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ON THE CORYCIAN GARDENER OF VERGIL'S FOURTH *GEORGIC**

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The passage on the Corycian gardener in Vergil's fourth *Georgic* (4.116–48) has a charm and grace which have consistently drawn the attention of critics. Rarely neglected in treatments of the *Georgics* as a whole, the passage has also been the major focus of several articles, including Burck's and most recently La Penna's.[1] Clearly much excellent and useful work has been done. I would like to suggest, nevertheless, that we have not probed as much as we might either the symbolic value of the gardener or the relationship of this passage to the poem's major themes. It is the purpose of this paper to contribute to a more precise formulation of the gardener's significance in the *Georgics* and of the ways in which the figure of the gardener illuminates those of the farmer and poet.

It will be useful, in order to place in context my own hypotheses, to resume previous work on this passage. Richter, comprehensive and representative, sees in the Corycian gardener a rural and Roman ideal, a perfect "*vir bonus Romanus agricola*," and thus an exemplar of the *laudes Italiae* (2.136 ff.) and of the fundamental value of agricultural life. The gardener counterbalances, in his view, both the *labor improbus* passage of *Georgic* 1.121–46 and the image of human helplessness which concludes *Georgic* 3 (531–66).[2] Klingner (309) sees the gardener primarily as a model of wisdom, like the farmers of the second *Georgic*, who transcends

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[1] The following works will be referred to by author's name alone: Erich Burck, "Der Korykische Greis in Vergils *Georgica* (IV 116–148)," in *Navicula Chiloniensis: Festschrift F. Jacoby* (Leiden 1956) 156–72; J. Conington and H. Nettleship, *The Works of Virgil* (London 1898; reprint ed., Hildesheim 1963); F. Klingner, *Virgil: Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis* (Zurich 1967); A. La Penna, "*Senex Corycius*" in *Atti del Convegno Virgiliano sul Bimillenario delle Georgiche* (Naples 1977); J. Perret, *Virgile* (Paris 1965); Michael C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth: Studies in the Georgics* (Princeton 1979); W. Richter, *Vergil: Georgica* (Munich 1957); L. P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil* (Cambridge 1969).

[2] Richter *ad* 125–48.

poverty through serenity and skill. La Penna (57) also views the gardener as a sage, particularly of the Epicurean sort, parallel in significance to the bees, a figure exemplifying utility and beauty. In general, then, the gardener is seen as embodying a rural, Roman, and philosophical ideal.

By contrast, I would like to suggest that the ideal (if we may use this terminology) embodied in the figure of the gardener may be not so much rural, Roman, and philosophical as poetic. Vergil represents the gardener as pursuing not so much beauty and utility as beauty and uselessness, not so much the simple life as the esthetic life. His values, as we may consequently infer, are profoundly at variance with the materialism and militarism implicit in Roman tradition,[3] and it is precisely his deviations from this tradition which constitute the essence of his significance.

In growing flowers, the epitome of superfluous beauty, the gardener pursues (like the poet) an esthetic and spiritual ideal which ignores material function or profit. The farmer's work, on the contrary, is realized in material productivity and answers to physical needs. Further, the gardener's symbolic opposition to the farmer is also reflected in his sympathetic relationship with nature, which cooperates in his purposes. By contrast, the farmer's mode is to vanquish nature through his technology, whose aggressive character is expressed in the military terms which Vergil applies to agriculture throughout the *Georgics*.[4] While the farmer achieves his uneven successes through a kind of war against nature, the gardener triumphs continually and without aggression as a consequence of his unique harmony with nature. Thus the gardener and the farmer exemplify a polarity between artistic and material achievements. This polarity is a major focus of the entire poem and is expressed most notably in Book 4, I would suggest, by the paired figures of Orpheus/Aristaeus and the *Georgic* poet/Octavian.[5] In his pursuit of beauty and in his harmony with nature

[3] Cf. Cato *Agr.* introd. 4: *At ex agricolis et viri fortissimi et milites strenuissimi gignuntur, maximeque pius quaestus stabilissimusque consequitur minimeque invidiosus, minimeque male cogitantes sunt qui in eo studio occupati sunt.* Similarly introd. 2: *Et virum bonum quom <maiores nostri> laudabant, ita laudabant, bonum agricolam bonumque colonum.* Cf. also Griffin (below, note 28).

[4] See Conington *ad* 99, 104–5, 125, 155, 160. Cf. A. Bradley, "Augustan Culture and a Radical Alternative: Virgil's *Georgics*," *Arion* 8 (1969) 350–53; H. Altevogt, *Labor Improbus: Eine Vergilstudie* (Munster 1952) 24, notes the "Kampfencharakter der bäuerlichen Arbeit." See also *G.* 2.207–11, 2.277, 2.367–70, 3.468–69; 4.106–8.

[5] By "*Georgic* poet" I refer to the first person speaker in the *Georgics*, the persona of the poet.

A. Bradley (above, note 4) 355–58 and Charles Segal in "Orpheus and the Fourth *Georgic*: Vergil on Nature and Civilization," *AJP* 87 (1966) 311–18, have both discussed the oppositions or polarities between Aristaeus and Orpheus. To summarize their arguments, while Aristaeus stands for "productivity" and "control" of nature, Orpheus stands for "creativity" and "sympathy" with nature. Segal also sees (321) an analogous opposition between Vergil and Augustus.

the gardener resembles Orpheus and the *Georgic* poet; in his indifference to power and glory he opposes Aristaeus and Octavian. Recognition of these relationships clarifies for us his symbolic value in the poem.

I should like to establish this reading first by considering the portrait of the gardener as the *Georgic* poet describes him, and then by comparing this portrait to the contrasting figures of the farmer and the poet. In this way, I believe, the gardener's significance will best emerge.

Certain structural features of this passage suggest the gardener's importance in the poem. First, the passage is significantly placed so as to correspond to both the *labor improbus* and *laudes Italiae* passages, as critics have noted. It appears antithetical to the former, complementary to the latter;[6] thus it engages major motifs of the *Georgics* as a whole. Secondly, the *Georgic* poet frames the passage with expressions of regret that he cannot pursue the topic as he would wish, but is prevented from doing so by limitations, as he says, of time and space:

> Atque equidem, extremo ni iam sub fine laborum
> uela traham et terris festinem aduertere proram,
> forsitan et pinguis hortos quae cura colendi
> ornaret canerem biferique rosaria Paesti,
> quoque modo potis gauderent intiba riuis
> et uirides apio ripae, tortusque per herbam
> cresceret in uentrem cucumis; nec sera comantem
> narcissum aut flexi tacuissem uimen acanthi
> pallentisque hederas et amantis litora myrtos. (4.116–24)

> uerum haec ipse equidem spatiis exclusus iniquis
> praetereo atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo. (4.147–48)

The effect of this *praeteritio* is precisely to emphasize the appeal of the theme which the poet puts aside.[7] The reader is thus left wishing to understand the significance and causes of the explicit tension between the *Georgic* poet and the gardener. Thirdly, the substance of the passage is intrusive and extraordinary within the genre of a georgic poem since the ancients ordinarily treated gardening quite separately from farming.[8] By virtue of not belonging, as it were, the passage becomes emphatic. Finally, the Corycian gardener is specifically represented as the *Georgic* poet's own vision:

> namque sub Oebaliae *memini me* turribus arcis,
> qua niger umectat flauentia culta Galaesus,
> Corycium uidisse senem, . . . (4.125–27)

[6] See, e.g., Perret 70, Wilkinson 104.

[7] La Penna 55, Burck 158.

[8] See especially Wilkinson 103 on the contemporary prose *cepuria* of Sabinius Tiro and Valerius Messala Potitus.

This is the only excursus in the *Georgics* which the poet claims as his own experience.[9] While we need not assume that the passage has literal truth, we must nevertheless acknowledge that the claimed special relationship to the poet suggests some particular significance.

What is suggested by the gardener's origin and location? Servius' assertion that the old Corycian was one of the Cilician pirates settled in Calabria by Pompey appears tangential to the substance of the passage.[10] It has also been suggested that the old man is made a Corycian because they were renowned as gardeners.[11] Certainly this is consistent with the substance of the passage but still, perhaps, unnecessary. Klingner's view, more persuasive since based upon the text itself, is that Vergil intends here to evoke ancient Greek poetry and mythology, implicit in the learned and poetic *Oebalia* for Tarentum.[12] The old man, subtly associated with a learned and poetic memory of Greek tradition, inhabits a city Greek in origin, renowned for its beauty (cf. Hor. *Od.* 2.6.6–24), and at the greatest remove from Rome.[13] Thus there is implied in the opening lines of the passage an association of the gardener with beauty and with poetry of a most particular sort, both learned and Greek; and this image is localized, ironically enough, at a distance from Rome so great as to lend itself to idealization and imagination.

Another important detail in these verses is the gardener's old age (*senem*, 127), which several commentators take to connote wisdom.[14] Yet it is perhaps more relevant to the *Georgics* to recall the verses on the old stallion of *Georgic* 3, which place old age within the georgic context:

> Hunc quoque, ubi aut morbo gravis aut iam segnior annis
> deficit, abde domo, nec turpi ignosce senectae.
> frigidus in Venerem senior, frustraque laborem
> ingratum trahit; et si quando ad proelia ventum est,
> ut quondam in stipulis magnus sine viribus ignis,
> incassum furit. (3.95–100)

The old stallion, when no longer able to procreate or to make war—his legitimizing functions within the georgic world—is to be harshly dismissed from the farmer's care and attention.[15] Although harsh, such advice is

[9] Cf. La Penna 55.

[10] Cf. P. Wuilleumier, "Virgile et le vieillard de Tarente," *REL* 3 (1930) 325–40. As La Penna implies (64), critics ought not to assign a background or future to a character where Vergil himself has not seen fit to do so.

[11] Servius *ad* Virg., *Georg.* 4.127 (as above, note 10). Cf. Martial 8.14 on Cilicians as gardeners.

[12] Klingner 309.

[13] Putnam 251 finely notes the gardener's distance in time and space from the poet, describing the passage as "an imaginative garden in itself."

[14] E.g., La Penna 63. For Putnam it suggests vulnerability (251).

[15] See Richter *ad loc.* for the difficulties in interpreting *abde domo*.

found throughout the writings of Cato and Varro, who prescribe elimination of old or sick animals in favor of those which will bring a profit.[16] In the farmer's world, dominated as it must be by material concerns, an old horse, since it is useless, has no value. According, then, to the material standards implicit in the very nature of a georgic poem, the old Corycian would have no value since he too is useless, not only for war or procreation but for vigorous labor. Yet the perception to which Vergil draws the reader's attention is that the gardener, raised above "mere usefulness"[17] (to cite Klingner's phrase in another context), achieves the most civilized, spiritually gratifying existence of the poem. While his old age makes clear the superfluous or inessential character of his activities, we see that he is "useless" only to those who assume uncritically what the term signifies. The poet implicitly invites us[18] to reconsider the nature of the truly "useful." The unique accomplishments of the gardener do not translate into political power or profit, to which concerns he is consistently indifferent.

That we are correct in relating the gardener's old age to the motif of "uselessness" is corroborated by the nature of the Corycian's land:

> cui pauca relicti
> iugera ruris erant, nec fertilis illa iuvencis
> nec pecori opportuna seges nec commoda Baccho. (4.127–29)

Unsuited for plowing, grazing, or vine-growing, this land has been abandoned. The gardener, undeterred by conventional estimates of value, transforms "useless" land into a source of beauty and individual satisfaction:

> hic rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum
> lilia verbenasque premens vescumque papaver
> regum aequabat opes animis, seraque revertens
> nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis. (130–33)

In contenting himself with unproductive land the gardener shows his indifference to profit, prestige, and convention. Although near the city (4.125), he pursues a life which excludes urban, or more generally, Iron Age values, as they are described in *Georgic* 1.136 ff. The absence from the gardener's life of commerce (cf. *inemptis*, 4.133), appetitiveness, aggression, and ambition serves to identify him ethically or morally with

[16] E.g., Cato *Agr.* 2.7: *boves vetulos, armenta delicula, oves deliculas, lanam, pelles, plostrum vetus, ferramenta vetera, servum senem, servum morbosum, et siquid aliut supersit, vendat.*

[17] "Bloßen Nutzen" 284, concerning the race horse of *G.* 3.49 f.

[18] K. Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description* (London 1968) 6 and 399, uses the phrase "implicit comment" in order to "denote Virgil's curious, characteristic technique, not of understatement but of non-statement . . . He leaves us to formulate, if we choose, the moral implications of his narrative." Similarly Klingner 183.

the Golden Age and, above all, to distinguish him from the poem's other figures, including Aristaeus (4.325) and even the *Georgic* poet (4.6), who are touched by Iron Age ambition. The gardener, unmoved by Iron Age needs, appears as an idealized figure.

The Corycian's garden is noncommercial and miraculously vital. What the poet describes here is not a small farmer's vegetable patch but a simultaneous profusion of flowering plants possible only in the imagination.[19] What the gardener grows is not particularly suited for consumption either by himself[20] or his bees.[21] Rather the trees and flowers specified here suggest a pleasure garden whose flowering transcends geographical and seasonal limitations. We are left with the sense that such a place must be meant to symbolize an idea of beauty, which serves no material function[22] but which sustains and expands the spirit, like the beauty of art, song, or poetry itself.

[19] On the garden's uncommercial character see Wilkinson 264 or Burck 159–60: "Ja, er verzichtet sogar hier wie auch im Folgenden darauf, einige der wichtigsten, d.h. ertragreichsten Gewächse zu erwähnen." On the miraculous character of this particular combination of flowers see Richter *ad* 137 and Pierre Grimal, *Les Jardins romains à la fin de la république et aux deux premiers siècles de l'empire* (Paris 1943) 413: "On dirait que Virgile a voulu accumuler dans cet enclos toutes les productions concevables, au dépens du réalisme, et même de la vraisemblance. Un tel jardin n'est pas *réel*." Again on 415: "L'enclos de Tarente est une création poétique au même titre que les Enfers où descend Orphée."

[20] The squash (*cucumis*, 4.122) is not grown by the Corycian gardener, although La Penna (57) does not note this distinction.

[21] Contrast the plants recommended for bees at 4.30–32, 63, 109, 112. The character of this passage emerges clearly when contrasted with Varro's Veianius brothers who turned their very small holding into a profitable apiary (as Burck 160 notes).

[22] Similarly P. J. Davis, "Vergil's *Georgics* and the Pastoral Ideal," *Ramus* 8 (1979) 30, notes that the "sole profit" which the gardener derives from the flowers is "beauty." The representation of flowering plants and trees for decorative purposes was a characteristic feature of Augustan art. Cf. M. Gabriel, *Livia's Garden Room at Prima Porta* (New York 1955) 8, note 15, who observes interestingly (11) that the seasonal element is entirely disregarded in the wall paintings of Livia's garden room. Pleasure in decorative flora is as early as the Homeric texts, as in *Iliad* 6.419, *Odyssey* 5.64, 7.112. On the non-material character of the art of gardens (which, I suggest, is parallel to that of poetry) Grimal writes (3): "Dans un tableau des différents arts, les jardins occupent une place privilégiée. Non toutefois prééminente, à côté des arts 'nobles', architecture, sculpture ou peinture—qui se situent hors de la durée, et parfois en défi au temps: les jardins, eux, meurent et renaissent à chaque saison . . . Art du passager, apparentés en cela à la musique, qui, elle aussi, est un art de la durée, à mi-chemin entre l'éternel . . . et l'instantané . . . Un autre caractère encore distingue les jardins, c'est qu'ils ne *créent* pas un objet . . . et tout leur artifice se borne souvent à rendre sensible certaines beautés qu'ils révèlent et réunissent en un même lieu." In Vergil's poetry floral references accompany themes of beauty or love (e.g., *Ecl.* 2.45 ff., 7.68). (For further references see Davis 30.) In *Aen.* 6.883–86 Anchises expresses with flowers dimensions of emotional experience to which words are not adequate:

> manibus date lilia plenis,
> purpureos spargam flores animamque nepotis
> hic saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani / munere.

The gardener's mode of growing flowers is revealing of his significance. Essential to note is the miraculous character of his achievement, which is not comprehensible, imitable, or possible to describe in conventional georgic *praecepta*. He makes sterile land productive, as in 130–33 cited above. His hyacinths bloom while rocks shatter with winter's cold and streams are frozen:

> primus vere rosam atque autumno carpere poma,
> et cum tristis hiems etiamnum frigore saxa
> rumperet et glacie cursus frenaret aquarum,
> ille comam mollis iam tondebat hyacinthi
> aestatem increpitans seram Zephyrosque morantis. (134–38)

Every blossom on his trees survives to bear fruit:

> illi tiliae atque uberrima tinus,
> quotque in flore novo pomis se fertilis arbos
> induerat, totidem autumno matura tenebat. (141–43)

He alone can transplant fully mature trees; and in this transplanting of full-grown trees, he anticipates and parallels the poet-singer Orpheus—a clear suggestion that he is a poetic figure:

> ille etiam seras in uersum distulit ulmos
> eduramque pirum et spinos iam pruna ferentis
> iamque ministrantem platanum potantibus umbras. (144–46)[23]

The moral relationship of the gardener to nature recalls the moral relationship of man to nature in the Golden Age of *Georgic* 1, for in each case nature, unassailed, responds abundantly. The gardener does not succeed through Iron Age farmer's technology, which is represented as aggressive or predatory. While such terms as *captare*, *fallere*, *insectari*, *terrere*, and *arma* characterize the farmer of the Iron Age in *Georgic* 1, the gardener is not represented as being on the attack. Neither do other Iron Age terms denoting technology or anxiety (*labor*, *usus*, *ars*, *cura*) occur of him.[24] Therefore, those who equate the gardener with the farmer, seeing both as expressions of a rural ideal, neglect two of the gardener's essential and unique features—his esthetic, materially superfluous goal and his nondestructive relationship with nature.

[23] Conington *ad loc.* states that *seras, eduram, iam pruna ferentis iamque ministrantem . . . umbras* are all emphatic. Davis (above, note 22) 31 notes that "the gardener enjoys a sort of private golden age."

[24] Cf. Klingner 309, note 1: "Not, Mühe und Plage treten in dem Gartenstück nicht ins Bewußtsein, sondern emsiges Tun und dazu Befriedigung und Genügen, Dinge, die in die Versreihe des ersten Buches nicht hineinspielen. Das deutsche Wort 'Arbeit' darf nicht dazu verführen, Ungleiches gleichzusetzen. 114 *ipse labore manum duro terat* steht zwar vor dem Eintritt in das schöne Bild, aber nicht darin . . ."

Finally, to the gardener alone is enduring contentment ascribed. Unlike other figures in the poem who aspire variously to wealth, power, glory, or divinity, he aspires to nothing other than what he has.[25] Within his own being he achieves the analogue of society's most exalted status: *regum aequabat opes animis* (4.132). In the gardener's unique happiness, a reflection, perhaps, of internal consistency and purpose, we may see the *Georgic* poet's awareness of those life-choices which distinguish the gardener from farmer and poet.

The material distinctions already noted between the gardener and the farmer reflect the spiritual differences which divide them as well. Despite their shared rural locale, the gardener embodies a spiritual vision, implicit in his continued happiness, which the farmer lacks. Farmers are, as the poet terms them, ignorant of how to live (1.41, *ignarosque viae*)[26] and do not know their blessings (2.458). We must infer, consequently, that the putative morality of the farmer's life, praised by critics,[27] and his freedom from urban vice result not from informed or conscious choice but are a consequence of his poverty and limited imagination.[28] The Corycian gardener, on the other hand, despite his proximity to the city, nevertheless chooses a life which excludes it. His isolation from the city is positive, idealized, and shows him to be freer than the farmer and deeper in spirit.[29]

The farmer lives without art or poetry, as we see in the "praise of country life" (as it is often called), which portrays the farmer as free from urban vice, but also as deprived of urban beauty. He never sees doors inlaid with beautiful shell, clothes embroidered with gold, or bronzes from Ephyra (2.463–64). *Pulchra* is the significant term here, for although these objects may connote decadence they are also works of acknowledged beauty, expressions of the refinement and depth of the human spirit. Vergil touches here upon the cultural barrenness of rural life which, as often in his poetry, characterizes the Roman tradition. As an example, we may compare Anchises in *Aen.* 6.847–53, who concedes to other peoples the greatest excellence in artistic expression.[30]

[25] Cf. La Penna (64): "ma l'inquieto spirito odissiaco, il bisogno di conoscere l'ignoto gli è estraneo."

[26] On philosophical connotations of the phrase see Richter *ad loc.*, Klingner 259.

[27] E.g., Burck 168, Klingner 309.

[28] This is brought out in an important article by Jasper Griffin, "The Fourth *Georgic*, Virgil, and Rome," *G&R* 26 (1979) 61–80, who discusses the collective, impersonal, unreflective character of traditional Rome, exemplified in *G.* 4 by the bees. Thus the bees do not constitute an ideal to emulate. Contrast La Penna 65: "Che la società delle api costituisca un modello etico-politico augusteo è verità che non ha bisogno di essere confermata."

[29] Contrast La Penna (65), who thinks that the gardener, blamably indifferent to society, has nothing to offer.

[30] Cf. Griffin (above, note 28) 64–65 on the traditional Roman's indifference to art. Cf. Hor. *Ars Poetica* 323 ff.

Unlike the farmer, however, the gardener is not without art, for his appreciation of beauty, clearly implicit in his growing of flowers, is expressed also in his artistic shaping of the natural beauty of his garden. *Circum* (4.130) and *in versum* (4.144), tantamount to technical terms, suggest respectively a border of flowers and rows of well-aligned trees, features "qui font la grâce des jardins . . . chers à l'antiquité gréco-romaine."[31] The gardener differs most significantly from the farmer, then, in his non-violent relationship with nature, in his contentment, and in the artistic dimension of his life.

The ways in which the gardener differs from the farmer are largely those in which he resembles the poet, as we may see from comparing the gardener to Orpheus and to the *Georgic* poet,[32] the two poet figures in the poem. From them we learn of Vergil's unidealized, ambivalent view of the poet's experience.

As was noted above, the *Georgic* poet implies a melancholy distinction between himself and the gardener when he indicates that he is not free to pursue his vision of the gardener as he would wish (4.116 ff., 147–48). The gardener's appeal seems precisely to be his freedom from the limiting realities, internal and external, which torment the *Georgic* poet. While the gardener appears free from emotional upheaval and longing, the *Georgic* poet describes himself as desiring victory and glory (3.9, 17; 4.6). Further, he expresses aspects of a poetic quest still unfulfilled when he longs to understand the workings of the universe (2.475–82) or to be in Greece (2.486–89). Despite his praises of Italy and of country life, Greece is the focus of the poet's aspirations.[33] He explicitly desires to be transported to Greece, his spiritual homeland, where he hopes to become intimate somehow with the sources of his passion (*amor*, 2.470, 3.285, 292), poetry. The poet embodies cultural ideals alien to his homeland, where he lives, consequently, in a kind of spiritual exile—just as the gardener lives in physical exile. In desiring glory, however, and in longing for what is absent, the poet experiences a spiritual disquiet from which the gardener is, apparently, free.

Overall the *Georgic* poet is deeply discontented with the present, as the recurrent motif of the Golden Age[34] necessarily implies. He appears to experience a powerful nostalgia for a lost and perfect past, the myth of the Golden Age expressing a standard by which the present is measured and always found wanting.

[31] Wuilleumier (above, note 10) 326. A certain refinement is implicit also in the term *dapibus*.

[32] Vinzenz Buchheit, *Der Anspruch des Dichters in Vergils Georgika* (Darmstadt 1972), made a great contribution in drawing attention to the importance and coherence of the poet's voice in the *Georgics*.

[33] Cf. Putnam 148.

[34] E.g., *G.* 1.125–28; *G.* 2.336–42, 536–40.

The passage under discussion here well exemplifies this pattern of discontent, for the *Georgic* poet represents himself as wishing to pursue his vision of the gardener but as prevented from doing so. He acknowledges in this way that the ideal which the gardener embodies is unavailable to him, hence isolated in the genre of georgic poetry, in time past, and in distance from Rome.

Comparison of the gardener to Orpheus, the traditional poet figure,[35] further illuminates the significance of poets and poetry in this poem. Orpheus, like the *Georgic* poet, is passionate, dissatisfied, and nostalgic. *Amor* and *furor* precipitate his tragic loss of Eurydice, an unremitting torment to him. In his longing for Eurydice he becomes, like the *Georgic* poet, nostalgic for an ideal past. (Eurydice is the final embodiment in the poem of the meaning of the Golden Age.) Through his music (*ipse cava solans aegrum testudine amorem*, 4.464), Orpheus' grief, austere and uncompromising, is eternally preserved, a memorial to the lost ideal.[36]

The poet is, in sum, subject to sorrows both beyond his control and also arising from within his own spirit. He seeks in song a past and irretrievable ideal (contrast Hor. *Od.* 4.11 where song is solace for necessary compromise of the ideal). The Corycian gardener, on the contrary, longing for nothing other than what he has, achieves unique contentment.

The fourth *Georgic* juxtaposes the impersonal, materialistic (cf. *amor habendi*, 4.177) society of bees to the extravagant, individual passions of the variously failed and imperfect Orpheus and Aristaeus.[37] Opposed to both is the fleeting ideal of the gardener who has their strengths and not their flaws. Although an individual, he has neither Aristaeus' concern for *vitae mortalis honorem* (4.326) and hope of divinity (*quid me caelum sperare iubebas*, 4.325) nor Orpheus' destructive passion (*quid tantus furor*, 4.495). To place the Corycian gardener passage in this book, therefore, is to point a contrast between the imperfect reality of both farmer and poet and an ideal of human existence, creative in pursuit of beauty, at peace with nature, and free from urban corruption. It is not the bees,[38] as often suggested, but the gardener who embodies the ideal life. Content without *gloria* and *honor*, indifferent to materialism, he lives closest to the morality of the Golden Age. The city, although so near and in reality so menacing, does not obtrude upon his existence. Unlike the conscripted farmers of

[35] On Orpheus as the archetypal poet, see Segal (above, note 5) 313 and Davis (above, note 22) 31, who cites *Ecls.* 3.46; 4.55, 57; 6.30; 8.55, 56.

[36] Cf. *Aen.* 1.461–62, where the effect of art is to memorialize sorrow and loss.

[37] See C. Perkell, "A Reading of Virgil's Fourth *Georgic*," *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 214–22, for a consideration of important parallels between Aristaeus and Orpheus. Segal (above, note 5) 319 notes that "neither Aristaeus nor Orpheus is a faultless model for the right relation to nature's demands."

[38] See H. Dahlmann, "Der Bienenstaat in Vergils' *Georgica*," *Abh Mainz*, Geistesw. Kl. 10 (1954) 555; Perret 83–85; note 28 above.

Georgic 1 or the exiled poets of *Eclogues* 1 and 9, whose shattered lives exemplify the city's ascendancy, he lives—ideally and impossibly—free of the city's influence. His virtues of simplicity and self-sufficiency suggest equally Stoicism and Epicureanism,[39] but his pursuit of beauty and his relationship with nature identify him most significantly as a poet—and as a poet of a particular sort. He exemplifies the timeless and free pursuit of beauty for its own sake. Untouched by the city's influence, he is also untroubled by its needs. He does not feel the challenge, so urgent to the *Georgic* poet, of voicing the city's ills or of attempting to forge, thereby, its moral and cultural values. In his harmony with nature and in his freedom to pursue an entirely esthetic ideal, the gardener is the creation of Vergil's imagination (thus I would interpret *vidisse*) and longing.

[39] Cf. Richter *ad* 125 ff., Klingner 310, note 1.