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UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Virgil in Virginia:

Eighteenth-Century Pastoralism and the *Novus Ordo Seclorum*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences in

Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

by

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August 2016

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Chapter 1: Literature Review

Thomas Jefferson believed that pastoralism, the idea that the person who cultivated the soil also cultivated his soul and virtue, would ensure the success of the American republic. The western concept of virtue developed in classical Greece with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, in whose works Jefferson was well-read. Virtue, according to the ancients, is the fundamental reason for a person's action. There are many reasons why a person might act, or not act, in a certain way. For example, a person could perform an action for different reasons: He can follow a rule simply because it is a rule; he can work for the benefit of society; he can decide to work for himself and not others; or he can perform an action that has inherent worth, like promoting happiness or benefiting others. The latter reason for acting is the very heart of virtue. Acting for the sake of virtue cannot be artificial; otherwise it is not virtue as such, but something else, like selfishness. Both Virgil and Jefferson regarded virtue as a character trait that cannot be pretended. Virtue must be cultivated and developed throughout a person's lifetime. Jefferson understood that each person has the natural capacity for virtue and to, therefore, act virtuously. Additionally, certain actions or habits can cultivate a person's virtue and, by extension, their soul. Such practices for Virgil and Jefferson included farming, learning, and political participation. For the ancients, and subsequently for Jefferson, there are three concepts that together demonstrate virtuous living: virtue itself (Greek: *arête*, Latin: *virtus*), prudence (Greek: *phronesis*, Latin: *prudential*), and happiness (Greek: *eudemonia*, Latin: *vita beata*). In the Declaration of Independence, for example, Jefferson explicitly

stated that happiness and prudence were motivations for virtuous action, such as the establishment of a government grown in virtue. Acting because it is the right thing to do (*virtus*), acting according to what is wise (*prudence*)—which is not acting in excess of benevolence to the degree that such and such action becomes unvirtuous—and acting according to happiness (*eudemonia*), all aid the individual toward the fulfillment of being a virtuous person. In order to act virtuously, the individual understands that there are things to be known first before acting. Thus the acquisition of knowledge is a virtue.

Certain classical thinkers, namely the Greek poet Theocritus and the Roman poet Virgil, believed that the deliberate cultivation of the earth was a virtue because it was an exercise in practical wisdom (acting intentionally). Therefore, because it was a practice rooted in benevolence, it fostered happiness. Farming, according to classicist Victor Hanson, is “the world of actuality, *never* potentiality.”¹ As such, as far as farmers were concerned, when they cultivated their crop during each season, they demonstrated their practical, independent, and hardy nature. Hanson further wrote:

The typical Greek farmer was a man who cared little for dress, shunned the palestra and gymnasium, was rarely portrayed on Greek pots, and never appeared in a Platonic dialogue... He walks rarely into town, and then mostly just to vote and go home, disgusted at the noise, the squalor, and the endless race for pelf and power...

Even in academic life, a farmer can remain only a farmer: unsophisticated, inarticulate, irrationally independent... These are all traits crucial for survival on the land, where immediate, unambiguous action is demanded in the face of impending rain, nighttime frost, sudden bank foreclosure... Certainly they are not “prudent.”²

¹ Victor Hanson, *The Other Greeks: The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 6.

² *Ibid*, 5-6.

Theocritus' pastoralist, on the other hand, *was* prudent. Theocritus' pastoralist, whom he created, acted intentionally with regard to society. The pastoralist was sophisticated and articulate because he was educated. He was independent, but rationally so. For Theocritus, the individual cultivated the earth in order to cultivate virtue, not survival. Because, as the classical poets understood, cultivators of the earth incorporated virtuous intention into their agrarian practices. Such action, like farming, became more complex, as virtue itself is complex because it is difficult to attain. Pastoralism therein became what Theocritus called *boukolikós*, or bucolic.³ And so, Theocritus' conception of the deliberate cultivation of the earth was not only an intellectual and physical practice, but it was a lifestyle, and eventually even a political theory. As such, pastoralism began with Theocritus and his *Idylls* ("little poems") and was carried on to Rome with Virgil's *Eclogues*, which will be explored later on.

The virtues of classical pastoralism, namely intellect, agriculture, and leisure, informed Thomas Jefferson's ideas about republicanism 1800 years later, and how that special kind of republicanism could safeguard virtue in the United States. An agrarian republic is a republic that is necessarily connected to the land and the cultivation of that land. Jefferson believed that a nation composed of pastoralists, each allotted a small portion of land (as Jefferson was skeptical of monopolies and hereditary wealth), would foster a political system in which the honest trading of goods and services and respect for sustainable practices would

³ The English term "bucolic" comes from the Latin, *bucolicus*, which comes from the Greek compound of *boûs* (cow) and *kolos* (tender). Bucolic is today synonymous with the term "pastoral," which comes from the Latin *pastor*, which means "shepherd." The Greek bucolic is a cow herder, the Roman pastoralist is a shepherd.

inspire a citizenry to the call of public office. Jefferson believed that if the American electorate was economically, culturally, and politically connected to the soil, then their interests would be not only commercial, but personal and intimate. Similar to the agrarian societies of antiquity, Jefferson believed that a population of independent farmers would generate a national identity of self-reliance, relative wealth, and duty, similar to the Spartans and largely all of Greece.⁴ Such a republic would ensure that all men enjoyed a comfortable level of wealth and a stable income, for they would be able to survive off their private property (through sustainable practices) and still engage in the marketplace for goods that they themselves could not produce, such as various metals, wine, milk, books, and more. Unlike the Greek farmers, however, Jefferson wanted his agrarian republic to be populated with learned citizens educated within their localized communities, which is a feature of the classical poets' pastoralists. Such an education, which included the typical subjects of the day, including the *Belles Lettres* and the natural sciences, would grant citizens the prudence to elect virtuous men into office. A virtuous government could only be actualized in an agrarian republic for the very reason that the land was considered didactic—capable of instilling lessons in responsibility.

Indeed, Jefferson most likely regarded his agrarian republicanism as the fulfillment of classical pastoralism, especially Virgilian pastoralism, for these very reasons. Although Virgil's pastoral vision helped shaped Jefferson's attitude toward westward expansion, the effects of pastoralism on Jefferson's thought and policies have not been examined in depth; Virgil's influence on Jefferson was

⁴ See Hanson, *The Other Greeks*, xx.

neither accepted nor recognized in Jefferson's own time. Scholars tend to focus heavily on America and its founders when examining pastoralism, farming, and environment in early America; but their recognition of classical pastoralism through philology and literary analysis is still largely absent when analyzing this cross-cultural transference of ideas between the classical world and early America. There is enough evidence to at least suggest that Jefferson's words and ideas on government came from classical pastoralism. Jefferson's letters and policies on environment have similar themes as those found in classical pastoralism.

Regardless of the absence of a direct link, there is a connection between Virgil and Jefferson. Both Virgil and Jefferson read Theocritus' *Idylls* and both translated Theocritus' ideas under the guiding hand of government. Virgil and Jefferson's conceptions of pastoralism have similar themes and ideas, such as the virtue of friendship, respect for environment, civic duty, and learning. Jefferson went beyond Virgil's poetry and tried to translate these virtues into a political reality. The tradition and ideals of pastoralism (or pastoralism itself) do not follow a linear trajectory. As it is in any philological study, the transference of ideas between cultures and ages become modified, perfected, and/or expanded upon. The themes remain the same nonetheless. Both Virgilian pastoralism and Jeffersonian agrarian republicanism are alternatives to the same theme that environment generates virtue. It was Virgil—and only Virgil—who is the sufficient source for Jefferson's pastoral vision because it was Virgil who infused pastoralism with politics, not Theocritus. As a result, it is entirely possible that

Jefferson might have understood that pastoralism, through the agent of government, would ensure virtue amongst the American citizenry. As such, Jefferson's agrarian republicanism could only have been a response to Virgilian pastoralism, given its political undertones. Thus, Jefferson generated in America the idea that there is a direct link between virtue, which would become the "soul" of American republicanism and attitudes toward the West for the next 100 years. The link between Enlightenment virtue-ethics and government is land.

The pastoral vision was not lost on post-revolutionary America in general, not just Jefferson. David Humphreys' 1786 *A Poem on the Happiness of America Addressed to the Citizens of the United States* evoked the third branch of virtue, happiness, through the lens of environment:

Oh happy people, ye to whom is given
A land enrich'd with sweetest dews of Heaven!
Ye, who possess Columbia's virgin prime,
In Harvests blest of ev'ry soil and clime!
Ye happy mortals, whom propitious fate
Reserv'd for actors on a stage so great!⁵

The moment of the fulfillment of America as Arcadia was not only regarded as epochal, but revelatory and apocalyptic. The wild, vast American lands began to open up in the post-revolutionary era as the republican government too came to fruition, not only in the law but amongst the citizenry and national character. In the American spirit, the addition of settlement, westward exploration, republicanism, nature, and agriculture effectively made the American landscape didactic because there were moral things to be learned from it, such as

⁵ David Humphreys, *A Poem on the Happiness of America Addressed to the Citizens of the United States*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

independence, sustainability, and beauty. Suddenly, the post-revolutionary American landscape itself became a source of virtue. Politics, nature, and virtue became the same thing. For example, Karol Ann Peard Lawson examined early American attitudes toward the didactics of landscape through prints. She observed:

Magazine engravings of the post-revolutionary years and the early republic trained Americans to see their native environment as a uniquely patriotic inspiration for an independent culture... The magazines' regular publication for original landscape plates led citizens of the United States to a self-conscious examination of the face of American nature as they sought therein a defining image of themselves.⁶

The American landscape, still chiefly wild, was an effective school for Americans in cultivating not only their personal virtue, but for defining the American character as virtuous. Reference to landscape, agriculture, and national character were prevalent in post-revolutionary visual culture. South Carolina's 1779 bill for 40 dollars, for example, depicted Ceres, Roman goddess of agriculture, on its front with the personification of Fame holding the Annals of America on the back of the bill. A ribbon surrounding Ceres reads, *Minime volanda fides*—faith rarely flies. The symbolism of the image is significant not only because it represents Ceres, as opposed to Columbia or Justice, but because the goddess of grain is represented didactically with the American spirit of revolution and republicanism, holding fast to the faith (*fides*) of the people to sustain their newfound republican government. And this is done with the help of Ceres—that is, through the persistent, deliberate cultivation of the earth.

⁶ Karol Ann Peard Lawson, "The National Landscape Depicted in American Magazines, 1780-1820," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 12 (Fall, 1992): 330.

The Roman poets of the first century B.C. experienced enlightenment similar to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth-century A.D. The Romans, too, regarded their new world order as a chance at a national rebirth of character. The Roman enlightenment was called Alexandrianism, and within this school of thought a group of Romans sought to emulate and perfect the Greek literary tradition. This enlightened group called themselves the *neoteroi*, a Greek term meaning “newer ones.” The concept is roughly parallel to the modern concept of *avant-garde* because the poetic art of the *neoteroi*, ironically, was forward-thinking as the artistic style looked backward toward Greece for inspiration instead of evoking overt political themes then traditional in Roman poetry. Similar to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, Alexandrianism was a turning point in not only what intellectuals thought, but how they thought. Alexandrianism was a cultural enlightenment because the Roman poets relied on a self-reflection that was largely absent in Greek writing. Virgilian scholar Bruno Snell, for example, observed that “It was Virgil who added the references to the speaker’s own glory and beauty, the sentimental concentration upon the self, for similar things are not found in Hellenistic poetry.”⁷ Snell rightly observed that Virgil, as a *neoteros*, borrowed significantly from Greek poetry, primarily from Theocritus. In fact, Virgil’s bucolic characters of the *Eclogues* all have Greek names, some even borrowed from Theocritus, including: Tityrus, Corydon, Daphnis, and Damoetas, to name a few. The structure of the *Eclogues* was modeled after Theocritus because the dialogic exchange of folk songs in Virgil

⁷ Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Origins of European Thought*, trans. T.G. Rosenmeyer (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 36.

resembles those in the *Idylls*. Virgil differed from the Greek pastoral mater, however, because Virgil's poetry was more sentimental, melancholic, and political. Virgil emphasized emotion originating within the self, and then projected onto the outer world. In other words, Virgil's poetry was a new way of understanding the relationship between self and environment.

Knowledge and emulation of Greece, in the minds of the Roman poets, legitimated Roman art and the empire's own status as the world's greatest superpower. For the *neoteroi*, sheer military might was not enough to showcase Rome's greatness; Rome needed to be superior in the arts as well, and the *neoteroi* understood that no empire had surpassed the Greeks' literary and artistic genius. It is no wonder that so much of Roman sculpture were Greek copies. Virgil participated in the intellectual circles of the Roman political elite, including Octavian's literary coterie, similar to how Theocritus was friends with Ptolemy Philadelphus during his tenure in Alexandria. Such learned circles of sociability erupted throughout eighteenth-century Europe as well. It is important to emphasize that the Romans' Alexandrianism was no mere superficial borrowing in order to assert dominance over the Greek tradition. Rather, the Roman poets understood the virtues in Greek thought and sought to emulate them, for it was the Greeks who discovered philosophy and, more significantly, the soul.⁸ Just as Virgil interpreted Greek pastoral poetry through his first-century Roman worldview, the eighteenth-century American, Thomas Jefferson, may have similarly interpreted classical poetry through his own Enlightenment worldview.

⁸ Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 297.

There are obvious parallels between Jefferson's political ties to landscape during and after the American Revolution and Virgil's political ties to landscape during and after the Roman Civil Wars. The parallels may not be direct, but they are observable. Virgil and Jefferson regarded the significant political turning points of their lives along the same line. They regarded these turning points as the great palingenesis of their lifetimes. Virgil's palingenetic political perspective was clearly expressed in his pastoral poems, whereas Jefferson expressed his palingenetic sentiments through his political theory of agrarian republicanism. Both pastoralists regarded the changing political climates as an eternal opportunity for a new order of the ages, on that would have positive, lasting effects upon generations into perpetuity. Classicist Edward Coleiro stated that the Roman Civil Wars of 49-46 B.C. between Julius Caesar and Pompey and the hope for a *novus ordo seclorum* inspired Virgil's pastoral works:

The vision of the new Rome of Octavian [later Augustus] which had made such an impression on him in 42 B.C. had completely engrossed him and had developed in his mind the full consciousness of the greatness of Octavian's task of reconstruction and the building of the new Rome, and the spirit of the Georgics which he composed at the suggestion of Maecenas reflects that view in terms of the reclaiming of Italy's agricultural wealth after the wreckage of the Civil Wars.⁹

The *Eclogues* were written in anticipation of a Golden Age without political corruption and civil unrest. Even though the collection of poems was artistic and seemingly unpolitical, Virgil's creative, pastoral vision responded to the political climate and anticipated a more just and a more virtuous government and political system. Virgil's view about the Roman Civil Wars emerged in the fourth and

⁹ Edward Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics with a Critical Edition of the Text* (Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner Publishing Co., 1979), 8-9.

sixth eclogues. Most especially, Virgil's vision for a new order of the ages appears in the genethiacon of the fourth eclogue:

Now comes the ultimate age of the song of Cumae
The great order of the ages is born anew
Now the Virgil returns and the Saturnian reigns return
Now the new progenies are let down from high Heaven
Only you, chaste Lucina, looks favorably upon the birth of the child,
From whom ceases the first irons
And the whole golden race rises from the world
Now your Apollo reigns!¹⁰

There is debate on what the child in this eclogue represents, as some Virgilian scholars argue that the child was the personification of the poetry of the *neoteroi*; others have suggested that the child represents the renaissance of the Augustan Age; and still other scholars argued that the child was actually the son of Pollio, who was the designated consul of Rome.¹¹ It would be folly to assume that Virgil the bard was so literal as to merely document Pollio's newborn son. The *Eclogues* were written within a specific socio-political climate and were written by a poet who befriended Augustus. As such, the child most likely represents the birth of the *novus ordo seclorum*. Coleiro continued to explain the eclogue's overarching theme of political rebirth:

But considering the date of the Eclogue (i.e. the months of Pollio's consulship in 40 B.C.); the enthusiasm of the poet for peace as the result of the Brundisium negotiations; the fact that the only period of peace which the Roman world knew before the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. was this brief respite between October 40 B.C. and 32 B.C. after which the crisis between the two war-lords came to a head again, but which many thought would continue for their lifetime (which, indeed, might have happened had it not been for the Cleopatra trap into which Antony fell again later); the fact that the poem is dedicated to Pollio, one of the main

¹⁰ Virgil, *Eclogues*, ed. G.P. Gould (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 48.

¹¹ Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics*, 220-21.

artificers... of that peace; the connection between the Eclogue and the peace of Brundisium should be plain and obvious.¹²

Coleiro believed that the eclogue and its mention of the Saturnian Age referred not to Augustus, but to the series of events which led to a peace in Rome. Virgil wrote in anticipation of a new, golden era without oppression by the Roman government.

Likewise in the sixth eclogue, Virgil mentioned the coming of the Saturnian reign: "Hence he [Silenus] reports of the stone of Pyrrha threw, of the Saturnian reign, and of the Caucasian eagles and of the theft of Prometheus."¹³

Coleiro commented that this passage was meant to convey the "appearance of man who was meant to live in perfect happiness (Saturnian Age) but who rebels (Prometheus, [and] is destroyed and is given rebirth through Deucalion and Pyrrha."¹⁴ Here Virgil warned his audience that mankind is susceptible to greed and corruption, hence the reference to Prometheus. Virgil heeded the warning that Rome was in peril of falling back into tyranny should virtue go unheeded.

Jefferson's attitudes toward Virginia as an Arcadia and his attitudes toward the West as a new order of the ages suggest parallels to similar themes in classical thought, though tailored to his unique situation in revolutionary America. Indeed, Jefferson likewise regarded human happiness (*eudemonia*) as natural, for Virgil wrote that "man was meant to live in perfect happiness."¹⁵ In any case, the sixth eclogue, and generally all of the eclogues, expresses the sentiment of

¹² Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics*, 221.

¹³ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 64.

¹⁴ Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics*, 214.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 121.

homelessness amongst a people in unexplored lands (Arcadia) and the desire for a just political system.

Bruno Snell summarized the sentiment of longing for the societies of antiquity when he wrote about the development of the Olympian gods:

The transparent clarity of the Homeric creed is a fruit of the detached sophistication of the aristocrats in the cities of Asia Minor; in departing from Greece they had left the dark powers of the earth behind them, and were able to raise their sky-god Zeus to his domination over gods and men. The gods do not derive from the cults, nor do they owe their origin for priestly speculation; they took shape in the songs of the poets, side by side with the company of the Achaeon heroes. They in turn spring from the echoes, kept alive through many centuries of hardship and misery, of the heroic age of Mycenae; they are moulded [*sic*] by the nostalgia for a paradise lost and a homeland deserted.¹⁶

This ancient trend expressed in the Homeric epics of leaving the homeland and finding virtue in a new, hopeful land is similar to the pastoral ideal of Virgil's pastoralists and, eventually, of the Revolutionary Americans. As Snell observed with the impact of the Olympian gods upon Greek thought, the relocation and sense of displacement from one land to another was not so much physical as it was intellectual and emotional. Virgil engaged in an intellectual and emotional relocation when he "re-moulded Theocritus in the image of what he considered to be characteristically Greek."¹⁷ The pastoral, Arcadian, intellectual landscape is likely the most direct lineage from the classical world to Thomas Jefferson, who interpreted this tradition according to the Enlightenment age and the political climate of the Revolution.

Jefferson regarded the new government and, more broadly, the new era of representation through laws and constitutions as humankind's opportunity for a

¹⁶ Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 290.

political rebirth. The American founders felt that monarchy lacked virtue because kings succumbed to the vices of power, greed, and religious intolerance.

Republicanism would ensure the success and perpetuation of individual rights and proper representation. Virgil regarded the coming Golden Age as a time of renewed morality, and Jefferson understood morality to be the consequence of reason. For Jefferson, as learning and reason advanced in the Enlightenment era, morality would follow. In a letter to his brother-in-law Peter Carr from Paris on August 10, 1787, Jefferson addressed his conception of the relationship between reason and morality:

In fine, I repeat that you must lay aside all prejudice on both sides, and neither believe nor reject any thing because any other person, or description of persons have rejected or believed it. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable not for the rightness but uprightness of the decision.¹⁸

In his letter, Jefferson laid out his perspective on morality, deeming its origins from within the individual self. Given the moral capacities of both a yeoman and an academic, Jefferson believed that “The former will decide it as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules.”¹⁹

Jefferson was skeptical of confusing or mistaking conscience and practical wisdom with moral philosophy. He believed that moral philosophy led men astray because it argued that there exists an authority on how men *in toto* should act outside themselves. He was weary of philosophers, politicians, and prophets alike who dictated what is good and bad for society. For Jefferson, conscience did not originate from an artificial source like political rhetoric or religion because the

¹⁸ Thomas Jefferson, “Letter to Peter Carr with Enclosure, August 10, 1787,” <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-12-02-0021>, (February 19, 2016).

¹⁹ Ibid.

sense of morality “is as much a part of his nature as the sense of hearing, seeing, feeling.”²⁰ He did believe that conscience, or virtue, could—indeed, needed to be—cultivated from nature and nature’s law, which meant that nature was the source of virtue. As such, Jefferson was skeptical of both moral philosophy and organized religion because they are presented to the individual without him arriving at such conclusions independently. For Jefferson, there is no personal engagement with these higher ideas of understanding if one passively receives them either in print or in the pulpit; he wanted the individual to actively engage with virtue and its source. Jefferson believed that the individual’s ability to reach moral conclusions or act virtuously was through the ability to reason and engage with the environment, which are innate. These qualities are available to both the layperson and the academic.

Furthermore, Jefferson believed that the virtuous person is able to advance his moral aptitude through learning because “the moral sense, or conscience, is as much a part of man as his leg or arm. It is given to all human beings in a stronger or weaker degree... It may be strengthened by exercise, as may any particular limb of the body.”²¹ As such, the individual who has the mindfulness to combine common sense with reason or learning is able to truly attain virtue through his acute sense of morality and knowledge. Jefferson wrote: “In this branch therefore read good books because they will encourage as well as direct your feelings.”²² Jefferson’s conception of morality was the combination of feeling and knowledge. The perfect blend between two things was the vision of the pastoralist. For

²⁰ Jefferson, “Letter to Peter Carr with Enclosure, August 10, 1787.”

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

Jefferson (and unlike his Enlightenment contemporaries), reason and emotion need not be contradictory. Only with both emotion and reason together could the individual cultivate virtue, for virtue, as the ancients understood it, was a complex way of engaging with the self and the world. The individual initiative to balance the head and the heart was a challenge for and marker of the virtuous person.

For Jefferson, republicanism alone was not enough to ensure virtue. It could safeguard natural rights, but in order to possess virtue, man must also be learned, and the kind of learnedness required of virtue was localized and intentional. Such was a feature of his agrarian republicanism, which is the marriage of pastoralism and politics. It is important to emphasize that Jefferson was not just an advocate for a pastoral nation; he was still very much a realist when it came to the American electorate, and understood that commerce was essential to America's success on the world stage. According to the historian J.G.A. Pocock, Jefferson was as much a classical republican as he was a Madisonian federalist, for both ideals were not necessarily mutually exclusive, at least to Jefferson. Pocock wrote:

He was, then, as committed as any classical republican to the ideal of virtue, but saw the preconditions of virtue as agrarian rather than natural; he was not a Cato, seeing the relation of natural aristocracy to natural democracy as the thing essential—unless this thought was in his mind as founder of the University of Virginia—so much as a Tiberius Gracchus, seeing the preservation of a yeoman commonwealth as the secret of virtue's maintenance. At the same time, we see, he doubted whether agrarian virtue could be preserved forever; but neither his faith nor his doubts separate him from the tradition of classical politics, or from the new liberalism of Madisonian Federalism.²³

²³ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), 533.

Pocock addressed this paradox in Jefferson's thinking about virtue and government by arguing that his political theory was "a theory in which frontier, not constitution, is the 'soul of the republic.'"²⁴ Historian Paul Rahe had a similar view of Jefferson, suggesting that farmers' diverse love of the land was "why he [Jefferson] emphasized that 'the cultivators of the earth' possessed more *amor patriae* than any other class and that merchants possessed the least."²⁵ Pocock and Rahe were correct in their observations that Jefferson understood that virtue was to be found in the natural world (although Pocock distinguished between nature and the natural world, which I do not regard as necessarily different concepts), but they stopped short on investigating what Jefferson thought "yeomen" to be; they also did not explain how the American relationship between virtue and environment would sustain the republic. Importantly, scholars emphasize *that* there was a relationship between politics and environment in eighteenth-century America, but they do not explain *how* that relationship entered the American mindset. Jefferson's virtuous yeomen were not the typical *autourgoi* of the classical world, or even early American farmers. Rather, Jefferson's understanding of a yeomanry holding the seat of virtue and government was more aligned with classical pastoralism than anything else. Virtue did not only arise from tilling the crops, but from a strong classical education and an engagement in contemplation, which the classical pastoralists suggested was a product of leisure, *otium*. Writing from Paris on February 7, 1787 to the Pennsylvania socialite,

²⁴ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 534.

²⁵ Paul Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 563.

Anne Willing Bingham, Jefferson criticized the Parisians' lack of Southern-style leisure and contemplation:

You are then engaged to tell me, truly and honestly, whether you do not find the tranquil pleasures of America preferable to the empty bustle of Paris. For what does the bustle tend? [...] Thus the days of life are consumed, one by one, without an object beyond the present moment. [...] In America, on the other hand, the society of the house, the improvements of the grounds, fill every moment with a useful and healthy activity... The intervals of leisure are filled by the society of real friends, whose affections are not thinned to cobweb, by being spread over a thousand objects.²⁶

Jefferson went on to point out the debt and bankruptcy of many Parisians, alluding to the financial corruptions of city life. The letter illustrates Jefferson's idealization of the country for not only the leisure, but for the prevention of commercial corruption. For Jefferson, humanity's place within nature should prohibit reckless spending and subsequent cultural degeneracy. Such a society would lead to the spurring of culture and knowledge. A debauched society, on the other hand, inevitably invites government corruption and a tyranny fed on dependence.

Historians Bernard Bailyn, Edmund Morgan, Merrill D. Peterson, and Gordon S. Wood, among others, have all examined the beginnings of American republicanism and have analyzed how the classical societies influenced, or did not influence, the American founding. Their investigations into this topic remain unfulfilled. This gap in the literature results from a lack of a thorough analysis of classical studies because the Americanist perspective derives largely from Anglo-American political history. The formation of the American political ideology has

²⁶ Jefferson, "Letter to Mrs. Bingham, Paris, February 7th, 1787," *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson: Compiled from Family Letters and Reminiscences by his Great-Granddaughter*, ed. Sarah N. Randolph (Cambridge, Massachusetts: University Press, 1939), 68-69.

strong foundations in pastoralism, specifically Virgilian pastoralism, through Jefferson's political theory of agrarian republicanism. Jefferson was significant to the founding because he not only contributed to the republican ideals that, to date, have lasted 250 years, but he drafted the Declaration of Independence, wrote the Virginia Constitution, served as Secretary of State, sat as President, and composed numerous letters expressing his ideas about the nature of government.

My approach to the topic of classical reception upon Jefferson's intellect and lifestyle focuses on one facet of classical studies, namely classical pastoralism. Pastoralism has a rich genealogy in European and American history, with particular emphasis on France and England in the eighteenth century. The range of studies within classical reception in early America is broad and diverse, specifically concerning the political parallels between ancient and modern political systems. As a result, I will discuss points that scholars neglect or overlook. Generally, Jeffersonian scholars acknowledge the Virginian's debt to the classics and understand that the American political system is, in fact, not classical in origin, but modern. I propose an alternative to this argument and explore just how deep Jefferson's political and philosophical debts to the classics are. This is not a cultural history, but an intellectual history and a philological exercise. It is largely an exploration into the history of ideas and the transference of ideas through language. My task as a political historian is to present an account of the development of the relationship between Jefferson's thoughts on environment within the greater pastoral-political narrative.

In order to understand Jefferson's ideas about race, class, and gender, it is important to first understand how his interests in pastoralism shaped his thinking. In fact, his opinions and attitudes about race and other matters would remain unresolved unless more light is shed on how his views on human nature and nature's government came to be. Jefferson's identity as a political thinker deserves further attention because there are still larger themes to uncover in the American political system and its debts to the ancients. Jefferson's status as a pastoralist does not contradict his status as a slave owner. Jefferson was a complex figure, and an exploration into his connection with pastoralism can potentially help to explain his identity as a slave owner, despite his misgivings about slavery.

Used primarily in art and literature, classical pastoralism is the Arcadian ideal of an *agrotopia* in which the individual possesses sympathetic sentiments toward nature and is physically removed from the corruption and chaos of the city. The eighteenth-century French and English misinterpreted the intellectual depth of pastoral poetry. They, unlike Jefferson, interpreted pastoralism as the ideal utopia for the naïve, the hyper-sexual, and the hedonistic.²⁷ Pastoralism, along with the Virgilian tradition, was a way of living in the world and perceiving it. As historian Leo Marx observed, pastoralism is "the ordering of meaning and value around the contrast between two styles of life, one identified with a rural and the other with an urban setting."²⁸ The pastoral ideal encompasses the art and learning of the metropolis, while at the same time celebrating the cultivation of

²⁷ For reference, see the works of French painter, Francis Boucher.

²⁸ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 94.

and labor in landscape. Even though Marx's pastoral observations are unsurpassed, he continuously referred to the pastoral ideals as a "symbolic landscape" that resides primarily in literature. Where it is true that eighteenth-century pastoralism was an ideal inspired by classical pastoralism, Marx failed to recognize that this tradition affected not only the aesthetics of early and post-revolutionary Americans, but the founding of their republic, too.

The pastoral lifestyle of early Virginia, in contrast to life in the city, resembled an escape into a more agrarian state of living combined with the knowledge in the liberal arts. As the founding generation began migrating to the more populated areas like Philadelphia, the wealthy planters on the frontier and on the farmlands regarded themselves as separated from the perceived moral decay in the cities and the increasing reliance on others for resources. The planters and farmers regarded their agrarian lifestyles as more virtuous than the commercial lifestyle. Marx identified the American pastoral ideal:

The ruling motive of the good shepherd, leading figure of the classic, Virgilian mode, was to withdraw from the great world and begin a new life in a fresh, green landscape. And now here was a virgin continent! Inevitably the European mind was dazzled by the prospect. With an unspoiled hemisphere in view it seemed that mankind actually might realize what had been thought a poetic fantasy. Soon the dream of a retreat to an oasis of harmony and joy was removed from its traditional literary context. It was embodied in various utopian schemes for making America the site of a new beginning for Western society.²⁹

Pastoralism was a "cultural symbol" for early Americans, giving them a vision of what the new country could be—a *novus ordo seclorum*.³⁰ Eschewing the English lifestyle of the commonalty whose domestic lives were geographically and

²⁹ Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, 5.

³⁰ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 48. "Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas; magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo."

politically constrained, Americans could expand their domestic spheres and could, more important, own their newfound property; the founders and their colonial forefathers could benefit from the knowledge and scholarship in Europe, while at the same time remain physically removed from Europe's corrupt politics. Such a pastoral setting—the combination of learning and environment—allowed the European expatriates of the seventeenth century to use the American land in order to fulfill their political ideals. As the British Americans would come to experience, their culture on the American landscape would resemble little of England's.

Just as the pastoral landscape is a physical medium between the city and the farm, it is also an intellectual medium between myth and reality whose roots reach back to the classical world. Virgil's first eclogue, for example, begins with a conversation between two outcasts in the woods, Meliboeus and Tityrus. Meliboeus laments, "We leave our homeland's boundaries and our sweet oats; we flee our homeland..."³¹ To which Tityrus replies, "O Meliboeus, god brought this leisure for us... and with his permission I wish to praise him with my rustic pipe."³² Tityrus' reaction to his exile is what Marx called the beginning of the "symbolic landscape, a delicate blend of myth and reality, [which] was to be particularly relevant to the American experience."³³ This "delicate blend" would lead Americans to distinguish themselves as Americans, not Europeans. Indeed, historian Drew McCoy addressed this reconciliation in Jefferson's own mind: "The trick was to advance far enough in the cycle to enjoy the many advantages

³¹ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 24.

³² Ibid.

³³ Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, 19.

of commerce without moving so far as to begin an ominous descent into decay and corruption, powerful images of which were evoked by historical memories of ancient Rome.”³⁴ The Americans, as McCoy observed, sought to learn from the ancient political systems models of what not to build a government upon. While the politics and government of Rome were models of corruption and greed for all of the founders, its pastoral *ethos* was greatly admired, especially by Jefferson.

In *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Bailyn observed the American tradition of the New World ideology along similar lines as Marx:

Just as their Saxon ancestors had left “their native wilds and woods in the north of Europe,” the settlers of America had emigrated to create in a new land civil and ecclesiastical governments purer, freer than those they had left behind... The idea that America was a purer and freer England came largely from local, nonconformist readings of history, it was reinforced by powerful elements within Enlightenment thought.³⁵

Although Bailyn’s assessment has merit, he ignored the classical virtues that contributed to what would become the American pastoral ideal of the eighteenth-century. He neglected the classical literary and historical tradition that the founding generation adopted.

The founders were, as they called themselves, “natural aristocrats,” and this identity was marked by men who were learned, wealthy by their own means, propertied, and virtuous. In an 1813 letter to John Adams, Thomas Jefferson described the natural aristocrat:

For I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. Formerly bodily powers gave place among the aristoi. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the

³⁴ Quoted in William Howard Adams, *The Paris Years of Thomas Jefferson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 166.

³⁵ Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 83.

weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength, like beauty, good humor, politeness and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground of distinction. There is also an artificial aristocracy founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class.³⁶

For Jefferson, a person's ability to reason, to govern, to be sociable, and to appreciate beauty were qualities not handed down by birthright or title, but were earned through a person's own will and effort. These characteristics of the natural aristocrat were ideal for sustaining a virtuous republic because, as Jefferson understood, "it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of society."³⁷ Jefferson combined the ancient *aristoi* (aristocrats) with the eighteenth-century virtues of politeness, the supremacy of reason, and republicanism. Additionally, Jefferson recognized the naturalness of government, noting that virtue is a product of natural creation.

The greatest difference in the right to govern between the aristocracy of the Old World and the natural aristocracy of the New World was rooted in legitimacy. Such difference was the very reason for the American Revolution, which was an intellectual revolution on the difference between monarchy as the only legitimate political system and republicanism. The European aristocracy's political authority was founded in their birth right, and authority was ideally transferred between father and son. This means that political legitimacy was derived from the corporeal self—that is, the physical

³⁶ Jefferson, "Letter to John Adams, Oct. 28, 1813," The Founders' Constitution. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch15s61.html>.

³⁷ Ibid.

body. It follows that the strength, and by extension political strength, of the physical body could be deceived through artificial means, such as weaponry. In this sense, the legitimate authority of the aristocracy rested in force of arms, which are unnatural. The natural aristocracy's political authority, on the other hand, was founded in what Jefferson called "the equal rights of men," which were natural and self-evident.³⁸ For the natural aristocrats, the perversion of government through the brute use of force was unvirtuous and unnatural. Constitutions and the free election of natural aristocrats to seats of government, however, were the products of nature because they were intellectual, communal, and consensual.

The combination of nature, intellect, and the right to govern was conceived in the classical world, which the founders understood as the fountainhead of their eighteenth-century ideals on republicanism. After all, Jefferson's discussion with Adams on natural aristocracy was started by their correspondence on Theognis. The natural aristocrats read the classical texts and extracted from the ancients' own debates on legitimate rule. Accordingly, the greatest virtue that Jefferson extracted from the ancient cultures was the relationship between government and nature, which included both natural law and the natural land. As a result, Jefferson looked to farming in order to develop a pastoral lifestyle and ideology. In turn, the farm became a landscape upon which the pastoralist developed a way of living different from the corruption of London and the colonial cities. More narrowly, the virtuous and philosophical interests of the pastoralist contrasted with the

³⁸ Jefferson, "Letter to John Adams, Oct. 28, 1813."

perceived commercial interests of the cosmopolitan merchant who pursued self-interest at the expense of benevolence and the Aristotelian common good.

Marx called Virgil's *Eclogues* the "true fountainhead of the pastoral strain," and Virgil, like Jefferson, regarded pastoralism as a chance at seclusion from the vices of communal living, which in turn merged the literary genre of pastoralism with a political ideology.³⁹ In the *Eclogues*, Virgil wrote that the pastoral life is necessarily secluded when Pollio sings: "Not all men love orchards and lowly tamarisks; if we woods sing, the woods are befit for council."⁴⁰ When Virgil wrote the last verse, he addressed the new Augustan era in Rome and, therefore, saw a political system potentially favorable to the pastoral ideal, one without corruption, greed, and dependence. The fourth eclogue is about an era in which Augustus would usher in a less despotic empire, where "the Virgin [Justice] returns, the Saturnian reigns return; now a new progeny is let down from high Heaven."⁴¹ The Romans regarded the coming Augustan Age accompanied by eternal Justice, along with whom future generations would be founded, similarly to revolutionary Americans. George Washington, for example, explicitly referenced the virtues in Augustus' republican era.⁴² For Virgil and the American natural aristocracy, the pastoral ideal was inextricably linked to the

³⁹ Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, 19.

⁴⁰ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 49.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² George Washington to Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, May 28, 1788. *George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 2 Letterbooks*. "The Augustan age is proverbial for intellectual refinement and elegance in composition."

political because the virtues of the pastoral lifestyle supposedly had beneficial outcomes for political development. As the American pastoral ideology formed, so did their political ideology, and certain Americans, as we will come to see, did not want to separate them.

Other scholars have attempted to discuss the virtues of farming and the vices of city life. Gordon S. Wood made mention of it in *The Creation of the American Republic and Revolutionary Characters*. In the latter book, Wood indirectly addressed the pastoral medium between the corruption in London and the virtues of America's placement as a distant province: "It helps to explain why North America and Scotland should have become such remarkable places of enlightenment and intellectual ferment in the English-speaking world during the eighteenth century."⁴³ Several years later in *Inventing America*, Garry Wills explained how Jefferson was inspired by ancient, medieval, and early modern thinkers along with the understanding that agricultural life would turn the American citizenry toward civic duty. Other scholars have taken a more pessimistic view on the subject. In *American Slavery American Freedom*, Edmund Morgan argued that the white elite of colonial, revolutionary, and post-revolutionary Virginia sought to form a common bond with the lowly classes, such as hardy farmers and backwoodsmen. For Morgan, a belief in self-sufficiency (and a disdain for a strong central government), resourcefulness, and white supremacy tied wealthy and common men together to support social and economic causes.

⁴³ Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 22.

Finally, Richard Hofstadter asserted in *The American Political Tradition* that the founding fathers used the Lockean idea of property—property as a farm and property as a business and livelihood—to contain human selfishness and envy and redirect them toward commerce.

These analyses, while worthy of merit, failed to recognize pastoralism, which is not the same thing as farming. These scholars recognized that the agricultural lifestyle was a prudent safeguard against cities inhabited by the lower classes, but pastoralism is not so easily defined, neither is virtue for that matter. What made a pastoralist were the classical ideals he embodied in his lifestyle. Thus, when the aforementioned scholars discussed farming, they were not discussing pastoralism. The pastoral ideal was not as simple as a beautiful landscape—it was a way of thinking and living not tied to fleeting emotion, but serious emotion and melancholia. The pastoralist created an intimate relationship between himself and his environment, as Marx observed with Virgil's Tityrus.⁴⁴ Conversely, the farmer in the eyes of Wood and company was a citizen who lived in anticipation of tyranny and revolution. Marx continued:

A similar accommodation with the idealized landscape is the basis for the herdsman's less tangible satisfactions: the woods 'echo back' the notes of his pipe. It is as if the consciousness of the musician shared a principle of order with the landscape and, indeed, the external universe.⁴⁵

The farmer's virtues might have been entirely political, but the pastoralist's encompassed metaphysical, literary, and aesthetic virtues *in addition to*

⁴⁴ Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, 23. "In a few lines Virgil quickly itemizes the solid satisfactions of the pastoral retreat: peace, leisure, and economic self-sufficiency. The key to all of these felicities is the harmonious relation between Tityrus and the natural environment."

⁴⁵ Ibid.

political ones. Jefferson defined pastoralism along these lines throughout his various writings on ethics, aesthetics, gardening, and republicanism. Where it is true that Jefferson transferred the literary pastoral ideal into a political one, he nevertheless held onto pastoralism's literary beginnings in the classics. Indeed, his pastoral epistemology necessarily affected his political philosophy.

Furthermore, even though the farmer's way of life supposedly prevented corruption, as the Americanist scholars observe, such a lifestyle was not necessarily pastoral. The ways in which the independent farmer regarded his land elevated him into a pastoralist. Pocock at least hinted at this difference. Pocock suggested that there was a pastoral, indeed a poetic, relationship between farmers (*geôrgoi*), yeomen (*autougoi*) and the American land during the Revolution: "America is the world's garden; there is an all but infinite reservoir of free land, and expansion to fill it is the all but infinite expansion of virtue."⁴⁶ Pocock recognized that farming prevented corruption, but also affirmed the virtuous pastoral ideal that it would not only prevent corruption, but would bring virtue. This way of perceiving the agriculturalist effectively identified him as a pastoralist because the individual began to see himself in terms of the virtuous eternal, not merely the earthly temporal. Such a distinction is classical, as the ancients regarded virtue in terms of eternal fulfillment and an everlasting relationship with nature. The Americans blended this pastoral virtue with the political climate of the Revolution. Pocock added: "For what the American is in search of is not the nature to be

⁴⁶ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 539.

contemplated in Arcadian scenery—though this option is never finally closed off—but his own nature as a man, which is civic, military, commercial, and in a word active.”⁴⁷ The civic ideals of republicanism married the classical pastoral ideal, thus creating an American citizen learned (formally or informally) in the liberal arts, the natural aristocrat.

Ancient historian Meyer Reinhold argued that “Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, the best classical scholars of their time, had but a superficial understanding of Vergil.”⁴⁸ Reinhold’s argument for Jefferson’s alleged Virgilian superficiality rested on his observation that, “in his voluminous letters, essays, and speeches there are many references to Homer but hardly any evidence of his great love for Vergil.”⁴⁹ Reinhold reserved his investigation into Jefferson’s Virgilian pastoralism to mere writings, which do not wholly speak to the founder’s lifestyle. There are other places to look besides letters. Even though there is the absence of Jefferson’s explicit reference to Virgilian pastoralism as the fountainhead of his agrarian republicanism, context can help to explain the Virgilian connection. Further inquiry into the trends of Jefferson’s agricultural learning, his political proposals for Virginian sustainability, and his ideas on friendship imply a connection to Virgil. There are things unknown about Jefferson’s attitudes toward Virgil and classical pastoralism in general, but the evidence, even

⁴⁷ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 539.

⁴⁸ Meyer Reinhold, “The Americanization of Vergil, from Colonial Times to 1882,” *Why Vergil? A Collection of Interpretations*, ed. Stephanie Quinn (Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2000), 319.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

though not from Jefferson's own pen, indubitably illustrates that Virgilian themes of pastoralism were not far from his thoughts.

Reinhold did acknowledge classical reception in eighteenth-century America, however:

For the Revolutionary generation political science was in the forefront, and the cult of antiquity was at its height in the 'Golden Age' of classical learning in America. Thus the Founding Fathers ransacked the Roman and Greek classics for republican models and classical virtues, and in a modest way Vergil has made a lasting contribution to our national image.⁵⁰

It is true that selected Virgilian quotations have remained political epithets for American republicanism. Reinhold cites the borrowing of Virgil's pastoral words on the dollar bill as evidence of the founders' allegedly superficial republican aesthetics: *annuit coeptis* ("he approved the undertakings"); *e pluribus unum* ("one from many"); and *novus ordo seclorum* ("new order of the ages").⁵¹ General Greek and Roman imagery reached beyond the early republic, too, because South Carolina frequently used mythic figures on its currency into the nineteenth century.

Where it is commonly understood today that the classical influences on American architecture was intended to evoke republican principles as a sort of New Rome, the founding generation was not always so narrowly focused on buildings, especially in Virginia. Architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson analyzed Jefferson's architectural inspirations from the classical world through a less conventional lens than direct republicanism. His analysis of the connection between Jefferson and the ancients rested on the love of

⁵⁰ Reinhold, "The Americanization of Vergil, from Colonial Times to 1882," 320.

⁵¹ Ibid.

knowledge. Through this route, Jefferson's political connections to the ancients are observable. By examining the less traditional routes from the ancient world to Jefferson, historians can get a better sense on just how strong the connection between classical thought and early American thought was. America's debt to Greece and Rome are far deeper than reference to antiquity on currency. In his account of the construction of the University of Virginia, which Jefferson designed, Wilson observed:

[Jefferson] wrote to both Thornton and Latrobe that the fronts of the professors' pavilions lining the central lawn should be "models of taste and good architecture, & of a variety of appearance no two alike, so as to serve as specimens of orders for the architectural lectures." One can interpret the different facades as an attempt to teach architectural taste to the students by providing ten different models, but the meaning may go deeper, since a dialogue takes place on the lawn between the ancients and the moderns.⁵²

For Wilson, the classical influences on Jefferson's architectural designs were not only composed of republican political symbols. Rather, classical reception was intended to be inspirational and educational in order to establish virtue, which, as Jefferson believed it, was essential to a well-functioning republic. An education in the classics was an invitation to engage with in the ancients on any subject, not just republicanism. Wilson continued: "On the lawn at the university, the ancients and moderns are in dialogue, indicative of the educational mission."⁵³ Conversely, historian Paul Rahe argued that the classical influences—whether aesthetic, moral, or political—were decorative, and Bailyn called classical reception in early America "window-dressing." Rahe and Bailyn's dismissal of the importance of

⁵² Guy Wilson, "Thomas Jefferson's Classical Architecture: An American Agenda," in *Jeffersonian America*, ed. Peter Onuf (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 120.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 121.

classical aesthetics (whether visual or literary) overlooks the depth of the ancients' reception in early America because, for example, of the impact of classical architecture upon Jefferson's thought. A connection with the ancients was meant to create a way of thinking and living amongst early Americans, especially Jefferson. Such a connection could have been an engagement in character formation reflected in both how the Americans organized their physical environment and the classical virtues they chose to emulate. The architecture of the University of Virginia is, if anything, classical. Through architecture, Jefferson sought to design a school system similar to the schools of the classical world. The value of learning and education was not lost on the pastoral poets, Virgil and Theocritus, for they were both highly educated men. Knowledge is one of the pillars of pastoralism. Jefferson's university is only one aspect of his acknowledgment of these pastoral virtues. If the United States was to be distinguished from debauched, corrupt Europe, it had to create a new kind of people. To Jefferson and his contemporaries, this new people would cultivate the soil as they cultivated their virtue. This act of cultivating virtue is overtly and implicitly political. The American government may still be classical in character because of pastoralism.

Chapter 2: Physical Environment

This chapter will explain in depth Virgil's conception of pastoralism and the relationship between environment and knowledge. This analysis is largely literary because the virtues in Virgil's pastoralism lie within his poetry, the *Eclogues*. Furthermore, this chapter will investigate within Virgil's *Eclogues* and Jefferson lifestyle: political symbolism found in nature, such as the mountain as a place of knowledge and political rebirth; aesthetics in nature and architecture; and leisure as a practice of contemplation. This chapter examines how Virgil tied plot, theme, setting, and character together in order to illustrate the central theme of the *Eclogues*, which is that environment produces virtue. Along those same lines, this chapter investigates who certain aspects of Jefferson's life, such as his intimate correspondences between friends and his life atop Monticello, illustrate his perception that environment produces virtue. This chapter will connect Jefferson to Virgil by highlighting the similarities in thought between how they perceived the relationship between humanity and nature. Both conceived of a virtuous life with small, mountainous, and agrarian communities, namely Arcadia and American farming communities. Both espoused a way of life that legitimized a political teleology through environment.

Virgil's political symbolism developed directly from the Greeks' symbolism of the mountain. Mythical Arcadia was not Virgil's creation, but Theocritus'. According to the ancients, both Greek and Roman, mythical Arcadia rests in the mountains. The real Arcadia rests in the mountains of Peloponnese in

southern Greece and is as much an area of shepherding today as it was in ancient times. Arcadia became mythical once the classical poets incorporated Arcadia into their imaginations. Once the poets married knowledge with environment, Arcadia became mythical and it became the pastoral ideal. Arcadia is the intellectual progeny of knowledge and environment, and is the ideal medium between the two. The pastoralists developed and harmonized Arcadia as the perfect medium to create the ideal life. Even the afterlife of Arcadia resided on the mountaintop. Virgil's singer, Menalcas eulogized the death of Daphnis in the fifth eclogue:

Daphnis, the bright beauty, marvels the entrance of Olympus
And sees clouds and stars beneath his feet.
Cheer, therefore, holds the forest and the countryside
And Pan and the Dryad girls.
[...]
Good Daphnis loves leisure.
The rugged mountains themselves toss their joyful voices to the stars.
The rocks themselves, the shrubs themselves,
Now resound the song: "God, the god he is, Menalcas!"⁵⁴

The mountain, for Virgil and Theocritus, was the central locus of the pastoral landscape. The mountain was the place most secluded from metropolitan life; it was the place with the greatest abundance of agriculture; and it was the place closest to the gods. The mountain has been a symbol of knowledge, inspiration, and imagination since classical Greece to early America.

Whether it is Mount Parnassus of the Delphic tradition, Mount Olympus of the gods, Mount Helicon for Hesiod, Mount Maenalus in Virgil, or the little mountain beneath Thomas Jefferson's feet, the symbolic mountain bears divine

⁵⁴ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 58.

and earthly inspiration. Hesiod's *Theogony*, for example, opens with a passage with his appreciation for the Muses atop the mountain:

From the Heliconian Muses let us begin to sing,
Who hold the great and holy mount of Helicon, and
Dance on soft feet about the deep-blue spring and
The altar of the almighty son of Cronos, and, when
They have washed their tender bodies in Permessus
Or in the Horse's Spring or Olmeius, make their fair,
Lovely dances upon the highest Helicon and move with
vigorous feet.
[...]
And one day they taught Hesiod glorious
Song while he was shepherding his lambs under holy
Helicon.⁵⁵

In his praise of the Muses, Hesiod observed their euphoric place upon Mount Helicon, as in the Archaic, Hesiodic, and Homeric traditions, the gods and Muses inspired humankind to act. Continuing in this opening passage of *Theogony*, Hesiod quoted the Muses: "Shepherds of the wilderness, wretched things of shame, mere bellies, we know how to speak many false things as though they were true; but we know, when we will, to utter true things."⁵⁶ As Snell observed, the Hesiodic verse addressed the intellectual connection between the gods and the poet's artistic ability, after all it was Hesiod, the pastoral poet himself, who was chosen by the Muses to write verse, according to the *Theogony*. Such an artistic gift was necessarily reserved to the chosen few in the ancient world. Snell examined that Hesiod's "knowledge, *in fine*, stands halfway between the divine knowledge of the Muses and the human knowledge of the fools."⁵⁷ Such a medium is the central qualification of pastoralism. Arcadia is the in-between place

⁵⁵ Hesiod, *Theogony*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 79-81.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 81.

⁵⁷ Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 139.

of two extremes, like the city and the wilderness, and between god and farmer. In any case, Hesiod demonstrated in the opening to the *Theogony* that the mountain was where the gods live, and it was the landscape upon which Hesiod chose to place the source of his pastoral vision.

Jefferson expressed similar sentiments in the *Notes on the State of Virginia* in which he recorded his feelings toward Virginia's Arcadian scenery. Writing on the Natural Bridge, Jefferson wrote:

If the view from the top be painful and intolerable, that from below is delightful in an equal extreme. It is impossible for the emotions arising from the sublime, to be felt beyond what they are here: so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing as it were up to heaven, the rapture of the spectator is really indescribable! The fissure continuing narrow, deep, and straight, for a considerable distance above and below the bridge, opens a short but very pleasing view of the North mountain on one side and the Blue Ridge on the other.⁵⁸

Jefferson wrote with the same awe and admiration for the grandeur of nature as Hesiod and Virgil. The Natural Bridge, nestled in Virginia, was to Jefferson surrounded by mountains, thereby inspiring that same awe felt and recorded by the classical pastoralists. Of course, Jefferson's observations were just as imaginary as Virgil's. In any case, like Virgil, Jefferson composed the *Notes* in order to facilitate a cultural identity founded in the land.

Continuing with the significance of the mountain, in the eighth eclogue, Virgil's character, Damon, personified Mount Maenalus within Arcadia during his suicidal monologic song:

Begin the verse with me, Maenalus, with my flute!
Maenalus has the always clever wood and the speaking pines,
He always listens to the loves of the shepherds and of Pan.

⁵⁸ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, The Avalon Project, Yale Law School. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/jeffvir.asp.

Who first did not disturb the idle reeds.
Begin the verse with me, Maenalus, with my flute!⁵⁹

At the mountain, humans and gods interacted with one another, and Snell rightly noted that “the currents of myth and empirical reality flow one into another.”⁶⁰ It was in this place between myth and empirical reality where the pastoralists were best able to actualize their intellectual and emotional passions because they were free from society. Indeed, historian James Thomas Flexner channeled this same idea when he wrote of the pastoral Americans:

The very expansiveness of the North American continent—its limitless reaches, its wild storms, its endless opportunities—made a man stand upon his feet and strut like Adam that first day in Eden.⁶¹

The place of the wilderness or Arcadia or Eden or North America was a place of infinite intellectual and political possibility. Jefferson’s comments on the Natural Bridge are reflections of this sentiment. Jefferson continued in the *Notes* expressing his reaction to the Potomac and Shenandoah, describing them as both breathtaking and terrifying:

It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful at that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate in the calm below... here, as in the neighborhood of the natural bridge, are people who have passed their lives within half a dozen miles, and have never been to survey these monuments of a war between rivers and mountains, which must have shaken the earth itself to its center.⁶²

⁵⁹ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 74.

⁶⁰ Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 283.

⁶¹ James Thomas Flexner, *American Painting: First Flowers of Our Wilderness* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 266.

⁶² Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

Here Jefferson observed the terror and awesomeness of nature combined with its sublime and tranquil characteristics. Indeed, Jefferson even described it as warlike, but at the same time wonderful and something deserving of observation by the calculating mind.

Jefferson would further develop his connection to pastoralism through his designed physical reality, Monticello, which is a reflection of this mindset and further seeds his intellectual debts to pastoralism. Not only did Jefferson's ideals of national agrarianism emerge out of this tradition for the awe of wild nature and the urge to tame it, but his physical environment is another extension of his debts to pastoralism. Jefferson transformed pastoralism into a lived reality with practical implications on government. The pastoral landscapes and estates of prominent Virginians, like Monticello and George Washington's Mount Vernon, were not only plantations engaged in woodworking and viticulture; they were centers for learning. Pastoralism was a way of living that encouraged a certain educational reality for the early American aristocracy. It furthered an environment of self-sustainability in rural life combined with the best attributes of city life, like art and science. The Shadwell estate of Jefferson's father, Peter Jefferson, for example, functioned as both a plantation and social center through its extensive library.

It was at the foothill of Jefferson's future Monticello where his pastoral ideology began, at Shadwell in the agrarian lands of Albemarle County. The colony of Virginia, especially its colonial capital of Williamsburg, rested on the periphery of the British Empire, (similar to the relationship between Virgil's

homeland of Cisalpine Gaul to the Roman Empire in Italy proper), and was geographically removed enough from British political culture in order to have its own identity of landowners. In any case, Jefferson's pastoral education had strong beginnings in the library at Shadwell. His father was, among many things, a planter, slave owner, surveyor, and businessman. According to historian Susan Kern,

Many of Peter Jefferson's friends were other officeholders and educated professionals. Among them were planters, surveyors, doctors, and clergy. They were people who traveled, purchased land and consumer goods, and read books. Their horizons were broad... The Jefferson circle included college professors and college presidents as well as authors of history books and maps.⁶³

As Kern observed, Jefferson grew up in a household that was no mere home—it was a social center of business, politics, and learning. It is in the library where the intellectual heritage of the Jeffersonian and the larger Virginia patrician class can be unearthed. Even more, it is on the bookshelves where their intellectual heritage can also be discerned. The library, as aristocratic Virginians used it in the eighteenth century, was not just a place to house books. Instead, the library was as much an intellectual concept as it was a physical space.

Kern observed that the library at Shadwell served many functions besides simply reading:

Another way of analyzing a book collection is as a group of objects that had shape, color, and size as well as unique storage and display needs. When we think about the Shadwell books as artifacts, we enter an interesting room. Peter's books resided in his office, where he kept his mathematical instruments and a collection of maps. This was a room that spoke of charting and exploration, both in the real woods and mountains of Virginia and on paper around the world. The books were part of the

⁶³ Susan Kern, *The Jeffersons at Shadwell* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), 163-64.

intellectual apparatus for that exploration, and indeed, the maps and other illustrations contained in the books added the books to the decorative as well as intellectual landscapes.⁶⁴

In this passage, Kern merged the learning of pastoralism with the physical environment. She even referred to learning as a “landscape.” In this way, Kern observed that space—that is, one’s spatial environment—necessarily affected one’s epistemology, and is even a reflection of it: “the house and its furnishings were didactic. The house was also the center of a substantial plantation, and the relationship of the parts of the plantation in the landscape shows how the Jefferson’s carefully ordered their world.”⁶⁵ Such virtues as learnedness, political duty, and self-sustainability extracted from Jefferson’s material world are attributes of pastoralism. Jefferson transferred the literary values of his father at Shadwell to his own library at Monticello, the Book Room where he expressed and reflected his personal vision of Arcadia.

Even though the Book Room’s inner world can be explored through the pastoral lens, it is equally important to emphasize the spatial environment in which Jefferson composed his ideas on government. In 1809, just a few short months after Jefferson’s two-term presidency ended, friend Margaret Bayard Smith visited Monticello and recorded her experience there. Smith observed:

Mr. J went to his apartments, the door of which is never opened but by himself & his retirement seems so sacred that I told him it was his sanctum sanctorum... When we descended to the Hall, he asked us to pass into the library, or as I called it his sanctum sanctorum, where any other foot than his own seldom intrudes. This suite of apartments opens from the Hall to the south. It consists of 3 rooms for the library, one for his cabinet one for his chamber, & a green house, divided from the other by glass compartments & doors; so that the view of the plants it contains,

⁶⁴ Kern, *The Jeffersons at Shadwell*, 35.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

is unobstructed.—He has not yet made his collection, having but just finished the room, which opens on one of the terraces. He shewed us every thing he thought would please or interest us—His most valuable & curious books—those which contained fine prints &ca—Among these I thought the most curious were the original letters of Cortez to the king of Spain, a vol, of fine views of Antient villa's round Rome, with maps of the grounds, & minute descriptions of the buildings & grounds. An old poem written by Pierce Plowman & printed 250 years ago; he read near a page, which was almost as unintelligible as if it was hebrew; & some Greek romances. He took pains to find one that was translated into french, as most of them were translated in latin & italian.—More than two hours passed most charmingly away.—The library consists of books in all languages, & contains about twenty thousand vols.⁶⁶

As such, Jefferson kept the library locked and protected. It was truly his *sanctum sanctorum*, a place for him only. Jefferson's solitude within the library is not necessarily indicative of the pastoral vision, (although its windows opening to the garden outside is), but is indicative of the seriousness Jefferson placed on his independent scholarship. More than that, such solitude is indicative of Jefferson's tendency toward contemplation and self-reflection; it is indicative of a man inclined toward the life of the mind—that is, the lifestyle driven by the enterprise of understanding. Monticello was a museum in its own right. In his home, Jefferson housed collections of sculpture modelled after Greek and Roman mythological characters, objects from the Lewis and Clark expedition, Native American artifacts, and natural specimens. In Monticello, art and nature met under the microscope of Enlightenment learning, and Jefferson put them on display for his visitors to see and learn from.

In her analysis of the material culture at Shadwell, Kern was able to discern “how people arranged activities within their living spaces,” which “can

⁶⁶ Margaret Bayard Smith, “Account of a Visit to Monticello, 29 July--2 August, 1809,” <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-01-02-0315>, (March 16, 2016).

show how people thought of themselves and how they related to other members of their households and communities.”⁶⁷ The library—both a symbol of learning and a physical space—is an example of Jefferson’s pastoral ideology because its contents, aesthetics, and sharing with others sheds light on the pastoral ideal. Kern illuminated some of the texts and authors Peter Jefferson found valuable, even virtuous. For example, Kern observed that history books composed over half of Jefferson’s collection.⁶⁸ The topics of such a history collection can hint at Peter Jefferson’s historiology—that is, his perspective on history as both a philosophical topic and a way of living that can be political. Such a large history collection, according to Kern, was by no means unique to Shadwell either: “Peter owned books on a range of topics that reflected the tendencies of other educated men in colonial Virginia.”⁶⁹ Besides the library as an athenaeum for the Jeffersons, it also functioned as a sort of “cultural currency” in early Virginia. Kern notes that “the material contained within these titles was a medium for communication among literate people of taste.”⁷⁰ The pastoral ideal was the perfect medium between the wilderness and the city, which in turn allowed the aristocratic estates to flourish as social centers for political discourse. Marx, alongside Kern, noted that the early Americans’ frontier epistemology settled between these two extremes. Kern effectively aligned her excavation study with Marx’s literary study when she observes: “The material world of wealthy Virginians in this period cannot be classified in terms of urban versus rural,

⁶⁷ Kern, *The Jeffersons at Shadwell*, 15.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

expecting that high culture filters through a small tidewater capital out to a vernacular hinterland.”⁷¹ In short, the “high culture” of the cities merged with the labor and production of the farmland, thereby creating a unique pastoral environment on the tamed landscape.

Jefferson’s own “high culture” of education jumpstarted at the age of 19 when he began his studies in law under George Wythe, a man Jefferson called his “faithful and beloved mentor,” and “most affectionate friend through life.”⁷² Jefferson’s intimacy with knowledge has strong foundations in the personal relationships with his intellectual mentors, many of whom he called friends. Even though Wythe instructed Jefferson in law, such instruction was by no means limited to law. Wythe was more than anything a lover of the classics, and his use and flair for the ancient languages was noticed by his contemporaries. It has been observed that Wythe’s love for the ancients was, if anything, passionate:

He thirsted like a living Tantalus for the refreshing springs of the ancient authors. A survival of his obsession may be seen in the Virginia Historical Society in the form of a *praxis*, an elaborate study comparing Greek words from the *Iliad* with their Latin equivalents. William Writ, the early biographer of Patrick Henry remarked: “He carried his love of antiquity rather too far; for he frequently subjected himself to the charge of pedantry....” Wythe may have been Virginia’s first philologist, but his learning was not an unalloyed blessing in the courtroom. Now and then, quipped Hugh Blair Grigsby, “he could hardly refrain from giving a line of Horace the force of an act of Assembly.”⁷³

Wythe, a future signer of the Declaration of Independence, later donated six classical books on pastoralism to Jefferson in 1806, including: copies of

⁷¹ Kern, *The Jeffersons at Shadwell*, 40.

⁷² Jefferson, “Autobiography, July 27, 1821,”

http://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj1.052_0517_0609/?st=gallery, (March 10, 2016).

⁷³ Alonzo Thomas Dill, *George Wythe: Teacher of Liberty* (Williamsburg: Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, 1979), 19.

Theocritus in Greek, Latin, and English; three copies of Virgil's *Eclogues* in Latin; and one copy of a body of collected works on agriculture in Latin, which included Columella's *De Re Rustica*.⁷⁴ It was in the marriage of books and environment, especially books on environment, where Jefferson's pastoralism is most apparent. Through studying his books and attitude toward landscape, Jefferson's identity as a pastoralist vies with his reputation as a statesman.

Jefferson's *sanctum sanctorum*, the Book Room, provided respite, but his books by no means resided only in the library of Monticello; they were bought and sold abroad, and locally borrowed and given within the United States. Jefferson's collection began at Shadwell, which grew from his travels to France, and his collection grew larger still after Wythe bequeathed his own collection to Jefferson in 1806. By 1811, Jefferson calculated that he had amassed about 20,000 volumes.⁷⁵ After the British burned the Library of Congress on August 24, 1814, Jefferson sold about 6000 books to Congress at a discounted price of \$23,950 in January, 1815. After Jefferson donated his own collection to the Library of Congress in 1815, he had a final resting place for about 1000 books in the library of Poplar Forest, his retirement home in Bedford County.⁷⁶ Jefferson regarded the burning of the Library of Congress, which housed mostly legal texts in the basement of the Capitol, as an attack on knowledge itself. He reacted by

⁷⁴ Jefferson, "Inventory of books received by Thomas Jefferson from the estate of George Wythe, circa September 1806," http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=1768&mode=large&img_step=1#page1 (January 22, 2016).

⁷⁵ Jefferson, "Letter to Thomas Law, April 23, 1811," <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mtj1&fileName=mtj1page045.db&recNum=298>, (March 9, 2016).

⁷⁶ Poplar Forest, "Reading and Writing at Poplar Forest" <http://www.poplarforest.org/jefferson/life-at-polar-forest/reading-and-writing-at-polar-forest/#.VuChAPkrLIU>, (March 20, 2016).

donating books on nearly all subjects from the natural sciences to Shakespeare to classical poetry. The Library of Congress' current size and reputation as a bastion of world knowledge is a result of Jefferson's donations to restore it as marker of America's prominence and intelligence.

Jefferson's sense of civic duty to preserve and record knowledge was private well before he made it public. Before the 1770 fire at Shadwell that burned all of his books, Jefferson recorded the books bequeathed to him after his father's death, among them Virgil's *Eclogues*. Besides the pastorals handed down to him from Shadwell, Jefferson also received pastorals from Wythe, a friend and mentor. Wythe's influence on Jefferson's intellectual development was substantial, both in terms of the legal and literary influences. In September 1806, Wythe recorded the following pastorals in a list to Jefferson: Virgil's collected works; Foulis' 1746 edition of Theocritus in Greek and Latin; Rami's edition of the *Eclogues*; and Fawkes' edition of the *Idylls*.

As it is, Jefferson was a meticulous note-taker and recorder of all things, especially of things he bought and sold. As a result, the Virginian left historians a record of the books he owned at one time or another. Historian Millicent Sowerby gathered his recordings into a comprehensive set of volumes of all the books Jefferson owned. It is through Sowerby's catalogue where the pastoral texts that Jefferson came into contact with are found. The Sowerby Catalogue lists Jefferson's pastoral copies, agricultural texts, books on Italian architecture, and many more books regarding the pastoral vision. A curious entry figures in one of his lists, which is a 1792 copy of the Scotsman Alexander Ross' 1632 epic,

Virgilius Evangelisans, also known as *Virgilius Evangelisans, sive Historia Domini et Salvatoris Nostri Jesu Christi. Virgilianis Verbis et Versibus descripta. Opera Alexandri Rossaei*.⁷⁷ The longer title translates as, “Virgil the Evangelical, or a History of the Lord and Saviour Our Jesus Christ. A Description of the Virgilian Words and Verses. The Works of Alexander Ross.” The piece is more commonly known as, *Virgilii Evangelisantis Christiados libri xiii*, or “Virgil the Christian Evangelical Book 13.”⁷⁸ In any case, Jefferson’s ownership of the seventeenth-century text is curious because it is a canto (or patchwork) of Christ’s life as told through Virgil’s verses of the *Aeneid*. Jefferson’s interest in Latin poetry reached beyond the mere notion that classical literature was a relic of the ancient world. The Ross copy illustrates Jefferson’s interest in classical reception in the early modern and modern worlds, and suggests that he was curious about the cross-cultural applications of classical thought. Even though Jefferson was a critic of organized religion’s effects on the rational mind, he found Ross’ canto illuminating its use of classical knowledge. The *Jeffersonian Bible* seems like a similar comparison.

Within the 1815 catalogue sent to the Library of Congress is Jefferson’s 1590 copy of Frenchman Pierre de la Ramée’s edition of the *Eclogues*, and Firmin Didot’s 1806 French translations of the *Eclogues* and the *Idylls* of Theocritus.⁷⁹ Further in the 1815 catalogue, Jefferson owned an additional 1746 copy of Theocritus in Greek and Latin issued by the Foulis brothers, Andrew and

⁷⁷ Millicent Sowerby, “Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson,” http://tjlibraries.monticello.org/transcripts/sowerby/IV_513.html, (March 11, 2016).

⁷⁸ Alexander Ross, “Virgilii Evangelisantis Christiados Libri xiii,” <https://archive.org/details/virgiliievangel00rossgoog>, (March 11, 2016).

⁷⁹ Sowerby, “Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson,” 513.

Robert.⁸⁰ The 1815 catalogue also references another copy of Theocritus from 1699 in Greek and Latin edited by Richard West.⁸¹ Francis Fawkes' 1767 English translation of the *Idylls* also makes an appearance in the 1815 catalogue in which Fawkes commented on the "superiority of Theocritus to Virgil in Pastoral" in the introduction.⁸² Whether or not Jefferson held this belief is uncertain.

As it pertains to Virgil in the 1815 catalogue, Jefferson owned an Old English translation of the *Eclogues*, but, as Sowerby noted, "There is no indication that this book was imperfect in Jefferson's manuscript catalogue, or in the Library of Congress printed catalogues of 1815 and 1831. None of these supplies the imprint and date, so that, without the title-page it is impossible to know which translation was in Jefferson's library."⁸³ Aside from Virgil himself, Jefferson owned a copy of the American pastoralist, Robert Beverley's *History and Present State of Virginia* in a French translation called, *Histoire de la Virginie*, first published in 1705.⁸⁴ Marx noted that Jefferson's ownership of Beverley's pastoral work represented Jefferson's connection to pastoralism:

When Beverley calls Virginia one of the "Gardens of the World," he is speaking the language of myth. Here the garden stands for the original unity, the all-sufficing beauty and abundance of the creation...

⁸⁰ Sowerby, "Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson," 467.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid, 468.

⁸³ Ibid, 469.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 513. Sowerby notes that "The original edition in English (London 1705) is listed by Jefferson in his manuscript catalogue, next before the entry for the French translation, and was one of the books reported by Jefferson to be missing in his letter to Milligan, March 28, 1815, immediately after the sale, and which Milligan was asked to try and get and bring with him. No copy was ever supplied to Congress.

Both the English and French editions are entered on Jefferson's undated catalogue, without price. In his Notes on Virginia Jefferson contrasts the work of Beverley with that of Stith: Beverley, a native also, has run into the other extreme; he has comprised our history, from the first propositions of Sr. Walter Raleigh to the year 1700, in the hundredth part of the space which Stith employs for the fourth part of the period . . ."

[Beverley] was looking for a conception of life which would combine (to use the language of Freud) the Indians' high level of instinctual gratification with those refinements of civilization based on performance—work—hence a degree of repression. In other words, he wanted nothing less than the ideal reconciliation of nature and art which had been depicted by writers of the pastoral since Virgil's time.⁸⁵

Jefferson's possession of Beverley's text, whether in English or French, illuminates his persuasion that Virginia truly was the American Arcadia. As it stands, the various Jeffersonian catalogues illustrate the vast and deep interest in knowledge that Jefferson possessed throughout his life with particular attention to pastoralism.

The virtue of knowledge and education is a significant theme in Virgil's bucolic poems as well as in Jefferson's book catalogues. Virgil's sixth *Eclogue*, for example, is a testament to the virtues of learnedness and the intellectual progression of cosmogony. The sixth *Eclogue* was dedicated to Varus, Governor of Cisalpine Gaul, which was where Virgil was born. According to the classicist Edward Coleiro, Varus "had been asking his friend Vergil for some sort of an epic poem, possibly of Alexandrine type, of his war-like achievements."⁸⁶ Although Virgil did not write a poem of military might as requested and typical of Roman verse at the time, *Eclogue VI* was a product of Kalliope's inspiration nonetheless because Virgil wrote of the origin and ordering of the universe with the use of an epyllion, or a short epic poem. It is, in its style and essence, the product of a *neoteros*. As such, the poem is sung by the rustic god, Silenus, tutor to Bacchus. In the eclogue, the wine-drunk god, *inflatum hesterno venas*, describes the cosmogony and humankind's connectedness with the divine. After being fettered

⁸⁵ Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, 85-87.

⁸⁶ Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics with a Critical Edition of the Text*, 198.

in his own garlands by the shepherds Chromis and Mnasyllus, Silenus began his song on the cosmogony:

For he sang through the great constrained void,
The seeds of the earth and of the airs and of the seas had been
Liquid and fire at the same time; so that from all these elements
All and all the young worlds of the world grew together;
Then the only world to endure and to shut off the Nereus sea god
Begins to gradually take the forms of things;
Now the new lands are stupefied at the luminescent sun,
Higher as when the rains fall and the clouds rise higher,
And when the first forests begin to surge,
And the rare animals were ignorant of the mountains.⁸⁷

Coleiro suggested that Virgil's merging the scientific with the philosophical/religious was a product of his schooling under his Epicurean professor, Siron. Moreover, Coleiro suggested that Virgil's honorable mention of his poet-friend, Gallus, ("*tum canit, errantem Permessi ad flumina Gallum Aonas in montis ut duxerit una sororum*"), was an expression of his Alexandrian education as a *neoteros* in order to both emulate his skilled friend and also for himself to reach the "same high literary level as the Greek Alexandrines, indeed, possibly, even on a better standard."⁸⁸ The greatest Greeks for Virgil or Gallus to emulate were the pastoral poets, Hesiod and Theocritus, even though, as Coleiro notes, "We can certainly reconstruct far more of the conditions of ordinary life in the country from the Eclogues than we ever could from the Idylls."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 62. "Nameque canebat, uti magnum per inane coacta/ semina terrarumque animaeque marisque fuissent/ et liquidi simul ignis; ut his ex omnia primis,/ omnia et ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis; tum durare solum et discludere Nerea ponto/ coeperit et rerum paulatim sumere formas;/ iamque novum terrae stupeant lusciscere solem,/ altius utque cadant summotis nubibus imbres,/ incipient silvae cum primum surgere cumque/ rara per ignaros errant Animalia montis."

⁸⁸ Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics with a Critical Edition of the Text*, 211.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 30.

In any case, continuing in the Theocritean tradition, Coleiro observed and referenced the nineteenth-century Scottish classicist, William Sellar who argued that *Eclogue VI* is much more philosophical than agrarian, thereby setting Virgil aside as a true Roman pastoralist by blending the intellectual with the environmental:

As Sellar says, though abounding with rich pastoral allusions, the *Eclogue* is more a mythological and semi-philosophical Idyll than a purely pastoral poem. We would add that with this *Eclogue* Vergil passes from the phase of the pastoral to that of the more learned type of bucolic poetry... All that we accept, and we add further that this learnedness flows from the very purpose of the poem which is to define Varus as a man of culture besides being an administrator and, possibly also, a soldier; indeed, the fact that Vergil prefers to present him in such a vest rather than in the trappings of military achievements may point out to the superior plane on which Vergil, as a man of culture, put education as compared to militarism, almost echoing Cicero's *cedant arma togae*.⁹⁰

As both Coleiro and Sellar argued, Virgil's emphasis on and respect for learning is here represented in the sixth *Eclogue*. Moreover, Virgil, unlike Horace or Hesiod, incorporated into his bucolics strong and observable themes of intellectualism. Virgil understood that the virtues of his unique Roman Epicureanism—landscape, emotionalism, knowledge—were avenues through which the pastoralist could contemplate and connect with the greater philosophical and political ideas of his time. His bucolics were intellectual endeavors into the enterprise of understanding the cosmogony. Unlike the pseudo-pastoralists of the European Renaissance and the later Enlightenment who superficially understood Virgil along the Epicurean lines of classical Greece,

⁹⁰Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics with a Critical Edition of the Text*, 212.

Jefferson was much more Virgilian.⁹¹ Jefferson was neither an artist, nor a poet. Instead, he was a man of learning, an architect, and a statesman. Jefferson is distinguished from the European pastoralists with these characteristics because he did more than try to imitate Virgil. Rather, Jefferson may have looked to Virgil to make pastoralism a way of life that infused his enlightened approach to learning, politics, and science. Virgil emulated Theocritus through the zeitgeist of Rome, and Jefferson emulated Virgil through the trends in thought of the eighteenth century, like scientific observation and specimen-collecting. Both Jefferson and Virgil read Theocritus' pastorals and Jefferson adopted from the classical pastoralists the virtue of learning, or on the grander scale, the virtue of understanding man's place within nature.

Jefferson's Monticello is an example of his particular pastoral blend of the intellectual with the environmental. His own Mount Parnassus can be regarded as an eighteenth-century Arcadia inspired by antiquity's mythical Arcadia. Jefferson's pastoralism resembles the virtues in Virgil's pastoralism, but Jefferson's inspiration took shape in eighteenth-century Virginia, especially in the Enlightenment virtues of learnedness and rationalism. The Virginian's pastoral virtues are variations on the classical tradition. In his literary commonplace book, for example, young Jefferson quoted Horace regarding his future Monticello: "O rural home: when shall I behold you! When shall I be able now with books of the ancients, now with sleep and idle hours, to quaff sweet forgetfulness of life's

⁹¹ See Edmund Spenser's 1579 *The Shepheardes Calender*, John Gay's 1713 *Rural Sports*, Racan's ca. 1620 *Les Bergeries*, and Alexander Pope's writings on pastorals.

cares!”⁹² Horace’s intellectual debts owed to Virgil were substantial.⁹³ From Theocritus, to Virgil, to Horace, to Jefferson, the pastoral tradition was handed down. In any case, Jefferson’s visions for Monticello even before its construction were the thoughtful products of a leisurely pastoralist.

Analysis of Monticello as an American Arcadia is available in Jefferson’s August 3, 1771 letter to his future brother-in-law, Robert Skipwith. Jefferson wrote through the eyes and pen of a pastoralist, not an architect or designer or a man of science. In this letter, Jefferson invited Skipwith to his growing mountain, his Mount Parnassus as it were:

Come to the new Rowanty, from which you may reach your hand to a library formed on a more extensive plan... A spring, centrically situated, might be the scene of every evening’s joy. There we should talk over the lessons of the day, or lose them in Musick, Chess, or the merriments of our family companions. The heart thus lightened, our pillows would be soft, and health and long life would attend the happy scene.⁹⁴

Jefferson’s letter to Skipwith can be seen as an evocation of the pastoral setting. Most especially, Jefferson invited Skipwith to indulge in his Arcadian *otium* of timelessness. He wrote of Monticello as if it were a place of never-ending cheer and good weather. The founder even evoked the pastoralists of the *Eclogues* when he suggested playing music as a way to joyously pass the time, for the Virgilian pastoralists sang songs and played their flutes, seemingly ignorant to domestic chores and duties. Music was an art deeply shared between Virgil and Jefferson.

⁹² Jefferson, *Literary Commonplace Book*, ed. Douglas L. Wilson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 83.

⁹³ See Horace’s *Satires*, I.vi.55 and I.x.45, and *Epistles*, II.i.247.

⁹⁴ Jefferson, “Letter to Robert Skipwith, August 3, 1771,” <http://www.loc.gov/item/mtibib000065/>, (January 28, 2016).

In the summer of 1809, friend of Jefferson and chronicler of early America, Margaret Bayard Smith recollected her first impression of Jefferson's Arcadian home of Monticello. Her reflection illustrates Jefferson's execution of his intricate years-long plan of designing his very own miniature *agrotopia*, the Monticello plantation:

After a very delightful journey of three days, we reached Monticello on the morning of the fourth. When I crossed the Ravanna, a wild & romantic little river, which flows at the foot of the mountain, my heart beat, for I thought I had now entered as it were the threshold of his dwelling, & I looked around every where expecting to meet with some trace of his superintending care.—In this I was disappointed, for no vestige of the labour of man appeared; nature seemed to hold an undisturbed dominion; We began to ascend this mountain, still as we rose I cast my eyes around, but could discern nothing but untamed woodland,—after a miles winding upwards, we saw a field of corn, but the road was still wild & uncultivated.—I every moment expected to reach the summit, & felt as if it was an endless road; my impatience lengthen'd it, for it [is] not two miles from the outer gate on the river to the house.—At last we reached the summit, & I shall never forget the emotion the first view of this sublime scenery excited.—Below me extended for above 60 miles round, a country cover'd with woods, plantations & houses; beyond arose the blue mountains, in all their grandeur! Montecello rising 500 feet above the river, of a conical form & standing by itself commands on all sides an unobstructed, & I suppose one of the most extensive views any spot of the globe affords.— The sides of the mountain covered with wood, with scarcely a speck of cultivation, presents a fine contrast to its summit, crowned with a noble pile of building, surrounded by an immense lawn, & shaded here & there with some fine trees.⁹⁵

Smith's observations of Monticello were not general observations of nature in its wild form, (except for her mention of the mountain's wooded sides, as the plantation's construction was nearly always in a state of perpetual construction). Nor did she observe the little mountain as a wild terrain untamed by human design. Rather, Smith's detailed recollection of Jefferson's microcosmic acropolis

⁹⁵ Margaret Bayard Smith, "Account of a Visit to Monticello, 29 July--2 August, 1809," <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-01-02-0315>, (March 16, 2016).

appears to illustrate the Enlightenment value of knowledge, through architectural design, upon the wild environment an architectural intention of the land and upon it. Her recollection highlights the mountain as a representation of intellect—architectural design—conquering nature. Monticello, though located in the wooded Albemarle County, was the not the intellectual product of an *autourgos*, and especially not of a *georgos*, but of an Enlightened, learned aristocrat.

Continuing in his letter to Skipwith, Jefferson's invitation to "Rowanty" could have been a reference to the ancient Assyrian area of Rowanduz, which today rests between the Kurdish valleys of Karand and Kala Rash and is surrounded by the Korek, Hindren, Zozik, and Bradasot mountains.⁹⁶ In 1892, the Oxford Assyriologist, Archibald Henry Sayce, wrote of the area:

Rowandiz seems also to have been regarded in Accadian mythology as the Olympus on which the gods dwelt... We must not imagine, however, that the Accadians, any more than the Greeks, actually believed the gods to live above the clouds on the terrestrial Rowandiz... so by 'the mountain of the assembly of the gods' they meant a spiritual mountain, of which Rowandiz was the earthly type.⁹⁷

Like Daphnis' afterlife on Mount Olympus, which towers above mythical Arcadia, mythical Rowanduz was the divine home of the gods who overlooked the blissful pastoral landscape below. Even more so, Jefferson's mention of "Rowanty," as opposed to the more obvious Mount Olympus, could have been a display of his learnedness in ancient history. The pastoral scenes in Jefferson's letters were evocations of the pastoral lifestyle. Such scenes exhibit a scholar

⁹⁶ Darren Ashby, "Dispatches from Iraqi Kurdistan: The Rowanduz Archaeological Program 2014," <http://www.penn.museum/blog/world/iraq/dispatches-from-iraqi-kurdistan-the-rowanduz-archaeological-program-2014/>, (January 28, 2016).

⁹⁷ Archibald Henry Sayce, "Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments," <https://archive.org/stream/freshlightfroman92sayc#page/n5/mode/2up>, (January 30, 2016).

learned in the classical pastoral works. On the other hand, “Rowanty” may have been a reference to the land of the Native Americans. Either way, Jefferson’s reference to Rowanty, either as Mount Olympus or the uncorrupted land of the Indians, illustrates that he had in mind an agrarian utopia upon which human happiness could be actualized.

Before identifying as a statesman, Jefferson was primarily a scholar, as his knowledge of ancient history illustrates. He much preferred discussing philosophy to politics. Above all, Jefferson preferred discussing the pastoral subjects, such as art and language, to other things. In an 1811 letter to Charles Wilson Peale, Jefferson spoke of pastoral settings:

I have often thought that if heaven had given me choice of my position & calling, it should have been on a rich spot of earth, well-watered, and near a good market for the productions of the garden. no occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, & no culture comparable to that of the garden...⁹⁸

Given the choice of living freely from public office to constructing a new government, it seems that Jefferson would like to have been a scholar and gardener. Monticello was the only place where Jefferson felt he could escape the pressures of political life. He could walk outdoors to his garden and observe the flowers and coiling vines. Monticello’s secluded location ensured a leisurely retreat from politics and government to be sure, but also of the metropolis. In other words, Monticello’s retreat from city life offered freedom and respite.

Besides Monticello, which was both a museum and a home, another example of Jefferson’s reverence for knowledge is his University of Virginia, the

⁹⁸Jefferson, “Letter to Charles Willson Peale, August 20, 1811,” <http://tjrs.monticello.org/letter/1354>, (April 29, 2016).

great bastion of learning that he immortalized at the bottom of his beloved little mountain. As historian Garry Wills observed, “European universities had been urban, dotted about in the interstices of a great city like Paris, or monastic, sealed up on gated quadrangles like those at Oxford and Cambridge.”⁹⁹ America, by contrast, was spread out and blended into the natural landscape. Whether it was by intentional design, (i.e. the early Americans sought to distinguish their educational systems from the Europeans), or unintentional, (i.e. simply because the American landscape afforded a vast space for construction), the American colleges “favored open not enclosed forms and rural rather than urban ones.”¹⁰⁰ On the campus of an American college, students gathered on the intersection between knowledge and nature. The American campus, like the College of William and Mary and later the University of Virginia, embodied the pastoral ideal where knowledge and nature met. Wills called such a setting the “conversation between the inner and outer worlds.”¹⁰¹ The inner world of traditional education, such as reading, writing, and lecturing, merged with the outer world of learning, such as architecture and the natural landscape. As designed by Jefferson, the University of Virginia was created for this very purpose. It was by no mistake that Jefferson chose to build his university at the bottom of Monticello, that home of his which best represented the pastoral ideal. The University of Virginia would truly become Jefferson’s Mount Parnassus and became the place to pursue the ancient virtue of learning.

⁹⁹ Garry Wills, *Mr. Jefferson’s University* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2002), 45.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 46.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 75.

The university was also a physical representation of Jefferson's passion for architecture. Jefferson's passion for architecture is exhibited most in his various letters for friends and in the books of his libraries. In a 1785 letter to James Madison, for example, Jefferson wrote from Paris a vehement plea for the Virginia State Capitol to be built in the classical style:

We took for our model what is called the Maison quarree of Nismes, one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful and precious morsel of architecture left us by antiquity. It was built by Caius and Lucius Caesar, and repaired by Louis XIV., and has the suffrage of all the judges of architecture, who have seen it, as yielding to no one of the beautiful monuments of Greece, Rome, Palmyra, and Balbec, which late travellers have communicated to us. It is very simple, but it is noble beyond expression, and would have done honor to our country, as presenting to travellers a specimen of taste in our infancy, promising much for our maturer age. I have been much mortified with information, which I received two days ago from Virginia, that the first brick of the capitol would be laid within a few days... But how is a taste in this beautiful art to be formed in our countrymen, unless we avail ourselves of every occasion when public buildings are to be erected, of presenting to them models for their study and imitation? Pray try if you can effect the stopping of this work... This loss is not to be weighed against the saving of money which will arise, against the comfort of laying out the public money for something honorable, the satisfaction of seeing an object and proof of national good taste, and the regret and mortification of erecting a monument of our barbarism, which will be loaded with execrations as long as it shall endure. The plans are in good forwardness, and I hope will be ready within three or four weeks. They could not be stopped now, but on paying their whole price, which will be considerable... You see I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and procure them its praise.¹⁰²

Jefferson also wrote a nearly identical letter to Edmund Randolph on the same day in his failed attempt at persuading his fellow Americans back home. In the letter to Madison, Jefferson made no explicit mention of republicanism and the

¹⁰² Jefferson, "Letter to James Madison, September 20, 1785," https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj1.004_0358_0360/?sp=3, (April 14, 2016).

republican models of antiquity, but this does not mean that the letter was not inherently political. Instead, Jefferson highlighted the virtues of beauty as a stronghold for the United States' reputation on the world stage. Jefferson observed that the United States' lack of eternal beauty within the greater context of the Enlightened eighteenth century was almost laughable, as the United States was the emerging world power and would thus be competing for prominence alongside the greater powers like England and France. In other words, Jefferson was here interested in emulating the grandeur and magnificence of antiquity and thus the fulfillment of eternal beauty and virtue and honor. He wanted American architecture to emulate the Europeans' because he saw the United States as the *novus ordo seclorum* for political and cultural history. Jefferson tried to develop American architecture in order to showcase America's greatness to the world by emulating the architecture of antiquity. Virgil likewise tried to expand upon the arts in order to showcase Rome's greatness to the world by emulating Greece's cultural superiority.

Jefferson's writing on the Maison Quarrée at Nîmes did not only express his admiration for French architecture, (and by extension classical architecture), or his frustrations that America lacked a refined taste in the fine arts, (a cultural sentiment that would last well into the nineteenth century). Rather, Jefferson's sentiments regarding the Maison Quarrée at Nîmes reflects a scholar's love for beauty and the transference of ancient knowledge to the modern mind. In a 1787 letter to the Comtesse de Tessé, Jefferson wrote of his love for art and architecture:

Here I am, Madam, gazing whole hours at the Maison quarree, like a lover at his mistress. the stocking weavers & silk-spinners around it consider me as a hypocondriac Englishman, about to write, with a pistol, the last chapter of his history. this is the 2nd time I have been in love since I left Paris... loving, as you do Madam, the precious remains of antiquity, loving architecture, gardening, a warm sun & a clear sky¹⁰³

Jefferson wrote as the aristocratic pastoralist he was by first expressing his intellectual and emotional sentiments on the classically-inspired object before him, and then reserving himself to the Epicurean delight of *otium*. He did not mention loving public office, or writing political treatises, or discussing jurisprudence. Instead, Jefferson mentioned loving nature and knowledge. Furthermore, Jefferson's feminine audience, namely the Comtesse, necessarily affected how he wrote and what he felt at liberty to express. By nature of her prohibition from political life, the Comtesse's correspondence with Jefferson allowed him to express himself unabashedly. Writing to a man of the law like John Adams or a man of war and military like George Washington would necessarily alter the expressions Jefferson chose to record, or perhaps felt comfortable with recording. Historians are able to understand so much of Jefferson's emotionality through his letters to *women*. In this letter to the Comtesse, Jefferson expressed himself emotionally as a woman. Such is a characteristic of the pastoralist, for even though the pastoralist values knowledge, this does not necessarily mean that emotion is prized above reason. In other words, pastoralism is about the mediation between two seemingly extreme concepts, such as the metropolis and the rural land, the science and art, reason and feeling. Jefferson's sensitivity identified him as a pastoralist because, like Virgil's

¹⁰³ Sowerby, "Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson," 121.

singers, emotion was as equally essential to the development of the intellectual's perception of understanding as was reason. Jefferson's affinity toward fine dress, the arts, and feminine sentimentality was equally expressed alongside his presentation as a gentleman, his interests in the natural sciences, and his rational political theorizing.

Chapter 3: Agrarian Republicanism

I

Broken into two parts, this next chapter examines how Virgil and Jefferson's philosophical similarities effectuated their perspective that environment produces virtue, which in turn translates into a just political system. Specifically, this chapter discusses Virgil and Jefferson's intellectual connections to nature through Epicureanism, not just their physical and spatial connections as described in the previous chapter. Then, this chapter will explore how Jefferson actualized his personal philosophy of pastoral Epicureanism within the gardens of Monticello. Finally, this chapter will lead into the final chapter on agrarian republicanism by transitioning Jefferson's personal thoughts and feelings on environment into the larger American ideology of the romance of the American West. Before exploring Jefferson's Epicurean vision, it is essential to first examine Virgil's in order to more fully map out the genealogy of pastoralism and find its origins.

Virgil's poetic and political vision emerged at the Epicurean school of Siron in Naples through his studies in literature and philosophy. While at Siron's School, Virgil realized "that his vocation was not the emptiness of the rhetoric of the forum, but the higher carefree pursuits of Greek philosophical learning."¹⁰⁴ Coleiro wonderfully summarized the Epicurean sentiments in the *Eclogues*:

In their ethics, then, the *Bucolics* reveal all the basic Epicurean tenets. Such are the calm feelings of satisfaction in Tityrus in *Buc.* 1; such in *Buc.* 2 is the praise of the simple life of the country as against that of the city; such is *Buc.*, 3... where men and animals were equally made to be

¹⁰⁴ Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics with a Critical Edition of the Text*, 4.

subject of the joys and sufferings of nature; in the Golden Age vision in *Buc.* 4, in the freshness, happiness and slight hedonism betrayed in the amoebean songs of *Buc.* 3 and 7. The excitement of the moment in the Meliboeus parts of *Buc.* 1, in *Buc.* 9, in *Buc.* 2, at the beginning of *Buc.* 3, calms down, in each case, to more sober considerations. Such is the crave for tranquil happiness viewed particularly in the ubiquitous pastoral environment and, indeed, the joy resulting from it... The inter-communion between man and nature, with its woods, its trees, its mountains, to the point of the latter's many personifications so that they might participate in man's joys and sorrows, recurring with repeated emphasis; the stress on friendship... all result from Vergil's Epicurean training in the School of Siron.¹⁰⁵

As Coleiro observed, the *Eclogues* were certainly inspired by the Greek philosopher, Epicurus, but that does not mean that the pastoral poems were copies of Epicurus, nor were the *Eclogues* strictly Epicurean odes. They were, and uniquely were, pastorals. What most strikingly distinguishes pastoralism from Epicureanism is, as Coleiro explained, that Virgil was not blind "to the reality of human nature and its feelings, deep, violent, irresistible."¹⁰⁶ Virgil's collection of pastorals was a philosophical treatise and an explanation of an ideal political system that represented an ideal way of living. Epicureanism, by contrast, is inherently apolitical. Virgil used cultural commentary to explain the medium between the farm and city living. As such, his pastorals—containing *pathos*, death, sorcery, politics, and lovesickness—highlighted the complexities of human experience and the human spirit. In mythical Arcadia, humankind's most honest, benevolent, creative, and intellectual talents could be actualized. Unlike the Epicureanism of classical Greece, which focused on positive pleasures

¹⁰⁵ Coleiro, *An Introduction to Vergil's Bucolics with a Critical Edition of the Text*, 37-8.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

experienced from external stimuli, Virgil focused on internal feelings and emotion, sometimes negative and melancholic.

A chief theme of Virgilian pastoralism is the characters' expression of emotion through poetry. Virgil's bucolics are sentimental, contemplative, and melancholic poems. As such, the words written are deeply sensitive and felt. In *Eclogue IV*, for example, the judge Palaemon concludes a contest between Damoetas and Menalcas with a sentiment on the sweet and sour of love: "and whomever fears the sweets or experiences the sours of love."¹⁰⁷ Palaemon's remarks reflect the sweet sting of lovelorn hearts. Additionally, Alpheisiboeus in book eight sings to the necromancer, Moeris to "bring water and a soft crown around this altar/ and burn verbena and masculine frankincense,/so that I may strive with magic spells to turn the sane senses of my wife; nothing is lacking here except songs."¹⁰⁸ In other words, Alpheisiboeus calls upon the necromancer to change how the woman he loves regards him—to love him back. In the *Eclogues*, the pastoral singers suffer broken-hearts and the emotional turmoil such emotional drama brings about.

It was Virgil who first incorporated the range of human emotion into Epicurean living.¹⁰⁹ Historian Merrill D. Peterson commented on the relevance of emotion within Epicureanism, which both Virgil and Jefferson subscribed to.

¹⁰⁷ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 48.

According to Suetonius, Palaemon was a drunkard poet and compulsive womanizer. Suetonius also mentioned that "it is no accident that his name is in the Bucolics, but because Virgil foretold when Palaemon will be the judge of all poets and poems." Suetonius, "De Grammaticis," <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/suetonius/suet.gram.html#23>, (February 24, 2016).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 78.

¹⁰⁹ Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation, a Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1970), 54.

Both Jefferson and Virgil read Epicurus, as Virgil was taught by Epicurus and Jefferson explicitly referenced himself as an Epicurean. In an 1819 letter to William Short, for example, Jefferson expressed his sentiments on Epicurus:

As you say of yourself, I too am an Epicurian. I consider the genuine (not the imputed) doctrines of Epicurus as containing everything rational in moral philosophy which Greece and Rome have left us. Epictetus indeed, has given us what was good of the stoics; all beyond, of their dogmas, being hypocrisy and grimace. Their great crime was in their calumnies of Epicurus and misrepresentations of his doctrines... Epicurus give laws for governing ourselves.¹¹⁰

Jefferson went on to distinguish himself from the typical interpreters of Epicurus by observing the political element of Virgil's Epicurean thought, (which is uniquely his), the virtue of civic duty:

Fortitude, you know, is one of his four cardinal virtues. That teaches us to meet and surmount difficulties; not to fly from them, like cowards; and to fly, too, in vain, for they will meet and arrest us at every turn of our road. Weigh this matter well; brace yourself up.¹¹¹

Jefferson's interpretation of Epicurus can be seen in Virgil's own interpretation of Epicurus along the lines of embracing what is painful with what is pleasurable for the sake of overcoming difficulty. Elements of Epicureanism, especially Virgilian Epicureanism's play with happiness and melancholy, are evident in the *Eclogues*, as they can also be observed in Jefferson's pastoral letters to friends.

Jefferson's Epicureanism was similar to Virgil's in that he incorporated the art of living with his identity as a scholar and statesman. Jefferson's Epicureanism, as Peterson observed, was a blend of ancient and modern

¹¹⁰ Jefferson, "Letter to William Short, October 31, 1819," <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl259.php>, (May 30, 2016).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

thought.¹¹² The elements essential to experiencing pleasure, in Jefferson's view, were also the elements of virtue: "honor, goodness, and peace of mind."¹¹³ The experience of pleasure is the essential indicator of the Enlightenment's place in Jefferson's Epicurean vision because it suggests "an empirical science of ethics."¹¹⁴ Jefferson's classical Epicureanism found its way through rationality and was the harmonization of pleasure and virtue.¹¹⁵ Jefferson indirectly aligned his Epicureanism alongside Virgil's through the emotive element, even though the former regarded Epicureanism through the Enlightened, rational lens of the science of ethics.

Along these lines of feeling within the Virgilian thought, Jefferson evoked the virtue of friendship most intimately in his personal correspondences. It is in his epistolary writings where pastoralism is most emphasized because Jefferson's confessions exposed his emotional sensitivity to intimate relationships. He expressed such sentiments in his beloved "Head and Heart" letter to Maria Cosway. In his famous letter, Jefferson described a pastoral setting akin to the ancients' own visions of Arcadia when he described a dialogue between his head and heart in which he lamented his separation from the Cosways, who were members of his intellectual circle while in Paris. On October 12, 1786 Jefferson wrote to Maria Cosway:

[S]he wants only subjects worthy of immortality to render her pencil immortal. The Falling spring, the Cascade of Niagara, the Passage of the Potowmac thro the Blue mountains, the Natural bridge. It is worth a

¹¹² Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation, a Biography*.

¹¹³ Ibid, 54.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 55.

voiage across the Atlantic to see these objects; much more to paint, and make them, & thereby ourselves, known to all ages. and our own dear Monticello, where has Nature spread so rich a mantle under the eye? mountains, forests, rocks, rivers. with what majesty do we there ride above the storms! how sublime to look down into the workhouse of nature, to see her clouds, hail, snow, rain, thunder, all fabricated at our feet! and the glorious Sun, when rising as if out of a distant water, just gilding the tops of the mountains, and giving life to all nature!¹¹⁶

More than merely describing the Shenandoah Valley where sat Jefferson's beloved little mountain, the Virginian described a landscape in the classical style—that is, his writing was emotional and aesthetic. For example, Jefferson's sentence: "and the glorious Sun, when rising as if out of a distant water, just gilding the tops of the mountains, giving life to all nature" illustrates a sensitivity to environment that speaks to the didactic power of nature. The revelation of Enlightenment and republicanism here illustrates America as the *novus ordo seclorum*.

Additionally, Jefferson's Epicurean vision reached to the physical environment, too. The Virginian immersed himself in the Epicurean way of life, especially in his final decades at Monticello. In an 1813 letter to John Adams, Jefferson wrote that, "the summum bonum with me is now truly Epicurean, ease of body and tranquility of mind; and to these I wish to consign my remaining days."¹¹⁷ Jefferson recorded his observations of the Monticello gardens in a book called the *Garden Book*. The merits in the *Garden Book* testify to his intellectual interest in describing agriculture and all things understandable. Jefferson's

¹¹⁶ Jefferson, "Letter to Maria Hadfield Cosway, Oct. 12, 1786," https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj1.006_0469_0480/?sp=5, (January 18, 2016).

¹¹⁷ Jefferson, "Letter to John Adams June 27, 1813," <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-06-02-0206>, (March 4, 2016).

fascination with the natural world through the *Garden Book* illustrates a deep and consistent interest and investment in the natural world. The time and dedication Jefferson put into his garden was an engagement into the practice of cultivating virtue, as he understood the virtue of diligent work upon the land. Reflected in his conception of an agrarian republic, Jefferson was as much a practitioner of virtue as a political thinker.

Along this broader trend of the didactics of the American landscape, Jefferson incorporated farming, or at least the idea of it, into his lifestyle. He composed the *Garden Book* over the course of 60 years, which he began at Shadwell in 1766 and finished at Monticello in 1824.¹¹⁸ The *Garden Book* is a detailed account of Jefferson's farms and gardens at both Shadwell and Monticello. Such entries include the blossoming of hydrangeas, the location of celery, and the dates of ripening for "tomatas."¹¹⁹ The *Garden Book* speaks more to Jefferson's personality and pastoral vision than merely representing his obsessive habit of recordkeeping. For example, Kern observed Jefferson's experimentation with the *Garden Book*:

If the Jeffersons had been less than gentry, Thomas's earliest garden book entries would not reveal the amazing luxury of a young man measuring and documenting the spring peas; if the garden book existed at all, it would have been about tobacco. Jefferson's peas do not make him a farmer, except perhaps in his own self-image.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Jefferson, *Garden Book*, http://www.masshist.org/thomasjeffersonpapers/doc?id=garden_1, (February 10, 2016).

¹¹⁹ Kern, *The Jefferson's at Shadwell*, 257.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Jefferson's observations of the Shadwell and Monticello gardens were from the viewpoint of a patrician who engaged in "Enlightenment learning."¹²¹ In other words, Jefferson's meticulous scientific inquiries into environment represent a curious and learned mind. He was not a farmer, but the *Garden Book* at least hints at his recognition that virtue is to be found in the soil. The *Garden Book* is also a representation of Jefferson's pastoral Epicureanism because it is the pastoral blend of nature and knowledge. Jefferson's somewhat obsessive recording was no doubt useful for gardening, but it was Jefferson's slaves who grew tobacco, hemp, cabbages, "tomatas," among other crops. Jefferson's participation in the agricultural affairs of the Shadwell and Monticello plantations benefitted from the slaves' labor. Both Thomas and Peter Jefferson's involvement on the Shadwell and Monticello plantations were reserved mostly for business and leisure.¹²² In any case, the *Garden Book* was an exercise in the aristocratic enterprise of understanding and exploring the natural world. The *Garden Book* can be regarded as Jefferson's attempt at embodying the farmer-pastoralist. The book represented his experimentation with agriculturalism and demonstrates the learnedness of the natural aristocratic planter. In other words, the *Garden Book* is the marriage between farming and education; it is the attempt of an educated man trying his hand at tilling the soil.

Jefferson's delicate perceptions of the natural world and agriculture in his *Garden Book* are also the topics of the pastoral writings of Virgil's *Georgics* and Horace's *Works and Days*, among other classical works. The *Works and Days* and

¹²¹ Kern, *The Jefferson's at Shadwell*, 343.

¹²² *Ibid*, 147.

the *Georgics* are agricultural treatises with a stylistic narrative, which makes the works chiefly pastoral. These ancient texts on agriculture became pastoral works rather than mere instructions for farmers because Virgil and Horace infused them with poetic and literary personalities. In the second book of the *Georgics*, for example, Virgil wrote about viticulture to be sure, but the bard showered his grape-growing with unique prose: “First, the difficult earth and the malignant hills, where the thin clay and pebbles in the thorny fields rejoice in Palladia’s lively olive groves.”¹²³ In his comments about the Italian soil, which can be unyielding and difficult to cultivate, Virgil intermixed landscape with the goddess Minerva, thereby merging the divine with the mortal. This marriage of the divine with the mortal is an essential ingredient in pastoral literature. In other words, Virgil infused agriculture with morality.

¹²³ Virgil, *Georgics*, book 2.179-181 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 148. “difficiles primum terrae collesque maligni,/ tenuis ubi argilla et dumosis calculus arvis,/ Palladia gaudent silva vivacis olivae.”

II

The transition from Virgil's poetry on environment and the instructive powers nature were picked up in part by Thomas Jefferson. He was well-read in classical pastoral poetry: he read Virgil as a youth in his Latin lessons, and he owned several copies of Theocritus, which were given to him by his close friend and mentor, George Wythe. As the previous chapters illustrate, Jefferson channeled the idea that virtue can be gathered in nature, which the classical pastoral poets put forth into Western culture. And, as circumstance would have it, Jefferson found himself not only on a supposedly uncolonized and unexplored continent, but he also found himself in a potentially revelatory and revolutionary political system. In the mid-1770s, a revolution was about to be fought on an expansive, wild continent upon which the opportunities for virtue were never-ending. As Jefferson would come to understand it, the new political system, of which he would have a direct hand in shaping, could and should necessarily be anchored to this land.

The founding fathers believed that their Revolution was on the cusp of the annihilation of natural rights lest they separate from Great Britain. In order to create a new world order, the founders sought to locate the "soul" of republicanism, which was the non-political and non-authoritarian center of a people. For the founders, this soul was virtue, and virtue could only be achieved through the land itself because land, as history had attested, was where political authority found its legitimacy. The precondition of virtue, as the founders saw it,

was political unrest because such a condition necessitated: acting with regard to natural rights; acting prudently; and acting according to the preservation of human happiness. John Adams famously said that the Revolution was no war, but an intellectual revolution of virtue. The triumph of virtue over tyranny and commercial corruption would be the teleology of the founders. As Jefferson saw it, equality of property would be the incentive for ensuring that the American people acted virtuously. In Jefferson's vision for what was to become the United States, landowners who were spatially separated from each other would not be tempted by the vices in the cities, such as gambling and dishonest marketing. Commerce, Jefferson understood, was essential in order to sustain a perpetual market economy, but if men were landowners, then they would not be tempted to indulge in corruption by virtue of the economic policies laid out in the principles of agrarian republicanism. Such a system would ensure that men need not rely on one another.

During the Revolutionary years, the great majority of Americans were farmers, and Jefferson may have understood that the leader of farmers and yeomen would necessarily be the leader of America. In 1776, Jefferson drafted the Virginia Constitution with a clause disestablishing primogeniture in Virginia. This part of the Virginia Constitution effectively ended the hereditary feudal land system in Virginia that the English had established. Jefferson's measure ensured the natural right to property as commercial. Later in 1785, Jefferson helped establish fee simple ownership, (which was a citizen's right to property through commerce), in the United States through his service on the Land Ordinance

Committee. Two years later in 1787, the government established the Northwest Ordinance, which gave citizens financial incentives for surveying land out West, (Jefferson's father was a surveyor in colonial Virginia). For Jefferson, independent landownership without landlords encouraged a collective spirit amongst small communities, which in turn led to a commercial republic rooted in honesty, concern for the common good, and virtue. In an 1803 message to Congress, for example, President Jefferson argued that Congress should encourage the indigenous cultures to adopt the American techniques of agriculture instead of hunting so that they could have the opportunity to demonstrate their respect for both the land and the body politic. When Jefferson regarded agriculture as the "greatest good," he wanted to give the Indians the opportunity to fulfill humanity's relationship with nature. The practice of agriculture, as Jefferson saw it, was the intellectual achievement of learning and the scientific conquest of nature. The agriculturalists, therefore, became "enlightened farmers." He believed that men have a moral duty to improve their reason and obey its mandates.

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson recorded his thoughts on all aspects of Virginia, from agriculture, to laws, to the Native Americans and slaves. He linked virtue with agriculture, and because the eighteenth-century founders regarded government as an extension of virtue, Jefferson necessarily linked agriculture (pastoralism) with politics. Jefferson understood that agriculturalism involved a reciprocal relationship with the land. If the agriculturalist farmed the land through sustainable practices, then the land would in turn supply hearty

vegetables, ripe fruit, well-functioning bees, and healthy livestock. The moral element to Jefferson's agrarian republicanism is seen in his view that democratic landownership would prevent landowners from taking advantage of the lower classes. Such would be the institutionalization of virtue in America. Jefferson embraced the Madisonian understanding of human selfishness, but argued that if people embraced environmental sustainability through self-interest, and if all men worked on their own farms, then their self-interest would call them together to regulate land-use democratically. Private virtue would become civic virtue. Jefferson's agrarian republicanism was a political theory directed toward stabilizing the state through landownership and the pastoral spirit. Jefferson's pastoral vision of respect for land was made into a political reality that resembled classical pastoralism. And this political reality of pastoralism was unique to American only because of its vast, open lands. Europe, on the other hand, could never actualize Virgil's pastoral vision because it was small and densely populated. Jefferson's agrarian republicanism connected classical pastoralism to the eighteenth century's economic, environmental, and moral necessities of creating a republican political system. Jefferson's policies of preventing land-based corruption through the Land Ordinance and the disestablishment of primogeniture were designed to encourage virtue amongst citizens, which would advance the republic.

Not only did Jefferson's translation of classical pastoralism into agrarian republicanism have effects on the Revolutionary era only, for his political pastoralism had lasting effects on American attitudes toward the environment

thereafter. Jefferson's pastoral vision inspired his Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and his order to organize the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Visions of the West as the new Arcadia were put into the American mind of Manifest Destiny because Jefferson put them there by establishing Arcadian visions of the American West through law and policy. And Jefferson placed this wonderment with the West into the American cultural mindset because the classical pastoralists created it such romanticism. Early American magazines, for example, such as *The Columbia Magazine*, *The Massachusetts Magazine*, *The New York Magazine*, and the *Port-Folio* all supplied early Americans with images of the idealized landscape.

According to print historian, Judy Larson:

American in the early republic celebrated the beauty of their land with a passion. Prints were primarily responsible for the popularizing images of America. Favorite sights included the Natural Bridge in Virginia; Passaic Falls in New Jersey; Niagara Falls and Saratoga Falls in New York; the Schuylkill River in Pennsylvania.¹²⁴

These trends in early American imagery representing the mystery, gravity, and beauty of citizens' new republican land supplied legitimacy to the apocalyptic revolution they just experienced. The land's natural beauties, uncorrupted by the European societies and their monarchies, ensured that American as republicans could tame the land and occupy it with virtue. By owning such prints or farming their own independent farms, each American could experience pastoralism and contribute to the national spirit. What was pastoral was also national and by extension political.

¹²⁴ Judy Larson, "Separately Published Engravings in the Early Republic: An Introduction to Copperplate Engraving and Printing in America Through 1820," *Printing History: The Journal of the American Printing History Association*, vol. 6 no. 1, (1984): 13.

Jefferson may not have been so explicit about his non-political classical influences, but such influences have left traces nonetheless. It is likely that Jefferson's libraries and gardens were nothing more than a rich planter's attempt to remove himself from the lower class farmers; but it is also possible that he had something more virtuous or academic in mind when constructing his property. Jefferson was, after all, a man of learning and republicanism. He took great care of his land. He likewise traveled across Europe in order to find out what he liked and disliked about how the Europeans organized their own environment. In an 1787 letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, for example, Jefferson observed from Nice that the European lower classes lived in feudal conditions: "Perhaps they are overworked, the excess of the rent required by the landlord, obliging them to too many hours of labor, in order to produce that, and wherewith to feed and clothe themselves."¹²⁵ Jefferson's agrarian republicanism was his remedy to the European problem. In his policies on agrarian republicanism, Jefferson understood that a democratic system of landownership would prevent landowners from taking advantage of the lower classes, which was the practice in Europe. Jefferson may have had the pastoral virtues of friendship, civic duty, and respect for environment in mind when he developed and executed his agrarian policies as a way to stabilize the American state and generate a holistic identity. He indirectly transformed Virgil's pastoral vision into a political reality, and this political reality of pastoralism was unique to America only because of its vast open lands.

¹²⁵ Jefferson, "Letter to Lafayette, 11 April, 1787," <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0273>, (May 30, 2016).

Finally, the American vision of the frontier is uniquely American in that it was and still is rooted in our political system, but its genealogy reaches back to when Virgil's farmlands were taken away from him by Roman soldiers. This sense of displacement by Roman farmers, by English commoners, and by American revolutionaries is, at its core, inherently environmental. As Jefferson saw it, the American West was endless with an infinite supply of land, which meant that there was an infinite supply of virtue, as Pocock phrased it.¹²⁶ The possibility of the American West necessarily carried with it the possibility of the re-establishment of those eternal, classical virtues of friendship, respect for nature, and the intellectual engagement into the enterprise of understanding.

Manifest Destiny and the pioneer mentality would be the American teleology, its reason for existing on the world stage. The Hudson River School, for example, the Luminists, Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, and Henry David Thoreau all expressed Arcadian themes in various forms. Earlier on in 1765, Edmund Quincy published his *Treatise of Hemp-Husbandry*, which included a quote from Horace: "Lucem redde tuae—Patriae."¹²⁷ The phrase comes from Horace's *Odes*, and the full quote is: "Lucem redde tuae, dux bone, patriae." Quincy's paraphrase translates as, "give back the light to your country."

This thesis has explored only the first layer of what is likely a multi-level exploration of Virgil and pastoralism's role in shaping the myth of the yeoman farmer in American history. Jefferson was not even the first figure to bring Arcadia to America, for the Italian explorer Verrazzano named the region of north

¹²⁶ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 535.

¹²⁷ Edmund Quincy, *Treatise of Hemp-Husbandry* (Boston: Green & Russell, 1765).

Virginia as “Acadia” in the sixteenth century. In any case, Jefferson was resolute in his new order of the ages, his *novus ordo seclorum*, and in its conviction that the relationship between environment and virtue would sustain the American republic as nothing else could. As Americans traveled west in order to map out the American topography in the nineteenth century, the classical pastoral ideal traveled with them.

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