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MAN AND BEAST IN LUCRETIUS AND THE *GEORGICS*

The overwhelming importance of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* for the interpretation of the *Georgics* is recognized by almost all critics. As W. Y. Sellar expressed it over a hundred years ago, 'the influence, direct and indirect, exercised by Lucretius on the thought, composition and even the diction of the *Georgics* was perhaps stronger than that ever exercised, before or since, by one poet on the work of another'.[1] Richard Thomas' recent commentary attempts to play down the extent of this influence, contending that 'the debt of Virgil to Lucretius in the *Georgics* is predominantly formal', and manifests itself chiefly on a verbal level, whereby the poet seeks 'to create a didactic appearance for his poem'.[2] The aim of this paper is to reassert the pervasive importance of Lucretian ideas, as well as Lucretian language, throughout the poem, and particularly in Virgil's presentation of the physical and metaphysical relationships between man and beast.

Reminiscences of the *DRN* seem particularly concentrated in *Georgics* 3, in which Virgil deals with the breeding and care of animals large and small. This is true on both a verbal and a structural level. Even Thomas has to admit that the Noric cattle plague is closely based on Lucretius' account of the plague at Athens, and that the echoes are thematically important.[3] As we shall see, the section dealing with the effects of *amor* is also pervaded by Lucretian language, and further verbal reminiscences are scattered throughout the book. As far as the structure of the book is concerned, there are clear (through not exact) correspondences with the structure of the *DRN*. *Georgics* 3 falls into two halves, each beginning with a programmatic section (1–48 and 284–94) and building up to a climax in the treatments of *amor* (209–83) and the plague (478–566) respectively. Similarly, each half of the *DRN* begins with a programmatic proem (1.1–145; 4.1–25) instead of (or as well as) the usual eulogy of Epicurus;[4] the diatribe against romantic love occupies a relatively central position at the end of book 4; and

[1] W. Y. Sellar, *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil* (Oxford, 1883), p. 199.

[2] R. F. Thomas, *Virgil: Georgics* (Cambridge, 1988), i.4. Mynors' recently-published commentary (R. A. B. Mynors, *Virgil: Georgics* (Oxford, 1990)) also limits itself to pointing out specific Lucretian echoes, without exploring Virgil's engagement with the *DRN* as a whole. Mynors would presumably have addressed the matter of Lucretian influence in his introduction, had he lived to complete it.

[3] Ibid., ii.130f.

[4] Virgil's two proems also contain verbal and thematic echoes of the Lucretian passages. His claim to be the first to have brought down the Muses from the Aonian mount to Italy (3.8ff.) is modelled on Lucretius' praises of Ennius and Epicurus (cf. 'primus ... deducam Musas' with 'primus ... detulit coronam' (*DRN* 1.117f.); 'me ... tollere humo' with 'tollere contra ... oculos' (*DRN* 1.66f.); 'victorque', 'primus ... referam tibi' with 'primus', 'refert nobis victor' (*DRN* 1.71, 75); and see further P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 48–51). The invocation of a goddess and the encomiastic element are also, of course, present in Lucretius' first proem, and the proud boast of 19f. (where the metaphor of the Italian games is used to suggest that Virgil intends to surpass his Greek models) is perhaps not unrelated to Lucretius' emphasis on Epicurus' Greek nationality (1.66) and his reflexions on the poverty of the Latin language (1.136–45). It may also be relevant that Virgil discusses Octavian's Trojan ancestry (34–6), which included Lucretius' 'Aeneadum genetrix', although she is not explicitly mentioned by Virgil. Correspondences between Virgil's second proem and Lucretius 4.1–25 are discussed below.

of course Virgil's conclusion has its counterpart in the Athenian plague at the end of the sixth book of the *DRN*. This structural parallel perhaps suggests that we are to read *Georgics* 3 as a response to the *DRN* as a whole, and particularly to the themes of sex and death which are (quite literally) so central to Lucretius' argument.

I want to suggest that one aspect of this engagement with Lucretian ideas in book 3 is Virgil's highly anthropomorphic treatment of animals, which is widely remarked upon by critics, and well brought out by Thomas in his commentary on the book. There is little agreement amongst Virgilian scholars as to the implications of this anthropomorphism: for Putnam, Miles and Thomas, Virgil's intention was to comment on the human condition in 'metaphoric guise', and the theme of the book is either the clash between 'imagination's passion for immortality and time's claim over [man's] mortal remains';[5] or the necessity for restraint and self-control in maintaining the balance of creative and destructive forces in human character and the natural world;[6] or the applicability to man of 'the sufferings and hardships, and ultimately the failure of the animal world'.[7] For Wilkinson and Liebeschuetz, the anthropomorphism stems from a feeling of kinship between man and beast, and the belief that they have much in common, perhaps betraying leanings towards pantheism.[8] There may be some truth in all these assertions; but I believe that a more balanced interpretation can be established by comparing Virgil's treatment with the relationship between animal and man as depicted in the *DRN*.

Lucretius often uses animal behaviour to illustrate physical and biological processes: the random movement of grazing sheep, imperceptible from a distance, illustrates atomic motion; the suckling of a new-born lamb exemplifies the cycle of growth and decay, whereby nature 're-uses' material derived from dead matter to create new life; a cow's ability to identify her own calf is an example of the diversity of living things, which is in turn based upon the diversity of atomic shapes.[9] At the human level, the behaviour of animals is often analogous to that of human beings: animals exemplify the operation of free will; the working of the senses; the way we dream about our daily activities; the fact that the female as well as the male derives pleasure from sexual intercourse.[10] Conversely, the way human beings react to various kinds of effluences helps to explain the effect of 'Averna loca' on animals.[11] Even more significantly, when Lucretius is explaining that an individual's character is based on the relative prominence of particular types of atoms in the composition of his soul, he again uses animal illustrations (the lion's fierceness, the deer's timidity, the cow's placid nature), and concludes 'sic hominum genus est'. Likewise, in book 5, there is constant reference to the analogy between animals and early man, who lived 'more ferarum'.[12] This similarity is fundamental to the entire reconstruction of primitive life: man in his 'natural state' is like any other animal, and hence the character of his life before the advent of social and technological 'progress' can be inferred from the behaviour of animals.[13] This principle of reconstruction is

[5] M. C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth: Studies in the Georgics* (Princeton, 1979), p. 177.

[6] G. B. Miles, '*Georgics* 3.209–294: *Amor* and Civilization', *CSCA* 8 (1975), 177–97.

[7] Thomas, op. cit., ii.49.

[8] L. P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 128f.; W. Liebeschuetz, 'Beast and Man in the Third Book of Virgil's *Georgics*', *G&R* 12 (1965), 68–72.

[9] 2.317–22; 1.259–61; 2.352–66.

[10] 2.263–5; 4.547f., 638–41, 678–83, 710–21; 4.984–1010; 4.1197–1207.

[11] 6.738–829. [12] 5.932.

[13] Cf. A. Schiesaro, *Simulacrum et Imago: Gli Argomenti Analogici nel De Rerum Natura* (Pisa, 1990), pp. 122–33.

particularly explicit in the passage which discusses the origins of speech (5.1028–90), where man's earliest attempts at expressing his feelings are compared to the varying cries of animals under different circumstances.

Several reasons can be advanced for this use of animal imagery. Animal similes are traditional in epic, and it can be argued that Lucretius regarded himself as an epic poet, as much a successor to Homer and Ennius (both of whom are mentioned with admiration in the proem) as to Empedocles and Epicurus himself.[14] Though his subject matter is obviously very different, he adapts themes and poetic techniques derived from epic to his description of the *rerum natura*. Thus, although his poem does not describe the exploits of epic heroes, he transfers the animal imagery of mythological epic to the atoms and to human beings in general. Animal imagery is also appropriate from a philosophical point of view, since men and beasts are regarded as fundamentally related, having a similar atomic composition. Both man and animal are subject to birth and death and follow the dictates of *voluptas*. Other animals have free will and undergo sense perceptions in exactly the same way as man; when Lucretius says that human temperaments are like the temperaments of animals, the comparison functions both as a poetic simile and as a 'scientific' argument from analogy, in view of the fact that the atomic make-up of the soul is the determining factor in both cases. This is in fact the case with most Lucretian similes: the comparison often rests not only on an apparent resemblance, but on an actual physical similarity between the objects or processes compared.[15] Thus, to take the example of the famous simile in book 1 which compares the action of the wind to that of a swollen river, both phenomena are in fact examples of the same process, namely the collision of one material element with another; the difference is simply that the 'body' of the water is visible, whereas that of the wind is not. Similarly, the frequent comparisons between man and animal reflect the belief that both are subject to exactly the same physiological processes, and are essentially similar in nature. This is forcefully expressed in the way that not only man and animals, but also plants and the constituent parts of the cosmos are frequently listed together as products of the universal interaction of atoms and void: thus, at 1.820f., we are told '...eadem caelum mare terras flumina solem | constituunt, eadem fruges arbusta animantis'.[16] Similarly, in using the memorable image of the *hieros gamos* of Earth and Sky to illustrate the constant interchange of atoms between one body and another,[17] Lucretius tells us that crops, trees, animals and man are all (metaphorically speaking) children of the Earth.

Thus, Lucretius' use of animal imagery and depiction of the relationship between man and animal is primarily 'scientific' in its motivation, although of course it also has poetic value, enabling the poet to present philosophical arguments in a lively and attractive manner, and in particular to invite the reader to visualize invisible processes such as the movement of atoms. This is typical of Lucretius' use of imagery in general,

[14] See C. Murley, 'Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* Viewed as Epic', *TAPA* 78 (1947), 336–46; Hardie, op. cit., pp. 193–219; R. Mayer, 'The Epic of Lucretius', *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 6 (1990), 35–43.

[15] The Lucretian simile has been well analysed by various authors: see especially G. Townend, 'Imagery in Lucretius', in D. R. Dudley (ed.), *Lucretius* (London, 1965), pp. 95–114; D. West, *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), pp. 74–8 and 'Virgilian Multiple-Correspondence Similes and their Antecedents', *Philologus* 114 (1970), 262–75; E. Pasoli, 'Ideologia nella Poesia: lo Stile di Lucrezio', *Lingua e Stile* 5 (1970), 367–86; A. Leen, 'The Rhetorical Value of the Similes in Lucretius', in D. F. Bright and E. S. Ramage (eds.), *Classical Texts and their Traditions: Studies in Honour of C. R. Trahman* (Chico, California, 1984), pp. 107–23; Hardie, op. cit., pp. 219–23; Schiesaro, op. cit.

[16] Cf. 1.744, 808; 2.1016 etc.

[17] 2.991–8.

which has been characterized by one critic as 'relentlessly didactic'.[18] As David West has shown, Lucretius was a pioneer of what he calls 'the Virgilian multiple-correspondence simile',[19] in which every detail of the simile is related in some way to its object. But Virgil's similes are very different in their effect, even in the *Georgics*.[20] The link between the two things being compared is emotive and symbolic rather than didactic. Pöschl's remarks on the similes in the *Aeneid* can also be applied to the *Georgics*: 'the emotional content dominates the perceptible content, and the symbolic content dominates the concrete.'[21] As we shall see, Virgil's characterization of the relationship between man and beast also owes much to Lucretius, but at the same time, its function within the *Georgics* is very different.

The similarity between animals and man is established in *Georgics* 3 by means of anthropomorphizing vocabulary,[22] which is at the same time highly emotive. The anthropomorphic treatment is introduced almost immediately after the proem to the book, with the discussion of the selection of animals for breeding. The relationships between the animals are expressed in human terms: 'matrum' (51), 'Lucinam iustosque ... hymenaeos' (60), 'laeta iuventas' (63). Paradoxically, it is an ugly and 'masculine' cow which should preferably be 'given in marriage', but this contrast only reinforces the anthropomorphic treatment. The mention of 'iuventas' (a word which is elsewhere used almost exclusively of human beings and gods) leads the poet on to reflect (66–9) on the brevity of youth for 'miseri mortales' in general. Like Lucretius, Virgil emphasizes the subjection of both man and beast to universal laws, but the tone of the lines (unlike comparable passages in the *DRN*) is very emotive: youth is 'optimus', old age and sickness are 'tristes', living beings are 'miseri', and death is 'durus'. The effect is to evoke sympathy for these fellow creatures who share in the tragedy of human existence.

The stallion described in the next section is still more vividly personified. The emphasis is as much on the horse's feelings as on its appearance: it should be bold and daring ('temptare', 'audet', 77f.), not easily frightened ('nec horret', 79), spirited ('animosum', 81), ambitious (102), fond of praise (112), fiery and keen ('calidum ... acrem', 119). The anthropomorphizing words 'senior' (97) and 'iuvenis' (118) are again used, and the horse's possible lineage is described in terms appropriate to that of a human hero in 121f.[23] In the description of the chariot race, the emotions of horses and drivers seem to merge: initially the horses' eagerness is emphasized, then the 'spes iuvenum'.[24] 'Amor laudum' and 'victoria curae' in 112 seem to apply to both. Although the description of the race is based primarily on Homer,[25] there are also echoes of *DRN* 2.263–5, where Lucretius uses the horse's eagerness to leave the starting-gate to exemplify free will.[26] Virgil takes over the emphasis on the horse's eagerness from his model, but uses it to establish an emotive bond between man and horse, where, for Lucretius, the link was purely physiological. The stress Virgil lays on the horse's feelings here looks forward to its central rôle in the section on *amor*,

[18] Leen, op. cit., p. 117.

[19] D. West, art. cit. (n. 15 above).

[20] Cf. Leen, op. cit., pp. 115–17.

[21] V. Pöschl, *The Art of Virgil. Image and Symbol in the Aeneid* (trans. G. Seligson, Ann Arbor, 1970), p. 92 (quoted by Leen, loc. cit.).

[22] For examples of the anthropomorphic treatment of animals in other books, see 1.181f., 186, 410ff.; 2.209f.; 4.511–15 and *passim*.

[23] Cf. Thomas, op. cit., *ad loc.*

[24] This presumably refers to the drivers, although, as Thomas notes, the phrase is momentarily ambiguous in a context where the age of the horse is under discussion.

[25] Cf. *Il.* 23.362–72.

[26] The allusion is clearly signalled by the Lucretian phrase 'nonne vides', which introduces both descriptions.

as well as the description of the horse dying of the plague.[27] The emotions associated with 'amor laudum' are the first step towards the *furor* associated with sexual *amor*.

After marriage comes the birth and upbringing of children, and, sure enough, the care of young cattle is described in terms very much appropriate to the education of a human child. *Hortari* and *formare* are used in this sense by Cicero and Quintilian, amongst others,[28] and, as Thomas notes, 'the suggestion of a human context [in 165] is obvious'. The reference to freedom and slavery in 167f. becomes somewhat sinister in the context, although the metaphor is an obvious one, simply reversing the common image of the 'yoke of slavery'.

Thus in the first section of book 3, leading up to the climactic treatment of *amor*, Virgil establishes links between man and beast by describing the emotions and relationships of animals in human terms. The boundary between man and beast is also blurred by references to metamorphosis in 92–4, where Saturn transforms himself into a horse, and 152f., where the poet refers to Juno's persecution of Io.[29] It is noteworthy that both these incidents occur in the context of a love-affair, for, as I shall go on to argue, the similarity between beast and man becomes most pronounced in the contexts of sex and death, of *amor* and the plague. Likewise, in the build-up to the plague towards the end of the book, Virgil describes the Scythian herdsmen in terms which hint at their bestial character. They live in underground caves (376f.), burn whole tree-trunks (in a manner reminiscent of the monstrous Cyclops[30]), are 'unbridled' ('effrena', 382) and clothe themselves in shaggy animal skins (383). In thematic terms, this digression forms part of the transition from the idyllic and ordered pastoral scenes of 322–38 to the horror and chaos of the plague. Not only is there a progression from the temperate climate of an Italian summer through extremes of destructive heat (the Libyans, 339–48) to deathly cold (the Scythians, 349–83), and also from the orderly succession of the seasons to the undifferentiated life of the Libyan and Scythian herdsmen, but the description of the animal-like Scythians also helps to prepare for the plague, in the face of which the boundary between man and animal is erased.

Before discussing the sections on the effects of *amor* and the plague in more detail, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the two metamorphoses mentioned above are both immediately preceded by echoes of Lucretius' anti-mythological polemic. Just before describing the metamorphosed Saturn, Virgil mentions the horses of Pollux and Achilles, 'quorum Grai meminere poetae'. This recalls a Lucretian distancing formula, used with minor variations in 2.600 (where the poet rejects allegorical interpretation in the manner of the Stoics), 5.405 (where he repudiates the myth of Phaethon) and 6.754 (where he pours scorn on the story of Athena's hatred of the crow). Virgil's description of the gadfly incorporates the phrase 'asper, acerba sonans' (149), echoing Lucretius' 'asper, acerba tuens' (5.33), which is used of the serpent guarding the apples of the Hesperides, in a context where the poet is belittling the achievements of Hercules by contrast with those of Epicurus. These allusions suggest that Virgil is taking issue with Lucretius' anti-mythological stance, a recurrent feature of which is the denial of metamorphosis and of the existence of composite creatures like centaurs.[31] For Virgil, the transformation of man into a beast is not only possible (at least on a symbolic level) but all too easy, especially when *amor* is involved.

[27] Cf. Miles, op. cit., pp. 180f.
[28] Cic. *De Or.* 1.234, *Brut.* 142; Quint. *Inst.* 1. pr. 5, 10.1.59, 10.3.23.
[29] Cf. Thomas, op. cit., *ad loc.*
[30] Cf. *Od.* 9.233f., 319–24.
[31] E.g. 2.701–9, 4.732–48, 5.878ff.

Lucretius' views on *amor* are elaborated in the long finale to book 4. On the one hand, he relegates it to the level of a crudely physiological process, with a pun on *amor* and *umor*, the semen which is at the root of the whole problem (4.1037–72). On the other, the poet employs a whole range of terms derived from amatory epigram to bring out the pernicious effects of succumbing to *amor*, which is depicted as a fire, a wound, a madness.[32] Nevertheless, he claims that if one is careful, the pitfalls of love are relatively easy to avoid: one can get rid of the troublesome *umor* through promiscuous relations (1063–72), and even if one does become ensnared, it is still possible to escape by confronting the beloved's imperfect nature realistically, though this is more difficult than avoiding *amor* altogether (1141–52).

Virgil transfers these symptoms to the animal kingdom, adopting the Lucretian association of love with fire, warfare and madness. Echoes of *DRN* 4 are particularly concentrated at the beginning and end of Virgil's account. As Philip Hardie has shown,[33] the etymological play on 'hippomanes'/'furor equarum' recalls Lucretius' pun on 'amor'/'umor'; while lines 209–18 are full of Lucretian vocabulary: 'caeci stimulos amoris', 'carpit viris', 'uritque videndo', 'dulcibus inlecebris' all echo phrases from the end of *DRN* 4.[34] The main body of the passage is dominated, however, by echoes from a different part of the *DRN*, the proem to book 1, where Lucretius hymns Venus' power to perpetuate animal species by means of sexual attraction. Here, in the context of animal reproduction, Venus' power is portrayed in a positive light: by means of her charm ('lepos') and power ('vis') she strikes love in to the hearts of all creatures and brings it about that they eagerly perpetuate their species, 'cupide generatim saecla propagent' (*DRN* 1.10–20). All is light, peace and joy: sex in the animal kingdom is natural and untroubled, and productive of *voluptas* – it is only in the context of human *amor* that Venus becomes a cruel tyrant. But Virgil problematizes this view of *amor* by conflating imitation of the two passages. After humanizing the animals by transferring to them the terms in which Lucretius had described the human lover, Virgil goes back to Lucretius' proem, laying emphasis on the barriers which the farmer must place in the animals' way (212–14), but which the power of *amor* will enable them to overcome (252–4, 269–70). Lucretius speaks of the wild beasts swimming swift-flowing streams and following Venus wherever she goes (*DRN* 1.14–16): this is specifically echoed in 253f. and 269f.[35]

> non scopuli rupesque cavae atque obiecta retardant
> *flumina correptosque* unda torquentia *montis*.
>
> illas *ducit amor* trans Gargara transque sonantem
> Ascanium; *superant montis et flumina tranant*. (*G.* 3.253–4, 269–70)

[32] Cf. E. J. Kenney, 'Doctus Lucretius', *Mnemosyne* ser. 4.23 (1970), 366–92.

[33] Op. cit., p. 164. Hardie draws attention to the corresponding metrical position of the words 'hic... nomine' in *G.* 3.280 and 'haec... nomen' in *DRN* 4.1058, and the use of the verb '(de)stillare' in both contexts. Both poets use the etymological play to sum up their characterization of *amor*: 'Virgil... exploits the general function of the Lucretian passage as a bleak summary of the reality of love; the final result of *amor* is this odious secretion whose use is only destructive.'

[34] Cf. 'caeco' 1120, 'caeci' 1153; 'stimuli' 1082, 'Veneris stimulis' 1215; 'ardor' 1077, 'ardoris' 1086, 'ardescit' 1090, 'ardorem' 1098, 'ardoris' 1116, 'ut ignis' 1138; 'spectando' 1102; 'dulcedinis' 1059, 'dulce' 1062; 'inliciaris' 1145.

[35] Cf. also Varius Rufus, *De Morte* fr. 4.5: 'non amnes illam medii, non ardua tardent'. The line is part of a simile which describes the behaviour of a hunting dog, though unfortunately the object of the comparison is lost. If A. S. Hollis ('L. Varius Rufus, *De Morte* (frr. 1–4 Morel)', *CQ* 27 (1979), 186–90) is correct in his hypothesis that the *De Morte* was an Epicurean poem along the lines of *DRN* 3, it seems very probable that Varius exploited the analogy between animals and man in the same way as Lucretius.

inde ferae pecudes persultant pabula laeta
et *rapidos tranant amnis*: ita capta lepore
te sequitur cupide quo quamque *inducere pergis*.
denique per maria ac *montis fluviosque rapaces*
frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
efficis ut cupide generatim saecla propagent. (*DRN* 1.14–20)

But the 'blandus amor' which Lucretius' Venus inspires in the animals has become in 271 the flame in the marrow which Lucretius had reserved for the description of human love. The emphasis on the universality of Venus' power is also derived from Lucretius' proem: 'hominumque ferarumque' recalls 'hominum divumque voluptas' in *DRN* 1.1, and Virgil's 'omne adeo genus' (242) is picked up by 'amor omnibus idem' in 244, just as Lucretius' 'genus omne animantum' (1.4) is picked up by 'omnibus incutiens amorem' in 1.19. Again, though, the animals are not rushing after the charming Venus of Lucretius' proem, but the flames and frenzy of book 4; and the catalogue of violent animal behaviour in 245–57 ironically inverts *DRN* 1.12–16 in which the animals frisk eagerly in Venus' train.[36] The gap between man and beast is also closed in the description of the battle of the two bulls, which are not only strongly personified, but in fact portrayed as epic warriors: Apollonius (2.88f.) had compared two warriors to bulls fighting over a heifer, and Virgil was to expand the simile, with explicit reminiscences of this passage, in describing the fight between Aeneas and Turnus in *Aeneid* 12 (715–24);[37] while the storm simile in 237–41 is based on a Homeric passage (*Il.* 4.422–6), describing an attack by the Greeks. The defeated bull's diet and sleeping arrangements recall Lucretius' description of early man, who lived 'like a beast',[38] again blurring the distinction between human and animal: Virgil's beast is like a man who lived like a beast...

Thus, for Virgil, *amor* is a universal and irresistible force, *common* to both man and beast. The difference between this and Lucretius' view is well summarized by Miles:[39] 'Unlike Virgil... [Lucretius] is disturbed not so much by the very boundlessness of the energies which passion releases as by the capacity of false values and misconceptions to pervert those energies.' For Virgil, the energies of *amor* are perverse in themselves, but are also part of the innate character of the animals, as the poet suggests by echoing his own earlier descriptions of the ideal horse: thus, as Miles points out, 250–4 picks up 77–85 (the horse's bold and sensitive nature) and 235–41 picks up the earlier wind simile in 193–201. The universal nature of *amor* is suggested by the anthropomorphic treatment of the animals, which culminates in an allusion to the story of Hero and Leander (258–63). The anonymity of the 'iuvenis' and 'virgo' who frame the lines makes this a paradigm for human behaviour in general, and the story is also closely linked with the behaviour of the animals which surrounds it. The 'iuvenis' swims across the straits, like the horses of 253 and 270, and human reason has no more power over him than the 'frena virum' over the horses in 252. Finally, the anaphora 'quid iuvenis'/'quid lynces' (258, 264) implicitly likens Leander to the lynxes and other animals whose usual behaviour is perverted by the power of *amor*.[40]

[36] Cf. Hardie, op. cit., pp. 158–66.

[37] Cf. R. L. Hunter, 'Bulls and Boxers in Apollonius and Vergil', *CQ* 39 (1989), 557–61.

[38] *DRN* 5.925–1010. Cf. especially 'instrato saxa cubili' with Lucretius' 'instrata cubilia fronde' (5.987; cf. 970–2), 'frondibus hirsutis et carice *pastus* acuta' with the description of early man's '*pabula* dura' in 5.939–44.

[39] Op. cit., p. 195 n. 8.

[40] Cf. Putnam, op. cit., p. 199; Mynors, *ad loc.*

There is yet a further level to Virgil's problematization of the concept of *amor*, which is underlined by the startling phrase 'capti... amore' in the second proem:

> Sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus,
> singula dum *capti* circumvectamur *amore*.
> hoc satis armentis; superat pars altera curae,
> lanigeros agitare greges hirtasque capellas;
> hic labor, hinc laudem fortes sperate coloni.
> 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.
> nunc, veneranda Pales, magno nunc ore sonandum. (284–94)

Coming immediately after the passage I have been discussing, this sudden shift in the meaning of *amor* to love for one's poetry and its subject-matter is clearly intended to startle the reader. Of course, as Thomas notes, the phrase is a kind of pun, since Virgil's subject-matter at this point is, precisely, *amor*.[41] But the resonances of the lines go much deeper. Once again, the self-echo is combined with echoes of Lucretius, whose own second proem in 4.1–25 is, like Virgil's, rich in Callimachean imagery.[42] Lucretius' first proem is also very important here, however, for Lucretius associates Venus with poetry as well as sexual attraction, asking her to lend her *lepos*, her charm, to his poetry (1.28). Moreover, the lines which I have described as Lucretius' 'second proem' also occur in book 1 (926–50), where they are preceded by another reference to 'suavis amor Musarum', picking up the earlier association between poetry and the charm of Venus. Virgil seizes another opportunity to turn Lucretius' own imagery against him, by associating 'amor Musarum' much more closely with sexual *amor*. Not only is the poet 'captus amore' like the beasts he has just been describing, but like them, he is led over mountain ridges by his love, and the violence of the word 'raptat' suggests a frenzy not totally dissimilar to the 'furiae' of 244. Virgil forcibly brings out the implications of Lucretius' bacchic imagery (*DRN* 1.922–5) and of his reference to love of the Muses: poetic inspiration, like sexual *amor*, is a kind of madness, and hence a very risky business. This association between sexual and poetic *amor* is also important for the interpretation of Virgil's treatment of the bees in book 4. But the reference to *amor* in connexion with poetry should also remind us of various other kinds of *amor* which are mentioned elsewhere in the poem: plants' 'amor terrae' (2.301), the horse's 'amor laudum' (3.112), the bees' 'amor florum' and 'amor habendi' (4.205, 177) and the dairy-farmer's 'amor lactis' (3.394). It is difficult to know exactly what to make of this phraseology, but certainly it should alert us to the fact that the value of *amor* is far from unambiguous in Virgil's eyes.

The second proem divides the book exactly in half, and helps to emphasize the parallelism between the two climactic passages on *amor* and the plague.[43] Once again, the anthropomorphic treatment of animals, which is on the whole less pronounced in

[41] The effect is very similar at *Ecl.* 6.10: 'si quis tamen haec quoque, si quis | captus amore leget' (cf. R. Coleman, *Virgil: Eclogues* (Cambridge, 1977), *ad loc.*). Here again, *amor* is both the subject of the poem and the emotion experienced by the reader. Love/friendship is, of course, a central theme in the *Eclogues*, where its rôle is perhaps even more ambivalent than in the *Georgics*.

[42] Cf. especially 292f. with *DRN* 4.1f.: 'avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante | trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis...'.

[43] The parallelism is also emphasized, as Putnam (op. cit., p. 221) and others have noted, by the similarity of some of the symptoms produced by *amor* and the plague, especially forgetfulness of normal pursuits (498 and 216).

the second half of the book, rises to a crescendo in the account of the plague. It is scarcely necessary to mention that imitation of Lucretius is also particularly pronounced here: almost all critics are agreed that Virgil's plague is essentially a reworking of the plague at the end of *DRN* 6, although Virgil fundamentally transforms his source in many ways. Klepl, West and Harrison[44] all give good accounts of detailed correspondences between the two passages, and I will confine myself here to discussing some general ways in which Virgil engages with the Lucretian account.

In many ways, Virgil's plague *inverts* its model. In Lucretius, the plague falls first on human beings and then spreads to animals, whereas Virgil's is an animal pestilence which eventually infects men as well (559–66). The symptoms of the Athenian plague are carefully adapted to the animals of the *Georgics*, and combined with self-imitation, whereby the description of the sick horse (498–514), in particular, pathetically evokes the healthy horse of 75–94. This pathos is also characteristic of Virgil's, but not Lucretius' account, which is related in a detached, 'scientific' style, sparing the reader none of the horror of the plague, but not encouraging excessive sympathy with its victims. Virgil gives us a highly *subjective* account, seen, as it were, from the inside, despite the pseudo-scientific tone conveyed by Lucretian echoes in the opening lines. There are three main scenes of animal death: the deaths of sacrificial animals at the altar (486–93), of the horse (498–514) and of the plough-oxen (515–30). All three groups of animals are strongly personified, and echo different passages of the *DRN*. The animals which die at the altar are portrayed in terms which unmistakably recall Lucretius' Iphigenia (*DRN* 1.84–100).[45] The possible philosophical implications of this echo will be considered shortly, but for now we should also note that one effect is to evoke sympathy for these innocent animals, struck down, like Iphigenia, before their time. The description of the horse's death is, as I have already noted, permeated by echoes both of Lucretius' plague and of Virgil's own earlier description of the healthy horse,[46] with the result that the creature is humanized and its fate rendered all the more pathetic. Full of pathos, too, is the death of the bull at the plough. Virgil concentrates on the emotions of the bull's yoke-mate, which seem to coincide with those of the 'tristis arator', just as the feelings of the horses and drivers merge in the chariot race in 103–12. The bull's sorrow develops imperceptibly into the symptoms of the plague, recalling the way that those who visit the sick in Lucretius' account eventually succumb themselves (*DRN* 6.1243–6); and its death is marked with a veritable funeral oration, lamenting its 'labor' and 'benefacta'. There are three separate sets of Lucretian echoes here: besides the reminiscence of *DRN* 6.1243–6, the behaviour of the mourning bull is closely based on Lucretius' description of the cow searching for her sacrificed calf (2.352–66),

[44] H. Klepl, *Lukrez und Virgil in ihren Lehrgedichten* (Darmstadt, 1967); D. A. West, 'Two Plagues: Virgil, *Georgics* 3.478–566 and Lucretius 6.1090–1286', in D. West and T. Woodman (eds.), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 71–88; E. L. Harrison, 'The Noric Plague and Virgil's Third *Georgic*', *PLLS* 2 (1979), 1–65.

[45] 'stans ... ad aram' ~ 'ante aras adstare' (*DRN* 1.89); 'circumdatur infula' ~ 'infula ... circumdata' (1.87); 'inter cunctantis ministros' ~ 'ferrum celare ministros' (1.90); 'cecidit moribunda' ~ 'terram ... petebat ... tremibunda' (1.92, 95).

[46] The horse's drooping ears and pounding hooves contrast with its light step and pricked-up ears in the earlier description (76, 84), while 'victor equus' reminds us of its earlier enthusiasm for victory (102, 112), now forgotten. The catalogue of symptoms in 500–8 – cold sweat, dry skin, bright eyes, deep and sobbing breaths, bleeding from the nose and swelling of the tongue and throat – is taken directly from Lucretius' account, while 'mox erat hoc ipsum exitio' (511) echoes 'hoc aliis erat exitio' in *DRN* 6.1229. Cf. West, op. cit., pp. 80f.; Harrison, op. cit., pp. 12f.; and Thomas, op. cit., *ad loc.*

perhaps the only occasion in the *DRN* on which personification of an animal is used for primarily emotive effect. Finally, the bull seems to have led an exemplary Epicurean life:

> ...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 abrumpit cura salubris. (526–30)

These lines are reminiscent of the proem to *DRN* 2, in which Lucretius contrasts luxurious banquets with a simple, but equally satisfying, open-air meal, and reminds us that sickness will leave the man who sleeps in a plebeian bed just as quickly as the one who wraps himself in embroidered purple coverlets. Virgil incorporates this Lucretian language in the conventional and very un-Lucretian complaint of the mourner:[47] what use is it to have led an exemplary life, since it will inevitably end in death? Thomas is surely missing the mark in claiming that these lines exemplify the failure of *labor*. Their effect is rather to humanize the bull to an almost incongruous extent, exemplifying the universality of death, which, like *amor*, is an irresistible force common to men and beasts.

Once again, Virgil turns Lucretian echoes against him, for Lucretius argues in the great diatribe at the end of book 3 that the fear of death, like the lures of *amor*, is easily overcome: 'nil igitur mors est ad nos, neque pertinet hilum' (3.830). As in the corresponding passage at the end of *DRN* 4, he suggests remedies for this disturbing *cura*: we should reflect on the fact that we will be able to feel no pain or regret once we have ceased to exist, that the matter of which we are made up is needed for new creation, that we cannot derive any more pleasure from lingering longer in the world, that better men have died... Virgil responds by dwelling on the horror and injustice of death itself, and its domination over man and beast.

As in the case of *amor*, the anthropomorphic treatment of animals is matched by an 'animalization' of man, which is here set in the context of a kind of grim parody of the golden age. Once again, Virgil takes his cue from Lucretius' account, in which carrion birds and beasts for the most part leave the diseased corpses untouched (*DRN* 6.1215–18). This uncharacteristic behaviour is enlarged upon by Virgil, for whom, of course, the victims of the disease are animals. This produces a situation which echoes the golden age imagery of *Eclogues* 4 and 5: wolves do not attack the sheep, deer are safe from dogs, snakes die. At the same time, men revert not to a pre-agricultural state, but to an animal-like state, for the lack of draught animals leaves them pulling their own wagons and hoes (instead of ploughs) and burying seed with their fingers. Finally, just as Hero and Leander provided the climax to the catalogue of creatures subdued by *amor*, the plague actually spreads to man: the infection of men by the use of animals' fleeces neatly inverts, as I have noted, the infection of beasts in Lucretius through eating diseased human corpses (*DRN* 6.1218); but the fact that it is *clothing* that man can no longer obtain from the plague-ridden beasts perhaps also contributes to the picture of his reversion to the status of an animal.[48]

[47] Cf. for example Ov. *Am.* 3.9.21f. (the lament for Tibullus), which, perhaps significantly, contains a reference to Orpheus.

[48] Note too the reference to Chiron and Melampus in 550. Aside from their fame as healers, the two mythological figures also have a special relevance because their stories (like those of Saturn and Io) involve a blurring of the boundary between animal and man. The centaur Chiron was the product of the union between Philyra and the horse-Saturn alluded to in 92–4; Melampus cured the daughters of Proetus of the madness which made them believe that they were cows (Apollod. 1.9.12, Vitruv. 8.3.21). Ironically, neither is able to cure the plague, which makes men behave like animals.

The highly subjective presentation of the account may also help to solve a problem which has been exercising scholars for some years:[49] is the plague to be seen as a punishment for an offence against the gods, and if so, what is the offence? There are indications on both sides: on the one hand, as Harrison argues, the interpretation of any plague as a sign of divine anger was a matter of standard Roman religious practice; Tisiphone, who is referred to in 552, is elsewhere the instrument of divine vengeance;[50] and the term 'sacer ignis' in 566 would be much more pointed if the plague were supposed to constitute a punishment meted out by the gods. On the other hand, there are the Lucretian echoes: the 'scientific' opening of the account, and the reminiscences in 486–93 and 520–4 of two passages in which Lucretius is explicitly or implicitly condemning sacrificial practices as cruel and useless. Moreover, the best efforts of the Norici to appease the gods are apparently a failure (though they keep trying even when there are no oxen to take part in the procession); and despite the ingenuity of Harrison's arguments, it is very hard to see any cause for divine wrath.[51] I would suggest that this uncertainty expresses the uncertainty of the Norici themselves: in the face of such calamities, no certainty is possible, and all one can do is continue to 'venerate the gods', with no guarantee of success. With what Thomas calls 'the failure of sacrifice', one might compare the failure of Dido's sacrifices, despite their very proper conduct, in *Aeneid* 4.[52] Here we see both sides of the story: Dido cannot have her way, because that would stand in the way of the divine plan for the foundation of Rome. Her sufferings are neither her own fault, nor do they prove the invalidity of religious practice.

To return to *Georgics* 3: we have seen that there are a number of parallels between Virgil's treatment of man and beast in the face of *amor* and of the plague. In particular, in both cases, the gap between man and beast is narrowed, both emphasizing the universality of the forces of sex and death, which, contrary to Lucretius' view, are presented as overpowering and irresistible; and showing how, in the face of such pressures, man is reduced to the level of the beasts.

The symbolic and anthropomorphic treatment of animals continues in *Georgics* 4, which, however, I only wish to discuss very briefly, since I am substantially in agreement with the interpretation of Jasper Griffin.[53] The personification of the bees, whose community is presented as a human state, is very well documented,[54] and scarcely requires illustration. They are actually called 'Quirites' in 201, and the whole account is full of anthropomorphizing vocabulary. In some ways their state is an ideal: they are patriotic, brave and hard-working.[55] They are also free from sex and death: they are born asexually from leaves (200), they do not die (at least according to 'quidam') but return to the divine mind of which they are a part (219–27), and can be reborn by means of the *bougonia*. Thus they are in some ways the antithesis of the animals of book 3, and this is particularly brought out by the phrase 'labor omnibus

[49] The question was originally raised by Harrison (op. cit.); see also Thomas, *ad loc.*; Mynors, *ad* 3.476.

[50] Harrison compares her rôle in *Aen.* 6.554ff.

[51] Harrison interprets 531–3 as explaining the ritual *error* of the Norici. But the usual interpretation of the lines (the lack of oxen is a *result* of the plague) is much more natural, since, as Thomas remarks *ad loc.*, 'the phrase *tempore non alio* clearly situates the events of these lines within the *course* of the plague.'

[52] The idea that one cannot guarantee the efficacy of sacrifice, since the gods may have plans of their own, is already present in the Homeric ἀλλ' ὅ γε δέκτο μὲν ἱρά, πόνον δ' ἀμέργατον ὄφελλεν (*Il.* 2.420).

[53] J. Griffin, 'The Fourth *Georgic*, Virgil and Rome', *G&R* 26 (1979), 61–80.

[54] See Griffin, op. cit., p. 77 n. 9 for further references.

[55] E.g. 203f., 210–18, 156–96.

unus' (184), echoing 'amor omnibus idem' in 3.244. Nevertheless, we cannot regard the bees as entirely paradigmatic,[56] for Virgil offsets their ideal qualities by constant emphasis on their smallness, with effects varying from pathos through irony to humour.[57] It is also remarkable, as Griffin argues, that there is no attempt to associate the bees with *poetry*. This association is, of course, immensely common elsewhere, and occurs in Lucretius, who speaks of the honey of the Muses in 1.947 (= 4.22) and compares himself to a bee in 3.11.[58] Griffin suggests that this omission is deliberate and significant, and that the bees, who are free from love, death and art, and devoted to *labor*, form a contrast to the figure of Orpheus in the latter half of the book. This is supported by the association we noted in book 3 between sexual *amor* and 'amor Musarum': the *furor* associated with sex and death is also the *furor* of poetic inspiration, and the two cannot be wholly separated from each other. Thus, in the Aristaeus story, Orpheus' love and art almost enable him to bring Eurydice back from death, but ultimately cause the downfall of both of them. Aristaeus is to some extent a mediating figure, who brings about the death of Eurydice and of his bees through *amor*, but is enabled to resurrect the bees (if not Eurydice) by disciplined obedience to divine instruction. But Virgil ultimately leaves us with an unresolved tension between Orpheus' *furor*, the *furor* of the beasts in book 3, and the sexless, deathless, artless society of the bees. This tension picks up the conflict between order and chaos, between nature and culture, which runs through the poem as a whole.

Thus far we have dealt mainly with the emotional and symbolic relationship between man and beast, with the use of animals as a metaphoric vehicle for comment on the *human* condition. It is also worth looking at the *literal* relationship between man and beast as portrayed in the *Georgics*, and the ways in which it exemplifies man's relationship with the natural world as a whole. This is particularly important in the second part of book 3, where, as I have noted, the animals are treated less anthropomorphically than in the first part. Instead, Virgil lays emphasis on the vulnerability of the smaller animals, the 'molle pecus' as they are called in 299, and on their dependence on man, on whom they rely for protection from cold, thorny undergrowth, poisonous snakes and disease.[59] This aspect of the relationship also has its counterpart in Lucretius, who tells us in 5.855–61 that all the species which now exist survived either because they were good hunters, or because they were good at running away, or because they were useful to man, who therefore looked after and protected them. Thus, a kind of partnership exists between man and domestic animals in Lucretius, and relations are generally cordial. In 2.1161, for example, the oxen and the farmer share in the toil of agricultural production. The sacrifice of the calf in 2.352–66 is presented very much as a *perversion* of this relationship, as Charles Segal argues:[60]

> The slaughter of the calf affirms man's mastery over nature only to suggest that it is a false mastery. The falsehood lies in man's wilful ignorance of his participation with all living creatures.

[56] Cf. B. Otis, *Virgil: a Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 181–90.

[57] E.g. 25–9, 83, 86f., 170–8.

[58] See Griffin, p. 78 n. 18 for further references. Even Varro remarks that bees have justly been called 'Musarum volucres' (*RR* 3.16.7). It is true that the bees' smallness has a symbolic value in the programmatic statement of 4.1–7; but the fact that they can be used to symbolize the Callimachean *tenuitas* of Virgil's poetry is not incompatible with the idea that they *themselves* have no art.

[59] This emphasis on vulnerability is also part of the build-up to the plague, as Otis (op. cit., pp. 176–9) and others have pointed out.

[60] C. P. Segal, '*Delubra Decora*: Lucr. II.352–66', *Latomus* 29 (1970), 104–18.

For Virgil, man's mastery is a much more ambiguous affair. We have seen that he is a protector to the gentle sheep; but often his treatment of the animals is much harsher. In 3.95–100, he is to have no pity for the old horse, and the dismissive phrase 'abde domo' strikes the reader as particularly cruel after the anthropomorphic treatment of the preceding paragraph. I have already drawn attention to the reference in 167f. to the enslavement of the calves, who have just been reared like human children. Again, in 369–75, the snow-bound stag is brutally cut down, despite its pitiful cries. Even the gentle sheep are subject to harsh treatment: an imperfect breeding animal is rejected with a blunt 'reice' in 389, and infected animals must be bled or even slaughtered without mercy (457–69).[61] There are further examples in book 4, where, for example, the bee-keeper is bluntly advised to pull the wings off the king bee to prevent swarming (4.106f.).

In order to appreciate the reason for this harshness, we must remember the emphasis on the chaotic forces of sex and death in book 3 and throughout the poem. These forces, as I have argued, are portrayed as ultimately irresistible, but the farmer's *labor* consists in harnessing them as best he can, and sometimes this entails cruelty to other creatures. Animals and nature in general need to be restrained to produce order, a point which is well illustrated by the vignette in book 2 (207–11) of the farmer who cuts down an old tree, destroying the homes of the birds in it: 'at rudis enituit impulso vomere campus'. 'This', comments Thomas, 'captures the dilemma of book 2, and of the poem as a whole: cultural progress imposes loss and suffering on nature.' Another significant Lucretian echo can be found in 3.65: 'atque aliam ex alia generando suffice prolem'. This echoes *DRN* 1.263:[62] '...alid ex alio reficit natura'. In the *Georgics*, the farmer replaces Lucretius' *Natura* as the force which brings order out of chaos, but that order is only to be had for a price. As in the *Aeneid*, Virgil shows sympathy for the victims of the struggle: Dido, Turnus, Amata have their counterparts in the *Georgics*. Man must be cruel in order to restrain the violence and disorder of the world at large; he must struggle against the forces of *amor* and death; yet at the same time the *furor* of poetic inspiration cannot be detached from those other *furores*. 'Virgil's conception of civilization', writes Miles, '...is neither heroic nor pathetic, but tragic.'[63]

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[61] Although these actions are not in themselves cruel, since the aim is, after all, to save as many of the sheep as possible, the comparison with the barbaric northerners who drink milk mixed with blood (461–3) and the violence of 'compesce' (468) after the pastoral imagery of 464–7 tend to portray the farmer in a far from favourable light. [62] Cf. 3.965, 970.

[63] An earlier version of this paper was read to the Literary Seminar of the Classics Faculty in the University of Cambridge in November 1990. Thanks are due to all who contributed to the ensuing discussion, and to Michael Reeve, who read and commented on an earlier draft. I would also like to thank the editors of *CQ* for their helpful comments and advice.