer, whose advice I found extremely helpful.

² Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard

R. Trask (New York: Pantheon, 1953), 193–95.

³ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁴ *moenia* and *munia* both derive from the same root meaning “shut” or “fastened” (Charlton T. Lewis, *Elementary Latin Dictionary*, (1891; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 945). For Servius’s remarks on the word see Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen, eds, *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1887; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961), 1.644, 2.89 (ad loc. *Aen.* 5.734, 6.638).

⁵ While the case has been made for precise distinction between pastoral and bucolic (see David M. Halperin, *Before Pastoral: Theocritus and the Ancient Tradition of Bucolic Poetry* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), 8–16), I use the terms more or less interchangeably (in this respect, as far as the most recent monographs on the *Eclogues* are concerned, I am closer to Karakasis and Breed, and further from Saunders and Jones). From the perspective of the reception of the *Eclogues*, “bucolic” would tend to emphasise ancient intertexts and “pastoral” modern ones, in other words, the pre- and post-history of the *Eclogues* respectively.

⁶ For contextualisation of Böhme’s philosophy, see Timothy Chandler, “Reading Atmospheres: The Ecocritical Potential of Gernot Böhme’s Aesthetic Theory of Nature,” *ISLE* 18 (2011): 553–68; Axel Goodbody, *Nature, Technology and Cultural Change in Twentieth Century German Literature: The Challenge of Ecocriticism* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), esp. chap. 1; and Kate Rigby, “Gernot Böhme’s Ecological Aesthetics of Atmosphere,” in *Ecocritical Theory: New European Perspectives*, ed. Goodbody and Rigby (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 269–96.

⁷ “Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics” (*Thesis Eleven* 36 (1993): 113–26) (hereafter “AFC”) is David Roberts’s translation of a version of “Atmosphäre als Grundbegriff einer neuen Ästhetik” that Böhme presented as a conference paper in 1991. It was later published as a chapter in *Atmosphäre: Essays zur neuen Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) (hereafter *A*). I will provide references for both sources in text and all quotations will be from Roberts’s translation unless otherwise indicated.

⁸ Walter Benjamin, “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 7 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–1989) (hereafter *GS*), 1.471–508. The essay is translated by Harry Zohn as “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 2007) (hereafter *I*), 217–51. Citations will be provided parenthetically in text.

⁹ Walter Benjamin, “Kleine Geschichte der Photographie,” *GS* 2.378; “A Small History of Photography,” in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verso, 1997), 250 (translation modified).

¹⁰ Benjamin’s predictions in this regard have proved famously incorrect. See the editors’ Preface in Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Michael Marrinan, eds, *Mapping Benjamin: The Work of Art in the Digital Age* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University

Press, 2003), xiii–xiv.

- ¹¹ Antoine Hennion and Bruno Latour, “How to Make Mistakes on So Many Things at Once – And Become Famous for It,” in Gumbrecht and Marrinan, *Mapping Benjamin*, 93.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 94.
- ¹³ Benjamin, GS 2.378; “Small History of Photography,” 250. Benjamin’s reference to breathing looks back to the word’s original sense in Latin.
- ¹⁴ Gernot Böhme, *Natürlich Natur: Über Natur im Zeitalter ihrer technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 109.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.
- ¹⁶ David Roberts, “On Aura and an Ecological Aesthetics of Nature,” in *With the Sharpened Axe of Reason: Approaches to Walter Benjamin*, ed. Gerhard Fischer (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 58.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 59, 60.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60
- ¹⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor as *Aesthetic Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) (hereafter abbreviated as *AT*). Further references will be provided parenthetically in text with the German page numbers preceding the English.
- ²⁰ Yvonne Sherratt, “Adorno’s Aesthetic Concept of Aura,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 33 (2007): 160.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 172.
- ²² Benjamin, “Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire,” GS 1.646–47; “On Some Motives in Baudelaire,” *I* 188.
- ²³ Christoph Weber, “Free Nature Today: On the Preservation of Nature in the Fields of Aesthetics,” in *Aesthetics and Aisthesis: New Perspectives and (Re)Discoveries*, ed. Hans Adler (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002), 69.
- ²⁴ Hermann Schmitz, “Hermann Schmitz, The ‘New Phenomenology,’” in *Phenomenology World-Wide: Foundations, Expanding Dynamisms, Life-Engagements: A Guide for Research and Study*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), 492. This essay briefly summarises Schmitz’s philosophical system, which is elaborated in the five volumes of his *System der Philosophie* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1964–1980): *Die Gegenwart*, *Der Leib*, *Der Raum*, *Die Person* and *Die Aufhebung der Gegenwart* (volume 3, *Der Raum*, contains the theory of atmospheres). For a brief summary in English of Schmitz’s phenomenology see additionally the entry by Anna Blume in the *Handbook of Phenomenological Aesthetics*, ed. Hans Rainer Sepp and Lester Embree (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010).
- ²⁵ Gernot Böhme, “Atmosphäre als Begriff der Ästhetik,” *Daidalos* 68 (1998): 115.
- ²⁶ Gernot Böhme, *Architektur und Atmosphäre* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2006), 156–57.

- ²⁷ Gernot Böhme, "Der Raum des Gedichts," in *Raum für Sprache – Raum für Literatur*, ed. Brigitte Labs-Ehlert (Detmold, Germany: Literaturbüro Ostwestfalen-Lippe, 2001), 95–111.
- ²⁸ Brian W. Breed, *Pastoral Inscriptions: Reading and Writing Virgil's Eclogues* (London: Duckworth, 2006).
- ²⁹ I am particularly indebted here to Shierry Weber NicholSEN's study of Adorno's aesthetics: *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997).
- ³⁰ Weber NicholSEN, *Exact Imagination, Late Work*, 110.
- ³¹ Benjamin, GS 1.214–15; *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), 34–35.
- ³² Stars and constellations are themselves prominent figures in the *Eclogues*, a connection worth noting but beyond the scope of this essay. Timothy Saunders explores the poems' astral tropes at great length in his *Bucolic Ecology: Virgil's Eclogues and the Environmental Literary Tradition* (London: Duckworth, 2008).
- ³³ Böhme, "Der Raum des Gedichts," 102.
- ³⁴ Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), 32.
- ³⁵ Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 30.
- ³⁶ Roberts, "On Aura and an Ecological Aesthetics of Nature," 61, 63.
- ³⁷ Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, 21–22.
- ³⁸ A discussion of the evidence for the dating of the *Eclogues* is provided by Robert Coleman in his commentary on the *Eclogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 14–21. Evangelos Karakasis provides a good overview of the generic constituents of pastoral as they are first brought together in Theocritus (*Song Exchange in Roman Pastoral* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011) 15–20).
- ³⁹ Paul Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 36–39.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 138, 161.
- ⁴¹ Williams, *Country and the City*, 96.
- ⁴² Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (London: Routledge, 1999), 1–2.
- ⁴³ Charles Martindale, "Green Politics: The *Eclogues*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 108, 109.
- ⁴⁴ Frederick Jones, *Virgil's Garden: The Nature of Bucolic Space* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011); Karakasis, *Song Exchange in Roman Pastoral*.
- ⁴⁵ See Breed, *Pastoral Inscriptions* for an extensive analysis.
- ⁴⁶ Eleanor Winsor Leach, *Virgil's Eclogues: Landscapes of Experience* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974), 83.

- ⁴⁷ As Stephen Hinds points out, intertextuality can operate atmospherically, as a mood, rather than necessarily through concrete *loci similes*. In such a way, he writes, “specific verbal allusions, where they exist, do not so much *constitute* the intertextual debt, which would be there without them, as *footnote* it” (*Allusion and Intertext* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 138).
- ⁴⁸ It should be noted that the *locus amoenus* is only one of potentially many atmospheres that could be associated with the *Eclogues*, though certainly it has been one of the most important. Moreover, we will see below how this atmosphere is compromised at certain points in the text.
- ⁴⁹ Paul Alpers, *The Singer of the Eclogues* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).
- ⁵⁰ Saunders, *Bucolic Ecology*, 7.
- ⁵¹ Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 187.
- ⁵² As Rosenmeyer notes, no ancient poet should be called a descriptive realist (*Green Cabinet*, 196). For this reason Franz Witek speaks (not without reservation) of “landscape-feelings” in Virgil (*Vergil's Landschaften: Versuch einer Typologie literarischer Landschaft* [Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2006], 20). In his typology of Virgilian landscapes, Witek considers the stage-set and the bearing of moods to be two of the main functional types of landscape representation (none of which rely on detailed description, despite the importance of the homeland in Witek’s reading) (*ibid.*, 23–44).
- ⁵³ Rumpf, “Bucolic *nomina* in Virgil and Theocritus: On the Poetic Technique of Virgil’s *Eclogues*,” in Katharina Volk, ed., *Vergil's Eclogues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 78. Rumpf’s study of Virgil’s vocabulary is much more pertinent here than the statistical analyses in René Lecompe, *Virgile, Bucoliques: Index verborum, Relevés statistiques* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970).
- ⁵⁴ Jones, *Virgil's Garden*, 17.
- ⁵⁵ Leach, *Vergil's Eclogues*, 83, 112.
- ⁵⁶ Peter L. Smith, “*Lentus in Umbra*: A Symbolic Pattern in Virgil’s *Eclogues*,” *Phoenix* 19 (1965): 298.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 298–99.
- ⁵⁸ Arnaldo Benedetto, “Shade and Coolness in Virgil’s Pastorals,” *Classical Bulletin* 14 (1938): 69.
- ⁵⁹ Clausen, *Commentary*, xxv; Angela Maria Negri Rosio, “*Umbra*,” in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, ed. Umberto Cozzoli (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1990), vol. 5, 383. The word occurs fifteen times in the *Eclogues*; additionally, the diminutive *umbraculum* and the adjective *umbrosus* occur once each (Lecompe, *Index Verborum*, 88–89). According to Negri Rosio, *umbra* occurs in Virgil’s works 107 times (“*Umbra*,” 378).
- ⁶⁰ Julie Nováková, *Umbra: Ein Beitrag zur dichterischen Semantik* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 24.

⁶¹ Ibid., 119, 27.

⁶² The text of the *Eclogues* cited is that in Wendell Clausen, ed., *A Commentary on Virgil, Eclogues* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). All translations from Latin are my own.

⁶³ See, for example, Jones, *Virgil's Garden*, 29–32; Saunders, *Bucolic Ecology*, 84–85; Michael Lipka, “Notes on *fagus* in Vergil's *Eclogues*,” *Philologus* 146 (2002): 133–38; James O'Hara, *True Names* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 63, 243–44; Karakasis, *Song Exchange in Roman Pastoral*, 29, 189.

⁶⁴ For this reason, *quercus* (oak), *myrica* (tamarisk) and *ulmus* (elm), which occur five, four and four times respectively, though they have their own bucolic associations (*myrica* particularly), are not imbued with the same atmospheric potentiality for the *locus amoenus* as *fagus*.

⁶⁵ Coleman, *Vergil, Eclogues*, 155. Cf. *Eclogue* 9.42: *lentae texunt umbracula uites* (“soft vines weave a shady place”).

⁶⁶ Böhme notes this defining characteristic of insignia: “Zu Insignien werden sie erst in der Sphäre der Sprache” (A 78).

⁶⁷ I have not had the space to investigate in as much detail as I might have the question of nature. Suffice it to say that there is great potential for a theorisation of nature in the *Eclogues* that moves beyond the unreflexive readings of the past. In this regard, Saunders's *Bucolic Ecology* makes a significant contribution.

⁶⁸ Ernst A. Schmidt, *Poetische Reflexion: Vergils Bukolik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1972), 111.

⁶⁹ Jones, *Virgil's Garden*, 13.