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Animal Suffering in Roman Literature

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Abstract

This thesis will focus on the philosophical and ethical concerns relating to the treatment of animals in ancient Rome, as presented by five Roman poets. We begin with an historical incident, in which the spectators at Pompey's games in 55 BC reacted sympathetically to the anguish of some elephants. Chapter 1 demonstrates how there is room for a sympathetic impulse towards animals even in poems by Statius and Martial on beast-hunts in the arena. Chapter 2 discusses how this expression of sympathy is explained scientifically with reference to Epicurean atomic theory, but with all the emotive power of poetry, in Lucretius. Chapter 3 considers how Virgil and Ovid adapt for their own poetic purposes the scientific explanations offered by Lucretius. What this thesis will show is how five prominent Roman poets express their sympathy for animals and do so by appealing to both the intellect and the emotions.

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To Iman,
Thank you for the gift of understanding.

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Animal Suffering in Roman Literature

Toynbee dedicates two pages near the beginning of his survey of the zoology of the Roman world to an analysis of the Roman attitude towards animals.¹ He claims that the Romans had a great fascination with animals, as is manifested in their literary, epigraphic and artistic evidence. But, as Toynbee argues, there is a moral contradiction in their overwhelming fascination in that "one of the outstanding paradoxes of the Roman mind [was] that a people that was so much alive to the interest and beauty of the animal kingdom, that admired the intelligence and skill to be found in so many of its representatives, that never seemed to tire of the sight of rare and unfamiliar specimens, that displayed such devotion to its pets, should yet have taken pleasure in the often hideous sufferings and agonizing deaths of quantities of magnificent and noble creatures".² Toynbee identifies here the issue which we will be addressing in this paper - the ethical questions pertaining to the treatment of animals in the Roman world. We will consider this issue through a selection of Roman poets, who excite pity for and oppose the maltreatment of animals.

To understand more clearly that objections to the maltreatment of animals in Roman society are rare in Roman literature, and that, when they do appear, they therefore deserve comment, consider the following examples of brutality towards animals in the arena. We begin with the Emperor Augustus who lists among his great achievements the slaughtering of 3500 animals in all at twenty-six different

¹ See Toynbee, pp. 21-3.

² *ibid.*, p. 21.

beast-hunts (*Res Gestae* 22.3). Augustus' claim that he was responsible for the slaughter of thousands of animals in merely twenty-six spectacles reveals his indifference towards the killing of animals, even in vast quantities. We can argue, however, that it was never Augustus' aim to preserve the lives of animals; they served for him a purpose, especially in the arena - to demonstrate his munificence and to entertain the public. Suetonius records that Augustus was also accustomed to exhibit animals on days when there were no games being held (*Aug.* 43.4). For example, Augustus exhibited a rhinoceros in the *Saepta*, a tiger on stage, and a snake 500 cubits in length in front of the *Comitium*. Moreover, Suetonius informs us of Augustus' motivation for displaying these particular animals; they were rare and worthy of being seen (*si quando quid inuisitatum dignumque cognitu advectum esset*). It hardly needs stressing that Augustus found propaganda value in exhibiting and slaughtering new species of animals in Imperial Rome.³ But what should be pointed out is that with time the exhibition and slaughtering of animals in the arena escalated as the Empire grew richer and the Roman Emperors sought to surpass their predecessors. For instance, at the dedication of his amphitheatre and baths Titus exhibited and killed thousands of animals. Suetonius (*Tit.* 7.3) says that Titus exhibited 5000 beasts of every kind in a single day; and Dio (56.25) says that 9000 animals were slaughtered. The great number and varieties of animals that were slain at Titus' games far surpass Augustus', while illustrating Titus' attitude

³ Cf. also Suet. *Cal.* 18, *Cl.* 21, and *Nero* 12 for the wild-beast hunts given by other Emperors.

towards animals: they existed for his benefit, and cruelty towards them was not a concern to him.

We can even bring our attention to one species of animal, the elephant, and consider more closely how the Romans treated and regarded this animal. According to Pliny (*N. H.* 6.16 f.) elephants were first brought to Italy in 280 BC in the war with King Pyrrhus, but were first seen in Rome five years later in a triumph. Then in 252 BC a large number of elephants were captured from the Carthaginians in Sicily and brought to Rome. Pliny notes that according to Verrius' report these elephants were made to fight in the Circus where they were killed with javelins, because it was not known what to do with them (*paenuria consilii*); Lucius Piso records that they were indeed led into the Circus, but were driven around by attendants carrying spears in order to increase contempt for them (*ut contemptus eorum incresceret*). Although Verrius' report differs from Lucius Piso's, they are similar in that the prevailing attitude towards elephants was one of indifference. The claim that elephants were just not useful is significant because, as we will see, despite that claim there was one occasion where a Roman audience collectively expressed sympathy for these animals, and, if only momentarily, felt that there existed a bond of kinship between humans and this one species of animal. In 55 BC Pompey held games in the circus to celebrate the opening of his theatre and the dedication of his temple to Venus Victrix.⁴ According to Dio and Plutarch, 500 lions were exhibited and killed over a period of five days. But Pompey also staged a

⁴ For the ancient references to Pompey's games see Cicero (*Fam.* 7.1.3), Seneca (*Brev. Vit.* 13.6 f.), Pliny (*N. H.* 8.7.20 f.), Dio Cassius (*Hist.* 39.38.1 f.), and Plutarch (*Pompey* 52.4).

battle with elephants, whose numbers vary according to our sources.⁵ Seneca says that Pompey pitted criminals against the elephants in a mimic battle (*more proeli*), and that the criminals were crushed by the weight of the animals. But Pliny and Dio record that the elephants were slain by armed men (Gaetulians from North Africa armed with javelins according to Pliny). Pliny notes that one elephant put up a marvellous fight against its opponents, even though its feet were disabled by wounds. He relates how the elephant crawled on its knees towards its enemies, and, snatching their shields, threw them into the air. Pliny records that the audience was amazed when another elephant was killed by the single blow of a javelin, which struck the animal under the eye and penetrated its vital parts. He then relates how the spectators were alarmed when the remaining elephants tried to stampede and break down the iron bars enclosing them. But, when the elephants lost all hope of escape, they tried to gain the crowd's sympathy by wailing and making other gestures of entreaty: *misericordiam vulgi inenarrabili habitu quaerentes supplicavere quadam sese lamentatione conplorantes*. Dio adds that the elephants walked about with their trunks raised towards heaven in lamentation. The accounts of Pliny and Dio illustrate two points which are important for our discussion. The first is that both Pliny and Dio draw attention to the elephants' ability to appeal to the sympathies of the crowd, either by wailing or raising their trunks as a sign of lamentation. In this respect, both authors characterize the animals as possessing sensual perception. The second point is that the onlookers react sympathetically to

⁵ According to Pliny, the number of elephants was 17 or 20; Seneca and Dio say that the number was 18.

the suffering animals and, in fact, are very open about their feelings towards both the elephants and Pompey. Dio states that the audience took pity on the elephants, and adds that this was contrary to Pompey's wishes. Pliny gives a more detailed description of the audience's sympathy for the animals as well as its anger towards Pompey, by revealing that the crowd of spectators simultaneously burst into tears and invoked curses on Pompey: *tanto populi dolore ut oblitus imperatoris ac munificentiae honori suo exquisitae flens universus consurgeret dirasque Pompeio quas ille mox luit inprecaretur*. The fact that the audience cursed Pompey implies that the crowd objected to the killing on moral grounds. For the crowd of spectators was clearly moved by the wailing of the elephants and, as a result, blamed Pompey for their anguish.

The strongest evidence of a moral objection, however, comes from Cicero, Pompey's contemporary and a spectator at these very games (*neque nos, qui haec spectavimus, quicquam novi vidimus, Fam. 7.1.3*). Cicero is writing a letter to his friend Marius to console him for not being able to attend Pompey's games: *ut ad te aliquid eius modi scriberem, quo minus te praetermisisse ludos paeniteret (Fam. 7.1.6)*. He relates how the wild-beast hunts lasted five days and how the last day of the shows was devoted to the elephants (*Fam. 7.1.3*). From the very beginning of his description of the *venationes*, Cicero assumes a moral stance by opposing the slaughter of humans and animals alike. He claims that a man of culture cannot find pleasure in the killing of a feeble man by a very powerful wild beast or in the slaying of a splendid animal by a hunting-spear: *sed quae potest homini esse politico delectatio cum aut homo*

imbecillus a valentissima bestia laniatur aut praeclara bestia venabulo transverberatur (Fam. 7.1.3). In fact, Cicero begins a moral tirade against these games at the very beginning of the letter, when he commends Marius on his strength of mind and character for shunning the events: *sin haec quae ceteri mirantur contemnenda duxisti et, cum per valetudinem posses, venire tamen noluisti, utrumque laetor, et sine dolore corporis te fuisse et animo valuisse, cum ea quae sine causa mirantur alii neglexeris* (Fam. 7.1.1). As with Pliny and Dio, Cicero relates that the spectators felt compassion for the animals, but he also adds the observation that the crowd felt a bond of kinship with them: *quin etiam misericordia quaedam consecuta est atque opinio eius modi, esse quandam illi beluae cum genere humano societatem*. Cicero combines two important themes: sympathy (*misericordia*) and kinship (*societas*). And if we keep it in mind that Cicero is writing from a moral perspective, then we have a link between emotional, moral and ideological concerns with respect to the treatment of animals in the Roman arena. Pompey, it seems, underestimated the 'humanness' of the elephants and the audience's capacity to sympathize with and relate to their human-like anguish. Moreover the spectators' sympathetic response to the elephants' anguish illustrates that in some cases the Romans observed limits in their cruel treatment of animals. In this paper, then, we will consider these limits, by focusing on instances where animals are treated with sympathy and there is an awareness that humans and animals are akin, particularly as reflected in the works of various Roman poets. In the first chapter we will continue our discussion of sympathy for animals in the arena, and we will see how an impulse of sympathy for a slain animal can be

expressed in poetry. Before we proceed, however, it should be pointed out here that this first chapter, dealing with Statius and Martial, serves as preliminary material, and that the bulk of our discussion will be in Chapters 2 and 3 on the poetry of Lucretius, Virgil and Ovid, and how these three poets excite pity for animals and emphasize the kinship that exists between humans and animals.

Chapter 1

magni quod Caesaris ora.../...unius amissi tetigit iactura leonis (Stat. *Silv.* 2.5.27 ff.)

This chapter will focus on poem 2.5 of Statius' *Silvae* and on epigrams 14 to 16 of Martial's *Liber De Spectaculis*. Both poets deal with a similar subject - the death of an animal in the arena. But, whereas Statius reflects the spectators' response to the death of a lion, Martial expresses his own sentiments concerning the fatal wounding of a pregnant sow. We saw above that the spectators felt a genuine sense of sympathy for the elephants in Pompey's games; Statius also relates how an audience can feel sympathy for an animal slain in the arena, and it should be noted that Statius does this in a generically structured funeral eulogy with a mixture of praise and lamentation.¹ The epigrams of *Liber De Spectaculis* commemorate Titus' inaugural games of the Flavian amphitheatre², and, in order to seek imperial favour, emphasize the spectacular appeal of the carnage in the arena. As we will see, however, there is a real possibility that in epigram 14 Martial deliberately makes the dying sow seem pathetic. This chapter, then, will attempt to show how poems from two different genres differ in their treatment of the subject of animal suffering.

In *Silvae* 2.5 Statius composes a funeral eulogy (known as a *consolatio*) for a lion slain in the arena. Although 2.5 differs from traditional *consolationes* in that it eulogizes an animal³, nonetheless the essential topoi of a *consolatio* are, according to

¹ See van Dam, pp. 63 ff.

² See Jennison, pp. 72-3; Coleman, pp. 62 ff.; Sullivan, pp. 6 ff.

³ See Newmyer, pp. 19-24 on the development of *consolationes* in Greek and Latin literature, including references to Statius' own funeral eulogies for relatives and favourite slaves of his friends. Although *consolationes* were far more frequently composed for humans, there are a few others for animals. In *Silv.* 2.4 Statius composes a funeral eulogy for the pet parrot of Atedius Melior. Other

van Dam, present in this poem⁴: *laudatio*, *lamentatio*, *descriptio mortis*, and *consolatio*. In the *laudatio* (1-6) Statius praises the lion for becoming tame and learning to perform tricks.⁵ In the *lamentatio* (7-15) he tells us that the lion has been killed while pursuing another animal (*victus fugiente fera*) and that its feline companions mourn its death. In the *descriptio mortis* (16-23) Statius returns to praising the lion, this time for the bravery it showed as it fell. He then compares the lion's courage to that of a soldier on the battlefield.⁶ Finally, in the *consolatio* (24-30) Statius consoles the deceased lion and relates how the people, the Senate and the Emperor mourn its death.

Van Dam notes that Statius' consolatory poetry consists of a mixture of lament and praise.⁷ In the case of *Silvae* 2.5, the lament is for a lion slain in the arena.⁸ Perhaps we should ask whether Statius treats the death of this lion with a

consolationes for dead animals include Catullus' poem 3 (for Lesbia's dead sparrow), Ovid's *Am.* 2.6 (for Corinna's dead parrot), and Martial 8.55 and 11.69 (for a lion and dog respectively).

⁴ Van Dam, p. 369.

⁵ The tricks include returning of its own accord to its cage, setting captured prey free from its jaws, and allowing the trainer to put his hand into its jaws and withdraw it. For the performance of a lion trained to release a captured hare from its jaws, see Martial 1.6, 14, 22, 44, 48, 51, 60, and 104. Martial *Sp.* 12 mentions a lion which bit the hand of its trainer and was punished for the misdeed. In *Sp.* 21 Martial tells us of a tigress that was accustomed (*consuetus*) to lick the hand of its trainer.

⁶ Van Dam (pp. 338-9, note on lines 19-23) notes that this simile comes from epic poetry (Homer *Il.* 20.64 ff.; Virgil *A.* 12.4 ff.; Lucretius *DRN* 1.205 ff.). Whereas the traditional simile compares the soldier to a lion, Statius turns the comparison upside down by comparing the lion to a soldier. Van Dam notes that the comparison of humans to lions is used to emphasize their *furor* and *rabies*. By turning the comparison around, however, van Dam argues that Statius is able to emphasize the lion's tameness and discipline.

⁷ See pp. 63 ff. Van Dam argues that consolatory poetry was moulded by oratory, philosophy and poetry alike; oratory deals with the deceased and involves praise, while philosophy deals with the survivors and provides comfort. Van Dam also brings our attention to Menander's *Peri Epideiktikon* (413-22, 434-7), where Menander sets forth the standard format for the composition of funeral orations. The manual dates from the third century AD, and, as van Dam argues, Menander's rhetoric theory on funeral eulogies was influenced by poetic tradition. Menander puts much stress on the element of lamentation, and emphasizes the importance of mixing encomia with the lament (see especially 434 ff.).

⁸ Contrast *Silv.* 2.4 which commemorates the death of the pet parrot of Atedius Melior. We learn from the preface to *Silv.* 2 that Statius has a close friendship with Atedius Melior and that the book

genuine sense of sympathy. We can easily argue that the presence of the Emperor Domitian in mourning at the end of the poem (27-30) supports a claim that Statius treats the death of this lion seriously.⁹ In addition, there are the touches of pathos that Statius adds to create pity for the lion.¹⁰ For instance, there is the appearance of two topoi standard in the *lamentatio*, the empty house and the complaint of the survivors.¹¹ The motif of the 'empty-house' is found in lines 11-2, where Statius draws attention to the fallen lion's open cage (*cardine aperto*), and contrasts it with the cages of the other lions (*clausis...portis*). Naturally, there is a sense of pathos in the notion of a home left empty by the death of its owner. But there is an added sense of pathos in that Statius explicitly calls this cage a home and tells us that the lion was accustomed to leave and return to it again (*quod abire domo rursusque in claustra reverti suetus*). Statius treats the other topos - the complaint of the survivors - through the dead lion's companions (13-5). We should note that the grieving survivors are animals, and that Statius considers their mourning in both human and animal terms. For instance, he tells us in line 13 that the lions remained quiet (*placidi*), even though they were angered (*tumuerunt*) that such a crime could have been allowed. Statius combines human and animal traits in his description of the lions here: anger is a lion's natural characteristic, whereas calm is a human

is dedicated to him. Therefore, it may be argued that 2.4 is more personal than 2.5, simply because of Statius' close friendship to Ateius Melior and his desire to console him on the death of his pet.

⁹ As Newmyer (p. 72) and van Dam (p. 368) point out, the presence of the Emperor Domitian in this poem calls for serious treatment on the death of the lion. Contrast Newmyer (p. 72) and van Dam (pp. 337-9; 368-9) on the way that Statius humorously parodies the formal *consolatio* in *Silv.* 2.4.

¹⁰ We learn from Menander Rhetor that pity is an essential component in consolatory literature. He states that the lament in a funeral oration should excite pity and move the listener to tears (*Rhet.* 421). Elsewhere, Menander Rhetor explicitly states that the element of lamentation must be stressed continually (*Rhet.* 434 ff.).

characteristic.¹² The taxonomy here exploited by Statius is also used and explained by Lucretius at *DRN* 3.288 ff., where he tells us that anger (*ira*) is a lion's natural characteristic, and that humans and cows are characterized by tranquillity (*placido...aere*) because of differences in their atomic composition. And we can see how Statius personifies the lions even further when he tells us that they feel shame at seeing their dead companion brought back to its cage: *puduitque relatum / aspicere* (14-5). And yet, when Statius describes in the same lines how the lions' manes have fallen (*cunctis cedere iubae*) and their brows are lowered (*totas duxere in lumina frontes*), we see how the lions mourn with animal traits too. The mix of human and animal reactions, however, is perhaps less important than the simple fact that the lions are shown as being capable of reacting to the death of their companion in a manner that recalls human grief. Van Dam notes that in *Silvae* 2.1.19 ff. and 175 ff. Statius focuses on the fact that mourning for the death of Atedius Melior's favourite slave is universal, and observes that this is a standard topos of the *consolatio*.¹³ In the same way, Statius focuses on the fact that all of the dead lion's comrades share in the grief, and this appeals for sympathy for them.

The standard topos that everyone is in mourning is also found in 2.5.24 ff. (the *consolatio* proper), where Statius mentions that the people of Rome, the Senate and the Emperor all grieve over the loss of this one lion. That is, all the spectators,

¹¹ See van Dam, p. 380, note on lines 11-13.

¹² See van Dam, p. 381, note on lines 11-13. He believes that *tumere* is closely related to *ira*, and cites Cicero (*Tusc.* 3.19) and Seneca (*Phoen.* 352). See also Stat. *Silv.* 2.1.58; and Sen. *Tro.* 1093 ff., where Seneca says that the offspring of a wild animal swells in anger (*animis tumet*), as the animal is not yet able to rage with its teeth (*nondum potens / saevire dente*).

¹³ See pp. 85 and 155. Cf. Men. *Rh.* (436 ff.), where it is suggested that emphasis be placed on the grief of the entire city.

both humans and animals, are in mourning. Newmyer claims that the *consolatio* proper of 2.5 is somewhat unusual in that the consolation is directed to the deceased rather than to the survivors, as Statius gives solace to the dead lion rather than to those who are mourning its loss.¹⁴ The poet tells us that the people and the Senate are saddened (*maesti*) and openly wail (*ingemuere*) for the animal.¹⁵ The Emperor is said to weep too (*magni quod Caesaris ora...tetigit*).¹⁶ And just as we saw with the surviving lions, where the emphasis on their collective mourning arouses pity, Statius inspires additional pathos by focusing on the grief of many people, including the Emperor himself. We now come to the second element in consolatory poetry - to render praise.¹⁷ Throughout the poem Statius repeatedly praises the fallen lion, complimenting it for the tricks that it performed in the arena¹⁸ and for the courage it showed in death. When Statius focuses on the grief of so many spectators in the *consolatio* proper, we see how he gives the lion further praise; this lion is special because its death causes so many to weep. But Statius also separates the grieving Emperor from his subjects, so that, as van Dam argues, one half of the

¹⁴ Newmyer, p. 74. See also van Dam (p. 385, note on lines 24-7) who draws attention to the addressee in line 25: *victe, feres* (= the dead lion). He points out that in none of Statius' other consolationes is the dead one comforted. Contrast *Silvae* 2.4 which, though also dealing with the death of an animal, none the less follows the usual format. First, the consolation is directed to Atedius Melior, who has lost his pet parrot (23-5). Second, the poet consoles Melior by claiming that his pet parrot will come to life again (see van Dam, pp. 365-7, note on lines 36-7).

¹⁵ Van Dam (pp. 385-6, note on lines 24-7) points out that *populusque patresque* (the standard poetic version for *senatus populusque Romanus*) implies 'everyone from high and low'. Clearly, the lion's death is portrayed as a grief to all.

¹⁶ Mozley (p. 119) translates *magni quod Caesaris ora...tetigit* as 'drew a tear from mighty Caesar's eye'. Van Dam (p. 386, note on lines 27-30) notes that the phrase - *iactura tetigit ora* - means not much more than 'the loss touched Caesar'. However, he adds that *ora* may be used to imply that Domitian wept. This of course would allow Statius to praise the Emperor on his outward show of emotion.

¹⁷ See van Dam, pp. 63 ff.; Newmyer, pp. 21 ff.

¹⁸ See n. 5.

comfort is that everyone mourned the lion, the other half is that 'even Caesar mourned'.¹⁹ This last fact - that Caesar mourned - is a supreme kind of comfort, for it singles out the lion among so many beasts (see 28 ff.). In this respect, Statius gives praise to the fallen lion, as the death of this animal alone touched the Emperor and caused him to weep. Furthermore, if it is a compliment to say that Domitian, a god on earth, can feel sympathy for an animal, then this sympathy is an attribute of great nobility. But, while he is praising the lion, Statius is also praising Domitian by paying a compliment to his sensibilities. The sympathy for the dead lion is eclipsed by the poet's aim to praise the Emperor for his outward show of emotion. It hardly needs stressing that Statius is seeking imperial favour through praising the fallen lion, because, as he informs us in the preface to *Silvae* 2, he composed 2.5 while the lion was still lying in the amphitheatre in order that he could present the poem to Domitian immediately (*eandem exigebat stili facilitatem leo mansuetus, quem in amphitheatro prostratum frigidum erat, sacratissimo Imperatori ni statim traderem*). It appears, therefore, that Statius' praise of and sympathy for the lion serve to compliment the Emperor himself. Let us now turn to Martial and consider how he treats similar subject matter in an epigram.

Poems 14 to 16 of Martial's *Liber De Spectaculis*²⁰ treat the spectacle of a pregnant sow which, being fatally stricken by a spear, gives birth in the arena. Poem 14, in particular, focuses on the wounding and the suffering of the sow, and,

¹⁹ See van Dam, pp. 384-5, note on lines 24-30.

²⁰ My numbering of the epigrams will correspond with Shackleton Bailey's edition (Loeb Classical Library, Cambr. Mass., 1993, pp. 12-39).

at least initially, treats the animal with pathos. It should be noted that one of the central purposes of *Liber De Spectaculis* is to entertain the reader, and that there is, in general, little emphasis on the suffering of the victims in the arena, except in so far as that the suffering of the victim adds to the amusement. To illustrate the point that Martial mainly wishes to entertain the reader with this collection of epigrams, let us look briefly at epigrams 9 and 10 which deal with the execution of criminals in mythological role-play. Epigram 10 describes a spectacle in which a condemned criminal is dressed up as Daedalus and killed by a bear: *Daedale, Lucano cum sic lacereris ab urso / quam cuperes pinnas nunc habuisse tuas*.²¹ Coleman notes that Martial presents the scenario in this epigram exclusively as entertainment in that the spectacle turns out contrary to the myth, something cleverly expressed in the last line.²² As for the condemned criminal himself, Coleman rightly argues that "a condemned criminal was a commodity whose punishment might fulfil a social need, and in this context his fate is more remarkable as entertainment than as punishment". Martial tells us in epigram 9 that a condemned criminal in the guise of Laureolus is strung up on a cross, while a bear tears his body to pieces.²³ Martial's treatment of the condemned criminal in epigram 9 readily compares with

²¹ Coleman (pp. 44 and 62 ff.) observes that epigram 10 describes a spectacle in which a criminal is executed in a formal public display involving role-play set in a dramatic context. She calls these kinds of executions 'fatal charades'. Other epigrams that deal with similar kinds of executions include 6, 9, 24 and 25.

²² See Coleman, pp. 63 ff. According to the mythological tradition, Daedalus was banished to an island, but, by fastening wings together, made his escape (see Ov. *Met.* 8.183 ff.; Apollod. 3.16.12 ff.).

²³ Suetonius (*Cal.* 57.4) records that the 'Laureolus' was a mime in which the actor fell forward (*proripiens se ruina*) and vomits blood. Juvenal (8.186 ff.) refers to a mime in which Laureolus was crucified. Coleman (pp. 64 ff.) explains that the 'Laureolus mime' originated from the story of the bandit-leader Laureolus who was eventually put to death after a successful career.

his treatment of the criminal in epigram 10: the criminal's fate is a source of amusement and the epigram's function is to reflect that amusement with a clever punch-line in the final lines of the poem: *vicerat antiquae sceleratus crimina famae / in quo, quae fuerat fabula, poena fuit* (10 ff.). Here, we see how Martial finds amusement in the fact that the mime is translated into reality, because, as Coleman notes, the traditional story acquires an unorthodox denouement²⁴, in that the condemned criminal is put to death by the vicious attack of a bear instead of by a slow and lingering death on the cross.²⁵ The horrific attack has a more spectacular appeal, and we see this in the way that Martial cleverly summarizes the sight of the criminal on the cross: *vivebant laceri membris stillantibus artus / inque omni nusquam corpore corpus erat* (5 ff.). Indeed, Martial does not shun the gore because it allows him to make a clever remark. Generally, the animals that are used in *venationes* receive similar treatment. They are there to provide entertainment and amusement, whether they carry out the execution of a criminal (epigrams 6 to 10, 19, 24 and 25), are hunted by *venatores* (epigrams 12 to 17, and 33) or fight with other animals (epigrams 11, 20 to 22, and 26). We may consider briefly the treatment of a bull in epigram 22, as it offers a contrast to the more sympathetic treatment of the wounded sow in 14. In 22 Martial describes how a bull is goaded with fire to toss straw dummies into the air.²⁶ But, when the bull tries to do the same to an elephant, it is trampled to death. Martial's witty comment at the end, *dum facilem tolli sic elephantia*

²⁴ Coleman, pp. 64 ff.

²⁵ See n. 23 for references to the 'Laureolus mime'.

²⁶ See S. Bailey, p. 21 n. b.

establishes her status as the passive victim. Campbell argues that the juxtaposition of *fixisset* and *gravidam* heightens the pathos of the situation, so that the pregnant animal is placed next to the word which signifies her destruction.²⁸ In line 3 Martial gives more details on the spectacle, revealing that a piglet leaps out of the sow's wound. The line begins by focusing on the birth of the offspring, but Martial continues to arouse sympathy for the mother sow, particularly with words like *miserae* and *vulnere*, which remind us of the pitiful nature of the sight. Most important, however, are the implications of *matris*, which Campbell regards as "an emotionally charged word placed in emphatic line-end position".²⁹ The pathos associated with the word *mater* is obvious, and we should note that it helps in the anthropomorphosis of the sow. *matris* corresponds to *Dianae* and *suem* in that it is placed at the end of the line, and in that all three signify female beings. Campbell claims that this emphasis on the feminine adds to the emotive scale of the affair.³⁰ We see this especially in the semi-formulaic emotive phrase *miserae...matris*. *miser* is an obvious word for inviting the reader to feel pity, and we may compare Martial's use of the word here with its appearance at 29.3 of *Liber De Spectaculis*.³¹ In 29.3 the word is used to describe the hero Leander as he addresses the surging waves.³² Since the mythological tradition tells us that Leander drowns while on his way to

²⁸ Campbell, p. 352.

²⁹ Campbell, p. 354.

³⁰ Campbell, p. 355.

³¹ The word also appears at 2.8 and 4.2, where it is used to describe the people who lost their homes to Nero's building schemes, and the wealth obtained by *delatores* (see Suet. *Tit.* 8.5 for Titus' punishment of *delatores*). S. Bailey (p. 33 n. a) argues that epigram 29 is out of place, and may in fact refer to a statue or painting.

³² Leander was said to have swum across the Hellespont each night to visit his beloved Hero, until one night he was drowned (see Ov. *H.* 18 and 19).

visit his lover, Martial's description is especially appropriate for exciting pity. A more conclusive example can be found in Statius, Martial's contemporary. Statius uses the phrase *misera mater* to describe, for example, the goddess Ismenis after she discovers that her son has been murdered (*Theb.* 9.357).³³ The phrase is also used further on in the same book to describe Atlanta, whose son is fated to die in the conflict at Thebes.³⁴ In Statius the phrase *misera mater* is used to arouse sympathy for both mothers by emphasizing the similarity of their plight, and we should regard the phrase as consciously pathetic. That it is an epic phrase associated with pathos can also be seen in Virgil (*A.* 9.484).³⁵ In 9.473 ff. Euryalus' mother discovers that her son has been killed and begins a speech lamenting the loss of her son; at 9.484 she is described as *misera mater*. The pathos associated with the phrase is heightened by the fact that she is repeatedly described as *misera* (see 9.216, 285, and 475), and that she describes herself as *misera mater* in the context of a lament for her dead son. Menander Rhetor (*Rhet.* 419 ff.) also helps us to understand the importance of the phrase in exciting pity. He uses the phrase 'unhappy mother' as a suggestion for amplifying the pathos in a section of a funeral speech where the emphasis is to praise the deceased's birth and parentage. Therefore, if we take into consideration Statius' and Virgil's use of the semi-formulaic emotive phrase and Menander's suggestion that it be used to arouse sympathy, we can argue that

³³ See Dewar (pp. 127 ff.) for further examples of the phrase *misera mater* in *Theb.* 9.

³⁴ See *Theb.* 9.634, 725, 813 and 885.

³⁵ See also *Ov. Fast.* 4.579, where the phrase is used to describe Ceres after the kidnapping of her daughter Proserpina.

Martial uses the phrase in the same way in order to create pathos for the mother sow.

Line 4, *O Lucina ferox, hoc peperisse fuit?*, is set apart from the narrative style of the preceding lines, as Martial explicitly manifests his own sympathetic disposition for the dying sow. In fact, the tragic tone of the line makes it the emotional high-point of the epigram. For instance, the apostrophaic *O* is intentionally pathetic and adds to the emotional tone of the line. When Martial addresses the goddess Lucina as *ferox*, we are reminded of *saeva* in line 1 and the cruelty of the spectacle. Campbell notes that *Lucina ferox* semantically echoes *saeva Dianae*: there, the goddess appears in her role as huntress, and here in her role as midwife.³⁶ Not only does this reflect the narrative progression (an animal wounded in a hunt is induced to deliver offspring), it also demonstrates Martial's cleverness in linking the two events by the dual roles of the same goddess. In lines 5-6 the poet focuses on the sensibilities of the mother sow by expressing the sow's desire to die so that she could give birth to all her offspring. Furthermore the reminder of the sow's injury in *saucia*, the juxtaposition of *pluribus...telis* encircling the animal, and the adjective *triste* continue to arouse pity for the dying sow. In the last two lines of poem 14 Martial compares the piglet's birth to Bacchus'.³⁷ The sympathy for the mother sow is now eclipsed by Martial's clever attempt at comparing the birth of a deity to that of an animal. For, as Campbell argues, "the sow and her piglet [also] suffer from the comparison: in contrast to the *numen* of Bacchus, they are mere *ferae*. This

³⁶ Campbell, p. 336.

³⁷ See *Ov. Met.* 3.259 ff. on the story of Bacchus' birth and his mother Semele's death.

reduction in the pig's status also reduces the amount of commiseration evoked in the hearer, just as, in a sense, their association with the goddess Lucina and the god Bacchus tends to convert pity into awe".³⁸

In epigrams 15 and 16 Martial continues to focus on the spectacle involving the pregnant sow. However, it becomes apparent from these two epigrams that Martial is now less interested in treating the death of the animal sympathetically than he is in emphasizing the excitement of her unexpected delivery. In poem 15 Martial focuses on the act and the agent of the wounding. Line 3, *O quam certa fuit librato dextera ferro*, is Martial's exclamation at the accuracy of the spear. In lines 4-6 he attributes the event to the goddess Lucina-Diana in her dual role as huntress and midwife. Line 6, *quaque soluta parens quaque perempta fera est*, cleverly summarizes the entire event and the poem itself. The compassion that Martial expressed for the sow in poem 14 is absent here, where his description of the wounding is more for the purpose of narrative than emotional appeal: *Icta gravi telo confossaque vulnere mater / sus pariter vitam perdidit atque dedit* (15.1 ff.). In poem 16 the description of the spear forcing the delivery is summarized in a single phrase: *vulnere facta parens* (2). Martial now focuses on the drama of the piglet dashing up and taking off in flight. Line 4, *o quantum est subitis casibus ingenium!*, is testimony to Martial's excitement over the unexpectedness of the event. If we take all three poems together, we notice that Martial develops the episode by means of a progressive approach whereby the sympathy for the sow is lessened with each poem, and the

³⁸ Campbell, p. 365.

excitement over her unexpected parturition is increased. Indeed, the spectacular appeal peaks in the final line of 16, a line that is emotionally far removed from the first line of 14, where Martial had described the games as cruel and paved the way for the sympathetic treatment of the wounded sow.³⁹ Poems 14 to 16, then, illustrate how Martial incorporates the subject of animal suffering into the epigram and varies his treatment, so that in poem 14 the wounded sow is treated with pathos, but, by the end of the series, the spectacular appeal is emphasized. That the spectacular appeal is emphasized in 16 should be of no surprise, since, as we saw above, it is Martial's primary aim to entertain the reader. None the less, even if the sympathy for the sow is fleeting in four lines in poem 14, it is perhaps surprising that Martial troubles to excite any pity at all for one of the victims of Titus' games in the Flavian amphitheatre.

We have now seen how poem 14 is atypical of *Liber De Spectaculis* in that it treats a fatally wounded animal with sympathy. Statius' *Silvae* 2.5 also treats a fallen animal with sympathy, especially in accordance with the standard conventions of consolatory poetry. We might expect that there would be no expression of sympathy for animals in the Roman arena, a place where the audience was routinely entertained by mass slaughter. But, just as we saw in Cicero and Pliny, where the audience reacts sympathetically to the pain of the elephants because of the bond between them, Statius and Martial are capable of conveying in their poetry a feeling of pity for animals that have been cut down in the arena. Now

³⁹ See also Campbell, p. 381 ff.

that we have established in this preliminary chapter that it is possible to express a genuine sense of sympathy for animals that are wounded and suffering in the arena, we will turn to poetry which is expressly concerned about the treatment of animals in the Roman world. We will discover in Lucretius a philosophic and poetic attempt to prove that humans and animals are akin, and that animals do in fact feel emotional and physical anguish much like the elephants of Pompey's games.

Chapter 2

nec pietas ullast.../...aras sanguine multo / spargere quadrupedum (DRN 5.1198-1202)

If we established in our first chapter that it was culturally possible for Roman poets to express in poetry sympathy for animals slain in the arena, then we will establish in this chapter that in some poetry the expression of sympathy for animals rests on both moral and philosophical grounds. Our examination will concentrate on Lucretius, whose express concern for a sacrificed calf and its bereft mother is linked both with his opposition to religion and with his scientific exposition of atomic theory. We will begin our discussion by considering how Lucretius deliberately excites pity for these two animals in an analogy which serves to illustrate the scientific point that atoms are distinct from one another in appearance.

In Book 2 of *De Rerum Natura* Lucretius' discussion of atoms and the variety of their shapes develops into a discussion of the infinite number of shapes they can take and how those shapes differ from one another in appearance. Lucretius then proceeds to prove his theory through examples from the human and animal world, one of which is found in these lines:

nam saepe ante deum vitulus delubra decora	
turicremas propter mactatus concidit aras	
sanguinis exspirans calidum de pectore flumen.	
at mater viridis saltus orbata peragrans	355
quaerit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis	
omnia convisens oculis loca si queat usquam	
conspicere amissum fetum, completque querellis	
frondiferum nemus adsistens et crebra revisit	
ad stabulum desiderio perfixa iuvenci,	360
nec tenerae salices atque herbae rore vigentes	
fluminaque illa queunt summis labentia ripis	

oblectare animum subitamque avertere curam,
 nec vitulorum aliae species per pabula laeta
 derivare queunt animum curaque levare: 365
 usque adeo quiddam proprium notumque requirit.

One of the features that we first notice in this passage is the sympathetic treatment of the sacrificed calf and the desperate search of its mother. For, as Bailey claims, "this famous description of the cow looking for her lost calf is Lucretius at his best. It shows how the picture in his mind gets the better of him, since much of the detail is irrelevant to the argument, the point of which is contained in 364-6; no other calf could satisfy the mother."¹ Indeed, Lucretius' extended analogy serves to illustrate his main point that atoms are distinct from one another in shape and appearance and that atoms of the same type seek each other out, just as individual species of animals vary in appearance but are able to distinguish their own offspring from others. But Lucretius begins the analogy by presenting a vivid description of the slaughter of the calf, including the horrible details associated with the sacrifice (352-4).² He then focuses on the calf's mother, taking into consideration her extensive search and the anguish she feels over her calf's disappearance (355 ff.). Next, the poet describes the beauty and the abundance of life in the countryside (361 ff.), so that the anxiety and distress of the previous lines are now replaced by the pleasant surroundings of the natural landscape. The focus then returns to the mother cow and her lost offspring (363 ff.), as the gentle tone of the preceding lines gives way to

¹ C. Bailey, p. 861. Cf. Segal (1970), p. 104.

² We will deal with Lucretius' feelings about the custom of sacrifice and the evil effects of religion further on (see pp. 31 ff.). We should note now that Lucretius focuses on the gory details of blood-sacrifice as a continuing process of creating a negative impression of religion.

sympathy for the mother cow once again. Finally in the last three lines, where Lucretius describes the diversity of the animal world and the mother cow's ability to distinguish her own calf from the other calves, we see how the simile is used to demonstrate the scientific point that atoms are different in appearance and distinct from one another.

We cannot ignore the sentimental tone, however, as it is one of the most outstanding features of this passage; the explicit narrative of the calf being slaughtered and of the distraught cow searching in vain for any trace of her missing offspring appeals to the reader's sense of sympathy, and diverts the reader from the argument being presented. And, clearly, the objects of sympathy are intended to be the slaughtered calf and its mother. We can see this right from the very beginning, where Lucretius introduces the calf by enclosing it within *deum...delubra decora* (352): the diminutive *vitulus* contrasts with the majesty of the shrine, so that the image of the calf diminished under the weight of *religio* adds to our feeling of pathos concerning the calf's fate. In lines 352 ff. Lucretius describes in vivid detail the horror of the sacrifice and the gory death of the calf: *mactatus*³ graphically depicts the state of the calf next to the altar, while *concidit*⁴ reveals the final action of the animal. Line 354, *sanguinis expirans calidum de pectore flumen*, also arouses our emotions by giving us the last graphic detail of the calf spewing blood from its wound. We might compare the epic tone of this line with, for example, Virgil A.

³ See n. 2.

⁴ Segal (1970, p. 106) describes *concidit* as the calf's swift and final movement. For the brutality and sharpness of the verb cf. *Ov. Ep.* 4.94 ff.; *Ep.* 6.78; *Fast.* 3.550; and *Met.* 8.763 ff.

11.818 ff., *labitur exsanguis, labuntur frigida leto / lumina, purpeus quondam color ora reliquit*, where Virgil describes the death of Camilla and excites pity for the noble heroine. Lucretius' calf is given the same noble treatment, as it is cut down in the prime of its youth, so that the reader is made to feel sympathy for the fallen animal. We might also observe how *calidum flumen*, describing the flow of the calf's blood, presents the image of a flowing river and emphasizes the volume of the flow of the calf's blood. The calf's hot river of blood contrasts bitterly with the gliding and, presumably, cool and refreshing rivers of the countryside in line 362; the calf's river of blood symbolizes its death, the gliding rivers of the countryside symbolize nature's abundance. From the analysis of these three short lines we can see how the vivid description plays a significant role in exciting pity for the slain calf: we see the wounded calf gasping, its life-spirit flowing out of its wound, and its imminent death. Indeed, the purpose of the imagery is to make the slaughter all the more real in our minds, and, hence, the impact upon our emotions greater.

The mother cow first appears in line 355, where the word *mater* is positioned at the very beginning of the line to arouse the reader's sense of sympathy. As we saw above⁵, Martial (*Spec.* 14.3) humanized a wounded sow not only by applying to her the term *mater*, but also by including that term in a semi-formulaic phrase which can be paralleled from intensely emotive passages in the highest of Latin literary genres. Here in Lucretius we find a similar phrase applied to the mother cow: *mater orbata*. The literary power of the image of a human parent bereft of a child can be

⁵ See pp. 17 ff.

seen, for example, in Virgil's treatment of the bereaved mother of Euryalus (A. 9.473 ff.); there Virgil emphatically excites pity for her by focusing on her anguish over the loss of her son. Lucretius treats the mother cow in a similar vein, giving her all the sympathy usually given to the pathetic epic character. For the specific application of *orbatus* to an animal deprived of its offspring, we might also bring attention to Valerius Flaccus 8.457 ff., where Medea in her anguish is compared to mother cows lowing for their lost calves: *veluti.../...orbatae traherent suspiria vaccae*. For all their grief, Valerius' bereaved cows remain cows (*vaccae*), but Lucretius speaks more emphatically and emotively of a bereaved *mother*. Consider also *completque querellis* (358), a phrase standard in epic and usually used to excite pity. The fact that the phrase is elsewhere applied to the expressions of grief in the cases of human beings, such as Euryalus' mother (Virg. A. 9.480, *questibus implet*) and Ariadne (Cat. 64.130, *haec extremis maestam dixisse querellis*), demonstrates that Lucretius is deliberately humanizing the cow in order to arouse the reader's sense of sympathy.

In addition, we have already seen the topos of 'the empty house', and seen how it was used in consolatory poetry to excite pity.⁶ Lucretius uses the same technique to arouse sympathy when he tells us that the mother cow repeatedly comes back to the stable looking for her calf (359 ff.). We are fully aware that the calf is dead and that the stable will be empty, and, so, we feel sympathy for the mother cow as the grief-stricken survivor, and for the very fact that she does not

⁶ See p. 10.

know that her calf is dead. At 360 ff. Lucretius consciously takes into consideration the sensibilities of the mother cow. For example, her anguish is expressed in the phrase *desiderio perfixa iuveni*, and her overwhelming concern for her calf is emphasized by the fact that neither the idyllic landscape nor the sight of the other calves can relieve her. Moreover, the phrase *proprium notumque* refers to the bond that the mother feels for her child, implying that only she can recognize the calf that is special and dear to her. The phrase is significant because it effectively concludes the discussion of the scientific point that animals are distinct from one another in shape and appearance while illustrating Lucretius' desire to excite pity for the calf and its bereaved mother.

The emotional tone which Lucretius uses to characterize the passage may also be seen as a subtle way for him to criticize the sacrifice of the calf and, in fact, religion itself. One of Lucretius' principal objectives is to free men's minds from the terrors of religion and superstition (see, for example, 1.932, *religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo*); we will discuss this further below with respect to the sacrifice of Iphigenia (1.80-101).⁷ For the moment, we should note the poet's subtle attack against *religio* in lines 44-5 of the proem in Book 2. There, *religio* is shown to be ineffectual, since it is unable to calm the mind of a general on the battlefield. A more conclusive example of Lucretius' condemnation of religion can be found at 2.600 ff., where he argues that the beliefs of popular religion are false, and that the worship of Mother Earth, for example, corrupts the mind with false superstition.

⁷ See pp. 32 ff.

Book 2 deals with such other important themes as the simplicity of nature and the struggle between life and death. And we find that these three themes - religion, nature, and the struggle between life and death - are explicitly combined in Lucretius' description of the mother cow searching for her calf. In the proem to Book 2 (29 ff.) phrases such as *in gramine molli, propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae*, and *tempora conspergunt viridantis floribus herbas* foreshadow the idyllic landscape of 2.355 ff., where the mother cow is searching for her missing calf: the woods are green (*viridis*) and leafy (*frondiferum*); the willow trees are delicate (*tenerae*), but full of life, as is the dew-soaked grass; the rivers are overflowing (*summis labentia ripis*); and the pastures are *laeta*, a standard metaphor for their sheer abundance. Much like the proem, the descriptive language of these lines emphasizes nature's abundance and tranquillity. Segal argues that Lucretius' natural scenery is an expression of his moral argument⁸, whereby *religio* is set against the simplicity of nature. The use of contrast, then, becomes an important means for the poet to attack religion. For example, the young calf, a newborn, serves as a symbol of the life-giving powers of nature, and when the calf is cut down in sacrifice, there is a conflict between nature and religion. It could also be argued that there is a contrast between the natural landscape and the mother cow. While she fruitlessly searches for her lost offspring, she is surrounded by a natural landscape teeming with life. The fecundity of the natural landscape clearly emphasizes the barrenness (*orbata*) of the mother cow, and it should be observed

⁸ Segal (1970), p. 108.

that this dichotomy evokes an emotional response from the reader. The natural landscape is calm and peaceful, and a nurturer of life; the mother cow is in perplexity, and her search is characterized by anxiety. The dichotomy causes the reader to respond to the cow's anguish with pity. Contrast and conflict are also seen in the theme of the struggle between life and death; for instance, in lines 40 ff. of the proem the mere mention of war and the emphasis on fighting bring to mind the hardships of life and the onslaught of death. Life is shown to be a struggle: *omnis cum in tenebris praesertim vita laboret* (54). Not far behind is the notion of death, which is hinted at in the phrase *in tenebris*. Furthermore, within this struggle between life and death Lucretius positions *religio* (44) as a factor which cannot resolve this polarity. Similarly, in this passage at 2.352-66 we see the significant role that religion plays in the struggle between life and death. The calf, as we noted above, is a symbol of nature, and through an extension of this symbol, it must also serve as the embodiment of life. The conflict comes by way of the sacrifice, an action which is emblematic of both religion and death. However, instead of religion being portrayed as a useless philosophy in a passive role, it now becomes the agent which administers death, the death of a calf. We will consider this more fully below, where we will discuss the role that religion plays in the sacrifice of the calf, and consider why Lucretius has a such a strong objection to the custom.

We have seen above how Lucretius excites pity for a sacrificed calf and its bereaved mother in an analogy which serves to illustrate the fact that atoms are distinct from one another in shape and appearance. We will consider here the importance of the same passage in relation to the description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia at 1.80-101, a discussion of the use of animals in warfare at 5.1297-1349, and, finally, the poet's digression at 1.921-50 (which is repeated in the proem at 4.1-25).

The quotation given at the heading of this chapter provides the most appropriate place to begin. In a section of the poem where he is summarizing the origin of religion, Lucretius abruptly breaks off from his account and begins to moralize on the folly of superstition and religious custom. He draws the reader's attention to numerous forms of worship, by claiming that they do not constitute *pietas*. The rituals include veiling one's head in public, revering the statue of a god, approaching every altar, falling to the ground and spreading one's hands before shrines, praying repeatedly, and, most important for our discussion, blood-sacrifice. It can be argued that from this list the custom of sacrifice is the religious practice that Lucretius condemns most vehemently, particularly if we pay special attention to his phrasing in *aras sanguine multo / spargere quadrupedum*. We have encountered the image of the blood-stained altar at 2.352 ff., where Lucretius vividly describes the sacrifice of a young calf, while at the same time exciting pity for the animal.⁹

⁹ Elsewhere, Lucretius uses the same diction to describe acts of sacrifice. For example, the same image occurs at 4.1236 ff.: *multo sanguine.../...conspergunt aras*. At 6.756 ff. there comes another reference to the practice of sacrifice. There is no explicit image of a blood-stained altar, but the

There, Lucretius tries to shape the reader's impressions with a powerful description of the grim realities of sacrifice, and, as we will argue, 2.352 ff. is connected to a passage from earlier in the poem, where the poet explicitly condemns the custom of sacrifice.

At 1.80-101 Lucretius gives the description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia as an example of the evils of religion. The sacrifice of Iphigenia is highly significant because it is prominently placed at the very beginning of the poem and thus influences the reader's impressions of sacrificial acts throughout the poem. In lines 80-3 Lucretius warns his reader that he need not fear that he will be traveling a path of impiety in reading this philosophical discourse. Rather, the reader should be wary of religion because it is faith in religion (and not philosophy) that causes criminal and impious deeds (83-4). Immediately a difference is seen between Lucretius' description of the cow searching for her lost calf and his description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia. In the former, Lucretius wishes to illustrate a scientific point concerning the variety of atoms and the difference in appearance of each; in the latter, he makes an effective argument against religion through a graphic description of the sacrifice of a young girl. However, a similarity binds the two thematically, in that there is a sacrifice in both - one of a virginal princess, the other of an animal. And while Lucretius does not explicitly state that religion was the root cause of the calf's slaughter, the reader cannot but assume that humankind's faith in religion is what causes the calf's sacrifice (*ante deum...delubra*) and the

sacrificial victims are referred to as *quadrupedes*. It appears that Lucretius wishes his reader to recall his earlier statements at 5.1198 ff., and consequently the gruesome sight of the altar.

anguish of its mother. The passage on the sacrifice of Iphigenia, for example, pronounces categorically the negative effects of religion, which are proclaimed in the climax at 101: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*. Since our first introduction to the practice of sacrifice in *DRN* reveals the author's abhorrence of the ritual (especially, when the ritual involves the sacrifice of a human), we should not be surprised that Lucretius shapes our impressions and biases against the custom for the remainder of the poem. Therefore, it is important to examine the passage at 1.80-101 carefully, since it will give us a better understanding of the passage at 2.352-66:

illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis	80
impia te rationis inire elementa viamque	
indugredi sceleris. quod contra saepius illa	
religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.	
Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram	
Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede	85
ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum.	
cui simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus	
ex utraque pari malarum parte profusast,	
et maestum simul ante aras adstare parentem	
sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros	90
aspectuque suo lacrimas effundere civis,	
muta metu terram genibus summissa petebat.	
nec miserae prodesse in tali tempore quibat	
quod patrio princeps donarat nomine regem.	
nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras	95
deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum	
perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo,	
sed casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso	
hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis,	
exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.	100
tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.	

We saw that 2.352-66 is emblematic of Lucretius' ability to infuse an analogy with pity and pathos for a slaughtered calf and its bereaved mother. Iphigenia, the victim of the sacrifice at 1.80-101, is given the same treatment, but our emotions are driven to the extremes of sympathy and shock. We see that Lucretius describes blood-sacrifice as a polluted act *turparunt sanguine foede* (85). The element of horror is further increased when we discover Agamemnon's involvement in the proceedings. However, a feeling of sympathy is produced through Iphigenia. She is victimized by religion and her antagonists, and Lucretius is determined to bring our attention to it - the agents of *turparunt* are now identified as *ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum* (86)¹⁰, her own father is close by (89), servants are concealing their knives (90), and the identification of Iphigenia as *hostia* (99) all stress the girl's pathetic fate. In line 98 the poet continues with his sympathetic characterization of Iphigenia, as seen through *casta* and *maesta*. The juxtaposition of *inceste* with *casta* emphasizes the innocence of the maiden in comparison to the wickedness of the custom of sacrifice. The most distressing detail of the narrative jarring on the reader's emotions is the role of the parent. When Lucretius tells us that there was no advantage in Iphigenia's calling Agamemnon a 'father' first, and a 'king' second, the reader's pity deepens when we reflect on a relationship between father and daughter.¹¹ The phrase *mactatu...parentis* (99) is Lucretius' final comment on Agamemnon's presence at and involvement in the sacrifice. At first we find him

¹⁰ The emphasis on the nobility of the Greek leaders (*delecti, prima virorum*) contrasts with their ignoble actions of sacrificing a young girl.

¹¹ Cf. Hallet, pp. 62 ff.

standing in sorrow by the altar, as seen through the eyes of Iphigenia; next, we discover that there will be no benefit in Iphigenia's appealing to him; and, finally, we are told that he is the one responsible for the sacrifice. At this point, the reader is compelled to feel more pity for Iphigenia, seeing that the man most bound to protect her is, in reality, her killer. But before we proceed to an examination of the familial bond between Iphigenia and Agamemnon, it must be reiterated here that pathos envelops the Iphigenia episode exactly as we have seen in 2.352-66, and the poet uses this device to reinforce his argument against religion.

We saw above that in the description of the mother cow searching for her lost calf there was an antithesis between life and death. The calf in the prime of its youth symbolizes nature's creative forces. The other calves that were frolicking through the meadows bring to mind youth and all the joys of life too. In the passage at 1.80-101 Iphigenia symbolizes the freshness of life, its innocence and the potential for its fulfillment. Her hair is described as *virgineos* (87)¹²; she is referred to as *casta* (98), emphasizing both her purity and her youth; and, finally, Lucretius tells us that she is ready for wedlock (*nubendi tempore in ipso*). The play on the marriage theme (so apparent in these lines) emphasizes the life that Iphigenia could have lived.¹³ And we quickly see a relation between the calf and Iphigenia: they

¹² C. Bailey (p. 614) draws attention to the ribbon that was worn around the head of Iphigenia. An *infula* was a ribbon normally worn by priests and priestesses, or by animals about to be sacrificed. A *vitta* was also worn by priests and priestesses, but more importantly by brides. Upon being adorned with an *infula*, Iphigenia along with the reader would immediately realize that she was about to be sacrificed. This differentiation deserves comment because Iphigenia is adorned like an animal for sacrifice, and, therefore, she is linked to the calf at 2.352 ff.

¹³ Kenney has some interesting thoughts on the allusions which Lucretius makes to the marriage ceremony at 1.95 ff. He states that Iphigenia is lifted to the altar in a sort of cruel parody of the ceremonies at a Roman wedding. The words *sublata*, *tremibunda*, and *deductast* befit the ritual of

both embody youth about to face a tragic demise. Although the reader does not actually see Iphigenia cut down at the altar, her fate has been sealed in mythology and in Lucretius' build-up of suspense.¹⁴ Her saddened father, the attendants hiding their knives and the people shedding their tears all contribute to the suspense that creates pathos and horror at the maiden's imminent death. Furthermore, the deaths of the sacrificial victims are not treated in a peaceful and gentle manner; on the contrary, the blood, the pollution and the sheer horror reflect the agony of their deaths. We should note too the decisive role that religion plays in the struggle between life and death. In the sacrifices of both the calf and Iphigenia, life and the innocence of youth are snatched into death when religion interferes and drives out logic and reason. Lucretius has identified that religion and its decadent rituals side with life's destructive elements - and death is its culmination. Lucretius' description of the sacrifice of the calf goes one step further in that the reader is made privy to the painful effects brought on by religion - namely through the cow as a mother figure. For the reader not only observes the loss of life at the hands of religion, but also a mother's futile search for a child that she does not know is dead.

mock-abduction. There follow the explicit references to marriage - *non ut sollemni more sacrorum / perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo* - which, of course, will not happen to Iphigenia. See Kenney (1974), p. 28; and C. Bailey, p. 615.

¹⁴ The purpose clause introduced in lines 95-6 is completed with the subjunctive *conclideret* in line 99. The subjunctive mood merely suggests that Iphigenia will fall to the ground, so the reader does not actually witness the fulfillment of her sacrifice. It could be argued that the calf at 2.352 ff. symbolizes the fulfillment of Iphigenia's fate. For at that point (2.353) the perfect tense of *concidit* is used, so that the reader has witnessed the very deed. Therefore, we have a further connection between the calf and Iphigenia, seeing that the calf fulfills Iphigenia's fate and in some respects becomes Iphigenia herself.

Another point for consideration is the personification of the calf in relation to Iphigenia. The calf is the second sacrificial victim in *DRN*, and it is only natural that the reader compare the calf with Iphigenia, or, more significantly, animal with human. The calf is raised to the status of a hapless girl, and, as we saw above, the humanization substantiates the animal's suffering; all of a sudden, the reader's perceptions of animal suffering are realized to their fullest extent. Lucretius appears to make a distinction, however, in the extent of the anguish of Agamemnon and the mother cow. Agamemnon, although saddened, does not suffer the same degree of anguish and anxiety as the mother cow. The cow searched everywhere for her child fruitlessly and was affected by the sight of the other calves. Lucretius concentrates greatly on her suffering (eleven lines to be exact), while he merely summarizes Agamemnon's grief with one word - *maestum*. However, Agamemnon is one of those unhappy humans who bring woe upon themselves (*cf.* 5.1194-7), and Lucretius uses him to illustrate the human weakness of relying heavily on superstition and religion.¹⁵ This of course brings us back to the ever-present underlying purpose of the poem - to undermine the reader's unquestioned faith in religion. Agamemnon, the agent of his daughter's death, upheld religious custom in order to sail to Troy. Lucretius opposes such zeal and argues that religion is cruel and impious through the example of Iphigenia's sacrifice; the passage at 2.352-66 by

¹⁵ Compare *DRN* 5.1194-7 - *o genus infelix humanum, talia diuis / cum tribuit facta atque iras adiunxit acerbas! / quantos tum gemitus ipsi sibi, quantaque nobis / vulnera, quas lacrimas peperere minoribu' nostris!* - with *Od.* 1.32 ff. There, Zeus addresses the Olympian gods on how mortal men blame the gods for their misfortunes, when, in fact, mortals bring further troubles upon themselves by their own folly. As evidence, Zeus provides the case of Aegisthus who was warned by Zeus not to woo Clytemnestra nor to murder Agamemnon. Aegisthus disobeyed and added to his misfortunes.

implication and with reference to the sacrifice of Iphigenia makes the same statement.

In Book 5 we encounter another use of animals in *De Rerum Natura*. While discussing how the development of weapons led to the rise of warfare, Lucretius tells us that at some time in the past animals were used as instruments in battle (5.1297-1349). Men not only rode into battle on horseback, but also sent out animals against their enemies. In line 1339 Lucretius states that elephants were *ferro male mactae*.¹⁶ The reader quickly recognizes the word *mactae* and recalls the use of its cognates in 1.99 (*mactatu*) and 2.353 (*mactatus*).¹⁷ But here the word is used to denote elephants that were slain in a battle, and not a victim that had been sacrificed at the altar.

mactare is important because of the moral implications it conveys and the violent image it emits. The word appears six times in the text, beginning at 1.99 and making its last appearance at 6.1242. At 3.41 ff. Lucretius argues that the pursuit of philosophy will remove the fear of death from men's hearts, especially their fear of the Underworld. He refutes those who declare that disease and disgrace are to be feared more than the lower realm of death, because, in fact, their actions reveal otherwise. For example, when their lives are in peril, they offer propitiatory

¹⁶ Elephants are called *boves lucae* at 5.1302. The term is said to have derived from the Romans' first encounter with elephants in Lucania, when the animals accompanied the army of Pyrrhus in 280 BC (see Plin. *N. H.* 8. 6. 16)

¹⁷ C. Bailey (p. 1533) translates *male mactae* as 'badly mauled' and believes the word to be a participle of an archaic *maco*, 'to slay', the root of which is seen in the frequentative *mactare*. Costa (p. 144) also believes that *mactae* may be connected with *mactare*.

sacrifices to the gods below, specifically sacrificing (*mactant*) black sheep (52).¹⁸ The descriptive imagery found in the sacrifices of Iphigenia and the calf is absent here, but the effect is still the same: the force of *mactant* is established by its earlier treatments, and the reader is expected to recall the same emotions and logic. The emotional response leads us back to thoughts of a blood-stained altar and a slaughtered victim, while the underlying logic is to make the argument that superstition leads to irrational deeds. Moreover, we might bring attention to the statement at 3.53-4: *multoque in rebus acerbis / acrius advertunt animos ad religionem*. Such a statement readily compares with the final line of Lucretius' description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (101). It can be argued, therefore, that the passages are related in that in each there is a reference to a sacrifice, an ambiguousness associated with certain actions, and, finally, a statement with moral undertones.

In Book 6 *mactare* appears twice, at lines 759 and 1242. At 6.756 ff. Lucretius describes for us the supernatural phenomena associated with pestilential regions, including a region in Syria where it is reputed that, as soon as they enter the region, four-footed animals fall to the ground as if they had been sacrificed to the infernal gods: *In Syria quoque fertur item locus esse videri / quadrupedes quoque quo simul ac vestigia primum / intulerint, graviter vis cogat concidere ipsa / manibus ut si sint divis mactata repente*. We can easily point out that Lucretius explicitly links *mactare* to religion (*manibus divis*), but this does little to further our argument. What we can

¹⁸ Kenney (1971, p. 82) notes that *nigrae pecudes* were the usual offerings to the infernal deities. See Hom. *Od.* 11.32 ff.; Virg. *A.* 6.153, 243 ff.

say, however, is that at 6.760 ff. Lucretius cautions against a supernatural or theological explanation for the phenomena, insisting instead on a natural explanation. The supernatural explanation for this phenomena in Syria seems to be in 759, *manibus ut si sint divis mactata repente*, that the infernal gods are making sacrifice of these animals.¹⁹ Undermining religion and superstition, as we have discussed above, is Lucretius' principal objective in the poem, and so refuting a supernatural explanation, which clearly involves the custom of sacrifice, correlates with the argument that acts of sacrifice do not constitute real *pietas*. The other example is found in the account of the plague at Athens (6.1138-1286). At 6.1239 ff. Lucretius relates how those who were afraid of death and avoided visiting the sick were punished with a foul death: *nam quicumque suos fugitabant visere ad aegros / vitai nimium cupidos mortisque timentis / poenibat paulo post turpi morte malaque / desertos, opis expertis, incuria mactans*. Here, *mactans* is used to modify *incuria*, and, taken together, the phrase emphasizes the carnage caused by people's fear and apathy. The phrase is significant for our discussion beyond the literal interpretation and the appearance of *mactans* in the text, because Lucretius seems to draw a parallel between the Athenians' disregard for the plague and his argument concerning the neglect of philosophy. He says that when the Athenians ignored their sick out of a fear of death, disastrous results soon followed: slaughtering neglect (*incuria mactans*) punished them with a death foul and evil, abandoned and without help. Likewise, the calf and Iphigenia succumb to religious zeal and slaughter because humans are

¹⁹ See C. Bailey, p. 1667.

ruled by fear and superstition, and neglect philosophy and the real workings of the universe. The disastrous results that arise from their sacrifices are the loss of life and the anguish inflicted on the surviving relatives. Therefore, the symbolism behind *incuria* must imply more than the Athenians' inaction to include a more general understanding of neglect, so that by combining *incuria* with *mactans*, Lucretius is able to maintain his argument that neglect of philosophy leads to superstition, which in turn leads to impious deeds.

We must also consider *male mactae* at 5.1339 in view of its relationship with 1.80-101 and 2.352-66. Segal argues that "it interweaves the folly of war with the folly of superstitious rites, for the phrase brings the suffering of these animals into relation with the cruelty of sacrificial murder".²⁰ Segal is correct in his assumption that the phrase *male mactae* includes the suffering of all wrongly slaughtered victims, and not just the elephants. The phrase immediately follows a graphic account of other animals used in battle, and so brings a conclusion to the carnage which had been escalating gradually: she-lions tore at the faces and backs (presumably of men and animals alike); bulls tossed and trampled men on their own side and ripped open the bellies of horses; boars tore apart their battle-comrades with their tusks and covered themselves in blood; and elephants were badly mauled (*male mactae*) with weapons.²¹ There is no mistaking the emphasis on death and violence in lines 1318-40; the juxtaposition of *mactae* provides a conclusion to the previous slaughter and an image analogous to sacrificial ritual. We have already considered Lucretius'

²⁰ Segal (1990), p. 205.

²¹ For the she-lions, see 5.1318-22; bulls, 5.1323-5; boars, 5.1326-9; elephants, 5.1339-40.

treatment of *mactare* throughout the poem, and observed how the reader assents to the moral condemnation and sentiment which the poet attaches to the word. Even when the poet confesses in lines 1341-9 that he is unsure whether these disastrous experiments with animals ever occurred, it makes little difference to the reader. The desired effect has already been ensured: *mactae* carries too many negative associations to be overlooked without consideration. Besides, some one hundred lines later, Lucretius provides a moral digression which helps to elucidate the earlier passage:

ergo hominum genus incassum frustra laborat	1430
semper et in curis consumit inanibus aevum,	
nimirum quia non cognovit quae sit habendi	
finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas.	
idque minutatim vitam provexit in altum	
et belli magnos commovit funditus aestus.	1435

The poet's lament for humankind wasting away in fruitless endeavours stems from Epicurean doctrines on pleasure and desire.²² But in line 1435 the reader's attention is directed to warfare - a source of anxiety for the poet because it is caused by human ignorance. The fact that warfare is caused by human ignorance reminds the reader of 6.1239-42, where Lucretius relates that neglect (*incuria*) of one's duty leads to foul death. Moreover, the reader cannot help but make a connection between this passage and the others which we have been examining (1.80-101, 2.353-66, and 5.1297-1349). If humankind were only to turn its attention and zeal to the noble

²² For a discussion of the importance of these lines to Epicurean doctrines concerning desires and the limits of pleasure, see C. Bailey (p. 1541) and Costa (p. 151).

pursuit of Epicureanism and the real workings of the universe, so much hardship and pain would be eliminated.

Moreover, at 5.1432-5 Lucretius seems to imply that humans are on a path of moral degeneracy, in that their ignorance of the limits to possessions and true happiness has made life more difficult and provoked war.²³ It can be argued, then, that the manifestation of this moral degeneracy lies in the passage on the experimentation of animals in warfare. For it is here that Lucretius uses his poetic license to project all the damage, carnage and gore of the battlefield onto the reader. This is not the first instance that we have examined in which Lucretius describes a scenario with such vivid detail and emotional upheaval. The poet's use of *mactae* is unsettling because it conjures up the image of a bloody sacrifice. The sacrifice of the calf is emphasized with certain details like *sanguinis exspirans calidum de pectore flumen* (2.354); the same technique is used of Iphigenia's sacrifice, particularly at 1.84 ff.: *aram / Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede*. Graphic violence and ceaseless slaughter characterize the experiments in warfare, as expressed in *deripiebant, latera ac ventres hauribant, caedebant, and tinguentes sanguine*. Consider how Lucretius further establishes a mood through his description of the elephants; their enormous size, hideousness and snake-like qualities instill fear and anxiety.²⁴ In fact,

²³ Costa (p. 151) believes that Lucretius is making the point that "men have lost their moral bearings and even go to war in their greed for possessions".

²⁴ At 5.1302-3 Lucretius describes the elephants as *turrito corpore, taetras, / anguimanus* (*anguimanus* refers to the snake-like movement of the elephant's trunk). The poet's description would not support a claim that Lucretius sympathized with the injustice towards all animals (as one might argue from the passage at 2.352-66, for instance). However, the reader would do well to remember that the elephants were in the battle in the first place because of human involvement and exploitation. If one adds to it the notion that humans neglect life's necessities (of which warfare is

Lucretius continues this mood, as seen in 1305 ff.: *sic alid ex alio peperit discordia tristis / horribile humanis quod gentibus esset in armis / inque dies belli terroribus addidit augmen*. The anxiety is then enhanced by the violence that follows, and Lucretius is able to combine the two to reveal the horror of the battlefield. And clearly the disturbing narrative is an effective way for Lucretius to exhibit the folly of humans and their warfare.

We have now seen a variety of ways in which Lucretius links these three passages, by reminding the reader of his argument, bringing emotion to his discourse, and proving his theories. As regards sacrifice, the *male mactae* of Book 5 serves as the greatest sacrifice in *De Rerum Natura* - a symbolic and climactic sacrifice - the sacrifice of living beings at the hands of ignorance and the pursuit of superstitious folly. Our final word on the passage comes from Segal, as he prepares us for our next discussion: "the apparent digression of 1308-49 ... functions in a way analogous to one of Plato's myths: it contains a poetic truth that supplements, in an imaginative way, the surface logic of the exposition of Epicurean philosophy. That supplement tends to be imagistic, metaphorical, and visual rather than literal or syllogistic."²⁵

Segal argues that Lucretius strives to make the moral implications of his material come alive emotionally as well as intellectually.²⁶ We have seen the moral condemnation underlying the sacrifices of Iphigenia and the calf and the

not one), then it is clear that humans bear the responsibility for inflicting undue hardship and anguish.

²⁵ Segal (1990), p. 191.

²⁶ Segal (1990), p. 192.

experiments with animals in warfare; we have also observed how it is emphasized through the violent imagery and the emotional trauma that Lucretius describes with vivid detail. Perhaps we should elaborate on Segal's statement further, by including the notion that poetry stimulates the emotions, and philosophy the mind. And nowhere does Lucretius state this belief more explicitly than in the 'poetic apology' at 1.921-50.²⁷ For it is in these lines that Lucretius reveals his mission to free men's minds from superstition with new and obscure material, which he will imbue with the charm of poetry. It should also be stressed that Lucretius wishes, first, to free men's minds from the bonds of superstition through natural philosophy of atomic theory, and, secondly, to imbue this philosophy with poetry (931 ff.):

Nunc age quod superest cognosce et clarius audi.
 nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura; sed acri
 percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor,
 et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem
 Musarum, quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti 925
 avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
 trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis
 atque haurire, iuvatque novos decerpere flores
 insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam
 unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musae: 930
 primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis
 religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,
 deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
 carmina, musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.
 id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur; 935
 sed veluti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
 cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
 contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
 ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur
 laborum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum 940
 absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiatur,

²⁷ I have borrowed the term 'poetic apology' from Gale (p. 136). Note that lines 926-50 are repeated as the proem to Book 4 with slight changes. For an examination of the various arguments put forth by scholars on the repetition of these lines, see C. Bailey (pp. 756-8).

sed potius tali pacto recreata valescat,
 sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
 tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
 vulgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti 945
 carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram
 et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle,
 si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
 versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem
 naturam rerum qua constet compta figura. 950

Lucretius makes a clear distinction between philosophy and poetry in these lines. He reiterates that his subject matter (the nature of the universe as defined by Epicurean philosophy) is difficult to grasp: twice he refers to his material as *obscura* (922 and 933); and his venture into the haunts of the Pierides is described as *avia* (926), a reference to the newness of philosophy as a subject for poetry.²⁸ Furthermore, Lucretius describes his subject matter as *absinthia taetra* (936) and *amarum / absinthii laticem* (940 ff.), the bitter medicine being the natural philosophy and the dry subject of atomic theory. The poetic aspects, on the other hand, are described in aesthetically alluring terms. For instance, he maintains that poetry will leave a sweet taste on the tongue and in the senses of the reader: *suavem, mellis dulci flavoque liquore, suaviloquenti carmine*, and *dulci...melle*. There is the reference to the poetry's *musaeo lepore* - the implication being that poetry will make the material more appealing. Finally, Lucretius repeatedly refers to the poetic elements within the domain of the Muses. Gale notes that the Muses are chiefly notable for their absence from *De Rerum Natura*²⁹, and so this passage has the distinction of being the

²⁸ C. Bailey (p. 759) translates *avia* as 'off the beaten track', and notes that philosophy was an unusual subject for poetry.

²⁹ Gale, p. 136.

first reference to the Muses and possibly functions as an invocation for their inspiration. The antithesis which is developed between poetry and philosophy comes together in two places to form a concentric whole.³⁰ First, at 933 ff. Lucretius states that by touching (*contingens*) his obscure material with the charms of the Muses, he will compose *lucida carmina*. Second, in the analogy at 936 ff. he recalls how doctors sweeten the rim of a glass to make the taste of bitter medicine more palatable.³¹ As honey is a component to make the medicine easier to digest, so is poetry to philosophy. And by combining the poetry with the philosophy, Lucretius will obtain his desired results: *sed potius tali pacto recreata valescat*. Therefore it is a medicinal purging of the mind and soul that Lucretius hopes to achieve with his discourse, specifically through the mixture of poetry and philosophy. At this point, we should return to the passage at 2.352-66 and consider how it combines both the philosophical and poetic elements, thereby appealing to both the reader's intellect and emotions.

We have already seen Lucretius' sentimental treatment of the sacrificed calf and its bereaved mother, and seen how the emphasis on the blood and the loss of life stresses the violent nature of sacrifice, so that the reader is compelled to condemn religious ritual. But Lucretius attacks religion through more than just the explicit details of the calf's sacrifice, as he exposes the reader to the psychological torment inflicted upon the mother. Religion is responsible not only for the death of

³⁰ Gale (p. 47) stresses that poetry and myth can contribute to the reader's salvation if they are used for philosophical pursuits, but, in fact, have no value in themselves. Poetry serves its function by seducing the patient into being cured.

³¹ Cf. D. Chr. Or. 33.10 and Them. Or. 24.302 a-c.

an animal, but also for the suffering inflicted on its surviving relatives. Lucretius' feelings about sacrifice are evident, and it hardly needs stressing that he considers it one of religion's cruellest follies. The most effective way for him to demonstrate this folly is through an elaborate portrayal of a slaughter and the subsequent grief. And so, when Bailey states that the passage at 2.352-66 shows how the picture in Lucretius' mind gets the better of him, it would be better for our understanding to regard the poetic details as the honey required for the poet's bitter medicine.³² But perhaps it should be asked that if the honey is sweet and charming, why would Lucretius give it the bitter taste of sorrow and pathos in the simile of the calf and its mother. Indeed, it is clear that the sorrow and the pathos in this simile are intended to cause a particular kind of literary pleasure, and to help the reader to digest the scientific point that the infinite number of atoms is not all alike in shape and form, that, in fact, they are distinct from one another (2.333-41). Yet, while the sorrow and the pathos cause pleasure and help to elucidate Lucretius' scientific fact, they also help to persuade the reader that sacrifice is not real *pietas* (cf. 5.1198-1202) and that the sacrifice of this calf is an example of the evils caused by superstitious beliefs (cf. 1.82 ff.).³³ The sorrow and the pathos, therefore, appeal to the emotions and direct

³² C. Bailey, p. 861.

³³ There can be no argument that this passage at 2.352-66 is related to Lucretius' purpose of attacking religion, for Lucretius chooses to demonstrate a scientific point with an analogy that includes a sacrifice. If Lucretius merely wished to demonstrate the differences among each animal species and the ability of one animal to recognize its offspring, why did he not create an analogy involving a calf mingled with other calves? Indeed, the sacrifice of the calf and the emotional anxiety of its mother are a deliberate attempt to persuade the reader that religion causes men to commit evil deeds.

the reader to condemn the custom of blood-sacrifice, the sacrifice, we might add, of an animal.

As a brief digression it is worth pointing out that Lucretius' treatment of animals differs from Statius' and Martial's. While we have seen that in all three poets there is the real possibility that pity is deliberately being aroused for animals, there is a difference in the aims of the three poets. Statius and Martial both excite pity for an animal that has been slain in the arena, yet the sympathy is subordinate to their socio-political aims of praising the Emperor. Lucretius arouses sympathy for a sacrificed calf and its bereaved mother in an analogy that aims both to demonstrate a scientific point and, as we just saw above, to reinforce the argument that religion causes evil deeds. In this way, too, Lucretius' sympathy for animals has subordinate aims. But, as we will see below, Lucretius' sympathetic impulse for the calf and its bereaved mother can be explained scientifically through the philosophy of Epicurean atomic theory that teaches that humans and animals have the same atomic composition.

To resume the argument, Gale states that Lucretius distinguishes himself from other poets as the bard of *vera ratio*, drawing his material from philosophy, rather than myth or history.³⁴ A mark of this distinction is the novelty found at 1.926-30, where Lucretius says that he will take delight in the composition of this

³⁴ Gale, p. 141.

poem. Gale maintains that the poet's pleasure will come from a poem on Epicurean philosophy, because it is the vehicle by which he can bring salvation to his readers.³⁵ We have seen that Lucretius attempts to bring this salvation by refuting religious doctrine and tradition, and by staying the course of the scientific approach and presenting an atomic explanation for the universe. The atomic theories are important for our discussion, because we can see that in these theories Lucretius applies the same criteria to animals as to humans. If we look at 2.342 ff., for example, we see that Lucretius argues that each animal in each species differs in appearance, and that the parent and the offspring of all animals are able to recognize one another. It should be noted that Lucretius makes no distinction here between human and animal, for all are alike. Lucretius then gives the analogy of the calf and its mother to demonstrate the difference in atoms and their immediate recognition of one another. But if we put this particular scientific point aside, we are left with the notion that all living beings - both human and animal - share similar characteristics, including sensual perception. Let us, therefore, consider what Lucretius has to say on the topic of atoms and sensation (2.865-990).

Lucretius begins by stating that 'the first-beginnings of things' are incapable of feeling, although they gave rise to things which we perceive to have feeling (*earum quae sentire videmus*).³⁶ He then proceeds with examples from nature to demonstrate that sentient beings can come from things which themselves cannot feel. In lines

³⁵ Gale, p. 47.

³⁶ Lucretius frequently calls the first particles the *primordia rerum*, or, as they are called here, *principia*. For a discussion of these first particles see DRN 1. 483-634. We should note here that Lucretius traces all life back to these particles.

879-80 he unequivocally states that nature changes all foods into living bodies and that from these nature *sensus animantum procreat omnis*. Although Lucretius argues that sense is created in one body from the atomic rearrangement of the appropriate atoms of food³⁷, our interest lies in his acceptance of the idea that all living things have sensual perception. In lines 886 ff. he ponders what force would strike the mind so as to move and compel it to express diverse feelings. Lucretius also argues that *sensus* makes its way through the entire body: the flesh, the nerves, the veins, and all that is of mortal substance (904-6). So far Lucretius has told us that there exists a variety of senses throughout the entire body in all living creatures (cf. 2.973), but there remains a question concerning the nature of these senses. There is physical sensation, such as the pain incurred from a blow to the flesh (963-6), and emotional or psychological sensation, such as laughter, sadness and mental capacity (973-90). This is important for our discussion because Lucretius seems to characterize the mother cow as having both types of sensation: *desiderio perfixa* can suggest a physical stabbing³⁸; her incessant wandering and lowing are a visual and audible reflection of her feelings of despair; and her ability to distinguish the other calves from her own assumes that she possesses the powers of instinct. The calf, on the other hand, makes no sound and the reader is not made aware of any physical pain which he might feel. But, at 2.944-51 Lucretius argues

Praeterea quamvis animantem grandior ictus
 quam patitur natura repente adfligit, et omnis
 corporis atque animi pergit confundere sensus.
 dissoluuntur enim positurae principiorum

945

³⁷ See C. Bailey, p. 941.

³⁸ See C. Bailey, p. 863.

et penitus motus vitales impediuntur,
 donec materies, omnis concussa per artus,
 vitalis animae nodos a corpore solvit
 dispersamque foras per caulas eiecit omnis.

950

In this passage Lucretius describes how a blow, which is larger than nature can endure, strikes down a living creature (*animantem*), disturbing the sensation of body and mind, and driving the living bonds of the soul (*vitales animae nodos*) out of the body. We might argue that lines 944-5, in particular, correlate with the calf at 2.353 ff., in that there is a blow which knocks the living creature prostrate. *ictus* reminds us of the blow that would have been inflicted on the calf next to the altar (cf. *Met.* 2.623-5, where Ovid describes the sacrifice of a calf, which involves the animal being struck by the blow (*ictu*) of a hammer); the fact that the blow is greater than what nature can endure intensifies the thrust of the impact, so that the receiver of the blow is knocked senseless (944-5).³⁹ Moreover, *adfligit* correlates with *concidit* (2.353), in that both verbs are associated with a violent action that leaves its object lying prostrate.⁴⁰ We might also argue that lines 946 ff., which focus on the notion of sensation and how it is affected by the blow to the body, tell us what happens to the calf after the sacrificial blow has been struck – its sensation is thrown into confusion and its soul is ejected out of the body.⁴¹ Since the ejection of the soul from

³⁹ cf. 2.354, where Lucretius tells us that blood spewed out of the calf's breast, an image which implies that the calf is losing its life-spirit.

⁴⁰ For the brutality of *adfligo* see Sall. J. 101.11, Ov. *Met.* 12.139, and Tac. A. 4.45; for *concido* see n. 4.

⁴¹ At 3.417 ff. Lucretius explains how the soul is mortal, and that, when he speaks of the soul (*anima*), he also speaks of the mind (*animus*). The significance of this discussion for us is that Lucretius makes his argument with the assumption that both humans and animals have souls: *nunc age, nativos animantibus et mortalis / esse animos animasque levis ut noscere possis*. As Bailey (pp. 1065 ff.) points out, *animantis* simply means 'living things', and, therefore, includes animals as well as humans.

the body implies death (see 3.526 ff., where Lucretius explains that, when a man dies, the soul is dispersed from the body) and the calf clearly dies at 2.352-4, it might reasonably be argued that its soul is ejected from the body. Note also the language that Lucretius uses at 3.425 ff. to describe how a soul is dispersed from the body, *exhalare* (432) and *diffluere* (435); he then adds the defining phrase, *detracto sanguine* (442), when he argues that a lifeless body cannot contain a soul. Lucretius' language here readily compares with the language he uses to describe the calf's death at 2.354, *sanguinis exspirans calidum de pectore flumen*. And so, when Lucretius also says that the blow will confuse all the sensations in the body and mind, we might argue that the calf, by association, is given the properties of physical and psychological sensation.⁴² The calf now resembles Iphigenia more than ever, as we think him to feel physical and psychological anguish.

In this respect, then, humans and animals are alike, because they are essentially composed of roughly the same kinds of atoms, including the atoms that endow them with physical and psychological sensation. And so it can rightly be argued that the sacrifice of the calf is in essence as tragic as the sacrifice of Iphigenia, because both are sentient beings and both are cut down by religious folly. In conclusion we should note that Sorabji makes a brief reference to 2.353-66 in his analysis of the ancient philosophical theories concerning the status of animals and

⁴² Compare, for example, what Lucretius says at 3.487 concerning the effects of epilepsy on the body. He says that when an epileptic man falls to the ground (*concidit*; cf. 1.99 and 2.353), as if struck by a thunderbolt (*ut fulminis ictu*), he foams at the mouth, groans and trembles, raves, grows rigid, twists, and pants irregularly. Clearly the sensations of body and mind are disturbed throughout the body. Similarly, the blow that strikes the calf will affect its physical and psychological sensation.

their treatment in the ancient world. He feels that Lucretius strongly thinks that the mother cow's anguish is a bad thing, that religion is evil, and that the calf has a distinctive, recognizable shape, but argues that Lucretius does not set out to criticize the injustice to animals.⁴³ Yet we cannot ignore the fact that Lucretius equates animals and humans in the atomic realm, a realm where he believes that all atoms are distinct from one another. We will continue to explore in the next chapter the philosophical and moral concerns for treating animals with sympathy, and we will see how, for some Roman poets, humans and animals share a kinship in ways other than atomic sensation.

⁴³ Sorabji, pp. 208-9.

Chapter 3

corpora.../...tuta esse et honesta sinamus (Ov. *Met.* 15.459-61)

Bailey tells us that Lucretius' description of the distraught cow was an influential literary motif, as can be seen from the traces of the passage which are to be found in Tibullus, Statius, and the two poets whom we will discuss in this chapter, Virgil and Ovid.¹ We will begin with Virgil, who was influenced by Lucretius' poetry and philosophy alike. The image of the bereft cow overcome with emotion can be found in the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, where Virgil expands the Lucretian image to include a cow tormented by love and a bull in the grip of sexual excitement, as well as a bull grieving for the loss of a loved one. Virgil also seems to have been influenced by Lucretius' precepts concerning the kinship that exist between animals and humans in that both are composed of the same atoms. For Virgil blurs the distinction between the two, by revealing that both humans and animals are subject to the forces of nature, and thus share a kinship.

In the third *Georgic* Virgil focuses on animal husbandry, devoting the first part of the book to the care of horses and cattle (49-283), and the second to the care of sheep and goats (284-566). At line 474 he begins an account of a plague in Noricum which arose in the cattle and spread throughout the countryside, eventually coming to infect humans.² The following passage, in particular, allows

¹ C. Bailey, p. 861.

² Although a full discussion does not fall within the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that Virgil's cattle plague is modeled on Lucretius' account of a plague in Athens in 430 BC (*DRN* 6.1138-1286). For a discussion of the relationship between the two plagues see Farrell pp. 84-94, Mynors pp. 251 ff., Putnam pp. 215 ff., Slavitt pp. 71-3, and West pp. 71-88. We should note that, whereas Lucretius illustrates the effects of the plague on humankind, Virgil focuses on the suffering of the animals.

us to see the sympathy and empathy that Virgil seeks to inspire in the reader for the dying bull and the yoke-mate he left behind:

ecce autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus	515
concidit et mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem	
extremosque ciet gemitus. it tristis arator	
maerentem abiungens fraterna morte iuvenum,	
atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra.	
non umbrae altorum nemorum, non mollia possunt	520
prata movere animum, non qui per saxa volutus	
purior electro campum petit amnis; at ima	
solvuntur latera, atque oculos stupor urget inertis	
ad terramque fluit devexo pondere cervix.	
quid labor aut benefacta iuvant? quid vomere terras	525
invertisse gravis? atqui non Massica Bacchi	
munera, non illis epulae nocuere repostae:	
frondibus et victu pascuntur simplicis herbae,	
pocula sunt fontes liquidi atque exercita cursu	
flumina, nec somnos abruptit cura salubris.	530

The passage is reminiscent of Lucretius' description of the mother cow searching for her lost calf. In particular, the shady groves, gentle meadows, and gushing rivers compare with the landscape that Lucretius imagined as being unable to relieve the mother cow's anxiety.³ Mynors rightly points out that Lucretius' cow turns away from those objects in the countryside which would have been familiar to her, specifically as the objects of food and drink.⁴ He further adds that Lucretius presents these objects in attractive language, expressing how a cow might see them.⁵

³ In Lucretius the rolling rivers appeared at 2.362. Virgil's *umbrae altorum nemorum* recall Lucretius' *frondiferum nemus* (2.359) and *tenerae salices* (2.361), and his *mollia...prata* reflect Lucretius' *herbae rore vigentes* (2.361) and *pabula laeta* (2.364). Virgil's intention is the same - to emphasize the allure of the countryside with its lush flora and teeming waters. Thomas (p. 139) notes how the pastoral world has lost its appeal for this one bull who is grieving over the loss of his companion. Similarly, Lucretius relates how the landscape offers little in the way of distraction for the mother cow searching for her calf.

⁴ Mynors, p. 255.

⁵ West (p. 83) would agree with Mynors that in Lucretius we have a cow's eye view of the landscape. The willows are tender and, therefore, gentle to the taste; the grass in its growth and

Mynors' is an important observation because it suggests that a cow has its own way of perceiving the natural landscape, a perception that would require the animal to possess some mental ability. Further, one could argue that in presenting the landscape from the cow's point of view Lucretius takes his reader into the mind of an animal by means other than through the emphasis on emotional and mental anguish. He individualizes a species of animal, and presents it in such a way that the animal appears to be capable of making decisions based upon instinct, here the natural instinct to obtain food and water. Mynors argues that Virgil's landscape, however, is described with the diction of a human observer, who might hope to obtain relief from the beauty of the pastoral environment.⁶ West agrees, arguing that Virgil abandons those characteristics most likely to interest a cow, and instead concentrates on those details which appeal to human comfort.⁷ Hence, there is shade from the trees, the meadows are soft, and the water is said to be clearer than amber (520-2). If Mynors and West are correct, should we assume that Virgil has borrowed Lucretius' analogy of a cow which is capable of reasoning and feeling to place the analogy in a world more familiar to human awareness and appreciation? A passage in Virgil's eighth *Eclogue* might offer some insight. Here, Virgil introduces the reader to the analogy of a cow searching for a young bull:

talis amor Daphnin qualis cum fessa iuencum
per nemora atque altos quaerendo bucula lucos
propter aquae rivum viridi procumbit in ulva
perdita nec serae meminit decedere nocti,

85

covered in dew, and also fresh to the taste; and the rivers are level with their banks and accessible to the mouth.

⁶ Mynors, p. 255.

⁷ West, p. 83.

talis amor teneat nec sit mihi cura mederi.

The anxiety and despair of the young cow in this passage recalls that of Lucretius' mother cow, but Virgil transfers the emotional context to the sphere of young lovers. We also see a similar emphasis on the attractive objects of the countryside: *nemora atque altos...lucos aquae rivum* and *viridi...in ulva*. This forlorn cow is in a desperate search (*fessa* suggests that she has been searching to the point of exhaustion) throughout the land to find the bullock that she loves. The beauty of her surroundings is in contrast to her emotional despair (*perdita*), as she is *perdita* among the groves, water and flora, all of which would normally occupy her attention instinctively. So obsessed is this cow that she forgets to return home when evening falls, thus causing the reader to conclude that she also neglects sustenance (another reason for Virgil to mention the waters and flora). The similarities between this passage and Lucretius' description of the mother cow searching for her lost calf are evident: there is a futile search for a loved one, an emphasis on the physical landscape, and the implication that an animal feels emotion. It should be pointed out that Virgil permits the reader occasion to view the countryside through the eyes and emotions of a cow. For, just like Lucretius' cow, this animal is unaffected by the temptations of the flora and the river. Virgil invites the reader to believe that, in any other circumstances, this cow would be drinking from the river and eating the sedge, rather than spending the evening searching for her lover. It is the same for the bulls at G. 3.520 ff. The groves, the meadows and the stream are all indicative of a countryside familiar to a bull. In fact, Virgil reminds us that we are in a rural

landscape in 528 ff., by stating that bulls drink and feed on the waters and flora that we had met at 520-2.

For the moment let us continue on this subject of the differences between humans and animals in the *Georgics*. Ross states that in the third *Georgic* "animals, large and small, allow accurate reflection of human conditions, without anthropomorphizing".⁸ Ross' argument that Virgil does not anthropomorphize is integral to the understanding of Virgil's treatment of animals, especially in view of Lucretius' influence on the *Georgics*. For, as we have seen, Lucretius argues that humans and animals have the same atomic composition, and if Virgil's characterization of a grief-stricken bull or a lovesick cow is treated in the same Lucretian vein, then Virgil's animals share a relationship with humans profounder than a symbolic expression of human suffering and misery. Humans have a kinship with animals in the *Georgics* because the forces of nature afflict them both. The plague is one of those afflictions, and it brings death and destruction to all forms of life in the countryside. The first victims of the disease are the cattle (480), but it is in the passage at 515 ff. that we see the extent of the suffering inflicted by the plague, and see how humans and animals are united by the destruction that it brings. For instance, the death of one of the oxen afflicts ploughman and yoke-mate alike. At 517 ff. Virgil tells us that the ploughman is *tristis*, and that he abandons the work which cannot be completed without the team of oxen. The yoke-mate reacts to the death of his companion in the same way as the ploughman; the animal is in grief

⁸ Ross, p. 149.

(*maerentem*) and is physically distressed over the loss (520 ff.). This is how Virgil best reveals the kinship that exists between humans and animals, that the death of this one animal affects human and animal alike. Virgil clearly wants to emphasize the fact that humans and animals are negatively affected by the diseased and dying animals, as we find in 534 ff. Here, men must perform the work which had been done previously by the ploughing oxen. Even in sacrifice men cannot escape the affects of the plague, when they are unable to make proper divination from the entrails of the slaughtered victims (486-93).

Death's antithesis also plays an important role in this poem, where it too is a force of nature that can bring destruction upon humans and animals alike. Virgil first introduces the topic of sex with reference to both cattle and horses (G. 3. 209-11)⁹, but proceeds with a passage that explores the power of sex in cattle only (212-41). This offers us an interesting parallel with lines 515-30, because there too cattle are the focus of the narrative and the central protagonists. Virgil says that the very sight of a cow is enough to inflame a bull's passions, so that he forgets about the woods and the grass, and is overcome by the charms of the female: *carpit enim viris paulatim uritque videndo / femina, nec nemorum patitur meminisse nec herbae / dulcibus illa quidem inlecebris* (215-7). We have already seen how the physical environment offers little comfort to an animal overcome with grief and anxiety, and, again, we come across the same notion. *meminisse* seems to imply that thoughts of *nemorum*

⁹ Virgil begins the discussion by stating that the best way to strengthen the animals is to keep them away from sexual desire (*Venerem*) and the stings of a hidden love (*caeci stimulos...amoris*). As we will see, however, Virgil shows little interest in methods preventing lust, and more in the extent of the power of that lust.

and *herbae* were fixed in the minds of bulls. In fact, Virgil specifies why the bull has no interest in them: he is seduced by the female's attractions (*dulcibus inlecebris*). Virgil then increases the seductive power of the cow, by revealing that she attracts many prospective suitors, two of which clash in order to decide which will mate with her (218-23). Furthermore, the loser of the contest is humiliated, and retires to a foreign country (*longeque ignotis exsulat oris*) where he bemoans the physical blows he has received, and the shame he feels over his defeat (224-8).¹⁰ After a while, the defeated suitor rebuilds his strength and sets out for a rematch with his rival paramour (229-41). Putnam argues that the reaction of the vanquished bull reflects a human response, where animals are seen in metaphorical terms of human erotic and political feuding. It may seem, then, that Virgil is humanizing animals only in order to moralize on human sexual behaviour. However, what at first may appear to the reader as merely a use of anthropomorphism is taken further by Virgil in the few lines that immediately follow the clash over the female:

Omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque 242
et genus aequoreum, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
in furias ignemque ruunt: amor omnibus idem.

These lines help to further our argument in two ways. First, Virgil claims that *amor omnibus idem*, love is the same for all. He does not distinguish between human and animal, because both are under the control of *amor*. Therefore, the bulls which come to blows over a desirable cow, and which are apt to feel shame and seek revenge, are similar to men, yet driven by instinct in their own right. For Virgil, lust controls

¹⁰ Thomas (p. 83) notes that the application of *exsulo* to an animal is unique in Latin and that it creates "a pathos and personification of great intensity".

all living beings, and not just humans, and the behaviour of those under its influence is the same.¹¹ In so far as Virgil makes no differentiation between human and animal and maintains that lust controls both, he does assemble a variety of animal species (wild beasts, marine life, birds, and, of course, domesticated animals). This brings us to our second point, that Virgil includes a vast array of animal species in his poem. So far we have seen that Virgil puts humans and animals on the same plane when it comes to the universal powers of sex and death. He now distinguishes the various species, and extends the powers of sexual excitement to all animals of the animal kingdom.¹² Clearly it is Virgil's intention to emphasize the universality of sex and death, and this, for us, lessens the boundaries between human and animal.

In conclusion let us return to the passage on the dying bull and its grieving yoke-mate. We have seen how Virgil recalls Lucretius' analogy of the mother cow, by claiming that the objects of the countryside were unable to relieve the bull's grief over the loss of his yoke-mate (G. 3.520-2). Virgil also seems to recall Lucretius' description of the calf dying at the altar: *concidit et mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem* (516); compare this with Lucretius' description of the calf at 353-4:

¹¹ And lest we should think that women are absent from Virgil's examination, we need only look at line 216, where the female cow is referred to as *femina*. Putnam (p. 191-2) and Thomas (p. 81) note that for the first time in extant Latin literature *femina* has been applied emphatically to a female animal. According to Thomas, when the word was applied to animals before Virgil, it was used as a virtual adjective (i.e., *canis femina*) or was found in the close company of *mas* (which was applied to the male of a particular species). This helps to support our argument that Virgil deliberately blurs the boundaries between human and animal.

¹² At 245 ff. we see lionesses, bears, boars, tigers, lynxes, wolves and stags under the control of lust. Horses, dogs and men also make an appearance within the same lines. With regard to the universality of death and suffering in Virgil, we see that the plague affects both tame and wild animals (480), dogs (496; 540), swine (496-7), horses (499-514), wolves (537-9), deer (539), marine life (541-3), snakes (544-5), birds (546-7), sheep (554-5), and, finally, humankind (563-6).

concidit.../...sanguinis exspirans calidum de pectore flumen. Virgil's emphasis on the bull falling to the ground and vomiting up blood recalls Lucretius' description of the fallen calf spewing blood from its breast. Is it Virgil's intention to evoke a sympathy for the bull, a victim of the disease, similar to that evoked by Lucretius for the calf, a victim of ritual sacrifice? It is clear that both animals are victims, the bull a victim of one of nature's fatal elements, and the calf of humankind's foolish superstition. What are we to make of the ethical and philosophical questions that Lucretius raises in his poem? Does Virgil raise the same questions? Farrell argues that there is thematic linkage between Lucretius' description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia and a passage in *Georgics* 3 (486-93), where some priests unsuccessfully attempt to expiate the plague through the sacrifice of a calf.¹³ We have seen how Lucretius treated the sacrifice of Iphigenia with shock and disgust, and continued his attack on the ritual by means of his description of the emotional impact of the sacrifice of the calf and its bereaved mother. Virgil continues Lucretius' ethical stance here, first in revealing that religion is powerless to bring an end to the plague, and second in his regard for the plague's victims. Nature is seen upsetting religion, especially when Virgil depicts the failure of religion in the face of the plague: the victims die before they can be offered for sacrifice (486-8); if the victim can be slaughtered, the infected entrails do not burn on the altars (488-9); and, finally, the seer is unable to give a response from the entrails of a bloodless animal (491-3). Virgil's attention is directed more to the ritual's failure than to its horror.

¹³ See Farrell p. 91-2 for a full analysis of the similarities in language and diction between Lucretius and Virgil.

This is where he differs noticeably from Lucretius. Virgil does point, however, to a shortcoming of religious practice in that it too is subject to the workings of nature. Putnam believes that the failure of religion depicted by Virgil is second in importance only to the physical pain of the bulls.¹⁴ For the bulls that are partners in men's labour are partners in their physical anguish too (515-7; 522-4). At 525-6 he laments that *labor* is futile, when its practitioners, the devoted farm animals, are rewarded with death and agony. The reader's sympathy for these animals is increased further, when Virgil carefully contrasts their humble lifestyle (528-30) with a life of luxury (526-7); for they do not feed and drink on lavish feasts and expensive wine¹⁵, but on leaves and grass, and the clear springs and rivers, and they sleep free of care. Indeed, the team of oxen led blameless lives, so they did not deserve so horrible a death. We may recall that Virgil holds that humans and animals are equally under the sway of love (*amor omnibus idem*) and the plague (the bearer of death), but it is here that he shows the greatest pity for those beings oppressed by the forces of nature, by expressing that their toil and simple lifestyles are fruitless, when they receive a cruel and undeserved death. Lucretius makes a similar claim, but about the oppression of religion and sacrifice (*DRN* 1.82-3; 101); superstition induces criminal acts, so that a young girl is murdered, and a mother cow is deprived of a child whose whereabouts she does not know. Virgil, on the

¹⁴ Putnam, p. 220.

¹⁵ Thomas (p. 140) notes that *Massica Bacchi munera* was a luxurious wine. Hence, the luxury of the wine and the feasts contrasts with the simple diet of the bulls, which nature herself would have provided.

other hand, does not condemn the use of animals on the farm, but he does question the pathetic lot of a bull whose devoted service will be rewarded with death.

As we recall, Lucretius' ethical argument was bound up with his precept that the fundamental nature of all living beings was identical (DRN 2.991-1022) and that this fundamental nature was characterized by sensual perception (DRN 2.865-990). In this way, one may argue that in Lucretius humans and animals share a bond of kinship. In his third *Georgic* Virgil proceeds along a similar course. To quote a phrase we have met a number of times in this discussion, but which still bears repeating: *amor omnibus idem*. Neither humans nor animals can escape the dominant power of love, nor can they avoid the disease which will lead to their suffering and destruction. Even within the passage concerning the two bulls, the human and animal worlds become entwined. As Farrell argues, "Virgil emphasizes the intergeneric similarity by focusing on a single quality, the unselfish love of one being for another, which transcends the boundaries of genus and species. The human and animal worlds become as one".¹⁶ Like Lucretius, Virgil has sympathy for the suffering animal, not least because he believes that animals are akin to humans under the controlling powers of nature.

As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, Ovid was also influenced by Lucretius' description of the slain calf and its bereaved mother. And we see that

¹⁶ Farrell, p. 91.

Ovid's expression of sympathy, like Virgil's, can be rationalized on the basis of kinship between humans and animals. But first we must discuss how Ovid excites pity for animals, especially those animals killed for the purpose of sacrifice. We have already seen that Lucretius was strongly opposed to the custom, and that he treats human and animal sacrifice in the same vein, thereby leading the reader to believe that he was equally opposed to both kinds of sacrifice. The major factor involved in Lucretius' attack is the emphasis he places on the cruelty of the act. Lucretius' opposition may have influenced Ovid, especially in the following passage (*Met.* 2.621-5):

tum vero gemitus (neque enim caelestia tingui
 ora licet lacrimis) alto de corde petitos
 edidit, haud aliter quam cum spectante iuvenca
 lactentis vituli dextra libratus ab aure
 tempora discussit claro cava malleus ictu.

625

Instead of the world of Lucretius where the universe is composed of atoms and controlled by the forces of nature, Ovid's world is the mythical and divine, a place where a god can be compared to a suffering animal.¹⁷ Ovid (*Met.* 2.542-632) tells the story of Apollo who, in a fit of jealousy, rashly shoots his lover Coronis with an arrow. He fatally wounds the girl, but then learns that, in killing her, he has killed his child too. As her body is placed on the funeral pyre, Apollo groans, just as a

¹⁷ The comparison of a god to an animal is quite unusual. However, occasionally epic heroes are compared to birds for pathos. At *G.* 4.511 ff. Virgil compares the hero Orpheus to a nightingale (*philomela*) that weeps for the offspring she has lost to the farmer's plough. Thomas (p. 233) points out that Virgil's simile is modeled on *Od.* 19.518-23 (where Penelope compares herself to Philomela lamenting for her lost son) and *Od.* 16.216-8 (where Odysseus' and Telemachus' cries are compared to the cries of birds whose young have been stolen away by farmers). Thomas also notes that Virgil's simile in *Georgic* 4 recalls *G.* 2.207-11, where the successful farmer uproots and destroys the bird's home as he converts the woods to farmland.

mother cow groans when she sees her calf struck by the sacrificial hammer. The analogy reminds us of Lucretius' description of the mother cow searching for her calf (DRN 2.352-66).¹⁸ There are obvious similarities: the circumstance of a sacrifice¹⁹; the emotional trauma of *gemitus* (cf. DRN 2.358, *querellis*) which signifies mourning and grief; and two protagonists who share a familial bond - a young calf and its mother.²⁰ However there is one important difference between the narratives of Lucretius and Ovid: Ovid's cow actually sees her calf being slaughtered (*spectante iuvenca*), Lucretius' does not. The detail of the eyewitness account in Ovid's analogy gives us two points for consideration. The first point is that sight is equated with knowledge. We recall that, because she does not see her calf being sacrificed, Lucretius' cow is deprived of the knowledge of her calf's whereabouts and the reason for its disappearance.²¹ In contrast, Ovid's cow sees her calf being struck on the forehead by the hammer, and, presumably, watches the remainder of the ritual (including the draining of the animal's blood).²² Ovid's cow, therefore, is made

¹⁸ See Kerney (1986, p. 388, n. 624), who observes that this analogy owes more to literary models (i.e., Lucr. DRN 2.352-66) than to sensibility.

¹⁹ The sacrifice of this calf differs slightly from the sacrifice of Lucretius' calf, in that here the animal is struck on the forehead by a hammer (*malleus*). Ogilvie (p. 48) points out that before the victim's throat was slit, it was knocked senseless by the blow of a sacrificial hammer.

²⁰ The description of the calf as *lactens* deserves comment. It may be that Ovid wishes to create sympathy for the young calf by specifying that the animal is a suckling. On the other hand, he may be just designating the type of sacrificial victim. The size of a sacrificial victim varied - suckling (*lactens*) or grown (*maior*) - depending on the nature of the occasion (see Ogilvie, p. 43). Ovid gives no indication of the occasion, but he has already told us that the victim is a *vitulus*, a young calf. *lactens*, therefore, seems to be emphatic, and is surely used to arouse our emotions by making us take pity on the extreme youth of the calf.

²¹ Ironically at DRN 2.357 ff. Lucretius places special attention on the mother cow's sense of sight, when she is searching for her missing calf: *convisens*, *oculis*, and *conspicere*. The irony is that she is looking for a calf that she will not find.

²² For sacrificial rituals involving the draining of blood, see Homer *Od.* 14.425-6; Cato *De Agricultura* 141; Lucretius DRN 2.353-4; Virgil *A.* 6.248-9.

aware of the fate of her calf, a detail which brings us to our second point: the reader's sense of sympathy and shock. Lucretius creates sympathy for the mother cow by describing her endless search for a calf which she will never find. Ovid takes a different approach, perhaps for the sake of brevity (his analogy is three lines, Lucretius' is fifteen). He considers the anguish of the cow even before the blow hits the calf. At line 623 Ovid tells us that the mother cow is watching the action unfold, then informs us that the hammer is suspended above the calf's right ear (624). It is at this point that the mother's fears are realized, and it is here that the reader begins to sympathize with mother and calf. But not only do we feel sympathy for the victims, we are also shocked by the horror of the cruelty involved in the sacrifice. And it is important that the cruelty and the harsh reality of the sacrifice are presented from the mother's perspective, because Ovid is able to take us one step further into the sensibilities of an animal. The fact that the mother cow is suffering in agony originates from the poet's desire to demonstrate Apollo's grief, but the details of the simile may have less to do with poetic licence than with reality. Galinsky considers this passage in his discussion of Ovid's treatment of suffering and death in *Metamorphoses*.²³ He feels that Ovid invests his descriptions of the slaughter of animals with sincerity and genuine sympathy. He also claims that the poet's simile may actually detract from the main narrative so that it does not have to inspire in the reader a shared sense of Apollo's grief. Galinsky's claim that the simile is treading into territory quite unlike the events of the main narrative

²³ Galinsky, pp. 143-5.

deserves comment. It is clear that Ovid formally uses the simile to illustrate how Apollo groans; but, if this is the case, why does Ovid not make the mother cow groan nor even utter a sound? The only suggestion of the mother cow making a sound is the comparative construction - *haud aliter* - which introduces the simile. Instead Ovid makes the reader ponder the mother cow's feelings as she watches the hammer coming down, and hears the impact of the blows (note the repetition of the hard 'c' sound in 625, *discussit claro cava...ictu*; the crashing-like sound stresses the unmistakable sound of the hammer's blow). Consequently, Ovid's simile may be functioning in a way similar to Lucretius' description of the mother cow and her slaughtered calf. First, the simile digresses from its primary goal, so that the reader is concerned less with Apollo's grief than with the cow's. Second, the emphasis that Ovid places on the cow's ability to see and hear what is happening arouses the reader's emotions and sympathies so that the reader is shocked by the cruelty of the sacrificial ritual. May we not suspect, then, that Ovid excites a genuine sense of sympathy for animals, here, as the victims of sacrificial ritual?

To help us answer this question more convincingly, we must turn to the speech of Pythagoras at *Met.* 15.60 ff. In lines 130-5 Pythagoras describes the scene at an altar:

victima labe carens et praestantissima forma	130
(nam placuisse nocet) vittis insignis et auro	
sistitur ante aras auditque ignara precantem	
inponique suae videt inter cornua fronti,	
quas coluit, fruges percussaque sanguine cultros	
inficit in liquida praevisos forsitan unda.	135

The physical appearance of the victim and the sacrificial adornments are described in the first two lines of this passage. For the next four lines Ovid focuses on the victim's perception of what is happening. In other words, the ritual is presented from the victim's point of view: the animal listens to prayers which it does not understand (*auditque ignara precantem*), it sees corn meal placed on its brow, and sacrificial knives reflected in a clear pool (presumably a water basin). In the sacrifice of Iphigenia (*DRN* 1.87-92) Lucretius gives some preliminary details of the scene, such as the ribbon being bound around Iphigenia's forehead, then proceeds to describe what Agamemnon and the attendants were doing from the point of view of the victim, Iphigenia. It seems possible that Ovid was influenced by Lucretius' presentation of the events leading up to the sacrifice. Galinsky has this to say on the relationship between Ovid's and Lucretius' use of sacrifice: "Whereas Lucretius, who often disparages myths, made one of his rare uses of myth - the story of Iphigenia - to depict the innocent and helpless state of the victim and thus to arouse the reader, Ovid, whose poem is about myths, chose to present a real experience, with which many of his readers were doubtless familiar, in order to appeal as directly and as movingly as possible to their sympathy (15.130-40)".²⁴ Reality, as we recall, plays an important role in Lucretius, the poet-philosopher on the real workings of the universe. Before he describes the sacrifice of Iphigenia, he claims that religion causes criminal and impious deeds (*DRN* 1.83-3), and he supports his claim by describing a sacrifice from mythology, and not until the sacrifice of the

²⁴ Galinsky, p. 141.

young calf (2.352-4) does the reader encounter a sacrifice from the non-mythological world. But even in this sacrifice humankind's faith in religion and superstition is held to be responsible for the act of bloodshed. Ovid differs somewhat; for, as Galinsky rightly points out, Ovid's sacrifice is presented from real experience. But, unlike Lucretius, Ovid absolves the gods and religion from the bloodshed: *nec satis est, quod tale nefas committitur: ipsos / inscribere deos scelere numenque supernum / caede laboriferi credunt guadere iuvenici* (Met. 15.127-9). Whereas Lucretius argues that faith in religion leads men to commit the evil deed of sacrifice, Pythagoras seems to imply that the deed was committed first, and that, in turn, the blame was directed at the gods. Clearly Ovid will not allow humankind to neglect its responsibility in the sacrificing of animals.

The *praevisos* of line 135 is worth noting because, as Kenney argues, it recalls Ovid's prior use of focusing upon the animal's perception of what is taking place (i.e., *spectante iuvenca*, Met. 2.623).²⁵ Galinsky feels that by presenting the sacrifice from the victim's point of view, Ovid tells the story simply with a kind of understated detail, so that the victim sees the knife reflected in the water, right before the knife's fatal blow.²⁶ This arouses our sympathies for the animal, as we are made to see the ritual from the position of the sacrificial victim before the actual death-blow is struck. At *Fast.* 1.327 Ovid describes an analogous scene with similar diction: *quia praevisos in aqua timet hostia cultros*. In that instance, however, Ovid explicitly reveals the psychological state of the victim when he says that the animal

²⁵ Kenney (1986), p. 388, n. 624; p. 461, n. 135.

²⁶ Galinsky, p. 142.

is overcome with fear at the reflection of the knife in the pool of water. Furthermore, by juxtaposing *timet* between *praevisos* and *cultos* Ovid inspires pathos for the frightened animal which is metaphorically surrounded by knives. There can be no doubt that Ovid intends to put his reader in the position of the animal at the sacrifice, and that by being made privy to what the animal witnesses the reader feels a genuine sympathy for the victim. For what else are we to think about a poet who is able to present an actual sacrifice from the animal's point of view, and, moreover, to consider the victim's psychological state before it is felled by the sacrificial knife? It should also be pointed out that at 15.127 ff. Pythagoras raises a moral objection against the sacrificing of animals, when he speaks of the custom as an impious and criminal act (*nefas...sceleri*). Ovid then strengthens Pythagoras' outrage when he refuses to allow humankind to blame its crimes on the gods and religion. We will consider these moral issues further, as we turn our focus to the poet's treatment of animals on the farm and as partners in labour.

In the passage we have just considered (*Met.* 15.130-5) Ovid makes a connection between the animal as a victim of sacrificial ritual and the animal as a labourer on the farm. At 133 ff. he tells us that, as a part of the sacrificial ritual, corn meal is placed between the victim's horns, but adds the defining phrase *quas coluit*. The reaction stimulated in this phrase is one of shock because it implies that the animal that is about to be sacrificed is the same animal that labours on the farm. And, thus, like Virgil's sentiment at *G.* 3.525 ff. there is the implied underlying argument that the animal does not deserve death as a reward for its loyal services to

humankind. In the context of Pythagoras' speech this is not surprising, considering the philosopher's sympathetic view of animals. It may be argued, however, that this sentiment is as much Ovid's as it is Pythagoras', and, we can prove this contention by turning to *Fast.* 4.409-16. Here Ovid bids the attendant priests not to sacrifice the bull to the goddess Ceres, while at the same time reminding them of the labour that oxen perform for humankind:

farra deae micaeque licet salientis honorem	
detis et in veteres turea grana focos,	410
et, si tura aberunt, unctas accendite taedas:	
parva bonae Cereri, sint modo casta, placent.	
a bove succincti cultros removete ministri:	
bos aret; ignavam sacrificate suem.	
apta iugo cervix non est ferienda securi:	415
vivat et in dura saepe laboret humo.	

Ovid informs the priests that there are numerous suitable offerings which can be given to the goddess, who is satisfied with very little, so long as the offering is pure (412). He then tells the priests to keep their knives away from the bull (413). According to Ovid the sacrificial offering of an ox to Ceres is impure, since the animal is the goddess' servant and the farmer's helper in the farming of her sacred gift.²⁷ It is for this reason that he demands that the bull be given better treatment: *bos aret.../...vivat et in dura saepe laboret humo*. Ovid's sentiments recall Virgil's at *G.* 4.525-30, where Virgil reflects upon the struggles which the bull endures and the simple things necessary for its survival. Moreover, when Ovid commands the priests not to sacrifice the bull, we are reminded of Lucretius and his strong

²⁷ Cf. *Met.* 15.127-9, where, as we have seen, Pythagoras argues that the slaughter of the toiling bullock (*laboriferi...iuvenci*) is an impious and criminal act.

opposition to the custom of sacrifice. But, unlike Lucretius (*DRN* 5.1198 ff.), Ovid does not object to the sacrifice of all animals, as we see in line 414 where he tells the priests that they can sacrifice the sow. The reason he gives for the slaughter of the sow is the simple fact that the animal is lazy (*ignavam*), especially in comparison to the hard-working ox (*in dura...laboret humo*). At *Fast.* 1.349-61 Ovid justifies the sacrifice of both the sow and the goat on the grounds that they inflict damage on the crops. For, as Ovid explains, the sow is sacrificed to Ceres as reparation for uprooting the goddess' sacred seed; and the goat is sacrificed because it gnaws on Bacchus' sacred vine.²⁸ But, to help us resolve this dilemma, we can note that Ovid follows his justification for sacrificing goats and pigs by asking what sheep and oxen have done that they should be sacrificed (*Fast.* 1.362). Ovid is broaching the topic of utility here, and we can see this more clearly at *Fast.* 1.381 ff., where he emphasizes the importance of sheep and oxen for the services they provide for the farm. With that proviso in mind, then, we should not be surprised that the poet does not oppose the sacrifice of pigs and goats, because he is mainly concerned about the sacrificing of animals that are partners in humankind's struggle to work the land.

At *Met.* 15.111 ff. Pythagoras also seems to argue that the sow and goat deserve to be sacrificed, again, because they inflict damage on the crops. But Pythagoras, here, is arguing with a view to pointing out the logical inconsistency in

²⁸ Note Ovid's use of *hostis* (359). The word suggests *hostia*, the Latin word for victim. The goat is at the same time Bacchus' enemy and deserving of its death, appropriately enough as the god's choice victim for sacrifice. See also *Fast.* 1.336, where Ovid explains that *hostia* derives from *hostibus domitis*.

the usual justifications given for sacrifice, which we see right from the beginning, for example, where he introduces them with *putatur* (111) and *ducitur* (115). These two distancing formulae suggest that the usual justifications for sacrificing these animals rest more upon belief than actual logic. Moreover at 116 ff. Pythagoras bolsters his argument by suggesting that, if pigs and goats deserve to be sacrificed in atonement to Ceres and Bacchus, then it does not reasonably follow that sheep and oxen should be sacrificed, because these animals are innocent and hard-working, and, presumably, bring no harm to the crops. Indeed, as we can see in the following passage, Pythagoras has nothing but praise for those animals that work alongside humans and help to cultivate the land.

longius inde nefas abiit, et prima putatur hostia sus meruisse mori, quia semina pando eruerit rostro spemque interceperit anni; vite caper morsa Bacchi mactandus ad aras ducitur ultoris: nocuit sua culpa duobus!	115
quid meruistis oves, placidum pecus inque tuendos natum homines, pleno quae fertis in ubere nectar, mollia quae nobis vestras velamina lanas praebetis vitaeque magis quam morte iuvatis? quid meruere boves, animal sine fraude dolisque, innocuum, simplex, natum tolerare labores?	120
inmemor est demum nec frugum munere dignus, qui potuit curvi dempto modo pondere aratri ruricolam mactare suum, qui trita labore illa, quibus totiens durum renovaverat arvum, quot dederat messes, percussit colla securi.	125

Wilkinson describes this passage as moving, arguing that it reveals how Ovid has a strong sense of sympathy for sheep and oxen.²⁹ The sympathy which Ovid has for these animals is clearly tied to his argument that humans and animals are partners

²⁹ Wilkinson, pp. 215-6.

on the farm. Kinship is implied, for instance, when Pythagoras states that sheep were born for the service of humankind (*inque tuendos / natum homines*) and that they provide milk (*in ubere nectar*) and wool for soft clothing. This notion of kinship is continued when we are told that the ox was also born to endure toil (*natum tolerare labores*), and that it is the farmer's husbandman (*ruricolam*).³⁰ Furthermore, when he characterizes them as harmless and gentle, we see how Ovid attempts to create sympathy for the sheep and the oxen. A flock of sheep is described as *placidum* (116); the bull is described as *innocuum* and *simplex* (121) and its innocent nature is seen in the phrase *sine fraude dolisque* (120). Ovid leaves us with the impression that such gentle and hard-working animals do not deserve the fate which they have endured. He makes this abundantly clear in lines 122-6, where Pythagoras addresses the farmer and his treatment of the bull that has helped plough his fields. He disapproves of the farmer who strikes his bull with an axe, calling him ungrateful (*inmemor*) and saying that he is unworthy to reap a good harvest (*nec frugum munere dignus*). Ethics and humane treatment, therefore, become the central issue for Pythagoras in his consideration of those animals that work the soil and provide other services for humankind.

We have seen above how Ovid excites pity for animals, such as the calf and its mother at *Met.* 2.623-5, and how he objects to the maltreatment of those animals that are humankind's loyal co-workers on the farm. It is worth reiterating that Ovid's expression of sympathy for animals and his emphasis on human-animal

³⁰ See also *Fast.* 1.381 ff., where Ovid praises the sheep as *lanigerum pecus* and the ox as *ruricola*.

kinship is reminiscent of both Lucretius' and Virgil's. We will now look at an issue, however, that we have not met in Lucretius and Virgil, namely abstention from the consumption of animal flesh. Ovid makes Pythagoras begin and end his speech in Book 15 of *Met.* with exhortations to vegetarianism (15.75-175, 453-78). It was widely known that Pythagoras opposed the eating of animal flesh for the philosophical tenet that the soul migrated from human to animal and vice versa.³¹ It

³¹ W. K. C. Guthrie (pp. 191-3) tells us that the teachings of Pythagoras attracted two different types of followers: on the one hand there were the enthusiasts for the promotion of mathematical philosophy, and on the other religious devotees whose ideal was the Pythagorean way of life. Moral conduct, then, played an important role in attracting some followers to the doctrines of Pythagoras. The moral code, which is of greatest interest to us here, included a prohibition against the consumption of animal flesh. It was well-known throughout the ancient world that Pythagoras taught the virtues of a vegetarian diet, and, to be sure, his beliefs caused much controversy (W. K. C. Guthrie (p. 187) notes some of the jokes made by the Greek poets of the Middle Comedy ridiculing the Pythagorean prohibition against the consumption of animal flesh). K. S. Guthrie has collected numerous references from the ancient sources and philosophers on the doctrines of Pythagoras, and there seems to have been no uniform agreement by ancient scholars on Pythagoras' exhortation for vegetarianism. For instance, Iamblichus reveals that Pythagoras forbade unjustifiable food (i.e., animal flesh) and the sacrifice of animals to the gods (see K. S. Guthrie, p. 84, n. 24). The logic behind this precept may have been that Pythagoras believed, as Iamblichus reveals, that humans should show justice towards animals and cause them no injury. Diogenes Laertius is more helpful with regards to Pythagoras' reasoning by revealing that Pythagoras forbade the killing and eating of animals on the basis that animals have a right to live in common with humankind (ibid. p. 145, n. 12.). Porphyry, however, says that Pythagoras would eat meat on occasion, and that he would sacrifice only small animals to the gods (ibid. p. 130, n. 34 and 36). He also says that Pythagoras abstained from certain parts of an animal's body in accordance with his philosophical precepts (ibid. p. 132, n. 43). W. K. C. Guthrie (p. 193) believes that the contradictory reports concerning Pythagoras' views on the abstention from certain foods are perhaps fueled by the fact that there were two kinds of Pythagorean followers, as we noted above. The controversy surrounding Pythagoras and his beliefs has not escaped modern scholarship, especially with respect to Ovid's inclusion of Pythagorean doctrines in *Metamorphoses*. Segal (1969, pp. 281-2) shows that Pythagorean vegetarianism is a subject of ridicule in Roman literature, and argues that when Ovid makes vegetarianism the main point of Pythagoras' speech "the seriousness of the entire episode is, at the very least, open to question". Solodow (p. 167) agrees with Segal, arguing that the entire discourse of Pythagoras should be seen as an extended joke. As regards the passages that deal with our topic, Solodow (p. 164) says that the framework - the vegetarian precepts - renders what philosophy there is in the speech trivial. Other scholars, such as Otis and Myers, treat Ovid's exposition of Pythagoras' vegetarian precepts more seriously. Otis (p. 298) argues that the vegetarian frame are typical transition passages, and serve to characterize the historical Pythagoras and frame his central philosophy on the transmigration of the soul. Myers (p. 137) agrees with Otis, arguing that Ovid includes the theme of vegetarianism in the speech of Pythagoras as part of the *ethopoeia* of the philosopher. To support this view, both scholars point out that Ovid incorporates into his narrative a didactic natural philosophy, which draws on the language and content of Lucretius' *DRN* (see Otis, p. 298; Myers, pp. 139 ff.). Therefore, when Ovid explains that Numa set out to consult Pythagoras concerning *quae sit rerum natura* (*Met.* 15.6) and that Pythagoras *magni*

should be of no surprise to the reader, therefore, that the issue of vegetarianism is included in his speech. But Ovid himself may have chosen to focus on the killing of animals and to emphasize the ethical questions pertaining to humane treatment for the very same reason that he treats the killing of cattle and sheep with horror (*Met.* 15.116-26; *Fast.* 1.362; 4.409-16), and that he places himself and the reader in the position of an animal at a sacrifice by presenting the ritual from the animal's point of view (*Met.* 2.623-5, 15.130-5; *Fast.* 1.327). He simply feels sympathy for them, which he can arouse in the reader too by concentrating on the cruelty involved in their being slaughtered. Although Pythagoras does not explicitly state at the beginning of his speech that meat consumption is a cruel act, he does describe it as an impiety and a pollution of the body (75-6). The element of cruelty comes into play at *Met.* 15.81 ff., where the philosopher states that the earth provides kindly sustenance without killing and bloodshed (*alimentaque mitia...sine caede et sanguine*).³²

primordia mundi / et rerum causas et, quid natura, docebat (*Met.* 15.67-8), we see how Ovid alludes to Lucretius in order to provide a basis for Pythagoras' philosophy on the transmigration of the soul, which includes the migration between humans and animals. In Otis' and Myers' view, then, Ovid's sympathetic treatment of animals in Pythagoras' speech would be nothing more than a component of his imitating Lucretius' desire to provide humankind with a rational truth on the nature of the universe. Colavito, on the other hand, argues for an interpretation of *Metamorphoses* as a poem which is based wholly upon Pythagorean doctrines. She feels that Ovid presents an accurate view of Pythagoras' precepts on vegetarianism, and leaves us with the impression that Ovid himself was a Pythagorean (see pp. 52 ff.). Galinsky, as we have seen, believes that Ovid had a sympathetic disposition towards animals (i.e., *Met.* 2.623-5) and that he was strongly opposed to the distasteful killing of them (see pp. 140 ff.). For Galinsky, then, the speech of Pythagoras should be taken seriously as not only reflecting Pythagoras' precepts concerning animals, but also Ovid's sympathy towards them. Clearly, the views among modern scholars on Ovid's inclusion of Pythagorean vegetarianism are wide-ranging and conflicting.

³² In lines 85-7 Pythagoras lists tigers, lions, bears and wolves as species which survive on the flesh of other animals. He equates their nature, and, therefore, their disposition to kill other animals and eat flesh with savagery and ferocity (*inmansuetum ferumque*). The analogy is clear: killing is fierce and cruel, and belongs to the savage beasts.

Ovid then has Pythagoras strengthen his argument with the following words by emphasizing that the consumption of meat is both criminal and cruel (88-90):

heu quantum scelus est in viscera viscera condi
 ingestoque avidum pinguescere corpore corpus
 alteriusque animans animantis vivere leto. 90

We should note how Ovid arranges Pythagoras' diction so that it may be as effectively moving as possible: the anaphora of flesh piled upon flesh (*in viscera viscera*), of body upon body (*corpore corpus*), of living being upon living being (*animans animantis*); the antithesis between life and death (*vivere leto*); and residing at the very centre of the sentence the agent of all this killing - the greedy and gluttonous human being (*ingestoque avidum pinguescere*).³³ Line 90, *alteriusque animans animantis vivere leto*, heightens the emotional appeal of Pythagoras' words, as it is made abundantly clear that the eating of flesh involves the death of another living being.

We see that at 174 ff. Ovid continues Pythagoras' impassioned plea to abstain from cruel slaughter and the consumption of meat, where, once again, killing is considered impious (*caede nefanda*) when blood is nourished with blood (*nec sanguine sanguis alatur*). It is in the final lines of Pythagoras' speech, however, that we most clearly see the emotive force with which the philosopher hopes to persuade his audience to abstain from killing animals and consuming their flesh:

quam male consuescit, quam se parat ille cruori
 inpius humano, vituli qui guttura ferro
 rumpit et inmotas praebet mugitibus aures, 465
 aut qui vagitus similes puerilibus haedum
 edentem iugulare potest aut alite vesci,

³³ For the notion of the belly as a tomb see, for example, Gorg. fr. 7.1 Or. and Lucr. DRN 5.993.

cui dedit ipse cibos! quantum est, quod desit in istis
 ad plenum facinus? quo transitus inde paratur?
 bos aret aut mortem senioribus inputet annis, 470
 horriferum contra borean ovis arma ministret,
 ubera dent saturae manibus pressanda capellae!
 retia cum pedicis laqueosque artesque dolosas
 tollite! nec volucrem viscata fallite virga
 nec formidatis cervos includite pinnis 475
 nec celate cibis uncos fallacibus hamos;
 perдите siqua nocent, verum haec quoque perditae tantum:
 ora cruore vacent alimentaue mitia carpant!

We see here that Ovid concludes and combines the three topics we have been considering with regard to animals: sacrifice (463-9), the role of animals as humankind's partners in labour (470-2), and, finally, abstention from meat (473-8). And, therefore, the poet makes this the final opportunity for Pythagoras to convince his audience that the lives of animals should be spared and not harmed. In order to succeed in this endeavour, Pythagoras wastes no time in appealing to the emotions of the audience for sympathy, as we see right from the beginning when he charges that the shedding of kindred blood (*cruori...humano*) is an evil custom committed by the impious man. When the reader comes across the calf of line 464, the reader is reminded of the calf at *Met.* 2.623-5 struck by the hammer, but this time the reader is made to witness the ritual of the spilling of its blood. Ovid arouses the reader's emotions even further, when Pythagoras wonders how the sacrificer can listen to the calf's lowing without the least bit of sympathy (*inmotas...aures*). Ovid continues to excite pity when Pythagoras likens the young goat's bleating to that of a child (466-7). For Pythagoras this shows the kinship that exists between humans and animals, as both are able to express pain and anguish. And we should point out

that the animals which the poet uses are young (*vitulus* and *haedus*), and this adds a more sympathetic touch. This contrasts with his treatment of sacrifice earlier on in the speech, where the victims were spoken of in the more general terms of their species (*ovēs* at 116; *bovēs* at 120). Moreover at 468 ff. Pythagoras reiterates that the killing of these animals is almost tantamount to a full crime (*ad plenum facinus*), and he even openly wonders to what lengths humankind is prepared to go in its killing. But instead of answering this question, Pythagoras reminds us that the animals that toil on humankind's behalf should be allowed to continue to offer their services: the bull to plough the soil and to die of natural causes; the sheep to offer its fleece against the cold; and the she-goats to fill their udders for milking (470 ff.). Pythagoras is repeating his argument, here, that it is wrong to kill animals that provide such loyal services for humans. But we also see that Ovid has Pythagoras gradually broaden the list of animals that merit humane treatment. The she-goats, for instance, who were once said to be to blame for their own slaughter (*Met.* 15.114-5), are now said to perform a necessary service for the farm, and, therefore, do not deserve to be cut down. Moreover, Pythagoras includes birds (474), wild animals such as deer (475)³⁴, and even marine life (476). The emphasis that Ovid places on the methods of trapping and hunting in lines 473-6 reveals the poet's aim to bring attention to the cruel nature of all killing. In fact the final words of Pythagoras' speech have more to do with humane treatment than philosophy, as Pythagoras

³⁴ *formidatis pinnis* refers to a hunting practice in which feathers were strung on ropes to scare deer towards the nets. The nets themselves were secured between two tree trunks. See Kenney (1986) p. 463, n. 475, and Toynbee pp. 143-4.

commands his listeners to abstain from flesh and to seek kindly nourishment instead (478).

At *Met.* 15.463 ff. Pythagoras implies that the killing of a calf leads to the shedding of human blood (*cruori...humano*). The discussion of abstention from the killing of animals for sacrifice and nourishment is related to the Pythagorean doctrine that teaches that souls migrate from one body to another, including metempsychosis between humans and animals. In chapter 2 we examined how Lucretius followed the doctrines of Epicurus and argued that a basic atomic structure was found in all living creatures, both human and animal, endowing them with sensation and feeling. Through the power of sensibility humans and animals are akin, and when the calf is cut down on the altar, it is as morally objectionable to Lucretius as the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The same is true of the speech of Pythagoras, where a moral subtext underlies the philosophical teachings. Pythagoras argues through his theories on metempsychosis that it is morally wrong to kill animals and consume their flesh, suggesting that there exists a bond of kinship between all living beings. For Pythagoras the process of metempsychosis is the philosophical principle through which he can address the treatment of animals and demonstrate their kinship with humans.

Pythagoras first introduces the process of metempsychosis at 158 ff., even before he has spoken his final words on the consumption of meat (173 ff.). Pythagoras says that souls are immortal and continue to live by dwelling in new abodes (*novis domibus*). By placing the subject of the transmigration of the soul

within the lines devoted to the prohibition against the consumption of animal flesh, Ovid appears to form a close link between the theory of metempsychosis and the killing of animals, and shows that humans and animals are akin through the transmigration of the soul. The link becomes clearer when Pythagoras elaborates on the process of metempsychosis between humans and animals:

omnia mutantur, nihil interit: errat et illinc	165
huc venit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupat artus	
spiritus eque feris humana in corpora transit	
inque feras noster, nec tempore deperit ullo	
utque novis facilis signatur cera figuris	
nec manet ut fuerat nec formam servat eandem,	170
sed tamen ipsa eadem est, animam sic semper eandem	
esse, sed in varias doceo migrare figuras.	

Pythagoras tells us that everything is in perpetual flux, and that nothing passes away. In particular, the soul does not perish, but passes from animal to human and then back again. We should note that Pythagoras only specifies that the soul passes from human to animal (and vice versa), but does not explicitly say that the soul passes from human to human, or animal to animal for that matter. But at 160 ff. Pythagoras does point out that he remembers that he was a certain Euphorbus in the Trojan War³⁵, thus implying same-species metempsychosis. But the fact that same-species metempsychosis is only implied shows that Pythagoras is selectively emphasizing kinship between humans and animals in order to strengthen the argument against the killing of animals. At 171 ff. Pythagoras says that the soul always remains the same, even after it has migrated to another body. According to

³⁵ See *Il.* 16.806 ff. and 17.9 ff., where Homer describes how Euphorbus wounded Patroklos and how he himself was later killed by Menelaus.

nos quoque, pars mundi, quoniam non corpora solum,
verum etiam volucres animae sumus, inque ferinas
possumus ire domos pecudumque in pectora condi,
corpora, quae possint animas habuisse parentum
aut fratrum aut aliquo iunctorum foedere nobis
aut hominum certe, tuta esse et honesta sinamus
neve Thyesteis cumulemus viscera mensis!

In this passage Pythagoras speaks of the soul as winged (*volucres*), and as being housed in a wild animal (*inque ferinas...domos*) or in the heart of a farm animal (*pecudumque in pectora*). Previously at 167 ff. Pythagoras spoke of the soul as passing between humans and wild animals only (*eque feris...inque feras*). But now, the soul is believed to be reincarnated in the domesticated farm animal. The inclusion of the farm animal paves the way for the connection that follows, a connection between meat consumption and cannibalism. When Pythagoras speaks of the man who slays (and eventually eats) his calf (464 ff.) or goat (466 ff.) or bird (467 ff.), we should think of these animals as quite possibly possessing *animas...parentum / aut fratrum aut aliquo iunctorum foedere nobis / aut hominum certa*. Moreover, Pythagoras does not specify whether the *corpora* at 459 (which he states should be kept safe and honoured) are human or animal; in truth, these bodies are probably a combination of both so that to consume them would be both a carnivorous act and cannibalism. At 463 Pythagoras unequivocally implies that the consumption of animal flesh is an

act of cannibalism: *neve Thyesteis cumulemus viscera mensis*. Pythagoras makes two important arguments here, that the consumption of animal flesh is an act of cannibalism and that prior to this exposition humans were unaware that in eating animal flesh they were eating kindred souls. Thyestes unknowingly ate his own children, whom his brother had killed and served up at a banquet.³⁶ Ovid reminds us that Thyestes consumed human flesh (in place of animal flesh) and that Thyestes was unaware of his actions until he was informed of what he had done. For Ovid, then, Pythagoras' doctrine is the philosophy that teaches that the killing of animals is morally wrong, and like Lucretius' Epicurus (*DRN* 1.55-61), Ovid's Pythagoras teaches *magni primordia mundi / et rerum causas et, quid natura* (*Met.* 15.67-8), which includes the transmigration of the soul between humans and animals.

And, thus, we see in Pythagoras' speech that there exists a bond of kinship between humans and animals, especially according to the philosophical doctrine that teaches that a soul can migrate freely between human and animal. The theory of metempsychosis explains why Pythagoras opposes the killing of animals and the consumption of their flesh, and, decidedly, why he expresses sympathy for animals. And, although it may be argued that the sentiments and arguments presented in Pythagoras' speech are not necessarily Ovid's, we have seen other instances in both

³⁶ The mythological tradition involving Thyestes was well-known for successive bloodshed and cannibalism. Atreus, Thyestes' brother, killed Thyestes' children and served them up to Thyestes, who unknowingly consumed them. (*Sen. Thy.* 682-1034; *Apollodorus Epitome* 2.10-14). Pelops, the father of Atreus and Thyestes, had been slaughtered by his own father Tantalus and served up to the gods at a banquet. The gods, save Ceres, recognized Tantalus' deception and restored Pelops, except for the shoulder (eaten by Ceres) for which they substituted a piece of ivory (*Ov. Met.* 6.401-11; *Apollodorus Epitome* 2.3; *Hyginus Fabulae* 83).

Metamorphoses and *Fasti* where Ovid himself expresses sympathy for animals. At *Met.* 2.621-5., for example, we saw how Ovid arouses sympathy for a mother cow as she sees her calf about to be sacrificed, and how, in fact, this analogy is related to Lucretius' analogy of the slain calf and its bereaved mother. Moreover, at *Fast.* 4.409-16 we saw how Ovid's sympathy for the bull is linked to moral issues concerning the treatment of those animals that are humankind's partners on the farm, or, as we can argue, those animals that share a bond of kinship with humans. In this chapter, then, we have discussed how both Ovid and Virgil adapt Lucretius' analogy at *DRN* 2.352-66 to express sympathy for animals and to emphasize the kinship that exists between humans and animals.

games of the Flavian amphitheatre. With that proviso in mind, then, *Spec.* 14 is conspicuous as a rare example of Martial's expressing sympathy for a victim in the arena, a victim that also happens to be an animal. This first chapter, therefore, is purely a preliminary contribution to our discussion in that it merely aims to show that even Roman poetry whose real objective is to praise humans can still express sympathetic impulses for animals which, like the elephants at Pompey's games, have been slain in the arena.

In our second chapter we focused on poetry that is expressly concerned with sympathy for animals, especially the simile at *DRN* 2.352-66 where Lucretius arouses sympathy for a sacrificed calf and its bereaved mother. Like Statius and Martial, Lucretius clearly appeals to the reader's emotions to excite pity for the calf and its mother; but unlike Statius and Martial (where the impulse of sympathy for an animal is subordinate to the poets' socio-political aims), Lucretius explicitly appeals to the reader's intellect to show that humans and animals share a bond of kinship. First, he does this poetically by linking the sacrificed calf (2.352 ff.) with the sacrificed Iphigenia (1.84 ff.). The two are related in that they are cut down by one of religion's cruellest follies, blood-sacrifice, a custom, we might add, that Lucretius explicitly condemns (1.80 ff.; 5.1198 ff.). Second, we see that according to Epicurean atomic theory humans and animals have the same atomic composition. This similarity in atoms suggests that animals, like humans, possess physical and psychological sensation (2.865 ff.). This would explain the emphasis that Lucretius places on the mother cow's anguish over the disappearance of her calf. Indeed, it

can easily be argued that according to Epicurean philosophy the similarities between humans and animals are stronger than the differences. We now see a further link between the calf and Iphigenia, as both equally must endure physical and psychological anguish. And, finally, since he makes it clear that every living being is composed of sense atoms which react in a similar way, Lucretius directs us to feel sympathy for the calf and its mother because we have sense atoms too.

In our third chapter we saw how Virgil and Ovid were influenced by Lucretius' poetry in that they too excite pity for animals and emphasize the kinship that exists between humans and animals. For instance, when he arouses sympathy for a dying bull (G. 3.515 ff.), Virgil points out how its death is a tragic blow to both its yoke-mate and the farmer. By emphasizing that the farmer and the yoke-mate are in grief over the loss of this one bull, Virgil implies that there is a bond of kinship between humans and animals in that they are both subject to the powers of nature. The point that both humans and animals are subject to the powers of nature is expressed more straightforwardly at G. 3.244 where Virgil argues that 'love is the same for all' (*amor omnibus idem*). As with Lucretius, then, the similarities that exist between humans and animals are seen to be stronger than the differences. We find the same argument developed in Ovid, especially in the speech of Pythagoras at *Met.* 15.60 ff. Humans and animals are akin according to the theory of metempsychosis in that a soul can migrate from human to animal or vice versa. Pythagoras' philosophical precept correlates with Epicurus' in that it too stresses the fundamental similarity that exists in the natures of both humans and animals. We

also saw in Ovid how philosophy can be explicitly linked to ethical concerns relating to the treatment of animals. Most importantly, Pythagoras urges us not to eat animal flesh because animals may possess the souls of humans. Moreover, we see Ovid's emphasis on ethics when Pythagoras, like Lucretius, condemns the custom of sacrifice, especially the sacrifice of those animals that work the soil and provide such loyal services to humankind (*Met.* 15.111 ff.). Pythagoras' words here correspond with Virgil's sentiments at *G.* 3.515 ff. in that animals that are humankind's helpers in working the soil do not deserve a horrible death for their services. And, finally, we saw in the same chapter how Ovid adapted Lucretius' analogy of the calf and its mother at *Met.* 2.623-5 for his own poetic purposes, expressing sympathy for the slaughtered calf and its mother and amplifying the mother's horror and anguish.

This brings us back to Cicero's account of Pompey's games, where we see the significance of Cicero's combining the notion of pity (*misericordia*) with the notion of kinship (*societas*). The sympathy is the spectators' reaction to the anguish of the elephants, and the bond of kinship is Cicero's rationalization of that sympathetic impulse. We have considered how some Roman poets (such as Statius and Martial) can excite pity for animals, and how others (such as Lucretius, Virgil and Ovid) can also arouse sympathy, yet rationalize that sympathy on the basis of kinship between humans and animals. And, although we have focused merely on a selection of Roman poets, more could easily be said on this topic by looking at other authors and other instances where sympathy is also expressed for animals. We can

conclude with Lucretius and his analogy of the slain calf and its mother, an analogy that serves to illustrate that atoms are distinct from one another in shape and appearance. Since, as Lucretius argues, individual species of animals are distinct from one another, we should not be surprised that five different poets each, with varying degrees of emotion and intellect, express sympathy for different animals.

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