Emotion in Vergil's Georgics: Farming and the politics of hope

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These, of course, are conclusions that one might reach from a simple overview of the semantics of *elpis*-words in Greek or of explicit and nonmetaphorical evaluations of *elpis* in Greek authors. A survey of the metaphorical terms in which *elpis* is conceptualized certainly adds color, detail, and a sense of first-person, lived experience to what assessments that are couched in more literal terms tell us about *elpis* as a psychological phenomenon and as a social and ethical concept, but it does not lead us to a radically different conclusion regarding the overall conceptualization of the phenomenon. We have looked only at Homer, archaic poetry, and tragedy. We have largely passed over a large number of rather basic metaphors for *elpis* (having/not having, coming/going, giving/taking *elpis*, etc.). Most of the language of *elpis* even in poetic genres is nonmetaphorical. There are straightforward, nonmetaphorical ways of expressing the aspects of *elpis* that metaphor conveys. *Elpis* metaphors are rarely as phenomenologically rich as other emotion metaphors: the most prominent single theme is the gap between the goals that *elpis* presupposes and the outcomes of the desires that it involves. There do exist metaphors of self-division and self-distancing, in which the normatively functioning self and *elpis* emerge as partners or opponents, or the person is *elpis*’s passive object; and there is often a strong sense that *elpis*, like other emotions, can be opposed to reason. But though *elpis* may deceive you or lead you astray, it does not normally seize you or attack you. In contrast to many other emotion metaphors, *elpis* metaphors rarely make it as violent, disruptive, or irruptive an experience as many other emotions are. Metaphor can portray *elpis* as something that makes one feel safe, warm, or nourished, but beyond the general sense of well-being that these metaphors suggest, *elpis* metaphors give us no strong sense of specific physical symptoms. So what is it like to feel *elpis*? It can sustain or nourish you; it can be sweet and warm, or be your friend in adversity. But it can delude you when there is no realistic expectation of success; it can float out, miss the target, or lead you into inaction or excess; and the gulf between aim and outcome might feel like falling from a great height. *Elpides* may be containers empty of contents, light and floating objects, or winged creatures. *Elpis* fails in all these ways because, in its affective-desiderative aspect, it involves beliefs about and desires for future states of affairs. It is because these may be mistaken or misplaced that *elpis* may be irrational. Fundamentally, then, these metaphors tell us one very important thing: in so far as *elpis* is conceived of in metaphorical terms, it is as an affective state with a substantial goal-directed and desiderative aspect. Mere expectation of future states of affairs does not attract imagery to anything like the same extent. Investigation of metaphors for *elpis* in early Greek poetry thus confirms that what we call “hope” is a distinct and prototypical sense of *elpis* in archaic and classical Greek.

**Emotion in Vergil’s Georgics**

Farming and the Politics of Hope

DAMIEN NELIS

The farmers who are the addressees of Vergil’s instruction in the Georgics live in a turbulent, unpredictable world. They have their own gods, the Fauns (agrestum praesentia numina, 1.10), and at the outset the poet emphasizes divine gift-giving (vestro si munere, 1.7; munera vestra cano, 1.12) and guardianship (cultor nemorum, 1.14; ovium custos, 1.17), before going on to invoke all the gods and goddesses who have an interest in the fields to be present at the beginning of his didactic poem (diique deaeque omnes, studium quibus arva tueri, 1.21). Farmers are advised to pray to these gods (hiemes orate serenas, 1.100; in primis venerare deos, 1.338), and prayers are a recurring theme in the poem (votis, 1.42, 1.47, 1.537, 4.536; vota, 436; precibus, 4.470). But it is also made clear right from the beginning that the same farmers are to be pitied, since some of them at least have lost the way (ignarosque viae mecum miseratus agrestes, 1.41). And it is hardly reassuring to learn soon after that Jupiter himself has decided that their way must not be an easy one (pater ipse colendi / hau faeilem esse viam voluit, 1.121–2).

It probably seems too simple a rhetorical move to assemble a few quotations in order to create an opposition between positive and negative visions of the world of the farmers in Vergil’s Georgics. Those who have any knowledge of the scholarship devoted to this poem are only too well aware of the fact that many pages have been written about whether its overall vision of the world is optimistic or pessimistic. In the wake of a number of profoundly influential pessimistic readings of the poem in the second half of the twentieth century, one scholar was even prompted to tackle the whole question in a book entitled *Vergils Weltsicht: Optimismus und Pessimismus in Vergils Georgica*. He arrived at the

1. I would like to thank J. Farrell and Y. Nadeau for advice; it would be to do them an injustice to assume that they subscribe to all the ideas presented here.

On Vergil’s farmers and the question of addressees in the poem, see Schiesaro 1993.

conclusion that the poem was essentially optimistic in outlook. Subsequently, another searching and learned interpretation went even farther, interpreting the poem as an explicitly optimistic meditation on the positive good that can come from the blood-letting of civil war. However, other scholars have preferred to see deliberate ambivalence and polyphony at work throughout the text. In light of this approach, I have attempted recently to argue that a linear reading of the four books provides visions of the course of Roman history from both pre-Actium and post-Actium perspectives, thus permitting both pessimistic and optimistic reactions to the text's evocations of the state of Roman affairs in the later thirties and early twenties BCE. In this chapter I propose another way of thinking about these matters by attempting, first of all, to pay close attention to the depiction of the emotion-filled world of the farmers. I then go on to shift the focus away from the farmers to the world of Aristaeus, before turning finally to contemporary Roman politics. The aim is to illustrate the ways in which Vergil's poem constructs a passion-filled world full of anger, fear, pity, and hope.

The initial run through the text collecting and looking at references to emotions will mean going over much-trodden ground and discussing some well-known aspects of the Georgics. But I know of no reading of this text that has as its main focus Vergil's handling of the emotional world of farming, and so it seems worth making the effort of providing just such a study, in the hope that a scholar who has done more than anyone to teach us about the emotions in Greek and Latin literature will find something of interest in it.


5. Nelis 2013b. It seems worth revisiting questions about optimism and pessimism in the Georgics in order to try to get some sense of where the debate now stands. To some extent, the opposition was always forced and facile, and it cannot stand up to the pressures created by the complexities of the poem. But there can be little doubt that those scholars who have argued for a fundamentally Vergilian pessimism have put their finger on an important element in the poem's make-up and greatly improved our appreciation of the complexities of the text. The tendency of some to relate this debate to the question of the poem's supposed pro-Augustan or anti-Augustan stance (simply assuming that if the poem is optimistic it is Augustan and if pessimistic anti-Augustan) has probably been less beneficial, even if, once again, I think it has to be admitted that those who have sought out an anti-Augustan interpretation have done much to refine interpretation of the poem. Overall, the nuanced and attentive reading of Gale 2000, building on advances made possible by Perkell 1989 and also on the results of the literary historical approach forged by Thomas in his 1988 commentary and by Farrell 1991, makes a very strong case for the poem's exquisitely balanced ambivalence.

6. Perkell 1989 and Thibodeau 2001 both provide fine insights into various aspects of emotion in the Georgics. The former (esp. 45-59) concentrates on the sense of pity evoked by the poet in his depiction of the human condition; the latter (chaps. 4 and 5) argues that the poet enchants his readers into both passionate feelings and reactions to the agricultural world, to the audience and to the poet himself, emphasizing (p. 155) the text's "psychagogic power."

Book 1

"What makes the cornfields glad" (Quid faciat laetas segetes, 1.1); thus begins Georgics 1. The adjective, of course, has strong connotations of fertility and rich exuberance here, but there is no doubt that the sense of happiness and joy is still felt. Its occurrence highlights the beginning of a recurring theme throughout the poem, with the adjective appearing no fewer than eleven times in book 1 alone. At lines 69, 74, 101, 102, 325, and 339 it is used in turn of crops, pulses, corn, fields, crops, and grass; at 301 it is used of farmers (who are also rejoicing, ovantes, at line 346) and at 304 of sailors; at 412 and 423 it is used of rooks (who are again rejoicing, ovantes, at 433) and herds of cattle. The world of the farmer can, therefore, be one of happiness. In fact, it bears repeating that the first thing the poet declares is that he will sing what it takes to bring about this state (1.1-5):

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.

What makes the cornfields glad; beneath what star it befits to upturn the ground, Maecenas, and clasp the vine to her elm; the tending of oxen and the charge of the keeper of a flock; and all the skill of thrifty bees; of this will I begin to sing.

Communication of the knowledge required to make the fields happy is immediately and inextricably linked to looking after vines and animals. As with the adjective laetus, the Latin words used to refer to the care, skill, and experience required to look after herds and bees (cura, cultus, experientia) are here established as keywords of the whole poem. As is so frequent in Vergil, verbal repetition helps build thematic strands that create unifying structures of thought. Only fourteen verses and then again twenty-three verses after its initial use, the noun cura reappears. At 1.17 it refers to Pan's attachment to Mount


8. On the meaning of laetus see Erren 2003, 5 on 1.1; on its repeated use and thematic importance see Jenkyns 1998, 330-33.

9. Cura will occur thirty times, cultus seven times, experientia twice; the verb curare is used five times.

10. Burck 1959 clarified the question of the poem's organic unity, but some later criticism has too often ignored him and operated on the basis of distinctions between didactic sections and more descriptive, digressive passages; cf. Nelis 2013b, 250. On the thematic unity of book 1 in particular, see Nelis 2010.
Maenalus in Arcadia (Pan, ovium custos, tua si tibi Maenala curae) 11. At 1.26 it refers to Caesar's possible choice of the earth as his particular sphere of interest, following his apotheosis (24–6):

\[
\text{tuque adeo, quem mox quae sint habitura deorum}
\]

\[
\text{concilia incertum est, urbis invisi, Caesar,}
\]

\[
\text{terrurumque velis curam, . . .}
\]

and thou, whatsoever place thou art soon to hold in the gods' consistory, whether thou wilt look on cities and have earth in keeping, . . .

Human cura has its parallel in divine cura, and the differing applications help to give a sense of the precise meanings we should attach to the word. It refers obviously to taking care of someone or something, but has connotations also of interest, concern, and anxiety, thus implying an emotional attachment or obviously to taking care of someone or something, but has connotations also of interest, concern, and anxiety, thus implying an emotional attachment or engagement.12 Very quickly, human cura again comes to the fore when the poet explains how important it is for the plowman, before he sets to tilling the earth, to know the local climate and the characteristics of the place in which he finds himself (50–53):

\[
\text{ac prius ignotum ferro quam scindimus aequor,}
\]

\[
\text{ventos et varium caeli praediscere morem}
\]

\[
\text{cura sit ac patrios cultusque habitusque locorum,}
\]

\[
\text{et quid quaeque ferat regio et quid quaeque recuset.}
\]

And ere yet our iron cleaves the unknown plain, be our care first to learn the winds, and the sky's shifting mood, and the ground's native nurture and dress, and what each quarter will bear and what each will reject.

Verse 52, containing both cura and cultus, obviously recalls verse 3. Compare:

\[
\text{cura sit ac patrios cultusque habitusque locorum}
\]

\[
\text{conveniat, quae cura boum, qui cultus habendo}
\]

On one level the connection between the two passages is a perfectly logical one, since line 43 (Vere nova . . .) marks a new beginning, as the first verse

11. It is often very difficult in translation to represent the presence of verbal repetition. Day Lewis, for example, uses two different terms to render the first three occurrences of cura: care at 3 and 26, love at 17. For the fundamental problems, see Raster 2002, 6–8, on translating the language of the emotions, and Woodman 2004, xxii–xxvi, on the problem of verbal consistency in the target language. On the word cura in general, see Hauser 1954. On the importance of cura in the Georgics, see Schiesaro 1993, 140–42, and on links between cura and labor, see Gale 2000, chap. 5.

12. Note too that Proserpine's desire to stay in Hades is also expressed in terms of cura: nec repetita sequi curaret Proserpina matrem, 1.39.

of didactic instruction proper, after the end of the prologue of lines 1–42. The release brought by spring (liquitur . . . resolvit, 43–4) means that it is time for the bull to groan with effort (ingemere, 46) as it helps drive deep the plow. In what is apparently a highly sentient world, it is the field itself that answers the prayers (seges . . . votis respondet, 47) of the "greedy farmer" (avari / agricolae, 47–8).13 This strong sense of engagement and intensity is reinforced by the cura and cultus of line 52. Here they are prerequisites that must be applied before setting to work (ac prius . . . quam . . . praediscere). The echo of line 3 thus emphasizes the constant and continuous care the farmers must take, and so it begins to become clear that it is not at all by chance that in the initial section of the first book the poet is putting such emphasis on happiness, commitment, and prayer. By doing so, he heightens the sense of both human and divine care and the potential for successful outcomes. This is a world in which the farmer who works and plows well can do much to help his fields (multum adeo . . . iuvat arva, 94–5), as humans, animals, and the land itself are all presented as inextricably interconnected in an agricultural world full of energy, effort, and strong emotional engagement. Care, knowledge, dedication, endeavor, toughness, and prayer pervade the opening scenes. But before long, the poet will also state much grimmer realities.

The presence of fixed laws in the workings of nature is already mentioned in lines 1.60–61, where we hear of the fixed and eternal laws imposed by nature (leges aeternaque foedera . . . imposuit natura). But at lines 1.118–46, Vergil widens the scope and offers his addressees a deeper historical and theological perspective, by explaining how the Golden Age gave way to the rule of Jupiter, who established a new dispensation demanding hard work. Now, a new key word come to the fore, labor, appearing at the beginning and end of the passage in question (labores, 118, . . . labor, 145).14 In Jupiter's new system, the emphasis on danger, harm, and suffering adds a new dimension to the farmers' world, as the poet now insists on defining more precisely than before the broader scope within which his farmers must live and strive. But work and suffering also have
positive aspects. They are seen as inherently educational, sharpening the capacities of human beings through, again, "cares" (curis, 123), keeping them from sloth (gravi ... veterno, 124), obliging them to develop knowledge and skills (artes, 133 and 145), and helping ensure some kind of victory (labor omnia vicit / improbus, 145–6). Immediately after this famous, much-discussed declaration, the next section of the poem begins with the revelation that humans have long benefited from the instruction of Ceres (prima Ceres ferro mortalis uertere terram / instituit, 147–8). The text thus emphasizes in a number of ways established continuities and places the life of the farmers in a broad perspective that englobes all of human history, combining lucid perception of the fact that that history can be seen as one of pitiful decline from primeval perfection but also as one of improvement brought about by educative processes leading to cultural evolution.

On the one hand, therefore, the opening sections of the first book of the Georgics present a world of eternal realities in which farmers can profit from divine and human teaching, offer prayer that can lead to happiness, submit to the pressure of hard work and see that their efforts can lead to learning and progress. But the poet also makes it starkly clear that there are dangers and obstacles and that in spite of their prayers disaster can strike at any time. We hear, for example, of the threat of weeds and lack of moisture (69–70); of rain, heat, and wind, (92–3); flooding rivers (115–17); troublesome animals (118–21); and this series culminates in the form of the hugely destructive storms that can wash away everything (1.311–34). This passage is unequivocally illustrative of the fundamental truth already stated earlier, that if farmers ever relax for a moment and cease their efforts, the laws of nature mean that they risk immediate disaster, a point the poet illustrates with the vivid simile in which a boat risks being carried off downstream if the rower stops his efforts (1.199–203). A similar point is made in another way soon after in lines 219–26, where the poet tells...
But if his circle be bright alike when he brings the day and buries the day he brought, vain will be thy terror of rain-clouds, and thou shalt discern the forests weaving in a clear wind from the north.

It is significant that these lines are quickly followed by a key transitional passage, as the poet turns from weather signs to Roman politics, linking the sun's role in relation to the former by pointing out that it reacted also to the assassination of Julius Caesar and gave clear signs of impending doom, thereby announcing civil war (1.463–8):

Solem quis dicere falsum audeat? Ille etiam caecos instare tumultus
saepè monet fraudemque et operta tumescere bella;
ille etiam extincto miseratus Caesare Romam,
cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine textit
impiaque aeternam timuerunt saecula noctem.

who shall dare to call the sun untrue? He likewise often warns of the imminence of dim alarms, of treachery and the gathering of hidden wars; he likewise had pity on Rome at Caesar's decease, when he veiled his shining face in dim rusty red, and an evil age dreaded eternal night.

The poet has been building up to this climactic mention of fear. First, it was a weapon in the farmer's armory in his war with nature (155). Then the farmers were terrified by the violent forces of nature in the form of storms (331), and the sun's role in relation to the former by pointing out that it reacted also to the assassination of Julius Caesar and gave clear signs of impending doom, thereby announcing civil war (1.463–8):

But rapidly and subtly the sun has been linked to Caesar, Caesar has died, been "put out" (extincto), and humans fear a threat of eternal night. We thus slip smoothly from didactic instruction to description of events in recent Roman history, and the first book of the poem then closes with a horrific vision of a world at caught in the rage of war (saevit toto Mars impius orbe, 1.511). But since this climactic passage stands to a certain extent outside the emotional world of the farmers, we will leave it aside for the moment and, noting only the prominence attached to fear at this point in the poem, return to it at the end of this chapter.20

Book 2

It is generally agreed that in contrast to the first book, the second gives a brighter and more positive picture of the world, without going so far as to say that it is totally and uniformly optimistic.21 The passages in praise of Italy (2.136–76), spring (2.323–45), and the rustic life (2.458–74, 513–38) undoubtedly ensure an almost consistently uplifting tone. A reading of the book that pays close attention to the handling of the emotions tends to look in the same direction, and it seems that Vergil has once again paid keen attention to this particular aspect of his depiction of the world of his farmers. As in book 1, happiness is a recurrent theme. When the agricultores are addressed explicitly for the first time at 2.37, the impersonal iuvat expresses a general sense of pleasure, followed quickly by an address to Maecenas, thus bringing two different kinds of addresses into close connection in a passage full of enthusiasm and joy.22 This atmosphere is immediately prolonged at 2.48, where it is the land itself that rejoices, as trees spring up happy and strong (laeta et forti surgunt), and again at 2.112, 144, 181, and 184, where in turn shores rejoice in myrtle groves (litora myrtetis laetissima), Italy has happy flocks (armentaque laeta), rough, dry land takes pleasure in the olive (Palladia gaudent silva vivacis olivae), and rich land rejoices in sweet water (punguis humus dulcique ulignae laeta). The adjective laetus occurs again at 221 and 262 of vines. At 252 we hear that some soils can be too rich (justo / laetior). At 326, showers of rain are described as falling from Aether into the bosom of his happy and fertile wife (i.e., the Earth, coniugis ... laetae). At 363–4, vines send shoots pushing joyously upwards (laetus ad auras / palmes). As we move...
into the second half of the book, attention shifts carefully from land and the plants to humans and animals. At 388, the farmers raucously celebrate Bacchus with happy songs (carmina laeta). In the whole section praising rustic life that begins with the famous makarismos declaring the happiness of farmers and of those who understand the workings of nature and know rural gods (O fortunatos nimium, sua si bon norint, / agricolae, 2.458-9; Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas, 2.490; fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestes, 2.493), pigs come home happy full of acorns (glande suas laeti redeunt, 2.520), and on the "happy green" (gramine laeto, 2.525) well-fed young goats lock horns. Given the parallel positioning, the whole closing sequence reads like an antidote to the grim spectacle of civil war that ended the first book. Two similarities suggest that the two passages are very much in dialogue on the level of the emotions.

At 2.490-92, the happy person who understands the workings of nature is able to put fear of death (metus) to flight, thus providing a contrast with the fear of eternal night mentioned at 1.468. On its own, given the differing kinds of fear, this parallel would not be enough to link the two passages, but there is more. Immediately afterwards, at 2.493-9, in his praise of those who know the gods of the countryside and know nothing of Rome and its violence and corruption, Vergil adopts a singular (fortunatus et ille . . . illum . . . ille) that while generalizing nevertheless helps to promote a strong sense of immediacy. The man in question is said not to suffer pain from pitying those in need nor to envy the wealthy (498-9):

    neque ille
    aut doluit miserans inopem aut invidit habenti.

    nor may pity of the poor or envy of the rich cost him a pang.

The point is not that the countryman is an unfeeling brute. It is rather that he lives in a rural society that is so akin to that of the golden age that there is simply neither place nor need for these emotions. Our countryman experiences neither pity nor envy because he lives in a world in which the earth pours forth everything in abundance for all to share. This absence of these two particular emotions in society presented as almost prelapsarian at the end of book 2 inevitably brings to mind the presence of pity (miseratus, 1.466) and envy (invidet, 1.504) at the close of the first book. There, the sun pities Rome and the gods begrudge humans Caesar's presence among them, the very presence of these two emotional states betraying the reality of a world gone awry. As on so many other levels, the final section of the second book holds up an alternative, more optimistic vision to the horrors that surround the end of the first. However, at the very last minute in book 2, the picture of the happy life of Roman farmers that the poet has been describing in detail is at least partially destabilized by means of a subtle temporal shift. After explicitly likening their world to that of the Saturnian golden age, that age is suddenly presented as a thing of the past (2.532-40):

    necdum etiam audierant inflari classica, necdum
    impositos duris crepitare incudibus ensis
    nor yet withal had they heard war-trumpets blown, nor yet the hard anvil
    clink under the sword.

This ominous close, clearly recalling precise details of the maelstrom of violence at the end of the first book, is in fact the last in a series of reminders, amidst the overall sense of exuberance and success that we have seen dominating throughout book 2, that less pleasant realities abide.

In a short section running from line 195 to 202 the poet advises those who are interested in keeping herds of cattle or flocks of sheep and goats, rather than vines and trees, to go to Tarentum or Mantua. The former is rich (saturi, 197), the latter unlucky (et qualem infelix amitis Mantua campum, 198). It is perhaps the sheer dominance of more joyous aspects in book 2 that makes this line stand out. The historical reference is unmistakably to the evictions that took place in Cisalpine Gaul in the wake of the battle of Philippi of 42 BCE, events that form the traumatic background to Eclogues 1 and 9, and in a real sense to the Eclogues as a whole.23 Once more, as at the end of book 1, the poet combines his course of instruction to farmers with allusion to specific and recent historical events, this one being a single, fleeting example that must be seen in the context of a much broader pattern at work in the whole poem that we will return to in the final section of this chapter.

Further realistic touches ensure that darker aspects never totally disappear as the reader makes her or his way in the second book. Very soon after the reference to unlucky Mantua, at 2.207, and there seems to be a clear connection in the poet's mind between the two passages,24 the poet describes an angry plowman going into the forest to chop down trees and clear land for plowing, in doing so destroying the ancient homes of birds that must fly away homeless (2.207-11):

    aut unde iratus siluam deexit arator
    et nemora evertit multos ignava per annos,
    antiquaque domos avium cum stirpibus imis
    eruit; illa e altum nidis petire relicitis,
    at rudis enuit impulso vomere campus.

23. See Osgood 2006, chap. 3.
or where the angry ploughman has carted the forest-trees away, and
levelled the copes that lay idle many a year, and rooted clean out the
birds' ancient homes; they spring skyward from their abandoned nests,
but the tangled field gleams behind the driven share.

As so often in book 1, there is a typically grim ambivalence here. Destruction
and flight sit alongside a move from laziness to hard work and improvement.
The text evokes a sense both of plangent sympathy and of harsh realism. But
what is difficult to explain is the anger of the plowman. Why is he angry as he
brings out strongly the realization that progress brings with it loss and suffering.
sets out to clear the land? Vergil offers no clear answer to this question, but he
on hard work, the whole (Jupiter,
as already noted, the farmer was told of the necessity to frighten away birds
(sonitus terrebis aves). The double impact of the tough farmer on helpless birds
brings out strongly the realization that progress brings with it loss and suffering.
Finally, another reminder of harsh realities occurs at 2.419 where there is fear
that storms may damage the ripened vines (et iam maturis metuendus Iuppiter uvis), the naming of Jupiter heightening the sense of potential danger. This verse
in fact brings to a close a short section in which there is considerable emphasis
on hard work, the whole (Jupiter, labor, fear) very much recalling for a brief
moment the atmosphere of the first book.

Book 3

The world of the third book is a strikingly passionate one. The reader who
turns to it directly after the first half of the poem is struck by an atmosphere
of heightened emotional intensity. In general, the focus is fixed on the animals,
but the presence of persistent anthropomorphism helps bridge this gap with the
world of humans. A mainly linear reading of the book will bring out the main
areas that receive special emphasis and permit appreciation of certain aspects
of structure and placement that are also relevant to an appreciation of Vergil's
overarching strategy as we move into the second half of the poem.

In the prologue to book 3, the third-person impersonal verb iuvat (3.23)
appears once again. On this occasion it is used to express the pleasure of imag­
ing the procession and sacrifices that will accompany the foundation of the
temple the poet sees himself founding for Caesar along the banks of the River

Mincius. 26 This is not the place for a discussion of this complex and import­
ant passage, but it is relevant to the purposes of this chapter to point out that
the extraordinarily enthusiastic and celebratory atmosphere that accompanies
the poet's shift to historical matters and the triumphs of Caesar helps stamp
a heightened emotional tone on this book. 27 Soon after, picking up the refer­
ence to triumphal games and chariot racing at 3.18, comes a brilliantly vivid
description of a chariot race, with the high hopes and fears of the charioteers as
they dash out of the starting boxes (cum spes adrectae iuvenum, exsultantisque
haerit / corda pavor pulsan, 3.105–6), obsessed by a passionate desire for victo­
ry (tantus amor laudum, tantae est victoria curae, 3.112). At certain points in
the passage, ambiguity about whether Vergil is describing the drivers or the
horses forces the reader to elide distinctions and see all involved as caught up in
a passionate frenzy. Both this tone and consistent anthropomorphism are pro­
longed when in the following sections Vergil turns to the question of breeding
and goes on to put enormous emphasis on the power of erotic passion, both in
the animal world and among humans. 28 Some famous lines sum up the picture,
giving an impression of almost universal erotic turmoil (2.242–4):

Omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque
et genus aequoreum, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
in furias ignemque ruunt: amor omnibus idem.

Yes all on earth, the race of man and beast, the tribes of the sea, cattle
and coloured birds break into fury and fire; in all love is the same.

The crucial aspect of the poet's didactic message is the dangerous nature of
such passion and the need to struggle against it. Whether one is rearing cattle or
horses, just as it is crucial to protect animals from certain dangerous pests, such
as the gadfly that terrorizes them (3.146–56), so animals must be kept away from
sexual desire, if one wants to keep up their strength (3.209–11):

Sed non ulla magis viris industria firmat
quam Venerem et caeci stimulos avertere amoris,
sive boum sive est cui gratior usus equorum.

25. See Thomas 1988 on 207 for Vergil's use of vivid adjectives to characterize his plowmen; he sug­
gests that Vergil may intend some sort of gloss in the jingle iratus + arator; O'Hara 1996 does not follow
him.

26. On this occurrence of iuvat see Fleischer 1960, 309, discussing the interesting question of whom
it pleases to watch the sacrifices. He could have made more of the fact that the reference to slaughtered
cattle that it gives pleasure to see (caesos ... iuvenos) cannot but recall 2.337, where it was exactly
the slaughter of cattle (caesis ... iuvenis) that marked the end of the golden age; see Dyson 1999. Given these
curiously contrasting images of sacrifice it seems reasonable to see the impersonal iuvat as deliberately
distancing the poet from the pleasure felt by others.

27. On the prologue to book 3, see, for example, Nels 2004; Meban 2008; Hardie 2009, 47–8; Pieri
2003, 2011a, chaps. 1 and 2; Dufallo 2013, chap. 4. For discussion of Invidia at 3.37 see below.

But no diligence more confirms their strength than to keep love and the stings of blind passion aloof, whether profit of oxen or of horses be more to our mind.

Erotic passions cause dissension (proelia, 220), anger (irasci, 232), and violence (vi, 220; vulneribus, 221; plagas, 226), all adding up to a madness that reduces to inefficacy all the efforts of the farmers to look after their herds.

Even the poet seems to be caught up in an excessive desire at this point, and so he calls himself to order and brings to a close the first half of the book in a vividly abrupt authorial intervention as part of a proem to the book's second half (2.284-93):

\[
\text{Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus, singula dum capti circumvactamur amore. hoc satís armentis: superat pars altera curae, lanigeros agitare greges hirtasque capellas; hic labor, hinc laudem fortes sperate coloni. nec sum animi dubius uerbis ea vincere magnum quam sit et angustis hunc addere rebus honorem; sed me Parnasi deserta per ardua dulcis raptat amor; iuvat ire iugis, qua nulla priorum Castaliam molli devertitur orbita clivo.}
\]

But time fleets meanwhile, fleets beyond recovery, while in loving enthralment we pass on and on. Enough now of cattle: half of our charge is left, the herding of fleecy flocks and rough she-goats. Here is work; hence enthralment we pass on and on. Enough now of cattle: half of our charge is left, the herding of fleecy flocks and rough she-goats. Here is work; hence enthralment we pass on and on.

One scholar has spoken of the poet as here involved in an "emotional race," well noting that these lines pick up the chariot imagery of the prologue to book 3.\(^\text{29}\) As well as the poet's passion for his subject matter, noteworthy also here is the mention of hope in line 288 (sperate). The transition from cattle and horses to sheep and goats initially will bring a diminution of intensity, and much of what follows is often close to the pastoral mode in terms of setting and tone. There is thus something slightly ironic in the call to the sturdy countrymen to embark on labor and hope for glory from the kinds of humble activity that are now going to be described. Nevertheless, the very presence of the emotion here right in the center of the book illustrates Vergil's interest in it. It is obvious here too that there is a connection between the aspirations of the farmers and those of the poet.\(^\text{30}\) He too hopes for success and recognition (honorem) amidst lowly topics (angustis), carried away as he is, like everyone and everything else by love (amore, 285; amor, 292).\(^\text{31}\)

One short passage in the third book ensures the continuity of references to happiness. From 349 to 381 the poet contrasts the life of his Italian shepherds with those in Libya and Scythia. As a whole, this section fits coherently into a pattern of ethnographical import that operates throughout the whole poem.\(^\text{32}\) The picture of extreme conditions and especially of dying animals (pereunt pecudes, 3.368) foreshadows the account of the plague that will soon begin. It is perhaps not surprising therefore, given the poet's obvious interest in establishing patterns of thematic continuity, to encounter the key adjective laetus twice in rapid succession, in a brilliant vignette (3.368-80):

\[
\text{intereunt pecudes, stant circumfusa pruinis corpora magna boum, confertoque agmine cervi torment mole nova et summis uix cornibus exstant. hos non immissis canibus, non cassibus uillis puniceaeve agitant pavidos formidine pennae, sed frustra oppositum trudentis pectore montem comminus obtruncant ferro graviterque rudentis caedunt et magno laeti clamore reportant.}
\]

ipsi in defossis specubus secura sub alta otia agunt terra, congestaque robora totasque advolveere focis ulmos ignique dedere.

hic noctem ludo ducent, et pocula laeti fermento atque acidis imitantur vitea sorbis.

30. For the pervasive link between the work of the farmer and the work of the poet in the Georgics, Putnam 1979, 27014, makes the essential connection, thus opening up the way to the metapoetic readings that have since become relatively common.

31. There is a distinction between the two loves mentioned in this passage. The former evokes a lack of control and something to be avoided, whereas the latter suggests control and orderly progression. Gale 2000, 55112, sees the problem, contrasting this dulcis amor with the destructive eroticism of lines 209-83. Miles on 3.289-93 says that the passage's second sweet amor refers to love of the Muses. Amor (sc. Musarum), the reader being able to supply their presence from the Lucretian model, DRN 1.9.24-5. amor / Musarum. On the paradox that amor seems to be necessarily involved in both violent destruction and orderly creation, see Miles 1980, 186-205; Nappa 2005, 141, emphasizes the connection between amor and poetry. See also Putnam 1979, 202-3, taking into account both the poet's reference to fleeting time and his mention of love and seeing the presence of both negative and positive elements: "emotion and time can also take positive forms in the mind's doings." In general on the paradoxes surrounding amor's simultaneous creative and destructive potential in the Georgics, see Miles 1975, reworked in 1980, chap. 4.

32. See Thomas 1982, chaps. 3 and 4.
Meanwhile all the air is a single drift of snow: the cattle die, the broadbacked oxen stand in a frosty shroud, and the deer huddle in troops, benumbed by the fresh masses that their antler tips barely outreach. On them men slip not the hounds, hunt them not with any nets or the terror of crimson-feathered toils; but while they vainly push against the breasting hill, slay them steel in hand and cut them down deep-braying and with merry clamour carry them home. Themselves in caverns deep sunken under earth they fleet their careless leisure, and roll to the hearth oak from the wood-pile and whole elms to feed the fire. Here they pass the night in games, and with beer and bitter meaths joyously counterfeit draughts of the vine.

Much of the force of the passage comes from opposition and inversion. The deer are not hunted in the traditional Italian manner, but are trapped as a form of ately to the joyous shouts of the hunters. We are tempted surely to see these life within it. The profound sadness of a farmer who has just seen one of his bulls die while plowing is brought out starkly by the added detail that the surviving bull laments as if losing a brother. Thus human and animal are caught in a moment of shared grief. One final passage of book 3 deserves attention. It occurs early in the book and has been taken out of turn both because of its singularity and the fact that it is intimately connected to a passage in the fourth book. At line 3.96, in a phrase of stark simplicity, the poet tells his farmers to shut up inside and show no pity to aged horses: abde domo, nec turpi ignosce senectae. The harshness of the advice certainly seems to have struck ancient readers, since a "gerontophile tradition," as it described by R. Thomas, tried to interpret the sentence otherwise, taking nec turpi together in order to give the sense "old age not to be despised." But following after the equally grim abde domo, it is clear that the poet is here intent on emphasizing once again certain harsh, violent realities that are not to be edulcorated. Once again too, we come across an example of advice that proposes a lack of emotion: the farmer must show no pity. He thus recalls the farmer at the end of book 2, who knows no pity. In contrast, the poet, Caesar, and the sun are all caught up in a sense of pity in the first book. This is a thematic nexus that will come to a head in the final book of the poem.

BOOK 4

In the first half of the fourth book, leading up to the beginning of the story of Aristaeus beginning at line 281, the most striking aspect is the passionless behavior of both the bees and their keepers. The keeper must look after his hives with care because both cold and heat can be dangerous (utraque vis apibus pariter metuenda, 4.37), and at 4.239-40 fear of a harsh winter (sin duram metues hiemem) and pity for the suffering of bees (res miserabere fractas) are.
noted, but these are isolated moments. On two occasions, in a manner that cannot but recall the harsh instruction delivered at 3.96, nec te turpi ignoscere senectae, unfeeling action is prescribed. First at 4.90, if two swarms have set to fighting, the losing “king” must be put to death—dede neci. Soon after, at 4.106-7, the best way of encouraging the bees to stay inside the hive and work to produce honey rather than flitting around in the open air is to rip the wings off their “king” bees—tu regibus alas / eripe, with the imperative as first word in the hexameter clearly recalling the earlier dede, in the same metrical position. Famously, of course, Vergil’s bees are themselves free from all sexual desire and procreate without sex (4.197-202):

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 refigunt.

This custom approved of bees may truly waken thy wonder, that they neither delight in bodily union, nor melt away in languor of love, or bear their young by birth-throes; but straight from the leaves, from the scented herbage gather their children in their mouths, themselves keep up the succession of king and tiny citizens, and fashion anew their halls and waxen realm.

Without it being easy to agree on exactly what more general point Vergil wants to make here about possible connections between the behavior of bees and Roman society, these lines obviously take the reader back to the words of 3.244, amor omnibus idem: love is the same for all—but apparently not for bees. There is also present a reminiscence of 2.498-9, where the golden-age-tinged world the farmers live in means that they need feel neither pity nor envy. Here too in the fourth book the poem offers another glimpse of an emotionless society. And this kind of society is again evaluated in positive terms. Even in their loveless world, the bees succeed in renewing their stock, and when their society is threatened by disease and the race needs restoring (4.281-2), help is at hand, because of the invention of bugonia by Aristaeus. It is to the telling of this story that Vergil famously devotes the second half of the fourth book of the poem.

THE STORY OF ARISTAEUS

Much has been written about the reasons for the transition in the middle of book 4 from didactic instruction to mythological narrative.37 What must impress the reader who is interested in working a way through this poem with an eye to the handling of the emotions is that the shift to the telling of the story of Aristaeus and of the inset tale of Orpheus and Eurydice brings with it an extraordinary intensity of passion. First, we see Aristaeus complaining sadly to his mother about the loss of his hives (tristis . . . multa querens, 4.319-20). His sad lament (luctus, 4.350) that Cyrene no longer loves him (quo tibi nostri / pulsus amor, 4.324-5) interrupts the numerous love stories being sung by Clymene (densos divum numerabat amores, 4.347). Cyrene is frightened at such an expression of grief (gemitu non frustra exterrita tanto, 4.353; percussa nova mentem formidine mater, 4.357). When Aristaeus is granted entrance into his mother’s watery realm, the narrator insists on his astonishment at what he sees (mirans, 4.363; stupefactus, 4.365). Next, after Cyrene’s description of Proteus and her son’s successful attempt to chain him down, the seer, with flashing eyes and gnashing teeth (ardentis oculos intorsit lumino glauco, / et graviter frendens, 4.347), Cyrene is frightened at such an expression of grief (gemitu non frustra exterrita tanto, 4.353; percussa nova mentem formidine mater, 4.357). When Aristaeus is granted entrance into his mother’s watery realm, the narrator insists on his astonishment at what he sees (mirans, 4.363; stupefactus, 4.365). Next, after Cyrene’s description of Proteus and her son’s successful attempt to chain him down, the seer, with flashing eyes and gnashing teeth (ardentis oculos intorsit lumino glauco, / et graviter frendens, 4.451-2) tells the tragic story of the deaths of Orpheus and Eurydice.

In Proteus’s narrative an even higher pitch of emotional intensity is achieved. Divine anger is the reason why Aristaeus has lost his hives, as he pays the price for great sins. Immediately, Orpheus is introduced with the adjective miserabilis (4.454), raging at the loss of his wife (graviter . . . saevit, 4.456). There follows at once the description of the other laments that follow her death, those of the Dryads and the landscape itself (clamore . . . flerunt . . . , 4.460-63). Next comes the extreme grief of Orpheus, who tries to console himself with song (solans aegrum testudine amorem, 4.464) and enters the terrifying Underworld (caligantem nigra formidine . . . lucam, 4.468), with its frightening king (regemque tremendum, 4.469), who is untouched by human prayers (nesciaque humanis precibus mansuetere corda, 4.470) as he presides over the multiple horrors of his realm (4.471-84). In Vergil’s version of the story, Orpheus succeeds in getting his wife back, but as he leads her out of Hades some kind of madness (dementia, 4.488) seizes him. The poet comments that this temporary moment of insanity in a lover’s mind would have been pardonable, if only the Underworld knew how to pardon (dementia . . . / ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere Manes, 4.488-9). Eurydice is lost for a second time and disappears, lamenting her husband’s madness (furor, 495). Orpheus

37. For a recent survey see Nappa 2005, 186–218.
38. Cf. miserum of Eurydice at 494 and 526; the miserabile carmen of the bird in a simile at 514; at 532 the death of Aristaeus’s bees is miserabile.
laments again (fletu, 4.505; flevisse, 4.509; querens, 520) and his endless weeping is illustrated by a highly emotional simile (4.511–15):

qualis populea maerens philomela sub umbra
amissos queritur fetus, quos durus arator
observans nido implumes detraxit; at illa
flet noctem ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
integat et maestis loca questibus implet.

But for all the tragedy of this scene, as the rough farmer takes the nestlings and leaves their mother to bewail her loss, clearly recalling the violent impact of the farmer on bird-life earlier in the poem (1.156; 2.209–11), Orpheus, now strikingly no longer feeling any love in the very next verse and leaves their mother to bewail her loss, clearly recalling the violent impact of the man's passion stated at 3.244, no longer feeling any love in the very next verse and leaves their mother to bewail her loss, clearly recalling the violent impact of the man's passion stated at 3.244, animum flexere hymenaei, manic Bacchic rites (4.520–27).

But for all the tragedy of this scene, as the rough farmer takes the nestlings and leaves their mother to bewail her loss, clearly recalling the violent impact of the farmer on bird-life earlier in the poem (1.156; 2.209–11), Orpheus, now strikingly no longer feeling any love in the very next verse (nulla Venus, non illi animum flexere hymenaei, 4.516), clearly recalling the Venus that the bees have no resort to earlier and inverting once again the rule of all-embracing erotic passion stated at 3.244, amor omnibus idem, proceeds only in provoking the passionate rage of Thracian women, who tear him limb from limb amidst their pitiable song and fills the region round with their mournful complaint.

The end of Proteus's narrative and his sudden departure lead into Cyrene's revelation of how Aristaeus can put an end to his sad plight (nate, licet tristis animo deponere curas, 4.531) and to the anger of the Nymphs between different elements in his poem and achieving overall thematic unity. For the sake of brevity, the main parallels will be presented as a list:

(1) Sad Aristaeus lamenting the loss of his bees (tristis ... multa querens, 4.319–20) recalls the sad farmer who sees one of his bulls die and that death lamented by another bull (tristis ... marentem, 3.517–18).
(2) The love stories sung by Clymene and the erotic intensity of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice recall the passages about the eroticism of animals and the universal power of love in book 2.
(3) The sense of pity that becomes almost omnipresent once Orpheus is introduced by the adjective miserabilis (4.454) recalls the presence of pity as a key emotion in the closing section of each of the first three books (1.466; 2.499; 3.478), with a particularly strong parallel between the plague at the end of book 3 and the theme of disease at the end of book 4.
(4) The durus arator (4.512) plundering nests recalls the angry, nest-destroying plowman at 2.207 (iratus ... arator, with the noun each time in the same metrical position at line-end).

Loss, sadness and lament, sexual passion and madness, pity and anger, and in turn an emphatic absence of erotic desire all contribute to create a mix of emotions both in the agricultural world inhabited by the farmers and in the world of Aristaeus. He is on one level a cultor (1.14) and a pastor (4.317), and so comparable to the poem's agricolae, but it is clear too that there is a gap and a crucial difference in poetic register between their worlds. In some sense, therefore, the mythological tale takes on the status of a kind of parable. From it, the farmers, always to be imagined as addressees of the whole poem, can take the lesson that obedience to precept and piety can help to right loss and ensure better word, be usefully described as an epyllion.39 But what must also command attention here is the presence of thematic continuity with the rest of the poem.

Whatever overall interpretive force one wants to give to the connections that can be established between the concerns of the Aristaeus episode and the rest of the poem, it cannot be denied that they are numerous and strong where the emotions are concerned.40 A quick look back over the mythological narrative enables the drawing up of a series of connections. What follows is not exhaustive, but intended to be detailed enough to be illustrative of the main point, which is that in terms of the handling of the emotions in this poem, the story of Aristaeus picks up themes already mentioned earlier in the text, mainly by means of verbal repetition. Awareness of the ways in which we find various aspects of the emotional world of the Italian farmers reflected in the passionate mythological tale of Aristaeus, Orpheus, and Eurydice will illustrate how Vergil succeeds in creating connections between different elements in his poem and achieving overall thematic unity. For the sake of brevity, the main parallels will be presented as a list:

40. See, for example, L. Morgan 1999, 17, for whom it is a given that the key to the understanding of the poem as a whole lies in the Aristaeus episode.
success. The fact that Aristaeus finds a response to the disease that hits his stock seems to offer a response to the apparently hopeless situation arising from the plague of book 3. One can go even farther and, accepting the idea that there is some kind of relationship intended between the society of the bees and Roman society, see Vergil as intending a clear political message.\(^{41}\) Interpretation along these lines finds in Aristaeus's recovery of his hives, thanks to a practice that has Egyptian origins (4.287–94), a way of referring to very recent Roman history, Octavian's victories at Actium and in Alexandria that brought defeat to Antony and Cleopatra and offered hope of salvation from civil war. In each scenario, salvation comes from Egypt.\(^{42}\) Whatever disagreements there may be over just how precisely it is possible to interpret the terms of the parallels, there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that this basically allegorical approach is fundamentally correct.\(^{43}\) Failure to accept this point, it seems to me, greatly impoverishes our understanding of this poem.\(^{44}\) Once it is adopted, it becomes possible to appreciate more fully how the role of the emotions fits into the handling of the contemporary political scene.

In our discussion of book 4, particular attention was paid to the fact that the book is very clearly made up of two distinct sections. Vergil makes the transition from one to the other very smoothly. At 4.251, he turns to the subject of disease and there follows a description of symptoms and possible remedies, before signaling a move away from didactic exposition to explicit mention of Roman affairs, mainly the close of book 1, the Laudes Italiae in book 2, and the prologue to book 3. But these are in fact only the lengthiest passages in a dense series of historical references running through the poem, all contributions to the anchoring of this poem in its contemporary context.\(^{45}\) All of this material functions within a cohesive pattern ensuring that the experience of reading the poem involves readers in following a continuous sweep of Roman history, much of which consists of very recent events and indeed of ongoing deeds that are presented as contemporaneous with the composition of the poem.\(^{46}\) A closer look at just one of the passages in question, one in which the emotions play a crucial role, will bring this chapter to a close.

### Caesar, Rome, and the Future

The entire closing sequence of the first book of the Georgics is of crucial importance for the interpretation of the poem as a whole, because it is in this climactic closing section that the poet establishes authoritatively and explicitly for the first time that the world of the farmers he is addressing is inextricably linked to contemporary Roman history. It is noteworthy therefore, as we have seen, that two emotions feature prominently, pity and fear.\(^{47}\) Together they help establish strong thematic links between the closing section and concerns highlighted earlier in the book, as well as preparing the ground for the introduction of another key emotion in the prayer that will bring the book to its close.

When at 1.461 Vergil begins the smooth transition from the weather signs given by the sun to other kinds of signs following the assassination of Julius Caesar, it is its sense of pity for Rome that comes first, in line 466, ille etiam extincto miseratus Caesare Roman. The use of the word miseratus recalls the...
Hope poet's request to Caesar to join him in pity of the farmers at 1.41, ignarosque viae mecum miseratus agrestis. This first mention of pity suggests that it is crucial to the whole enterprise, the poet's concern for farmers being the part of the reason for his decision to write this poem. 48 Caesar becomes of central importance too when, right from the outset, he is invited to guide and accompany the poet (mecum), who uses, as we have seen already, the metaphor of the "way" (via). The image functions on different levels, evoking the course of the poem, the ways of the agricultural life and of nature in general, of human existence (as made clear by its repetition at 1.122, pater ipse colendi I haud facilem esse viam voluit) and of Roman history. It is this last connotation that dominates at the book's close, where the simile of the chariot (currus) running out of control makes full sense only when it is seen as looking back to the poet's request to Caesar to "grant an easy course" at 1.40: da facilem cursum. The book thus ends by suggesting that the initial prayer may not be answered, that the via and cursus of both this poem and of the affairs of Rome may not be at all easy. This possibility helps bring into focus the presence of the other key emotion: fear.

48. On pity in the poem, see the excellent reading of Perkell 1989, 45–59. She brings out very well (p. 46) the fact that "the poet's sensibility inclines him to pity and that he aims to elicit pity as a response from his readers." On pity more generally, see Konstan 2001.

deceit, and war (tumultus, fraudem, bella) and its pity (miseratus) of Rome leads to provision of warning signs (monet). The verb used to refer to Caesar's assassination (extincto ... Caesar) equates this event with the extinction of the sun's light and so ushers in an age living in fear of eternal darkness (aeternam ... noctem). The smooth transition from agricultural to political concerns is brilliantly achieved by a combination of emotional continuity. In the previous section of the poem, farmers have been instructed in how to study the sky in search of weather signs and assured that the sun is a reliable guide. But rapidly and subtly the sun has been linked to Caesar, Caesar has died and eternal night seems to threaten. When the poet then glimpses into the future (scilicet et tempus veniet, 1.493), all he can see is astonished plowmen turning up the bones of Romans killed at Philippi (1.493–7):

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.

Surely a time too shall come when in those borders the husbandman, as his crooked plough labours the soil, will find spears eaten away with scaling rust, or strike on empty helms with his heavy mattock, and marvel at mighty bones dug up from their tombs.

It is at this grim moment that the poet resorts to a closing prayer, which demands to be quoted in full (1.498–514): 49

di patrii Indigetes et Romule Vestaque mater, quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia servas, hunc saltem everso iuvenem succurrere saeclo ne prohibete. satis iam pridem sanguine nostro Laomedontae luimus periuria Troiae; iam pridem nobis caeli te regia, Caesar, invidet atque hominum queritur curare triumphos! quippe, ubi fas versum atque nefas, tot bella per orbem, tarn multae scelerum fades, non ullus aratro dignus honos, squalent abductis arva colonis, et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem. hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;

49. My understanding of these lines follows closely the important reading of Kaster 2002, and I give his text, punctuation, and translation of lines 498–508.
vicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes
arma ferunt; saevis toto Mars impius orbe,
ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadririge,
addunt in spatio, et frustra retinacula tendens
fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas.

Ancestral Gods, heroes of the land, and Romulus and you,
mother Vesta, who watch over Tuscan Tiber and Roman Palatine,
at least do not stop this young man from bringing aid to a world
overturned: enough long since have we paid in blood
for the treachery of Laomedon’s Troy, long since
has heaven’s court been feeling invidia against us over you,
Caesar, complaining that you care for triumphs of men!
For indeed, when right and wrong are reversed, when there are so
many wars
Throughout the world, when there are so many forms of crime, the
plow has
no worthy honor, fields go to seed, abandoned by their tillers,
and from curved pruning hooks is forged the hard sword-shaft.

Here the Euphrates, there Germany heaves with war; neighboring cities
rush into arms one against another over broken laws: the merciless War-
God rages through all the world: even as when chariots bursting from
their barriers swerve out on the course, and, vainly tugging at the curb,
the driver is swept on by his horses, and the car hearkens not to the rein.

The striking reappearance of the name “Caesar,” that is Octavian, just thirty-
seven lines after its previous occurrence at 1.466 to refer to Julius Caesar, raises
questions about continuity and disruption. The crucial question in these lines
is, simply put, this: will this new Caesar, unlike the older one, be allowed to stay
on earth long enough to save Rome? The fact that the passage is steeped with
invidia and intensity of feeling. The gods want Caesar among them in heaven and
be grudge (invidet, 504) humans, among them the poet, his continued presence
on earth. Rather remarkably, divine invidia threatens a disturbed age (everso . . .
saeclum) that only the younger Caesar can save (succurrere). Amidst the wreckage
that dominates the whole closing sequence, fervent prayer resounds and, at the
very last moment, a glimmer of hope remains visible. As the book ends with
the simile of the chariot apparently heading for certain disaster, the charioteer
appears incapable of controlling his steeds, but in fact, since we never find out
about the outcome of the situation, the book ends on a note of tense uncertainty,
leaving open the hope, however slight, of salvation. 50

When this closing section of book 1 is reread with an eye to figuring out its
relationship to the poem as a whole, the crucial importance of the emotions
of pity, fear, envy, and hope come to the fore. Since quite a lot has been said
already about pity and fear, we will concentrate on envy and hope. In his reading
of the close of the first book, R. Kaster has clarified the structure of Vergil’s
thought by defining precisely the role played by Invidia. He has demonstrated
that it is an emotion felt toward the young Caesar by a group of gods (the caeli
. . . regia of 503) that must be clearly distinguished both from the Roman deities
addressed in lines 498–9 and from the viewpoint of the poet himself. For Kaster,
their “peevious and invidious” complaints present as pursuit of trifling mortal tri-
umphs what is in fact a “selfless attempt to rescue a world overturned.” 51 While
one could quibble about the use of the word “selfless” here, which brings in
an idea that is not expressed in the Latin, and prefer to say simply that the young
Caesar offers the possibility of salvation, there can be no doubt that Kaster’s
interpretation has greatly improved understanding of the whole passage. 52 His
conclusion is worth citing: 53

50. For the simile as allowing a glimpse of hope see, for example, Boyle 1986, 76, who sees “the
hope of the triumph of order over disorder, right over wrong, fruitfulness over distraction.” For Perkell
1989, 151–2, the simile “expresses uncertain hope for future peace, not a conviction of fulfillment of
end of Georgics I the chariot of history is out of control, but the image allows, at least, for the possibility
of reaching a finishing line, the end of the poem, of instruction, of history.” For hope and the broader
historical context, see Clark 1983. For a searching discussion of the ambiguities involved in dealing with
the emotion of hope see Fulkerson 2015.


52. Kaster’s understanding of lines 503–4 and the fact that he clearly distinguishes between the
view of the poet and that of the caeli regia lead him to punctuate the text in a new way, with a period and
exclamation mark after triumphos (see above). This then involves taking quippe as introducing a new
idea, rather than reinforcing that of the previous lines. He has not been followed by Conte in his Teubner
edition of 2013. His paper seems to have appeared too late to be taken into account by Erren 2003 and
Nappa 2005.

Getting heaven's invidia right ... has some significant consequences. First, and in contrast to some other contemporary readings, it offers what seems to be an unambiguously favorable and hopeful view of Caesar, who is raised above the saeculum that he will save if only he is allowed by a covetous heaven.

While one could once again quibble, this time over the words "unambiguously favorable," it is certainly right to allow space for hope amidst the ambient chaos. As we have already seen, even if the chariot seems to be heading for disaster, we never actually see it come to grief. And even if we sense the presence of an allusion to the myth of Phaethon, as we almost certainly must in a passage involving the sun, a father, his son (even if admittedly Vergil refers to Octavian only as iuuenis and not as adopted son of Caesar), and a dangerous chariot-ride, we may still hope for a happy ending, perhaps seeing Caesar as a new sun, as a successful Phaethon who will ensure that the sun reappears in orderly fashion, like the horse-drawn dawn earlier in the book (1.249–50).54

aut redit a nobis Aurora diemque reducit,
nosque ubi primus equis Oriens adflavit anhelis

or dawn returns from us and leads back the day; and when dayspring touches us with his panting horses' breath,

A further heartening element will come as the reader moves through the poem and arrives at the prologue of book 3. These lines clearly celebrate, however allusively, post-Actium triumph, and in doing so they provide a response to the gloom of civil war at the end of the first book, a passage steeped in pre-Actium despair.55 As before, detailed study of this dense prologue is impossible (3.37–9):

Invindia infelix Furias amnemque seuerum
Cocyti metuet tortosque Ixionis anguis
immanemque rotam et non exsuperabile saxum.

54. The quotation comes from see Gale 2000, 36, who accepts the implicit comparison between Octavian and Phaethon; cf. Holberg 2006, 53. I have not seen Wilhelm 1986, whose title suggests that it is relevant to this discussion. One could also point out that since the first book begins with the sun and the moon (clariissima lumina, 1.5), an allusion to the sun in the closing lines would be a neat example of ring composition. Cf. Doyle 1986, 76: "Caesar may make the darkness into light."

55. For fuller detail, see Nels 2010b, arguing for the poem's presentation of Actium as a key turning-point in Roman history.

There is debate as to whether we should imagine Invidia as a statue in the temple, as a relief on its pediment, or as not being part of the description of the temple at all,56 but what is more important for our concerns is that this image of Envy cowing in fear before the punishments of the Underworld signals the defeat of the emotion the poet attached such importance to at 1.504.57 In strong contrast to that passage, in which the caeli . . . regia begrudged to humans Caesar's interest in earthly triumphs (invidet atque hominum queritur curare triumphos), the poet now says that Caesar's universal triumphs (bisque triumphantus utroque ab litore gentes, 3.33) will inspire no envy. In addition, this defeat of Invidia and her fearful seclusion in Hades recall the third and final passage in the poem in which Vergil refers to envy, that is at 2.499, where, as discussed above, he also celebrated its absence when aligning the world of rustic life with that of the golden age: neque ille / aut doluit miserans inopem aut invidit habenti. This double absence of emotion, positively evaluated on each occasion, should perhaps be linked to the passage in which we have seen Vergil referring to the sexless life of bees. The Georgics seem to set up a controlled and regulated emotionless existence as one possible solution to the passion-filled madness that we see wreaking havoc in the close of book 1, the eros-driven herds of book 3 and in the story of Aristaeanus, Orpheus, and Eurydice. As on almost every level, this poem sets up oppositions and plays with apparent contradictions. Those who live their lives within the world of this poem see joy and sadness, golden age leisure and hard graft, war and peace, defeat and victory, death and resurrection, evolution and destruction, divine gift-giving and envy. In turn, the way in which the poem is constructed thematically also makes it possible to appreciate both distance and similarity between human and divine, human and animal, country and city, the rhythms of natural world and the course of Roman history. And since the close of book 1 is the first crucial passage encountered in the poem that encourages readers to negotiate the transition from one side to the other of the relationship between agriculture and politics, it may be of no small importance for our overall vision of this poem's message that in this passage's horrific evocation of civil war, fear of eternal night does not extinguish totally the hope of a return of the sun.58 The poet's voice prays to the gods of Rome, seeing in Caesar,
apparently against all odds, the only hope of salvation. That slim hope, on the level of the immediate and contemporaneous political concerns of the poem, is in fact confirmed by the triumphal celebrations of the opening of book 3. On the other hand, in a very minor key, tucked away in the didactic middle of book 1, Virgil has warned us that hopes can prove vain (1.219–26):

\[
\text{at si triticeam in messem robustaque farra}
\]
\[
\text{exercebis humum solisque instabis aristas,}
\]
\[
\text{ante tibi Eoae Atlantides abscondantur}
\]
\[
\text{Cnosiaque ardentis decedat stella Coronae,}
\]
\[
\text{debita quam sulcis committas semina quamque}
\]
\[
\text{invitae properes anni spem credere terrae.}
\]

But if for wheaten harvest or strong spelt thou wilt work thy ground, and the corn-ear alone is thy desire, first let the Atlantides be at their morning setting and the blazing star of the Cretan Crown sink away, ere thou yield their debt of seed to the furrows, or ere thou hasten to intrust the year's hope to an unwilling earth. Many begin before the setting of Maia; but a harvest of empty stalks mocks their expectation.

And already in the prologue to the first book we learned that the Underworld cannot hope for Caesar as king (nam te nec sperant Tartara regem, 1.36). Whether a sense of hope in Caesar in relation to the current political situation can be supported by the evidence to be gleaned from the other levels on which this text operates, as it presents the hard labor and the prayers of the farmers, the history of civilization as a whole, humanity's place in the world, and ideas about the very power of poetry itself, is no doubt a question about which there will be disagreement for as long as there are readers willing to try to make sense of this extraordinary, passionate poem.

imagery throughout the poem and also the solar imagery of Roman circus games that underpins this reading, see Nelis 2008; see also Hardie 2009, 45-7. No doubt present also, such is the density of the chariot imagery, is an evocation of the idea of the chariot of the soul, on which see Gale 2000, 188. See also Nelis 2015 on emotion and a very similar nexus of ideas and imagery in Aeneid 1.

**Picture this: You are the hero, or heroine, of a Greek novel.**

You are far from home, and have recently been abducted by pirates, sold into slavery, beaten, buried alive, or worse. You are separated from the one you love, for whom you have undergone this painful and somewhat preposterous series of trials. But then, Something Happens. Perhaps it is a dream, perhaps a fragment of overheard conversation: this small bit of information suggests to you that there is a chance of rescue, perhaps even reunion. How do you feel in this circumstance? Thinking over all you have suffered, you feel despair, but still, you have a glimmer of hope for the future—surely you would not have survived to this point if it were not all going to work out in the end? Then again, your luck must be running out. And yet, there might be a chance. . . . There you sit, torn between hope and despair, in the process providing vicarious enjoyment for your readers who are all teetering on the edges of their own seats.

At the same time, of course, even if you yourself in the novel do not know it will all be all right in the end, your readers surely do (the ancient novel, unlike some of its modern relatives, always ends happily ever after, at least for the protagonists). So the series of perils and dramatic rescues interest readers primarily because of the emotional up- and down-swings they present, an emotional rollercoaster safely removed from the troubles of real life. And hope is an intrinsic part of these narratives (as it may be in the lives of readers): time after time, the protagonists of the novels hope for amelioration of their situation, and time after time, their hopes are realized. This brief study of the emotion of hope (elpis) in the Greek novel falls into two parts. First, I touch upon the role

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