

STUDIES IN VERGIL'S THIRD GEORGIC

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I have offered studies on selected aspects of the third book of the Georgics, the second 'published' work of Vergil. The Georgics is a didactic poem in four books in which Vergil presents a discussion of various aspects of farming, advice on the maintenance of the land, the planting of crops with special attention to the cultivation of the vine and the olive, and the keeping of livestock and bees. At various points in his presentation, Vergil suspends his didactic approach to offer comment on contemporary problems, the political corruption and chaos evident throughout all of Italy. These editorial intrusions by the concerned poet have prompted modern critics to transcend the limited critical approach which views the Georgics as nothing more than an agricultural manual in verse, and to appreciate the broader philosophic design of the poem. Within the technical framework of his poem Vergil is offering a vision of civilization with important moral and political implications for his age.

In spite of this enlightened critical approach to the poem as a whole, the third book of the Georgics has suffered from scholarly neglect. Structurally its position in the poem is crucial: Vergil abandons the preoccupations with the vegetable world and inanimate Nature which characterize books I and II, and turns to animate representatives of Nature, cattle, horses, sheep, and goats, whose lives are marked by passionate

involvement and turmoil. The principal themes of book III are love and death, and although Vergil never directly abandons his preoccupation with animals, I believe that he does intend his discussion to have important moral and political implications for men as well. In my study of the third Georgic I have emphasized a vital political direction for Georgic III: Vergil uses his agricultural material as metaphor and the principal representatives of the domestic agrarian world as symbols in his vision of concern for the fate of Rome and all of Italy.

I have begun my study with a consideration of the changing agricultural patterns in the Italian peninsula during the last two centuries of the Republic in order to expose the glaring discrepancy between patterns of land utilization in peninsular Italy in the late Republic and the simple, subsistence farming which Vergil discusses in the Georgics. Vergil was aware of the agricultural conditions of his age and obviously did not intend his treatise to be interpreted literally as a technical manual. A close comparison of his technical material with the agricultural discussion provided by Varro in the De Re Rustica, Vergil's principal source for his agricultural precepts, offers strong evidence of a basic disparity between the sophisticated artistic presentation of the third Georgic and the uninspiring prosaic aspects of his subject matter, and additional proof that Vergil intends a broader design for the third Georgic, a philosophic statement about man and the world.

This broad direction is confirmed by a consideration of the echoes of Lucretius' philosophic poem, the De Rerum Natura, which we find in Georgic III. Lucretius introduced a discussion of sex and plague into his own poem and Vergil profits from the example of his predecessor.

But he never resorts to slavish imitation, but leaves behind Lucretius' preoccupation with abstract philosophical principles to offer his own vision of hope in a living ruler, Octavian.

The ultimate message of Georgic III is intrinsically connected with the final book of the series. With his discussion of apiculture Vergil offers a vision of order, control, and political community which cancels his earlier concerns with disorder and divisive passion.

In the epyllion which concludes the poem, Vergil turns directly to the world of men, Aristaeus, the farmer, and Orpheus, the poet. With the miraculous tale of bougonia, the resurrection of a swarm of healthy new bees from the rotting corpse of a steer, Vergil offers a dramatic representation of regeneration which dispels the pessimistic obsession with death with which book III concludes, and signals optimistic hope for the political future of Rome. The tragic story of Orpheus, on the other hand, confirms Vergil's earlier judgment on passion and its destructive hold on the lives of men. At the same time, with the figure of Orpheus, Vergil considers the role of the poet in society and raises an issue which is not resolved concerning the possibilities for creative expression in the new regime.

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INTRODUCTION

In undertaking a study of Vergil, one is immediately impressed by the wealth of critical scholarship which through the years has centred on this celebrated figure of Augustan Rome. The poetry of Vergil has never prompted a lukewarm response; in ancient times his popularity was unparalleled; from modern critics he often receives excessive and exuberant praise or severe criticism.

In modern times the Aeneid has claimed the lion's share of critical attention, although quite recently the Eclogues too have enjoyed a new vogue among scholars. The Georgics, however, consistently remained the neglected masterpiece until L. P. Wilkinson published his illuminating study, The Georgics of Virgil. A Critical Survey in 1969. Wilkinson has penetrated the didactic exterior, which to modern tastes appears thoroughly unpalatable, and revealed the moral, religious, and political preoccupations of the poem as a whole; he also appreciated many of the poetic and descriptive qualities which very often are obscured by the mass of agricultural material. Wilkinson has devoted considerable attention to the poem's Nachleben, its fate in the period immediately following the death of the poet, and in the centuries preceding our own. I have found this work to be extremely valuable in my own study.

Yet because Wilkinson's book is a survey with a very broad compass, the individual books of the Georgics necessarily do not receive intensive study. One of the most fascinating, and one which has received the least

notice from critics, is the third Georgic. I have attempted in this dissertation to reveal some of the valuable insights to be gained from Georgic III and to establish it as a work deserving of scholarly attention.

The third Georgic represents a very important statement by the poet; its vital role in the over-all design of the poem is signalled by its crucial position in the structural scheme: it initiates the second half of the Georgics where Vergil leaves behind his preoccupation with inanimate Nature and turns his attention to animate creatures whose lives are punctuated by turmoil and passionate involvement. I have attempted to establish an immediate contemporary direction for Georgic III, where Vergil uses his didactic medium, the concerns of animal husbandry, to express vital philosophic, moral and political concerns for contemporary Rome. It is paradoxical that Book IV has attracted considerable attention from scholars, particularly the Aristaeus Orpheus epyllion, while Book III, where Vergil broadens the philosophic design of the work, and raises the issues germane to his discussion of bees and men in Book IV, remains neglected. In this study of Georgic III I have included a brief consideration of the aspects of Vergil's discussion of the bees and the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice which are intrinsically related to the philosophical, moral, and political issues raised in the third Georgic.

I have often referred to several established commentaries and derived considerable value from the notes of Conington, P. Vergili Maronis Opera, Vol. I, Page, P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica, Büchner, P. Vergilius Maro, der Dichter der Römer, Richter, Vergil, Georgica, Otis, Virgil: a Study in Civilized Poetry and Klingner, Virgils Georgica.

In my own study, however, I have avoided the line-by-line approach of a commentary, and offered a series of studies on various sections of the third Georgic. I have concentrated on Vergil's use of his sources, especially Varro and Lucretius, in order to appreciate the extent and purpose of Vergil's borrowings in Georgic III and to grasp the special Vergilian design of the book. Wherever possible I have also introduced aspects of continuity with the Eclogues and the Aeneid in order to appreciate Georgic III in the total context of the Vergilian corpus.

Throughout the dissertation quotations from the Eclogues, Georgics, and the Aeneid have consistently been drawn from the Oxford Classical text, P. Vergili Maronis Opera, edited by R. A. B. Mynors (Clarendon Press, 1969); those cited from the De Rerum Natura are also drawn from the Oxford Classical text, Lucreti De Rerum Natura Libri Sex, second edition, edited by Cyril Bailey (Clarendon Press, 1922); the material quoted from the De Re Rustica of Varro has been reproduced from the Loeb Classical Library edition, edited and translated by William Davis Hooper, and revised by Harrison Boyd Ash (William Heinemann, 1935).

CHAPTER ONE

ROMAN PREDECESSORS OF VERGIL: CATO AND VARRO

A valuable point of departure for our study of the third Georgic is a consideration of the principal Roman agricultural material which appeared before the 'publication' of the Georgics.

The first treatise on agriculture, the De Agri Cultura by Cato, appeared in the middle of the second century,¹ as the post-Hannibalic economic and social revolution was in full progress. Though the treatise lacks cohesion and direction, it provides valuable evidence of the changing agricultural pattern in Italy. In his preface to his work, the old-fashioned, rigid moralist cites agriculture as the most respectable pursuit for man. A staunch defender of the old Roman moral fibre, and vehemently opposed to the influx of foreign, and especially Greek elements into Italy, Cato opens with an edifying passage in praise of the old Italian yeoman and the opportunities for a moral and upright life which agriculture provides. He was himself familiar with the practical, back-breaking features of agricultural labour.

¹It is difficult to date the De Agri Cultura precisely. Since Cato died in 149, we have the terminus post quem; most scholars generally date the work in the years 175-150. K. D. White, Roman Farming (London, 1970), p. 19 suggests only the middle of the second century, as does A. J. Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, The Hannibalic War's Effects on Roman Life, (Oxford, 1965), II, 297. Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, Rome and Italy of the Republic, (Baltimore, 1933) I, 160 dates the work ca. 175-50 B.C.

Yet above all else, Cato was a practical man who could not fail to appreciate the profit-making potential of the new developments in agriculture. In the words of Heitland, "Cato's position, taken as a whole, shews no sign of a reactionary aim, no uncompromising desire of a reversion to a vanished past. Nor does he fall in with the latest fashion and treat the huge latifundium as the last word in landowning."² Though he pretends in his introduction to disassociate himself from the business class, and offer a guide to farming on a small and simple scale, Cato's treatise betrays a shrewd, business-like attitude to his subject. According to Plutarch (Cato Maior, 21, 5), Cato himself concentrated on mining and commercial ventures, although he did keep slaves and indulged in farming as a secondary activity. In the De Agri Cultura his remarks are very clearly directed to a newly emerging class of slave-owning land-holders who in later years were to dominate the Italian agricultural scene. He offers sound advice on the management of the estate, the construction of buildings and the kind of equipment needed to maintain the farm on an efficient basis. In many respects Cato is a pioneer whose work reflects the beginnings of the social and economic revolution which was to have so profound an effect on the life style of all Italians. His treatise marks the beginnings of the change which Vergil will lament in the Georgics.

²W. E. Heitland, Agricola: A Study of Agriculture and Rustic Life in the Greco-Roman World from the Point of View of Labour, (Cambridge, 1921), p. 168.

The emergence of Rome as an international power profoundly altered the character of life in Peninsular Italy. Prior to the double confrontation with Carthage, the economic structure of Peninsular Italy in highlands and lowlands alike had been founded on a combination of agriculture and animal husbandry, operated in small family units, and producing only enough for their own use.³ Since the Roman Republic relied on its farmer citizens to provide needed military support in times of public danger, the lengthy wars with Carthage meant that extensive tracts of Italy's best farmland fell into disuse.

The wars claimed heavy casualties, and even those who did return often were psychologically unsuited to the demands and monotony of rustic life after exposure to the rigours and excitement of military life. Moreover, the invasion by Hannibal during the Second Punic War, and the defensive 'scorched earth' policy adopted by Fabius in an effort to check the advance of the Carthaginian army ruthlessly devastated Caudine, Hirpine, Apulian, and Lucanian territory.⁴ South Central Italy, the

³Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 103.

⁴Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 31. Tenney Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, I, 100-101 also points out that severe Roman reprisals against those communities who defected to the side of Hannibal resulted in the confiscation of considerable territory by the Roman Senate, especially in Lucania and Apulia. This confiscated land became "ager publicus" which was eventually rented to grazers when few small-scale tenants could be found after the War.

area between Rome and the Volturnus river, became overpopulated with the mass exodus of the peasantry into the walled towns, while the surrounding countryside remained barren and deserted.⁵

In the economic sphere, the wars with Carthage had far-reaching consequences; Rome was exposed to the highly industrialized Punic agricultural system which was directed by purely economic considerations and conducted on a large scale for profit. The small independent farmer who had up to now formed the backbone of Roman society came to be regarded as an inefficient anachronism.

Moreover, for the financing of the war effort, Rome turned to the non-Senatorial business class and members of the Roman establishment. These war loans were paid off generously by Rome in three installments, two cash payments before the end of the Second Punic War, and a final payment of land in 200 B.C., tracts of land in the Ager Romanus, a prime area directly around Rome.⁶ In an ironic and pathetic twist of fate, the capitalist was able to buy up the small ancestral plots of the peasant soldiers with money which the soldier had made available for him.

Though southern Italy was rapidly losing her resident population, there was no shortage of labour. The wars with Hannibal and the subsequent struggles imposed by Rome's imperial ambitions provided a constant supply of slave labour for the capitalist enterprises.⁷

⁵Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 103.

⁶Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 174.

⁷Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, I, 187-8 estimates that within the years 200-150 B.C., 250,000 enslaved prisoners of war were imported into Italy.

The character of the southern Italian landscape was gradually changing over to large estates held by wealthy Romans and farmed by slave labour. The growing cities of the central Italian lowlands in no small way contributed to the changing agricultural character of southern Italy. The cities provided a lucrative and easily accessible market for the oil and wine produced on the new plantations. In addition to the growing of vines and olives, a system of nomadic animal husbandry was firmly established. The flocks pastured in the cool highlands during the summer, and in the winter were driven again into the lowlands. This system of transhumance was especially efficient and well suited to the varying terrain of southern Italy; it ensured a full economic use of the Apennine highlands, and the constant annual alternating migrations allowed for the successful maintenance of large flocks. It is difficult to ascertain the exact size of the estates which developed in this period. Frank suggests that they probably consisted of units of two hundred to three hundred acres, and since the system of farming was still intensive, they required an abundance of labourers.⁸

After the wars with Hannibal, the Roman government was faced with the problem of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the foundering peasant economy.⁹ From 201-173 B.C. the Roman government engaged in the distribution

⁸Frank, An Economic History of Rome to the End of the Republic (Baltimore, 1920), p. 94.

⁹Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 190-281 devotes considerable study to the attempts at reconstruction and rehabilitation undertaken in the years 211-134. I have found this discussion very helpful. Tenney Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome I, 122-4 offers an excellent summary of the colonies established by Rome during the years 200-150 B.C.

of allotments of "ager publicus". Campania was one area regarded by both the government and private enterprise as particularly favourable: the government was anxious to foster the production of cereal crops, while the large land owners viewed the Campanian climate and location as ideal for the growing of vines and olives. Moreover, the lush Campanian lowlands would have provided an ideal winter pasturage for flocks summering in Lucania.

The demands of the struggle with Hannibal had necessitated the sale of part of the Campanian territory. In 205, a slice of the Ager Campanus along its south-western edge was sold, and in 199, another just to the north at the foot of Mount Tifata. Otherwise the government was relatively successful in defending its Campanian land against the encroachment of private enterprise.

In the region of the Samnite plateau, an area which was not especially inviting for ranching or the cultivation of grapes or olives, efforts to rehabilitate the peasant economy were quite successful. Scipio's veterans were settled on expropriated Caudine and Hirpinian territory on a large scale, and the area remained a centre for cereal production down to imperial times.

In the extreme south of Italy, the Ager Thurinus and Bruttium, the policy was more varied. Two Latin colonies, Copia and Valentia, were established at key points for the protection of the peninsula from subsequent invasion. A number of allotments were made to the colonists, but these were rather small, in Toynbee's view, to insure enough land for winter pasturage of animals grazing on Mount Sila in the summer.

In Apulia and Lucania, private enterprise gained a free hand in the extensive tracts of land which had been expropriated from secessionist states, or made available through severe depopulation of the region as a consequence of war. The Roman government lacked the man-power and the resources to rehabilitate these devastated regions. It did limit the amount of "ager publicus" which could be cultivated by one individual, and the number of animals that a single rancher could graze on public pasture.

In the central Italian lowlands, a prime region for its proximity to Rome, a number of factors conspired to eliminate any possibility of reviving the traditional peasant economy. Since the invasion of Hannibal, the rural population had taken up residence in the cities, found new jobs in industry and had grown used to urban living. Moreover, the vital area of the fifty-mile radius around Rome had legitimately passed to private enterprise as payment for war loans. Most of the central Italian lowlands consequently were divided between sprawling private plantations and overcrowded cities. The traditional peasant economy persisted in a few districts in the area: the north-eastern corner of the Liris basin, and the Ager Venafrus in the upper valley of the Volturnus, and the Sabine highlands which were not attractive to commercial agriculturalists.

In the early part of the second century, southern Italy displayed a varied physical composition: there were a number of overcrowded, industrialized towns, scattered blocks of small independent holdings interspersed among sprawling plantations where the land was given over to olives and the vine, and, in some instances, wheat, or converted into pasture for large nomadic herds. In spite of diligent attempts at

repopulation of the area, southern Italy in the second century never regained the population density of the pre-war years.¹⁰

¹⁰In Northern Italy reconstruction attempts encountered different problems. With an abundance of swampland and forest, the area itself did not immediately offer attractive possibilities for agriculture. Reclamation of the Po basin had been begun by the Etruscans in the sixth century, and though Cisalpine Gaul and Liguria as the Romans found them were agricultural countries, the victory over the terrain was not complete. Reclamation was continued by the Romans after the Hannibalic Wars. Complete victory over the Ligurian tribes was not accomplished until 155, but the Romans were more successful in Cisalpine Gaul. After the initial campaign with the Gauls (224-222), the Romans founded two colonies on territory expropriated from the Boii, Placentia on the southern bank of the Po, and Cremona on the northern bank. With the final defeat of the Boii in 191, colonization began in earnest: in 189, a new Latin colony, Bononia was founded on the site of the Boian capital. In the years 190-173 expropriated portions of the Ager Boianus were planted with settlements of peninsular Italians and in 183 colonies were founded at Mutina and Parma. Though the defeat of Carthage had opened up new markets for Italian wine and oil in the western Mediterranean, capitalists never gained as solid a hold over the region as they had in the more southern regions of the peninsula. For a fuller discussion of the winning of the North West, see Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 254-85.

Cato is concerned with investment farming on a moderate scale in the region of Campania and southern Latium; though he does treat other kinds of farming in an unsystematic fashion, his principal subjects are the growing of olives and grapes. An ideal size for an estate specializing in olives would be 240 iugera, while a holding of 100 iugera¹¹ would be sufficient for a profitable vineyard. He doesn't denounce the larger plantations of 500 iugera¹² which were becoming popular, but insisted on frequent personal attention by the owner to check abuses before they had become firmly entrenched. He does not present his material in any systematic fashion, but offers a series of practical points interspersed with bits of rustic wisdom and interesting trivia.

Cato accepted slavery as a necessary condition for the management of the estates, and his treatise provides specific instructions on the rations and care slaves require (Chs. LVI-LX). He adopts the same pragmatic and ruthless approach to the human participants in the agricultural operation and regards them as nothing more than chattel. He does insist that shackled labourers be given more rations than other slaves.

Significantly, Cato's treatise provides instructions for the letting of contracts at the time of the grape and olive harvests (Chs. CXXXV-VI), a provision which suggests that the heavy seasonal labour was

¹¹White, Roman Farming, p. 389 points out that Cato does not limit himself to these two types of "intensive farming", the olive and the vine, but rather "in his unsystematic, rambling handbook refers to at least six different units." "They all however have a common aim--to provide the owner with the greatest possible return on his investment while keeping production costs to a minimum." p. 390.

¹²White, Roman Farming, p. 390.

contracted out to free labourers, while the regular chores of ploughing, sowing, and harrowing would be done by gangs of slaves. It appears that there existed a reservoir of casual free labour which enabled the plantation owner to keep his operation running on an efficient basis.¹³ Cato frequently suggests buying land in a region where a steady supply of hired labour would be available. Though he recommends a self-sufficient approach as much as possible, Cato does mention the buying of tools, implements, and housewares from the town market (Ch. CXXXV). Again this provides evidence of the trend toward urbanization in southern Italy. The location of commercial and manufacturing towns now was largely determined by economic rather than military considerations.¹⁴

Though Cato's primary concern is specialized crops, he still suggests the kind of farming that is popular to this day in many parts of western Europe--intensive farming. He recommends that a flock of sheep be kept on the olive plantation, and swine on the vineyard, and a few ploughs and oxen to cultivate the orchard. He also recommends the growing of cereal crops to feed the slaves and the livestock.¹⁵

¹³Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 304 mentions this as one of the deplorable effects of the Hannibalic Wars.

¹⁴Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, II, 310.

¹⁵White, Roman Farming, pp. 389-95, discusses agricultural organization in Cato's treatise. Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, I, 160-72 also provides a good discussion of the salient features of Cato's discussion of agriculture.

Agriculture had once been the means of livelihood and an honourable occupation for the ordinary Roman citizen. Yet the colonus, the sturdy Roman yeoman of Republican days is missing from Cato's treatise. Agriculture was now throughout great areas of Italy rapidly becoming industrialized as a field of investment of capital for the moneyed classes. Cato's treatise provides striking indication of the appeal of the new system for the practical, profit-minded Roman, and the facility with which the transformation which was to change the character and lifestyle of Italy was accepted.

The period which intervened from the death of Cato in 149 B.C. until the publication of another significant treatise on agriculture, the De Re Rustica by M. Terentius Varro in 37 B.C., was scarred by a great deal of upheaval, social and economic, as well as political. Eventually a reactionary attitude manifested itself as the evils of the rampant growth of large estates and the subsequent decline of the old sturdy peasant class became apparent. A serious attempt at agrarian reform was initiated by Tiberius Gracchus in 133; he attempted to effect a re-distribution of "ager publicus", land legally held by the State, in order to satisfy the needs of the poor. Through the years distinctions between private and public holdings had become blurred as the private investors stealthily encroached on public land and extended their boundaries.

The Gracchan reforms were motivated by military considerations as well as social and economic factors.¹⁶ The decline of the independent

¹⁶Frank, An Economic History of Rome, p. 121.

farmer seriously threatened the supply of man-power for the army. Gracchus proposed to limit the holdings of those already in possession of "ager publicus": under his scheme a single citizen could own a maximum of 500 iugera of such land; if he had two grown sons, the limit was extended to 1000 iugera, and the state renounced all claim to the land. The remaining public land was to be distributed in smaller allotments to the poor, who would not own the land, but would pay a minimal rent to the state treasury. They were not allowed to sell these allotments. With the murder of Tiberius, the mantle of reform fell on his brother Gaius; he chose to broaden the scope of agrarian reform initiated by Tiberius by extending the re-allotments to state owned lands in the provinces as well.

Following the death of Gaius, the commission established by Tiberius for the enactment of agrarian reform continued in operation, although its effectiveness was gradually but definitively curtailed. Eventually the prohibition against the sale of these allotments was lifted, and all too soon much of the land passed from the hands of the peasants back to the capitalists.¹⁷

¹⁷For the discussion of Gracchan land reforms I have relied on the accounts of Frank, An Economic History of Rome, pp. 119-30; M. Rostovtzeff, Rome (repr. of 1st ed. with corrections; New York, 1927), pp. 95-105; H. H. Scullard, From the Gracchi to Nero A History of Rome from 133 B.C. to A.D. 68 (2nd ed.; London, 1963), pp. 23-40.

In any event, had the Gracchan reforms succeeded, there would hardly have been a reversion to the glorious past. In the first place, the remedial legislation introduced by the Gracchi considered only "ager publicus", and made no provision whatever for the large tracts of land in private ownership.¹⁸ Secondly, Rome was by now an imperial power and the simple past could never again be reconstructed.

As Roman foreign involvement became more extended, it became increasingly difficult for the peasant to maintain continued cultivation of even the most meagre plot of land. As the number of land-holders sharply decreased, the burden of military service was felt even more acutely. At the same time, reluctant service on the part of the war-weary peasant hardly bolstered the efficiency of the army.

Toward the end of the second century, drastic reform of the military system was undertaken by Marius, a step which ultimately proved to be even more disruptive to the Italian agricultural scene. Marius disposed of the old system which made military service an obligation of property holders, and created instead a standing army of volunteers recruited from city and country alike, drawn by the promise of pay and land allotment upon retirement.¹⁹

The creation of a semi-professional army by Marius should have had a stabilizing influence on the agricultural economy of Italy. The small independent farmer was released from his burden of military service

¹⁸Heitland, Agricola, p. 175.

¹⁹Rostovtzeff, Rome, p. 107.

and free to devote all of his energy to the development of his land. Unfortunately, the Marian reforms proved to be anything but beneficial to the agricultural status quo. By binding the soldiers to him and establishing land allotment as a means of remuneration, Marius initiated a policy which was to result in ruthless confiscation during the civil wars which marked the end of the Republic.

The first century saw a series of civil conflicts followed by vicious proscriptions and confiscation of private property. All of the public lands by this time had been disposed of, except for the Ager Campanus. Moreover, the military colonist in general proved to be a less than beneficial influence on agrarian life. Frequently land allotments were bestowed on veterans who had no practical knowledge concerning the successful operation of a farm. In time, many left, abandoning the land to weeds or speculators. Instead of agrarian renewal, this period saw a further decline in the number of independent small farmers, coloni, the growth of intensive plantation farming and large scale ranching.

The period intervening between the death of Cato and the appearance of Varro's agricultural treatise was significant as well for more positive developments. With extended foreign involvement, knowledge of the products and agricultural practices of foreign lands greatly increased, and Varro did not hesitate to incorporate these new precepts into his work. As a result, the De Re Rustica is much broader in scope and outlook than Cato's work, and Varro shows a concern for principles, a discussion of reasons for preferring particular methods, and a willingness to employ

experimentation which were lacking in the earlier work.²⁰

During the period which intervened between the 'publication' of the De Agri Cultura and the appearance of Varro's text there were several agricultural writers whose works have not survived, but who are cited by Varro. The Sasernas, both father and son, are quoted by Varro several times on matters relating to the economics of agriculture (I ii 22; xvi.5; xviii.2 and 6; xix.1; II, ix.6). An even more important figure is Tremelius Scrofa who is hailed by Varro as a celebrated authority on animal husbandry (II i.2; i.11) These three figures have prominent roles in the dialogue presentation of Varro's material.

Varro himself was born in Sabine Reate, the heart of rural Italy, and was familiar with the hard labour of the farm. Like Cato he was primarily interested in farming for profit and shows little sentiment or fancy. The De Re Rustica, the only one of the author's mammoth collection of writings to survive intact, is the product of his mature years and shows considerable practical experience. Though he obviously admired the work of Cato and quotes freely from the De Agri Cultura, he recognized that rapidly changing methods and economic factors had rendered the treatise obsolete. Varro's wife Fundania had recently purchased a farm and he intends his treatise to serve as a guide for her in securing a profitable return for her investment.

He recognized that the enlarged outlook of agricultural science demanded a well organized systematic presentation. As a result, his treatise, cast in dialogue form, is clearly divided into three separate

²⁰Heitland, Agricola, pp. 179-80.

areas for discussion: agriculture, the conditions of soil, terrain, and climate regulating tillage; animal husbandry discussed at length in book two; thirdly, "pastio villatica", the raising of specialized stock for the gourmet table.²¹ At times the work shows stylistic imperfections and careless use of language, but Varro does make an effort to inject humour into his discussion and add variety where he can.

The concentration on animal husbandry and the more specialized concerns of "pastio villatica" reflect the preoccupations of the new age. Varro himself was a celebrated breeder of horses and mules, and since the time of Cato, great strides had been made in all aspects of animal husbandry. Particular emphasis was placed on the "interdependence of crop and animal husbandry which is recognized today as fundamental to good farming practice."²²

The discussion of book three reflects Varro's openness to new ideas and his perspicacity; the raising of specialized gourmet items was a new sideline for the farmer close to the luxury market, and would prove to be a particularly lucrative preoccupation as gourmandise became increasingly fashionable in Roman high society. Varro's preoccupation with this highly specialized area provides an interesting comment on the growth of luxury since the time of Cato.

Unlike Cato, Varro does not provide specific indications of the size of farming operations he has in mind, although we can draw certain

²¹This outline of the De Re Rustica is based on that provided by White, Roman Farming, pp. 22-24.

²²White, Roman Farming, p. 23.

conclusions from his presentation. Though his treatise appeared in 37, just five years after Philippi and widespread colonization of veterans, his work reflects conditions prior to the Civil War, the period between 67 and 54.²³ His treatise is directed primarily to prosperous farmers, a reasonably sophisticated class who were primarily concerned in securing a good return on their land investments and in making an efficient labour force of slaves. Varro shows little concern for the small farmer. In the opening statement of book II, to be sure, he laments the decline of agricultural pursuits and chastizes those who abandon their land and flock to the city in search of free grain and entertainment:

Igitur quod nunc intra murum fere patres familiae
 correperunt relictis falce et aratro et manus movere
 maluerunt in theatro ac circo, quam in segetibus ac
 vinetis, frumentum locamus qui nobis advehat, qui
 saturi fiamus ex Africa et Sardinia, et navibus vindemiam
 condimus ex insula Coa et Chia. (II.praef. 3)

He deplores the fact that Italy has lost her self-sufficiency and must rely on Africa and Sardinia for grain, and the islands of the Aegean for wine. Yet these statements are offered in the preface of his book, a section where rhetorical, flamboyant expression is common; elsewhere he displays a somewhat different attitude. The lengthy second book of the treatise is devoted exclusively to a discussion of animal husbandry in which Varro definitely has a large-scale operation in mind. At the close

²³Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, I, 363.

of the preface in which he contrasts the simple agricultural life of old with the current interest in grazing, he concludes with the recommendation that the rancher learn the benefits of a more intensive farming:

Quarum quoniam societas inter se magna, propterea
 quod pabulum in fundo compascere quam vendere plerumque
 magis expedit domino fundi et stercoratio ad fructus
 terrestres aptissima et maxime ad id pecus appositum,
 qui habet praedium, habere utramque debet disciplinam,
 et agri culturae et pecoris pascendi, et etiam villaticae
 pastionis. (II.praef. 5)

Obviously Varro's treatise displays no real reactionary attitude toward the new agricultural methods.

Moreover, throughout the first book of the treatise, Varro gives ample evidence of consistent wheat production in Italy. At I.i.1-2, he gives instructions on the various methods of harvesting wheat in Umbria, Picenum, and Latium. Elsewhere he mentions that Etruria provides an especially good yield of wheat (I.xliv), while Apulia provides the best quality (I.ix.6). Though the city of Rome relied on imported grain to feed its swelling masses, the rest of Italy was self-supporting, and grain production in Peninsular Italy in the late Republic was both extensive and remunerative.²⁴

²⁴This conclusion is supported by Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, I, 364, and White, Roman Farming, p. 39. J. Ruelens, "Agriculture et Capitalisme a l'Epoque de Ciceron", Les Etudes Classiques XIX (1951), 330-43 presents a very different view, that Varro's treatise provides evidence of a serious decline in agricultural production, in cereal crops and the vine; Ruelens, however, provides no substantial evidence to support his view. He also proposes that Varro's treatise is intended to encourage a back-to-the-land movement in support of Octavian's agrarian policy, a view that is completely untenable in the light of Varro's own capitalist enterprises, and the inability of Octavian in 37 to enforce agrarian reform, if indeed he even had such a policy in mind so early in his career.

Generally Varro gives the impression that he intends his treatise for the landowners who had invested in farms of moderate size, 100 to 200 acres.²⁵ These farms were cultivated intensively, though they did specialize in a major crop. Varro's material also reflects the increase of animal husbandry. Presumably holdings for large-scale ranching which required facilities for both summer and winter pasturage required more land.

At one point (I.xvi.4), Varro does make a distinction between large estates far from a market, forced to maintain their own staff of smiths and artisans, and medium-sized estates with easy access to a supply of hired labour to perform operations on a seasonal basis.²⁶ However, it seems unlikely that ranching had extended itself to the point where it threatened other kinds of agriculture, and really large estates were few in this late Republican period.²⁷

²⁵Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, I, 363.

²⁶White, Roman Farming, pp. 395-6.

²⁷K. D. White, "Latifundia. A Critical Review of the Evidence on Large estates in Italy and Sicily up to the End of the First century A.D.", Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies XIV (1967), 62-79 cautions against the indiscriminate use of the term "latifundia" for the late Republican period. He does acknowledge the existence of a few large single units devoted to ranching in southern Italy during the late Republic but suggests that these were the exception rather than the rule.

One particularly important aspect, ignored by Cato (surely a deliberate omission rather than mere oversight in view of Cato's firm belief in efficient personal supervision and direction) and introduced by Varro, is the presence of the free tenant-farmer, "colonus", on the Italian agricultural scene. He mentions certain restrictions on the tenant,²⁸ a situation which suggests that the land-holder had the upper hand in the relationship.

Moreover, elsewhere in this treatise, besides the technical sense of "colonus" as tenant-farmer, Varro also uses the term in its older sense of cultivator (I.xvi.4, II.praef. 5). These men are simple farmers who presumably own their own land, though their holdings are on a much smaller scale. Unfortunately Varro gives no indication of exactly how numerous was this class of cultivator in the Italy of his day, nor whether they actually performed the farming tasks with their own hands. At least we do learn that the class of small independent farmer was not entirely extinct.

It is important to appreciate Varro's attitude toward the agricultural conditions of his day and to assess his purpose in writing the De Re Rustica. We must agree with K.D. White's judgment that his treatise "is not, as might have been expected from an octogenarian encyclopedist, a work of unpractical erudition, but based throughout on practical knowledge and tried experiment."²⁹ Though he obviously admired

²⁸R.R.I.ii.17 and II.iii.7. The tenant was bound to protect the land by strictly controlling the pasturage of sheep.

²⁹Roman Farming, p. 24.

the old peasant class and the simple but strong beginnings of Italian agriculture, he was a shrewd and practical realist who realized modern developments and agricultural improvements had rendered such a system of small-scale farming impractical and anachronistic in the chief arable districts of Italy.

At the same time, his diligent preoccupation with detail and the highly organized systematic arrangement of his treatise attest to a desire to impose an efficient, workable system on Italian agriculture. The dreadful waste of land resources and the mismanagement of potentially lucrative estates must certainly have grated against Varro's efficient practicality.

There is one particular passage which poses some difficulty for commentators. Early in the De Re Rustica (I.ii.3-6), employing the dialogue form which characterizes most of his treatise, Varro has Agrasius offer effusive praise of the Italian land. Italy, it seems, is better cultivated than any other country and produces crops which defy comparison; in short, the whole of Italy is one big orchard.

In an attempt to reconcile the jarring inconsistency in this boast by Varro with the old view which proposes a slump in the agrarian economy during the period when the treatise first made its appearance, Heitland places the date of the dialogue of book one in the period following Pompey's successful campaign against the pirates (67/66). This effusive praise of Italy would then be set in the brief lull following the turmoil created by Sullan confiscations and the slave uprising led by Spartacus, and directly preceding the rise of the two mighty armies under Pompey

and Caesar.³⁰ Even with this attempt to erase any possible anachronism in Varro's account, Heitland still refuses to accept the passage in question as a sincere and reliable expression. "Surely", he concludes, "the complete cultivation of Italy, compared as it is with that of other countries, is a description not to be taken literally, but as a natural exaggeration in the mouth of a self-complacent agriculturist."³¹

In his work on Roman farming, K.D. White accepts Varro's assessment of Italy as one large orchard more literally as a reference to the cultivation of fruit trees and the vine which had by this time become a major preoccupation of Italian agriculture. Again, however, he makes a judgment similar to Heitland's:

His remark (I.2.6) that the 'whole of Italy resembles one vast orchard' is certainly an exaggeration, but emphasizes the prevailing character of the agriculture of his time.³²

It is significant to note that in this passage Varro does not limit his assessment of Italian agricultural production to fruit trees and vines, but also mentions varied grain production and olive cultivation as indicative of the fertility of the Italian land. Certainly, I would admit a certain degree of exaggeration and rhetorical emphasis in this panegyric on Italy, but I hesitate to label Varro's attitude as one of self-complacency.

In my opinion, in this passage, Varro is attempting to impress upon his reader the vast potential of the Italian land, a fertility which is either being ignored or abused. The panegyric is not limited by any set

³⁰Heitland, Agricola, p. 179.

³¹Agricola, p. 179.

³²White, Roman Farming, p. 22.

chronological references, but the kinds of farming emphasized, olive, vine and arboriculture, are definitely the preoccupations of the large landowners of Varro's day.

Vergil's own effusive praise of Italy in book II of the Georgics in spirit and tone closely resembles Varro's statement and was probably directly inspired by it. In a strong rhetorical introduction, Vergil ranks Italy supreme among the lands of the East fabled for their wealth:

Sed neque Medorum silvae, ditissima terra,
nec pulcher Ganges atque auro turbidus Hermus
laudibus Italiae certent, non Bactra neque Indi
totaque turiferis Panchaia pinguis harenis. (136-9)

Vergil too relies on exaggeration to make his point; Italy is the land of perpetual spring and the earth brings forth two abundant harvests:

hic ver adsiduum atque alienis mensibus aestas:
bis gravidae pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbos.
at rabidae tigres absunt et saeva leonum
semina, nec miseros fallunt aconita legentis,
nec rapit immensos orbis per humum neque tanto
squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis. (149-54)

This passage contradicts the message of Georgic I where Vergil emphasized the constant effort required by man to arrest the process of decline evident in all things. Like Varro, Vergil presents a rhapsodic image of the Italian potential with the hope that it can be fulfilled.

Varro does not assume the stance of a moralist to issue a strong censure of those who are ignoring or abusing the vast agricultural potential of Italy. Similarly, we do not find any kind of impassioned exhortation to correct agricultural abuse or develop untapped resources.

There is, nonetheless, a definite desire for agricultural reform subtly expressed throughout his treatise. It finds positive expression in the systematic exposition of sound principles for the efficient

organization and management of large estates. Guided by a realistic outlook and his own preoccupation as a landowner of repute, Varro attempts to work within the system, to establish an efficient and workable arrangement for the new agricultural trends. He recognized that the potential of the fertile Italian countryside was not being fully realized and sought a corrective without suggesting a radical reversal to a vanished past.

At least once in his treatise, at the beginning of book II, Varro takes a nostalgic look at Rome's agricultural beginnings and praises the sturdy Roman yeoman; the preoccupations of book II, however, the management of the new stock ranches, anchor the treatise firmly in the present.

The dialogue of book II is introduced with an account of the origin and dignity of stock-raising (II.i.2-10). Again Varro reverts to the distant past with a positive goal for the present. By calling to mind the strong inter-dependence of man and domestic beasts in ancient times, and the particular significance of oxen and sheep in Roman tradition, he attempts to dignify animal husbandry as a pursuit for contemporary agriculturists. Pride in Roman origins is called forth as a stimulus for positive action in the present. But as the rest of the exposition of book II reveals, Varro has no intention of re-establishing a primitive one-to-one relationship of man and beast, but rather presents a systematic exposition of the latest techniques and aspects of large-scale ranching.

Similarly, in no way a sentimentalist, Varro accepts slavery as a necessary complement to large scale land-holding; at the same time, he recognizes the difficulties inherent in making an efficient labour force

of slaves. He advocates certain limited incentives designed to give the slave a motive for working efficiently. Again, however, this hardly attests to a humanitarian attitude on Varro's part, but rather a keen concern with efficiency and the most expedient means of gaining the desired goal.³³

Varro provides ample evidence of a subtle current of constructive reform totally in the context of large-scale landowning. He undoubtedly appreciated the need for definite correctives in the agricultural system, but his aim was hardly reactionary; he sought rather to maintain and improve upon the status quo.

Though Vergil began the composition of the Georgics only a year after the publication of the De Re Rustica, political, social, and economic conditions had deteriorated rapidly since the dramatic date of Varro's treatise. Rome had seen another civil war, a dreadful contest between Pompey and Caesar, from which Caesar had emerged supreme, only to be brutally murdered in 44 B.C. His death involved Rome and all of Italy in still another series of bloody altercations; for a time, Caesar's heir, Octavian, Antony and Lepidus shared power and set about quieting republican resistance. In 42 B.C. Brutus and Cassius were defeated at Philippi, but civil war continued. The most pressing threat came from Sextus Pompey who held Sicily, and was effectively starving Rome by intercepting grain supplies from Africa.

³³R.R. I.xvii

The agricultural economy in Italy was profoundly affected by events following the death of Caesar. Closely allied with powerful financiers and the landed gentry, Caesar had, for the most part, solved his obligations to his veterans in the provinces, and had not attempted a major re-distribution of land in Italy.³⁴ His avengers, however, were faced with the problem of finding the necessary capital to wage war, and after victory, of securing a reward for their legions.

There resulted a series of confiscations and bloody proscriptions designed to raise capital. The rich, regardless of rank, were the targets.³⁵ For the first time, Italy was forced to pay the cost of civil war in money and land, since the provinces of the West were exhausted, and the East was held by Republicans. For the settlement of the veterans after the war, the Triumvirs set apart eighteen of the wealthiest cities in Italy.³⁶ It fell to Octavian upon his return from Philippi to arrange for the settlement of 100,000 veterans over Italy, not without fierce resistance from the dispossessed. Later, after the capture of Sicily and the disbanding of a further 20,000 veterans Octavian adopted a policy that was more politic and concentrated on allotments in the provinces rather than in Italy.³⁷

³⁴Ronald Syme, The Roman Revolution (Reprint of 1st ed.; Oxford: 1939), p. 194.

³⁵Syme, The Roman Revolution, pp. 195-6.

³⁶Syme, The Roman Revolution, p. 196. Appian Bella Civilia 4.3.10. Among them Syme cites Capua, Rhegium, Venusia, Beneventum, Nuceria, Ariminum, and Vibo Valentia.

³⁷Syme, The Roman Revolution, p. 233.

A poet in a tumultuous age, Vergil emerges in his first 'published' work, the Eclogues, as an artist who is vitally involved in the political turmoil surrounding him. In each of his pastoral poems the question of personal liberty, and especially the freedom of the poet to create, is a crucial issue. The forces which threaten that liberty are closely scrutinized. M. C. J. Putnam suggests that the Eclogues represent a "poetry of ideas dealing with the writer and mankind at large, the confrontation of the essentially stable life of the free imagination and the forces of history."³⁸

This is especially true in Eclogues I and IX where Vergil uses the poetic world of refined shepherds and spontaneous rustic song as a vehicle for protest against the disastrous consequences of civil war and confiscation of private property. In Eclogue IX we are presented with the conversation of two poet-shepherds who are leaving Mantua, not of their own volition, but because their land has been occupied:

O Lycida, vivi pervenimus, advena nostri
 (quod numquam veriti sumus) ut possessor agelli
 diceret: 'haec mea sunt; veteres migrate coloni.'
 nunc victi, tristes, quoniam fors omnia versat,
 hos illi (quod nec vertat bene) mittimus haedos. (2-6)

The only ray of hope in an otherwise pessimistic poem is the figure of Menalcas who somehow will preserve the pastoral freedom; but as the poem progresses, the likelihood of successful intervention on the part of Menalcas becomes increasingly remote. The future of pastoral song, of poetry itself, is seriously questioned as Moeris' creative ability

³⁸Virgil's Pastoral Art. Studies in the Eclogues (Princeton, 1970), p. 15. I have found this study by Putnam quite stimulating and a source of inspiration for my own study of the Georgics.

deteriorates by degrees to the point that he is no longer able even to remember old songs, let alone create new ones:

Omnia fert aetas, animum quoque. saepe ego longos
cantando puerum memini me condere soles.
nunc oblita mihi tot carmina, vox quoque Moerim
iam fugit ipsa: lupi Moerim videre priores.
sed tamen ista satis referet tibi saepe Menalcas. (51-5)

The ninth Eclogue proposes very little hope for the future of poetry in a world dominated by civil war and the rule of force.

Similarly, Eclogue I presents the problem even more starkly through the contrasting situations of Tityrus and Meliboeus. Tityrus sits in the shade of the beech tree, comfortable and confident of protection from the new 'god' at Rome:

O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit.
namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram
saeper tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti. (6-10)

Meliboeus, on the other hand, has lost his freedom and is being forced into exile:

At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,
pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae veniemus Oaxen
et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.
en umquam patrios longo post tempore finis
pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen,
post aliquot, mea regna, videns mirabor aristas?
impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit,
barbarus has segetes, en quo discordia civis
produxit miseros: his nos consevimus agros! (64-72)

The soldier too is a product of Rome and his presence on the land has seriously disrupted agricultural harmony and curtailed the freedom of its inhabitants. With a perceptive critical insight, Vergil exposes the double aspects of Rome: the soldier represents the devastating encroachment of civil war on the countryside, and the disorder and suffering imposed

by the confiscation of land. On the other hand, Rome has the power to confer "otium" on a privileged few, yet such freedom, dependent as it is on the whim of a ruler has destroyed the essence of the pastoral ideal. Though the problem of freedom at first appears very simple-- Tityrus knows freedom from exile, while Meliboeus does not, as the poem progresses, the issue becomes more complex. The freedom of Tityrus acquires a less beneficent aspect, and the power of government over creative expression is exposed. Putnam offers the following judgment:

It is a major accomplishment of Virgil in the first Eclogue to reflect, in one person, this divergence between Rome as it might be, all powerful but benign, and the realities of a harsh and gloomy context where traditional values are collapsing and where the realm of the spirit is enslaved, where civil discord destroys the 'pietas' men bear the gods, themselves and their land.³⁹

These particular Eclogues have been the source of considerable speculation concerning the private aspects of Vergil's life and his own fate in the series of confiscations which befell northern Italy after Philippi. Vergil was born on October 15, 70 B.C. at Andes, just south-east of Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul.⁴⁰ The family estate is now considered to have been rather large and his family important residents of Mantua, descended from the Etruscan founders of the city. Cisalpine Gaul was a very fertile region, producing wheat, grapes and olives and offering excellent pasturage for sheep and cattle.⁴¹

³⁹Virgil's Pastoral Art, p. 79.

⁴⁰K. Wellesley, "Virgil's Home," Weiner Studien. LXXIX (1966), 330-50 argues that the birthplace of Vergil was actually Banded and that the family farm was located at Montaldo.

⁴¹White, Roman Farming, pp. 67-68. Alexander G. McKay, Vergil's Italy (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1970), in his chapter "Cisalpine Gaul and Lombardy" pp. 55-77 offers a full discussion of the area where Vergil spent his boyhood and the important aspects of his biography.

In Vergil's day the area showed a mixed character: small independent farms interspersed with large ranches, since the Apennines offered ample opportunities for summer grazing. Consequently Vergil brings to the Georgics a knowledge of farming operations and perhaps practical experience as well; moreover, in the Georgics he displays an awareness of the difficulties and the simple pleasures of rustic life, and a sympathy with the farmer which must be traced to his early years in Mantua.

When Vergil was actually composing the Georgics it seems unlikely that he still possessed his Mantuan acreage. As a reward for their service at Philippi, Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian had promised their soldiers farmland in Italy. Among the eighteen cities marked for confiscation was Cremona, a neighbouring town of Mantua, and when Cremona's territory proved to be insufficient, the confiscations spread to Mantua and Vergil's ancestral farm.

The bitterness and struggles connected with these confiscations and the personal loss of the poet are reflected in Eclogues I and IX. There are ancient traditions which suggest that the Vergilian estate was later restored through the mediation of influential friends. The problem of identification of the figures mentioned in the Eclogues and the actual outcome of the struggle is a complex and controversial issue which we cannot pursue in this chapter. The evidence of the second Georgic however, (vv. 198-9) where Vergil again alludes to the confiscations, and describes his native Mantua as "infelix", together with the fact that Vergil later maintained residences at Rome, Nola and Naples, but

nowhere in northern Italy, suggest that appeals were unsuccessful and the ancestral home was lost forever.⁴²

With so pronounced an inclination toward social comment in the Eclogues, it seems to me not unreasonable to expect a similar involvement in contemporary political reality in the Georgics. Moreover, the quiet appeal for rehabilitation of the agricultural system subtly but positively suggested in Varro's treatise undoubtedly must have encouraged Vergil to offer his own message of reconstruction and redemption. In the Georgics, however, although Vergil relies heavily on Varronian material for the factual content of his treatise, he is not concerned with the organization of a specific farm unit. No doubt the full discussion of farming by Varro deterred Vergil from presenting a more extensive discussion of agriculture. Contrary to the practice of Cato and Varro, we find no definite specifications as to ideal size, location, and management of the farm area. Moreover, in the Georgics, where we might expect to find specific references to particular areas of Italy, either the northern Cisalpine regions where Vergil spent his boyhood, or the southern Campanian environs where he was composing the Georgics, Vergil has rarely provided a definite geographic locale for his agricultural preoccupations within the broad confines of the Italian land.

We know that by this time the landowner had two possible alternatives open to him for the management of his land: he could lease all or

⁴²McKay, Vergil's Italy, pp. 63-66 supports this conclusion and discusses more fully the evidence of the Eclogues in the matter of intervention and appeals.

part of the estate to tenant-farmers, "coloni", or rely entirely on slave labour, leaving the over-all direction of the estate to a steward, himself a slave, but presumably more capable.⁴³ Only in rare cases would the landowner actually reside on the estate, and even then his participation in the actual running of the farm would most likely be minimal.

Throughout the Georgics, on the other hand, Vergil has avoided consideration of the thorny question of land tenure. He often addresses his remarks to "coloni", a substantive linked to the verb "colere", and used in the general sense of cultivator with no political distinction between independent farmer, and tenant-farmer attached to a wealthy landowner. In a similar fashion he refers elsewhere to "pastores", "aratores" and "agricolae" without clearly indicating their status as free men or slaves.⁴⁴ As a poet and a philosopher Vergil saw in the farmer a representative of every man struggling to come to grips with the problems of his existence, and arrive at some measure of success in an age when political corruption and chaos made that struggle even more difficult. The fact remains and continues to prove extremely frustrating to commentators that Vergil nowhere makes reference to slavery, a feature of the Italian rustic scene since Rome's earliest days. Heitland concludes that the omission is a deliberate one, conditioned by the subtle but persuasive influence of Maecenas.⁴⁵ Slavery was no longer the neutral issue it once

⁴³White, Roman Farming, p. 40.

⁴⁴Heitland, Agricola, p. 227.

⁴⁵Heitland, Agricola, p. 237.

had been, but now represented an embarrassing problem which bristled with difficulties and carried troublesome associations since the slave uprising led by Spartacus.

In his analysis of the conception of the Georgics, Wilkinson, like Heitland, views Vergil's neglect of the topic of slavery as a significant and deliberate omission. In his view, we are to find its source in the poet's own strong belief in the redemptive value of personal labour rather than any promptings or suggestions by Maecenas.⁴⁶

Crucial to the issue, here, is another important consideration, the audience for whom Vergil intended his treatise. At the end of his impressive invocation to book I, Vergil appeals to Octavian to aid him in his task of bringing assistance to the unfortunate rustic:

da facilem cursum, atque audacibus adnue coeptis,
ignarosque viae mecum miseratus agrestis
ingredere et votis iam nunc adsuesce vocari. (I.40-2)

Throughout his poem, the insistence on the value of personal labour and attention to solitary figures like the old Corycian gardener (IV.125 ff.) appear to suggest a return to a system of small-scale farming. Certainly, in the De Re Rustica Varro implied the continuing existence of at least a few independent farmers, though no specific details as to their number or location were forthcoming. The independent small farm remained a characteristic feature of the Po Valley, an area with which Vergil was particularly familiar, and was also found in less accessible mountain areas

⁴⁶L. P. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil A Critical Survey (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 54-5.

where Nature herself dictated the size of the plot and the mode of farming; moreover, the southern coast of Italy, deeply imbued with Greek tradition, still favoured the older, simpler methods of farming.⁴⁷

The Campanian region where Vergil was actually composing his agricultural treatise still supported a number of small farms (especially the area of Capua) managed by "coloni", independent farmers to whom small parcels of land had been allotted by the state. Certainly Vergil was not directing his remarks to these few survivors of the old Roman farming class; they were already experiencing first-hand the back-breaking personal labour which the poet was putting forth as an ideal. Moreover, should these farmers require direction (and one doubts that they would), Vergil's selective and less than exhaustive treatment of some aspects of agriculture would hardly fill the need.

In addition, Vergil, who emerges from the Eclogues as a poet keenly perceptive of the precarious future of the small independent farmer and the changing character of the Italian landscape, would most certainly be aware of the extent to which large landowners exercised control over most of Italy's arable land. Yet the evidence of the Eclogues, the painful realization of the agonizing displacement caused by land confiscation certainly does not support any programme of re-distribution of land and a reversal to the system of the glorious past, in spite of the emphasis on personal labour which we find in the Georgics. Even if

⁴⁷Frank, An Economic History of Rome, p. 327.

Vergil in more idealistic moments envisioned a return to the simple, pious life of old, the bloody events of contemporary history with which he was all too familiar forced upon the poet a more realistic assessment of the cost in strife and Roman blood which a complete re-distribution of land would demand.

The fact remains that the poet of the Georgics, though vitally concerned with the future of Italy, was not involved in the technicalities of land-tenure or, for that matter, in the actual running of a farm. This misinterpretation of the Georgics has been foisted on contemporary critics as the result of the enthusiasm of ancient agronomists for citing Vergil as an authority on technical agricultural matters. Columella regarded Vergil with a deep reverence and incorporated more than fifty citations from the Georgics and intended the tenth book of his De Re Rustica as a tribute to Vergil. Occasionally Vergil's advice on a particular practice was challenged by Seneca or the elder Pliny, but this difference of opinion served only to establish the Georgics more firmly as an agricultural treatise.

There is a definite didactic purpose in the poetic scheme of the Georgics, but a didacticism totally alien to the traditional view that Vergil intended his treatise to be an actual guide to farming. Vergil's preoccupation is Italy and man; he deplores the disruption of harmony through civil strife and ruthless confiscation of land which he had witnessed. In a sense, the preoccupation in the Georgics is the same as in Eclogues I and IX, though he offers a broader philosophic design in the Georgics and ultimately admits a more optimistic vision.

With his insistence on the values of hard personal labour and the celebration of the simple rustic ideal he offers a poetic vision of reconstruction for troubled Italy, a vision which has both moral and political implications. His message is intended for all Italians and especially that group of sophisticated gentlemen farmers who had lost touch with the basic and simple rhythm of existence. Yet, in a very special sense, the treatise has been written for Octavian, the one man who is capable of bringing that dream to fruition.

Following the invocation of Georgic I, where in a very flattering association Octavian is linked with the divine benefactors of agriculture, and future divinity is assured for him, Vergil addresses him directly with a very simple but poignant plea:

da facilem cursum atque audacibus adnue coeptis,
ignarosque viae mecum atque miseratus agrestis
ingredere et votis iam nunc adsuesce vocari. (40-2)

He asks him to share his own compassion for the rustics, men who are "ignaros", surely not uncertain of the manner in which to farm their land, but rather anxious for the future and desperately in need of political and personal security. Though divinity is to be a future reward for Octavian, Vergil asks him to accept in the present the responsibilities of a benefactor.

The Vergilian vision becomes more sharply defined in the pessimistic conclusion of book I where Vergil exposes the forces of anarchy and war which are plaguing Rome. The chaos is clearly visible in the agricultural world; foreign lands are fertilized with Roman blood and Mother Earth accepts spears, helmets, and bones in place of seed:

nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
 Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.
 scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
 agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro
 exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,
 aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis
 grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris. (491-7)

The book closes as it began with a recognition of Octavian's singular position as saviour, although here Vergil strengthens his request with a plea to the sacred divinities of Rome and Italy to allow the young benefactor to ease the troubled conditions:

di patrii Indigetes et Romule Vestaque mater,
 quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia servas,
 hunc saltem everso iuvenem succurrere saeclo
 ne prohibete. (498-501)

Amid the constant war and carnage Vergil deplores the loss of the old agrarian pride and the tragic neglect of fertile land:

tot bella per orbem,
 tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro
 dignus honos, squalent abductis arva colonis,
 et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem. (505-8)

Mention of "abductis colonis" must surely contain a reference to those farmers forcefully evicted from their land to make room for veterans of military service; moreover, reference to the neglect of the land and the transformation of agricultural implements into weapons of war might well reflect the unsuitability of many of these war veterans for the agricultural life; when an opportunity for military service presented itself, they willingly abandoned the land they had been given.

In spite of concentrated efforts on the part of many critics to make the Georgics a propaganda statement for the Augustan back-to-the-land movement, historical facts themselves clearly establish the Georgics

as a personal rather than an official vision. For much of the period during which Vergil was composing the Georgics, Octavian was actively involved in subduing his political opponents, first Sextus Pompey, and then Antony. If he had a programme of agrarian reform in mind, he was hardly in a position to carry it out.

When he finally emerged as victor after the battle of Actium and sole ruler of the Roman world, he perceived all too clearly the need for regeneration and reconstruction of Italy itself. His initial attempt at moral reform through legislation was a law designed to put an end to adulterous relationships and associations with courtesans; this met with such bitter protest and opposition that it was hastily withdrawn in 28 B.C., and shelved for a decade when it received stronger expression.⁴⁸ Early in his Principate, Augustus came to rely on the literary promulgation of the ideal of "Itala virtus": the primitive peasant values of moral rectitude and frugal self-sufficiency. Yet the return to a vanished past remained only an ideal; Augustus realized that the revival of small-scale farming would be anachronistic and unfeasible, and totally alien to his desire of preserving at least the facade of the status quo.

Syme suggests:

As in politics, so also in economic life, there could be no reaction. None was intended. No thought of mulcting the rich men of Italy, curbing the growth of their fortunes or dividing up their monstrous estates for the benefit of the deserving and Roman poor, whose peasant ancestors had won glory and empire for Rome.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Syme, The Roman Revolution, p. 443.

⁴⁹Syme, The Roman Revolution, p. 452.

Yet in the post-Actium period, there was one significant change of policy by Octavian. Following his victory he disbanded a great many of his legions and settled his veterans on land allotments which he bought rather than confiscated. In his written account of his achievements, Augustus emphasizes that he was the first to solve the problem of obligation to veterans in this way.⁵⁰ The fact that he departed from the practice of confiscation which he himself had favoured earlier suggests that he had come to appreciate the disruptive effect of violent seizure of land and desired to maintain at least a semblance of stability in rural areas. This plan was initiated by Octavian after Actium in 30 B.C. by which time the Georgics were nearly completed. It seems to me not unreasonable to find in Vergil's agricultural treatise a significant influence upon Octavian's change of policy.

⁵⁰Res Gestae III.16.

CHAPTER TWO

VARRONIAN ELEMENTS IN GEORGIC III

In assessing the position of beast and man in Georgic III, Liebeschuetz has recognized this book as a treatise that can be read at various levels. Certainly it is a technical handbook providing some information on animal husbandry, "very selective in its subject matter, the sections on the various animals complete in various degrees, but selected in such a way that if the book is taken as a whole, each important task is treated at least once."¹ Vergil's principal source for the technical aspects of his subject is Varro,² who had devoted the second book of his agricultural treatise, the De Re Rustica, to a consideration of animal husbandry. A parallel study of the material presented by Varro and later echoed in the third Georgic offers the Vergilian scholar an excellent opportunity to grasp Vergil's design and purpose: we cannot hope to find clearly defined parallels or strong verbal reminiscences of Varronian material in Vergil's account. The poet's own artistic flair and the poetic medium demand a different approach, and Vergil was not content merely to copy and versify Varronian material.³

¹"Beast and Man in the Georgics", Greece and Rome, N.S. XII (1965), 75.

²L. A. S. Jermyn, "Vergil's Agricultural Lore", Greece and Rome XVIII (1949), 50.

³Jermyn, "Vergil's Agricultural Lore", p. 49.

Moreover, the omissions and adaptations introduced by Vergil are more valuable for us as significant clues to Vergil's intention in writing the Georgics.

Consistent with his desire to provide a thorough exposition of the system of large-scale farming in the De Re Rustica, Varro has imposed a rigid schematic arrangement on his discussion of animal husbandry in book II. Continuing the dialogue method initiated in book I, Varro has divided the subject of animal husbandry into three broad classifications: "origo", "dignitas", and "ars".⁴ The discussion of the origin and dignity of stock raising is handled by Varro himself,⁵ who begins by introducing an evolutionary theory of man and his relationship with animals. With the end of the golden age of spontaneous production by Mother Earth, man began to exercise dominion over the varied species of wild animals in order to maintain himself. In Varro's view, sheep, naturally docile creatures, were the first animals to be domesticated; the current system of interaction of crop and animal husbandry represents the culmination of a long period of development.⁶

⁴R.R.II.i.2.

⁵R.R.II.i.3-10.

⁶R.R.II.i.5:

Tertio denique gradu a vita pastorali ad agri culturam descenderunt, in qua ex duobus gradibus superioribus retinuerunt multa, et quo descenderant, ibi processerunt longe, dum ad nos pervenirent.

The discussion of the dignity of animal husbandry is enhanced by erudition and the workings of an encyclopaedist's mind. As proof of the antiquity and reverence associated with the raising of stock Varro provides linguistic evidence in both the Greek and the Latin tongue, mythological allusion, testimony from astronomers who distinguished the various regions of the zodiac with the names of domestic animals, and the numerous geographic areas which owe their names to goats, cattle, and horses.

A consideration of the "ars", the science of animal husbandry, passes to Scrofa (II.i.11-28) who presents the general outline of topics to be covered by various speakers throughout the rest of the dialogue. Scrofa introduces the primary incentive, the hope of monetary gain, which will direct attitudes and practices with respect to stock raising throughout the presentation.

Initially, the topic of animal husbandry admits three main divisions, each of which can be sub-divided again into three smaller units; we have the topic of smaller animals, sheep, goats and swine, followed by a discussion of larger animals, oxen, asses, and horses. Finally, a third class must be considered, the mules, dogs, and herdsmen who themselves offer little direct possibility for profit, but are kept to insure a maximum return for the farmer's investment in stock. The farmer who is interested in keeping livestock has two principal preoccupations, the assembly and maintenance of the herd "*pecoris parandi ac pascendi*"; efficient assembly of a herd demands knowledge of age (*aetas*), species (*cognitio formae*), breed (*seminium*), and law of purchase (*ius in parando*).⁷

⁷R.R.II.i.13-16.

Once the herd is assembled, the farmer must undertake proper maintenance--consideration of pasturage (*pastio*), breeding (*fetura*), feeding (*nutricatus*), and health (*sanitas*).⁸ Finally he must take care to keep a profitable number of animals.

These nine criteria are strictly applied to the consideration of each of the nine varieties of animals. The remainder of the treatise is rigidly divided into no less than eighty-one segments.

Because of special considerations, the topic of mules and herdsmen presents some difficulty and threatens to disrupt the rigid schematization suggested at the outset. The problem is anticipated, and the solution offers some interesting speculation regarding Varro's attitude toward the human participants in the agricultural scheme. Atticus questions the validity of a nine-fold division for mules and herdsmen, since breeding and the bearing of young are not considerations in the discussion. He immediately retracts part of his statement, and limits his objection only to the case of mules, and admits human participants in his original scheme.⁹

Within the framework of the dialogue, Varro blandly accepts the assessment of Atticus concerning the herdsmen and considers the problem presented by mules. A brief but lively discussion ensues concerning the

⁸R.R.II.i.16-24.

⁹R.R.II.i.26:

Sed do etiam in hominibus posse novenarium retineri numerum, quod, in hibernis habent in villis mulieres, quidam etiam in aestivis, et id pertinere putant, quo facilius ad greges pastores retineant, et puerperio familiam faciunt maiorem et rem pecuariam fructuosiore.

ability of mules to produce offspring (ii.27), while the association of human and animal conception is silently approved. This singular lack of response is symptomatic of the general attitude in Varro's treatise; little distinction is drawn between the human participants in the agricultural drama and the beasts of the land.

However, Varro's treatise shows a marked advance on Cato's presentation on the issue of slave labour; Cato unabashedly regarded slaves as human chattel on a par with the ox; Varro, on the other hand, recommended more humane treatment, the bestowal of certain privileges on worthy slaves to ensure their loyalty. We must bear in mind, however, that Varro's actions are motivated by pragmatic rather than humanitarian considerations; he recognized that labourers who were offered profitable personal incentives worked more willingly than those who toiled only to escape punishment.

Scrofa's exposé on the science of animal husbandry concludes the programmatic outline for Varro's treatise. The nine point division is rigidly followed in the discussion of each of the nine varieties of domestic creatures necessary to successful stock raising. Some aspects are treated more exhaustively than others as the demands of particular species dictate; yet the external framework outlined by Scrofa is consistently maintained. Varro relies on the literary device of dialogue with its change of speakers and capacity for digressions and pleasantries to lend variety and interest in the second book of the De Re Rustica.

In his consideration of the sources for the technical material presented in the Georgics, Jermyn suggests that the general arrangement

of the Varronian treatise influenced Vergil in his plan for the Georgics.¹⁰

Vergil introduces his poem with a short programmatic statement:

Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram
 vertere, Maecenas, ulmisque adiungere vitis
 conveniat, quae cura boum, qui cultus habendo
 sit pecori, apibus quanta experientia parcis,
 hinc canere incipiam. (I.1-5)

Certainly the Vergilian preoccupations outlined here and their order of presentation correspond to the general plan of the De Re Rustica. Vergil, however, has devoted four books to the exposition of his material, while Varro presents only three. Moreover, the Vergilian account is controlled by a firm principle of selectivity exercised judiciously by the poet. Apiculture, for instance, the sole technical concern of Georgic IV, represents only one aspect of the specialized operations of "pastio villatica", the raising of gourmet delicacies for the tables of the rich, suggested by Varro as a lucrative enterprise.

In method, as well, the two accounts are quite dissimilar. Vergil has not followed the rigid scheme and the contrived dialogue employed by Varro as a vehicle for his didacticism. The technical discussion proceeds simply and seemingly independent of the poet. His remarks are directed to an unnamed participant in the agricultural drama:

Seu quis Olympiacae miratus praemia palmae
 pascit equos, seu quis fortis ad aratra iuencos,
 corpora praecipue matrum legat. (49-51)

The focus in this third book of the Georgics is definitely on the animal representatives of the agrarian world, while man remains in the

¹⁰"Vergil's Agricultural Lore", p. 67.

background, partially eclipsed, yet still vitally implicated in the birth and death agonies of the world around him. It is significant that Vergil introduces man prominently in the two powerful scenes of destruction: in the first, like animals wild and domestic, man falls victim to the savage fury of "amor"; in the dramatic description of plague with which the book concludes, the role of man progresses from sympathetic observer to actual victim. He is first introduced briefly, grieving at the death of his ox (vv. 517-9); as a consequence of the perversion of nature, man's role in the agrarian scheme is similarly perverted and he is forced to assume the burdens of the draught animals (vv. 534-6); finally he himself is touched by the pollution (vv. 563-6).

The relationship of man and animals, the origin and dignity of animal husbandry, is not given a formalized discussion in the Vergilian account as it was by Varro. Vergil does not introduce etymological evidence and learned testimonia to establish the importance of the bond between the farmer and his animals. Rather, the union is presented as an emotional one with a particular mystery and permanence. The scene at the close of Georgic III is an excellent example of the rapport between man and beast in Vergil's scheme. When the plough ox has fallen victim to disease, both the farmer and the other ox lament the death of their partner in labour:

it tristis arator
maerentem abiungens fraterna morte iuencum,
atque opere in medio defixa reliquit aratra. (517-9)

The plough is abandoned in the field, mute testimony to the disruption of the rhythm of agrarian existence.

In his consideration of animal husbandry, Varro emphasized the special prominence of cattle in Italian life. He admonishes Vaccius to exercise caution in his discussion of cattle, and points out that Italy traditionally is said to have acquired its name from the word for oxen:

Vide quid agas, inquam, Vacci.
 Nam bos in pecuaria maxima debet esse auctoritate,
 praesertim in Italia, quae a bubus nomen habere sit
 existimata. Graecia enim antiqua, ut scribit Timaeus,
 tauros vocabat italos, a quorum multitudine et
 pulchritudine et fetu vitulorum Italiam dixerunt.
 Alii scripserunt, quod ex Sicilia Hercules persecutus
 sit eo nobilem taurum, qui diceretur italus. Hic
 socius hominum in rustico opere et Cereris minister,
 ab hoc antiqui manus ita abstineri voluerunt, ut
 capite sanxerint, siquis occidisset. (II.v.3-4)

The same current of reverence and respect for the "bos" is infused in the Georgics though the Vergilian expression is more subtle. The ox is consistently portrayed as the partner of man in his rustic labours; he joins with man in the bitter struggle that has been ordained by Jupiter:

Nec tamen, haec cum sint hominumque boumque labores
 versando terram experti, nihil improbus anser
 Strymoniaeque grues et amaris intiba fibris
 officiunt aut umbra nocet. pater ipse colendi
 haud facilem esse viam voluit... (I.118-22)

The "sata laeta" destroyed by Nature's fury are the product of his travail as well:

ruit arduus aether
 et pluvia ingenti sata laeta boumque labores
 diluit; (I.324-5).

Moreover, the ox in Vergil's scheme acquires a very special significance as a symbol of continuity, the perpetuation of the peaceful agrarian existence. For Vergil the rustic life still bears traces of the primeval purity of the Golden Age and the lowing of cattle contributes to the idyllic atmosphere:

at segura quies et nescia fallere vita,
 dives opum variarum, at latis otia fundis,
 speluncae vivique lacus, at frigida tempe
 mugitusque boum mollesque sub arbore somni
 non absunt; illic saltus ac lustra ferarum
 et patiens operum exiguoque adsueta iuventus,
 sacra deum sanctique patres; extrema per illos
 Iustitia excedens terris vestigia fecit. (II.467-74)

Again, at the conclusion to book II, as Vergil contrasts the peaceful, uncluttered life of the farmer with the fast, discontented pace of the city-dweller, the bull emerges as an integral feature of the agrarian scene, the ever-faithful companion of man, and as much a symbol of continuity as the farmer's little grandchildren:

agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro:
 hic anni labor, hinc patriam parvosque nepotes
 sustinet, hinc armenta boum meritosque iuencos. (513-5)

This special association for the bull is not a new concept introduced in the Georgics, but originates in the Eclogues. In the politically charged statement of Eclogue I, a sharp contrast is drawn between the dispossessed Meliboeus, who is forced to leave his home and wander as an exile, and the more fortunate Tityrus, who continues to enjoy a life of ease and song. Meliboeus' animals are suffering; one of his she-goats abandons her new-born kids, a dramatic representation of the denial of

hope for the future:¹¹

en ipse capellas
 protinus aeger ago; hanc etiam vix, Tityre, duco.
 hic inter densas corylos modo namque gemellos,
 spem gregis, a! silice in nuda conixa reliquit. (12-15)

In sharp contrast to Meliboeus' plight, Tityrus sings beneath the shade of a beech tree, while his animals, notably cattle, are allowed to graze:

ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
 ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti. (9-10)

The role of the "bos" or "taurus" as a symbol of the continuity of the rustic ideal is explicitly drawn later in the Eclogue as Tityrus echoes the message of his benefactor:

'pascit ut ante boves, pueri, summittite tauros,'¹² (45)

¹¹In his work, Virgil's Pastoral Art, Putnam emphasizes Vergil's use of the landscape and its inhabitants to express his anxieties about the future. The contrast between the fortunate Tityrus and the dispossessed Meliboeus is especially significant (p.31). The issue at stake in Eclogue I and in the whole pastoral collection, in Putnam's view, is the preservation of the freedom to create in a world of political turmoil which threatens to destroy it (p. 9).

In the Georgics, though Vergil is concerned with more practical, mundane considerations, he is still involved with perpetuating the Roman ideal of order and stability, and again uses the landscape and its inhabitants to express that message.

¹²Putnam, Virgil's Pastoral Art, p. 25 emphasizes that since this "otium" is unique to Tityrus and dependent on the continued goodwill of the benefactor, it actually represents a very serious threat to Tityrus' freedom to create. Nevertheless, on the surface, it does appear as a guarantee of continuity.

In the Georgics, moreover, a striking testimonial to the simple nobility and purity of the "taurus" accompanies the description of his death:

quid labor aut benefacta iuvant? quid vomere terras
invertisse gravis? atqui non Massica Bacchi
munera, non illis epulae nocuere repostae:
frondibus et victu pascuntur simplicis herbae,
pocula sunt fontes liquidi atque exercita cursu
flumina, nec somnos abruptit salubris. (III.525-30)

It is significant that the "taurus" has died in the performance of his rustic task. As a symbol of the continuity of the agrarian life, his death signals a very grave danger for the continuation of the bucolic ideal.

There is a danger inherent in emphasizing the Golden Age aspects of Vergil's agricultural scheme: we must not lose sight of the fact that, in spite of the tranquillity and security which Nature offers man in close communion with the land, the agricultural life demands very strenuous labour from the farmer. The first book of the Georgics establishes very definitely that man must wage an incessant battle against deterioration and decline. The motivation for the struggle is clearly defined as a mission imposed by Jupiter himself:

pater ipse colendi
haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda
nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno. (121-4)

"Curis" and the association with the divine design represents a very significant concept for the Georgics: as it appears in this theodicy passage, it is practical in application and tone, signalling the obligations which the farmer must perform, and conveying the sense of anxiety

about the future which accompanies those duties. This is the primary connotation of the word "cura" in the poem and it recurs often.

Significantly, it occurs more frequently in books I and III where Vergil is especially preoccupied with the difficult struggle imposed on man.¹³

We recall that in the opening statement of the Georgics, Vergil used the term "cura" to signal the duties and demands of animal husbandry:

quae cura boum, qui cultus habendo
sit pecori, apibus quanta experientia parcis,
hinc canere incipiam. (I. 3-5)

Throughout Georgic III "cura" appears often as a synonym for the diligent attention and labour which the farmer must devote to his stock.¹⁴ With the use of "cura" Vergil has linked animal husbandry to his divine scheme outlined earlier in his poem and added special dignity and

¹³ In book I, in addition to the theodicy passage, "cura" invested with practical significance, occurs at v. 3, 53, 177, 216, 228, 302.

Though less frequent, it does occur in books II and IV in this same practical sense whenever Vergil wants to emphasize the particularly diligent, concentrated effort a task demands: II.397, 405, 415, 433, 439, and IV.113, 118.

"Cura" is used in a practical, though slightly different sense at IV.178 since the labour is demanded of bees rather than men. Again at IV.531, when Cyrene speaks of the "tristis...curas" of Aristaeus, the substantive "cura" conveys more of the aspect of worry than labour, although the latter should not be discounted since Aristaeus is a hard working farmer.

¹⁴G.III.124, 137, 157, 305, 319, 384, 404. At III.229 "cura" is used in a special sense to convey the determined effort undertaken by the defeated bull to regain his status.

respect to animal husbandry.¹⁵

Varro has given particular prominence to sheep as the first animals to have been domesticated by man. Moreover, they acquire prominence in Italy since Rome traditionally was founded by shepherds.¹⁶

In the Vergilian account, sheep and goats are treated collectively. In the passage in praise of Italy (II.150) and later in the conclusion of the same book where the joys of country life are celebrated (II.525-6), "pecudes" are cited as essential features of the rustic landscape. In book III, this association of the flocks with peaceful idyllic harmony serves to strengthen the disruptive impact of the plague. Yet Vergil does not highlight sheep and goats in the same manner as the horse and the cow: in the case of the former, pathos is aroused by their collective destruction; for the latter, interest centres on the individual.

In choosing the representatives of domestic beasts Vergil has exercised the selectivity which is a regulating principle throughout the Georgics. Of the group of smaller animals discussed by Varro, Vergil

¹⁵There are certain special uses of "cura" in the Georgics which must be noted in the interests of completeness. At IV.345 the term is used in a thoroughly elegiac sense to describe the amorous adventures of Vulcan. At I.17, 26; III. 110, 286, 530, 538; IV.355; "cura" describes intense personal feeling.

¹⁶R.R. II. i. 9:

Romanorum vero populum a pastoribus esse ortum
quis non dicit? quis Faustulum nescit pastorem
fuisse nutricium, qui Romulum et Remum educavit?
Non ipsos quoque fuisse pastores obtinebit, quod
Parilibus potissimum condidere urbem?

introduces only sheep and goats. Similarly, of the larger domestic animals, cattle and horses receive the poet's attention, while asses are completely ignored. The third peripheral group, mules, dogs, and herdsmen, is almost totally ignored: Vergil devotes only ten lines to the subject of dogs and alludes to herdsmen only indirectly.

Similarly, the nine criteria for assembly and maintenance of a herd emphasized by Varro are not introduced in Vergil's account. As one would expect, in a poetic treatise where specific details concerning the location and size of the farm are not provided, the Varronian pre-occupation with the optimum number of animals to be maintained and the legal questions involved in the purchasing of stock are not of primary importance to Vergil.

The primary concern in the first half of Georgic III (vv. 49-208) is breeding. Age, breed, and knowledge of species, considerations stressed by Varro, are also important for Vergil since they serve to regulate successful, controlled breeding. A certain degree of variety is introduced as Vergil treats the larger animals as a single unit, allowing the cow to stand representative of the female principle, and the horse of the male principle in the creative act. In the description of controlled breeding, when passion is directed toward a constructive end, the maintenance of the herd, only the cow and the stallion are mentioned. Later in the impressive description of the destructive fury of uncontrolled passion, the bull and the mare represent the larger domestic animals. Vergil has skillfully combined variety, economy, and balance in his account.

As he turns to the discussion of smaller domestic animals (vv. 295ff.),

Vergil again varies his approach. Sheep and goats are introduced as representatives of the rustic world. Both species require more attention than cattle and horses but reward the farmer's efforts with an abundant supply of wool and milk. This quiet reciprocal relationship contains the essence of the simple rustic ideal envisaged by Vergil. The manner in which Vergil treats the aspect of health is especially significant: the valiant attempt of the "pastor" to maintain a positive programme of preventive medicine is dramatically undercut by the sweeping devastation caused by the plague. As in the earlier consideration of "amor", attempts by the farmer to maintain control are vitiated by the onslaught of destructive, uncontrollable forces.

49-71: Choice of the Dam

Appearance

Varro De Re Rustica II.v.7-9:

ut sint bene compositae, ut integris membris,
 oblongae, amplae, nigrantibus cornibus, latis frontibus,
 oculis magnis et nigris, pilosis auribus, compressis malis
 subsimae, ne gibberae, spina leviter remissa, apertis naribus,
 labris subnigris, cervicibus crassis ac longis, a collo palea
 demissa, corpore bene costato, latis umeris, bonis clunibus,
 codam profusam usque ad calces ut habeant, inferiorem partem
 frequentibus pilis sub crispam, cruribus potius minoribus rectis,
 genibus eminulis distantibus inter se, pedibus non latis,
 neque ingredientibus qui displudantur, nec cuius unguae divarent,
 et cuius ungues sint leves et pares, corium tactu non asperum
 ac durum, colore potissimum nigro, deinde robeo, tertio helvo,
 quarto albo; mollissimus enim hic, ut durissimus primus.

Vergil Georgics III.51-9:

optima torvae
 forma bovis cui turpe caput, cui plurima cervix,
 et crurum tenuis a mento palearia pendent;

tum longo nullus lateri modus: omnia magna,
 pes etiam, et camuris hirtae sub cornibus aures.
 nec mihi displiceat maculis insignis et albo,
 aut iuga detrectans interdumque aspera cornu
 et faciem tauro propior, quaeque ardua tota
 et gradiens ima verit vestigia cauda.

Breeding

Varro II.v.13:

Non minores oportet inire bimas, ut trimae pariant,
 eo melius, si quadrimae. Pleraque pariunt in decem annos,
 quaedam etiam plures.

Vergil III.60-68:

aetas Lucinam iustosque pati hymenaeos
 desinit ante decem, post quattuor incipit annos;
 cetera nec feturae habilis nec fortis aratri.
 interea, superat gregibus dum laeta iuventas,
 solve mares; mitte in Venerem pecuaria primus,
 atque aliam ex alia generando suffice prolem.
 optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
 prima fugit; subeunt morbi tristisque senectus
 et labor, et durae rapit inclementia mortis.

Culling

Varro II.v.17:

Item ut in reliquis gregibus pecuariis dilectus
 quotannis habendus et reiculae reiciundae, quod locum occupant
 earum quae ferre possunt fructus.

Vergil III.69-71:

semper erunt quarum mutari corpora malis:
 semper enim refice ac, ne post amissa requiras,
 ante veni et subolem armento sortire quotannis.

Vergil begins his discussion of animal husbandry with the brood-cow, the ideal female for bearing a line of working oxen. He relies principally on the account provided by Varro, but has been particularly selective in his borrowing. In the description of the physical appearance of the massive beast, we are first presented with a full frontal view:

head, neck, dewlaps. The terse expression, "turpe caput", summarizes a number of details supplied by Varro. Similarly, the impression of massive length and breadth in the region of the neck is conveyed by the single adjective "plurima". Vergil emphasizes the extraordinary length of the dewlaps.

In a brief lateral view, Vergil again stresses the aspect of size. Once more he has created an over-all impression and ignored a number of details which Varro considered important. One particular aspect, however, the size of the feet, has been emphasized by Vergil, and appears to contradict the instruction by Varro, "pedibus non latis". The particular emphasis given to the description in the Georgics, "pes etiam", suggests that Vergil may be offering a corrective of the general view.¹⁷

Similarly, Vergil's cow has curved horns and shaggy ears, whereas Varro mentions only dark horns. It is possible that Vergil may have had a particular breed in mind, although it's difficult to make a positive identification. It may be that Vergil chose to reproduce these details from another source now lost to us.¹⁸ The aspect of colour is skillfully handled by Vergil. Varro has provided a list in order of preference: the black is to be preferred, then the red, and the dun; the white is the least in demand because of its delicate nature. Vergil seems to

¹⁷John Conington, P. Vergili Maronis Opera, ed. Henry Nettleship (revised 4th ed; London, 1881) I, ad G III.55.

¹⁸Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, p. 225 admits this possibility.

have another breed in mind as he mentions a spotted cow;¹⁹ moreover, he uses the physical attribute of colour to introduce a corresponding psychological aspect.

The description of the cow concludes with a rear view of the beast. The Varronian precept on the length of the tail is transformed by Vergil into a vivid picture of the shaggy cow ambling away, its tail dragging on the ground. This pictorial quality is a distinctive feature of Vergil's descriptive art.

In the matter of breeding, Vergil has accepted the Varronian recommendation on the years of four through ten as the ideal period for conception, but has embellished the bald, factual material with special colouring and sympathy. He has transferred to the animal kingdom vocabulary traditionally reserved for human wedlock and maternity.²⁰ "Lucinam" and "hymenaeos" stand in striking contrast to the prerogatives of the animal kingdom, "feturae" and "aratrix".

Moreover, we are provided with a valuable insight into Vergil's poetic design. Throughout the Georgics he frequently imagines himself in the place of even the smallest animals, but he was moved by even

¹⁹Richter, Vergil, Georgica (Munich, 1957) ad III.55 believes that the transition to the topic of colour in the Vergilian account is rather abrupt and suggests that the poet intended another verse between 55 and 56 to relieve the abrupt expression, "nec displiceat". It seems to me, however, that Vergil has reacted to the absolute judgment of Varro, and the "nec displiceat" simply introduces the precept with a varied approach and creates no textual problem.

²⁰T.E. Page, P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica (repr. of 1st ed.; London, 1898), p. 294 observes that in the jurists "iusta aetas" is the age at which a girl can legally be married.

stronger ties of sympathy for the larger domestic beasts, cattle and horses.²¹ Within his discussion of animal conception he attempts to encompass the cruel facts of the human condition and establish a parallel in the lives of animals and men.²² The debilitating effects of old age are juxtaposed to the brief and happy period of youth:

cetura nec feturae habilis nec fortis aratri.
interea, superat gregibus dum laeta iuventas,
solve mares; (62-4)

The simple expression "laeta iuventas" and the expressive verb "superat" are equally suitable for the sprightliness of young animals and the confident exuberance of young men. Finally, the parallel is explicitly drawn:

optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
prima fugit; subeunt morbi tristisque senectus
et labor, et durae rapit inclementia mortis. (66-8)

²¹ Liebeschuetz, "Beast and Man in the Georgics", p. 64.

²² Commentators have reacted rather differently to the passage. Page, *P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica*, p. 297 has not appreciated the significance of the parallel and seems to regard Vergil's reflection as out of place. Büchner, *P. Vergilius Maro, der Dichter der Römer* (Stuttgart, 1956), p. 272, draws attention to the parallel but otherwise offers no comment. Klingner, F., *Virgils Georgica* (Zurich and Stuttgart, 1963), p. 144 has followed a slightly different line of interpretation. He sees in Georgic III the depiction of a complete life cycle, in which the philosophic reflection is significant since it makes Death a corollary of life.

Certainly it is easy to detect a cycle in Georgic III: Vergil treats the cow and the horse at various stages of their life. It seems to me, however, that there is a danger inherent in such a scheme in assigning equal importance to the various stages. Love and death are the principal preoccupations of Vergil in Georgic III.

The original practical suggestion put forward by Varro has been transformed by Vergil into a philosophical reflection on the brevity of life.²³ The phrase "miseris mortalibus" is a distinct echo of Lucretian phraseology, and the pessimistic reflection of these lines is in harmony with Lucretius' appraisal of the human condition.²⁴

A strong eugenic consideration follows the pessimistic assessment of life in Vergil's scheme. The rancher is encouraged to undertake positive action to ensure the continuation of his line of stock. Only the very best should be selected to maintain the optimum strength and quality of the line (vv. 69-71). The repetition of "semper" and the use of several imperatives emphasize the ruthlessness and diligence the task demands. Culling was a common practice in animal husbandry and is advocated by Varro as a worthwhile endeavour in the interests of "fructus". In the Vergilian description, however, culling acquires a sense of urgency and a philosophic implication not found in Varro's account. In the face of continual decline man is obliged to exert himself in a constant struggle to maintain some level of productivity. The pessimistic reflection of Georgic I is re-iterated:

²³Varro admits the possibility of parturition after ten years of age, but Vergil has ignored this remark to strengthen the impact of his philosophic comment.

²⁴Richter, who is usually quite perceptive of Lucretian influences, has missed this particular example and dismissed the passage as a poetic topos. It seems to me, however, that the reminiscence is deliberate and intended by Vergil to lend weight to his philosophic reflection.

sic omnia fatis
 in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri,
 non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
 remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit,
 atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alveus amni. (199-203)

It is important to note, however, that in recognizing the possibility of arresting the process of decline, and insisting upon a programme of positive action, Vergil offers a corrective to Lucretius' negative assessment of progress and the human condition.²⁵ In Georgic III, the negative impact of the sickness and death which are inevitable for individuals is offset by hope for the continuation of the species.

72-122: Choice of the Sire

Occupation

Varro II.vii.15:

Equi quod alii sunt ad rem militarem idonei, alii
 ad vecturam, alii ad admissuram, alii ad cursuram, non item
 sunt spectandi atque habendi.

Vergil III.49-50:

Seu quis Olympiacae miratus praemia palmae
 pascit equos,

Vergil III.72-74:

Nec non et pecori est idem dilectus equino:
 tu modo, quos in spem statuas summittere gentis,
 praecipuum iam inde a teneris impende laborem.

²⁵The view that Lucretius presents a pessimistic vision is challenged by Agnes Kirsopp Michels, "Death and Two Poets", Transactions of the American Philological Association LXXXVI (1955), 160-79 and T. E. Kinsey, "The Melancholy of Lucretius", Arion III (1964), 115-30. Kinsey advances an argument which is even more extreme than Mrs. Michels and ascribes to Lucretius, "an attitude of outrageous optimism". Though I agree that the teachings of Epicurus were a source of great personal joy for Lucretius, I still believe that he viewed the rest of mankind, struggling along without the benefits of Epicurus' message, in an extremely pessimistic light.

Signs of Spirit

Varro II.vii.6:

Equi boni futuri signa, si cum gregalibus in pabulo
 contendit in currendo aliave qua re, quo potior sit; si, cum
 flumen travehundum est gregi, in primis progreditur ac non
 respectat alios.

Vergil III.75-79:

continuo pecoris generosi pullus in arvis
 altius ingreditur et mollia crura reponit;
 primus et ire viam et fluvios temptare minacis
 audet et ignoto sese committere ponti,
 nec vanos horret strepitus.

Physical Attributes

Varro II.vii.4-5:

Equos, ad admissuram quos velis habere, legere oportet amplo
 corpore, formosos, nulla parte corporis inter se non congruenti.
 Qualis futurus sit equus, e pullo coniectari potest: si caput
 habet non magnum nec membris confusis si est, oculis nigris,
 naribus non angustis, auribus applicatis, iuba crebra,
 fusca, sub crispa subtenuibus saetis, implicata in dexterio-
 rem partem cervicis, pectus latum at plenum, umeris latis, ventre
 modico, lumbis deorsum versus pressis, scapulis latis, spina
 maxime duplici, si minus, non extanti, coda ampla sub crispa,
 cruribus rectis aequalibus intro versus potius figuratis,
 genibus rutundis ne magnis, ungulis duris; toto corpore ut
 habeat venas, quae animadverti possint, quod qui huiusce modi
 sit, cum est aeger, ad medendum appositus.

Vergil III.79-83:

illi ardua cervix
 argutumque caput, brevis alvus obesaque terga,
 luxuriatque toris animosum pectus. honesti
 spadices glaucique, color deterrimus albis
 et gilvo.

Vergil III.86-88:

densa iuba, et dextro iactata recumbit in armo;
 at duplex agitur per lumbos spina, cavatque
 tellurem et solido graviter sonat ungula cornu.

Age

Varro II.vii.1-2:

Horum equorum et equarum greges qui habere voluerunt,
 ut habent aliqui in Peloponneso et in Apulia, primum spectare
 oportet aetatem, quam praecipiant sic. Videmus ne sint minores
 trimae, maiores decem annorum. Aetas cognoscitur et equorum
 et fere omnium qui ungulas indivisas habent et etiam cornutarum,
 quod equus triginta mensibus primum dentes medios dicitur amittere,
 duo superiores, totidem inferiores...

Vergil III.95-100:

Hunc quoque, ubi aut morbo gravis aut iam segnior annis
 deficit, abde domo, nec turpi ignosce senectae.
 frigidus in Venerem senior, frustra que laborem
 ingratum trahit, et, si quando ad proelia ventum est,
 ut quondam in stipulis magnus sine viribus ignis,
 incassum furit.

Criteria of Judgment

Varro II.vii.6:

De stirpe magni interest qua sint, quod genera sunt
 multa. Itaque ab hoc nobiles a regionibus dicuntur, in
 Graecia Thessalici equi a Thessalia, in Italia ab Apulia
 Apuli, ab Rosea Roseani.

Vergil III.100-102:

ergo animos aevumque notabis
 praecipue: hinc alias artis prolemque parentum
 et quis cuique dolor victo, quae gloria palmae.

Vergil III.118-22:

aequus uterque labor, aequae iuvenemque magistri
 exquirunt calidumque animis et cursibus acrem,
 quamvis saepe fuga versos ille egerit hostis
 et patriam Epirum referat fortisque Mycenae,
 Neptunisque ipsa deducat origine gentem.

From the beginning of his discussion we realize that Vergil's
 attitude toward horses will differ significantly from that toward cows.

In announcing his subject for Georgic III he establishes a fundamental

difference between the two species. Cattle are essentially domestic animals necessary for the mundane labour of the farm; horses, on the other hand, fall into a luxury category. Vergil will develop this definite contrast throughout the first half of Georgic III.

Varro briefly outlines the various activities reserved for horses and stresses the necessity of matching the animals to the tasks set out for them. He mentions military service, racing, hauling, and breeding as the principal occupations of horses. Vergil, however, limits his attention to racing and war, and the aggressive behavior of spirited stallions and mares in his principal preoccupation in the equine sphere.

The philosophic reflection with which the section on the brood cow concluded also influences the selection of the stallion as sire. A sense of urgency is felt as the future of the species hangs in the balance. The horses chosen are obviously superior stock, drawn from a herd which is specially bred. The farmer is obliged to lavish attention on them from their youth.

The description which follows of the proud young stallion in action (vv. 75-9) is a brilliant example of Vergil's descriptive art.²⁶ Varro's prosaic description of signs of spirit is transformed by Vergil into a lively and readable exposé of psychological development. The

²⁶ The passage is ignored by Page, Klinger, Büchner, and Richter. Seen synoptically with its Varronian model, it seems to me to provide a particularly effective indication of Vergil's poetic handling of his material.

stallion displays youthful confidence and exuberance but not recklessness. He is not content simply to run with the herd, but assumes the lead.

Vergil employs carefully selected vocabulary to capture the transition from instinctive caution in the face of a potentially hostile environment to confident dismissal of Nature's threatening mien. Vergil displays a remarkable ability to appreciate the animal's perspective: rivers are first viewed with apprehension, "minacis", and must be met cautiously, "temptare"; as the stallion gains confidence, natural barriers lose their threatening character and become simply an unknown, "ignoto... ponti", and must be tried more decisively, "sese committere"; finally, Nature's threats become empty, "vanos", and exercise no hold over him, "nec...horret".

The actual physical description of the stallion appears to have been inspired by Varro, though again Vergil has borrowed very selectively. Initially we are given a general view of the magnificent stallion with simple adjectives describing his dominant features:

illi ardua cervix
argutumque caput, brevis alvus obesaque terga, (79-80).

Varro has provided much more detail.

With the description of the stallion's chest, however, Vergil has transformed the rather prosaic Varronian description into a more colourful and suggestive account:

luxuriatque toris animosum pectus. (81)

The rippling muscular action of the pectoral region reflects the exuberance and audacity of the young horse. The verb "luxuriat" is especially

suggestive of the pride and confidence the stallion places in his youthful strength. Vergil has again admitted a subtle correspondence between physical appearance and psychological make-up.

The emphasis on colour (vv. 81-83) appears to be a particular Vergilian preoccupation, for it is not mentioned by Varro with respect to horses. On the other hand, Varro briefly mentions a number of breeds which are to be preferred, a point which Vergil ignores completely.²⁷

Preoccupation with physical attributes is temporarily abandoned as Vergil introduces the spectre of war. Actual participation in the fray is not yet implied, but the mere sound of battle is enough to drive the stallion to the peak of excitement:

tum, si qua sonum procul arma dedere,
stare loco nescit, micat auribus et tremit artus,
collectumque premens volvit sub naribus ignem. (83-5)

The association with fire, a destructive force, has sinister implications and suggests a potential for uncontrollable fury. For this detail Vergil is indebted to Lucretius who twice introduces comparisons involving spirited horses into his discussion (v. 30-31; 1073-7).

With a return to the physical attributes of the stallion, Vergil relies on his Varronian model: the heavy mane tossed to the right, the double muscle running the length of the spine, and the hard hoofs are details mentioned by Varro as indication of solid physical build. Varro

²⁷Richter, *Georgica*, ad G.III.49ff. comments on Vergil's description of the brood cow:

Die cognitio formae ist dort der zweite Unterabschnitt unter vieren, die für den Viehkauf wichtig sind; ihn allein wählt der Dichter aus, nicht mehr für den Käufer, sondern für den Betrachter.

The judgment is equally suitable for Vergil's description of the physical aspects of the stallion.

has provided a detailed, uninterrupted list of desirable physical qualities. Vergil, however, has punctuated his physical description with consideration of psychological strength. In vv. 86-88 physical details are again introduced to match and reinforce psychological attitudes. We gain a distinct indication of the stallion's mettle, his potential for action in a battle situation. He displays both form and spirit worthy of his celebrated ancestors.

The imagery which follows (vv. 89-94) is especially interesting. In the first place, it serves to reinforce the contrast between the stallion and the cow, for Vergil limits his imagery, with one exception,²⁸ to horses; he carefully chooses images which will emphasize their spirited, action-oriented natures. From the Homeric sphere he has chosen for comparison the legendary Cyllarus, celebrated steed of Pollux, the horses of Mars, Xanthus, and Balius, the famous chariot team of Achilles.²⁹

²⁸Georgic III.152-56, the pursuit of Io by the gadfly. Here, however, the tale serves to augment the horror of the insect rather than reinforce the character of the cow.

²⁹Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, p. 94 draws attention to an interesting symmetrical pattern. The section on the choice of the sire is exactly equal in length with that of the dam. Moreover, the section on the cow concluded with six lines of reflection while the discussion of the stallion concludes with six lines of mythological parallels. We must keep in mind, however, that Vergil's reflections on life and death influence the stallion as much as the cow.

He concludes the six line embellishment with a tale of metamorphosis drawn from Hellenistic sources, the flight of Saturn in the likeness of a mighty steed, after he has been surprised by his consort Rhea in an illicit rendezvous with the nymph Philyra.

Certainly embellishments of this kind lend dignity to his subject matter. The horses of Mars and Achilles had been celebrated by Homer and had thus earned a permanent niche in epic poetry. The tale of Saturn's equine disguise was told by Apollonius of Rhodes. Vergil does not ignore the literary debt, but acknowledges his sources in a rather general fashion, "et quorum Grai meminere poetae", a technique frequently used by Lucretius.³⁰

Varro too may have provided Vergil with an indication of the effectiveness of adorning the sometimes bald technical material with mythological embellishment. In his preface to the discussion of cattle, he introduces two tales, Jupiter's metamorphosis into a bull in pursuit of Europa, and the special protection which a herd of cattle provided for the sons of Neptune (II.v.5). These mythological tales are intended to support the prominent position which Varro claims for the cow. The technical account of horses, on the other hand, in Varro's account is quite bare of any kind of embellishment; it is quite possible that Vergil may have imitated Varro's technique while exercising his own right of selection.

Moreover, the particular myths introduced by Vergil reinforce fundamental attitudes in connection with the stallion. Comparison with

³⁰De Rerum Natura I.831; II.600; V.405 and VI.754.

celebrated war horses and mention of the Saturn-Philyra episode implicate the stallion in the aggressive spheres of war and passion. Until this point, the stallion has not been connected with "amor", but it is an association which Vergil will develop with increasingly sinister overtones, ultimately culminating in the image of sexual madness which affected the mares of Glaucus.³¹

Pessimistic preoccupation with old age and sickness already introduced in the discussion of the cow surfaces in this next section dealing with horses (vv. 95-100); again the devastation of the aging process is experienced most strongly in the area of controlled breeding. The particular concern with age and its debilitating effects is a special Vergilian preoccupation; in Varro's account, age is viewed rather neutrally as a criterion of judgment in stock selection.

Strikingly absent in the consideration of the aging stallion is the affinity of man and animal as the victim of time, a marked feature of Vergil's earlier treatment of the theme in the case of the cow. Vergil advocates decisive action, though his recommendation of banishment of the

³¹ Commentators have generally failed to appreciate the significance of this mythological embellishment introduced by Vergil. Page, P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica, p. 299 suggests that Vergil was attempting to "lend dignity to his subject matter by referring to the famous horses mentioned in epic poetry." He doesn't pursue the issue any farther.

Neither Büchner nor Klingner offers any appreciation of the myths or the reasons for their introduction. Richter assiduously identifies the mythological allusions and their sources but fails to integrate them into Vergil's broad design.

It seems to me, however, that imagery is so very rare in the Georgics that we can't simply dismiss it as poetic embellishment and must search for broader significance in the work as a whole.

aging animal does betray a certain sympathy. Cato suggested that sick and worn-out slaves should be sold to offset any liability for the farm. The ravages of time visible in increasing slowness and inability to perform in the service of Mars or Venus³² are observed rather clinically by Vergil.

The simile of the fire (vv. 99-100) is especially interesting and strikes a pathetic note. That same image earlier (v. 85) had symbolized the stallion's youthful spirit, so exuberant it bordered on destruction; here it is introduced as an image of decline. Vergil has subtly used continuity in imagery to establish the disturbing lack of permanence in the mortal condition.

The negative admonition is countered with more positive advice for judging horses: principal criteria of judgment are spirit and age; pedigree and attitudes toward victory and defeat also rank as important considerations. In contrast to Varro, Vergil places more emphasis on individual actions and behavior than on pedigree.

Mention of "gloria palmae" calls forth a colourful vignette of a chariot race (vv. 103-112). Earlier we observed that in discussing the susceptibility of the stallion to the ravages of sickness and old age, Vergil neglected to draw the parallel between the plight of this noble animal and the human condition, a point which he stressed in considering the life cycle of the cow. Instead, he has chosen a vivid action scene, a chariot

³² Richter, *Georgica*, ad III.98, suggests that "proelia" refers to the act of sexual union, and is the first instance of that metaphor which became popular with the elegists. It seems to me, however, to be more consistent with the Vergilian scheme to interpret "proelia" in its more usual sense of "battle". The stallion has already been implicated in the sphere of war (v. 83) and it is in this connection that Vergil has introduced the element of fire (v. 85).

race, to illustrate the common motivation of man and animal. In their mutual desire for victory, the excitement and aspirations of charioteer and race horse merge in a collective expression of competitive spirit. As in sickness and death, so also in the excitement of life, man and animal share fundamental drives and the vicissitudes of fortune.

The arresting phrase "nonne vides" directs our attention to the race at hand and lends a particular immediacy to the description.³³ All of the principal details in Vergil's description are modelled on Homer-- the position of the riders, the motion of the chariots, the cloud of dust, and the warm, moist breath of the horses following behind. We also detect clear linguistic echoes of the Lucretian description of racing horses in the vivid introduction. The emphasis on the single motivation of man and animal, however, is Vergil's particular contribution to the scene. In the Homeric account, though charioteer and racer are working together for a common goal, the focus never becomes blurred: at all times we see man and animal clearly and distinctly, each fulfilling his own task in the dramatic moment.

In the Vergilian description, no distinction between the human and animal participants is intended. The emphasis is on the shared experience

³³Richter and Klingner suggest two different passages in *Iliad* XXIII as sources for the Vergilian description, vv. 362 ff. and vv. 500 ff. Though I accept vv. 369-72 as directly inspirational:

ἔστασαν ἐν δίφροισι, πᾶτασσε δὲ θυμὸς ἑκάστου
 νίκης ἱεμένων· κέκλοντο δὲ οἷσιν ἑκάστος
 ἵπποις, οἳ δ' ἐπέτοντο κονίοντες πεδίω.

I don't believe that vv. 500-506 add anything new to the action and are not a direct source of inspiration for Vergil.

as man and animal have become one, working toward a common objective.³⁴

This vivid representation of the chariot race stands in sharp contrast to the rather pessimistic reflection which preceded it. The demands of strenuous racing must be met by men and animals in their prime.

The colourful description of the race is followed by two brief aitia which celebrate the legendary founders of the two principal occupations of spirited stallions, racing and war. Erichthonius is credited with the invention of the chariot and it was he who first claimed the title of "victor".

The Lapiths of Thessaly, on the other hand, are acknowledged as the creators of military manoeuvres and they first united man and animal in the common pursuit of war.³⁵ With these learned and esoteric allusions Vergil adds dignity and authority to his didactic material and colourfully

³⁴This shared experience of healthy competition is an important positive aspect of the affinity between man and animal which Vergil emphasized. It stands in sharp contrast to his negative reflection of vv. 66-68 and also serves as another proof of Vergil's skillful use of variety as a poetic tool; he introduces negative attitudes with his discussion of the female, and more positive attitudes with his discussion of the male. The significance of the chariot race in Vergil's scheme is not appreciated by commentators.

³⁵Vergil's sources for these aitia are not clear. Servius-Auctus traces the tale of Erichthonius to Varro's Admirabilia and Richter also makes this suggestion. Willi Frenzt, "Mythologisches in Vergils Georgica" Beitrage zur klassischen Philologie XXI (1967), p. 57 raises the possibilities of a Hellenistic source which might have come to Vergil through Varro. The origin of the Lapith aition is especially obscure, though Frenzt again looks to the Hellenistic period as a possibility.

reinforces racing and war as the special provinces of horses.³⁶

The section on the choice of the stallion concludes with a reinforcement of the position already taken by Vergil. He insists that racing and war are quite separate occupations, equally strenuous and both demanding special qualities in the stallion. Again Vergil rejects Varro's emphasis on lineage and stresses speed (implying youth) and spirit as primary criteria of selection. Celebrated centres like Mycenae and Epirus have important literary significance³⁷ and together with the allusion to the creation of horses by Neptune maintain the aura of epic grandeur and dignity with which Vergil has surrounded the stallion.

³⁶The purpose of the aitia is disputed by commentators. Richter insists that they serve no useful purpose but are simply Hellenistic embellishments. Klingner suggests that they represent part of Vergil's scheme to reinforce the contrast between the cow and the horse and serve to lend nobility to the latter. Frenzt, "Mythologisches in Vergils Georgica", p. 58 puts forward the interesting suggestion that the aitia, which posit a mythical semi-divine origin for the chariot and the specialized art of riding, represent a reply to the Lucretian view, V.1298 ff. which assigns a natural evolutionary development to these arts.

The Lucretian passage, however, is concerned exclusively with the use of horses in war, first in mounted combat, and secondly in chariots; racing does not enter his scheme at all. Moreover, Vergil has not introduced Lucretian echoes in his aitia; generally he relies on strong Lucretian reminiscences to reinforce his reversal of the Lucretian view. Consequently, the view of Frenzt seems to me to be untenable.

³⁷Varro R.R.II.vii.6. He mentions Thessaly, Apulia, and Rosia as important contemporary centres for the rearing of horses.

123-37: Breeding

Preparation

Varro II.v.12:

Ante admissuram mensem unum ne cibo et potione se impleant, quod existimantur facilius macrae concipere. Contra tauros duobus mensibus ante admissuram herba et palea ac faeno facio pleniores et a feminis secerno.

Varro II.i.17:

praeterea quod ante admissuram diebus triginta arietibus ac tauris datur plus cibi, ut vires habeant, feminis bubus demitur, quod macescentes melius concipere dicuntur.

Vergil III.123-28:

His animadversis instant sub tempus et omnis impendunt curas denso distendere pingui, quem legere ducem et pecori dixere maritum, florentisque secant herbas fluviosque ministrant farraque, ne blando nequeat superesse labori invalidique patrum referant ieiunia nati.

Vergil III.129-37:

ipsa autem macie tenuant armenta volentes, atque, ubi concubitus primos iam nota voluptas sollicitat, frondesque negant et fontibus arcent. saepe etiam cursu quatiunt et sole fatigant, cum graviter tynsis gemit area frugibus et cum surgentem ad Zephyrum paleae iactantur inanes. hoc faciunt, nimio ne luxu obtunsior usus sit genitali arvo et sulcos oblimet inertis, sed rapiat sitiens Venerem interiusque recondat.

Season for Conception

Varro II.v.12-13:

Haec secundum astri exortum facio, quod Graeci vocant lyran, fidem nostri

Varro II.v.13:

Maxime idoneum tempus ad concipiendum a delphini exortu usque ad dies quadraginta aut paulo plus. Quae enim ita conceperunt, temperatissimo anni tempore pariunt; vaccae enim mensibus decem sunt praegnates.

Varro II.vii.7-8:

Horum feturae initium admissionis facere oportet
ab aequinoctio verno ad solstitium, ut partus idoneo
tempore fiat; duodecimo enim mense die decimo aiunt nasci.
Quae post tempus nascuntur, fere vitiosa atque inutilia
existunt.

Vergil III.133-34:

cum graviter tunsis gemit area frugibus, et cum
surgentem ad Zephyrum paleae iactantur inanes.

Having introduced the female and male principles in his scheme, Vergil turns his attention to breeding. The discussion which follows is a remarkable passage for several reasons. It provides clear indication of Vergil's syncretic approach to his sources: the precepts which Vergil recommends are borrowed from Varro, while much of the language and imagery are unmistakably Lucretian. At the same time, key themes and special Vergilian preoccupations reappear to reinforce the philosophic design of Georgic III.

The technical discussion of breeding is quite general and applicable to both cows and horses. The actual act of copulation is only implied, and the more technical aspects and difficulties experienced in inducing the male to mount the female, discussed at length by Varro (II.v.13; vii. 8-10), are ignored by Vergil. The bulk of the Vergilian discussion is concerned with preparation for breeding.

Vergil follows the precepts outlined by Varro which recommend that the breeder should fatten the male and starve the female. This particular approach is advocated by Varro only for cattle, but Vergil has not chosen to introduce the bull at this point, and the stallion is still representative of the male principle. Consequently, in this section on breeding,

cattle and horses are dealt with indiscriminately. Moreover, Vergil has set aside no definite interval for this feeding regime.

Segregation of male and female, though not directly advocated at this point, is certainly implied. Moreover, the feeding pattern which Vergil suggests leads one to suspect that the animals were kept in some kind of enclosure prior to mating and were not allowed to graze for themselves. Vergil takes care to establish the motive for this special diet. He is concerned not only with the stamina of the individual stud, but the strength of the whole line; we sense his determination to offset the constant process of deterioration which he saw everywhere in the universe.

As in the earlier discussion of breeding (v.60), affinity between man and animal is suggested as Vergil speaks of the sire in human terms-- he is a "maritum" (v. 125). The regimen for females differs sharply from that for males and consists of limited food and water and plenty of strenuous exercise. The reference to controlled breeding is especially interesting; with regard to the female, Vergil mentions "nota voluptas"; earlier he designated the reproductive task of the sire as "blando... labori". These are not merely poetic euphemisms, but betray an attitude which stands in sharp contrast to the fiery tirade against uncontrolled sexual activity with which Vergil concludes this section. Controlled breeding is quite appropriately accepted as the necessary means for sustaining life.

In designating the ideal period for conception, Vergil departs from Varro, who recommends that special care should be taken to ensure that the

young will be born in reasonably temperate conditions. For cattle he suggests a forty day period extending from the rising of the Dolphin in early summer as the ideal time for mating. Since the gestation period for cows is ten months, the calves will be born after winter has past, and when fodder will be most abundant.³⁸ For horses whose gestation period is two months longer than that of cows, Varro suggests the period from the vernal equinox to the solstice, mid-March to mid-June, as the proper time for breeding.

In suggesting the period following threshing as the time to begin special preparation for breeding, Vergil appears to favour a much later date for mating than Varro and Columella. Such a scheme would still ensure the birth of the young before the arrival of winter, even in the case of the mare whose gestation period was longer. Problems would undoubtedly arise, however, in securing suitable food for the pregnant animals, and later for the young. Both Cato and Columella provide lists of rations for working oxen which clearly establish the difficulties of securing adequate nutritious feed for these animals in autumn and winter.³⁹ Even in the summer, green forage ran out as early as the beginning of June and the animals had to be fed leaves.

The area of the Veneto where Vergil spent his boyhood, however, enjoyed two advantages which made it a particularly attractive region for cattle raising, a high water table and abundant summer rain which kept the

³⁸Columella VI.24.1 suggests mid-June to mid-July as the ideal period for the mating of cows.

³⁹Cato XXX.54 and Columella VI.3.4ff. and XI.2.99ff. White, Roman Farming, pp. 219-23 has drawn up a comparative table of the two schemes.

grass lush and green for a longer period than in the rest of Italy.⁴⁰ It may be this experience which prompted Vergil to underplay Varro's concern about feeding the young and to suggest a later period for conception. T. E. Page suggests another alternative, that Vergil erred in suggesting so late a period for mating.⁴¹

It seems to me, however, that we must exercise caution in demanding too precise an interpretation from the Vergilian statement. The account is very general; the threshing season varies according to geographic and climatic conditions, and Vergil has not established any time limit for the period of preparation. It is possible that Vergil's scheme may have been motivated by a literary design, rather than strictly factual considerations. The season when Nature gives forth her ripened fruits heralds the consummation of the happy association of man and the earth; threshing, man's processing of Nature's gifts, is the final stage of that association. At the same time, an urgent challenge accompanies this completion: death is the corollary of Autumn's abundance and unless man takes steps to renew the association, productivity will cease. Man must again plough and sow to reap another harvest.

In a similar fashion, the farmer must renew his stock to insure continuation of the line. This cycle of life and death and man's endless struggle to maintain productivity are essential features of Vergil's philosophic scheme. The agricultural metaphor with which Vergil describes conception, succinctly establishes the parallel between the topic of animal husbandry and man's relationship with the land discussed elsewhere

⁴⁰White, Roman Farming, p. 280.

⁴¹P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica, p. 303.

in the Georgics. Man, animal, and the land are drawn together in a common mysterious bond.

The significance of this agricultural metaphor is often missed by commentators.⁴² Vergil appears to have drawn his inspiration from two different passages in the De Rerum Natura. At IV.1105 Lucretius describes conception with the image of sowing; later in the same book, v. 1172, he borrows plowing terms to describe sexual union in rather crude imagery. Vergil combines the two metaphors into one sensual, though less blatant image. He has subtly drawn the metaphor and with it the aspect of controlled breeding into his philosophic scheme; with mention of "nimio luxu" and "sulcos inertis", undesirable conditions which must be avoided, Vergil insists on the same primal vigour as a necessity for animal reproduction as he does for the production of farm crops in the first two books of his poem. Moreover, the response of the genital 'earth' is quick and vibrant--the seed is absorbed rapidly and hidden deep within. Though this agricultural metaphor provides more detail about conception than we find elsewhere in the Georgics, Vergil has preserved a sense of mystery for this important life process. At the same time, his insistence on powerful, productive force in the earth has been extended to encompass the animal world and sound a positive hope for the continual renewal of life.

⁴²Richter, Georgica ad III.123 comments on the delicacy with which Vergil has handled the subject and suggests that the poet has found the ideal middle ground between coarseness and prudishness. Certainly this is an appropriate but rather limited judgment; the passage has other merits in addition to pleasing refinement.

138-56: Care of the Pregnant Animals

Varro II.v.14-15:

Eas pasci oportet locis viridibus et aquosis. Cavere oportet ne aut angustius stent aut feriantur aut concurrant. Itaque quod eas aestate tabani concitare solent et bestiolae quaedam minutae sub cauda ali, ne concitentur, aliqui solent includere saeptis. Iis substerni oportet frondem aliudve quid in cubilia, quo mollius conquiescant. Aestate ad aquam appellendum bis, hieme semel. Cum parere coeperunt, secundum stabula pabulum servari oportet integrum, quod egredientes degustare possint; fastidiosae enim fiunt. Et providendum, quo recipiunt se, ne frigidus locus sit; algor enim eas et famis macescere cogit.

Varro II.vii.10:

Cum conceperunt equae, videndum ne aut laborent plusculum aut ne frigidis locis sint, quod algor maxime praegnatis obest. Itaque in stabulis et umore prohibere oportet humum, clausa habere ostia ac fenestras, et inter singulas a praesepibus intericere longorios, qui eas discernant, ne inter se pugnare possint. Praegnatem neque implere cibo neque esurire oportet.

Vergil III.138-45:

Rursus cura patrum cadere et succedere matrum incipit. exactis gravidae cum mensibus errant, non illas gravibus quisquam iuga ducere plaustris, non saltu superare viam sit passus et acri carpere prata fuga fluviosque innare rapacis. saltibus in vacuis pascunt et plena secundum flumina, muscus ubi et viridissima gramine ripa, speluncaeque tegant et saxea procubet umbra.

Vergil III.146-56:

est lucos Silari circa ilicibusque virentem plurimus Alburnum volitans, cui nomen asilo Romanum est, oestrum Grai vertere vocantes, asper, acerba sonans, quo tota exterrita silvis diffigiunt armenta; furit mugitibus aether concussus silvaeque et sicci ripa Tanagri. hoc quondam monstro horribilis exercuit iras Inachiae Iuno pestem meditata iuvencae. hunc quoque (nam mediis fervoribus acrior instat) arcebis gravido pecori, armentaue pasces sole recens orto aut noctem ducentibus astris.

Having discussed the topic of breeding, Vergil directs our attention to the care of the pregnant animals. As earlier in Georgic III, the cow represents the female principle, and Vergil adheres rather closely to the admonitions put forward by Varro. "Cura" reappears in the Vergilian account to designate the special consideration man owes to the pregnant beasts.

The prohibition against strenuous labour seems to have been suggested by Varro's discussion of the care of pregnant mares. The precaution is quite suitable for cattle as well in Georgic III, since Vergil has designated cows from the start as work animals, "fortis ad aratra" (v.50). The pulling of wagons, moreover, applies to the cows since cattle, even females, were used as draught animals in ancient times. Vergil elaborates upon Varro's prohibition against exercise and suggests that spirited activity, especially jumping, reckless racing and swimming in rapid rivers, should be curtailed. He recommends quiet, secluded pastures where fresh water and green pasture and ample shade are easily accessible. The scene represents a vivid elaboration of Varro's prosaic suggestion, "locis viridibus et aquis". The well ordered details and the strong visual quality of the Vergilian description suggest that Vergil may have had an actual spot in mind. K. D. White suggests the pasture lands of the Veneto where Vergil spent his boyhood as the inspiration for the passage.⁴³

The simple warning which Varro issues concerning the gadfly and its injurious effect on pregnant cows is transformed by Vergil into a

⁴³ Roman Farming, p. 280.

brief but remarkable study of hellish fury. Though tiny in relation to the victim, the gadfly has the potential for inciting riot among once docile creatures. In Vergil's account its trademark is a harsh, buzzing sound and it can drive a herd of animals headlong in fear. The air echoes the distress of the overwrought cows. The scene acquires a peculiar, almost supernatural horror. The strange indefinable terror is enhanced by the precise geographic setting which Vergil provides; Silarus, Tanager, and Alburnus all establish Lucania as the scene of the drama. The unreal atmosphere is dispelled by the reality of the setting.

In connection with the Lucanian setting we should recall that Paestum is a city of that region and the site of the celebrated Juno-Hera sanctuary whose legendary founder was Jason. The gadfly has special associations with Juno. Aeschylus in the Suppliants (vv. 306-8) and the Prometheus Bound (vv. 566 ff; 589-92; 673-82) describes the creation of the gadfly to torment Io who had been loved by Zeus. While her guardian Argus lives, the gadfly is called "muops"; after his death, she is persecuted by his chthonic spirit, an insect called "oestrus". The mention by Vergil of Io, daughter of Inachus, and the wrath of Juno may owe its origins to Vergil's familiarity with the sanctuary at Paestum.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Frentz, "Mythologisches in Vergils Georgica", p. 123 ignores the Varronian directive and insists on a Hellenistic source for Vergil's mention of the myth of Io and the gadfly. The tale as told by Vergil is brief and elusive, designed for the reader cognizant of the details. The strong literary tradition undoubtedly influenced Vergil's decision to incorporate the myth in his poetic treatise, but I don't share Frentz' conviction of a Hellenistic source. Vergil briefly shares the tragedian's perspective as he focuses on the communal madness incited by the gadfly. The jealous rage of Juno and the lecherous activities of Jupiter which Frentz cites as a Hellenistic source seems to me to be completely secondary elements in Vergil's account. Moreover, the whole incident of the gadfly has been inspired by a prosaic observation made by Varro.

The brief history of the scourge, moreover, offers little comfort. Product of Juno's spite, conceived in passion as punishment for lust, and visited on an innocent victim, the gadfly continues its reign of terror. The specially vivid language with which Vergil describes the insect leaves no doubt as to the kind of impression he wishes to convey. In a passage such as this we gain insight into the creative genius which will fashion the striking portrayal of "furor impius" in the Aeneid.⁴⁵

The section concludes quietly with the suggestion that herds be pastured in the early morning and evening to avoid the pest.

For the association of the gadfly, Paestum and the sanctuary of Juno I am indebted to Prof. A. G. McKay. In his book, Vergil's Italy, pp. 243-6 he offers a fuller description of Paestum. Prof. McKay in private communication has also suggested that Vergil's use of the substantive "asilo" instead of the more usual noun "tabanus" may have an etymological connection between "asilo" and "Silari", that is "asilo" may signify a "Sil(ar)o".

⁴⁵Commentators generally miss this aspect of continuity in the Vergilian corpus, Klingner, Büchner, Richter and Frenzt all insist that Vergil includes the tale to lend dignity to the cow and attach to this beast a "myth of suffering" as the horse has his "myth of nobility". It seems to me, however, that such a judgment distorts Vergil's perspective. He simply enlivens the precept about the gadfly with a brief but effective presentation of hellish fury and psychological terror, reactions which will fascinate him on a number of occasions in the Aeneid.

157-78: Care of the Young: Calves

Milking

Varro II.ii.17 (of lambs):

Interea matres eorum iis temporibus non mulgent
quidam; qui id melius, omnino perpetuo, quod et lanae plus
ferunt et agnos plures.

Vergil III.176-78:

nec tibi fetae
more patrum nivea implebunt multraria vaccae,
sed tota in dulcis consument ubera natos.

Concern for the pregnant females logically passes to consideration of the young animals. In this section Vergil reverts to his original pattern; instead of discussing the two species of domestic beasts together, he first treats the care and training of calves, and then includes a similar section for colts.

The section on calves is introduced with a reference to some kind of branding process. Mention of both "notas" and "nomina gentis" (v. 158) has sparked considerable controversy among commentators. Branding is not mentioned by Varro, and other agronomists offer little to illuminate Vergil's reference.⁴⁶ Vergil does seem to have a double mark in mind-- the

⁴⁶In the case of swine, Columella 7.9.11 suggests some mark made in liquid pitch to indicate pedigree. Calpurnius Ecl. 5.84ff. mentions a mark of ownership drawn in tar.

"notas", probably an indication of ownership to enable the stockbreeder to keep track of his herd, and an additional mark to indicate the animal's pedigree.⁴⁷ In the context of branding, he mentions the several occupations for which calves were required: breeding, sacrificial purposes, and of course, agriculture. Presumably the rancher had to have some reliable means of differentiating the various animals and setting them to their individual tasks.⁴⁸

Vergil's particular concern in this section is the training of calves for agricultural labour. Varro does not consider the breaking and training of young horses. Vergil returns to the emphasis on youth which figured prominently in his earlier discussion of the ideal parents. Calves must be selected and training begun while they are still easily adaptable. Gentleness and patience highlight the process of training which Vergil advocates. Again he displays a remarkable degree of empathy with the animal, as he subtly conveys the sense of dislocation experienced by the calf who, once totally free, must now grow used to constraints and servitude (vv. 166-9).

⁴⁷This interpretation is favoured by both White, Roman Farming, p. 280 and Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, p. 255.

⁴⁸Vergil also mentions branding at G. I.263 with the phrase, "§ignum pecori". The singular, "§ignum", can indicate a single brand with a double component to indicate both the owner and the pedigree. The Veneto where Vergil spent his boyhood was an especially suitable region for cattle raising and Vergil may be drawing on personal experience here in this discussion on branding.

Once he has acquired a pace suitable for ploughing and grown accustomed to a partnership, the calf must experience shared labour. The task is at first a simple one, merely dragging an empty wagon, but the pair soon graduates to more strenuous labour. The climax of the training process is described realistically, from the animal's perspective. The creaking of the axle and the pull of the wheels on the bronze pole emphasize the labour demanded of the oxen. The details are borrowed from Homer's description of a chariot (Iliad V. 838), but the adjective "valido" represents a remarkable addition by Vergil; it confirms the strongly empathic approach adopted by the poet in this section on training. The young oxen accustomed only to the easy pull of an empty wagon would find the new burden nearly impossible. The adjective, "valido", moreover, carries a special nuance, an attitude of primitive vigour together with strong moral fibre. In his unquestioning acceptance of his hard lot, the ox shares in a way of life which forms the very backbone of Roman strength.

The discussion on training concludes with a brief consideration of the kinds of food required by the unbroken calf (vv. 174-6). The phrase "pubi indomitae" provides clear indication of Vergil's attitude toward the young animals. Throughout the discussion, he supervises their education as one would guide young children.

His final consideration departs from agricultural practice which was widely accepted in ancient times. Vergil disapproves of this traditional practice of milking cows while the young are still nursing, and insists that the full quota of milk be reserved for the calves. Varro himself makes mention of the practice in his discussion of sheep and likewise

disapproves, though out of more practical motives than Vergil. He suggests that the ewe will provide more wool and more lambs if she is never milked. With characteristic sympathy, Vergil describes the calves as "dulcis natos".

179-208: Training of the Young: Colts

Varro II.vii.12-13:

eosque, cum stent cum matribus, interdum tractandum, ne, cum sint deiuncti, exterreantur; eademque causa ibi frenos suspendendum, ut eculi consuescant et videre eorum faciem et e motu audire crepitus. Cum iam ad manus accedere consuerint, interdum imponere iis puerum bis aut ter pronum in ventrem, postea iam sedentem. Haec facere, cum sit trimus; tum enim maxime crescere ac lacertosum fieri. Sunt qui dicant post annum et sex menses eculum domari posse, sed melius post trimum, a quo tempore farrago dari solet.

Vergil III.179-208:

Sin ad bella magis studium turmasque ferocis,
aut Alpheia rotis praelabi flumina Pisae
et Iovis in luco currus agitare volantis,
primus equi labor est animos atque arma videre
bellantum lituosque pati, tractuque gementem
ferre rotam et stabulo frenos audire sonantis;
tum magis atque magis blandis gaudere magistri
laudibus et plausae sonitum cervicis amare,
atque haec iam primo depulsus ab ubere matris
audeat, inque vicem det mollibus ora capistris
invalidus etiamque tremens, etiam inscius aevi.
at tribus exactis ubi quarta accesserit aestas,
carpere mox gyrum incipiat gradibusque sonare
compositis, sinuetque alterna volumina crurum,
sitque laboranti similis; tum cursibus auras
tum vocet, ac per aperta volans ceu liber habenis
aequora vix summa vestigia ponat harena:
qualis Hyperboreis Aquilo cum densus ab oris
incubuit, Scythiaeque hiemes atque arida differt
nubila; tum segetes altae campique natantes
lenibus horrescunt flabris, summaeque sonorem
dant silvae, longique urgent ad litora fluctus;

ille volat simul arva fuga simul aequora verrens.
 hinc vel ad Elei metas et maxima campi
 sudabit spatia et spumas aget ore cruentas,
 Belgica vel molli melius feret esseda collo.
 tum demum crassa magnum farragine corpus
 crescere iam domitis sinito; namque ante domandum
 ingentis tollent animos, prensique negabunt
 verbera lenta pati et duris parere lupatis.

Feeding

Varro II.vii. 13-14:

Haec enim purgatio maxime necessaria equino pecori.
 Quod diebus decem facere oportet, nec pati alium ullum cibum
 gustare. Ab undecimo die usque ad quartum decimum dandum
 hordeum, cottidie adicientem minutatim; quod quarto die
 feceris, in eo decem diebus proximis manendum. Ab eo tempore
 mediocriter exercendum et, cum consudarit, perungendum
 oleo. Si frigus erit, in equili faciendus ignis.

Vergil III.205-08:

tum demum crassa magnum farragine corpus
 crescere iam domitis sinito; namque ante domandum
 ingentis tollent animos, prensique negabunt
 verbera lenta pati et duris parere lupatis.

Vergil begins his discussion on the training of foals with emphasis on the aggressive activities of war and racing (vv. 179-81) for which the stallion is bred. He follows the training programme outlined by Varro rather closely, though as in the case of calves, gentleness and patience are special features of the Vergilian approach. Since the horse is generally quite excitable, and particularly so in youth, he must first grow accustomed to the sight and sounds of the equipment he will use. Vergil has made an interesting addition to the Varronian recommendation. Varro suggests that the colt should grow used to the appearance and the sound of the harness, "ut eculi consuescant et videre eorum faciem et a motu audire crepitus ". Vergil, on the other hand, admits the spirit and

the weapons of warriors, "animos atque arma videre" into his scheme. We have already noted his emphasis on the shared experience of competition in the chariot race. Here the bond between man and animal is made stronger as the young stallion learns to copy man's attitude toward war.

Varro recommends that the trainer should handle the foal from time to time while he is still by his mother's side so that once separated from her, he will be used to a human touch. Vergil makes a similar recommendation though no mention is made of the mare, and Vergilian expression suggests a much more intimate relationship between man and animal as the product of this gradual association. In Vergil's scheme, the foal learns to experience these sensations apart from his mother, just after he has been weaned. Vergil recommends harnessing at this young age:

atque haec iam primo depulsus ab ubere matris
 audeat, inque vicem det mollibus ora capistris (187-8)⁴⁹

As always, the poet displays a remarkable ability for appreciating the animal's perspective:

invalidus etiamque tremens, etiam inscius aevi. (189)

⁴⁹Mynors prefers the reading "audeat" instead of "audiat" which occurs in some manuscripts and I agree with his choice. Throughout the discussion on training of the stallion, the poet has emphasized the inexperience and timid nature of the stallion; the verb "audeat" allows us to interpret the action from the animal's perspective and to appreciate the courage and effort which new tasks demand. This kind of empathetic approach is typical of Vergil's technique in Georgic III. The reading of "audiat", on the other hand, adds nothing to the description and simply repeats the emphasis on auditory sensations already stressed in vv. 182-6. Vergil does not waste words.

He has established an effective correspondence between metre and sense; the epithet, "invalidus", which demands that the final syllable be long and followed by a strong pause, suggests the reluctance of the foal to accept the harness.

Serious training of the stallion begins in his fourth year. In the matter of age Vergil is in complete agreement with Varro though little information on actual training is provided in the prose treatise. Varro concentrates his attention on suitable feed for the horse in training, an aspect which receives only marginal attention in Vergil's scheme.

Vergil, however, effectively captures the gradual acquisition of pace and the growing confidence the young stallion places in his own ability. Discipline and control are the key features of his training regimen. He is first introduced to the course and taught to maintain a regular step; the cadence of his hooves punctuates the silence, "gradibusque sonare impositos". Youthful awkwardness disappears, replaced by graceful fluid motion. Disciplined control of his abundant youthful energy demands considerable effort of the stallion. Vergil suggests, "sitque laboranti similis"--as an athlete preparing for a rigorous contest, the young horse struggles to acquire strength and stamina.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Page, P. Vergili Maronis *Bucolica et Georgica*, p. 308 suggests that "the horse is as yet held in and so presents the appearance of one 'struggling', 'chafing', 'fretting' to get free". Certainly this represents the natural reaction of a spirited animal unaccustomed to restraints, but it seems to me that with the verb "laboro" Vergil also intends a more positive nuance, efforts to control this negative impulse.

After he has acquired rhythm and control, rigid discipline is relaxed as he is allowed to challenge the wind. Though still guided by reins, he gallops at full speed across the open plain and barely touches the ground with his hooves. The scene presents a striking contrast to the steady ordered pacing described earlier.

Vergil displays a fascination for horses in motion and an obsession with their power. In a very artistic vein, and with distinct Lucretian echoes, he introduces an Homeric simile (196-201) to describe the racing stallion.⁵¹ A threatening sinister association is attached to the stallion's power as he is compared to the North wind. The wind, and especially the North wind, is a potentially destructive force which builds in intensity and gradually envelops all of the natural environment. For the time the threat of destruction is unfulfilled, but the potential remains. So also the stallion has the capacity for uncontrolled destructive fury.

Throughout the discussion of the training process we are presented with a striking contrast. The young stallion, once "invalidus etiamque tremens, etiam inscius aevi", is continually surrounded by the accoutrements of war and highly aggressive competition. The activities toward which

⁵¹ Iliad X.436. Richter, Georgica ad III.190ff. recognizes the highly poetic character of the passage and details Vergil's indebtedness to Homer and Lucretius. He fails to appreciate the particular colouring which Vergil introduces with the introduction of the North wind in his scheme. Similarly, Klingner, though he does associate violence with the North wind, doesn't push the implications of the simile any farther. Büchner ignores the simile altogether.

his energies are directed, chariot racing and war,⁵² are again emphasized in an especially vivid description:

hinc vel ad Elei metas et maxima campi
 sudabit spatia et spumas aget ore cruentas,
 Belgica vel molli melius feret esseda collo. (202-4)

The single descriptive detail, "spumas...cruentas" suggests the ferocity of the competition and the immense strength the animal brings to his task. The adverb, "melius", however, provides the significant key to the interpretation of the passage. Until now, racing and war have been linked indiscriminately as the special preoccupations of spirited stallions. Here priority is clearly established for war. In Vergil's scheme the stallion emerges as one of the principals of battle, and the contrast with the cow whose chief function is agricultural is drawn more sharply.

The section concludes with a recommendation on the kind of food suitable for a horse which has been broken. Throughout his discussion Vergil displays certain reservations about the stallion; he clearly distrusts the animal's tremendous power and emphasizes the need for diligent training. Curiously enough, though quite effectively when we consider the behavior of impassioned mares to be described later (vv. 266-83), the section on training concludes with another warning of the sinister

⁵²Richter, *Georgica* ad III.204 suggests that the "Belgica esseda", though originally a war chariot used by the Gauls, by the time of the composition of the *Georgics* referred to a coach used by gentlemen for travel. Surely, however, Vergil intends the original meaning; the stallion has constantly been linked with war and racing before this, and no mention has been made in Vergil's scheme of chariot horses, that is, horses used for general transportation.

potential of the unbroken stallion (vv. 206-08). These subtle hints and implied threats will erupt in a crescendo of uncontrolled fury and passion in the climactic discussion of "amor" (vv. 242-83).

Following his discussion of "amor", Vergil offers a brief editorial comment in which he dismisses his previous preoccupations with large domestic animals and announces a new theme:

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus,
singula dum capti circumvectamur amore.
hoc satis armentis: (284-6).

"Amor" is an effective choice in this context and can naturally be construed as a personal admission by the poet of the fascination he feels for his subject matter. At the same time, we cannot miss the obvious link with the topic of "caecus amor", a theme which Vergil has just developed at length. The ambiguity is an effective and deliberate technique on Vergil's part. The digression on "amor" had no formal conclusion, and to have introduced one would have shattered the dramatic impact of the presentation. With this short statement Vergil brings the discussion on the destructive aspects of love together with his topic of cattle and horses to a neat conclusion.

He announces his intention to treat a new theme, smaller domestic animals, sheep and goats:

superat pars altera curae,
lanigeros agitare greges hirtasque capellas; (286-7)

The adjective, "lanigeros" is particularly interesting from a linguistic point of view. It is a compound adjective, a coinage of the variety

which Lucretius favoured. With it Vergil establishes a distinct Lucretian reminiscence and links his new topic with the De Rerum Natura. In the second half of the third book, as in the first half, the influence of Lucretius will be considerable. The echo is strengthened when Vergil imitates Lucretian enthusiasm in establishing his motivation for treating such a theme:

nec sum animi dubius verbis ea vincere magnum
 quam sit et angustis hunc addere rebus honorem;
 sed me Parnasi deserta per ardua dulcis
 raptat amor; iuvat ire iugis, qua nulla priorum
 Castaliam molli devertitur orbita clivo. (289-93)

This passage especially recalls that section in book I where Lucretius freely expresses his enthusiasm for his task, while recognizing the difficulty of his self-imposed obligation:

nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura; sed acri
 percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor
 et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem
 musarum, quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti
 avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
 trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis
 atque haurire, iuvatque novos decerpere flores
 insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam
 unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae; (922-30).

Moreover, there are echoes in Vergil's statement of other editorial comments offered by Lucretius in which he openly acknowledges the difficulty of his task and reveals the compulsion which forces him to write.⁵³

⁵³ Lucretius expresses similar judgments about his task at V.97-99:
 nec me animi fallit quam res nova miraque menti
 accidat exitium caeli terraeque futurum,
 et quam difficile id mihi sit pervincere dictis;
 and I.136-9:
 nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta
 difficile inlustrare Latinis versibus esse,
 multa novis verbis praesertim cum sit agendum
 propter egestatem linguae et rerum novitatem;

Certainly Vergil has paid an obvious tribute to Lucretius as stylist. The frequency of the Lucretian parallels and the context from which they are drawn suggest that Vergil stood in awe of Lucretius' capability with unwieldy didactic material. Obviously he felt a strong sense of kinship with his predecessor as he tackled the difficult, non-poetic aspects of his subject matter.⁵⁴ This second prologue is concluded with a brief but solemn and dignified invocation to Pales:

nunc, veneranda Pales, magno nunc ore sonandum (294)

and V.735-6:

difficilest ratione docere et vincere verbis,
ordine cum <possint> tam certo multa creari.

We notice that Vergil echoes both the sentiments and the phraseology of Lucretius.

⁵⁴Richter acknowledges the Lucretian reminiscences in this prologue but misses the importance of Vergil's dependence. Klingner relies on these Lucretian echoes to support a playful contrast between great and small, but I don't believe that this represents the true spirit of the prologue. Büchner offers no comment on the Lucretian echoes, but he does treat the prologue as a serious poetic statement as I have done.

295-321: Care of Sheep and Goats in Winter

Shelter

Varro II.ii.7-9:

Ubi stent, solum oportet esse eruderatum et proclivum, ut everri facile possit ac fieri purum. Non enim solum ea uligo lanam corrumpit ovium, sed etiam ungulas, ac scabras fieri cogit. Cum aliquot dies steterunt, subicere oportet virgulta alia, quo mollius requiescant purioresque sint; libentius enim ita pascuntur. Faciendum quoque saepta secreta ab aliis, quo incientes secludere possis, item quo corpore aegro. Haec magis ad villaticos greges animadvertenda. Contra illae in saltibus quae pascuntur et a tectis absunt longe, portant secum crates aut retia, quibus cohortes in solitudine faciant, ceteraque utensilia. Longe enim et late in diversis locis pasci solent, ut multa milia absint saepe hibernae pastiones ab aestivis.

Vergil III.295-99:

Incipiens stabulis edico in mollibus herbam
 carpere ovis, dum mox frondosa reducitur aestas,
 et multa duram stipula filicumque maniplis
 sternere subter humum, glacies ne frigida laedat
 molle pecus scabiemque ferat turpisque podagras.

Varro II.ii.7:

stabula idoneo loco ut sint, ne ventosa, quae
 spectent magis ad orientem quam ad meridianum tempus.

Varro II.iii.6:

Stabulatur pecus melius, ad hibernos exortos si
 spectat, quod est alsiosum.

Vergil III.300-304:

post hinc digressus iubeo frondentia capris
 arbuta sufficere et fluvios praebere recentis,
 et stabula a ventis hiberno opponere soli
 ad medium conversa diem, cum frigidus olim
 iam cadit extremoque inrorat Aquarius anno.

Economics

Varro II.i.4:

In quis primum non sine causa putant oves assumptas et propter utilitatem et propter placiditatem; maxime enim hae natura quietae et aptissimae ad vitam hominum. Ad cibum enim lacte et caseum adhibitum, ad corpus vestitum et pelles adtulerunt.

Varro II.i.28:

Sed Scrofa, Si exigere mavis sine mulorum fetura et nutritu numerum octoginta et unum, est qui expleas duplicem istam lacunam, quod extraordinariae fructum species duae accedunt magnae, quarum una est tonsura, quod oves ac capras detondunt aut vellunt; altera, quae latius patet, de lacte et caseo, quam scriptores Graeci separatim τυροποιάν appellaverunt ac scripserunt de ea re permulta.

Varro II.iii.5:

De emptione aliter dico atque fit, quod capras sanas sanus nemo promittit; numquam enim sine febris sunt.

Varro II.iii.7:

Ab hoc in lege locationis fundi excipi solet, ne colonus capra natum in fundo pascat. Harum enim dentes inimici sationi, quas etiam astrologi ita receperunt in caelum, ut extra lembum duodecim signorum excluserint;

Varro II.iii.8:

Quid dicam de earum sanitate, quae numquam sunt sanae?

Vergil III.305-13:

hae quoque non cura nobis levioze tuendae,
nec minor usus erit, quamvis Milesia magno
vellera mutantur Tyrios incocta rubores.
densior hinc suboles, hinc largi copia lactis;
quam magis exhausto spumaverit ubere mulctra,
laeta magis pressis manabunt flumina mammis.
nec minus interea barbas incanaque menta
Cinyphii tondent hirci saetasque comantis
usum in castrorum et miseris velamina nautis.

Pasturage

Varro II.iii.6-7:

Non multo aliter tuendum hoc pecus in pastu atque ovillum, tamen habent sua propria quaedam, quod potius silvestribus saltibus delectantur quam pratis; studiose enim de agrestibus fruticibus pascuntur atque in locis cultis virgulta carpunt.

Vergil III.314-17:

pascuntur vero silvas et summa Lycaeï,
horrentisque rubos et amantis ardua dumos,
atque ipsae memores redunt in tecta suosque
ducunt et gravido superant vix ubere limen.

Vergil III.318-21:

ergo omni studio glaciem ventosque nivalis,
quo minor est illis curae mortalis egestas,
avertes, victumque feres et virgea laetus
pabula, nec tota claudes faenilia bruma.

As in his discussion of the larger domestic animals, in the case of sheep and goats, Vergil offers no specific details about the size of the herd or the manner of ranching he has in mind. Varro, however, diligently applies the nine criteria of his original scheme outlined in the introduction to sheep and goats, investing the topic of sheep with special dignity as the first animals to participate with man in the agricultural drama; he provides ample evidence to indicate that goats were held in reasonably high esteem in antiquity. He also includes swine in his discussion of smaller domestic beasts.

Vergil, on the other hand, displays a certain embarrassment for having introduced the animals into his poetic account and apologetically declares:

nec xum animi dubius verbis ea vincere magnum
 quam sit et angustis hunc addere rebus honorem; (289-90)

His approach to sheep and goats is fundamentally different from that of the larger domestic animals; he does not single out individual representatives of the species, but instead treats them collectively, without particular attention to male or female. Preoccupation with breeding and training of the young have been replaced by considerations of feeding and health. Similarly, though he does display a certain degree of sympathy for the rather helpless creatures, the rapport between man and animal, a special feature of his consideration of the larger animals, is noticeably absent.

Vergil opens his discussion with a consideration of the care of the animals in winter. In his discussion of sheep Varro suggests a number of alternatives for winter pasturage; for flocks which are normally pastured near the steading, he suggests some kind of enclosure for shelter in inclement weather (ii.7-9); for other flocks it is sufficient to drive them to winter pasture lands with make-shift, portable precautions against the elements, so that they may graze freely all year (ii.9). The latter practice, known as transhumance, was a popular method of ranching in antiquity and favoured by Varro himself.⁵⁵

Vergil, however, discusses only one possibility, stabling in winter. In his account there is a particular emphasis on the frail nature of the flock which we do not find in Varro's treatise. Varro suggests a number

⁵⁵R.R.II.ii.9.

of precautions which are advisable when the animals are to be kept in indoor enclosures, but he doesn't emphasize any special weakness or frailty in the animals themselves. Vergil, however, suggests a particular susceptibility to chill and disease. The flock is described as "molle pecus" and must be protected from winter's chill.

In Vergil's account, more emphasis has been placed on winter as a hostile force with the potential for harm. Mange and disease are attributed to the cold, while in the Varronian description, they are the result of uncleanness when moisture is allowed to stand in the stall.

While developing his discussion to include goats, Vergil gives the impression of actually conducting a tour through the stables. Goats housed in protective quarters for the winter require arbutus branches and fresh water, just as if they were grazing freely outdoors.

Varro's precept on the ideal location for the stable is modified by Vergil. Varro twice suggests that the stable should face in an easterly direction, toward the winter sunrise. He cautions against a southerly direction.

Vergil too is concerned that the animals should derive full benefit from the winter sun. He recommends a full southern exposure so that the stable should feel the warmth from the noon-day sun directly:

et stabula a ventis hiberno opponere soli (302)

"Opponere" is a much stronger verb than the Varronian "spectare" and suggests that the stable should be placed squarely in the path of the sun's rays. Vergil elaborates on the aspect of cold with mention of

Aquarius and the year's rainy end.⁵⁶

Throughout his discussion of the care of these smaller animals, Vergil credits the goat with a degree of independence, reliability, and usefulness not stressed by Varro.⁵⁷ In discussing the necessary criteria for the selection and maintenance of herds of goats, Varro displays a certain degree of reluctance about the advisability of such a project; in the first place, purchasing goats is a somewhat hazardous venture since they are highly susceptible to fever (iii.5) and not particularly healthy animals (iii.8); moreover, the farmer who keeps goats must take care in choosing a pasture site for grazing, since goats can severely damage the growth of vegetation (iii.7); finally, herds of goats must be kept relatively small, for they scatter easily and are rather difficult to control (iii.9). Though he does not comment extensively on the economics of goat farming, Varro does caution prospective buyers on the dangers of keeping too large a herd; since the animals are especially sensitive to disease, an epidemic can easily wipe out one's

⁵⁶Richter, *Georgica*, ad III.302ff. suggests that Vergil has departed from traditional practice concerning the location of the stable in order to create a strong sensual impression--Vergil is actually conveying the human experience of the pleasant warmth of the sun on a winter's day.

⁵⁷Klingner, *Virgil's Georgica*, p. 154 wrongly suggests that the passage in praise of goats, vv. 305-17 is repeated from Varro. Varro does mention some economic advantages to be gained from keeping goats, but his reluctance and precautionary attitudes far outweigh these considerations. The tone and attitude in *Georgic* III are distinctly Vergilian.

initial investment (iif.10).

Vergil, on the other hand, stresses the economic value of goats, and suggests they are quite worth the effort their maintenance demands. He even compares them favourably with Milesian sheep whose fleece is especially valuable (vv. 305-10). We notice that "cura" appears again; since sheep and goats are presented by Vergil as rather passive and helpless creatures, the demands on man in this sphere of animal husbandry will be even greater than in the case of the larger farm animals. Yet his effort does not go unrewarded; in the case of goats, the return on his labour far exceeds the time and effort devoted to their care.

In addition to an abundant supply of milk, goats provide the farmer with a rough hairy cloth to furnish soldiers and sailors with garments.⁵⁸ In good weather, goats display a particular self-reliance, and return uncalled from their pasture, without a guide, in the evening:

pascuntur vero silvas et summa Lycaei,
horrentisque rubos et amantis ardua dumos,
atque ipsae memores redeunt in tecta suosque
ducunt et gravido superant vix ubere limen. (314-17)

With this charming vignette of rural tranquillity, Vergil introduces several salient facts about goats which are handled in a baldly factual manner by Varro. With mention of "Lycaei", we recall not only

⁵⁸Richter, *Georgica*, ad III.313 suggests that Vergil, a 'land-lubber', erred in interpreting Varro's suggestion of the uses for goat hair, "capra e pilis ministrat ad usum nauticum et ad bellica tormenta et fabrilis vasa" (II.xi.11). Richter believes that Varro intended the outfitting of ships rather than the sailor's clothing. It seems to me, however, that Varro's phrase "usum nauticum" is not that precise. Moreover, this one-to-one relationship between man and animal is the essence of Vergil's vision and the gift of clothing is more direct and personal than ship's rigging.

that Arcadia is the natural haunt of these creatures, but also that they are frequently represented as the companions of Pan. Moreover, allusion to "silvas", and "rubos", and "dumos" suggests that the preferred grazing area for goats is lofty, rugged terrain with hardy bush growth.

The particular emphasis on the independence of the flocks together with the abundant milk supply, and their fertility and quiet loyalty to man carries a reminiscence of the tranquillity and spontaneous productivity characteristic of the Golden Age. In his earlier poetic vision of the return of the Golden Age, Vergil depicts a similar scene:

ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae
ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones; (E. IV. 21-2)

In return for their loyalty and productivity, the goats demand special care only in winter. The passage closes with a repetition of didactic points already raised in connection with smaller domestic animals; they must be sheltered from inclement weather and have ready access to an abundant supply of food:

ergo omni studio glaciem ventosque nivalis,
quo minor est illis curae mortalis egestas,
avertes, victumque feres et virgea laetus
pabula, nec tota claudes faenilia bruma. (318-21)

This special attention appears as an obligation owed to the creatures and to be fulfilled willingly by man. Vergil stresses cheerful diligent attention, "omni studio", and "laetus".

This reciprocal relationship constitutes the essence of man's successful co-existence with Nature. It is a particular Vergilian touch that the creatures should earn man's care and devotion.

322-38: Care of the Animals in Summer

Varro II.ii.10-11:

Eaeque ibi, ubi pascuntur in eadem regione, tamen temporibus distinguntur, aestate quod cum prima luce exeunt pastum, propterea quod tunc herba ruscida meridianam, quae est aridior, iucunditate praestat. Sole exorto potum propellunt, ut redintegrantes rursus ad pastum alacriores faciant. Circiter meridianos aestus, dum defervescent, sub umbriferas rupes et arbores patulas subigunt, quoad refrigeratur. Aere vespertino rursus pascunt ad solis occasum. Ita pascere pecus oportet, ut averso sole agat; caput enim maxime ovis molle est. Ab occasu parvo intervallo interposito ad bibendum appellunt et rursus pascunt, quoad contenebravit; iterum enim tum iucunditas in herba redintegrabit.

Vergil III.322-38:

At vero Zephyris cum laeta vocantibus aestas
 in saltus utrumque gregem atque in pascua mittet,
 Luciferi primo cum sidere frigida rura
 carpamus, dum mane novum, dum gramina canent,
 et ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba.
 inde ubi quarta sitim caeli collegerit hora
 et cantu querulae rumpent arbusta cicadae,
 ad puteos aut alta greges ad stagna iubebo
 currentem ilignis potare canalibus undam;
 aestibus at mediis umbrosam exquirere vallem,
 sicubi magna Iovis antiquo robore quercus
 ingentis tendat ramos, aut sicubi nigrum
 ilicibus crebris sacra nemus accubet umbra;
 tum tenuis dare rursus aquas et pascere rursus
 solis ad occasum, cum frigidus aëra Vesper
 temperat, et saltus reficit iam roscida luna,
 litoraue alcyonen resonant, acalanthida dumf.

The environmental approach is continued as Vergil turns to spring and summer and the care which the smaller domestic animals require in this season. The inspiration for the passage is to be found in Varro's discussion of sheep. He outlines certain practices which are advisable when pasturing sheep throughout the long summer days. At daybreak, for instance, when the grass is dewy and fresh, the animals are turned out

to graze. Later, when the sun is out, they are driven to water. In midday, when the heat of the sun is strongest, grazing stops and the animals are driven into the shade for the rest of the afternoon. As evening approaches, and it grows cooler, the sheep are driven into the grass again, where they are allowed to graze freely until it gets quite dark. At sunset, the flock is watered again.

Throughout this description, Varro maintains a rather prosaic attitude toward Nature. Pasturing the flock is his primary concern and the changing faces of the summer landscape are inconsequential except as indices for the day's labour.

Vergil, on the other hand, borrows the didactic precepts outlined by Varro and transforms them into idyllic scenes of bucolic tranquility. For Vergil, Nature is the happy mistress of the flock; at dawn, it is she who drives them out to crop the succulent grasses (vv. 322-26). With carefully selected vocabulary, Vergil attempts to crystallize the freshness of dawn; the fields are described as "frigida rura", and in a striking appeal to our optic sense, the visual aspect of dew is stressed, "dum gramina canent".

Similarly, at mid-morning, as the flocks are watered, the pristine perfection of the scene is broken only by the shrill call of the cicadas (vv. 327-30). As noon approaches and the summer heat grows more intense, beckoning shade is offered by the mighty oak, Jove's tree, or a shady grove of ilex. Vergil's Nature is alive, mysterious, and maternal, always ready to welcome her creatures to her bosom (vv. 331-34). Here man gains a sense of permanence and security.

Sunset and the approach of nightfall are heralded by the kingfisher on the shore and the finch in the thicket. Again the flocks enjoy food and drink while Nature restores the tired earth (vv. 335-38). Vergil effectively conveys the pleasing coolness of evening; "temperat" is an especially expressive verb. In this agricultural setting there are no extremes, but everything in moderation. Whereas the sun presided over the daytime earth, the moon now plays her role in rejuvenating the meadows.

Again Vergil has displayed his remarkable descriptive ability. His appreciation of Nature's beauty and tranquility, so dominant a theme in the Eclogues, appears again and transforms the mundane daily chores of the shepherd into a beautiful and exciting encounter with Mother Earth. This passage is strongly reminiscent of his earlier discussion in Georgic II, where he praises the simple natural riches of Italy in contrast to the exotic wealth of foreign lands.⁵⁹ The preoccupation is particularly Vergilian and closely linked to his concept of the Golden Age.

339-48: The Libyan Shepherd

Though Vergil doesn't identify the actual setting of this bucolic ideal, when we consider his previous appraisals of Italian rural life, we can hardly fail to appreciate the patriotic intent of this colourful vignette. Additional support for this view is gained, moreover, when we

⁵⁹Georgic II.136-76 and also II.514-42.

consider the digressory material which follows; the geographic bent is developed more fully as we turn our attention to the difficult life of the Libyan shepherd, and the Italian rustic situation, by comparison, appears even more ideal.

Unlike the Italian shepherd who must provide some kind of enclosure for his flocks as shelter from cold, inclement weather, the Libyan shepherd leads a nomadic life in a land which is always hot:

saepe diem noctemque et totum ex ordine mensem
pascitur itque pecus longa in deserta sine ullis
hospitiis: tantum campi iacet. (341-3)

But Libya remains inhospitable and never embraces its shepherds; instead, it lies vast and neutral, "sine ullis hospitiis". In contrast to the systematic arrangement of the Italian shepherd's day, the "armentarius Afer" knows no distinction even between night and day or month. Nature here doesn't accompany and complement man in his labour, but merely imposes on him a condition of total isolation, "longa in deserta".

Vergil introduces a rather interesting comparison of the African herdsman with the Roman soldier:

omnia secum
armentarius Afer agit, tectumque laremque
armaque Amyclaeumque canem Cressamque pharetram;
non secus ac patriis acer Romanus in armis
iniusto sub fasce viam cum carpit, et hosti
ante expectatum positus stat in agmine castris. (343-8)

The severe Libyan climate forces upon the shepherd a nomadic life totally alien to the pastoral ideal and more suited to the harsh, aggressive life style of the soldier. The introduction of the "acer Romanus" is an

interesting feature. One wonders whether Vergil is envisioning the farmer-soldier of Rome's past who was forced to abandon agricultural lands in the name of patriotism. Certainly this digression, brief as it is, serves to illustrate the harsh effects of extreme temperature on the life of man and points to the obvious advantages of moderation. We recall Vergil's earlier judgment on the felicity of the Italian farmer:

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
agricolas! (II.458-9)

349-83: The Scythian Shepherd

An even more striking testimony of the perversion of existence effected by climatic extremes is to be found in Vergil's account of the life of the Scythians in a land dominated by ice and cold. We notice that Vergil has devoted considerably more space to this digression on Scythia: thirty-four lines as opposed to only ten in the case of Libya. Moreover, the artistic pattern of this pair of digressions, the movement from extreme heat to extreme cold, is exactly the reverse of Vergil's opening discussion when he first considered the effects of winter's cold on the flock and then moved to the warmth of summer. In any case, his discussion of environmental conditions and their effects on animal husbandry opens and closes with a consideration of cold. The weird semi-human actions of the Scythians leave us with a psychological chill as well.

Vergil establishes the precise, geographical location for this strange land:

At non qua Scythiae gentes Maeotiaque unda,
turbidus et torquens flaventis Hister harenas,
quaque redit medium Rhodope porrecta sub axem. (349-51)

Unlike the Libyan desert which demanded a nomadic existence of its inhabitants, life here is totally centred around the steading, but in an eerie, perverted manner. Animals are stabled all year round, for the land offers no grassy plains or hillsides for grazing:

illic clausa tenent stabulis armenta, neque ullae
aut herbae campo apparent aut arbore frondes; (352-3)

In spite of the specific geographical setting, the area exudes an aura of mystery and unreality. The landscape affords no diversification, but is dominated by mounds of snow:

sed iacet aggeribus niveis informis et alto
terra gelu late septemque adsurgit in ulnas.
semper hiems, semper spirantes frigora Cauri; (354-6)

Visions of death and associations with the Underworld are suggested in this area which never sees the light of the sun:

tum Sol pallentis haud umquam discutit umbras,
nec cum invectus equis altum petit aethera, nec cum
praecipitem Oceani rubro lavit aequora currum. (357-9)

The phrase, "pallentis...umbras" especially suggests the strange, ghostly atmosphere which dominates the land.

Vergil's descriptive technique in this digression is especially effective. At first we gain a cartographic view of Scythia--we know the precise location but nothing of its character. Then with the expertise of a modern cinematographer, Vergil scans the landscape, outlining the

huge amorphous mass of ice and snow. Individual scenes come into focus, each reaffirming the total impression of gripping, paralyzing cold:

concrescunt subitae currenti in flumine crustae,
 undaque iam tergo ferratos sustinet orbis,
 puppibus illa prius, patulis nunc hospita plaustris;
 aeraque dissiliunt vulgo, vestesque rigescunt
 indutae, caeduntque securibus umida vina,
 et totae solidam in glaciem vertere lacunae,
 stiriaque impexis induruit horrida barbis.
 interea toto non setius aëre ningit: (360-7)

At this point Vergil introduces animals on the Scythian landscape:

intereant pecudes, stant circumfusa pruinis
 corpora magna boum, confertosque agmine cervi
 torpent mole nova et summis vix cornibus extant. (368-70)

Struggling vainly against the elements, the deer present an easy target for the hunter. The hunting scene which follows, far from being a sporting confrontation between man and animal, is simply an opportunity for ruthless slaughter, testimony to the perverted life style Nature has imposed upon man in this region. The hunters use no nets, dogs, or other devices to snare a lively catch, for the helpless victims can offer no resistance to the attack and are brutally cut down:

hos non immissis canibus, non cassibus ullis
 puniceaeve agitant pavidos formidine pennae,
 sed frustra oppositum trudentis pectore montem
 comminus obtruncant ferro graviterque rudentis
 caedunt et magno laeti clamore reportant. (371-5)

The verb "obtruncant" is especially effective to describe the violent, brutal murder. Vergil draws a pathetic contrast between the helpless victims bellowing loudly, "graviterque rudentis", and the shouts of the men rejoicing in their slaughter, "magno laeti clamore".

Until now the human participants in the Scythian drama have been cited rather indirectly; earlier, allusion was made to the effects of the

bitter cold on their clothes (363) and on their beards (366). In the hunting scene, of course, they appear as antagonists in the tragic drama, but the real centres of attention in the Vergilian design are the helpless victims. Finally the Scythian shepherds themselves move directly into focus as Vergil describes their strange subterranean existence:

ipsi in defossis specubus secreta sub alta
otia agunt terra, congestaque robora totasque
advolvere focis ulmos ignique dedere. (376-8)

Clearly, here we are presented with a perverted parody of the rustic ideal:

his noctem ludo ducunt, et pocula laeti
fermento atque acidis imitantur vitea sorbis.
talis Hyperboreo Septem subiecta trioni
gens effrena virum Riphaeo tunditur Euro
et pecudum fulvis velatur corpora saetis. (379-83)

"Secura otia" assumes strange associations in this northern land bound by ice and cold. We recall Vergil's earlier discussion of bucolic tranquility and appreciate the impact of the contrast which the poet intends with this Scythian imitation:

ipse dies agitat festos fustusque per herbam,
ignis ubi in medio et socii cratera coronant,
te libans, Lenaeae, vocat pecorisque magistris
velocis iaculi certamine ponit in ulmo,
corporaque agresti nudant praedura palaestra. (II. 527-31)

Vergil has simply presented us with a view of the life of the Scythian shepherds and added no editorial comment. For years commentators have struggled to appreciate the significance of these Scythian and Libyan digressions in Vergil's scheme and ultimately have fallen back on artistic considerations as justification for the disturbing passages. Richter links the Libyan-Scythian digressions to the passages in Georgic I where

Vergil maps out the various regions of the heavens:

has inter mediamque duae mortalibus aegris
 munere concessae divum, et via secta per ambas,
 obliquus qua se signorum verteret ordo.
 mundus, ut ad Scythiam Riphaeasque arduus arces
 consurgit, premitur Libyae devexus in Austros. (237-41)

He suggests that Libya and Scythia represent stylized images for the inhospitable tracts of earth, and by implication stress the ideal temperate region of Italy.⁶⁰ Klingner too believes that the Libyan-Scythian passages are intended by the poet to establish a sharp contrast with the praise of Italy in Georgic II.⁶¹ Wilkinson likewise favours this interpretation and adamantly dismisses any other solution.⁶²

⁶⁰Richter, *Georgica*, ad III. 339 ff.:

So bleibt Italien in der Mitte und bekommt ex silentio, auch noch den Ruhm des 'wirklichen Arkadiens' hinzu...Gerade darum kann dem Dichter auch nicht an einer Zeichnung von geographischer Individualität gelegen sein. Seine Bilder sind Namen für das 'caelum inimicissimum', und so ist, was auf den ersten Blick als naive Übertreibung erscheint, in Wahrheit dichterische Stilisierung.

⁶¹Klingner, *Virgils Georgica*, p. 156:

Zwischen maßlosen, unmenschlichen Gegensätzen sieht man nun erst recht das Leben der heimischen Herden und ihrer Hirten, aber auch die italische Heimat überhaupt traulich eingenistet, den Rhythmus ihrer Jahres- und Tageszeiten, worin die Gegensätze, im geordneten Ablauf gemildert, ein gegliedertes Ganzes ausmachen. Italien stellt sich wieder als Land der Mitte dar. Das ganze Gebilde ist innerlich verwandt mit den Lob Italiens in zweiten Buch.

⁶²Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil*, p. 98:

These fine descriptive passages offset one another, as of heat and cold, while together they offset the temperate life and landscape of Italy that precedes. 'Quid...prosequar?' asks Virgil, using the rhetorical figure of *praeteritio* to introduce them. This artistic justification provides the only and sufficient answer.

Clearly from the chiasmic arrangement of the two digressionary passages with the earlier considerations of winter and summer, we must conclude that Vergil intended the passages to be interpreted as a unit. Moreover, the digressionary passages transform environmental considerations from the limited agricultural sphere to a broad and more general statement of the implications of climate for the behavior of men and animals.

If we consider each of the four passages dealing with climate, we notice that the discussion on summer warmth, whether it be the balmy temperate days spent with the flocks in Italy or the sweltering extremes of Libya, is relatively neutral. Cold, on the other hand, carries more sinister associations; from the outset of his discussion on the care of sheep and goats in the winter, cold is presented as a potential threat--without due care, the animals can suffer all kinds of injury. Similarly, in the Scythian passage, cold is a much more obvious enemy, robbing Nature of her productivity, animals of their existence, and perverting man and his relationship with Nature. I believe that Vergil has emphasized this aspect of physical cold with its potential for destruction in anticipation of the chill of death to be visited on man and animals with the onslaught of the plague.⁶³

⁶³R. Martin, "Virgile et la Scythie", Revue des Etudes Latines XLIV (1966), 286-304 puts forward an hypothesis which differs significantly from the traditional interpretation. He suggests that Vergil has two areas in mind, the traditional region of Scythia between the Ister and the Tanais by the sea of Asov, and the region south of the Danube, the Roumano-Bulgarian area which in ancient times was known as Thrace and Moesia. Martin insists on contemporary relevance for the passage and suggests that the second portion of the digression, vv. 360-83, was added as Vergil completed the Georgics when the expedition to Moesia led by

384-93: Wool Production

Varro II.ii.3:

De forma ovem esse oportet corpore amplo, quae lana
 multa sit et molli, villis altis et densis toto corpore,
 maxime circum cervicem et collum, ventrem quoque ut habeat
 pilosum.

Vergil III.384-6:

Si tibi lanitium curae, primum aspera silva
 lappaeque tribolique absint; fuge pabula laeta;
 continuoque greges villis lege mollibus albos.

The Ram

Varro II.ii.4:

Animadvertendum quoque lingua ne nigra aut varia sit,
 quod fere qui eam habent nigros aut varios procreant agnos.

Vergil III.387-90:

illum autem, quamvis aries sit candidus ipse,
 nigra subest udo tantum cui lingua palato,
 reice, ne maculis infuscet vellera pullis
 nascentum, plenoque alium circumspice camp^o.

Following this descriptive unit dealing with climate, Vergil turns his attention to the economics of sheep and goat farming. This section discussing wool production along with its companion piece on milk

M. Licinius Crassus was imminent. Martin interprets the emphasis on the brutal savage ways of the Scythian tribes as Vergil's attempt to justify this war of aggression.

I am not convinced by Martin's evidence of two different styles in the Scythian digression, or his preoccupation with inconsistencies in the account. Though it answers the problem of the disproportionate length of the Libyan and Scythian digressions, this conclusion credits Vergil with romantic sentiments that were not his, and ignores the movement and design of the unit as a whole. I don't believe that Vergil would have found it necessary to justify any external war--the Romans were a nation of conquerors.

and cheese (vv. 394-403) and the brief discussion on dogs (vv. 404-14) serve as a transitional unit to Vergil's growing concern with danger and later illness besetting the flock. This brief emphasis on positive benefits to be derived from keeping flocks of sheep and goats is sandwiched between negative considerations of the hazards involved in climatic extremes and more obvious peril to the animals, treacherous snakes.

In introducing the topic of wool production, Vergil offers several suggestions to ensure good yield of wool (vv. 384-6). The problems encountered in shearing sheep discussed by Varro are nowhere mentioned by Vergil as the subject of wool production is handled very selectively. Only one consideration, a genetic aspect, receives particular attention from the poet. The folly of choosing a ram with a spotted tongue was introduced by Varro, more logically as a point for consideration in the selection of a suitable ram for breeding. In discussing smaller domestic animals Vergil has not considered the aspect of breeding; consequently, he has introduced this colourful bit of rustic wisdom as a special precaution in the production of choice fleeces. This belief in the theory of the spotted tongue was commonly held in antiquity. We can understand how such a theory would exercise a special appeal for a poet who showed particular concern for eugenics and purity of the line.

In sharp contrast to this homely bit of wisdom, the section concludes with a rather esoteric mythological allusion. Returning briefly to the theme of love, Vergil makes reference to Pan's wooing of the Moon with a snowy fleece:

munere sic niveo lanae, si credere dignum est,
 Pan deus Arcadiae captam te, Luna, fefellit
 in nemora alta vocans; nec tu aspernata vocantem. (391-3)

394-403: Milk and Cheese Production

Varro II.ii.19:

Utrumque enim ad corpus alendum inimicum, ut maxime
 amicum cytisum et medica. Nam et pingues facit facillime et
 genit lacte.

Varro II.xi.1:

Lacte est omnium rerum, quas cibi causa capimus,
 liquentium maxime alibile, et id ovillum, dein caprinum.

Varro II.xi.3:

Ex hoc lacte casei qui fiunt, maximi cibi sunt bubuli
 et qui difficillime transeant sumpti, secundo ovilli, minimi
 cibi et qui facillime deiciantur caprini.

Varro II.xi.4:

Caseum facere incipiunt a vergiliis vernis exortis
 ad aestivas vergilias. Mulgent vere ad caseum faciendum mane,
 aliis temporibus meridianis horis, tametsi propter loca et
 pabulum disparile non usque quaque idem fit.

Varro II.xi.3:

Et etiam est discrimen, utrum casei molles ac recentes
 sint, an aridi et veteres, cum molles sint magis alibiles,
 in corpore non resides, veteres et aridi contra.

Vergil III.394-99:

At cui lactis amor, cytisum lotosque frequentis
 ipse manu salsasque ferat praesepibus herbas:
 hinc et amant fluvios magis, et magis ubera tendunt
 et salis occultum referunt in lacte saporem.
 multi etiam excretos prohibent a matribus haedos,
 primaque ferratis praefigunt ora capistris.

Vergil III.400-03:

quod surgente die mulsere horisque diurnis,
 nocte premunt; quod iam tenebris et sole cadente,
 sub lucem: exportant calathis (adit oppida pastor),
 aut parco sale contingunt hiemique reponunt.

This brief consideration of wool production is followed by a discussion of equal length concerning other by-products of the herd, milk and cheese. Vergil recommends certain dietary additions to stimulate the production of milk (vv. 394-7). Varro suggests clover as a valuable food for animals which are to be milked, though he makes no mention of adding salt to their diets. Sheep's milk is to be preferred, since it is the most nourishing, followed by goat's milk according to Varro. In the matter of cheeses, those made from sheep's milk are most nutritious, while goat's milk cheese is more easily digested.

In his discussion, Vergil makes no clear distinction between sheep and goats in the matter of milk and cheese, though his recommendation concerning the young involves only kids (vv. 398-9). Varro, we recall, does not approve the milking of breeding ewes at all.

In making of cheese Vergil recommends two different steps, though he presents a much more simplified account than Varro. Milk drawn in the morning and through the day should be made into cheese in the evening (vv. 400-01); evening milk, on the other hand, should be poured into wicker baskets and brought into town or salted and stored to be eaten in the winter (vv. 401-3).

In contrast to Varro who suggests spring and early summer as the period for cheese-making, Vergil does not specify a particular time of

year, though his latter remark regarding cheeses stored for the winter implies that he had a particular period in the warmer weather in mind for the making of cheese. Varro makes no mention of the marketing of cheese, but has devoted a good deal of his discussion on the making of cheeses to a consideration of the various means of inducing coagulation, a point which is ignored by Vergil. As always, the discussion by the Roman poet is highly selective, but designed to capture the essence of rural life.

404-13: The Care of Dogs

Varro II.ix.1:

Canes enim ita custos pecoris eius quod eo comite indiget ad se defendendum. In quo genere sunt maxime oves, deinde caprae. Has enim lupus captare solet, cui opponimus canes defensores.

Varro II.ix.5:

Item videndum ut boni seminii sint; itaque et a regionibus appellantur Lacones, Epirotici, Sallentini. Videndum ne a venatoribus aut laniis canes emas; alteri quod ad pecus sequendum inertes, alteri, si viderint leporem aut cervum, quod eum potius quam oves sequentur.

Varro II.ix.8-10:

Cibatus canis proprior hominis quam ovis. Pascitur enim eduliis et ossibus, non herbis aut fronde. Diligentur ut habeat cibaria providendum...Nec non ita panem hordeacium dandum, ut non potius eum in lacte des intritum, quod eo consueti cibo uti a pecore non cito desciscunt. Morticinae ovis non patiuntur vesci carne, ne ducti sapore minus se abstineant. Dant etiam ius ex ossibus et ea ipsa ossa contusa.

Vergil 404-06:

Nec tibi cura canum fuerit postrema, sed una
 velocis Spartae catulos acremque Molossum
 pasce sero pingui.

Vergil III.406-13:

numquam custodibus illis
 nocturnum stabulis furem incursusque luporum
 aut impacatos a tergo horrebis Hiberos.
 saepe etiam cursu timidos agitabis onagros,
 et canibus leporem, canibus venabere dammas;
 saepe volutabris pulsos silvestribus apros
 latratu turbabis agens, montisque per altos
 ingentem clamore premes ad retia cervum.

Passing from economic considerations of sheep and goat farming, Vergil turns to dogs, part of that peripheral group cited by Varro as necessary elements in maintaining optimum productivity of the herds. Varro regards the watch-dog as an integral part of his scheme and applies to this animal the same nine criteria of judgment which he has advocated for domestic animals.

Vergil disregards Varro's exclusive preoccupation with the guard dog and mentions two celebrated breeds. He regards protection and hunting as suitable preoccupations for both, although he does recognize speed as the special prerogative of the Spartan hound, while the Molossian is renowned for ferocity. Vergil's treatment of the topic of dogs is very general, highly rhetorical, and only tenuously connected to his subject of animal husbandry. Vergil was not interested in the keeping of large flocks and consequently dogs were less necessary in his scheme. While Varro stresses the usefulness of dogs as protection against wolves, Vergil adds a more exotic enemy, Spanish brigands. Again war has been thrust into the quiet, rural setting.

The short section closes with a vivid hunting scene:

saepe etiam cursu timidos agitabis onagros,
 et canibus leporem, canibus venabere dammas;
 saepe volutabris pulsos silvestribus apros
 latratu turbabis agens, montisque per altos
 ingentem clamore premes ad retia cervum. (409-13)

One wonders how much time the busy farmer would have had for such pursuits. It seems to me that the scene was more valuable to Vergil as a poetic presentation than for its relevance to his discussion of animal husbandry.

On the other hand, dogs are not an entirely neutral and hence superfluous element in the discussion. They are symbols of aggression, be it defensive, as in the case of protection against enemies, or offensive, as in the hunting scene. Elements unhealthy and sinister, but capable of being controlled, intrude on the quiet rustic landscape. The discussion provides the transition to other menaces, snakes and disease which threaten the herd as directly as wolves or Spanish brigands. Vergil is developing a climactic progression to the most sinister threat, the onslaught of vicious, destructive plague which cannot be controlled.

414-39: Snakes

Vergil continues his discussion on the care of sheep and goats by again turning in the direction of the stables. He offers several recommendations for the removal of snakes. He begins by suggesting fumigation to rid the stables of the "chelydrus":

Disce et odoratam stabulis accendere cedrum,
 galbaneoque agitare gravis nidore chelydros. (414-5)

The particular threat presented to the livestock by this creature is not directly emphasized by Vergil. Yet the descriptive epithet, "gravis", is used, presumably in the connotation of "troublesome" or "offensive". Still within the confines of the stable, Vergil describes the viper:

saepe sub immotis praesepibus aut mala tactu
vipera delituit caelumque exterrita fugit, (416-7)

Again this reptile is disturbing only for its presence in the stable and though described as "mala tactu", as envisioned here by Vergil it offers no specific threat to the animals. Stealth is its principal attribute. The verb "delituit" is particularly expressive to describe this stealthy, lurking presence. The snake is beginning to acquire its sinister, forbidding character; still we gain no indication of fierce, aggressive behavior, for the snake, "exterrita", simply flees.

With the appearance of the "coluber", on the other hand, we witness definite climactic progression in the narrative. Unlike the water-snake and the viper, this serpent is venomous and thus presents a more overt threat to the stock; at the same time, its actions are more aggressive:

aut tecto adsuetus coluber succedere et umbrae
(pestis acerba boum) pecorique aspergere virus,
fovit humum. cape saxa manu, cape robora, pastor,
tollentemque minas et sibila colla tumentem
deice! (418-22)

This reptile is dangerous not only to the smaller domestic animals, but to cattle as well. The phrase, "pestis acerba boum" is strangely anticipatory of the plague which will be described as "pestis" and which will

exact a heavy toll among cattle. Yet, for all its threats and hostility, the "coluber" can be controlled if the shepherd takes quick, decisive action. Much of the terror connected with the plague arises from man's inability to effect any useful remedy. Here the once hostile aggressive creature takes refuge in frightened flight:

iamque fuga timidum caput abdidit alte,
cum medii nexus extremaeque agmina caudae
solvuntur, tardosque trahit sinus ultimus orbis. (422-4)

The association of "virus" with the "coluber" suggests an earlier passage in the Georgics where Jupiter himself is said to have made snakes venomous (I.129). Together with other tribulations this was intended by Jupiter to force man to learn to conquer his environment. For the moment, at least, the "pastor" in Vergil's scheme has the upper hand in his battle against forces which threaten to destroy his existence. But his complete helplessness later in the face of the plague represents not only a reversal of natural law but a perversion of the divine plan as well.

This brief impression of confident control is dispelled as Vergil moves beyond the locale of the steading to present the memorable vignette of the Calabrian snake (vv. 425-39). The dominant impression becomes one of horror and revulsion as Vergil emphasizes the visual aspects of the snake:

est etiam ille malus Calabris in saltibus anguis
squamea convolvens sublato pectore terga
atque notis longam maculosus grandibus alvum, (425-7).

Strong in his aggressive fury, he greedily devours the fish and frogs in the lake:

qui, dum amnes ulli rumpuntur fontibus et dum
 vere madent udo terrae ac pluvialibus Austris,
 stagna colit ripisque habitans sic piscibus atram
 improbus ingluviem ranisque loquacibus explet; (428-31)

Even more frightening is the aspect of the snake, driven mad by the heat
 and raging over a parched landscape:

postquam exusta palus, terraeque ardore dehiscunt,
 exsilit in siccum, et flammantia lumina torquens
 saevit agris asperque siti atque exterritus aestu. (432-4)

In his madness, he denies to man a characteristic pleasure of the
 bucolic landscape:

ne mihi tum mollis sub divo carpere somnos
 neu dorso nemoris libeat iacuisse per herbas,
 cum positis novus exuviis nitidusque iuventa
 volvitur, aut catulos tectis aut ova relinquens,
 arduus ad solem, et linguis micat ore trisulcis. (435-9)

We cannot help but recall Vergil's earlier appreciation of the quiet,
 carefree existence afforded man in the rustic life:

at secura quies et nescia fallere vita,
 dives opum variarum, at latis otia fundis,
 speluncae vivique lacus, at frigida tempe
 mugitusque boum mollesque sub arbore somni
 non absunt; (II.467-71).

Here peaceful sleep in the outdoors is not denied. The appearance of the
 Calabrian snake has seriously disrupted the illusion of peace and security
 to be had in Italy. Earlier, as Vergil extolled the praises of the
 Italian land, the absence of the large scaly serpent is a noticeable
 feature of the idyllic rustic setting:

at rabidae tigres absunt et saeva leonum
 semina, nec miseros fallunt aconita legentis,
 nec rapit immensos orbis per humum neque tanto
 squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis. (II.151-54)

Clearly, then, with the introduction of a variety of snakes and especially the Calabrian species into his scheme of animal husbandry, Vergil intends to signal a serious disturbance. His choice of substantives to describe the serpents is especially revealing, for we notice a climactic progression; the choice of "chelydrus" and "viper" is quite a regular one for relatively harmless snakes; "coluber" denotes a more threatening species; "anguis", however, in the Vergilian corpus conveys a much more threatening and odious association than these other substantives used to identify snakes.

The topic of snakes as a potential hazard to livestock is not introduced in the Varronian treatise; the preoccupation is Vergil's own. Yet as we examine the passage, we notice that Vergil has moved beyond the immediate area of the steading and with the vignette of the Calabrian snake transferred the threat to a more general and broader level. The topic of snakes has been introduced by our poet to establish a psychological climate of horror and anticipation of a terrible upheaval. For the time, our fears and forebodings are directed toward an unknown calamity, but will converge on the cataclysmic plague. In the description of this which we will consider later, Vergil takes particular care to develop a link between the phenomenon of plague and this earlier description of serpents. The appearance of these sinister reptiles is designed to establish a mood of terror and helplessness which will dominate the conclusion of the book.⁶⁴

⁶⁴In Georgic IV we find a similar association of the serpent with death as Eurydice, fleeing from the amorous pursuit of Aristaeus does not see the snake hidden in the grass and is bitten (vv. 457-9). Similarly in Aeneid II Vergil introduces serpent imagery to establish a psychological climate of horror and doom as the Trojan city falls to the Greeks. I have discussed this particular use in Aeneid II more fully in Chapter III in connection with the plague passage.

440-77: Disease and its Treatment

Varro II.i.21:

Quarta pars est de sanitate, res multiplex ac necessaria, quod morbosum pecus est vitiosum, et quoniam non valet, saepe magna adficiuntur calamitate. Cuius scientiae genera duo, ut in homine, unum ad quae adhibendi medici, alterum quae ipse etiam pastor diligens mederi possit. Eius partes sunt tres. Nam animadvertendum, quae cuiusque morbi sit causa, quaeque signa earum causarum sint, et quae quemque morbum ratio curandi sequi debeat.

Varro II.i.22:

Fere morborum causae erunt, quod laborant propter aestus aut propter frigora, nec non etiam propter nimium laborem aut contra nullam exercitationem, aut si, cum exercueris, statim sine intervallo cibum aut potionem dederis. Signa autem sunt, ut eorum qui e labore febrem habent adaperitum os umido spiritu crebro et corpore calido.

Varro II.i.23:

Curatio autem, cum hic est morbus, haec: Perfunditur aqua et perungitur oleo et vino tepefacto, et item cibo substinetur, et inicitur aliquid, ne frigus laedat; sitiendi aqua tepida datur. Si hoc genus rebus non proficitur, demittitur sanguis, maxime e capite. Item ad alios morbos aliae causae et alia signa, in omni pecore quae scripta habere oportet magistrum pecoris.

Varro II.xi.5:

De tonsura ovium primum animadverto, antequam incipiam facere, num scabiam aut ulcera habeant, ut, si opus est, ante curentur, quam tondeantur.

Varro II.xi.7:

Tonsas recentes eodem die perungunt vino et oleo, non nemo admixta cera alba et adipe suilla; et si ea tecta solet esse, quam habuit pellem intectam, eam intrinsecus eadem re perinungunt et tegunt rursus. Siqua in tonsura plagam accepit, eum locum oblinunt pice liquida.

Vergil III.440-51:

Morborum quoque te causas et signa docebo.
 turpis ovis temptat scabies, ubi frigidus imber
 altius ad vivum persedit et horrida cano
 bruma gelu, vel cum tonsis inlotus adhaesit
 sudor, et hirsuti secuerunt corpora vepres.
 dulcibus idcirco fluviis pecus omne magistri
 perfundunt, udisque aries in gurgite villis
 mersatur, missusque secundo defluit amni;
 aut tonsum tristi contingunt corpus amurca
 et spumas miscent argenti vivaque sulphura
 Idaeasque pices et pinguis unguine ceras
 scillamque elleborosque gravis nigrumque bitumen.

Vergil III.452-6:

non tamen ulla magis praesens fortuna laborum est
 quam si quis ferro potuit rescindere summum
 ulceris os: alitur vitium vivitque tegendo,
 dum medicas adhibere manus ad vulnera pastor
 abnegat et meliora deos sedet omina poscens.

Vergil III.457-463:

quin etiam, ima dolor balantum lapsus ad ossa
 cum furit atque artus depascitur arida febris,
 profuit incensos aestus avertere et inter
 ima ferire pedis salientem sanguine venam,
 Bisaltae quo more solent acerque Gelonus,
 cum fugit in Rhodopen atque in deserta Getarum,
 et lac concretum cum sanguine potat equino.

Vergil III.464-77:

quam procul aut molli succedere saepius umbrae
 videris aut summas carpentem ignavius herbas
 extremamque sequi, aut medio procumbere campo
 pascentem et serae solam decedere nocti--
 continuo culpam ferro compesce, priusquam
 dira per incautum serpant contagia vulgus.
 non tam creber agens hiemem ruit aequore turbo
 quam multae pecudum pestes. nec singula morbi
 corpora corripunt, sed tota aestiva repente,
 spemque gregemque simul cunctamque ab origine gentem.
 tum sciat, aërias Alpibus et Norica si quis
 castella in tumulis et Iapydis arva Timavi
 nunc quoque post tanto videat, desertaque regna
 pastorum et longe saltus lateque vacantis.

With the conclusion of the digression on the Calabrian snake Vergil returns to more pertinent considerations of animal husbandry with a discussion of disease and its treatment. Throughout Georgic III there is a perceptible pattern to Vergil's description; he moves from confident control to total helplessness and despair. In the first section dealing with the larger, domestic animals, Vergil painstakingly reveals the variety of points to be observed in conscientious selection and training of stock; just as success comes within reach, all positive benefits and accomplishments are undercut and swept away by a negative, uncontrolled outbreak of savage fury. So also in the matter of health, Vergil carefully outlines a programme of preventive medicine to enable the "pastor" to gain control, only to witness such control and life itself swept away in a violent, savagely destructive epidemic.

The discussion on disease opens with quiet confidence as Vergil again assumes the role of "praeceptor":

Morborum quoque te causas et signa docebo. (440)

Varro considered health an important topic for each of the nine species in his agricultural scheme. While recognizing that certain illnesses demanded the skill of a physician, he stressed that others could be treated effectively by a careful herdsman, and attempted to establish basic principles to be followed in the latter instance. The subject of disease was divided into three broad areas of consideration: cause, symptoms, and treatment. Among the various causes of disease, Varro cites heat, cold, overwork, lack of exercise, and feeding or watering too soon after strenuous

labour.

Of these, only illnesses from overwork are stressed. Certain symptoms for easy recognition by the herdsman and a programme of treatment are outlined. For the treatment and cure of other diseases, Varro recommends that the head herdsman keep a manual to be consulted whenever necessary. In his consideration of each of the animal species, however, Varro is content, at least in the case of sheep and goats, to dismiss the question of health and refer the reader to the manual for suitable remedies.

In his discussion, Vergil singles out only one illness for consideration, scab and skin eruptions. As in his earlier discussion (vv. 298-9), he stresses cold as the principal cause of scab in sheep along with excessive sweating. Brambles, too, often cut the animals' flesh and lead to nasty problems. Vergil's principal concern is treatment of the disease and he offers several solutions. As in the example discussed by Varro, treatment is intended to be carried out by a resourceful herdsman.

He first suggests complete immersion in a stream, presumably to cleanse the fleece and the infected area (vv. 445-7). After shearing, the animals are rubbed down with a carefully concocted mixture (448-51). In discussing the shearing of sheep Varro recommends a similar process, though the particular mixture described by Vergil appears to be his own.

Vergil strongly urges immediate, positive action against disease and displays a strong repulsion for inactivity or indecision (vv. 452-4). Consistent with the message stressed throughout the Georgics, man is

obligated to arrest the continuous decline of the earth by whatever resources are available to him. Disease has a sinister and mysterious potency which flourishes if allowed to go unchecked (vv. 454-6).

With the description of the "ulcus" Vergil has sounded a warning and established a sense of foreboding which will be brought to fulfillment in the plague sequence. As so often is the case in Vergilian description, pessimism and destruction lurk menacingly beneath the guise of effective control. Vergil's remark in the close of this passage is interesting and revealing. Though he has consistently upheld the observance of rustic religious ritual, and urged man to maintain a pious, respectful attitude toward his gods, Vergil shows little patience with the man who relies solely on divine solutions for his problems. There are times when man must lay ritual and omens aside and act on his own initiative.

Should disease progress to a more critical stage, Vergil recommends a more drastic method of treatment, the letting of blood (vv. 457-63). Such a remedy was also recommended by Varro, though he suggested the animal's head as the more usual location for the technique. Vergil stresses the mysterious and urgent nature of the remedy by emphasizing its exotic origins: it was developed by nomadic peoples, Scythians, Macedonians, and Thracians who drink milk mixed with blood. A drastic measure for a critical situation, it should not be left to the timid.

Vergil's description of the onslaught of disease is interesting; sickness is regarded as a raging fury which slowly devours itself; "depascitur" (v. 458) is an especially expressive verb to suggest thorough

consumption by fever. Clearly this scene is intended to anticipate the terrible advance of plague which is to follow; there is, however, one significant difference; here at least, methods of treatment are available for the "pastor"; for the fury of the plague man can find no remedy.

Finally Vergil briefly considers symptoms of disease in sheep (vv. 464-7). As always the "pastor" must not hesitate to adopt a decisive attitude and quickly eliminate the contaminated animal before the whole flock becomes infected (vv. 468-9).

Throughout the discussion of disease, we notice a subtle climactic progression. Vergil begins by discussing a relatively simple skin disease; he then moves to a consideration of fever, "incensos aestus" (v. 459), which insidiously penetrates the flock and brings destruction in its wake if allowed to rage unchecked. Without a formal transition, Vergil moves directly into the plague sequence. The illusion of security and control which had been fostered by Vergil's calm exposition of medical precepts is definitively dispelled by the outbreak of the massive epidemic:

nec singula morbi
 corpora corripunt, sed tota aestiva repente,
 spemque gregemque simul cunctamque ab origine gentem. (471-3)

The impression one gains from a synoptic study of Vergil and Varro strongly substantiates our instinctive appreciation of the independence of the poet. Certainly we become aware that Vergilian dependence on Varro is considerable, though none of the borrowings in itself is especially significant, and all can be classified under the heading of didactic

content; even then Vergil has made no attempt to produce as comprehensive a "dialogue" or as strongly a pragmatic approach to animal husbandry.

In Georgic III Vergil does not offer an exhaustive study of animal husbandry; his limited approach above all conditions his response to the Varronian material. In all instances, borrowing of technical precepts is governed by a strong principle of selectivity rigidly controlled by the poet. Vergil's principal preoccupations in book III are the philosophic themes of love and death, and the borrowings from Varro's treatise are clearly subordinate to the philosophic design of the book.

Though Vergil occasionally differs from Varro on a minor point of agricultural practice, we find no real evidence of any attempt to offer a corrective of the Varronian view. In many instances the divergence owes its origins to a special philosophic colouring which Vergil wishes to impart to his presentation. Though he used the agricultural material as a vehicle for his presentation of a programme of reconstruction of war-torn Italy, Vergil was not primarily interested in agricultural operations, and Georgic III in no way ranks with book II of the De Re Rustica for technical merit. At all times borrowing from the Varronian treatise is subject to the special demands of his poetic medium and Vergil's own artistic considerations. In addition to poetic economy, Vergil ranks variety high on his list of artistic requirements; consequently, we often find evidence of a strong pictorial quality which Vergil introduces with consummate skill to add vitality to the baldly factual precepts of Varro. Occasionally, Vergil borrows the technical content of the

De Re Rustica and combines it with strong linguistic echoes of the Lucretian philosophic poem to present a technical precept in an unique fashion. Vergil occasionally introduces esoteric mythological allusions to add colour to his presentation. At other times Vergil has recognized the value of simplicity and presented the Varronian precept in a straightforward manner, though in language suited to the requirements of the poetic hexameter.

A notable feature of the Vergilian presentation which imparts special vitality to the Varronian precepts on animal husbandry is the poet's remarkable ability to empathize with the domestic animals. In Vergil's scheme they are living, suffering, active participants in the agricultural drama, rather than mere topics of discussion in a technical treatise. Again however, this represents a natural outgrowth of Vergil's poetic nature and in no way detracts from the technical excellence of Varro's material.

Though the Varronian material has lent substance and shape to the didactic content of Georgic III, the De Re Rustica has provided another more vital contribution which unfortunately appears to have been ignored. Commentators herald the Hesiodic direction of the Georgics with its emphasis on hard personal labour and the rewards of the simple agricultural life. In combining this sound moral attitude of archaic Greece with the technical knowledge and proven agricultural expertise of a contemporary Roman, Vergil has infused his message of reconstruction with special

relevance for contemporary society. But Varro's treatise appeared in 37, only a year before Vergil began the Georgics, and Varro's quiet appeal for agricultural rehabilitation must have inspired Vergil in his own vision of reform and impressed upon the poet the suitability of a technical framework for the expression of a message of rehabilitation.

CHAPTER THREE

"LUCRETIAN" MODELS IN GEORGIC III

Pestis

Among classical authors who have written of plague Thucydides has the singular distinction of having experienced the symptoms which he describes. Yet the rambling discursive style or preoccupation with sensationalism that sometimes occur in first person narratives do not mar the Thucydidean account; his description of the disease is motivated by a desire to alert future generations to all symptoms in the event of a recurrence:

I shall describe the course of the disease and the symptoms to observe, should it ever again attack, in order to have some advance knowledge and not remain in ignorance. Having suffered from the disease myself and witnessed the afflictions of others, I shall make this information clear.¹

Ἰ ἐγὼ δὲ οἶόν τε ἐρίγνετο λέξω, καὶ ἀφ' ὧν ἄν τις
σκοπῶν, εἴ ποτε καὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιπέσοι, μάλιστα ἄν ἔχοι τι
προειδῶς μὴ ἀγνοεῖν ταῦτα δηλώσω αὐτός τε νοσήσας
καὶ αὐτὸς ἰδὼν ἄλλους πάσχοντας. (II. 48.3).

Thucydides *Historiae*, ed. with critical notes by Henry Stuart, with emended and augmented apparatus criticus by Enoch Powell (repr. of 1st ed.; Oxford, 1955), I. All subsequent quotations from the Thucydidean text will be drawn from this edition.

As well as a detailed discussion of the physical manifestations of the Athenian plague, Thucydides offers a keen analysis of the psychological and social effects it brought in its wake. Several centuries later, his penetrating study was to have both direct and indirect influence on two of Rome's greatest poets, Lucretius and Vergil respectively. Lucretius followed the Thucydidean example quite closely and concluded his monumental epic, the De Rerum Natura, with an account of the great plague which struck Athens in the fifth century. Vergil, on the other hand, though greatly indebted to Lucretius and indirectly to Thucydides for many elements in his description of plague, chose to make animals the victims of his epidemic and made the Alps north of Italy the setting for the devastation. In order to appreciate the full impact of the plague sequence, we must consider Thucydides' purpose in writing the Histories and the special intellectual climate of Periclean Athens which stimulated his endeavours.

The fifth century was a critical period for all of Greece and especially for the Athenians. In the midst of the turmoil which threatened to topple Athenian fortunes, Thucydides developed a new historical perspective. He looked beyond individual events of contemporary history in search of a universal and permanent law. In his view, human nature never changed and consequently the history of individuals and nations must necessarily repeat itself. The study of historical events and personages, therefore, was extremely valuable for the comprehension of the future as well as the past.

The Peloponnesian War provided an excellent opportunity for him to develop his historical thesis. In describing the conflict, he has provided his reader with an almost clinical assessment of ambition and power. In his

view, the principal cause of the struggle was the incessantly growing power of Athens, which caused Sparta to feel threatened and compelled her to assert herself. But power in the Thucydidean scheme encompassed much more than greed; a true Athenian, Thucydides hailed the age of Pericles as the greatest in the history of Athens and celebrated a composite ideal of power which embodied literary, philosophical, artistic, and moral excellence, as well as political greatness. He believed that the Athenian experience held a valid lesson for all men. Consequently, the psychological motivation of the Athenians at the peak of their power and in the face of adversity are important considerations of his history.²

While acknowledging Thucydides' creative insight, we must remember that he lived in an intellectually stimulating era. One of his contemporaries, Hippocrates, was himself engaged in a struggle which was to have a direct influence on Thucydides. In attempting to divorce medicine from philosophy, Hippocrates developed a system of rational empiricism in which he stressed prognosis, the physician's ability to predict, as the essence of medical science. Through close attention to symptoms and other indications of disease, together with an intelligent appraisal of the significance of these facts, the physician should be able to make a knowledgeable prediction of the course of the disease.

²Werner Jaeger, Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture, trans. G. Hight (2nd ed; New York, 1965), I, 389. Elsewhere (p. 383), Jaeger asserts that Thucydides wrote the first political history.

The condition of man in health as well as in illness concerned Hippocrates. In his treatise, Airs, Waters, Places, he considered the effects, both physical and mental, of environmental conditioning. By environment, Hippocrates understood both political and geographic factors. Another significant observation made by Hippocrates was his concept of change which he envisioned as a powerful sensation which roused man from comfortable inertia. Though he insisted on natural causes for changes in the human condition, Hippocrates wisely recognized that not everything yielded to scientific analysis; certain elements in human life were inscrutable and must remain in the realm of τυχή, chance. Here, however, chance is devoid of any metaphysical or semi-divine association.

The teaching of Hippocrates had a profound influence on Thucydides who attempted to adapt the principles and methods of the Hippocratic science of medicine to his own study in the Histories³. Since all human actions could be traced to natural causes, the investigation of human motives in relation to geographic and political environment was in Thucydides' view a proper and fruitful endeavour for the historian. In an age which so glorified individualism, it is not surprising that Thucydides also recognized the importance of individual personality in the shaping of human history, and he has devoted considerable attention to the prominent figures of his day.

Following the lead suggested by Hippocrates, Thucydides envisioned the growth of society as well as its destruction as the product of environmental shock. At the same time, he admitted in his historical scheme certain incalculable elements beyond human motivation in the realm of chance or

³For the study of the influence of Hippocrates on Thucydides, I am indebted to C. N. Cochrane, Thucydides and the Science of History (Oxford, 1929), pp. 7-29.

coincidence. The plague, for instance, can be traced to a natural cause, contagion from Egypt by way of the Piraeus. Yet the appearance of this malady at a critical moment in Athenian history must remain a coincidence beyond the historian's ken.

Above all, Thucydides aimed to raise history from the level of simple chronicle, as Hippocrates had removed medicine from the limited approach of his predecessors. Just as the physician must rely on the observation of symptoms (semeiology) together with knowledgeable prediction (prognosis) to arrive at a correct classification of disease, the historian likewise must apply the same processes to history, "which thus for him becomes the semeiology and prognosis of human life."⁴

The plague sequence in Book II is a key unit in the case for the influence of Hippocrates.⁵ Thucydides' description of the plague is divided into three relatively equal sections. He begins with a discussion of the origin of the pestilence (II.47-8) which takes its rise suddenly and dramatically.⁶ Besieged beyond its walls by the enemy, the city falls victim

⁴Cochrane, Thucydides, p. 27.

⁵Cochrane, Thucydides, p. 27 enthusiastically hails the plague as "the most intimate link between Hippocrates and Thucydides", and suggests that the obvious correspondence at this point has far-reaching significance for the Thucydidean history as a whole: "The canons of interpretation employed for the prognosis of the plague seem to us to be the canons employed also in the interpretation of Greek history generally." p. 28.

⁶Cochrane, Thucydides, p. 27 observes: "He begins by what in Hippocratic terminology is a *κατὰστας*--a general description of the conditions, climatic and otherwise, prevailing during the summer in which the plague broke out."

within to a foe equally as fierce. Thucydides resists the temptation to offer philosophic or religious speculation about the causes of the plague, and instead concerns himself exclusively with the symptoms of the disease.⁷ He does outline the geographic sweep of the pestilence--Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, the Persian Empire, and finally Athens by way of the Piraeus; though the suggestion is not introduced by Thucydides, such a pattern leads one to suspect that the contagion was spread by sailors. Thucydides subtly emphasizes the war-time setting and psychological climate, as he describes the initial Athenian response to the frightening sickness:

It first struck the inhabitants of the Piraeus who suspected that the Peloponnesians had thrown poison into the cisterns.⁸

Throughout these introductory chapters one is impressed by the detached attitude of our author; without the autobiographical material supplied to us, we would hardly imagine this to be a first-person account. Yet this Thucydidean restraint is an effective descriptive technique. His unimpassioned observance of the failure of the Athenians to offer resistance to the strain deftly underscores the total emotional and physical devastation wrought by the disease:

⁷ J.H. Finley Jr., Thucydides, (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), p.68 also suggests that this approach represents a close affinity with the Hippocratic corpus.

⁸ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἐν τῷ Πειραεῖ ἤψατο τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥστε καὶ ἐλέχθη ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὡς οἱ Πελοποννήσιοι φάρμακα ἐσβεβλήκοιεν ἐς τὰ φρέατα. (II.48.2)

For physicians, treating the disease for the first time, found no remedy...no other human art was of any avail. The many supplications in the sanctuaries, the consultations with oracles and other sources of this sort, all proved to be ineffectual. Finally overcome by the evil, they gave up any resistance.⁹

In the rather lengthy section which follows (II. 49-50), the manifestations of disease and its effects, both physical and psychological, are again discussed rather clinically. Thucydides follows Hippocratic theory, detailing the spread of the pestilence through the body from its incipient stages to its critical peak and subsequent post-critical manifestations. Throughout, his details are accurately recorded and attest to a considerable knowledge of medical terms.¹⁰

Although the section which deals exclusively with pathology (II.49) is fairly lengthy, it is important to stress an observation made by Thucydides himself which underlines his purpose in this description:

That, then, was the disease if one overlooks many other examples of unusual nature as it happened in each case, distinguishing one from the other--such was the general nature of the malady.¹¹

⁹ οὐτε γὰρ ἰατροὶ ἤρκουν τὸ πρῶτον θεραπευόντες ἀγνοία... οὐτε ἀλλῆ ἀνὺρωπεία, τέχνη οὐδεμία, ὅσα τε, πρὸς ἱεροῖς, ἐκέτευσαν ἢ μαντείοις καὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις, ἐχρήσαντο, πάντα ἀνωφελεῖ ἢν, τελευτῶντές τε. αὐτῶν ἀπέστησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ νικῶμενοι (II.47.4)

¹⁰ D.L. Page, "Thucydides Description of the Great Plague at Athens", Classical Quarterly, N.S. III (1953), 97-109, devotes considerable attention to vocabulary introduced by Thucydides in his discussion of plague and concludes that Thucydides was quite familiar with the medical parlance of his day and strove for accuracy in his description of the symptoms of the disease.

¹¹ τὸ μὲν οὖν νόσημα πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα παραλιπόντι ἀτοπίας, ὡς ἐκάστῳ ἐτύχανε τι διαφερόντως ἑτέρῳ πρὸς ἕτερον γιγνόμενον, τοιούτου ἦν ἐπὶ πάν τὴν ἰδέαν (II.51.1)

He is not interested in pathology for sensationalism or the indulgence of a private preoccupation. His primary concern is the exposition of a typical case for the purpose of easy identification of the strain, if it should recur.

Thucydides is not content simply to isolate man as victim and tabulate his physical disturbances. The effect of the plague on man's environment also comes under the watchful scientist's eye. The reversal of natural law by which predatory birds and beasts in their turn become the victims of their intended prey, or forget their predatory instincts altogether, or the death of the faithful dog, paying with his life for his association with man, such events are recorded with complete objectivity; empathy or even sympathy have no place in the Thucydidean account.

Finally, in his concern for the whole man, Thucydides considers the psychological effects of the disease,¹² the implications of contagion and its effects on inter-personal relationships. Perhaps benefitting from personal experience, he again displays keen insight and observation (II.51). The peculiar resistance of the disease to treatment bred a kind of communal helplessness and panic which made the implications of contagion even more horrendous. Man's basic instinct for survival was submerged beneath overpowering depression and apathy; he simply abandoned himself, and in some instances, his loved ones to disease and death. Acts of heroism in the name of friendship or total disregard of duties demanded by family ties are

¹²Cochrane, Thucydides, p. 28 observes that Thucydides is again following the example of Hippocrates who usually included a description of psychological reactions in his discussion of symptoms.

viewed with the same impassive consideration. Only once, in observing the behavior of those who recovered from the pestilence, does Thucydides allow himself a somewhat cynical judgment:

And they were congratulated by others and they themselves in the excessive joy of the moment, for the time entertained the empty hope that they in future would not perish from any other disease as well.¹³

In the final section of his discussion (II. 52-5), Thucydides considers the social aspects of the pestilence. It is interesting to note that in the Thucydidean account, the plague is confined to the urban area, although it exacts its toll from among city dwellers and farmers alike. We must remember that as a consequence of war, and the annual ravages of the countryside by the enemy, the urban situation was aggravated by the presence of the displaced farmer. Overcrowding helped to bring death and disease even to the hallowed shrines and temples of the gods and with this desecration came the breakdown of traditional religious ritual. Man's duty to the dead, long an ingrained and vital aspect of ancient piety, came to be regarded with horror. Burial was now only a necessary expedient to be carried out as quickly and unceremoniously as possible. The dead, heaped upon pyres that were not their own, lost their identity and were denied religious rites.

This disregard for divine law was in turn followed by a total lack of reverence for any human precept or institution. Physical disease brought with it a social plague, in the words of Thucydides, *ἀνομία*, lawlessness.

¹³ καὶ ἑμακαρίηοντό τε ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ αὐτοὶ τῷ παραχρῆμα περιχρεῖ καὶ ἐς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον ἔλπίδος τε εἶχον κούφης μὴδ' ἂν ὑπ' ἄλλου νοσήματός ποτε ἔτι διαφθαρῆναι. (II. 51. 6)

Here we become especially aware of Thucydidean perspicacity and insight. His study of the plague as a vicious onslaught against the physical complexity of the human organism has progressed to an objective view of the collapse of the social organism.

Without fear of retribution, either divine or human, as deterrent, without hope, justice, and personal honour as incentives, and in the face of the all too apparent transitory nature of life and prosperity, man ceases to function as a communal being. He gives free rein to his own impulses at the expense of his fellow man and his city. For Thucydides the effect of the plague on the morale of the Athenians was a proper subject for scientific investigation. In his account of the pestilence, he exposes for the first time the forces of instability and violence which would soon reveal themselves in the conduct of the Athenian leaders and populace alike and would lead to the Athenian collapse.¹⁴

Having begun at the physical level, Thucydides has progressed to the climactic peak at which Athenian society has begun to burn with the fever of violence and crime. The plague narrative concludes unpretentiously with mention of a semantic controversy among the elders concerning the interpretation of the sickness.

From the symptoms outlined by Thucydides we can offer a general description of the malady which attacked Athens: a serious, exanthematic disease which began with fever, affected the respiratory tract, reached a critical peak around the seventh or ninth day, and finally ended in death or severe post-critical complications, among them blindness and gangrene.

¹⁴Finley, Thucydides, p. 57 emphasizes this aspect of the Athenian plague.

Throughout the centuries, medical and lay scholars have struggled with little success to make a positive identification of the Athenian plague. The solutions have been varied and conflicting; the most popular suggestions are smallpox, measles, typhus, ergotism, and bubonic plague.¹⁵ It may be that in spite of the wealth of details outlined by Thucydides and his

¹⁵The case for smallpox is strongly supported by two members of the medical profession, Drs. M. L. and R. J. Littman, "The Athenian Plague: Smallpox", Transactions of the American Philological Society, C (1969), 261-75. While they refuse to heap unqualified praise on Thucydides' lay approach to the plague, they suggest that the location and vesiculation of the rash as described by Thucydides are characteristic of smallpox. Thucydides' failure to mention the pock marks is easily explained by the Hippocratic canons which directed his work: as a consequence, rather than a symptom of the disease, they serve no prognostic purpose.

J. F. D. Shrewsbury, on the other hand, in his article "The Plague of Athens", Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXIV (1950), 1-25, looks to a disease common to modern society, measles, as the solution to the problem. He supports his thesis by citing evidence from the first epidemic of measles which struck the Fiji Islands in 1875 and whose inhabitants displayed symptoms very similar to those described by Thucydides.

His theory is given enthusiastic support by D. L. Page, "Thucydides' Description of the Great Plague at Athens". Page displays unswerving faith in Thucydidean accuracy and supplements his study with an analysis on the technical vocabulary used by Thucydides.

W. MacArthur, on the other hand, takes strong exception to the theory of measles. In his article, "The Athenian Plague: A Medical Note" Classical Quarterly, N.S. IV (1954), 171-4, he insists that all the primary symptoms of typhus are recognizable in the Thucydidean description and suggests that the disease can be transmitted by body lice, a not uncommon pest in the aggravated conditions of war-time.

His article prompted a rebuttal from Page, "The Plague: A Lay Comment on a Medical Note", Classical Quarterly, N.S. IV (1954), p. 174, who emphasizes that Thucydides makes no mention of severe mental derangement, one of the primary manifestations of typhus.

MacArthur, however, refused to be swayed, and in another article, "The Plague of Athens", Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXXII (1958), 242-6, he insists that both the historical evidence and medical knowledge point to typhus and rule out ergotism, bubonic plague, smallpox, and measles.

The typhus theory is also endorsed by A. W. Gomme, An Historical Commentary on Thucydides (Oxford, 1956), 11.2, 146-62. Though he believes the measles theory untenable, he strongly praises the work done by Page in the area of technical medical terminology.

In a radical departure from commentators who blindly accept Thucydidean observations about contagion, P. Salway and W. Dell, "Plague at Athens", Greece and Rome, 2nd series II (1955), 62-70 reject all suggestions of

careful attention to detail, we can never arrive at a definitive identification of the sickness which struck Athens. In any case, we should not allow the problem to obscure the significance of the plague in Thucydides' concept of history.

In the light of such critical controversy, one commentator has developed an interesting theory which merits closer attention. Using the inability of modern commentators to offer a plausible identification as his point of departure, M. C. Mittelstadt suggests that the elusiveness of the plague sequence is a deliberate technique on the part of Thucydides, who introduces the plague as a metaphor for the collapse of the political organism at Athens.¹⁶

¹⁵contagious diseases in favour of ergotism, a kind of food poisoning from the ergot toxin which generally appears on rye, but which can infect other cereal grasses as well.

Their view, in turn, is strongly challenged by E. Watson Williams, "The Sickness at Athens", Greece and Rome, 2nd series IV (1957), 98-103, who insists that it was far too early in the war for problems of grain supply to have become that urgent. Williams returns to the theory of an infectious epidemic and suggests that the disease was bubonic plague, the only epidemic which infects animals and birds. Williams is not disturbed by Thucydides' failure to mention the 'buboes', the painful swelling in the region of the groin from which the plague derives its name.

The omission of so significant a detail does disturb Ms. E. M. Hooker, "Buboes in Thucydides?", The Journal of Hellenic Studies, LXXVIII (1958), 78-83. Ms. Hooker attempts to render the plague identification more conclusive by interpreting the Thucydidean reference to ἕλκος ulcer, as a reference to the 'buboes' characteristic of bubonic plague.

¹⁶"The Plague in Thucydides: An Extended Metaphor", Rivisti di Studi Classici, XVI (1968), 145-54.

Mittelstadt suggests a symptomatic analogy between the progress of physical disease and political deterioration. He maintains that Thucydides envisioned the power structure of the Athenian empire with the image of the human body, the head in control of the extremities. In his analysis of the disintegration of centralized control by Athens, Thucydides follows very closely the deterioration of the human body beset by plague: just as plague strikes the head, then spreads to the internal organs, and finally becomes evident in the extremities, so also in the case of political deterioration, the fever of destructive, uncontrolled ambition first struck Athens, then spread to her internal factions, and following the death of Pericles, extended to the extremities of the Athenian empire, Corcyra, Mitylene, Potidaea.

In Mittelstadt's view the analogy in symptoms is complemented by a close correspondence in language: the vocabulary of the progress and effects of rampant imperialism closely corresponds to the vocabulary of the progress and effects of plague.

Mittelstadt's theory is a provocative solution to the controversy surrounding the plague sequence; yet one is left with the uncomfortable feeling that in spite of the innovative technique of the Histories, Thucydides is being credited with a far too modern concept. We wonder if Thucydides possessed the necessary detachment to view so cataclysmic an event as the plague, to which he himself fell victim, as mere metaphor. Moreover, he clearly distinguishes the physical manifestations of the disease from its psychological and political consequences. In Mittelstadt's scheme, these distinctions are blurred.

Though I hesitate to accept the full implications of Mittelstadt's theory, I do believe that he has offered valuable direction in our study of the development of plague as a literary motif. In choosing to emphasize the social effects of the sickness as well as its physical manifestations, Thucydides has provided a provocative study of human behavior in times of stress and its effects on the policy of a nation. By combining the physical realities of disease with political and social insights, Thucydides has initiated the trend toward metaphor which Vergil will develop so effectively in the plague sequence of Georgics III.

In our study of the development of a plague motif, the opening scene of the Sophoclean drama, Oedipus Tyrannus, deserves close attention. The play begins with a delegation of priests and children of Thebes who have come to the king seeking assistance from the dreadful pestilence which grips their city.

We are provided with a description of the plague from two sources: the old priest of Zeus, spokesman for the delegation (vv. 14-57), and the chorus of Theban elders (vv. 151-215). In contrast to the plague description in the Thucydidean narrative, the Sophoclean account does not emphasize the physical manifestations of disease. Instead, the plague is given a rather stylized description; the spectre of death holds the city tightly, rendering all in its grip sterile. Physical sickness is represented as a fiery, demonic power casting the Theban victims into Hell:

You too have seen our city's affliction, caught
 In a tide of death from which there is no escaping--
 Death in the fruitful flowering of her soil;
 Death in the pastures; death in the womb of woman;
 And pestilence, a fiery demon gripping the city,

Stripping the house of Cadmus, to fatten hell
With profusion of lamentation.¹⁷

In the lamentations of the chorus, the plague is again described
with the image of fire:

Show us again your threefold power
This hour, as in ages long ago.
From the fire and pain of pestilence save us and make us clean.

Sorrows beyond all telling--
Sickness rife in our ranks, outstripping
Invention of remedy--blight
On barren earth,
And barren agonies of birth--
Life after life from the wild-fire winging
Swiftly into the night!¹⁸

17 πόλις γάρ, ὡς περ, καὺτός, εἰς οὐρανῶν, ἄγαν
ἤδη, σαλεύει, κἀνακουφίσει, κἀρα
βυβῶν ἐτ' οὐχ οἶα τε φοινίκου σάλου,
φθίνουσα μὲν, κάλυψεν ἐγκάρποις, χυθονός,
φθίνουσα δ' ἀγέλας βουνομοῖς, τόκοισί τε
ἀγροῖς γυναικῶν· ἐν δ' ὁ πυρφόρος θεός
σκήψας ελαύνει, λοιμὸς ἔχθιστος πόλιν,
ὑφ' οὗ κενεῦται δῶμα Κασμείων· μέλας δ'
Ἄϊδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται. (22-30)

Sophoclis Fabulae, ed. with apparatus criticus by A. C. Pearson
(repr. of 1st ed.; Oxford, 1967). The translation is that of E. F.
Watling, Sophocles, the Theban Plays (repr. of 1st ed.; Penguin Classics,
1964).

18 τρισσοὶ ἀλεξιμόροι προφάνητέ μοι,
εἴ ποτε καὶ προτέρας ἄτας ὑπερ
ὀρνυμένως πόλει
ἦνύστ' ἐκτοπίαν φλόγα πῆματος
ἔλθετε καὶ νῦν
ὦ πόποι, ἀνάρισμα γὰρ φέρω
πῆματα
κρέϊσσον ἀμαλμακέτου πυρός ὄρμενον
ἀκτῶν πρὸς ἑσπερου θεοῦ. (164-77)

In a curious association, the plague is linked to Ares who rages in battle through the city without the usual panoply of war:

Not with the rattle of bronze, but loud around us
The battle is raging, swift the death-fiend flying.
Fling to the farthest corners of the sea,
Or to some bleak North bay,
The onset of his armoury!¹⁹

The Thebans regard the plague as an indication of divine displeasure; the old priest of Zeus who has guided this band of suppliants to the king speaks of another group who have positioned themselves around the twin altars of Pallas in the market place (vv. 19-21). The king himself has despatched a messenger, Creon, to the Pythian shrine of Apollo in search of an effective remedy for the pestilence. The response with which Creon returns establishes the source of the evil as a murder which must be expiated before the Theban land can be cleansed of the pollution (vv. 95-98).

Here the plague motif has acquired a complexity lacking in the rational, scientific treatise of Thucydides; by divine agency, the physical realities of sterility and death are occasioned by moral turpitude. Moreover, the outbreak of plague and the oracular response sought by Oedipus initiate a fatal sequence of events which will ultimately bring relief for the city, but destruction for the royal household.

The dramatic potential of the plague as a catalytic influence in the tragedy of Oedipus is fully realized as the drama develops; encouraged by the oracle of Apollo, Oedipus ensnares himself and his family, as he

19 Ἄρεά τε τὸν μακρὸν, ὃς
νῦν ἄχαλκος ἀσπίδων
φλέγει με περιβόατος ἀντιάκων

.....
εἰτ' ἐς τὸν ἀπόξενον ὄρμων
Θρήκιον κλύδωνά

(190-97)

searches for the truth that will free his city. For our purposes, a consideration of the stimulus which prompted Sophocles to incorporate this complex motif into his drama will be valuable.

Oedipus' uncompromising search for truth and its tragic consequences are celebrated features of the Theban legend. Traditionally, however, the plague was not a feature of the Oedipus tale.²⁰ Before the Athenian plague, though, there was a well-developed artistic and religious tradition concerning plague upon which Sophocles might draw for inspiration.

In the opening scene of the Homeric Iliad, for example, we find the Achaeans besieged by a dreadful plague which strikes men and animals alike (1.50-52). This plague is represented as a direct consequence of Agamemnon's cruel treatment of Chryses, priest of Apollo, and his refusal to accept ransom for the priest's daughter who had been taken captive and awarded as his special prize. In the Homeric account, although the overwhelming onslaught of death is emphasized, the physical manifestations of the disease are unimportant. The focal point for the Homeric bard is the presentation of plague as a direct indication of divine displeasure. In the epic idiom, Apollo himself is presented stalking the Greek camp, hurling

²⁰This problem is discussed by B. M. W. Knox, "The Date of the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles", The American Journal of Philology, LXXVII (1956), 134. Knox points out that the mention of the plague in connection with the story of Oedipus receives no attention in Homer, Odyssey. XI.274, Pindar Olympian Odes 2.42ff., Euripides Phoenissae, the summary of the Aeschylean Oedipus in the final stasimon of the Seven Against Thebes, the Attic historian Androtion, or the later accounts of Apollodorus and Diodorus. Certainly, as Knox points out, it was much too important an aspect to be ignored if it had already become part of the tradition.

his arrows of pestilence at the Greek Army, and exacting vengeance for the insult done him by Agamemnon (vv. 43-53).

In the Homeric account, however, the dramatic potential of the plague episode is appreciated. Once he has returned the priest's daughter as a necessary step toward propitiation of Apollo, Agamemnon attempts to restore his own position of honour among his men by arbitrarily claiming the prize of Achilles as his own. This rash behavior prompts the quarrel with Achilles which proved to have serious repercussions for the Greek army and threatened the outcome of the whole expedition. The plague initiates a tragic chain of events which build to the personal crisis of Achilles and plunge the fate of the Greek expedition against Troy into uncertainty.

In ancient Greek religious tradition, especially in the description of supernatural afflictions and curses, divine displeasure is traditionally expressed as a threefold blight, the failure of crops, sterility and death among farm animals, and abortive birth-pangs among the women.²¹ This threefold image is a feature of the Sophoclean blight mentioned by the priest of Zeus (vv. 25-7), and later by the chorus of Theban elders (vv. 171-3). In addition, actual physical sickness of epidemic proportions, λοιμὸς ἐχθίστος is claiming the lives of many Theban citizens (vv. 27-29).

The same substantive, λοιμὸς, plague or pestilence, is used by Thucydides in connection with the epidemic which ravaged Athens. In fact, it is quite likely that Sophocles found inspiration for his dramatic

²¹ Knox, "The Date of the Oedipus Tyrannus", p. 135.

representation in the plague which was besieging Athens.

B. M. W. Knox is so convinced of the influence of the Athenian plague on the Sophoclean representation that he feels justified in dating the Oedipus Tyrannus by the events and patterns of disease at Athens.²² The controversy surrounding the dating of the play cannot concern us too greatly here. But if we accept the thesis in its broadest application, that the plague sequence in the Oedipus Tyrannus was directly inspired by the historical plague which began at Athens in 430, we gain striking insight into Sophoclean dramatic technique. The full dramatic potential of the plague sequence has been realized and successfully employed to initiate the painful process of self-discovery crucial to Oedipus' future.

²²Knox, "The Date of the Oedipus Tyrannus," examines references in the chorus which point to the Athenian influence: the hostility toward Ares, the call to Apollo as the Delian healer (v.154), and the reference to the goddess of Fair Fame which brings to mind the temple of Fair Fame at Athens built from the spoils taken at Marathon. He is convinced that the dating of the play can be made later than the first appearance of plague at Athens in the summer of 430. At v. 164 the chorus appeals to Athena, Artemis, and Apollo to provide aid again as they had done earlier, a detail which Knox accepts as a reference to a second outbreak of plague at Athens in the summer of 427. Finally, reference is made in vv. 190-1 to Ares raging in the city without the usual accoutrements of war, a detail which in Knox's view, suggests an interval when the Athenians were beset by plague alone rather than the terrible combination of sickness and war which they had experienced earlier. Such an interval occurred in the summer of 426 when the Peloponnesian armies turned back before reaching the Attic boundaries. Such details point to the spring of 425 as the earliest possible date for the production of the Oedipus Tyrannus.

Albin Lesky, Greek Tragedy, trans. H. A. Frankfort (2nd ed.; London, 1965), p. 111 also supports the view that the outbreak of plague at Athens influenced the Sophoclean representation, but unlike Knox he makes no attempt to push the reference beyond the summer of 430.

Sophocles has freely blended historical fact with literary and religious tradition to create an artistic motif, a plague composite. The development of this plague motif represents a significant contribution to the literary tradition upon which Vergil was to draw for his own representation of plague.

Later, in a new land and a new age, the Athenian plague again came to be of particular interest. When Lucretius, a Roman poet, assumed the task of committing to verse the major tenets of the Epicurean physical system, he chose to embellish his discussion of epidemics with an account of the disaster which had befallen Athens almost four centuries earlier. His principal source for this discussion was Thucydides, a point which no one can dispute in view of the obvious similarities between the two accounts. For many years, editors and commentators of Lucretius have expended considerable energy in making a detailed comparison of the two accounts, and concluding from the various points of divergence that Lucretius' knowledge of Greek was somewhat inadequate, or that he made use of other sources.²³ In his discussion of the physical aspects of the disease, Lucretius has supplemented the Thucydidean account with details drawn from some Hippocratic source.²⁴ As for his knowledge of Greek, it appears to me to be a problem almost impossible to assess. Moreover, to

²³For a detailed commentary on the plague in Lucretius, see H. A. J. Munro, T. Lucreti Cari Libri Sex (Cambridge, 1893), III.391ff.; C. Bailey, T. Lucreti Cari Libri Sex (repr. of 2nd ed.; Oxford, 1947), III.1728 ff.; A. Ernout and L. Robin, T. Lucreti Cari Libri Sex (Paris, 1928), ad 6.1138 ff.

²⁴Bailey, T. Lucreti Cari Libri Sex, III, 1728.

account for the divergences from the Thucydidean account with these factors alone, in my opinion, is to do Lucretius a serious disservice and to miss the full impact of his poetic presentation.

In this analysis I intend to concentrate on the major areas of divergence with the hope of arriving at an appreciation of Lucretius' imaginative technique and some perception of the development afforded the plague motif. Like the Thucydidean narrative, Lucretius' description falls loosely into three sections: the origin and physical phenomena of the disease (vv. 1138-1229), the psychological effects of the plague (vv. 1230-51), and finally the social ills, the aggravation caused by the influx of the people from the country, the subsequent collapse of religion and tradition (vv. 1252-86).²⁵ Lucretius has followed Thucydides' direction in presenting the plague in its social as well as physical aspects.

As Lucretius begins his account, however, we become aware of some important implications in phraseology. His description of the plague begins:

Haec ratio quondam morborum et mortifer aestus (1138).

Here as elsewhere in his poetic treatise, Lucretius' purpose is epideictic: he has chosen the example of the Athenian plague as tangible proof of his earlier theoretical discussion of epidemics (VI.1090 ff.). Moreover, the abundance of descriptive detail and the careful organization in the plague narrative suggest that Lucretius realized the potential of the plague sequence as a dramatic and effective poetic presentation.

²⁵The divisions are those suggested by Bailey, T. Lucreti Cari Libri Sex, III, 1728.

In his analysis of the "formal design" of the De Rerum Natura,²⁶ R. Minadeo has offered a challenge to those critics who contend that Lucretius never intended the plague sequence to stand as the conclusion to his poem. Minadeo proposes a strict and deliberate parallelism between content and structure in the Lucretian poem: the cycle of creation and destruction which Lucretius perceived as the essential operative principle in the universe is reproduced in the structural design of his poem, principally through the proems and conclusions of the individual books. The opening address to Venus as the creative principle in Nature (Bk. I) and the concluding account of the plague at Athens (Bk. VI) provide the most dramatic representation of the cycle of creation and destruction, while the proems and conclusions of the remaining books, with the exception of the opening of book two and the conclusion of book five, reinforce the cyclical pattern of the work.

With such evidence of a deliberate and formal design in the poem, Minadeo has effectively refuted the judgment of some critics that the De Rerum Natura lacks organization and poetic unity. But, more importantly for our purposes, Minadeo's thesis has established the plague sequence as a vital element of Lucretian design, from the point of view of both structure and content. Particularly attractive is his perception of a smaller cycle of creation and destruction with Athens at the centre; the 'mini-cycle' begins at V.925, traces the cultural evolution of man, builds to the climactic success enjoyed by Athens, and finally presents a dramatic

²⁶"The Formal Design of the De Rerum Natura", Arion, IV (1965), 445-61.

image of destruction as the once mighty city is besieged by plague.

In his study of the plague, Lucretius has expanded the sociological direction initiated by Thucydides. The brilliant rise of Athens and her dramatic fall are intended to symbolize the universal condition of man, the futility of human aspirations to glory. The immediate reference of Athens is broadened to encompass the Epicurean world-picture.

In the discussion of the origin of the epidemic, we notice a significant departure from Thucydidean thought. Like Thucydides, though in less detail, Lucretius describes the geographic sweep of the plague from North Africa to Athens. Lucretius, however, has altered the strictly factual pattern described by the Greek historian to suit the demands of his Epicurean physical system. He ignores the implication in the Thucydidean narrative that the contagion was spread by sailors, and with the phrase, "aera permensus multum camposque natantis" (v. 1142), calls to mind his earlier discussion of disease which he believes results from the presence of noxious particles in the air:

primum multarum semina rerum
esse supra docui quae sint vitalia nobis,
et contra quae sint morbo mortique necessest
multa volare. ea cum casu sunt forte coorta
et perturbarunt caelum, fit morbidus aer. (VI.1093-97)

Moreover, with the allusion to the Athenians as the people of Pandion (1143), he has enhanced the artistic character of his discussion and emphasized the distance between him and his subject.

Having established the origins of the sickness, Lucretius turns to a detailed description of the physical discomforts of plague. He relies closely on Thucydidean technique, outlining the physical symptoms manifest

in the early stages and following the course of the disease to its critical peak and catastrophic consequences.²⁷

In this section especially, the attitudes of the Greek historian and the Roman poet are pointedly dissimilar. Prognostic considerations motivated Thucydides' thorough discussion of the symptoms of the disease: he wanted future generations to be able to recognize the sickness if it should recur. Lucretius, on the other hand, has displayed a marked fascination for pathology throughout his poem. He even conceived of his own poetic role in terms of a medical metaphor:

sed veluti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
cum dare conantur,...

(I.936-7 et
passim)

His discussion of the plague in book six has provided him with unlimited opportunity for indulging this fascination for pathology. In fact, he even supplemented the thorough description of symptoms provided by Thucydides with details drawn from the Hippocratean writings, which bear no immediate reference to the plague at Athens.²⁸

Moreover, within his discussion of the physical phenomena of the malady, there is one particularly interesting deviation from the Thucydidean narrative which offers a significant insight into Lucretius' treatment of the plague motif. In his discussion of post-critical stages of the disease, Thucydides mentioned that although the victim survived, the plague often affected the extremities of his body--fingers, feet, genitals. Lucretius

²⁷Bailey, T. Lucreti Cari Libri Sex, III, 1728

²⁸For a fuller discussion, consult Bailey, T. Lucreti Cari Libri Sex, ad VI.1182-96.

has seized this detail and modified the circumstances surrounding the mutilation of the body:

et graviter partim metuentes limina leti
vivebant ferro privati parte virili,
et manibus sine nonnulli pedibusque manebant
in vita tamen, et perdebant lumina partim:
usque adeo mortis metus his inceserat acer. (1208-12)

While Thucydides objectively observed the loss of certain extremities through gangrenous infection, Lucretius offers moral judgment on the motivation which led to amputation. It is not quite clear in the Lucretian text whether the victims actually amputated their own limbs or consulted doctors for the purpose. The important phrases in the Lucretian description are "metuentes limina leti" and "mortis metus". The fear of death is the 'bogey' against which Lucretius has been struggling throughout the De Rerum Natura.

For Lucretius the psychological effects of disease are more important even than the physical manifestations. The behavior of individuals in the face of certain death was a fascinating subject for a poet-philosopher who viewed fear of death as one of the principal causes of human misery. Consequently, the direction initiated by Thucydides has been altered considerably; objective observation of physical disease has given way to critical analysis of psychological illness and, on occasion, strong moral judgment.²⁹

²⁹I arrived at this conclusion independently of H. S. Commager Jr., "Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague", Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, LXII (1957), 105-18. He suggests: "Lucretius appears to be viewing physical phenomena in terms of fear and desire, held by the Epicurean doctrine to be the two principal obstacles to happiness. And from this tendency to see physical facts and events in nonphysical terms, rather than from the carelessness imputed to him by his editors, Lucretius'

The contagious aspect of the disease receives special attention in the Lucretian description. Commentators have offered this as another proof that Lucretius has misunderstood the Thucydidean text, but I believe that the divergence is intentional and a consequence of his obsession with fear of death which he saw gripping mankind. Unlike Thucydides, Lucretius is incapable of viewing the situation impassively; man's failure to aid his fellow man is sternly condemned by the poet, and a solitary death is seen as punishment for man's selfish desire to cling to life:

²⁹deviations from Thucydides arise." (p. 105).

Elsewhere Commager states his case even more strongly: "We have seen Lucretius describe physical ills in a psychological vocabulary, treat clinical phenomena as emotionally motivated actions, change medical data to ethical commentary, and broaden the plague's area in defiance of historical fact. In simplest terms, his additions and alterations display a marked tendency to regard the plague less in physical terms than in emotional, moral and psychological ones." (p.108)

In support of his thesis, Commager has cited among other arguments the deviations from the Thucydidean text evident at VI.1208-12, 1239-42 and 1252 as I have done. Commager, however, pushes the implications of these and other alterations much farther than I am prepared to do. He concludes that unlike Thucydides who "recorded the plague as an aid to future generations (2.48;3), Lucretius borrows it as an emblem of a present mental sickness. To recognize it man is to look not ahead but within." (p. 113). It is true that Commager qualifies this conclusion somewhat with the suggestion that Lucretius was not really consciously using the plague as symbol or allegory but only allowing his imaginative tendencies full rein. (p. 117, n. 23). It seems to me, however, that such a conclusion is still rather extreme; it also seems unwise to attempt to approximate too closely a poet's imaginative processes.

I do not feel that Lucretius ever lost sight of the historical reality of the plague; in fact, in my opinion, he sought to emphasize the historical perspective in his poem. My principal concern is the development of a plague motif; I have cited instances of Lucretian moralizing as indications of the freedom with which Lucretius handled the historical evidence, a freedom which I believe influenced Vergil in his treatment of plague.

nam quicumque suos fugitabant visere ad aegros,
 vitae nimium cupidos mortisque timentis
 poenibat paulo post turpi morte malaque,
 desertos, opis expertis, incuria mactans. (1239-42)

Death also claims those who allow "pudor" to direct their actions, but their unselfish care of the sick is commended by the poet. This tendency to moralize occurs often in the De Rerum Natura: we recall that in book two, Lucretius assumes the stance of the philosopher in a lofty citadel, observing the masses struggling below.

Finally, there is one other significant deviation from the Thucydidean account in the final section of Lucretius' description. Lucretius has expanded the geographic sweep of the plague to envelop the surrounding countryside (v. 1252); in the Thucydidean account, the pestilence was strictly an urban phenomenon. In addition, though he makes no mention of the Spartan invasion of Attica, and the war-time conditions which necessitated the migration, Lucretius describes the influx of the country population into the city. Yet he has transferred to a rural setting many of the conditions which Thucydides witnessed in the city. Lucretius seems to suggest that the plague originated in the country. One can only speculate as to the motivation behind this divergence. Perhaps the movement of the disease from rural to urban areas better suited the Epicurean theory of a corrupt atmosphere; on the other hand, we must remember that although this represents a description of the plague which infected Athens, the account was written by a Roman poet, for whom a strong feeling for the land was a deeply-ingrained aspect of his Roman heritage. Certainly the descriptions of the farmer as "pastor", "armentarius", and especially "robustus...curvi moderator aratri" (vv. 1252-3) call to mind the old Italian yeoman who stands

conspicuously in the foreground of Roman tradition.

Throughout the De Rerum Natura, progressive deterioration of all things has been a fundamental principle of Lucretian philosophy. The gradual decline is particularly noticeable in agrarian life. We recall the striking scene at the close of book two as the old farmer, weary from his own fruitless struggles, marvels at the yield his ancestors drew from the land. The earth is depicted as an aging mother, no longer able to generate strong, lasting progeny and no longer capable of supporting even the weak species she has borne. By transferring plague, the most dramatic representation of destruction in the poem, to a rural setting, Lucretius has fused deterioration and dissolution in a powerful, cataclysmic close.

The rest of the Lucretian account of the plague adheres rather closely to the Thucydidean description; in fact, contrary to his usual practice, Lucretius here condenses Thucydides' detail and suspends his penchant for moralizing. Surprisingly for one so vehemently opposed to religion, the collapse of religious ritual is merely noted without comment. The description closes with the picture of strife at the funeral site, mute testimony of man's inhumanity to man. It presents an effective and controlled conclusion to an otherwise impassioned narrative.

I have spent considerable time assessing the Lucretian treatment of the plague in comparison to that of Thucydides in order to highlight the development of the literary motif by a Roman poet. With an attitude typical of classical authors, Lucretius has proceeded directly from an historical source, borrowing details exactly as they were presented by Thucydides when they suit his own purpose, and altering other aspects when a somewhat different interpretation is desired. In the Lucretian description of the

malady, we witness poetic imagination in action, rigidly directed by firm philosophic conviction. Lucretius felt completely free to superimpose his own scientific and moral convictions on the account of an historical phenomenon to offer a lesson to his contemporaries. He felt the right, perhaps accepted as his mission, the merging of fifth century Greece and first century Rome into one passionate description of a suffering people. His presentation had a profound impact on the poet who succeeded him.

In attempting to decipher the somewhat elusive message of the Vergilian plague sequence, commentators have persisted in initiating their discussion at v. 478, thereby ignoring a significant feature of the description and a valuable key to interpretation.³⁰ I believe that the direct introduction to the plague is to be found a few lines earlier as Vergil makes a smooth transition from illness likely to strike a particular sheep to the dreadful situation at Noricum which affected all the animal world:

continuo culpam ferro compesce, priusquam
dira per incautum serpent contagia vulgus. (468-9)

The verb "serpent" can evoke a number of associations. It occurs eight times in the text of Lucretius in a variety of contexts: it is used to describe the onslaught of old age, stellar movement, the progression of

³⁰F. Klingner, Virgils Georgica, p. 157 connects the discussion of snakes with the plague sequence, but he offers no comment on the manner in which Vergil has secured the connection, nor has he described the aspect of continuity with Aeneid II.

fever, the influx of malignant atmospheric conditions, and, on three occasions, as a substantive, "serpens", for snake.³¹

In the Vergilian text, the full potential of the serpentine association is realized. In the prelude to the description of the plague, the use of the verb "serpant" intentionally calls to mind Vergil's earlier description of snakes (414-39). We recall the cumulative impression of horror which Vergil created in his discussion of these loathesome reptiles. He begins with mention of the "chelydrus", a water snake whose presence in the stable is incongruous and dangerous, but at least the farmer has some methods of protection at his disposal. Likewise, a well aimed blow with a cudgel effectively removes the threat posed by the "coluber". With the description of the Calabrian snake, however, Vergil moves beyond the immediate locale of the steading and presents a sustained image of horror. The snake is terrifying in his aggressive fury as he greedily devours the fish and frogs in the spring. Even more frightening is the image of the creature in the summer, maddened by the heat and raging over a parched landscape:

postquam exusta palus terraeque ardore dehiscunt,
 exsilit in siccum, et flammantia lumina torquens
 saevit agris asperque siti atque exterritus aestu. (432-4)

³¹D.R.N.I.415; V.692, 523; VI,660, 1120; IV.60, 638; V.33 respectively.

William R. Nethercut, "Vergil's De Rerum Natura", Ramus, II (1973), 42 suggests that "the serpent itself serves symbolically to introduce the extended discussion of the plague." In support of this statement he cites one example from the De Rerum Natura where Lucretius uses "serpere" with "ignis" and sickness:

exsistit sacer ignis et urit corpore serpens (VI.660).

I must add that I developed my own interpretation of the serpent sequence before I had occasion to read Nethercut's article.

Emphasis is clearly on flaming heat, madness, and uncontrolled violence--a setting duplicated later at the onslaught of plague. With serpentine stealth, disease has crept in upon an "incautum...vulgus" and rages supreme:

saevit et in lucem Stygiis emissa tenebris
 pallida Tisiphone Morbos agit ante Metumque,
 inque dies avidum surgens caput altius effert. (551-3)

Though the verb "saevit" is the only direct linguistic link with the actions of the Calabrian snake, the stance is similar; the serpent too moves with uplifted head, "sublato pectore". Moreover, the link is reinforced when we consider that the serpent is Tisiphone's creature. Vergil has removed the snake from its restricted agricultural setting and made it a portent of doom. With the verb "serpant" and its association, he effectively re-establishes a psychological climate of horror and revulsion.

This serpent sequence of Georgic III offers some interesting speculation with regard to Vergil's later composition. At least one commentator, Bernard Knox, looks to book III of the Georgics as Vergil's source of inspiration for the sustained serpent metaphor in Aeneid II. In support of his thesis he cites several verbal reminiscences from Georgic III. 414-39, which appear at various points in Aeneid II, as well as repetition of whole lines which occur with little or no alteration in the Pyrrhus simile (II.473-5). Moreover, he suggests that the description of the vicious Calabrian snake directly inspired the account of the attack on Laocoon by the equally terrifying reptiles.³²

³²"The Serpent and the Flame", in Virgil A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Steele Commager (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), 124-42.

Having established the association of the serpents, particularly the serpent of Calabria, with the plague sequence of book III, we realize that the link with Aeneid II goes beyond verbal reminiscence. In using the image of the Calabrian snake as a means to convey the psychological climate of horror and violence necessary to the plague, Vergil originated the sustained serpent metaphor which was to figure so prominently in Aeneid II. The serpent image in the Aeneid has been more fully developed in order to convey aspects of Grecian violence and also Trojan doom and re-birth, but its origins are clearly traced to Georgic III.

Another important consideration, and one which has presented some difficulty, is the location which Vergil has chosen for his plague, Noricum and the surrounding Alpine territory. Lucretius first introduced the plague in a rural setting, although in his account particular emphasis still centred on the urban disaster. The vocabulary which Vergil has used in introducing this northern setting is intriguing, and provides the passage with a distinct military colouring:

nec singula morbi
 corpora corripunt, sed tota aestiva repente,
 spemque gregemque simul cunctamque ab origine gentem.
 tum sciat, aérias Alpís et Norica si quis
 castella in tumulis et Iapydis arva Timavi
 nunc quoque post tanto videat, desertaque regna
 pastorum et longe saltus lateque vacantis. (471-7)

"Aestiva" (v. 472), for instance, used as a substantive describing the pasturing herds represents a legitimate usage which developed out of the migratory patterns followed by the animals in search of suitable pasturage. At the same time, however, we cannot help but recall that "aestiva" is also the term frequently used to describe summer military encampments.

Moreover, with reference to the living accommodations of the Alpine tribes, Vergil introduces the striking noun, "castella", which is definitely associated with strongly fortified dwellings. It stands in sharp, and deliberate contrast to "arva", a key substantive in the poem for fertile cultivated farmland.

In an interesting article, "L'Epizootie du Norique et l'Histoire",³³ Jacques Heurgon suggests that the choice of Noricum was quite a topical reference on Vergil's part, since at the time of the composition of the Georgics, the area was beginning to be better developed and more frequently travelled. He cites particularly the campaign of Octavian against the Iapydi, undertaken in 35, during which Octavian was wounded. Apart from its topicality, however, Heurgon sees no particular significance in this military association.

There was also the successful campaign waged against the Parthini in Dalmatia by C. Asinius Pollio, for which he had celebrated a triumph in 39 B.C. Vergil's reference to the Timavus (v. 475) recalls an earlier reference in the Eclogues to this campaign by Pollio:

tu mihi, seu magni superas iam saxa Timavi,
sive oram Illyrici legis aequoris,..... (VIII.6-7)

The battles themselves proved to be indecisive since trouble continued to erupt on that north-eastern frontier until Augustus annexed the kingdom of Noricum as a Roman province some twenty years later.³⁴

³³Revue des Etudes Latines, XLII (1964), 231-47.

³⁴R. Syme, The Roman Revolution, p. 390.

Yet the campaigns must have stirred the hearts of the Roman public, and aroused a vain hope that the frontier was at last secured.

Heurgon makes the telling observation that the description of the geographic setting which Vergil has provided at the beginning of the plague sequence resembles a landscape painting more than a precise geographic location.³⁵ In his view, the Vergilian pestilence is a completely artistic conception and represents the response to the stimulus of the Lucretian plague. The choice of the Alpine setting as the site of the disaster merely represents an attempt on Vergil's part to lend geographic precision to his artistic vision. The actual choice of Noricum is dictated by its historical topicality as well as the knowledge of its legend and custom gleaned in Vergil's boyhood in the Veneto.³⁶

³⁵"L'Epizootie", p. 236: Et naturellement, ce tableau est géographiquement faux, car les hauteurs du Norique et une partie des arva de l'Iapydie sont de l'autre côté des Alpes. Virgile ne travaillait pas sur une carte. Il disposait à sa guise, de façon pittoresque, les lignes et les couleurs qui lui paraissaient définir la région dans laquelle se jouerait son drame.

³⁶Heurgon, "L'Epizootie", p. 247: Par surcroît, il a cédé au désir de particulariser l'événement, en le situant dans un secteur vers lequel se tournait alors l'attention générale. C'était risquer de se voir opposer un cruel démenti. Heureusement, pour donner quelque consistance à ses imaginations, le souvenir lui revenait de ce qu'il avait entendu raconter jadis de ce pays où les agriculteurs attelaient des buffles et labouraient à la houe, parce que, de toute évidence, une epizootie y avait détruit la race des boeufs." p. 247.

Heurgon's observations about the customs of this northern land are interesting and help to elucidate some rather obscure references in the Vergilian text. It is possible that Vergil might have drawn on boyhood memories of that area in his description of the dire circumstances of the plague. The Alpine custom of scraping the soil with hoes suits Vergil's thesis of the destruction of plough animals, as does the use of wild buffaloes as draught animals which, Heurgon advises, was a regular practice in this Alpine setting. Moreover, mention of the "sacra Iunonis", the rites of the Argive Juno (vv. 531-3), sits much more comfortably in the text when we recall that the whole area of the Veneto was characterized by special devotion to the Argive hero Diomedes and had set aside a sacred wood in honour of Juno.³⁷

A problem still persists in my mind, however, concerning Vergil's choice of Noricum and the role of the plague sequence in the scheme of the Georgics. Can we legitimately suggest, as Heurgon does, that the choice of Noricum is so intimately linked to the Lucretian presentation in the De Rerum Natura and totally devoid of special significance for Georgic III and the scheme of the poem as a whole? I think not. Vergil was far too conscientious a craftsman to simply draw inspiration from a predecessor at the expense of his own artistic conception.

The intricate structural scheme operative in the Georgics places particular emphasis on the conclusion of each book. The books are paired: I and II function as a unit, and III and IV also represent a pair. We cannot deny that Vergil was deeply influenced by Lucretius, but his debt

³⁷Heurgon, "L'Epizootie", pp. 244-5.

to his predecessor is felt in a variety of ways scarcely appreciated by many critics. The prominence of proem and conclusion in the De Rerum Natura and the cyclical theme which they support, in my opinion, prompted Vergil to incorporate a similar structural arrangement in his own didactic work. In the Georgics, however, the key structural unit is the pair with three significant segments; the proem sounds an optimistic and impressive opening statement for the whole unit. The conclusion of the first book presents a strongly negative vision. The proem of the second half of the unit, though signalling the formal opening of the new book, is much less impressive than the initial proem, and for our purposes, structurally insignificant. The tension sounded so dramatically at the close of the first book is quietly resolved in the body of the second, while the conclusion of the pair re-establishes the optimism and security which prevailed in the opening statement. In the Lucretian presentation, the philosophic colouring shifts from light to dark, and with the vision of the Athenian plague, emphasis is finally on pessimism. In the Vergilian scheme, on the other hand, each structural unit presents a movement from light to dark to light again with the final emphasis on optimism.

Consequently, the Vergilian plague sequence, considered in the light of this structural scheme, offers new insights for our study. Books III and IV function as a pair and together they sound a philosophic message which moves from optimism to pessimism and finally to optimism again. The conclusion of book III with its pessimistic vision is diametrically opposed in tone to the more optimistic conclusion of book IV, yet is intrinsically linked with it in the broader philosophic movement of the pair. It seems

to me, therefore, that it is not unreasonable to expect a broad correspondence in the geographic setting of each conclusion. The bougonia ritual with its successful, productive outcome is enacted in the northern Greek environs of Thrace. The plague sequence of III with its contrasting vision of death and destruction is set in the Alpine area north of Italy. This correspondence in setting serves to establish quite pointedly the contrast in outcome. As a result, I believe that choice of the northern region of Noricum as the site of the plague was deliberate on Vergil's part, intimately linked to the artistic and structural scheme of the Georgics, and not, as Heurgon would have us believe, the result of an accident in history.

Yet the contemporary association still has some special relevance for the interpretation of the plague within Georgic III. Among commentators, only L. P. Wilkinson attempts to link Vergil's plague with contemporary Roman events;³⁸ he unquestioningly accepts Noricum as the site of the devastation and expresses a view similar to Heurgon's interpretation:

³⁸The setting for the plague receives little attention from commentators. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, pp. 206-8 gives it some attention. J. Conington, P. Vergili Maronis Opera, ad G.III.478 supposes an actual plague, though he cannot supply any additional information and attaches no special significance to the northern setting. T. E. Page, P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica, p. 329, identifies Vergil's literary source but offers no comment on Noricum. K. Buchner, P. Vergilius Maro, der Dichter der Römer, p. 278, Klingner, Virgils Georgica, p. 160, and B. Otis, Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford, 1964), p. 179, are similarly uninformative. W. Richter, Virgil, Georgica, ad G.III.478 ff. identifies the area in modern geographical references, but otherwise offers no suggestions concerning Vergil's choice of mise en scene for the plague.

Is it not rather apparent that Virgil has conceived a plague that never was on land or sea, a piling up of gruesome symptoms culled from any source, or even his imagination, and affecting, like the amor of 242 ff.,

omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque
et genus aequoreum, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
though man is only casually introduced because this is a Book of beasts?

He colours his lurid canvas with the ingenuity of an Ovid or Tacitus, and the sensationalism of a Dore. Against the background of the soaring Alps and the Noric hill-towns we are shown the lowlands above Trieste, still desolate years after the catastrophe.³⁹

But later Wilkinson qualifies his earlier discussion of the strange manifestations of the plague, and shows a willingness to admit a certain element of fact behind the artistic vision:

Dio records (45.17 7) among portents of the year 43 that the Po, after a big flood, suddenly receded, stranding a vast number of snakes; and that countless fish were cast up on the shore near the mouth of the Tiber; and that on top of this there was a terrible (human) plague nearly all over Italy. We do not know the date of the Noric plague, but it could have been 43: in which case Virgil or his informants might have seen the dead snakes and fish and erroneously connected them with the animal and human plagues respectively. So there may be some element of fact behind the fantasy.⁴⁰

If we assume any kind of historical reference for the Vergilian plague, however, it seems to me to be more reasonable to look for a more immediate reference than the portents following the murder of Caesar. Internal evidence in the poem itself supports the extension in time; after all, Virgil had already dealt with the mysterious consequences following the murder of Caesar in the conclusion of book one, and he had nothing to gain by a more subtle reference to the same events in the conclusion of book III. Moreover, the prominence given to Octavian in both the poems

³⁹Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, p. 207.

⁴⁰Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, p. 208 note.

of books one and three, as well as the plea for his safety in the conclusion of book one seem to me to suggest that Vergil's thoughts were directed to the contemporary scene. I believe that with the presentation of plague at Noricum, Vergil has taken advantage of the current interest in the region to issue a message for his contemporaries. The full implications of that message will become clear as the discussion develops.

In presenting his interpretation of the plague, Vergil has abandoned the formal tri-partite scheme adopted by both Thucydides and Lucretius, that is, the discussion of the malady according to its physical manifestations and psychological and social repercussions. Vergil has not totally ignored these aspects, but has adopted a new method of presentation, relying on a technique generally labelled ring-composition. He begins and concludes his discussion of plague with an objective, didactic style of narrative (vv. 478-85 and 548-67). He has deliberately called attention to this device by subtly echoing Lucretius at his didactic best. At v. 478, as he begins his discussion of the pestilence, he cleverly imitates the Lucretian introduction:

Hic quondam morbo caeli miseranda coorta est

recalls

Haec ratio quondam morborum et mortifer aestus. (VI.1138)

Similarly, in the concluding portion of his discussion, Vergil deliberately accomplishes the transition with the adverb, "praeterea" (v. 548), a favourite Lucretian transitional connective.

In contrast to the objective introduction and conclusion, the central core of the Vergilian plague sequence consists of a 'catalogue of victims' (vv. 486-547) where Vergil makes full use of his gift for vivid, pictorial

and empathetic description. With subtle skill, he has bound the two styles into an impressive whole.

In the introduction proper to the plague sequence (478-85), Vergil establishes the setting and the season of the dread disease. Unlike Thucydides and Lucretius, he doesn't trace the geographic pattern of the contagion. Though he has earlier specified a definite terrestrial locale, his primary concern is to stress the all-embracing cosmic sweep of the plague:

et genus omne neci pecudum dedit, omne ferarum,
corruptique lacus, infecit pabula tabo. (480-1)

The thought was probably inspired by the Lucretian explanation of the origin of epidemics: he suggests that noxious particles either fall into the water supply or settle on the growing crops or animal pastures or remain suspended in the air:

haec igitur subito clades nova pestilitasque
aut in aquas cadit aut fruges persidit in ipsas
aut alios hominum pastus pecudumque cibatus,
aut etiam suspensa manet vis aere in ipso
et, cum spirantes mixtas hinc ducimus auras,
illa quoque in corpus paritur sorbere necessest.
consimili ratione venit bubus quoque saepe
pestilfitas et iam pigris balantibus aegror. (VI.1125-32)

Though there are no direct linguistic echoes of this passage in the Vergilian text, Vergil has reinforced the link with his predecessor with the use of a favourite Lucretian construction, "genus" with the adjective "omne" and followed by a genitive.

In an attempt to compound the seriousness of the disease, Vergil has ignored the series of explanations provided by Lucretius (and signalled with the conjunction "aut") and suggests that the pollution has infected

both the water supply and the food.⁴¹ Moreover, the plague acquires a special relevance for the Georgics as Vergil emphasizes the extent of the pollution. Its ravages are felt by Nature in the wild as well as Nature domesticated: the perfect fusion of wild and domestic which has been the message of the Georgics thus far is achieved with perverted and disastrous consequences. Through effective use of word-order Vergil emphasizes the total interaction between the two separate spheres. "Pecudum" and "pabula" are representative of the domestic, agrarian scene, while "ferarum" and "lacus" suggest the untamed world. At the same time, the emphatically placed verbs, "corruptit" and "infecit" serve to convey the horrendous implications of this interaction.

Equally intriguing is Vergil's four-line preoccupation with pathology:

nec via mortis erat simplex; sed ubi ignea venis
 omnibus acta sitis miseris adduxerat artus,
 rursus abundabat fluidus liquor omniaque in se
 ossa minutatim morbo conlapsa trahebat. (482-5)

Again, in a significant departure from the example set by Thucydides and Lucretius, Vergil has not provided his readers with soundly documented

⁴¹Nethercut, "Vergil's De Rerum Natura", p. 47 suggests that in contrast to the animate world which is besieged by suffering and death, the vegetable world remains untouched. It seems to me, however, that although Vergil concentrates his attention on the animal victims (a necessity in a Book on animals), he does suggest that the plague infected all of the natural world. The suggestion is reinforced with the explanation of epidemics given by Lucretius who suggests that noxious particles fall right on the growing crops.

medical fact.⁴² Instead, we are presented with the mysterious co-operation of elemental forces; fire and water, traditionally hostile elements, now united in a perverse union for the purpose of bringing destruction of cosmic proportions. The adverb, "minutatim", an obvious Lucretian echo, serves to deliberately emphasize the contrast in approach by the two poets. Clearly, the Vergilian plague is representative of more than physical disease.

At this point, abstract discussion of the malady is terminated as Vergil turns to the presentation of what I have termed a 'catalogue of victims'. In this central portion of the plague sequence, Vergil has made use of an interesting technique. With almost cinematographic finesse, he centres his attention first on a single victim, the microcosm, and then moves to an all-inclusive view of the total agricultural scene, the macrocosm. In the Vergilian account, in contrast to the approach favoured by Thucydides and Lucretius, man is not an integral part of the action-- not a surprising development, of course, in a description of animal plague. At the close of the plague description, however, he is implicated most directly as he too becomes a victim of the dreadful sickness.

It is significant that Vergil has chosen to present first the death

⁴²Richter, Vergil, Georgica, ad III.478 ff. in a long involved note, drawing on the resources of modern veterinary medicine, attempts to arrive at an identification of the animal plague described by Vergil. Yet he cannot arrive at a single disease which incorporates all of the symptoms mentioned by Vergil, and is forced to dismiss the involvement of the creatures of the sea, snakes, and birds as mere poetic invention. Vergil's plague is a completely artistic presentation and cannot support close scientific scrutiny.

of the "hostia", the sacrificial victim. Vergil has rejected the static observation of Lucretius on the breakdown of religious practice (VI.1272-7) in favour of a more dramatic presentation. The horrible reality of disease is emphasized as death is brought to the immediate sacrificial rite:

saepe in honore deum medio stans hostia ad aram,
 lanea dum nivea circumdatur infula vitta,
 inter cunctantis cecidit moribunda ministros; (486-8).

In the presence of the priestly administrators, at the altar itself, clothed in the impressive trappings of the solemn rite, the victim falls dead before the sacrifice can be performed.

In the second example, the inefficacy of religious ritual is stressed, though the scene is more pathetic than dramatic:

aut si quam ferro mactaverat ante sacerdos,
 inde neque impositis ardent altaria fibris,
 nec responsa potest consultus reddere vates,
 ac vix suppositi tinguntur sanguine cultri
 summaque ieiuna sanie infuscatur arena. (489-93)

Although the sacrifice has been performed according to the prescribed rite, the animal has died a useless death, for its entrails will yield no sign. The emphatic verb "infuscatur", which seems to convey an impression of filth, stands in sharp contrast to the snowy fillets of the victim. With careful detail Vergil has emphasized the unexpected results of the sacrifice: the thin trickle of blood is enough only to lightly stain the sacrificial knife and the surface of the sand.

Identification of the "hostia" as a bull or sheep seems to me to be unimportant; rather, the sacrificial victim is significant as a symbol of formal religious ritual, an ingrained aspect of stable agrarian life. We recall Vergil's earlier words:

cuncta tibi Cererem pubes agrestis adoret:
 cui tu lacte favos et miti dilue Baccho,
 terque novas circum felix eat hostia fruges,
 omnis quam chorus et socii comitentur ovantes
 et Cererem clamore vocant in tecta; neque ante
 falcem maturis quisquam supponat aristis
 quam Cereri torta redimitus tempora quercu
 det motus incompósitos et carmina dicat.

(I.343-50)

Here he emphasizes the necessity of sacrifice to Ceres in spring to insure the healthy growth of the crops, and again in the fall, before man reaps the benefits of harvest. Only by maintaining a respectful, pious attitude to the gods can man hope for rewards for his labour.

Later in book II, he again confirms the efficacy of rustic ritual, this time in pointed contrast to the more sophisticated pursuits of philosophy and science (vv. 494-5). The collapse of religious ritual in Vergil's scheme is an important and distressing symptom of the disruption of the rustic ideal. At this point, the horror and seriousness of the situation are only implied, not explicitly stated by Vergil. He relies on vivid pictorial and emotional association to create the desired impression.⁴³

It seems to me that this passage describing the death of the sacrificial victim also provides significant insight into Vergil's attitude toward his literary predecessor and convincing proof of his independent

⁴³Herta Klepl, in her study, Lucrez und Virgil in ihren Lehrgedichten: Vergleichende Interpretationen (Darmstadt, 1967), has provided an excellent discussion of this passage. She too stresses the special significance which the collapse of religious ritual acquires in the Vergilian scheme: "Krankheit und Tod sind nur dadurch bedeutsam, da sie sich an der 'hostia' vollziehen. Da höhere Zusammenhänge zerstört werden, da die göttlichen Gesetze, die dem Menschen in den natürlichen Vorgängen offenbar sind, versagen und enttäuschen, darin besteht das eigentlich Furchtbare der Krankheit." p. 62.

poetic spirit. Though the passage was undoubtedly inspired by the Lucretian observations on the collapse of religion as a consequence of disease, the Vergilian description itself is more closely modelled on another Lucretian passage, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia described in book I:

cui simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus
 ex utraque pari malarum parte profusast,
 et maestum simul ante aras adstare parentum
 sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros

 nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras
 deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum
 perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo,
 hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis,
 exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.
 tantum religio potuit suadere malorum. (87-101)

Lucretius has presented the image of Iphigeneia at the moment of sacrifice, in front of the altar, wearing the ritual fillets of the victim. Vergilian echoes of the passage are unmistakable: "circumdatur infula vitta", the stance of the "hostia", "ad aram", and surrounded by priestly attendants, the Lucretian-styled adjective, "moribunda", in place of the epithet, "tremibunda". Yet Lucretius has presented the scene as an example of the evils which have been perpetrated in the name of religion. The vivid and pathetic representation comes as a climax in his argument against religious superstition. Vergil, on the other hand, has deliberately introduced Lucretian echoes in a passage which presents the collapse of religion as a disastrous consequence. As elsewhere in the Georgics, we gain additional proof of the independent spirit with which Vergil approaches his sources.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Both Richter, Vergil, Georgica, ad III.486, and Klepl, Lucrez und Virgil, p. 61 acknowledge the Lucretian source for G. III.486-8, but fail to appreciate the special significance of the echo in the Vergilian scheme.

Throughout the catalogue, Vergil never loses the perspective of the total agricultural horizon. With consummate skill, he moves from the official religious function to a private rustic setting (494-7). With careful choice of epithets, Vergil allows his sympathy to show. A striking contrast is created as calves die in the "laetis...herbis", a dreadful reversal of the previous idyllic situation, as they give up their "dulcis animas" by the "plena praesepia". The monstrous death of the dogs is vividly suggested by the striking juxtaposition of the epithet "blandis" and the substantive "rabies". Finally, we are presented with the single appearance of swine in the grips of death. The scene is brief and effective; Vergil again offers no direct comment, though a mounting emotional tension is felt.

By far the greatest portion of Vergil's attention in this catalogue of victims is directed to the horse and the bull who have had significant roles throughout the first half of book III.⁴⁵ Consonant with his technique of alternating views of the agrarian macrocosm and microcosm, Vergil leaves behind the view of the animals round the steading, and narrows his range to the horse, the "victor equus". In this section (vv. 498-514), Vergil pays particular attention to pathological detail, leaning heavily on the Lucretian text. Yet, in contrast to the Thucydidean and Lucretian approach which detailed the manifestations of disease strictly according

⁴⁵ Ms. Klepl, Lucretius und Virgil, p. 58 suggests that Vergil's choice of domestic animals as victims of the disease has personalized Vergil's presentation of the plague and immediately evoked sympathy and compassion which are lacking in the presentation of Lucretius. It seems to me that this is especially true of the bull and the horse who were the principal subjects of the first half of the third book.

to the various stages of the sickness, Vergil draws indiscriminately from the Lucretian description and borrows only enough details to make his discussion of physical symptoms realistic.

The horse first loses his appetite, refuses to drink, and is generally restless; these symptoms are not borrowed from Lucretius, but appear to have been added by Vergil himself. They have a special relevance for Georgic III where eating habits and animal behavior are important aspects of Vergil's didactic study. Similarly, the detail of the drooping ears, "demissae aures" (v. 500) is a Vergilian touch and sadly establishes a contrast with happier times when the spirited stallion picked up his ears at the first sound of battle fray.

Intermittent sweating and a cold, hard texture to the skin are borrowed from the Lucretian description (vv. 1187 and 1194 respectively), although the latter detail also establishes a pathetic contrast within the framework of book III. Now touch is an uncomfortable sensation for man, and presumably for the animal as well. Earlier, touch had been an exciting means of communication between man and beast:

tum magis atque magis blandis gaudere magistri
 laudibus et plausae sonitum cervicis amare. (185-6)

The special rapport which had been established has been abruptly severed, another manifestation of the disruption of the subtle rhythm of existence occasioned by the plague.

Following the lead of Lucretius, Vergil suggests a worsening of the animal's condition, but the symptoms of impending death in the Vergilian description are again borrowed indiscriminately from Lucretius' discussion. In one particularly interesting example, the condition of the eyes (v.505),

Vergil effectively abbreviates the Lucretian detail by substituting the striking epithet "ardentes" with "oculi" for the more detailed manifestation provided by Lucretius, "duplices oculos suffusa luce rubentis" (v.1146). With mention of laboured breathing, groans, and heavy sighs (vv.505-7) as signs of imminent death, Vergil has not observed the distinctions made by Lucretius: in the Lucretian account, only irregular respiration is suggested as a symptom of the progressive deterioration of the victim (v.1186), while groans and sighs are early manifestations of disease (vv.1146 and 1160). We must always keep in mind, however, that Lucretius is discussing symptoms as they apply to man, while Vergil is discussing the illness of a horse.

Vergil has again followed an independent course in combining nose-bleed with mention of a swollen tongue and constricted throat (vv.507-8). In Lucretius' description, early in the course of the disease, the victim's throat oozed blood, the voice box became ulcerated, and the tongue was rough and bloody (v.1147). Later, as death approached, blood also flowed from the nose (v.1203).

Lucretius makes a special observation about the peculiar resistance of the disease to a generalized method of treatment. What was beneficial to one sufferer often proved to be fatal for another (v.1226). This comment prompts an interesting presentation by Vergil who centres the peculiar reactions in a single victim. Given an application of wine, the horse begins to improve, and regains his strength, only to turn on himself in a perverted, suicidal act of violence:

profuit inserto latices infundere cornu
 Lenaeos; ea visa salus morientibus una.
 mox erat hoc ipsum exitio, furiisque reffecti
 ardebant, ipsique suos iam morte sub aegra
 (di meliora piis, erroremque hostibus illum!)
 discissos nudis laniabant dentibus artus.

(509-14)

Though the details are Lucretian, Vergil has made the presentation of the death of the race horse peculiarly his own. Throughout the first half of the third book, the agility, power and spirit of the stallion have been emphasized; now, at the moment of death, these very qualities prove to be his undoing.

The parenthesis of v. 513, a rare intrusion by the poet, serves to emphasize the impression of horror and awe associated with the violent death of the stallion. Yet, more significantly, with the contrast of "piis" and "hostibus" Vergil moves beyond the physical manifestations of the sickness, and raises the issue of the meaning of the stallion's death.

At the beginning of his description, Vergil has used the expression, "infelix studiorum", which has offered commentators considerable difficulty. Conington admits his problem in arriving at a suitable explanation for the phrase:

A horse might be called 'felix studiorum' either as feeling pride in his occupation, or having attained success in it, and the negative of either would suit the sense here, as though already a victor, he might still be unhappy, as having been cut off from further triumphs.⁴⁶

Similarly, T. E. Page offers the following comment:

The horse is described as 'unhappy in his efforts' because they bring him no reward.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Conington, *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, ad G.III.498.

⁴⁷*P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica*, p. 330.

I believe that the phrase might better be translated as "unlucky, in the sense of unproductive, in his pursuits". Throughout the Georgics, the pursuits of the horse have been violent and aggressive--the race course or the battle-field, exactly opposite to the rustic ideal of quiet, non-aggressive simplicity. At the same time, however, we must remember that the horse is an integral feature of the Italian landscape. In his celebrated passage in praise of Italy, Vergil centres his attention on the creature of war with an attitude of pride:

hinc bellator equus campōse arduus infert,
 hinc albi, Clitumne, greges et maxima taurus
 victima, saepe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,
 Romanos ad templa deum duxere triumphos. (II.145-8)

Linked here with symbols of Roman piety, the horse too stands as a testimony to the strong Italian national character. For Vergil, as for all patriotic Romans, military accomplishments were a source of pride. Weakened now by disease, and unable to fulfil the tasks for which he was trained, the horse carries with him to his death a vital part of Italian strength. The phrase "immemor herbae" now offers a sad commentary on the image in book II of that proud creature grazing in the lush Italian pastures. With the suicidal violence which marks his death, all his strength and power turned to gruesome, self-mutilating ends, it seems to me that Vergil intends a symbol of Rome, tearing at her own vital organs in a terrible perversion of her military strength.

The companion piece to this section on the "victor equus" is a sixteen line passage on the death of the bull (vv.515-30). I have chosen to limit my discussion of the "taurus" to v.530, for in my opinion, at v.531, though he still deals with the same category of beast, Vergil has reverted to his original technique, and presented another glimpse of the

agrarian macrocosm. In contrast to the description of the death of the stallion where pathological details are emphasized, the physical ills of the steer receive only cursory attention. He falls at the plough:

ecce autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus
 concidit et mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem
 extremosque ciet gemitus.

(515-7)

Curiously, the image is borrowed from a description in the De Rerum Natura of an epileptic seizure (III.489 ff.), rather than the plague sequence of book VI. The rest of the Vergilian passage in connection with the bull takes the form of a philosophic comment on the inefficacy of a good life. Here, to a greater extent than anywhere else in his 'catalogue', Vergil gives free rein to empathetic narrative, and the pathetic image of the dead bull remains very much a Vergilian creation. To appreciate the full implications of the Vergilian description of the "taurus", one must take into consideration the role assigned to the bull throughout the rest of the poem.

Earlier in book III, the pursuits reserved for the bull have been totally honourable: to him falls the role of sacrificial victim, or help-mate of the farmer. It is this latter category that Vergil has emphasized throughout the Georgics. The expression, "hominumque boumque labores", has become almost formulaic in the Vergilian text and succinctly describes the co-operation of man, beast, and Nature which is set forth as the Vergilian ideal.

In the plague sequence, with the description of the death of the bull, man steps from the periphery into a more prominent position as Vergil presents a direct glimpse of the psychological effects of the pestilence. This aspect of its destruction is not emphasized to such a degree as we

find in Thucydides and Lucretius; yet the plough, abandoned in mid-task, offers mute testimony to the devastating disruption of the balance between man, beast, and the land:

it tristis arator
maerentem abiungens fraterna morte iuvenum,
atque opere in medio defixa reliquit aratra. (517-9)

The "arator" has become "tristis", and the wealth of treasures which Nature offers no longer serve to entice the "maerentem iuvenum". Still the image of the bull as the faithful companion of man is sustained as he meets his death while performing his task beneath the yoke.

The death of the bull and the abandoned plough symbolize the disruption of the simple Italian agricultural life which had served as the foundation of Roman greatness through the centuries. Like the "victor equus", the "taurus" in his death sounds a tragic end to vital aspects of Italian national life.⁴⁸

Moreover, in this passage as well, Vergil has devoted considerable attention to overt philosophical reflection (vv.525-30). He openly challenges the value of moral rectitude as he asks:

quid labor aut benefacta iuvant? quid vomere terras
invertisse gravis? (525-6)

The object of the verb "iuvant" is ambiguous, and I believe deliberately so; both the "arator" and the "taurus" participate jointly in lives distinguished for their purity and simple productivity. Just as their labour has been performed in partnership, so also the lament for unjustified

⁴⁸Commentators, notably Klingner, Büchner, and Klepl, insist that Vergil intends a sharp contrast in the death of the stallion and the steer. Throughout Georgic III the stallion and the steer are depicted as very different creatures with different functions to perform, but we must not lose sight of the fact that in a special sense their deaths are complementary and together symbolize the collapse of Italian national life.

death must necessarily be directed toward man and beast, even though death has for the moment claimed only half of the partnership.

In his description of the simple life of the "taurus":

frondibus et victu pascuntur simplicis herbae,
pocula sunt fontes liquidi atque exercita cursu
flumina, nec somnos abrumpit cura salubris. (528-30)

Vergil recalls with bitter irony an earlier passage where he extolled the joys of the rustic ideal:

o fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
agricolas!.....
dives opum variarum, at latis otia fundis,
speluncae vivique lacus, at frigida tempe
mugitusque boum mollesque sub arbore somni
non absunt; (II.458-71).

Clearly, the death of the "taurus" with his deep rustic association more than any other single victim emphasizes the dreadful psychological and social repercussions of the malady.

In contrast to the passage describing the death of the stallion, where echoes of the Lucretian plague sequence are numerous, the "taurus" passage displays no significant links with the Lucretian plague. With the image of the grieving bull, however, Vergil does introduce reminiscences of a Lucretian description in book II. Following the death of his partner in labour and his release from the burden of service, the grieving bull cannot be tempted by the pleasures which Nature offers. Instead, he sinks to the ground and a pathetic inertia seizes his powerful frame:

non umbrae aliorum nemorum, non mollia possunt
prata movere animum, non qui per saxa volutus
purior electro campum petit amnis; at ima
solvuntur latera, atque oculos stupor urget inertis
ad terramque fluit devexo pondere cervix. (520-4)

The style of the passage, especially the repetition of the connective "non", and the brief description of the landscape, as well as linguistic echoes connect it with the Lucretian description of the cow grieving for the loss of her calf:

completque quere^{is}
frondiferum nemus adsistens et crebra revisit
ad stabulum desiderio perfixa iuveni,
nec tenerae salices atque herbae rore vigentes
fluminaque illa queunt summis labentia ripis
oblectare animum subitamque avertere curam,
nec vitulorum aliae species per pabula laeta
derivare queunt animum curaque levare:
usque adeo quiddam proprium notumque requirit. (II.358-66)

In spite of the scientific motive for including the description (as proof of his theory that atoms differ in shape and form), Lucretius has provided a moving presentation of a grieving mother; even in the animal kingdom ties between parent and offspring are strong and not easily broken before the young reach maturity.

Vergil has recognized the emotional impact of the Lucretian description and successfully evoked an empathetic reaction in his own presentation; he has altered the basic Lucretian arrangement, however, and made the death of a brother the source of grief. The dissolution through death of the working relationship of the two bulls, the disruption of agricultural harmony, is effectively presented by Vergil as an emotional upheaval.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Richter, *Vergil, Georgica*, ad III.517 recognizes the significance of the adaptation introduced by Vergil but fails to integrate the death of the steer in the over-all vision of the Vergilian plague sequence.

Ms. Klepl, *Lucrez und Virgil*, pp. 74-6 provides an excellent comparison of the Vergilian description and its Lucretian model, and, as I have done, emphasizes the strongly empathetic quality of Vergil's poetic vision. But in her attempts to contrast the stallion and the steer,

Yet, if Vergil appears to be questioning the validity of the rustic ideal, we soon realize that this represents only a momentary reflection. Contrary to the impression of lawlessness stressed by both Lucretius and Thucydides, the old Italian agrarian spirit prevails in the Vergilian account, as man struggles to cling to the last remaining shred of continuity. With oxen in short supply, he is forced to improvise in his religious obligations as well as his agricultural labour. In contrast to happier times when only the best animals were used in religious rites, he now must allow ill-matched wild beasts to participate in the worship of his gods:

tempore non alio discunt regionibus illis
 quaesitas ad sacra boves Iunonis et uris
 imparibus ductos alta ad donaria currus. (531-3)

Similarly, in the private agrarian sphere, the same tenacious spirit surfaces as man himself assumes the tasks of the draught animals:

ergo aegre rastris terram rimantur, et ipsis
 unguibus infodiunt fruges, montisque per altos
 contenta cervice trahunt stridentia plaustra. (534-6)

Though we cannot help but appreciate Vergil's tribute to the dedication of the peasant, who with "contenta cervice" assumes burdens not intended to be his, the scene still strikes one as a terrible parody of "labor" and the working relationship of man and the land which has been stressed throughout the poem; the epithet, "stridentia", is particularly effective, as the wagons themselves appear to vocalize the incongruity of the situation.

⁴⁹she errs in interpreting vv. 520-4 as a description of the death of the steer. This interpretation is also favoured by Conington, Page, and Buchner. It seems to me, however, that the phrase, "extremosque ciet gemitus" unquestioningly establishes the death of the steer and makes no further description necessary. The verses which follow seem more logical when applied to the grieving bull. Both Richter and Wilkinson support this view.

Around the steading as well (vv.537-40), we witness the same frightening incongruity as wild beasts mingle with domestic creatures. In the Lucretian account, the distaste for the contaminated flesh and contagion kept the predatory creatures from the sick and the dead. Many animals succumbed to the disease within their wooded lairs. In the Vergilian description of the plague, however, natural hostilities are simply forgotten, and we are presented with the terrible reversal of the Golden Age; the goal of the Georgics, total interaction of wild and domestic has been realized in a perverse and frightening situation:

acrior illum
cura domat; (538-9)

The key words, "cura" and "domat", representative throughout the poem of man's struggles to bring Nature into communion with him, strike a pathetically ironic note.

Finally, we recall that in his didactic preface, Vergil took care to stress the monumental sphere of the malady: it was not confined to the domestic agricultural setting alone, but the destruction encompassed land, sea, and air. Consequently, the poet moves from a domestic setting to the natural, untamed world (vv.541-7). The pestilence engulfs the creatures of the sea which belches dead bodies on the shore:

iam maris immensi prolem et genus omne natantum
litore in extremo ceu naufraga corpora fluctus
proluit; (541-3)

Vergil's descriptive simile, "naufraga corpora", is a strange comparison, oddly suggestive of the victims of mighty sea battles. The whole of Nature is in a state of complete upheaval--seals leave the ocean and search out the rivers, vipers and water-snakes die in their natural habitat. The death of these reptiles is especially significant when we recall the

serpentine association lent to the plague. In this unnatural state of affairs, the pestilence has usurped the serpentine image on earth, and the vipers themselves must yield and die. Finally, the air is polluted and offers no refuge for its creatures. The narrow agricultural scope has been broadened to involve all facets of the universe in total destruction.

The catalogue of victims thus complete, Vergil moves abruptly to his didactic climax (vv.548-66). As in the Thucydidean and Lucretian accounts of the sickness, the inefficacy of man's efforts to put a halt to the contagion is stressed. Even those skilled in the healing arts cannot find a solution. In the Vergilian account, we are presented with a short catalogue of medical figures:

cessere magistri,
Phillyrides Chiron Anythaoniusque Melampus. (549-50)

Two Greek mythical healers are represented departing, unable to offer any positive remedies to check the spread of the disease. Their place is immediately claimed by three representatives from Tartarus:

pallida Tisiphone Morbos agit ante Metumque, (552).

Victory of chthonic forces is now supreme. Vergil has skillfully signalled the climax of the plague sequence with the quick and frightening change of dramatis personae.

At this point the scene shifts from the monstrous supernatural world to a rustic setting again (vv.554-5) and a kind of pathetic fallacy; the hills and rivers and herds assume a tragic vibrance as all of nature echoes the disaster. It is clear now that the Vergilian plague transcends the limits of a strictly medical phenomenon confined to an agricultural setting. The destruction has assumed cosmic proportions and carries with

it monumental significance. All of Nature, indeed all of life itself, feels its disruptive force.

Throughout the description of the plague, we have noticed that Vergil has chosen to confine man to the periphery of the action; he appears now and again in the catalogue of victims, but only in a secondary capacity. Here at last, as a dramatic conclusion to the plague description, Vergil brings man to the forefront. He too shall feel the effects of the destruction first-hand.

From the beginning, man is pathetic in his ignorance. His alliance with "humus" becomes a totally tragic one as he must now empty his barns and commit to the earth the rotting corpses of his stock, a sharp contrast to happier times when he buried seed in the earth with the hopes of filling his granaries with provisions, and feeding his stock. His involvement builds with climactic progression until at last, despite his efforts to salvage even a minimum from the disaster, he himself falls victim to the disease. Here we notice a sharply defined contrast with the opening of this section; the impressive gathering of "magistri" are free to depart; the unnamed "quis", on the other hand, is betrayed by his simple alliance with the land and its creatures, as he too falls victim. The balance between man and Nature has finally been disrupted. With this pessimistic note Vergil concludes the third book of the Georgics.

The question of interpretation of the Vergilian plague sequence is a complex one. As a learned, artistic poet, Vergil undoubtedly was influenced in the development of the plague motif by his predecessors, Thucydides, Sophocles, and Lucretius. At the same time, we must appreciate

the poetic scheme of the Georgics which prompted Vergil to conclude his third book with an image of sweeping devastation.

For too long, critical inquiry has directed its gaze only to Lucretius and minimized the Vergilian achievement by searching for slavish imitation of his Roman predecessor. Certainly Lucretius exerted considerable influence on the younger poet, not only in the description of plague, but throughout the Georgics. Moreover, since Lucretius was a fellow Roman, and a near contemporary of Vergil, it is wise to begin with the De Rerum Natura in our consideration of literary influence.

The mammoth study contributed by Merrill,⁵⁰ though a useful tabulation of the linguistic echoes of Lucretian material in the Vergilian corpus, unfortunately has presented a misleading impression concerning the extent of Vergil's debt to Lucretius. Merrill uncovers 1635 passages in the De Rerum Natura which give rise to discernible echoes in the poetic expression of the Eclogues, Georgics and the Aeneid. His statistics have been reviewed by Cyril Bailey,⁵¹ who offers a more conservative estimate of over 1000 examples by eliminating a number of parallels which he feels should more accurately be ascribed to coincidence rather than imitation. Even in the more cautious assessment presented by Bailey, in a corpus of over 12,000 lines, Vergil has echoed his predecessor about once in every 12 lines. Obviously such statistical evidence establishes the extent of Vergil's dependence on Lucretius, but in my opinion has a rather limited value in the total assessment of a complex literary phenomenon. More

⁵⁰"Parallels and Coincidences in Lucretius and Virgil".

⁵¹"Virgil and Lucretius", Proceedings of the Classical Association of London, XXVIII (1931), 21-39.

enlightening is the manner in which Vergil has incorporated each of these borrowings into his own text and the pattern of assimilation that emerges in his poetry and contributes to his artistic vision.

Although we have already examined individual Lucretian echoes as they relate to the various aspects of the plague presented by Vergil, it seems to me that it might be useful to review again the general pattern of borrowings in the plague sequence in order to arrive at a true appreciation of Lucretius' influence and Vergil's own independent genius.⁵²

One naturally assumes that because Vergil chose to follow the Lucretian example at the end of his poem in concluding Georgic III with a description of plague, the similarity in content ought to be complemented by a close correspondence in language. This impression is substantiated by Vergil's opening remarks (vv.478-85) which show a strong linguistic dependence on Lucretius' description of plague and his earlier, more generalized discussion of epidemics.

Yet, as Vergil moves to a consideration of individual victims, he draws themes from the Lucretian plague, but incorporates reminiscences from the rest of the De Rerum Natura. In the description of the death of the sacrificial victim, he calls to mind the Lucretian observation about the collapse of religious ritual, but verbally recalls the dramatic representation of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in book I.

Throughout his discussion, Vergil reveals a close dependence on the Lucretian plague sequence in one limited area, pathology. Even here there is evidence of the freedom and independent spirit which Vergil

⁵²I have found the study by Ms. Klepl, Lurez und Virgil, pp. 53-55 especially helpful at this point.

displayed elsewhere toward Lucretian material. Neither the fascination for lurid details, nor the demands of scientific accuracy have motivated Vergil. Only enough details necessary for the realistic presentation of the physical aspects of disease are provided, and these are chosen indiscriminately, without particular regard for the natural progression of the sickness. Vergil's immediate concern is a dramatic impact, a sweeping vision of hopelessness which will conclude Georgic III on a note of despair. His only attempt at identification of the malady is an echo of the Lucretian expression, "sacer ignis".

Clearly there emerges from a linguistic study of the plague sequence in the two poets a definite perception of Vergil's relationship to his predecessor. Close verbal correspondence between the two descriptions of plague is not nearly as extensive as one might expect. It would be folly, however, to suggest that the conclusion of Georgic III was fashioned quite independently of Lucretius. Vergil himself has established a very deliberate link with the Lucretian description of plague in the opening section of his discussion of the sickness, and reinforces the association with verbal echoes drawn from throughout the De Rerum Natura. Yet the association is never confined within the narrow limits of imitation as Vergil freely assimilates and incorporates them into an impressive whole that remains uniquely his.

Yet literary influence encompasses more than linguistic links, and I believe that the influence of Lucretius in the development of the plague motif is felt most strongly in the philosophic colouring with which Vergil has imbued his description of plague. He has duplicated the dark, pessimistic tone of the Lucretian plague sequence, but again with an

independent flair has made it subordinate to the broader design of the Georgics. We must appreciate the artistic scheme and poetic movement of the poem before we can perceive the place of the plague sequence in Vergil's design and the special link with the De Rerum Natura.

Through the efforts of R. Minadeo,⁵³ we have come to appreciate the impact of the description of plague in the poetic scheme of the De Rerum Natura. Philosophically as well as structurally, the plague sequence is intended by Lucretius as a dramatic climax in his vision of the constant cycle of creation and destruction at work in the universe. At the close of his poem, he makes an example of Athens at the peak of her power, and later in the grips of despair, to provide concrete testimony to the philosophic abstract he has stressed throughout his work. The only truly positive thrust in the philosophic system of Lucretius is provided by the figure of Epicurus, who is hailed as champion of the philosophy of withdrawal which Lucretius has so enthusiastically espoused.⁵⁴

⁵³"The Formal Design of the De Rerum Natura", pp. 444-61. W. R. Nethercutt, "Vergil's De Rerum Natura", p. 45 offers an interesting assessment of Lucretius' structural design. He suggests that the poem is divided into two halves; the first three books present the philosophic abstract of the Epicurean system, while the second half (Bks IV to VI) emphasizes human behavior and the responses which ought to be forthcoming in the light of this philosophical revelation. Both sections conclude with a discussion of death. Book III is designed to dispel the terror associated with death, while Book VI with its discussion of the Athenian plague reveals the behavior of those who have not found the peace of the Epicurean message.

⁵⁴Minadeo, "The Formal Design of the De Rerum Natura", p. 459.

In the Georgics, however, we find a significant qualification of the Lucretian world-picture. Vergil recognizes a powerful negative force in the universe, but it is one which man can arrest by dint of effort:

sic omnia fatis
in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri,
non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit,
atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alveus amni. (I.199-203)

The figure of the boatman, ceaselessly struggling against forces which threaten to destroy him, and doomed to failure if ever he relaxes his efforts, like the farmer, stands as Vergil's answer to the Epicurean message of non-participation. Moreover, in Vergil's scheme, the struggle is not ordained by some impersonal and abstract principle of the universe, but rather is providentially directed for the ultimate benefit of man:

pater ipse colendi
haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda
nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.
.....
ut varias usus meditando extunderet artis
paulatim, et sulcis frumenti quaereret herbam,
ut silicis venis abstrusum excuderet ignem. (I.121-35)

In the Lucretian scheme, one of the principal points of reference for tangible evidence of the workings of abstract, philosophic principles is Athens, with Epicurus at her centre, radiating light and dispelling the dark fears of the mind. For Vergil, Rome and all of Italy are his concern, and Octavian has usurped the image of Epicurus as saviour; active statesman rather than passive philosopher, his task remains to establish physical, military peace, as Epicurus sought to institute philosophic calm.

In his structural arrangement, Vergil has partially heeded the example of Lucretius in giving special prominence to the proem and conclusion of each book. In the Georgics, however, the books are linked

in pairs. The proem of each unit, as opening statement, sounds an impressive, optimistic note in which Octavian figures quite prominently. At the close of the proem, Vergil admits a mildly disquieting element which establishes a subtle current of tension. This negative aspect is picked up and amplified in the close of the book with a startling image of destruction. The proem of the second unit of the pair, while signalling the formal opening of the new book, is much less impressive than the initial proem, and for our purposes, structurally insignificant. The tension sounded so forcefully at the close of the first book is quietly resolved in the body of the second, while the conclusion of the pair dramatically re-establishes the aspect of quiet optimism and security which prevailed in the opening statement.

A closer look at the Vergilian text will clarify this structural scheme. Book one of the Georgics opens with an impressive proem in which Vergil announces his intended subjects for each of the four books of the poem. There follows an invocation to twelve rustic deities, each of whom has performed some valuable service to aid man in his struggle for civilization. In a supreme compliment, divinity is suggested for Octavian in the company of these productive gods and goddesses:

tuque adeo, quem mox quae sint habitura deorum
 concilia incertum est, urbisne invisere, Caesar,
 terrarumque velis curam, et te maximus orbis
 auctorem frugum tempestatumque potentem
 accipiat cingens materna tempora myrto;
 an deus immensi venias maris ac tua nautae
 numina sola colant,...

(24-30)

In contrast to the Epicurean conception of gods who live completely carefree lives, totally detached from the cares and achievements of men, productivity and beneficence are the essence of divinity for Vergil.

Octavian likewise must accustom himself to invocation, and be prepared to aid man in his struggle:

da facilem cursum atque audacibus adnue coeptis,
ignarosque viae mecum miseratus agrestis
ingredere et votis iam nunc adsuesce vocari. (40-2)

Only one negative aspect intrudes to disturb the optimistic tone of this proem:

(nam te nec sperant Tartara regem,
nec tibi regnandi veniat tam dira cupido,
quamvis Elysios miretur Graecia campos
nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem), (36-9)

The association of Tartarus with the divinity of Octavian in itself is only a mildly disquieting element, especially since Vergil at this point does not pursue the implications of such a connection any further. The chthonic association, however, will recur and function as a significant negative theme in the Georgics. It suffices, for the time, simply to mark its first occurrence.

In insisting upon the Providential direction of the universe, and exhorting man to struggle against the progressive deterioration of the earth, Vergil has adopted an optimistic stand which is diametrically opposed to the pessimistic reflections of Lucretius. Save for the redeeming cry of "labor omnia vicit/improbis", however, we can hardly describe the first book of the Georgics as an optimistic and encouraging treatise; at every step of the way, the farmer, engaged in a harsh and never-ending struggle, is threatened by destruction.

Similarly the close of Georgic I picks up the pessimistic pre-occupations of the agricultural struggle and projects these negative attitudes into the political sphere. Vergil begins by assigning the sun

a prophetic role in anticipating political upheaval and civil strife:

solem quis dicere falsum
 audeat? ille etiam caecos instare tumultus
 saepe monet fraudemque et operta tumescere bella; (463-5).

We notice particularly the adverbial qualification, "saepe monet".

Vergil is not concerned only with the portents and strange atmospheric phenomena of the preceding decade. The evils of "fraudem" and "operta bella" are a prominent feature of Roman history, and the poet's foreboding concerning civil strife is intended for the future as well as the past. Moreover, all of nature co-operates in issuing a dire warning.

In support of his thesis, Vergil cites proof from the not-too-distant past, the atmospheric disturbances which followed the murder of Julius Caesar: eclipse, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, and a variety of mysterious and frightening omens (vv.469-88). Man himself added the dreadful climax to the cataclysmic warnings, as Roman fought against Roman at the battle of Philippi:

ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
 Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi;
 nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
 Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos. (489-92)

The evils of war and political struggle impinge on agricultural reality as the farmer, fulfilling his routine tasks, unearths traces of the unholy struggle:

scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
 agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro
 exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,
 aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis
 grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris. (493-7)

War implements and the bones of fallen heroes impede the plough.

One cannot help but recall the image of the "arator" presented by Lucretius at the close of book two (vv.1164-7); he stood in awe of the achievements of the past, when the earth was stronger and his ancestors enjoyed a richer life. In the Vergilian scheme, the negative aspects of civil strife and political intrigue loom larger than the progressive deterioration and decline of the earth.

Abruptly, Vergil's perspective shifts to the present with a plea to the gods of Italy for a saviour:

di patrii Indigetes et Romule Vestaque mater,
 quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia servas,
 hunc saltem everso iuvenem succurrere saeclo
 ne prohibete. (498-501)

In the description which follows, the conditions of "everso...saeclo" as a consequence of war are presented in a straight-forward manner. For the moment, the preoccupation with semeiology and atmospheric warnings has lapsed. All is chaos throughout the Roman world:

tot bella per orbem,
 tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro
 dignus honos, squalent abductis arva colonis,
 et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.
 hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;
 vicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes
 arma ferunt; saevit toto Mars impius orbe, (505-11).

Even the semblance of agricultural harmony has disappeared as men abandon the plough to take up the weapons of war. The passage concludes quite negatively with a metaphor drawn from racing:

ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
 addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
 fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas. (512-14)

The use of equine symbolism as an expression of the political state at Rome is an interesting image and one which will recur in the Georgics. It is also significant that the figure of Octavian is introduced at the

transition point between the vestiges of chaos past and present. As the plea to the protectors of Rome illustrates, he is quite obviously cast in the role of saviour, and provides the only source of light in an otherwise dark conclusion.

The tension surrounding the agricultural production in Georgic I is firmly resolved in Vergil's second book. The poet has not minimized the necessity of "labor", but instead of a ceaseless struggle with a recalcitrant earth, the farmer finds a co-operative partner in Nature. Contrary to the Lucretian image of the earth as a tired mother, in the Vergilian scheme, she still possesses pristine strength and abundant fertility:

ver adeo frondi nemorum, ver utile silvis,
 vere tument terrae et genitalia semina poscunt.
 tum pater omnipotens fecundis imbribus Aether
 coniugis in gremium laetae descendit, et omnis
 magnus alit magno commixtus corpore fetus.

.....
 non alios prima crescentis origine mundi
 inluxisse dies aliumve habuisse tenorem
 crediderim: ver illud erat, ver magnus agebat
 orbis et hibernis parcebant flatibus Euri,
 cum primae lucem pecudes hausere, virumque
 terrea progenies duris caput extulit arvis,
 immissaeque ferae silvis et sidera caelo.

(II.323-42)

Every spring, her vigour is renewed, and all creatures experience the joy and exuberance of that primal awakening.

This current of optimism carries over to the conclusion of the second book, the last significant segment of the first structural unit. The insidious association of agriculture and martial exploits lamented in the close of the first book has been dissolved. The life of the agricola is distinguished by the absence of civil strife and conflicts with foreign foes:

o fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis
fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus. (458-60)

and later:

fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestis
Panaque Silvanumque senem Nymphasque sorores.
illum non populi fasces, non purpura regum
flexit et infidos agitans discordia fratres,
aut coniurato descendens Dacus ab Histro,
non res Romanae perituraque regna; neque ille
aut doluit miserans inopem aut invidit habenti.
quos rami fructus, quos ipsa volentia rura
sponte tulere sua, carpsit, nec ferrea iura
insanumque forum aut populi tabularia vidit. (493-502)

The strong political overtones evident in the close of Georgic I have been modified somewhat in the conclusion of this second book. Certainly one could argue convincingly that the restoration of agricultural harmony represents the fulfillment of the plea offered by Vergil in the midst of the chaos depicted in book I (vv.500-1). Likewise, in the opening proem of the structural unit, although divinity is being reserved for Augustus, the sphere of his beneficence has not yet been decided (I.24-36). One might interpret this closing image of harmony and order as a suggestion that Italian agriculture is to be reserved for Augustus' direction.

The fact remains, however, that Octavian is nowhere mentioned in the close of book II, and Vergil was far too careful a craftsman to allow so important an association to be detected only by implication. In addition, the message of the Georgics put forward thus far does not align itself to an image of instant success: in spite of the natural fertility and co-operative spirit of Nature, the farmer must still labour very hard to achieve satisfactory results.

Moreover, if we examine the conclusion to book II carefully, we notice that harmony and peace are evident only in the sphere of agriculture,

while tension and strife persist in other areas:

sollicitant alii remis freta caeca, ruuntque
 in ferrum, penetrant aulas et limina regum;
 hic petit excidiis urbem miserosque penatis,
 ut gemma bibat et Sarrano dormiat ostro;
 condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro;
 hic stupet attonitus rostris, hunc plausus hiantem
 per cuneos geminatus enim plebisque patrumque
 corripuit; gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum,
 exsilioque domos et dulcia limina mutant
 atque alio patriam quaerunt sub sole iacentem. (503-12)

Men still struggle to amass wealth, power, and influence at the expense of their own happiness and often the lives of their fellow citizens.

With the image of the happy farmer and the message of Georgic II, Vergil has set forth an ideal which he positively believes can be attained, an alternative life-style to the war-torn, chaotic realities of the Roman present:

ante etiam sceptrum Dictaei regis et ante
 impia quam caesis gens est epulata iuvenis,
 aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat;
 necdum etiam audierant inflari classica, necdum
 impositos duris crepitare incudibus ensis. (536-40)

The key figure in the attainment of this goal is Octavian. Moreover, a certain degree of success has already been achieved. Earlier in book II, Vergil alludes to military success already enjoyed by Octavian:

et te, maxime Caesar,
 qui nunc extremis Asiae iam victor in oris
 imbellem avertis Romanis arcibus Indum. (170-2)

Here, he is quite clearly cast in the role of protector of Roman fortunes.

In passing, I believe that it is valuable to devote some discussion to the passage in praise of Italy (vv.136-76) which figures prominently in book II. From it we do gain valuable insight into Vergil's perspective on progress and martial activity. Contrary to Lucretius, Vergil does not regard human ambition as a futile and undesirable exercise. Rather, along

hinc bellator equus campo sese arduus infert,
 hinc albi, Clitumne, greges et maxima taurus
 victima, saepe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,
 Romanos ad templa deum duxere triumphos. (145-8)

But, as for all patriotic Romans, for Vergil the spectre of civil strife is an odious perversion of military strength. It is this aspect of war which Vergil fears and laments in the Georgics.

The proem of book III as the opening statement of the second structural unit picks up and expands the theme expressed in the proem of the first. The concept of deification suggested for Octavian, the ultimate honour among pious Romans, is elaborated upon as Vergil proposes to erect a temple in honour of the new god (vv. 12-18). Certainly the expression is a metaphorical one; Vergil had neither the resources, nor the intention of constructing a marble edifice in honour of Octavian, and one doubts whether Octavian himself would have considered such a monument to a living ruler entirely appropriate. Instead, the temple image is intimately linked to Vergil's own literary aspirations and signals his intention to honour Octavian mightily in his poetic creation.

The precise intention of Vergil's literary design, a controversial issue, is not significant for our purposes here. More important, in my opinion, is the extension of the concept of divinity through the introduction of metaphor. Vergil has initiated a trend for the remainder of the work. The poetic and artistic design of the second half of the Georgics is more complex and intriguing than that of the first two books.

Moreover, in the proem of book III, we notice that the role of Octavian as saviour has been made more explicit. In book I deification was proposed for him, but only in a very general sense; in the first half

of the Georgics we received sporadic reports of the successful military exploits of Octavian, but his proposed divinity is not directly linked with martial expertise.

In the proem to book III, the two concepts are intimately linked. Representations of successful campaigns fought by Octavian are to provide the relief on the temple doors (vv. 26-33). A logical explanation can be found for such a literary development. While Vergil was busy composing the Georgics, Octavian was occupied in asserting his authority over the Roman world; after Actium, he emerged as the sole leader capable of restoring order out of the chaos. The proem to book III acknowledges his singular position.

Amid the confident optimism and exuberance of this proem, as in the opening statement of book I, a chthonic association emerges to disturb the illusion of tranquility:

Invidia infelix Furias amnemque severum
Cocyti metuet tortosque Ixionis anguis
immanemque rotam et non exsuperabile saxum. (37-9)

Admittedly the threat is dispelled as quickly as it is introduced, but an element of uncertainty and disquiet lingers on. Even the interpretation of "invidia" has not been specified by the poet, but the parallel with book I (vv. 36-9) suggests that the threat concerns Octavian.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Conington, P. Vergili Maronis Opera, ad G III. 37 and Page P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica, p. 285, support this view. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, pp. 170-1 suggest that "invidia" is quite a general reference capable of referring to the envy of the poet's triumph as well as jealousy of Octavian's military and personal successes.

Having envisaged the celebrated ancestors of Octavian (vv. 34-36), it is possible that Vergil feared the re-appearance of civil strife; after all, Octavian's uncle, Julius Caesar, had been cut down in his prime.

Books III and IV of the Georgics duplicate the pattern of the first structural unit; moreover, since they constitute the final pair of the poem, a definite climactic progression is evident and the conclusions are sounded even more forcefully. In book III, Vergil leaves the world of inanimate Nature and embraces animate representatives in his scheme. As in book I, the theme of love is given rather negative treatment and the attitude is essentially pessimistic. While emphasizing the steps necessary to insure successful breeding, that is, creation, the climax of existence, Vergil is ever conscious of the brevity of life:

optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
 prima fugit; subeunt morbi tristisque senectus
 et labor, et durae rapit inclementia mortis. (66-8)

The breeder's struggle to effect control is dramatically undercut by inordinate passion in the animals themselves. Even attempts by the farmer to maintain control over relatively docile creatures like sheep and goats meet with failure in the face of the ever-present threat of disease and death.

Before we consider the conclusion to book III, there is one passage in Vergil's discussion of "amor" which deserves special attention, the battle of the bulls (vv. 219-41). Throughout the poem the bull has been presented as the reliable and productive partner of man in his rustic labour. In this brief vignette of battle, however, this image is definitively shattered.

As a testimony to the disruptive influence of "amor", the battle between the two powerful antagonists is impressive. There are certain indications in the description, however, which suggest that Vergil intended the vignette to serve another purpose. In the first place, Vergil has taken particular care to establish a precise geographic setting for the battle, the south of Italy:

pascitur in magna Sila formosa iuvenca:
 illi alternantes multa vi proelia miscent
 vulneribus crebris; (219-21).

Moreover, in his rather lengthy condemnation of "amor" in which he cites numerous examples of the ferocity and wild behavior of animals in the grip of sexual passion, in only this instance are two members of the same species pitted against each other. Similarly, the behavior of the defeated bull is revealing. In the face of defeat, the vanquished bull becomes an exile, leaves the place of his birth, and prepares himself for another contest:

victus abit longeque ignotis exsulat oris,
 multa gemens ignominiam plagasque superbi
 victoris, tum quos amisit inultus amores,
 et stabula aspectans regnis excessit avitis. (225-8)

The choice of vocabulary, especially "exsulat" and "regnis avitis", is suggestive and unusual in the context of animals; the behavior of the vanquished bull, moreover, suggests the pattern often witnessed in civil conflicts in Roman history, when the weaker party in the dispute often departed for foreign shores in an attempt to gain reinforcements for his cause.

Likewise, in describing the bull's attempt to reclaim his lost territory and his honour, Vergil has introduced details suggestive

of military strength:

post ubi collectum robur viresque refoetae,
signa movet praecepsque oblitum fertur in hostem: (235-6).

Finally, in a simile which concludes the vignette, and which is designed to stress the vigour and ferocity of the avenging bull, Vergil has introduced a subtle detail which reinforces the Italian nature of the contest and its combatants:

signa movet praecepsque oblitum fertur in hostem:
fluctus uti medio coepit cum albescere ponto,
longius ex altoque sinum trahit, utque volutus
ad terras immane sonat per saxa neque ipso
monte minor procumbit, at ima exaestuatur unda
verticibus nigramque alte subiectat harenam. (236-41)

Black sand is volcanic sand, characteristic of the south of Italy.

Vergil has taken care to make this vignette stand out distinctly from the rest of his discussion of "amor". The aspect of sexual passion receives only token attention; brief mention is made of the heifer, but the focus is clearly on the behavior of the defeated bull. It seems to me that here, in spite of the presence of the "iuvenca", Vergil has introduced "amor" in its more general sense of passion, as opposed to sexual frenzy, and intends the battle of the bulls to stand as a powerful and dramatic illustration of the fury of civil strife. In the light of this interpretation, the "iuvenca" loses its sexual connotation and stands simply as a coveted prize, the stimulus which directed the combatants and provoked the contest.

The theory gains credibility when we consider that Vergil himself regarded this contest of the bulls as a suitable image to describe Turnus and Aeneas in mighty conflict:

ac velut ingenti Sila summove Taburno
 cum duo conversis inimica in proelia tauri
 frontibus incurrunt, pavidum cessere magistri,
 stat pecus omne metu mutum, mussantque iuvencae
 quis nemori imperitet, quem tota armenta sequantur;
 illi inter sese multa vi vulnera miscent
 cornuaque obnixa infigunt et sanguine largo
 colla armosque lavant, gemitu nemus omne remugit:
 non aliter Tros Aeneas et Daunius heros
 concurrunt clipeis, ingens fragor aethera complet.

(Aen. XII.715-24)

The similarities are too close and too numerous for the passage in Georgic III not to have inspired Vergil in his description here in Aeneid XII. We must also realize the circumstances of the conflict between Aeneas and Turnus to appreciate the full impact of the introduction of the simile. Aeneas and Turnus were, after all, kinsmen, as the result of the colonizing mission imposed on Aeneas by divine agency; consequently, their struggle is a civil conflict. Moreover, although the two heroes ostensibly were fighting for the hand of Lavinia, the ultimate issue of the contest was power, control of all of Italy.

Just as the proem of book III picked up and expanded the theme of divinity for Augustus originally suggested in the proem of book I, so also the conclusion of book III parallels and further develops the preoccupations of the closing statement of book I. For an appreciation of the message of the plague sequence, therefore, we must look to the close of book I and Vergil's description of the cataclysmic events which followed the murder of Caesar.

In book I, political reality intruded sharply on Vergil's description of agriculture. The poet moved directly from a discussion of weather signals provided by the sun to its unique role as a forecaster of political doom. The atmospheric disturbances cited by Vergil as a signal

of political chaos following the murder of Caesar have some historical validity and have been recorded by other sources, although the connection with the death of Caesar is regarded as poetic invention. Having introduced the spectre of civil strife, Vergil turns to the present political situation and the statement closes on a negative note of disorder and despair.

I believe that the conclusion of book III picks up the negative tone of the close of book I and projects the poet's forebodings for the present through the image of plague. By introducing the metaphor of sickness and death as an index of political disorder and civil strife for the present, Vergil parallels the technique of book I where all of Nature echoed dire warnings for the past:

tempore quamquam illo tellus quoque et aequora ponti,
 obscenaeque canes importunaeque volucres
 signa dabant. (469-71)

We recall that although Vergil briefly considered the contemporary political situation, there is no colourful presentation to parallel the preoccupation with the past in the conclusion to book I. In a very vivid sense, the conclusion of book III completes this earlier close.

Admittedly, in the conclusion to book III, Vergil makes no overt reference to political events as he had done in book I, and nowhere acknowledges the plague as metaphor. The image of sweeping devastation develops naturally from his discussion of sickness in sheep and goats, and no attempt is made to disturb his agricultural preoccupation. In the proem to book III, however, with the metaphor of the temple, we have already observed a tendency in this second structural unit toward more sophisticated, artistic expression. The introduction of plague as metaphor

seems to me to be an effective extension of this tendency and not completely without precedent. Moreover, since the Vergilian plague has no real historical validity, we can expect that Vergil would be somewhat more reticent in drawing the connection with political reality than in book I. After all, the atmospheric phenomena recorded there actually did occur, and they were already connected, in the popular imagination at least, with the assassination of Caesar.

Similarly, if we view the plague sequence in the same context as the atmospheric phenomena of book I, we notice a significant development in imagery. Although the atmospheric disturbances cited in book I were frightening and serious, the overwhelming onslaught of disease and death occasioned by plague is far more grave.

Moreover, if we examine the two passages of conclusion carefully, we become aware of certain common elements. Initially, we note that atmospheric disturbances in the decade preceding the composition of the Georgics were recorded as far away as Germany and the Alps:

armorum sonitum toto Germania caelo
audiit, insolitis tremuerunt motibus Alpes. (473-4)

In Georgic III, Vergil has made the Alps the site of the devastation:

tum sciat, aërias Alpīs et Norica si quis
castella in tumulis et Iapydis arva Timavi
nunc quoque post tanto videat, desertaque regna
pastorum et longe saltus lateque vacantis. (474-7)

Animals also figure prominently in the chaos of book I. At first they are depicted in a frightening manner, with the ability to speak (v. 478); later they become the victims of the flooding Eridanus:

proluit insano contorquens vertice silvas
fluviorum rex Eridanus camposque per omnis
cum stabulis armenta tulit. (481-3)

In the plague sequence of book III, of course, animals are the principal victims of the fatal illness.

Moreover, a preoccupation with omens appears to be a common element of the the two passages. In the close of book I, the entrails of sacrificial animals provide sinister indications:

nec tempore eodem
tristibus aut extis fibrae apparere minaces (483-4)

and other sources also give ominous testimony:

aut puteis manare cruor cessavit, et altae
per noctem resonare lupis ululantibus urbes. (485-6)

In the catalogue of victims presented in the plague sequence, Vergil concerns himself with the sacrificial victim who either dies before the priest can accomplish the ritual slaughter, or properly slain, fails to yield any significant sign (vv. 486-93).

Wolves also figure in the description of plague but do not keep to themselves as in the account of book I, but mingle freely in a mysterious and frightening harmony with animals formerly regarded as prey (vv. 537-9). Like the wolves of book I, domestic animals send up cries which echo through the countryside and fill the air with tragic vibrance (vv. 553-4). Even the sea appears to duplicate the actions of the Eridanus and casts its victims on the land to create conditions resembling a mighty flood (vv. 541-3).

Admittedly we do not find identical parallels in the close of book I and the plague sequence of book III. The description of plague naturally called for other resources and different narrative techniques than the recording of atmospheric disturbances. Moreover, Vergil was far too skillful a poet to simply duplicate material. At the same time, however,

the common elements we have cited point to a similarity of approach in the two passages which reinforces the suggestion that Vergil intended the sequence as an index of political disorder.

Toward the conclusion of his description of plague, Vergil introduces a frightening image, the appearance of Tisiphone and the victory of chthonic forces (vv. 551-3). The appearance of sinister, supernatural forces in a narrative concerned with physical disease underlines the artistic, rather than historical reality of the plague in the Vergilian scheme. The strong representation of chthonic forces at this point, however, is significant and picks up other negative elements which have emerged in the Georgics.

In both the proems of books one and three, in both instances in connection with success enjoyed by Octavian, Vergil has introduced some kind of hellish association. In each case, he has been content simply to introduce the negative suggestion without fully revealing the implications of the chthonic association. In book III, moreover, although the connection with Octavian is more subtly drawn than in book I, the chthonic representation is expanded as allusion is made to the tortures of Tartarus:

Invidia infelix Furias amnemque severum
Cocytii metuet tortosque Ixionis anguis
immanemque rotam et non exsuperabile saxum. (37-9)

As we have already seen, "invidia" is most logically interpreted as a reference to the civil strife and intrigue which Vergil feared would accompany Octavian's success. The appearance of Tisiphone and the victory of demonic forces in the conclusion restate the theme more strongly, and suggest that the restraining influence for which Vergil had hoped in the proem, has not materialized; civil disorder is again rampant.

Moreover, the parallel with the conclusion of book I, where civil strife and disorder, both past and present, was a prominent and direct concern of the poet, also supports this interpretation. Likewise, the battle of the bulls depicted earlier in Georgic III offers effective testimony to the viciousness of civil conflict. Even in the conclusion to book II where the tone is light and optimistic, Vergil deplores excessive self-interest and the crime of fratricide (vv.503-12).

It is the Aeneid, however, which provides the most convincing proof for our interpretation of the Tisiphone emergence in Georgic III. In Aeneid VII, as Juno becomes concerned that the Trojans might refound their city in Italy with little resistance from the local inhabitants, she despatches Allecto, like Tisiphone, one of the Furies, to create strife between the Trojans and the Latins. The description which Vergil has provided the monstrous creature is interesting:

luctificam Allecto dirarum ab sede dearum
 infernisque ciet tenebris, cui tristia bella
 iraeque insidiaeque et crimina noxia cordi. (324-6)

We learn that fratricide and civil strife are her special province:

tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres
 atque odiis versare domos, tu verbera tectis
 funereasque inferre faces, tibi nomina mille,
 mille nocendi artes. (335-8)

Throughout book VII she is depicted as an instrument of passion; she hurls a hellish snake at Amata, which will poison her with its venom and release all the destructive resentment she feels toward her daughter's betrothal to Aeneas (vv. 341-58); she pierces Turnus with a firebrand to kindle the seeds of war and destruction in his breast (vv. 445-66).

Finally, Allecto herself is represented sounding the signal of war

rousing Trojans and Latins to hateful civil conflict;

At saeva e speculis tempus dea nacta nocendi
 ardua tecta petit stabuli et de culmine summo
 pastorale canit signum cornuque recurvo
 Tartaream intendit vocem, qua protinus omne
 contremuit nemus et silvae insonuere profundae; (511-15).

In the Aeneid, both Tisiphone and Allecto as avenging Furies are conceived in a similar manner by Vergil. In Aeneid VI we notice that Tisiphone is also accompanied by frightening and horrible snakes:

Tisiphone quatit insultans, torvosque sinistra
 intentans anguis vocat agmina saeva sororum. (571-2)

Later their roles seem to merge as Tisiphone is pictured actively participating in the conflict which Allecto has instigated:

pallida Tisiphone media inter milia saevit. (X.761)

Especially significant for our purposes is the definite association of chthonic forces and civil conflict. In the Georgics, and particularly in the conclusion of the third book, we find the origins of this motif which Vergil has developed so effectively in the Aeneid.

In choosing to present plague as an image of destruction, Vergil undoubtedly was influenced by Lucretius. The description of the sickness at Athens was a celebrated feature of the De Rerum Natura, and Vergil took special care through deliberate linguistic reminiscences to link his own presentation with that of his predecessor. At the same time, however, in the Vergilian design, through skillful placement in the structural scheme, this common element serves very pointedly to mark the contrast in the philosophy of the two poets. Lucretius introduced the description of the plague at Athens as a powerful negative climax in his pessimistic assessment of the human condition. Vergil borrowed the

pessimistic colouring of the plague sequence, used it to his advantage at the close of book III, and then altered the dark tones in the conclusion of book IV. The dismal foreboding introduced through the plague at the close of book III is only temporary. Just as book II resolved the tensions experienced in book I and restored the optimism of the opening statement, so also book IV will silence the preoccupations with civil strife, disease, and death which marked book III and sound an optimistic conclusion for the work as a whole. We cannot justifiably argue that with the common element of plague Vergil has effected a reversal of the pessimistic Lucretian philosophic system. In essence Lucretius was not a pessimist. He joyfully espoused the Epicurean credo as a model for himself and for all mankind. In assessing the fate of his contemporaries struggling along without the benefits of his philosophy, however, he offers an increasingly pessimistic verdict. This dual aspect of the poet's position in the De Rerum Natura is expressed quite directly in the proem of book II:

sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
 edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
 despiciere unde quae alios passimque videre
 errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,
 certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
 noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
 ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.
 o miseras hominum mentis, o pectora caeca!
 qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periculis
 degitur hoc aevi quodcumque est! nonne videre
 nil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi ut qui
 corpore seiunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur
 iucundo sensu cura semota metuque?

(7-19)

Like Lucretius, Vergil viewed the plight of his contemporaries in a pessimistic vein, but he found his source of optimism not in abstract philosophical principles, or the inspiration of a Greek philosopher long

since dead, but in contemporary reality, the living 'hero' Octavian who Vergil hoped would rescue the Roman world from political and moral chaos.

We must remember, however, that the Vergilian plague sequence differs from the Lucretian presentation in another very significant aspect: there is no historical reality behind the plague described by Vergil. He has altered the focus of the Lucretian description so that the principal victims in his scheme are animals, while man remains on the periphery. Moreover, there is no historical evidence of any kind of animal disease of such proportion at Noricum or anywhere in the region. The Vergilian plague, therefore, is a completely artistic creation, developing the trend toward metaphor which Vergil initiated in the poem of book III.

The presentation of plague as image represents a rather bold undertaking and a significant development of the plague motif. We would be wise to consider the position of other authors in the plague tradition in order to detect possible sources for Vergil in his innovative presentation.

The point of departure for any study of the plague tradition must be Thucydides who initiated interest in the sickness which appeared at Athens. His account had an immediate historical reference in the Athenian plague, but, as we have seen, his approach transcended the physical limits of the disease. He attempted to submit the plague and the behavior of the Athenian people in such a crisis as an indication of the social and political illness which lurked at the heart of Athenian society, and threatened to silence her greatness. In the light of so innovative

a concept, Vergil's own presentation of plague as an index of political disorder appears less radical and rests more comfortably in the plague tradition.

Still there is no historical reference behind the Vergilian description of plague, but only a completely artistic representation. Here, in my opinion, the influence of Sophocles is detected most strongly. In the Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles freely adapted the historical plague at Athens to suit his dramatic framework. The setting is moved from Athens to Thebes and the historical import of the sickness as conceived by Thucydides is completely lost. For Sophocles the plague is valuable for its dramatic potential and is introduced as a catalyst to initiate Oedipus' fatal process of self-discovery. Moreover, Thucydides' pre-occupation with objective narrative is discarded in favour of artistic manipulation, as the plague is presented as an indication of divine displeasure.

In such a free and artistic presentation of what was once historical reality, it seems to me that Vergil found valuable inspiration for his own plague sequence. To be artistically valuable and convincing, the plague need not be grounded solidly in objective, historical fact, as the Sophoclean representation illustrated. It was only a short step from the Sophoclean manipulation of historical fact to a completely artistic conception of plague. Moreover, Vergil had the necessary poetic skill and independence to integrate that conception fully and effectively in the poetic and philosophic design of the Georgics.

Once again the Aeneid provides evidence in support of our conclusion. Plague makes an appearance in the Vergilian corpus during the wanderings

of Aeneas and the Trojans in search of a new homeland. Once they have settled themselves in Crete, their efforts at establishing some kind of permanence are suddenly frustrated with the appearance of plague:

Iamque fere sicco subductae litore puppes,
 conubiis arvisque novis operata iuventus,
 iura domosque dabam, subito cum tabida membris
 corrupto caeli tractu miserandaque venit
 arboribusque satisque lues et letifer annus.
 linquebant dulcis animas aut aegra trahebant
 corpora; tum sterilis exurere Sirius agros,
 arebant herbae et victum seges aegra negabat. (III.135-42)

In certain respects this presentation of plague is linked more directly than the plague of Georgic III to the Sophoclean conception. In form it follows the traditional pattern of blight: sterility of vegetation, both wild and domestic, as well as physical illness and death. Moreover, as in the Oedipus Tyrannus, after the consultation of oracles, the plague is ultimately linked to divine displeasure (vv. 147-71).

Although the treatment of the theme in Aeneid III is much briefer and more stylized, there are certain elements which recall Vergil's earlier description of plague in the Georgics. The origin of the plague among the Trojans is attributed to "corrupto caeli tractu" (v. 138), just as the animal pestilence in the third Georgic is described as "morbo caeli" (v. 478).

Similarly, the blight which strikes the Trojans is both "tabida membris" (v. 137) and "miseranda" (v. 138). In Georgic III we find the same description:

Hic quondam morbo caeli miseranda coorta est (478),

but the process of decomposition and deterioration succinctly described in the Aeneid as "tabida", is here described more fully:

sed ubi ignea venis
omnibus acta sitis miseros adduxerat artus,
rursus abundabat fluidus liquor omniaque in se
ossa minutatim morbo conlapsa trahebat. (482-5)

The range of the blight in Aeneid III is discussed briefly and finally summarized as a year of death:

miserandaque venit
arboribusque satisque lues et letifer annus. (138-9)

In Georgic III, of course, the scope of the description is broader, and much of the plague sequence is concerned with a catalogue of victims. The initial assessment of the range of the disease suggests a pattern similar to that described in Aeneid III:

et genus omne neci pecudum dedit, omne ferarum,
corruptique lacus, infecit pabula tabo. (480-1)

Finally, we note a similarity in season in the two accounts: in each case, the stifling Autumn heat aggravates the discomforts of the disease. In Aeneid III, Vergil signals Autumn with mention of the Dog-Star:

tum sterilis exurere Sirius agros,
arebant herbae et victum seges aegra negabat. (141-2)

In Georgic III, Autumn is mentioned directly and as in the Aeneid, emphasis is on the unbearable heat:

tempestas totoque autumnus incanduit aestu (479).

The brevity of the plague description in the Aeneid eliminates the possibility of extensive parallels with the plague narrative of Georgic III, but I do believe that the common aspects which I have cited point to a similarity of approach in the two accounts. Especially significant for our purposes is the motivation for the introduction of the plague in the Aeneid. Vergil has recognized the dramatic potential of the plague and

introduced the sickness as a means of securing the continued wanderings of Aeneas, and intensifying the feelings of sympathy for the hapless Trojans. Such an artistic conception of plague must certainly owe its origins to the Sophoclean precedent in the Oedipus Tyrannus. Moreover, since there are obvious similarities between the description of the sickness in Aeneid III and the plague sequence of the Georgics, support is provided for our theory that the special artistic conception of the plague in the conclusion of the third Georgic can be traced to the influence of Sophocles. After all, one cannot deny continuity of thought and expression in the Vergilian corpus; it seems a logical extension of the process to look for continuity of inspiration as well.

Thus we see that the introduction of the plague sequence in the conclusion to Georgic III represents a complex response on Vergil's part to a number of literary influences. Certainly the initial and principal direction in the discussion of plague must have come from Lucretius, a near contemporary of Vergil and a fellow Roman, but throughout his poetic career Vergil remained receptive to the rich literary traditions of the past and present. It is this aspect of Vergil's poetry which offers the Vergilian scholar endless opportunity for discovery and enlightenment.

Amor

In contrast to other areas of Vergilian scholarship the "amor" digression of book III, one of the most remarkable examples of Vergil's poetic art, suffers from a lack of critical attention.⁵⁶ Yet its position in Georgic III, the climactic and impressive conclusion of the first half of the book, signals the poet's intention to lend particular emphasis to his statement on sex. The consequences of love, the disruption of cosmic harmony, in part at least, parallel the description of plague which forms the conclusion of the book. Moreover, with the development of the theme of sustained disruptive fury, and the love-death cycle introduced with the story of Hero and Leander, the discussion on "amor" is connected with the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice with which the poem concludes. At the same time, the preoccupation with sex, a theme also explored by Lucretius, provides an excellent opportunity to assess the relationship of the two poets. Consequently, I believe that the passage merits full study, both for its internal aspects as well as its position in the scheme of the Georgics.

⁵⁶ Among commentators, Conington, Page, Büchner and Richter discuss individual aspects of the passage though more for the sake of scholarly thoroughness than from any appreciation of the special qualities of the passage, or concern for its position in the scheme of the poem.

Klingner, Virgils Georgica, pp. 148-52 offers a fuller interpretation and appreciates the emphasis which Vergil has placed on the blind, irrational quality of "amor". He draws attention to the discussion by Lucretius in the invocation of book one and later in book four but doesn't pursue the study.

Both Otis and Wilkinson fail to provide any developed discussion on the passage.

Following his discussion of the training of the colt and the correct dietary regimen for the breaking of young horses, Vergil again emphasizes the uncontrollable, potentially destructive nature of the unbroken colt:

namque ante domandum
ingentis tollent animos, prensique negabunt
verbera lenta pati et duris parere lupatis. (206-8)

With mention of "ingentis...animos" and the representation of undisciplined behavior, Vergil skilfully accomplishes the transition to his discussion of "caecus amor", where all creatures under the influence of lust are capable of wild, destructive behavior.

Vergil introduces the discussion of "amor" with a warning about the debilitating effects of sex and a suggestion that male and female animals should be strictly segregated:

Sed non ulla magis viris industria firmat
quam Venerem et caeci stimulos avertere amoris,
sive boum sive est cui gratior usus equorum.
atque ideo tauros procul atque in sola relegant
pascua post montem oppositum et trans flumina lata,
aut intus clausos satura ad praesepia servant. (209-14)

It is noteworthy that earlier in his discussion of the preparations for mating, Vergil ignored the Varronian directive which recommended the segregation of male and female animals as a measure to increase sexual potency and desire. Here in his discussion of "caecus amor" he has clearly abandoned his preoccupation with controlled breeding necessary for the maintenance of the herd, and is concerned with the dissipation of energy and the destruction of order through uncontrolled passion. Just the sight of the female is enough to drive the bull to the point of distraction, so that he forgets to eat and becomes especially pugnacious:

carpit enim viris paulatim uritque videndo
 femina, nec nemorum patitur meminisse nec herbae
 dulcibus illa quidem inlecebris, et saepe superbos
 cornibus inter se subigit decernere amantis. (215-18)

As proof of his didactic precept Vergil offers a powerful and impressive vignette of two bulls battling for a heifer. Throughout the Georgics the bull has been portrayed as a docile, industrious animal, the partner of man in his rustic labour. The phrase "hominumque boumque labores" occurs frequently, and succinctly captures the essence of the co-operative relationship of man and beast. In Georgic III Vergil has until now introduced only the cow, and allowed the stallion to represent the masculine principle in his discussion of breeding. With this display of brute strength and hostility he has shattered the normal rustic associations of the "taurus", and offered powerful evidence of the disruptive, uncontrollable fury of "amor".

The motivation for the battle of the bulls is introduced very simply:

pascitur in magna Sila formosa iuvenca: (219)

this represents a subtle technique on Vergil's part to emphasize the volatile nature of sexual frenzy. The battle itself acquires an heroic epic quality; the bulls resemble mighty warriors, bloody with wounds, yet still fighting with a fierce determination to decide the contest. The woods and the heavens resound with their powerful groans:

illi alternantes multa vi proelia miscent
 vulneribus crebris; lavit ater corpora sanguis,
 versaque in obnixos urgentur cornua vasto
 cum gemitu; reboant silvaeque et longus Olympus. (220-23)

Even with defeat the issue is not settled, for the vanquished bull, nursing his wounds and injured pride, leaves the area and begins a rigorous

training programme to regain his strength:

victus ab it longeque ignotis exsulat oris,
 multa gemens ignominiam plagasque superbi
 victoris, tum quos amisit inultus amores,
 et stabula aspectans regnis excessit avitis.
 ergo omni cura viris exercet et inter
 dura iacet pernox instrato saxa cubili
 frondibus hirsutis et carice pastus acuta,
 et temptat sese atque irasci in cornua discit
 arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque lacessit
 ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit harena. (225-43)

There is a curious ambivalence in the description: at times the bull resembles a human combatant and the comparison is strengthened with anthropomorphic language; his status as an exile is emphasized and a sharp contrast is created between the "ignotis...oris" where he now finds himself, and the "regnis...avitis" which he has abandoned; at other times we cannot ignore the reality of his animal nature--he toughens his hide on the bark of trees, butts with his horns and beats the air with his mighty hooves. It seems to me that the constant shift is a deliberate technique on Vergil's part, designed to mark sexual frenzy, battle fury, and vengeful hostility as common attributes of man and beast, and at the same time, to emphasize the base animal origins of these instincts.

Vergil does not present the second altercation between the bulls although the battle is announced and the outcome anticipated:

post ubi collectum robur viresque relectae,
 signa movet praecepsque oblitum fertur in hostem: (235-6)

The original victor has forgotten the combat and has presumably allowed his strength to wane, while the exiled bull returns in prime condition to initiate another contest. The vignette ends with an effective simile, an image of Nature's primal fury:

fluctus uti medio coepit cum albescere ponto,
 longius ex altoque sinum trahit, utque volutus
 ad terras immane sonat per saxa neque ipso
 monte minor procumbit, at ima exaestuât unda
 verticibus nigramque alte subiectat harenam. (237-41)

Again in the conclusion there is evidence of the same unresolved tension between the realities of human combat and basic animal fury. The announcement of the second battle with its reference to "signa" and "hostem" suggests a military campaign, while the comparison of the charge of the bull with the breaking of a huge wave on the shore links his strength with the unbridled force of Nature.⁵⁷ The vignette of the bulls stands as a powerful and convincing representation of the destructive force of "caecus amor".

Following this impressive representation of brute force and hostility, Vergil initiates a more generalized discussion of sex (vv. 242-83). With a strong Lucretian reminiscence, he exposes passion as a force which threatens all species:

Omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque
 et genus aequoreum, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
 in furias ignemque ruunt: amor omnibus idem. (242-4)

"Genus" in connection with "omne" and followed by one or more dependent

⁵⁷ There is some strong evidence in the passage to suggest that Vergil intended "amor" in the battle of the bulls to encompass more than sexual frenzy. I have discussed this passage (vv.219-41) earlier in connection with the plague where I believe that it has special relevance.

genitives is a common construction appearing at random throughout the Lucretian text.⁵⁸ The pile-up of species, animals, wild and domestic, men, the creatures of the sea, and birds, is also typical of Lucretian exposition. The general impression of Lucretian influence in the sphere of language is reinforced with the condemnation of "amor", a thematic link with the scathing attack on sexual passion provided by Lucretius in the fourth book of the De Rerum Natura. Since Lucretius had already surmounted the difficulty of committing so delicate a subject to poetry, it is not surprising that Vergil turns to his predecessor for inspiration and direction in his own presentation of the theme.

The celebrated Lucretian attack on passion provides the conclusion of book IV, where the philosopher-poet considers sensation in its many aspects. The vehemence with which Lucretius condemns "amor" tends to obscure the more rational basis of his argument. As a true Epicurean, he denounced "amor" as a force disruptive of the mind's tranquillity.

Haec Venus est nobis; hinc autemst nomen amoris,
hinc illaec primum Veneris dulcedinis in cor
stillavit gutta et successit frigida cura. (1058-60)

Yet in the Lucretian scheme, "amor" represents passionate commitment to a single individual. In especially vivid language Lucretius

⁵⁸In actuality, of 74 occurrences of "genus" in the Lucretian corpus, almost a third (21) show resemblance to this passage; "genus omne" plus a dependent genitive plural occurs three times: I.4 (animantum); I.163 (ferarum); "omne genus" alone occurs six times: I.160, 1026; II.759, 821,; IV.735; V.428; "genus omne" is seen five times: II.1089; V.865, 902, 1039, 1356; finally, "genus" plus a dependent genitive is seen a total of seven times--three of these in association with "ferarum": I.254, II.1081; VI.1216 and others: V.1156, 862.

describes it as a festering sore which day by day grows larger and more difficult to eradicate. As a method of treatment Lucretius recommends a series of casual sexual encounters, to turn the mind from its singular obsession:

ulcus enim vivescit et inveterascit alendo
 inque dies gliscit furor atque aerumna gravescit,
 si non prima novis conturbes vulnera plagis
 vulgivagaque vagus Venere ante recentia cures
 aut alio possis animi traducere motus. (1068-72)

At the same time, however, he recognizes sexual desire as a basic and natural impulse, and stresses the fact that casual sex is far more pleasurable than the act of love between two who are passionately committed:

Nec Veneris fructu caret is qui vitat amorem,
 sed potius quae sunt sine poena commoda sumit.
 nam certe purast sanis magis inde voluptas
 quam miseris. (1073-6)

This passage establishes quite clearly the distinction Lucretius intends between "Venus", sex as a natural, undeniable instinct, and "amor", a perversion of that instinct. A great portion of his description in book IV is devoted to the exposition and ridicule of the folly of those in love. In a brilliantly clever exposé, he employs the traditional poetic conceits of erotic literature to expose the lengths to which the lover is driven in his longing for his beloved: in the grips of "rabies" and "furor", the lover wastes away for an invisible wound (vv. 1117-20); held fast in a bittersweet servitude, he squanders the family fortune, sacrifices his own reputation, and lives his life at the whim of another (vv. 1121-40).

The vehemence of the Lucretian presentation is relaxed, however, as he turns to the physiological aspects of human reproduction. In this sphere, sexual desire is free of the excesses and perversion which

accompany "amor", and merely represents a necessary expression of the need to renew the species, an impulse shared by men and animals alike:

Nec mulier semper ficto suspirat amore
 quae complexa viri corpus cum corpore iungit
 et tenet assuctis umectans oscula labris
 nam facit ex animo saepe et communia quaerens
 gaudia sollicitat spatium decurrere amoris.
 nec ratione alia volucres armenta feraeque
 et pecudes et equae maribus subsidere possent,
 si non, ipsa quod illarum subat ardet abundans
 natura et Venerem salientum laeta retractat. (1192-1200)

In tone and spirit the passage recalls the impressive invocation of book I where Lucretius hail's Venus as a symbol of a vital generative power constantly at work in the universe, insuring the renewal of life:⁵⁹

Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divumque voluptas,
 alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa
 quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis
 concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantum
 concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis: (I. 1-5).

Here we find no trace of disapproval or condemnation by the poet; instead Lucretius celebrates the exuberance and vitality evident in all of Nature:

denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapaces
 frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
 omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
 efficis ut cupide generatim saecula propagent. (I. 17-20)

This bilateral consideration of sex, the realization of its productive and destructive potentialities, has influenced Vergil greatly in his own presentation of the theme. He has deliberately emphasized his dependence on Lucretius with a few, well-chosen verbal reminiscences. Prior to his vehement condemnation of uncontrolled sex as a negative,

⁵⁹Venus also appears as a symbol of a basic generative force at several points in his discussion of "amor": De Rerum Natura IV.1215, 1223, 1235, 1248, 1270, 1276.

disruptive force in life, Vergil eschews the use of the substantive "amor" to describe the positive controlled union of male and female. Sexual union is euphemistically referred to with the expression, "in Venerem" (vv. 64, 97, 137). With a typically Vergilian touch, the topic of controlled breeding is invested with special dignity as terms are borrowed from the human sphere: the cow, for instance, is to be prepared for "iustos...hymenaeos" and "Lucinam" (v. 60); similarly, the stallion chosen as sire is called "maritum" (v. 125). Though the anthropomorphic direction is Vergil's own, it betrays the same respectful attitude toward necessary reproduction which we have seen in the Lucretian treatise.

In similar fashion, Vergil borrows the Lucretian substantive "voluptas", which in Epicurean doctrine is allowed to stand for a number of pleasures, non-sexual as well as sexual, and gives it a decidedly sexual connotation in describing the awakening of the generative impulse in the female:

atque, ubi concubitus primos iam nota voluptas
sollicitat, frondesque negant et fontibus arcent. (130-1)

In the forceful condemnation of the negative aspects of "amor" with which the first section of Georgic III concludes, Lucretian echoes become more frequent. In the De Rerum Natura we find the noun "stimulum" used in a non-erotic context (III. 874) as well as an erotic one (IV. 1082). In the introduction to his discussion of uncontrolled passion, Vergil echoes the earlier non-erotic application of the substantive with the epithet "caecum", but introduces the expression in a clearly sexual reference consistent with Lucretius' usage in book IV:

Sed non ulla magis viris industria firmat
 quam Venerem et caeci stimulos avertere amoris (209-10)

In his study⁶⁰ Merrill detects twenty-two verbal reminiscences of the Lucretian text in this digression of forty-one lines; the majority of these echoes are drawn at random from throughout the Lucretian corpus, and not exclusively from those sections where Lucretius concerns himself with "amor"; nevertheless, they lend a strong Lucretian colouring to the Vergilian passage and reinforce the thematic link with the Lucretian diatribe on "amor".⁶¹

Similarly in his opening statement, Vergil mentions "furias" and "ignem" (v. 244), and later "furor" (v. 266), deliberate echoes of Lucretius' diatribe on sex.⁶²

⁶⁰"Parallels and Coincidences in Lucretius and Virgil", University of California Publications in Classical Philology III.3 (1918), 135-247.

⁶¹Benjamin Farrington, "Polemical Allusions to the De Rerum Natura of Lucretius in the works of Vergil", Acta Universitatis Carolinae Philosophica et Historica I (1963), 87-94 offers a number of examples in the Vergilian corpus where Vergil introduces Lucretian phraseology deliberately to offer a corrective of the Lucretian view. He cites no instances from Georgic III, however, and I don't believe that such an attitude is tenable for the discussion of "caecus amor".

⁶²"Furor" occurs twice in the Lucretian corpus: IV. 1069, 1117. "Ignem" in the same context does not occur, but has a definite parallel in sense with v. 1086 where love is conceived of in terms of flame:

namque in eo spes est, unde est ardoris origo,
 restingui quoque posse ab eodem corpore flammam.

Similarly, "furias" would appear to be synonymous with "rabies" (1083, 1117) and of course is linked to "furor".

On two occasions the action of horses in Vergil's account of "caecus amor" recalls descriptions of impassioned animals offered by Lucretius: the males driven wild by the scent of the mares refuse to be contained by geographic barriers:

non scopuli rupesque cavae atque obiecta retardant
flumina correptosque unda torquentia montis. (253-4)

In the Lucretian account, similar actions are described as Venus spurs on the earth's creatures to roam land and sea:

denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapaces (I.17).

Later Vergil describes the actions of mares maddened by lust:

illas ducit amor trans Gargara transque sonantem
Ascanium; superant montis et flumina tranant. (269-70)

Again in the Lucretian description, we find a similar account in the invocation to Venus:

inde ferae pecudes persultant pabula laeta
et rapidos tranant amnis: (I. 14-15).

Finally in connection with the mares of Glaucus, the particular emphasis on spring and their increased sexual capacity heightened by Venus' powers (vv. 271 ff.) appears to be an association suggested by two different passages in Lucretius. In the invocation of book I there is a definite and sustained link between spring and increased sexual capacity among the earth's creatures. Later in book V, the association is again suggested, though somewhat more subtly:

it ver et Venus, et Veneris praenuntius ante
pennatus graditur, Zephyri vestigia propter
Flora... (737-9)

Similarly the connection of flame and "amor" introduced by Vergil with the impassioned mares of Glaucus (v. 271) recalls a similar use of

the elegiac conceit in the Lucretian diatribe:

namque in eo spes est, unde est ardoris origo,
restingui quoque posse ab eodem corpore flammam. (IV. 1086-7)

Undoubtedly Vergil was aware of the similarity of attitude he shared with Lucretius in his discussion of "amor"; both poets, while concentrating their attention in different spheres of existence, appreciated the destructive aspects of passion. Moreover, Vergil made no attempt to obscure the obvious link with his predecessor, but instead reinforced it with deliberate reminiscences of the Lucretian text.

Though they share a common theme, however, the Vergilian discussion of sex shows a markedly different character from the presentation by Lucretius. Vergil's principal preoccupation is "caecus amor" in the animal world, while Lucretius confined his attention to human love. The Lucretian discussion of "amor" is characterized by a vehement attack on love. Though Lucretius attempts to ground his study in sound scientific analysis, objectivity is lacking in most of the discussion; only when he turns his attention to physiology and reproduction does he regain the scientist's composure. It is little wonder that this attack on sex offers support to those who subscribe to the theory that Lucretius himself was maddened by a love philtre.

In the Vergilian account, on the other hand, the description is marked by complete control. After a didactic prelude in which Vergil establishes passion as a universal phenomenon bringing disruption to the lives of men and beasts alike, he presents a catalogue of 'sufferers', though I hesitate to apply that label since little sympathy is evident.

He introduces the catalogue with a group of beasts distinguished

for their ferocity: the lion, the bear, the wild boar, and lastly the tiger (vv. 245-9)--representatives of the specific (in this case Libyan), non-Italic untamed world. Here I believe commentators such as Conington and Page err in ignoring the definite geographical reference provided by Vergil. In the above group of animals, the lion and the tiger, not indigenous to Italy, stand out as exotic representatives of Nature in the wild. The wild boar and the bear, however, would be known to those Italians who enjoyed hunting. The definite reference to the "agris Libyae" is a deliberate attempt on Vergil's part to direct our attention to a specific setting far from Italy, and to emphasize the universality of the phenomenon of "amor".

In the domestic sphere, Vergil presents the stallion. The arresting phrase "nonne vides" recalls an earlier description of the horse race (v. 103) when, in co-operation with man, the stallion's mighty potential was directed to a positive and healthy goal. The reminiscence serves to establish more pointedly the disastrous and disruptive consequences of "amor":

nonne vides ut tota tremor pertemptet equorum
 corpora, si tantum notas odor attulit auras?
 ac neque eos iam frena virum neque verbera saeva,
 non scopuli rupesque cavae atque obiecta retardant
 flumina correptosque unda torquentia montis. (250-54)

All benefits of rigorous training have been destroyed and co-operation with man has ceased. Their power is now purposeless as they run with reckless abandon, heedless of any obstacle which the natural terrain might present. The description is strictly controlled; the behavior of the stallions themselves establishes the pathetic consequences with no editorial comment from the poet.

Again the focus changes to the untamed world with mention of the Samnite boar:

ipse ruit dentesque Sabellicus exacuit sus
 et pede prosubigit terram, fricat arbore costas
 atque hinc atque illinc umeros ad vulnera durat. (255-7)

With the epithet "Sabellicus" Vergil lends particular immediacy to his description in specifying a definite Italian locale for the ferocious creature. In certain respects the actions of the boar recall those of the defeated bull described earlier. He paws the ground with restless energy, toughens his hide on the bark of trees, and tempers himself for wounds that will result from numerous altercations. With remarkable economy of description Vergil has presented a cumulative impression of the disruptive fury of sexual frenzy. At this climactic point he introduces "amor" into the human sphere.

As a representation of human passion Vergil has chosen the mythological tale of Hero and Leander. He has not named the celebrated lovers directly, but simply alludes to their identity with reference to "iuvenis" and "virgo". Poetic economy has been relaxed somewhat as he depicts their ill-fated love, "durus amor", against a tragic backdrop. The scene might well be taken directly from a Greek tragedy: the night and the elements, symbolic of cosmic force, conspiring to destroy the young lovers:

quid iuvenis, magnum cui versat in ossibus ignem
 durus amor? nempe abruptis turbata procellis
 nocte natat caeca serus freta, quem super ingens
 porta tonat caeli, et scopulis inlisa reclamant
 aequora; nec miseri possunt revocare parentes,
 nec moritura super crudeli funere virgo. (258-63)

The grief-stricken parents stand by powerless to arrest the cruel fate of their son. Hero likewise is doomed to die for an excess of feeling.

In the human sphere, "amor" has more serious implications. The duties demanded by family ties are forgotten, and even the beloved is implicated in a cruel fate.

In this section Vergil displays obvious sympathy with the star-crossed lovers, a significant departure from the cynical presentation of human love by Lucretius. Vergil's manner of introducing the myth is at once curious and interesting; the general appellations "virgo" and "iuvenis" serve to support the impression of universality the poet wishes to convey: Hero and Leander stand representative of all young lovers forced to bear the consequences, however tragic, of "amor".

Vergil presents the Hero and Leander tale as the sole example of the effects of "amor" in the lives of men. At v. 263, we turn again to the world of animals and a curious union of the exotic lynx, the wild but familiar wolf, the domestic dog, and finally the deer showing an unaccustomed ferocity. This is a strange, almost perverse union of creatures normally natural enemies, now united as victims of a common foe. The scene foreshadows the dreadful consequences of the plague (vv. 537-40) when natural hostilities will be forgotten in the face of common tragedy. The discordant element at this point is the appearance of the lynx and the mention of Bacchus. Bacchus has figured significantly in the Georgics up to this point, usurping the role of the Italic god Liber, as patron of viticulture and the object of simple veneration by the pious rustic anxious to ensure a bountiful grape harvest. Elsewhere his name is synonymous with the vine itself and wine.

By calling attention to the dappled lynx, one of the exotic creatures used to pull the chariot of Bacchus, Vergil deliberately suggests

the god's Eastern origins and the mysterious orgiastic and emotional aspects of his worship. The link between "amor", Venus and Bacchus is not explicitly drawn by Vergil though the introduction of Bacchus in this discussion offers room for some interesting speculation.

As a climactic conclusion to his discussion of "amor", Vergil turns his attention to another Greek myth, the tale of Glaucus of Potniae who defied Venus by not allowing his herd of mares to breed and suffered dreadful consequences. To this tale Vergil added an account of the Greek-inspired phenomenon of wind impregnation, followed by the strange appearance of hippomanes. Certainly this, the longest passage in Vergil's discussion of "caecus amor" is remarkable for its gruesome, weird qualities, its intense, almost revolting mystery. Conington⁶³ points out that many editors believe that this passage concerning the mares placed at the conclusion of the Vergilian discussion detracts from its unity, and hence they suggest that it be transferred to follow Vergil's earlier discussion of the lovesick stallions. Unfortunately, though the male-female sequence of such an arrangement would provide a neat descriptive unit, the climactic force and poetic intention of the discussion (vv. 266-83) would be destroyed.

In the first place it is not unusual for Vergil to have chosen to stress the particular intensity of the female animals:

scilicet ante omnis furor est insignis equarum; (266).

The view that the female of all species was more disposed to a strong sexual appetite than the male was commonly held in antiquity. Its literary

⁶³p. Vergili Maronis Opera, p. 207.

potential was first exploited by Euripides with his fascination for female psychology; he, in turn, bequeathed this interest to Hellenistic circles.

The manner in which Vergil has chosen to handle the myth is especially interesting. The tale surrounding the figure of Glaucus of Potniae shows a number of variations.⁶⁴ According to one tradition, it was Glaucus' practice of feeding his mares human flesh which eventually led to his own death; in another, the horses were maddened by eating a peculiar herb and turned upon their master; and of course there is the tradition which makes the death of Glaucus a punishment inflicted on him by Aphrodite.

Vergil clearly establishes the complicity of Venus in this action:

et mentem Venus ipsa dedit... (267)

As in the tragic account of Hero and Leander, here also we gain the impression of a tragic plot; indeed, if we can judge by the title of a play now lost to us, Glaucus Potneius, Aeschylus himself considered the tale worthy of the tragic stage.

Actually the Vergilian treatment of the myth shows closer affinity with Euripides. Though the fate of Glaucus is not elaborated upon by Vergil, his death is connected with the madness of his mares and his situation is similar to the plight of Hippolytus: his death results from his failure to recognize Venus as a powerful and essential force in life.

⁶⁴Pausanias 6.20.19; Etymologicum Magnum 685, 41.

Similarly, Pentheus in the Bacchae meets his death as a result of his unwillingness to accord Bacchus his due honour. Finally, in the conclusion of the Georgics, Orpheus himself refuses to accept the death of Eurydice and take a new wife. He meets his own death at the hands of Thracian maenads who are incensed at his behavior.

In a similar manner, the mares of Glaucus, maddened by the denial of a necessary outlet for sexual energy, roam the countryside in frenzy, finally satisfying their desire in a perverse union with the wind. Though the phenomenon of wind-impregnation owes its origins to Homer (II. 16.150), and was treated at some length by Aristotle (H.A.6.19), the association of this strange phenomenon with the myth of Glaucus might well have been inspired by tragic and specifically Euripidean sources: the reactions of the psyche, especially the female psyche, to conditions of severe stress was an area of exploration favoured by Euripides.

Moreover, the Eastern locale and the frenzied wandering of the mares suggests Bacchus and the wild actions of the maenads:

illas ducit amor trans Gargara transque sonantem
Ascanium; superant montis et flumina tranant. (269-70)

The mares are led by the mysterious and compelling force of "amor".

Finally there remains the strange matter of hippomanes, a rare and exotic discharge obtained from pregnant mares, to be used in the arts of black magic. Again the treatment afforded this phenomenon is intriguing and significant. There are various associations attached to hippomanes: it was imagined by some as a noxious herb which, if eaten by horses,

drove them mad.⁶⁵ Others used the term to describe a black, fleshy growth on the forehead of a new-born foal, which, if snatched from the foal before the mother could eat it off, proved to be a potent charm.⁶⁶ Finally there existed the interpretation favoured by Vergil in this discussion.⁶⁷

It is especially significant that Vergil chose to link the mysterious phenomena of wind-impregnation and hippomanes with the myth of Glaucus' mares who were denied the joys of Venus. He appears to have been the first to link hippomanes as a secretion with the story of Glaucus' fate. In this strange, unrelieved climax, Vergil exposes most forcefully the power of "amor". With no outlet for their sexual urges the mares become completely wild: murder, perversion, and physiological abnormality are part of the Glaucus tale. Even the end result of such uncontrolled behavior, the mysterious hippomanes, a deadly poison, reinforces the impression of horror. Interaction between human and animal, elsewhere in the Georgics a productive, life-giving union, here signals an extension of murder and perversion as step-mothers concoct deadly potions for their charges. The initial Lucretian directive which exposed the disruptive, totally negative aspects of "amor" in the

⁶⁵Theocritus 2.48; Theophrastus Historia Plantarum 9.15.6

⁶⁶Aristotle Historia Animalium 6. 22. 17 ff.; 8.24.9. Aelian De Natura Animalium 3.17; 14.18. For this interpretation, see also Aeneid 4.516.

⁶⁷Aristotle Historia Animalium 6.18. 10 ff; Pausanias 5.27.3.

lives of men has been intensified as Vergil has exposed the impulse at its basic animal level.

Yet we recall Vergil's judgment at the beginning of his discussion, "amor omnibus idem" (v. 244) and realize that although most of his examples are drawn from the world of animals, he recognizes all too clearly the destructive potential of "amor" in all its aspects in the lives of men. "Amor" in the Vergilian scheme is a powerful and deceptive force whose impact is felt throughout the cosmos. In the animal world Vergil condemns "amor caecus" as a force capable of inciting blind fury, madness and impulsive, destructive behavior. In the world of men, Vergil witnessed a similar lack of control which expressed itself in fratricidal conflict and political chaos, and seriously threatened the future of the Roman state.

In the startling conclusion of the discussion of "amor", with emphasis on the heightened sexual capacity of mares, "scilicet ante omnis furor est insignis equarum" (v. 266), and the totally undisciplined behavior of lusty stallions (vv. 250-54), we gain additional evidence of the rather sinister associations attached to the horse throughout Georgic III. From the outset Vergil establishes a very definite contrast between the lumbering, docile cow who must perform with man the hard and monotonous rustic chores, and the graceful spirited stallion who experiences the flush of victory on the race course, or the excitement and danger of the battlefield. At the same time Vergil has subtly introduced negative associations in connection with the stallion, an attitude of suspicion concerning his tremendous power and a hint of his potential for uncontrolled destruction which finally explodes with full vigour in the

climactic discussion of "caecus amor". The horse is a significant figure in the third Georgic and his appearances are not to be interpreted lightly. In a very real sense Vergil's discussion of "amor" in book III is designed as a didactic prelude to the epyllion which concludes the poem. Having chosen numerous examples from the animal world, wild and domestic, Vergil exposes the destructive potential of sexual frenzy, and the universality of its effects. With the myth of Hero and Leander he not only implicates man in the destructive sphere of "caecus amor" but also initiates the trend toward tragic love which he will develop so poignantly in the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice.

His emphasis on the destructive and uncontrollable nature of passion will be heightened in the epyllion, though the relatively full discussion of its baser animal aspects in Georgic III eliminates the necessity of introducing sexual details in the epyllion. The lustful pursuit of Eurydice by Aristaeus briefly re-establishes the blatant sexual preoccupation of Georgic III, but for the most part the poet is free to concentrate on the love-death association. All three principal figures in the epyllion are inextricably linked in the snares of love. Aristaeus' uncontrolled passion results in Eurydice's death and brings destruction to his bees. Orpheus is twice a victim and his attempt to regain Eurydice in Hades is a dismal failure because of his inability to control his own passionate impulses. Later his refusal to forget Eurydice and find another love results in his own death at the hands of Thracian maenads, women whose actions are motivated by Venus, though their capacity for gruesome slaughter is the result of Bacchic frenzy. Only Eurydice is free of guilt, yet she suffers a double death because of the

powerful hold of "amor" on her lovers.

The discussion of "amor" in Georgic III and the tragic love story of Orpheus and Eurydice are inextricably linked and together provide a powerful and moving presentation of Vergil's views on "amor". In my opinion, the link between the passages also provides convincing proof to those critics who question the place of the epyllion in the original scheme of the poem.

In contrast to the Lucretian diatribe on "amor" in which the vehemence of the poet is relaxed as he turns to a more clinical and scientific discussion of human reproduction, the Vergilian condemnation of "caecus amor" concludes with a hair-raising tale of love-fury, and the tension is unrelieved. Even the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, though a poignant and moving example of human love, with its tragic conclusion reinforces Vergil's earlier judgment on the disruptive power of uncontrolled passion. Yet the climactic digression in book III and the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice do not represent Vergil's sole preoccupations with "amor" in the Georgics. In Georgic IV, in considering the remarkable life-style of the bees, Vergil highlights their special method of reproduction in a passage which is relevant to our consideration of the Vergilian view of "amor".

Illum adeo placuisse apibus mirabere morem,
quod neque concubitu indulgent, nec corpora segnes
in Venerem solvunt aut fetus nixibus edunt;
verum ipsae e foliis natos, e suavibus herbis
ore legunt, ipsae regem parvosque Quirites
sufficiunt, aulasque et cerea regna refingunt. (197-202)

The curious piece of agricultural lore which suggests that the bees did not indulge in sexual intercourse, but plucked their young from leaves is not an innovation on Vergil's part, but represents one of a number of

suggestions put forward by Aristotle (H.A.5.21.553a). The ancients were very poorly informed about the reproduction of bees.⁶⁸ Yet the fact that Vergil has chosen to emphasize this particular theory, the complete absence of sexual activity, is significant in the light of his violent condemnation of "caecus amor".

Throughout the central section of his discussion of apiculture (IV. 149-229), Vergil focuses his attention on the remarkable mores of the bees and offers the order and harmony of their existence as a special lesson for his contemporaries. It would be absurd, of course, to suggest that Vergil expected his fellow citizens to follow the example of the bees in completely forsaking sexual union, but the sexless life of the bees does present a model of order which effectively cancels the overwhelming sense of horror and revulsion which emerges from the Vergilian presentation of the evils of "caecus amor". Even in its positive, creative aspects, controlled breeding in the Vergilian scheme is fraught with worry, constant care, and an incessant struggle against deterioration of the species.

Freed from the concerns of propagation and removed from the abuse engendered by "amor" in its more excessive expressions, the bees turn their attention to the positive aspects of asexual creativity and immortality. Personal desires are unimportant; they die as they live, in the service of the community. Death has little import, provided the race remains immortal.

⁶⁸L. P. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, pp. 265-6

saepe etiam duris errando in cotibus alas
 attrivere, ultroque animam sub fasce dedere:
 tantus amor florum et generandi gloria mellis.
 ergo ipsas quamvis angusti terminus aevi
 excipiat (neque enim plus septima ducitur aestas),
 at genus immortale manet, multosque per annos
 stat fortuna domus, et avi numerantur avorum. (203-209)

The introduction of "amor" and "generandi" (v. 205) in the context of the labour of the bees seems to me to represent a deliberate attempt on the part of the poet, to emphasize the substitution of productive, communal labour for disorder, self-interest and divisive passion. In linking the concept of communal immortality with the total disregard for sex which characterizes the life of the bees, Vergil has effectively dismissed the preoccupation with passion and death which characterized book III. Just as the "amor" digression in book III exposed the need for man to bring his own impulses and the world around him under control, so the exemplum of the bees in book IV stresses the value of such control and has important political implications in Vergil's scheme of reconstruction.⁶⁹

Yet in offering the beehive as a symbol for a politically corrupt and chaotic era, Vergil never loses sight of the fact that the bees are insects, and are not subject to the same pressures and impulses as men.

⁶⁹ L. P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil*, p. 105 acknowledges this passage as "the obverse of the corresponding one in book 3 (242-83) on the ubiquitous and destructive power of sexual lust." but he doesn't develop the argument any further. Elsewhere, p. 132, Wilkinson suggests that Vergil's presentation of the asexual habits of the bees owes its origins to the "personal obsession of the shy, unmarried poet." It seems to me, however, that Vergil was deliberately establishing a link with book III and not merely indulging a private preoccupation.

In the epyllion which concludes the poem, Vergil returns to the theme of "amor" and its implications in the lives of men and women. The story of Aristaeus, Orpheus and Eurydice is a deeply moving and tragic tale, worthy of a separate study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESOLUTION: GEORGIC IV

In a perceptive article, Charles Segal has recognized the link between books III and IV and acknowledged the remarkable character of Vergil's final statement in the concluding book of his treatise:

It is curious, then, that Vergil should end the Georgics with the alienation from nature that man's very humanity creates. This alienation is anticipated in the ending of III, where a sub-human brutality brings a fearful coarsening of the relation between man and nature (see III, 373-80). Book IV carries the problem to a profounder level, to the question of whether such a separation may not be inherent in the nature and condition of man.¹

Vergil examines the problem of nature and civilization in two significant ways in book IV: the first half of the book (vv. 1-280) presents a discussion of apiculture; (vv. 281-558) in the second half Vergil leaves the world of insects and concerns himself directly with men in the tale of Aristaeus and Orpheus.

Vergil begins his discussion of apiculture with details concerning the proper location for the hive, and methods of encouraging the bees to settle, and establish a productive community. This initial presentation concludes with a charming vignette of the old Corycian beekeeper who takes special pride in his hives and the other simple rewards of his small plot (vv. 116-48). In the middle section of the discussion (vv. 149-227),

¹"Orpheus and the Fourth Georgic: Vergil on Nature and Civilization", American Journal of Philology, LXXXVII (1966), p. 324.

man disappears from the scene and the special nature of the bees is highlighted. The tiny creatures become the sole objects of attention as the exemplary features of their remarkable life style are emphasized. In the final third (vv. 228-80), with the transition to the topic of special care and the treatment of the diseases to which bees are prone, Vergil returns to his initial preoccupation, man's interaction with Nature. The passage is reminiscent of the discussion of the care of sheep and goats introduced in book III; man has again become a figure of action, and the need for "labor", a key theme of the Georgics has been re-asserted.²

The lighthearted vein which characterizes the introductory and concluding sections in this discussion of apiculture is dispelled in the central section (vv. 149-227) as Vergil singles out the bees as creatures specially gifted by the gods; moreover, a significant dimension is added when we learn that the gift is not gratuitous but the response to a special favour afforded Jupiter at his birth (vv. 149-52). The lives of the bees are distinguished by strong communal organization; personal aspirations are forgotten as each individual performs the task allotted to him for the benefit of the entire community. "Labor", a key theme

²Vergil's discussion of apiculture receives considerable attention in the commentaries which we have consulted regularly. Conington, P. Vergili Maronis Opera Vol I, Page. P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica, Klingner, Vergil's Georgica and Richter, Vergil Georgica. The account by Brooks Otis, Virgil: a Study in Civilized Poetry, (Oxford, 1963), pp. 181-87 is brief but covers the salient features of Vergil's discussion. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, pp. 100-107 discusses the organization of Vergil's discussion of apiculture and later, pp. 260-69 comment on the technical aspects of the apicultural lore provided by Vergil. B. G. Whitfield, "Virgil and the Bees A Study on Ancient Apicultural Lore", Greece and Rome III (1956), 99-117 and D. E. Wormell, "Apibus Quanta Experientia Vergil Georgics 4. 1-227", Vergiliana (ed. by Bardon and Verdière, 1971), 429-35 are concerned with Vergil's practical knowledge of his subject.

throughout the Georgics, is an essential feature of the bees' existence and acquires an added dimension with emphasis on altruism and self-sacrifice. The positive values of devotion to the community and productive labour have silenced Vergil's earlier concern with disorder, self-interest, and divisive passion. Unlike other creatures of the animal and insect world, the bees are not troubled by sexual urges.³ Even death is unimportant provided the race remains immortal. A special feature of the communal spirit of the bees is an almost obsessive loyalty to their king; while he abides with them, perfect harmony and industry prevail; if he is lost, they themselves will destroy the very community they worked so diligently to establish. Vergil concludes the discussion on a dignified note with an allusion to the theory of Stoic pantheism. Like all sentient creatures the bees participate in the divine spirit which permeates the universe; they cannot die, but simply rejoin this universal soul.

There is little doubt that Vergil intended to highlight the bees and their outstanding "mores" as examples for man. The preoccupation of book III, the negative disruptive forces of passion and the brutal reality of death are replaced by positive benefits of self-sacrifice, productivity, and immortality. The order and harmony of the beehive, and complete loyalty to their king stand in sharp contrast to the political chaos and

³We have already discussed this aspect of the life of the bees in Chapter III where it has special relevance for Vergil's discussion of "amor".

corruption of contemporary Rome which Vergil has continually deplored in the Georgics. With the image of the beehive Vergil offers a powerful symbol for political and moral renewal in Augustan Rome and a strong statement of the need for complete loyalty to Octavian.⁴

In the second half of Georgic IV as Vergil turns to the world of men, the story of Aristaeus, Orpheus and Eurydice, the preoccupation with passion and death which characterized book III re-emerges. The epyllion itself has been the subject of a great deal of critical controversy as the result of comments made by Servius which suggest that the story as we have it does not represent Vergil's original conclusion to his

⁴The leading exponent of this view that the bees are intended by Vergil to offer an example of social and political harmony to the Romans is Hellfried Dahlmann, "Der Bienenstaat in Vergils Georgica" in the collection Hellfried Dahlmann, Kleine Schriften (Hildesheim, 1970), pp. 181-96. Though I believe that Dahlmann's conclusions are especially relevant for the central panel of the discussion of apiculture he does minimize the role of the beekeeper in the other sections of the discussion and at times pushes the symbolism too far. We must keep in mind that Vergil often uses his symbols on two levels, at times offering only a simple literal presentation and at other times investing the same subjects with deeper symbolic meaning.

poem.⁵ I have not been convinced by those critics who deny the original unity of the poem, and in my own study I have attempted to link the tale

⁵The remarks of Servius, ad Georgic IV. I and Eclogue X.1 that the conclusion of Georgic IV originally contained a panegyric of Gallus which Vergil was forced to remove under imperial pressure have produced a hotly debated issue among scholars. Among those who accept the Servian judgment are W. Y. Sellar, The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil and E. K. Rand The Magical Art of Virgil (Cambridge, Mass., 1931). Sellar strongly censures the tale of Orpheus and Aristaeus as a suitable conclusion for Georgic IV, and suggests that Vergil borrowed in haste from the Aeneid (pp. 188-9, 251). Rand pp. 341-3 takes advantages of certain discrepancies in the Servian text to suggest that the Aristaeus tale was part of Vergil's original scheme, and that only the Orpheus episode represents a substitution. Unlike Sellar, he does not regard the resulting epyllion as an unsuitable conclusion for Vergil's poem.

Among more modern commentators, T. J. Haarhoff, "Virgil and Cornelius Gallus", Classical Philology LV (1960), 101-108 suggests that Vergil's original panegyric of Gallus was literary rather than political, and under compulsion from the Emperor, Vergil then substituted the epyllion as we know it with a veiled criticism of Augustus. Orpheus is to be identified with Gallus while Aristaeus represents Augustus. The Thracian women who ultimately tear Orpheus apart are actually jealous Roman senators who metaphorically slaughter Gallus.

R. Coleman, "Gallus, the Bucolics and the Ending of the Fourth Georgic", American Journal of Philology, LXXXIII (1962), 56-71 joins the ranks of Servian supporters with an attempt similar to Haarhoff's to establish the special relevance of the Aristaeus epyllion in its present form. He sees Vergil's use of the epyllion form as a special tribute to Gallus, and interprets the central tale of Orpheus and Eurydice as a personal reflection of the poet's tragic loss of a friend. Unfortunately this theory does little for the essential unity of the fourth book and the poem as a whole, and reduces the Aristaeus epyllion to a clever literary exercise where Vergil develops a private theme which has no real relationship to the topic of bees or the broader philosophic design of the Georgics.

In offering a rebuttal of the Servian arguments, W. B. Anderson, "Gallus and the Fourth Georgic", Classical Quarterly XXVII (1933), 36-45 offers some cogent arguments involving technical considerations and the chronological difficulties raised by the supposition of a second edition. He points out that excessive panegyric of Gallus in the presence of Octavian, who had been the real conqueror and organizer of Egypt, would hardly have been politic, moreover, Gallus' prefecture had only begun in 30 and would not have merited such praise. Anderson also refutes the charge of carelessness and evidence of hasty composition which the supporters of Servius cite so readily as proof of a second edition.

of Aristaeus and Orpheus closely with book III, while still appreciating the place of the episode in its own book, and its implications for the poem as a whole.

George Duckworth, in a convincing article, "Vergil's Georgics and the Laudes Galli", American Journal of Philology, LXXX (1959), 225-37 argues for the essential unity of the Georgics from a structural perspective. The Orpheus myth is a vital part of the epyllion, and book IV with its theme of rebirth is crucial to the scheme of the Georgics.

Charles Segal, "Orpheus and the Fourth Georgic" in his attempt to establish the essential unity of the Georgics and the relevance of the epyllion in that scheme has concentrated on the figures of Cyrene and Proteus, areas which were troublesome even for those who unquestioningly accepted the epyllion as Vergil's original design. In his analysis of the central figures Segal insists that although neither Orpheus nor Aristaeus is entirely blameless, Aristaeus in his attempts to restore his bees is serving nature, while Orpheus is pursuing only the fulfilment of a personal need.

I must confess that my allegiance rests with those who regard the Aristaeus Orpheus epyllion as the original and effective expression of the poet. In my opinion although he refused to commit himself on the Servian issue, Owen Lee, "Virgil as Orpheus", Orpheus XI (1964), 9-18, offers the most convincing statement:

The final answer to such criticism must always be Virgil's deserved reputation as a careful and painstaking artist. Even in the epic poem which never received his finishing touches he is firmly in the literary rather than the oral tradition; he is a poet, not a rhapsode or stitcher-together of poems. A fortiori in the Georgics his most finished work there can be no purple patches. Every part bears on the whole. Whether originally composed as it stands or inserted later, the Orpheus story belongs in the larger context of the Georgics and derives its significance from them. (p. 10).

Vergil begins the *epyllion* with an allusion to the origin of the resurrection myth he is about to unfold:

Sed si quem proles subito defecerit omnis
 nec genus unde novae stirpis revocetur habebit,
 tempus et Arcadii memoranda inventa magistri
 pandere, quoque modo caesis iam saepe iuvenis
 insincerus apes tulerit cruor. (281-5)

The reference to Aristaeus as "Arcadii magistri" represents a subtle and rather learned allusion, for his Arcadian associations were not a well known feature of the legend surrounding Aristaeus.

Vergil himself promises to narrate the tale "ab origine" (v. 286) and, as if to justify his interest in what appears to be a rather esoteric subject, he cites contemporary evidence, the popularity of the practice in Egypt, as proof of its topicality. In the discussion which follows, there are striking divergences between the ritual practiced in Egypt and that later described as the invention of Aristaeus. The Egyptian art of bougonia is to be regarded as an established custom.

In alluding to the popularity of the custom in Egypt, Vergil establishes this art of bougonia as a 'tried and true' remedy:

omnis in hac certam regio iacit arte salutem. (294)

Moreover, certain details of its preparation indicate a long established history. In the first place, while Aristaeus successfully performed the initial ritual in the open air with Nature as his witness, the Egyptians have made some modifications in the rite, and have set aside a special room for the performance:

exiguus primum atque ipsos contractus in usus
 eligitur locus; hunc angustique imbrice tecti
 parietibusque premunt artis, et quattuor addunt,
 quattuor a ventis obliqua luce fenestras. (295-8)

The spontaneity of the original rite is gone, for early spring has been designated as the suitable and regular season for such regeneration:

hoc geritur Zephyris primum impellentibus undas,
ante novis rubeant quam prata coloribus, ante
garrula quam tignis nidum suspendat hirundo. (305-7)

Such divergences do not seem to me to be an indication of inconsistency on Vergil's part, or a hasty conflation of two separate bougonia tales. Rather, Vergil has logically indicated his intention to present the resurrection myth in its double aspect: the more stylized modern ritual which has been developed through regular practice, and the original spontaneous rite with its surprising conclusions. To signal his intention to return to the origin of the resurrection myth, Vergil must somehow re-introduce the figure of Aristaeus seen briefly at the beginning of the discussion. Again the result is a sophisticated allusion to another feature of the Aristaeus legend, his divinity:

Quis deus hanc, Musae, quis nobis extudit artem?
unde nova ingressus hominum experientia cepit? (315-6)

The allusion to the divinity of Aristaeus may be somewhat premature, but the double destiny which awaits him, a mortal life and future divinity, was a known feature of the legend, and is clearly indicated in his conversation with his mother which follows (vv. 325-6). I see no real conflict with the earlier reference to Aristaeus as "Arcadii magistri" (v. 283). Rather, Vergil is quite naturally shifting our attention to his principal preoccupation, the origin of the bougonia, after a brief discussion of the modern practice. In addition, we are presented with another feature of the inventor's history.

The key to the interpretation of the Aristaeus-Orpheus epyllion, in my opinion, is an appreciation of the emphasis on the parallel situation of the two heroes together with the sharp contrast in the ultimate consequences of their actions. Too many commentators concentrate on the latter and fail to recognize the former. The effectiveness of the epyllion structure depends on the subtle interplay of similarity and contrast.

When we first encounter Aristaeus, he appears very much a character of the Georgics; except for his divine parentage, he is a typical farmer with responsibilities. He is concerned not only with the keeping of bees, but he also has livestock and raises crops. Like the "tristis arator" of book III, he has confronted Death and has been forced to accept the reality of his own helplessness. Often commentators are too overwhelmed by the description of Cyrene's exotic realm to accurately assess the position of Aristaeus. Like Orpheus, he grieves deeply for his loss. The abrupt change in his existence has prompted him to question his divine parentage and the effectiveness of his role on earth:

quid me caelum sperare iubebas?
 en etiam hunc ipsum vitae mortalis honorem,
 quem mihi vix frugum et pecudum custodia sollers
 omnia temptanti extuderat, te matre relinquo.
 quin age et ipsa manu felicitis erue silvas,
 fer stabulis inimicum ignem atque interfice messis,
 ure sata et validam in vitis molire bipennem,
 tanta meae si te ceperunt taedia laudis. (325-32)

This conversation with Cyrene establishes very clearly the position of Aristaeus as farmer. In spite of his divine parentage and the destiny of future immortality, he is completely involved in his agricultural role on earth. His successes as a farmer are extremely important to him, and

in the heat of the moment he invites Cyrene to destroy it all, to uproot his orchards, destroy his livestock and wither his crops and vine if he cannot be successful in bee-keeping as well.

The scene is reminiscent of the celebrated confrontation between mother and son, the meeting of Thetis and Achilles in the first book of the Iliad and later in the eighteenth.⁶ I believe that the Homeric parallel is deliberate and significant: in a sense, Aristaeus is like Achilles for the loss of his bees has diminished his honour among men. In spite of the relatively brief treatment of the matter, death in the hive is to be regarded as a very serious disaster for Aristaeus, a symbol of failure which diminishes his creative role as farmer.

There follows an intriguing and remarkable description of Cyrene's watery realm (vv. 333-59). In certain respects the presentation is Homeric and recalls the scene in Iliad XVIII, when Thetis, at home beneath the sea, hears the cries of her troubled son and is joined in her lamentation by other nymphs. In the Vergilian presentation, the nymphs are clustered around Cyrene, spinning and listening to tales of amorous intrigue among the gods:

inter quas curam Clymene narrabat inanem
Volcani, Martisque dolos et dulcia furta,
aque Chao densos divum numerabat amores.

(345-7)

⁶The scene is described by Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, pp. 214-15. He also calls attention to the Homeric parallels and in a point which I missed established the precedent for the sarcasm of Aristaeus in the Iliad: the remarks uttered by Thetis to Zeus (I. 515-16).

Yet the Vergilian presentation also displays certain Hellenistic traits. Like most ancient deities, the lives of the nymphs are carefree and enjoyable, and few mortal difficulties penetrate their serene surroundings. The familiar, homey introduction to the nymphs is particularly Hellenistic: they are presented performing domestic chores, spinning and listening to stories. The tales are light and entertaining, not tragic love, but "dulcia furta", pleasant diversions for carefree lives.

Vergil has combined the Homeric example of a catalogue with the Hellenistic penchant for realistic detail.⁷ Each of the nymphs is identified with details about her physical appearance or the special circumstances of her life: Drymo, Xantho, Ligea and Phyllodoce have long, shiny hair which falls down over a snow white neck (vv. 336-7); Cydippe is unmarried, while blond Lycorias is even now experiencing her first labour pains (vv. 339-40); the daughters of Ocean, Clio and Beroe, are wearing golden jewelry and dappled skins.

The pleasant static representation is interrupted by the cries of Aristaeus which penetrate the depths of the sea. There follows a series of quick actions which culminate in Aristaeus' entry into the watery realm. In placing the encounter between Cyrene and Aristaeus beneath

⁷Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil*, p. 216 has also called attention to this aspect of Vergil's poetic art. He develops the Hellenistic aspects more fully and suggests that Vergil's concern for sound and rhythm in this passage also is Hellenistic in origin (p. 217).

the sea Vergil has departed from his Homeric model. The conversation with his mother involves a descent for Aristaeus, as remarkable and awesome an achievement as Orpheus' descent into the Underworld.⁸

Yet Aristaeus' descent is facilitated by magic; Cyrene parts the sea and a huge wave pushes him down (vv. 360-2). Orpheus, on the other hand, accomplishes his own descent with the magic of his song.

Moreover, just as Orpheus had to penetrate the unyielding facade of Death with his song, so also Aristaeus must somehow break through the casual indifference displayed by the nymphs to appeal to his mother; his only recourse is his lament.

Once admitted to the aquatic paradise, Aristaeus undergoes a series of events in ritual sequence. Before meeting Cyrene he experiences a short tour of the area beneath the sea and discovers the source of the earth's rivers. It seems to me that this catalogue of rivers (vv. 365-73) reflects Hellenistic tastes. When the conquests of Alexander destroyed the narrow geographic and political unity of the city-state, men were stimulated to contemplate and explore the vast territories beyond Greece, and to carry back tales of exotic lands and adventures. A new interest in travel literature and adventure tales developed, and combined with the Hellenistic penchant for 'science', often resulted in explanations

⁸The imagery of ascent-descent represents a significant and consistent pattern in the Georgics as shown by Smith Palmer Bovie, in an excellent article, "The Imagery of Ascent-Descent in Vergil's Georgics", American Journal of Philology, LXXVII (1956), 337-57.

of the origins of exotic rites and mysteries which travel uncovered. In similar fashion, Aristaëus' magic adventure is highlighted by educational sidelights, as he uncovers the origins of the earth's rivers.⁹

Contrary to the Homeric model of Achilles and Thetis, the meeting between mother and son is described quite elliptically in the Vergilian account. The only allusion to Aristaëus' complaint about his bees is the phrase "fletus...inanis" (v. 375), and the lamentation by the shores of the Peneus represents the only direct communication by Aristaëus to his mother.

Before Cyrene offers any advice to her troubled son, there follows another ritualistic element, a feast and sacrifice to the gods (vv. 376-86). The scene concludes with a favourable omen:

ter liquido ardentem perfundit nectare Vestam,
 ter flamma ad summum tecti subiecta reluxit.
 omine quo firmans animum sic incipit ipsa: (384-6)

The libation to Oceanus and the favourable response present divine sanction for Aristaëus' mission. We recall Cyrene's earlier remark to the nymphs, "duc, age, duc ad nos; fas illi limina divum/tangere" (vv. 358-9). Throughout the underwater adventure, we are never allowed

⁹E. A. Havelock has paid particular attention to this underwater scene in "Virgil's Road to Xanadu". *Phoenix* I (1946), i,3-8; 2, 2-7; I Supp. (1947), 9-18. Havelock traces Vergil's interest in river lore to ancient Greek geographers, but doesn't highlight the Hellenistic interest. An especially interesting feature of the article is the emphasis on the value of sound in this underwater grotto. "The mermaid episode is written in patterns of spondees; with repetition to suggest chime or echo...The reader catches the sound booming and bouncing off the walls of the chamber." (1,p. 6).

to glimpse the reactions of Aristaeus directly: his first and only dramatic appearance up to this point has been the lament at the shores of the Peneus. In fact, the whole description of the encounter between mother and son has a magic, unreal quality about it. Far from detracting from his narrative, however, it seems to me that this is a deliberate and effective technique on Vergil's part to illustrate the sublimation of Aristaeus' own personality. He is to become a pawn in Cyrene's hands.

Following the encouraging omen, Cyrene at last begins to aid her son by introducing him to yet another adventure, the meeting with Proteus. The characterization of Proteus is interesting and significant. In the course of Cyrene's instructions to Aristaeus, Proteus is twice called a "vates" (vv. 387, 392), a prophet with knowledge of past, present and future:

novit namque omnia vates,
quae sint, quae fuerint, quae mox ventura trahantur; (392-3).

Cyrene impresses upon Aristaeus the need for brute strength in extracting the truth from Proteus:

hic tibi, nate, prius vinclis capiendus, ut omnem
expediat morbi causam eventusque secundet.
nam sine vi non ulla dabit praecepta, neque illum
orando flectes; vim duram et vincula capto
tende; (396-400).

Later she again emphasizes the necessity of sustained force:

sed quanto ille magis formas se vertet in omnis
tam tu, nate, magis contende tenacia vincla,
donec talis erit mutato corpore qualem
videris incepto tegetet cum lumina somno. (411-14)

Though the direct model for the encounter is the scene between Menelaus and Proteus in the fourth book of the Odyssey, the meeting is

also reminiscent of the presentation in Eclogue VI, where the two boys assault the primitive Silenus, bind him in his own garlands, and force him to give up a song. With the figure of Silenus, Vergil introduces both Dionysiac revelry and Apolline rationality and through his song Silenus imposes poetic order on the contradictory and confusing aspects of life.¹⁰ Like Silenus, Proteus is a primitive creature, a denizen of the deep, and guardian of the clocks of Neptune. With the encounter in Georgic IV, however, we do not find the same emphasis on Dionysiac revelry, and the assault is not treated in such a light-hearted manner. Proteus also represents Apolline rationality, and the assault by Aristaeus must be interpreted as an attempt to enfeeble inspiration, a confrontation between practical, aggressive reality and the world of the spirit. Consistent with Homeric tradition, Proteus will assume a number of shapes in order to elude his captor.

Cyrene's instructions to Aristaeus are quite explicit; she even anticipates the many frightening disguises Proteus will assume in order to escape. As a result, Aristaeus' actual struggle with Proteus lacks immediacy and suspense and becomes little more than a re-enactment of Cyrene's earlier tale. This particular aspect of the Vergilian narrative

¹⁰For this interpretation of the Eclogues, I am indebted to the study by Michael C. J. Putnam, Virgil's Pastoral Art, p. 202 ff. The comparison between Proteus and Silenus and the antithesis of Apolline and Dionysiac elements is developed at length by Charles P. Segal, "Virgil's Sixth Eclogue and the Problem of Evil", Transactions of the American Philological Association, C (1969), 407-35.

has been strongly censured by critics who view the entire scene with Proteus as ineffective. Again, however, it seems to me that the lack of suspense is a deliberate technique on Vergil's part. The subjugation of Proteus is intended as a ritualistic act on the part of Aristaeus, an obligation imposed on him as a necessary condition for the restoration of the bees.

The whole encounter with Proteus has a magical aura about it, more akin to Jason's contest with the fire-breathing monsters in the Argonautica, than Menelaus' struggle with Proteus as described by Homer in the Odyssey. In the Homeric description, after Menelaus has successfully captured Proteus and held him through his awesome series of metamorphoses, he gains information not only of his own situation and the means to remedy the problem he faces, but also learns of the fate of Odysseus, Ajax and Agamemnon. The seer is reluctant to divulge his information, but it is a reluctance engendered, in part at least, by sympathy for Menelaus (IV.492-4).

Similarly, in Eclogue VI, Silenus willingly submits to his captors and obliges with a song. In the encounter between Aristaeus and Proteus, on the other hand, hostility is sustained and no reconciliation between captor and captive is possible. In Vergil's view, there can be no easy interaction between man's harsh, practical nature and his creative spiritual powers. Proteus indignantly addresses Aristaeus as "iuvenum confidentissime" (v. 445); having been reminded of the divine instructions which prompted the attack, Proteus finally begins his tale with violent

gestures:

ad haec vates vi denique multa
ardentis oculos intorsit lumina glauco,
et graviter frendens sic fatis ora resolvit: (450-2).

Consistent with Vergil's principle of the providential direction of the universe, Aristaeus' loss has not been occasioned by some abstract principle of destruction or the capricious whim of the gods; rather he has unwittingly brought destruction upon himself and his bees through uncontrolled sexual frenzy:

Non te nullius exercent numinis irae;
magna luis commissa: tibi has miserabilis Orpheus
haudquaquam ob meritum poenas, ni fata resistant,
suscitat, et rapta graviter pro coniuge saevit.
illa quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina praeceps,
immanem ante pedes hydram moritura puella
servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba. (453-9)

The fact of Aristaeus' guilt stands in sharp contrast to the magic details and fantasy. The emphatic phrase "dum te fugeret" clearly implicates Aristaeus in Eurydice's death.

There has been considerable controversy concerning Aristaeus' guilt and crime. Vergil treats the matter quite elliptically; we learn only that Aristaeus has precipitated Eurydice's death from snake bite by pursuing her through the woods. Proteus' account at this point turns abruptly towards the reactions of Orpheus to Eurydice's death and he never returns to the question of Aristaeus' guilt.

In spite of the elliptical reference to Aristaeus' crime, which in the view of some critics diminishes his guilt, it seems to me that we should regard Aristaeus' actions as motivated by "amor". Earlier, in book III, in discussing cattle and horses, Vergil provided a detailed

account of the physical and psychological manifestations of "amor". It is quite suitable that he should again explore the theme with emphasis this time on the tragic implications of love in the lives of men. It is not necessary to provide a clinical description of passion as it affected Aristaeus; rather, with a subtle allusion to "amor", he effectively calls to mind all the fierce disruptive fury of passion which he detailed in book III, while focusing his attention squarely on the tragic results of such passion.

Since the association of Aristaeus with the tragic legend of Orpheus and Eurydice represents an innovation on Vergil's part, it is only suitable that the crime of Aristaeus should be a major one and particularly reprehensible. At the same time, the emphasis in the Aristaeus tale is positive rather than negative: Aristaeus must repair his losses and not dwell on the origin of his disaster. With typical resourcefulness, Vergil has accomplished both aims: in briefly alluding to Aristaeus' crime, he intends not to diminish his guilt, but to centre the deed properly in the perspective of the whole Aristaeus tale. The accent is clearly on the positive results of reparation, the bougonia.

Another aspect of the Aristaeus tale has prompted considerable controversy. Following the account of Orpheus' inconsolable grief and his abortive attempt to regain Eurydice, Proteus jumps back into the sea; Aristaeus has been shown his guilt, but has not been provided with a means to make amends. It remains for Cyrene to suggest a method for restoring his bees.

Some critics have suggested that the role of Proteus is superfluous and ineffective since he provides no real solution for Aristaeus, and Cyrene was obviously aware of the problem from the beginning. In my opinion, however, the separation of roles was quite necessary, and a testimony to Vergil's poetic skill. In departing from the Homeric tradition which made the prophet responsible for the ultimate solution, Vergil has emphasized again the distance between the aggressive practical pursuit of life, typified by Aristaeus and his concern for his bees, and the spiritual, creative aspect of life. By maintaining the hostile, unco-operative attitude of Proteus, Vergil has asserted the impossibility of a complete reconciliation between the two facets of man's existence. The problem is crucial to the epyllion, and with the figure of Orpheus and his relationship to Aristaeus, Vergil will again present the dilemma with broader and more poignant strokes.

At the same time, however, Vergil has not sacrificed the essential unity of the Aristaeus tale itself to this grander design. In the tradition of the Iliad which highlighted the relationship of mother and son, Cyrene was a much more suitable figure to bring aid to Aristaeus than to censure him for his wrongdoing. The narration of Aristaeus' crime and the tragic consequences suffered by Orpheus required the relatively objective stance of Proteus so that the implications of Aristaeus' guilt might be fully developed. Cyrene would be far too sympathetic to Aristaeus to show any real feeling for Orpheus. The epyllion structure as used by Vergil depends on the effective contrast in attitude and emotions, as well as contrast in conclusions.

Moreover, the separation of roles serves another useful function. By advising Aristaeus to visit Proteus, Cyrene counsels her son to a confrontation with his past. Through his subjugation of Proteus, Aristaeus conquers change and halts the progression of time for a recall of his past few mortals are allowed.

Cyrene, on the other hand, is able to effect change in the present situation. By directing Aristaeus to yet another ritual, she pushes her son positively into the future. Past and present merge in the successful outcome of the bougonia; the ascent of the bees from the putrefying flesh signals the advent of a happy fruitful existence. Vergil has thus provided the traditional role of the divine mother with a special dynamism.¹¹

The Aristaeus tale concludes simply but dramatically with the bougonia ritual. I use the term "ritual" in connection with the resurrection of the bees, because here, as in the earlier encounter with Proteus, Aristaeus' actions are quite automatic; he diligently follows a series of directions outlined by his mother. At no time are we allowed to glimpse Aristaeus' reactions to the events which have occurred or even to the miraculous return of the bees. In fact, his victory over death demands a complete sublimation of his personality and a rigid

¹¹M. Owen Lee, "Virgil as Orpheus", p. 12 suggests that the reappearance of Cyrene at this point is necessary for the symmetrical arrangement of the tale, which he expresses in the following fashion:

Georgics - Aristaeus - Cyrene - Proteus - Orpheus -
 Proteus - Cyrene - Aristaeus - Georgics.

adherence to ritual.¹² The objective, epic style with which Vergil has detailed the story of Aristaeus is well suited to such an impersonal hero.

With the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, however, Vergil gives full vent to a sensitive, empathetic narrative. The story, at the crucial centre of the epyllion, imparts a very special message for the Georgics. The fate of Eurydice is implied by Proteus, and her death is signalled by the lamentation of the chorus of nymphs who were her companions, the lofty Rhodopeian mountains, and the Greek terrain (vv. 460-3). Against the backdrop of the soaring Thracian mountains, we first glimpse Orpheus, alone on the solitary shore, day and night mourning his beloved Eurydice:

ipse cava solans aegrum testudine amorem
te, dulcis coniunx, te solo in litore secum,
te veniente die, te decedente canebat. (464-6).

His situation is similar to that of Aristaeus, for he must somehow confront Death and accept it; yet the significance of his disaster is more immediately obvious than that of Aristaeus. The reactions of the two heroes are also similar; like Aristaeus, Orpheus cannot bring himself to accept the change and attempts to restore his loss. Yet he has no recourse to divine aid, and stands representative of creative man, a remarkable musician with song as his talisman.

¹²Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, p. 220 comments: that "... after Aristaeus' first outburst of petulance, human feelings are not in evidence."

At this point, the narrative passes elliptically to Orpheus' journey in the Underworld, a descent paralleling Aristaeus' underwater journey. The extent of Orpheus' creative powers becomes obvious as his song first charms the undifferentiated shades in Hell:

at cantu commotae Erebi de sedibus imis
umbrae ibant tenues simulacraque luce carentum. (471-2)

then reaches Tartarus itself and holds its infamous inhabitants spell-bound:

quin ipsae stupuere domus atque intima Leti
Tartara caeruleosque implexae crinibus anguis
Eumenides tenuitque inhians tria Cerberus ora,
atque Ixionii vento rota constitit orbis. (481-4)

Finally, Orpheus is on the very threshold of victory as his beloved Eurydice follows him, about to return to life:

iamque pedem referens casus evaserat omnis,
redditaque Eurydice superas veniebat ad auras
pone sequens (namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem), (485-7)

As in the Aristaeus episode where success was finally mirrored in the flight of the bees from the rotting flesh into the upper air, so also for Orpheus, victory is expressed in ascent from this place of death. Similarly, just as Aristaeus was compelled to conform to a prescribed ritual in order to achieve his desired goal, so also Orpheus must fulfil an obligation imposed by Proserpina. The allusion to the terms of the contract is indirect in Vergil's narrative; we hear only of a "lex" imposed on Orpheus by Proserpina, a simple condition which stipulates that Eurydice must follow Orpheus, and that he must not look back at her until they reach the upper air. Here the similarity with Aristaeus' situation ends, for Orpheus is unable to respect the terms of his agreement with Proserpina. He cannot control his own personality; his own impulsive behavior prevails

over the forces of reason and defeats the magic of his song:¹³

cum subita incautum dementia cepit amantem,
ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere Manes:
restitit, Eurydicenque suam iam luce sub ipsa
immemor heu! victusque animi respexit. (488-91)

His offence is minimized by the narrator, "ignoscenda quidem", but the poignant farewell of Eurydice exposes the disruptive force of "amor", and the association of love and death, a theme which Vergil stressed in book III:

illa 'quis et me' inquit 'miseram et te perdidit, Orpheu,
quis tantus furor? en iterum crudelia retro
fata vocant, conditque natantia lumina somnus.
iamque vale: feror ingenti circumdata nocte
invalidasque tibi tendens, heu non tua, palmas.' (494-8)¹⁴

¹³Brooks Otis, Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry, p. 201 offers a succinct appraisal of Orpheus' tragedy:

Orpheus in this poem confronts the huge inhumanity of death but this in itself is not the point of his tragedy. Orpheus can actually conquer death by his poetic genius, by a song. Yet he cannot conquer his own impulses which destroy him in the very moment of triumph.

¹⁴Otis, Virgil, p. 212 links Orpheus with Leander and charges them both with recklessness.

Ascent for Orpheus alone is not significant and we are never told of his departure from Hell. The narrative moves from his frantic introspection immediately following the loss of Eurydice for the second time (vv. 504-5) to the shores of the Strymon, where Orpheus for seven months has poured out his grief for his beloved wife:

septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine mensis
 rupe sub aëria deserti ad Strymonis undam
 flesse sibi, et gelidis haec evolvisse sub antris
 mulcentem tigris et agentem carmine quercus: (507-10).

The barren Macedonian landscape reflects the sterility of his song; Orpheus, to be sure, is still a powerful singer with the ability to soothe wild beasts and move trees, but his song is only recollection and not conscious creation. Grief for Eurydice has enveloped his whole existence and destroyed his creative art.

The simile which follows is significant, and in my opinion, points very definitely to the interpretation Vergil desired for the Orpheus tale. Orpheus in his grief is like a nightingale who mourns the loss of her young whom the cruel ploughman has deliberately killed:

qualis populea maerens philomela sub umbra
 amissos queritur fetus, quos durus arator
 observans nido implumis detraxit; at illa
 flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
 integrat, et maestis late loca questibus implet. (511-15)

"Durus" is a strong word, especially in a treatise which celebrates the rustic ideal; to make certain its meaning does not escape us, Vergil emphasizes the conscious cruelty with the participle "observans". Vergil very definitely establishes a price for civilization; the victims are not only the helpless, in this case the fledgling chicks, but those sensitive

creative creatures who rely on art. The nightingale is as much a victim as her chicks and in the place of resistance can only repeat a mournful lament. Similarly, Orpheus is a victim; although he appears to have precipitated his own disaster, he is incapable of conforming to an order imposed externally, of stifling his spontaneous, emotional nature. With the contrast of Orpheus and Aristaeus, Vergil does not intend to diminish progress and civilization, for he has consistently emphasized their desirability in the Georgics, but he does realistically assess the consequences for the human spirit.

Following the disaster in the hive, Aristaeus' principal concern is the restoration of his lost bees and a return to a successful, productive life. Orpheus, however, cannot abandon his mourning and attempt to build a new life:

nulla Venus, non ulli animum flexere hymenaei:
 solus Hyperboreas glacies Tanaimque nivalem
 arvaque Riphæis numquam viduata pruinis
 lustrabat, raptam Eurydicen atque inrita Ditis
 dona querens.

(516-20)

Thoughts of another marriage do not entice him, and he forsakes all human contact to wander alone in desolate arctic regions. Again the landscape, held fast by ice and snow, reflects the sterility of Orpheus' life. The winter scene also recalls the brutal desolation of the Scythian winter described in book III. Orpheus has chosen to live in a de-humanizing environment where his art can serve only his grief. His vast creative potential has been stifled, and like a nightingale, he only repeats the same mournful song.

It is significant that death for Orpheus should come at the hands of Thracian maenads in the middle of a Bacchic revel. Incensed by Orpheus' withdrawal, "spretae", the women, in a ritualistic act, right the situation by calling upon the resources of "dementia" and "furor":

spretae Ciconum quo munere matres
inter sacra deum nocturnique orgia Bacchi
discerptum latos iuvenem sparsere per agros. (520-22)

The symbol of Apolline excellence has been destroyed by Dionysiac fury. Yet in a sense, Orpheus' death is anti-climactic. The physical dismemberment only externalizes the lack of cohesion in Orpheus' spiritual life. Only the head remains, still echoing the lament for the lost Eurydice, a poignant but effective symbol for the destruction of a poet:

tum quoque marmorea caput a cervice revulsum
gurgite cum medio portans Oeagrius Hebrus
volveret, Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua,
a miseram Eurydicen! anima fugiente vocabat:
Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripae. (523-7)

This final detail emphasizes most effectively that of all the legends and traditions associated with the figure of Orpheus, Vergil presents him as a poet par excellence, the symbol of man's creative nature. Even in death the poet sings, but his song has been rendered ineffectual.

In choosing to link these two tales in a single epyllion, a surprising association since the figures of Aristaeus, Orpheus, and Eurydice were not traditionally linked, Vergil has provided a dramatic conclusion not only for book IV, but for the Georgics as a whole. Both tales individually impart an important message for Vergil's contemporaries, and together they sound a vital concern for the future of Augustan Rome.

As our analysis has revealed, there is a striking similarity in the situations of Aristaeus and Orpheus, but an especially striking divergence in the ultimate conclusions of the individual tales. This interplay of similarity and contrast has been used very effectively to present a powerful and dramatic conclusion to the poem.

Aristaeus stands as a typical representative of the Georgics. He is a farmer, who like every man experiences the trials and tribulations of life. The death of his bees, however, represents a failure with which he cannot cope alone. Consequently, he turns to divine sources, his mother. Through the agency of Proteus, to whom she directs him, Aristaeus encounters his own guilt, and with a series of ritualistic acts of atonement turns failure into success. The positive completion of the strange rite of bougonia, the re-emergence of life after death, re-affirms the current of optimism pulsating through the Georgics. The symbolism of the bougonia ritual is interesting and particularly suggestive. The results of Aristaeus' ritualistic performance are briefly outlined in the conclusion to the fourth book:

post, ubi nona suos Aurora induxerat ortus,
 inferias Orphei mittit, lucumque revisit.
 hic vero subitum ac dictu mirabile monstrum
 aspiciunt, liquefacta boum per viscera toto
 stridere apes utero et ruptis effervere costis,
 immensasque trahi nubes, iamque arbore summa
 confluere et lentis uvam demittere ramis. (552-58)

We recall that in book III, the death of the plough-ox (vv. 515-30) marked a pathetic and dramatic climax in Vergil's vision of overwhelming destruction: the productive partnership of man and beast in agricultural

labour was finally sundered by forces beyond man's control. In Georgic IV, however, the negative image of the dead steer is imbued with positive value--new life teems in the rotting carcass in the form of healthy, productive bees. Bees, we recall, in Vergil's scheme represented an ideal of selflessness, productive labour, and devotion to the community. Here they take their rise from the dead steer, who in Georgic III also provided testimony to the vicious, destructive nature of civil conflict (vv. 220-41). The bougonia ritual is clearly intended as an artistic representation of the resolution of the tension felt in the conclusion of the third Georgic, an expression of faith in the new regime of Octavian. Even the image applied to the swarming bees is revealing; as they rise from the rotten carcass, they cluster like grapes in the trees. The vine was introduced by Vergil in Georgic II, also a light and optimistic book, as an image of order and natural productivity. The preoccupation with death and disorder with which the third book concluded has been finally and effectively silenced in the Aristaeus episode.

Moreover, the successful ascent of the bees signals the appeasement of the shades of Orpheus and Eurydice, a final dismissal of the chthonic association, a prominent negative theme in Georgic III and elsewhere in the poem, which threatened Octavian's position as saviour of the Roman future. By co-operation with representatives of the divine order, through self-effacing obedience and humility, Aristaeus has been able to conquer even death and bring his efforts to successful completion. The tale of Aristaeus has re-affirmed the message of the Georgics, that salvation lies

in the simple pure life of agriculture. We cannot help but recall Vergil's earlier judgment:

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint
agricolas! (II.458-9)

and later:

fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestis
Panaque Silvanumque senem Nymphasque sorores.
illum non populi fasces, non purpura regum
flexit et infidos agitans discordia fratres,
aut coniurato descedens Dacus ab Histro,
non res Romanae perituraque regna; (II.493-8).

The contrasting unsuccessful story of Orpheus, on the other hand, modifies the full-blown optimism of the bougonia ritual. As representative of creative civilized man, Orpheus has the power to conquer his environment, yet fails in his attempt because of his inability to control the disruptive elements of his own personality. In a more sympathetic and human light, Vergil again emphasizes the message of the "amor" digression of Georgic III: men are not bees and certain disruptive elements in their psychological make-up will persist to negate attempts to establish order. Impulsive action cost Orpheus the loss of his beloved Eurydice. Later, after his ascent from Hades, his inability to accept failure and his own responsibility for his actions ultimately results in the loss of his own life. Unlike Aristaeus he refuses to build on his tragedy and leads a purposeless existence, blaming the powers of Hell for his own weakness (vv. 516-20). This lack of perceptive judgment seems to me to be another facet of the "amor" which Vergil so vehemently condemned in Georgic III.

Yet the figure of Orpheus has a double impact in the final vision of the Georgics. Though Orpheus is himself responsible for Eurydice's

return to Hades and his own unproductive death, Aristaeus ultimately initiated the series of tragic events. We must not lose sight of the guilt of Aristaeus and his tragic intervention in the life of the poet. The successful, aggressive, 'Augustan' figure is ultimately responsible for the death of the sensitive artist. In his analysis of the epyllion, Lee also emphasizes the position of Orpheus as a symbol for all poets, "a universal artist who knows life at a deeper level than other men, who comes in fact face to face with the mysteries of life and death."¹⁵ He suggests that the poet is superior to other men and that in the conclusion of the epyllion, Aristaeus' sacrifice to Orpheus represents an acknowledgement of the superiority of the poet.

To be truly successful, Everyman-Aristaeus must acknowledge his debt to the nobler Orpheus who is the real symbol of civilization, whose descent is the real adventure of the human spirit.¹⁶

Certainly the conclusion of Georgic IV suggests a final reconciliation of the two sides, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that the reconciliation is effected only after the silencing of the poet.

The ultimate conclusion which Lee draws from the Aristaeus epyllion is an identification of Orpheus with Vergil himself.

Thus indirectly does Virgil imply that the Orpheus story is his own, that this is his defense for writing a poem on agriculture - as an artist he is at the heart of all culture, of all civilization.¹⁷

¹⁵"Virgil as Orpheus", p. 17.

¹⁶ "Virgil as Orpheus", p. 18.

¹⁷ "Virgil as Orpheus", p. 18.

I too believe that Vergil intended Orpheus to be a representative of himself and of all poets, but I must take strong exception to Lee's view that Vergil felt the need to offer a defense for the Georgics. Through his agricultural medium Vergil has offered a vital message for his contemporaries, a programme of hope and renewal, surely an achievement not to be deprecated by anyone, let alone the poet himself. With the story of Orpheus, however, and his relationship with Aristaeus, as elsewhere in his poetic corpus, I believe that Vergil is raising a serious question concerning the possibilities of a truly creative life for the artist in the new political regime at Rome.

The relationship of poetry and political life was not a new concern for Vergil, but represents a crucial problem in his earliest work. The Eclogues are much more than escapist verses; in them Vergil presents the challenge of aggression and power to Arcadia, the land of the imagination where man has the freedom to create. In confident, optimistic strains he shows what might develop from a happy union of pastoral, poetry, and history. In more pessimistic moments he exposes life as it will be if the freedom of the imagination is curtailed.

Eclogues I and IX, especially, present the direct confrontation of the two worlds. In Eclogue I, Tityrus, alone, sitting in a shade which may be more menacing than beneficial, enjoys a leisurely freedom which is denied the other poet-shepherds. Meliboeus is forced into exile by a soldier who is both "barbarus" and "impius"; Tityrus enjoys "otium" which is pleasant but artificial, the gift of a beneficent new Roman leader.

These two contradictory aspects of Rome are juxtaposed, and though the fate of Tityrus in comparison to that of Meliboeus appears more favourable, still there is alarming evidence that he too has lost his freedom.

In Eclogue IX, the "otium" enjoyed by Tityrus is unknown as the two shepherds, Moeris and Lycides, journey out of the countryside, their land now in the hands of a new owner. The threat to the landscape and the shepherd's creative existence becomes more explicit as Moeris' creative ability gradually deteriorates until he is no longer able to create new songs or remember old ones. Eclogue IX presents a very pessimistic appraisal of the possibilities for the co-existence of the world of the spirit and that other world dominated by aggression, war, and political expediency.¹⁸

The signature of the poem is an important statement in a number of respects. The opening lines establish very clearly the contrast between the life of the poet and that of the soldier-statesman:

Haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebam
 et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum
 fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis
 per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo. (559-62)

The reference to Octavian is complimentary and features his military expertise as well as his ability to affect peace; it probably looks forward to the celebration of the peace of Caesar in the epic which

¹⁸Putnam, Virgil's Pastoral Art, p. 339 emphasizes: "The loss of Mantua and the loss of poetry only prove again that once politics and war impose on the imagination, all integrity will vanish."

Vergil was planning.

Moreover, the juxtaposition of the agricultural topics of the Georgics and the military campaigns of Caesar duplicates the pattern of the Georgics: through the agricultural-didactic fabric of his poem Vergil has woven a pattern of civilization for Italy.

The final four lines at first glance supply auto-biographical material:

illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
 Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
 carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa,
 Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi. (563-66)

With the allusion to the Eclogues and especially the mention of Tityrus sitting in the shade which, we recall, was created by Octavian, Vergil establishes continuity in his work and links the conclusion of Georgic IV with an important issue of the Eclogues, the relationship of poetry, freedom, and political autocracy. The epilogue opens with an image of the supremacy of Octavian and closes with a view of the poet-shepherd, Tityrus, who is dependent on Octavian for the freedom to create. Again we become aware of the subtlety and independence of Vergil's art as he subtly questions his own poetic future in the new regime.¹⁹

¹⁹After I had completed my analysis of the Aristaeus-Orpheus episode I discovered an article by Anthony Bradley, "Augustan Culture and a Radical Alternative: Vergil's Georgics", Arion VIII (1969), 347-58. Though he draws heavily on modern psychological interpretation in his analysis, Bradley has arrived at a conclusion similar to that which I have offered:

"The effect of the Orpheus myth is to complicate one's response to the civilization that Vergil celebrates for most of the poem. There is little doubt that Vergil 'believes' in the virtues of that civilization, but at the same time he understands and emphasizes the rather grim conditions on which it is established, and entertains (in the Orpheus myth) the

Though I cannot accept the suggestion put forward by Servius that Georgic IV originally concluded with a panegyric of Gallus which Vergil was forced to remove after Gallus disgraced himself in Egypt, there may be a connection between the epyllion and Vergil's friend and fellow poet, Gallus. In presenting the challenge of contemporary political problems to the realm of poetry and art, Vergil may have found inspiration in the career of Gallus.

Gallus is a haunting figure in the Eclogues. In Eclogue VI which is especially concerned with poetics, the spiritual metamorphosis of the poet Gallus is featured in Silenus' song (vv. 64-73). Gallus is drawn by the nymphs from the streams of Permessus (an emblem of his preoccupation with "amor") to the Aonian mountains and the company of Linus and Apollo.

possibility of a culture based on freedom rather than on sublimation." (p. 358).

Yet, in his conclusion Bradley disassociates Vergil completely from the figure of Orpheus:

"This is not to say that Vergil is involved in the Georgics in an overt questioning of the structure of his own society, seeking to replace that structure with a workable social alternative. Indeed, in relating Orpheus to the work culture in the character of a sacrificial victim, the contrary could be more easily alleged: Vergil was justifiably skeptical about that possibility and was concerned only with dramatizing a perennial conflict in which the kind of freedom Orpheus stands for is doomed to a necessary defeat at the hands of a repressive civilization." (p. 358).

I believe that although Vergil was a firm believer in the Augustan settlement as a means of insuring continuity and prosperity for Rome, as a poet he was vitally concerned in preserving a place for art in that new civilization.

Here he is presented with the pipes of Hesiod:

'hos tibi dant calamos (en accipe) Musae,
 Ascraeo quos ante seni, quibus ille solebat
 cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.
 his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo,
 ne quis sit lucus quo se plus iactet Apollo.' (69-74)

The scene is a dramatic representation of a change of poetic interest on Gallus' part: he will forsake elegiac love poetry in favour of an aetiological epyllion celebrating the grove of Gryneum sacred to Apollo.

In Eclogue X, the tribute is still poetic but more personal. The poet Gallus is placed in a rustic Arcadian setting, the landscape of pastoral poetry which he attempts to espouse. As the poem develops, it becomes increasingly obvious that Gallus cannot abandon his elegiac preoccupations for the pastoral ideal. He imagines a rustic life for himself, but his vocabulary betrays a thoroughly elegiac attitude:

atque utinam ex vobis unus vestrique fuissem
 aut custos gregis aut maturae vinitor uvae!
 certe sive mihi Phyllis sive esset Amyntas
 seu quicumque furor (quid tum, si fuscus Amyntas?
 et nigrae violae sunt et vaccinia nigra),
 mecum inter salices lenta sub vite iaceret;
 serta mihi Phyllis legeret, cantaret Amyntas.
 hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,
 hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer aevo. (35-43)

Both "furor" and "consumerer" are incompatible with the innocent loves which characterize the pastoral retreat.

The pastoral ideal is also challenged by another facet of Gallus' life, his martial activities:

nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis
 tela inter media atque adversos detinet hostis. (44-45)

Gallus himself acknowledges the harsh contrast between his pastoral vision and the realities of his life. In the final analysis, however, he cannot abandon "amor" in its double aspect, but instead yields completely to it:

tamquam haec sit nostri medicina furoris,
aut deus ille malis hominum mitescere discat.
iam neque Hamadryades rursus nec carmina nobis
ipsa placent; ipsae rursus concedite silvae. (60-63)

and later:

omnia vincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori.' (69)

This tenth Eclogue, like the first and the ninth, examines the crucial relationship between poetry and progress. With the figure of Gallus Vergil denies the possibility of a union of pastoral and contemporary reality, yet in Eclogue X, Gallus is at least able to continue functioning as a poet. In the Georgics, with the figure of Orpheus, Vergil considers the problem more deeply and in a still more pessimistic vein denies any interaction between poetry and political reality.

The tragic results of Orpheus' journey to the Underworld, his fateful loss of memory, and Eurydice's final return to Hades, were not part of the popular legends of Orpheus and Eurydice and most likely represent innovations on the part of Vergil himself.²⁰ The story of Orpheus and

²⁰C. M. Bowra, in his article, "Orpheus and Eurydice", Classical Quarterly XLVI (1952), 113-26, on the strength of these divergences tries to reconstruct a lost Alexandrian original which he believes was Vergil's principal source for the Aristaeus Orpheus episode. Although I can appreciate the Hellenistic qualities which prompted Bowra to formulate such a conclusion, I am not convinced that these are not the product of Vergil's own imagination. In my opinion Vergil deliberately attempted to write an Alexandrian narrative as a tribute and an expression of concern for his friend and poet, Gallus.

Eurydice highlights romantic love and tragedy, a combination popular with the Alexandrians and of special interest to Gallus. In his own neoteric love elegy, Gallus relied on the prose outlines of tragic love stories compiled by Parthenius. In addition, the choice of the epyllion, a genre especially favoured by the neoterics and Gallus himself, it seems to me that Vergil solidified his poetic tribute. Moreover, with the emphasis on Orpheus as singer, and the ultimate loss of his creative powers, I believe that Vergil was presenting a subtle message of concern for his friend, not, as some would have it, because of Gallus' rash behavior in Egypt and his disfavour in imperial circles, or because of his eventual suicide, but rather on account of his new and potentially dangerous political popularity, on the occasion of Gallus' appointment as governor of Egypt.

While Vergil was composing the Georgics, Gallus' political involvement deepened and with his new role of governor of Egypt, his future as a poet has become more precarious. It is a tribute to Vergil's perspicacity and independence to perceive the same dilemma in the light of political settlement. Behind the figure of Orpheus stands Gallus, fellow poet and friend of Vergil, and the epyllion is intended both as a poetic tribute and a message of concern. Orpheus stands representative of all poets and his tragedy has important implications for Vergil himself and for all poets working in the new regime.

In his analysis of the Georgics,²¹ Colin Hardie advances a novel

²¹The Georgics: a Transitional Poem, The Third Jackson Knight Memorial Lecture (Abingdon-on-Thames, England, 1971), p. 27.

poetical interpretation for the Orpheus Aristaeus epyllion: he interprets the tale as an "allegory of the poet's development and dilemma" concerning his proposed plans for the writing of an epic. With the figure of Aristaeus Hardie suggests that Vergil intends not a shepherd but a poet and the loss of his bees signals the absence of the necessary poetic inspiration. The plea to Cyrene for the restoration of his bees represents Aristaeus' desire to become an Orpheus, a powerful poet capable of moving all of nature with the magic of his song. Yet Orpheus himself must ultimately accept failure--he cannot restore his beloved Eurydice: similarly, though the bougonia ritual is successful, the conclusion of the Georgics in Hardie's view is not optimistic:

No clear message emerges at the end of the Georgics:
rather despondency in the face of hopeless dilemma;
between either timeless Greek mythology or contemporary
Roman history.²²

Vergil has not yet found the necessary inspiration for the writing of the Aeneid, and only after the completion of the Georgics and three more years of study will he find a solution to the dilemma.

Though I can appreciate Hardie's search for continuity of themes in the Vergilian corpus, I find such an allegorical interpretation of the conclusion of book IV otiose and incompatible with the movement of the poem as a whole. There is nothing in the Aristaeus-Orpheus epyllion that approximates self-conscious reflection by the poet on his future poetic endeavours, moreover, over two hundred verses on the personal problems

²²Hardie, The Georgics, p. 29.

of the poet seems to me to be excessive, particularly when Vergil has elsewhere shown special concern for poetic economy. Moreover, Hardie's interpretation makes the epyllion totally irrelevant to the poem as a whole, and reduces the Georgics to little more than a poetic exercise in preparation for the epic chef d' oeuvre. Throughout the Georgics Vergil has used the agricultural-didactic fabric of the poem as a means of expressing his views of civilization. Aristaeus as an "agricola" is very much a part of that vision and his story brings the poem to a successful close. Orpheus, on the other hand, as poet par excellence is distinguished from the practical Aristaeus, but his experience, no less than the bougonia ritual, is intended to impart a vital message to Vergil's contemporaries.

With the contrast between Aristaeus and Orpheus, moreover, Vergil initiates a study of duty and success which he will pursue more fully in the Aeneid. Aristaeus succeeds because he is able to control his impulses and adhere to a programme imposed on him from without. By the same token, Orpheus fails because of his inability to do just that. In the Aeneid, Vergil presents his hero in a process of development, as he gradually learns to sacrifice his own interests and aspirations in the fulfilment of an objective imposed on him by the gods. Just as Orpheus appears more human and attractive than Aristaeus, so also Aeneas, in the opinion of many, appears more likeable and convincing on those occasions when he fails to meet his obligations. In fact, some believe that Turnus and Dido are more effective and intriguing personalities than Aeneas.

It seems to be a special Vergilian gift to explore the complexities of the human psyche and to show special understanding and sympathy toward those who cannot conform and who must ultimately fail in their endeavours.

CONCLUSION

Having examined these various sections in the third Georgic, and the aspects of resolution offered in book four, we must now assess the insights into Vergilian scholarship which this study has yielded. The period during which Vergil was composing the Georgics was desperately in need of renewal, though not the kind of agrarian renewal, the return to the simple farming of early Republican days, which is often thought to be the message of Vergil's poem on agriculture. The agricultural treatise written by Cato, the De Agri Cultura, in the middle of the second century shows clear evidence of the shift to large-scale, industrialized farming which was already in full swing; the appearance of the De Re Rustica by Varro, a little more than a century later, confirms the success of the agricultural revolution, and establishes very definitely the demise of the self-sufficient, independent rustic. Yet because the Georgics is ostensibly concerned with farming on a small scale, we must not conclude that the Augustan poet in contrast to his predecessors was out of step with his time; on the contrary Vergil is vitally attuned to the needs of his age, and within the agricultural framework of the Georgics he offers a programme of reconstruction for his contemporaries.

The close comparison of the discussion of animal husbandry provided by Vergil in the third Georgic and the thorough treatment of the subject in the second book of the De Re Rustica by Varro provides undeniable evidence of Vergil's poetic ability. Vergil is capable of transforming the most

technical and uninspiring factual material into a lively and readable expose worthy of his hexameter verse. The palm for technical merit, however, must go to Varro, for Vergil was not interested in providing a complete and exhaustive study of the keeping of livestock; though he relies almost exclusively on Varro for his technical material, he chooses that material very selectively and purposefully.

Yet from the synoptic study of Varro and Vergil we gain more than evidence of Vergil's gift for poetry; we become aware of a basic tension between the sophisticated, artistic qualities in the third Georgic and the non-inspiring aspects of his subject matter. From this tension there emerges a realization of the broader design of the third Georgic. Vergil is not offering a poetic manual on the care of livestock, but a philosophic statement about man and the world, especially the Roman world. In Georgics I and II he presented a pattern of civilization, a vision of a life lived in close harmony with the subtle rhythm of Nature. In book III, as he leaves behind the inanimate vegetable world, and turns his attention to animate representatives of Nature, he is interested not only in cattle, horses, sheep and goats, but in men, his fellow Romans and their place in civilization.

The philosophic direction of the third Georgic is substantiated by numerous echoes from the De Rerum Natura of Lucretius. In the two climactic sections of the third Georgic, the discussion of "amor" (vv. 242-83), and the powerful description of plague with which Georgic III concludes, Vergil draws most heavily on the discussion of these same subjects by Lucretius. The poet of the De Rerum Natura was vitally

concerned with the problems of his contemporaries and offers his message of the Epicurean philosophy as a remedy for the ills of contemporary society. Though Vergil never directly abandons his preoccupations with animals in Georgic III, he clearly intends his reflections on passion and death to sound vital concern for the fate of man. "Amor omnibus idem", he declares, and in the impressive presentation of bestial fury he exposes the urgent need for order and control in both the political and moral spheres. The orderly, sexless life of the bees which forms the sequel to Vergil's discussion of passion by contrast points to the value and productivity which life acquires in the absence of these destructive forces. In the conclusion of the third Georgic, the dramatic and unrelieved presentation of death sounds a note of warning and foreboding for the future of Rome and all of Italy.

From our study of Lucretian influence in the third Georgic we also gain a new appreciation of the relationship between Lucretius and Vergil. The problem of the philosophic and literary relationship between the two poets has through the years received considerable attention; the solutions to the problem fall into two categories: some scholars maintain that Vergil remained a convinced Epicurean throughout the period when he was composing the Georgics, and they insist that every echo of the De Rerum Natura represents an acknowledgement of his faith in that philosophy and his debt to Lucretius; on the other hand, other scholars insist that Vergil had by this time abandoned the inclination toward Epicureanism which had occupied him in his youth, and that he deliberately incorporated reminiscences of the De Rerum Natura in order to effectively dismiss the tenets of the Epicurean philosophic system. It seems to me that neither

judgment is valid for the Lucretian echoes which we find in the third book of the Georgics. Vergil obviously admired the work of Lucretius and appreciated the manner in which he had incorporated difficult technical material into poetic verse. The didactic approach adopted by Lucretius was a direct inspiration for Vergil in the presentation of his own poetic message. Yet in the third Georgic, Epicureanism, its acceptance or its rejection, is not the issue. Vergil is not offering a polemic of the Lucretian view, but has significantly qualified the philosophic direction of the De Rerum Natura: he has recognized as Lucretius did that men, especially in times of great stress, private and public, need someone or something to believe in. In place of Lucretius' faith in an abstract philosophical system, and his idealization of a Greek philosopher who had long since died, Vergil substitutes belief in a living ruler, an active statesman who would bring peace and settlement to the Roman world. In Georgic III he exposes that need most emphatically, and though the book concludes pessimistically with an image of death and destruction which expresses Vergil's fears for the present and future of Rome, the dark vision is only temporary; the pessimism is resolved in the miraculous conclusion of the fourth book, the generation of the bees from the putrefying flesh of the dead ox, a symbol of political hope in the new regime of Octavian.

Modern commentators are gradually coming to appreciate a broader philosophic design in the poem as a whole, and for the most part have abandoned the limited view of the Georgics as an agricultural treatise;

they have also appreciated the contemporary political direction in the opening statement of Georgic I where Vergil hails Octavian as a new 'god' for the Roman state, and likewise in the conclusion of the first book where Vergil very directly acknowledges Octavian as the only hope in the midst of political chaos and war. Similarly, the importance of the beehive as an organizational model for Roman society has been appreciated. Yet for the most part the third Georgic has remained the neglected work in the series; the vital, contemporary, political direction which Vergil has incorporated in his discussion of animal husbandry has hitherto been unappreciated, and the significance of Vergil's transition to the animate world, except in the case of the bees, has largely been ignored.

We have noticed that in the Eclogues Vergil is vitally concerned with the place of the individual, especially the creative individual, in a society which is being rent by the forces of civil conflict, and the encroachment of the insensitive, non-creative instruments of Roman aggression. In the Georgics Vergil's social conscience is even better developed. He is concerned not only with poets and their freedom to create, but with all men and the basic need to live in a society free of civil strife and political intrigue, where personal and public security are not constantly being threatened. In the Georgics, and especially in book III where he first turns his attention to animate representatives of the Italian landscape, Vergil's agricultural material becomes metaphor, a vehicle for the poet's reflections on the moral and political problems of contemporary Rome and Italy. Powerful and effective symbols are introduced in Georgic III with the figures of the "taurus", the "equus", and the "agricola",

though he has a somewhat subordinate role in the actual structure of Georgic III.

Throughout Georgics I and II the "taurus" is presented as an integral feature of the Italian rustic scene, the partner of man in his agricultural labour. In Georgic III, with the discussion of controlled breeding and the training of the young calf for his agricultural labour, efforts designed to insure the continuity of the rustic life, Vergil emphasizes the importance of this creature in his vision of civilization. In the concluding description of plague, as death comes to one of the oxen, significantly, in the middle of his ploughing task, the successful performance of the agricultural routine is terminated: the plough is abandoned in the middle of the field, and both the farmer and the ox are overcome with grief and cease to function in their usual manner. The death of the plough-ox offers a moving representation of the disruption of agricultural harmony and the philosophical reflection on the value of a good life, a rare editorial intrusion by Vergil, makes the disruption appear more reprehensible.

Only once, in the battle of the bulls (vv. 209-41), does Vergil admit a less than exemplary association for the "taurus". Like all animate creatures, the bull is capable of experiencing destructive, passionate impulses; the representation of the battling bulls provides a very effective illustration of Vergil's judgment, "amor omnibus idem", but in no way detracts from the principal role of the "taurus" as a symbol of the basic rustic origins of Italy. We have seen that there is considerable evidence to suggest that Vergil intends the battle of the bulls as a

representation of civil strife, rather than conflict rooted in sexual desire; in this light, the battling beasts present a powerful and impressive illustration of the effects of civil strife on the non-military segments of society. Once docile, industrious creatures turn on each other in violent conflict as the infectious fury of civil strife spreads. Surely Vergil intends the passage to have very pointed political implications. Even the rustic world cannot maintain its equilibrium in the tumultuous conditions of the present.

While the "taurus" throughout the Georgics remains a basically positive symbol intrinsically connected to Italian agriculture, the "equus" from the beginning acquires negative associations. At the conclusion to Georgic I, where Vergil exposes the political corruption and chaos in the Italian land, he chooses equine symbolism to convey that image most forcefully:

saevit toto Mars impius orbe,
 ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
 addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
 fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas. (511-14)

In Georgic III the horse has a prominent role, a rather curious development in a discussion of agriculture since the horse in ancient times had no real agricultural function. It was only many centuries later that the horse-collar was developed which enabled the farmer to hitch the horse to a plough and perform the task as our ancestors did. Obviously the prominence assigned to the "equus" in Georgic III signals the poet's intention to impart an important message with the figure of the "equus". The race course and the battlefield are marked as the special preoccupations of the horse, and as the discussion of book III develops, the battlefield gradually

acquires priority. At the same time we notice a number of increasingly sinister associations attached to the horse; he is constantly compared with destructive forces, especially the wind, and Vergil lends a suspicious and ominous note to his powerful potential. The horse moves in a non-agricultural realm, and emerges in Georgic III as a symbol of aggression and violence. The final qualification of his role emerges in the conclusion of the third Georgic, in the plague sequence where death comes to the powerful creature in a most horrifying manner. All the power and strength at his disposal are turned against himself in a suicidal act of violence. He tears at his own flesh and vital organs, just as Rome through civil conflict was tearing herself apart and threatening to destroy Italian greatness.

The death of the "taurus" and the "equus" together signal the conclusion of vital aspects of Italian national life. It is significant, however, that the "equus" does not appear again in the poem, but from the putrefying carcass of the "taurus" in Georgic IV emerges a swarm of healthy bees, a symbol of new political hope. Obviously Vergil puts his faith in the strong moral fibre of rustic society which had sustained Italy through the years and aided in her rise to imperial greatness.

In Georgic III and elsewhere in the poem, Vergil emphasizes hard personal labour, and with attention to solitary figures like the old Corycian gardener celebrates a style of farming which had all but disappeared from most of the Italian peninsula. The "colonus", the independent farmer who owned a small plot of land and cultivated exclusively for his own use, is a prominent feature in Vergil's treatise

and nowhere else. Yet we cannot conclude that Vergil was deliberately offering an anachronistic vision, or hoping to inspire a return to farming on this small and inglorious scale. Even in the Eclogues he appears fully cognizant of the changing agricultural patterns in Italy and had learned from bitter personal experience that the interests of the individual invariably were regarded as secondary to those of government and organized investors. Moreover Vergil was far too conscious of fratricidal conflict and the number of Roman lives that had been sacrificed to suggest a militant return of confiscated properties.

Rather, the "agricola" in Vergil's poetic scheme is an apolitical individual caught in the turmoil of civil strife and political corruption. In the third Georgic, where domestic animals are the centre of Vergil's scheme, he only comes into prominence occasionally, but his presence is always felt on the periphery. When Vergil begins his discussion of the technical considerations of animal husbandry, he addresses his remarks to an unnamed farmer:

Seu quis Olympiacae miratus praemia palmae
pascit equos, seu quis fortis ad aratra iuencos, (49-50).

Throughout book three he remains that anonymous figure who must perform the variety of tasks which Vergil recommends for the care of domestic animals. Though men are implicated in the Vergilian condemnation of "caecus amor", the farmer is not directly involved; even in the plague sequence he can only stand by helplessly as his animals die; with the death of the plough-ox, a climactic point in Vergil's presentation of the plague, we are allowed a brief glimpse of the farmer experiencing grief for the loss of his partner in labour. Finally, as the contagion spreads, he too becomes

a victim and must yield to death as his animals have done. The farmer in Vergil's scheme is a symbol of every man experiencing the joys and the tribulations of life. In Georgic III, a more pessimistic book, the joys are few, but then sorrows and death are part of everyone's life.

Although Vergil was deeply conscious of the suffering and tragedy in the lives of men, he was not a confirmed pessimist, and together with many of his contemporaries he was beginning to appreciate the new climate of hope and renewal which the victories of Octavian were generating. With the leadership of this young and accomplished statesman and soldier, Vergil again began to envision a glorious future for Rome and all of Italy. This current of optimism is given particular expression in the tale of Aristaeus with which book four of the Georgics concludes. As the tale begins, the position of Aristaeus is very similar to that of the unnamed farmer of Georgic III. In spite of his divine parentage, he is living a life on earth which is fraught with toil, difficulty and failure. He has encountered Death but is determined to overcome his losses and to turn failure into success.

With the figure of Aristaeus, Vergil has added a new dimension to the figure of Everyman-Farmer, an impulsive sexual nature which establishes him even more strongly as a symbol of every man. As the result of his amorous pursuit of Eurydice, he has precipitated her death, and ultimately the death of Orpheus, and as punishment has lost his bees. Yet Vergil is not content to make this the lesson of the Aristaeus narrative. In an optimistic vision he affirms the possibility of transforming a sinful past into a bright future. Aristaeus is able to regenerate his lost hive ...

and the miraculous ascent of the bees from the carcass of the steer symbolizes a private triumph as well as an expression of new political hope. The connection of Aristaeus with the condemnation of "caecus amor" in the third Georgic and his special link with the "tristis arator" of the plague sequence in book III are important aspects of Vergil's vision of resolution in Georgic IV which have not been appreciated by commentators. Moreover with the figure of Aristaeus Vergil has developed the symbolism of the "agricola" who appears throughout the poem. The striking disparity between the prominence of the "colonus" in the Vergilian scheme, and the glaring reality of the pattern of land utilization in the late Republic, which denied the existence of this class of land holder in any significant number, has been resolved.

Although Vergil has revealed a deeper social commitment in the Georgics with his attention to the plight of the common man in Italy, he has not forgotten the creative man, the poet, who occupies a unique position in society and who has special needs. In the epyllion, with the figure of Orpheus, Vergil has again raised serious questions concerning the ability of the poet to function in contemporary Roman society. In the Eclogues Vergil ultimately offered a very pessimistic judgment concerning the possibilities of successful interaction between the political sphere and the poetic world of the imagination. The Eclogues, of course, were written in a very dark period following the murder of Julius Caesar and the violent repercussions which followed. Yet in the narrative of Aristaeus and Orpheus, written in the light of political settlement and the

emergence of Octavian as the new hope of the Roman world, Vergil raises the same crucial question concerning the future of the poet in the new regime. In the epyllion of book IV Orpheus is in a sense the victim of the practical, aggressive Aristaeus; a kind of reconciliation is effected as Aristaeus offers gifts to Orpheus in Hades. At the same time, however, we cannot forget that such a reconciliation has occurred only after the poet has been silenced. There is no real resolution of the problem raised with the figure of Orpheus, yet the fact that Vergil has dared to question his own position and that of all poets in the new regime is a significant testimony to his independence, and offers an effective rebuttal to those who consider Vergil little more than a court puppet. The aspect of continuity in the Vergilian corpus does not receive much attention from the majority of critics, but it can provide vital insights into the broader design of the Georgics.

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