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The Influence of Lucretius upon Virgil

A Thesis

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by

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In preparing this thesis I have used the following books:

Studies in Virgil, Clover; Roman Poets of the Augustan Age, Sellar; Companion to Latin Authors, Middleton; Classical Greek Poetry, Jebb; History of Latin Literature, Simcox; Latin Literature, Mackail; Texts of Virgil, Papillon and Haigh, Connington, and Kennedy; Lucretius Book Five, Duff; Merrill's Lucretius.

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Outline.

Introduction

Literary Influence

Body

Influence of Lucretius upon Virgil,--as shown in the Georgics especially.

Form

Structure

Phrases

Use of Words

Thought.

On life in the country and city.

Of nature as she favors man.

On the austere side of nature

In scientific explanations.

On religious views.

One of the chief tenets of the Epicurean philosophy is that the soul dies with the body. Yet even Lucretius, the greatest of the Roman followers of Epicurus, could not deny a kind of immortality to man. For man's work does not always die with him. And perhaps the most permanent work he may do is in Literature. In this his influence may be felt for centuries and he will have many following in his footsteps. Especially great is that influence upon the men of his own age and century. Such was the influence which Lucretius has exercised upon materialistic thinkers of many ages and upon the poets of his own time and country, especially Horace and Virgil.

The influence of one author may be shown in the thought and feelings expressed by another and in the general tone of his work; plots may be borrowed or style imitated. So Wordsworth shows in his earlier poetry the influence of Paine's Age of Reason and, even in a more marked degree, of the writings of William Godwin. Shakespeare adopted many of his plots from Holinshed's Chronicles and the tales of Boccaccio. So Keats imitated Spenser. And at one time the translation of Latin or

Greek classics increased the reputation of an author. So Dryden added to his fame by his version of Virgil and Pope, after writing the Rape of the Lock, spent ten of the best years of his life on his translation of the Iliad and Odyssey.

But nowhere has avowed imitation been allowed to claim as high honor as at Rome and at no time was imitation more openly acknowledged than during the Augustan Age. It has been said that "from one point of view Roman poetry was an imitative reproduction, from another it might be regarded as a new revelation of the human spirit". Horace claims to be a "traveler along untrodden ways" because he showed to Latium the iambic, not as one who discovered a new measure peculiar to Latin. Lucretius approaches "untouched fountains" because he first writes of Greek philosophy in the Latin tongue. Virgil during his lifetime was attacked for innovations in style. Yet in the three great works he has left, he is imitative in a marked degree. Like all authors of his time he was a close student of Greek literature and from it he drew much of his material and forms of composition. In the study of Virgil we have the advantage of

possessing most of his models. The Eclogues are closely imitative of Theocritus and the Aeneid is modeled after Homer's great epics. But Virgil was affected by other literary influences besides the Greek. Though he drew much of his material for his Georgics from Hesiod, the Works and Days is too desultory, too lacking in structure to be followed in form as were Theocritus and Homer. The Alexandrian poets Aratus and Nicander in their didactic poems upon agricultural subjects also furnished Virgil with material, but their works are also limited in subject and form. The only great Roman didactic poem before Virgil's time was the De Rerum Natura of Lucretius and upon this Virgil modeled the form of his Georgics. As Lucretius did, so Virgil divides his work into topics making each the subject of a book. Each book opens with an introduction or invocation. The transition from one subtopic to another is marked by such common Lucretian phrases as *contemplator, quod superest, nonne vides, nunc age*. Between these various divisions of their subjects, both Lucretius and Virgil introduce descriptions, incidents, and digressions in which they give views upon religion, morals, etc, for the

purpose of relieving the monotony of their themes. Then each book closes with an episode.

As Lucretius addresses his friend Memmius, for whose instruction in that philosophy which removes the terrors of death his poem is written, so Virgil addresses Maecenas, the patron at whose request he is writing his Georgics. But Lucretius, instead of speaking to Memmius the friend, sometimes seems to use the name Memmius to mean the general reader, so Virgil often addresses the husbandman for whom his work is written. "Deus ille fuit, deus", Lucretius uses these words in speaking of Epicurus, the source of his knowledge and his inspiration, "the man who first dared to tread beneath his feet the bonds of religious superstition and rise above the fears of death." So Virgil in the introduction to his work after calling upon the gods of the husbandmen, invokes Caesar (Augustus) the future god who has yet his province to choose. In his triumph over bringing the Muses from Helicon to Italy, he will erect a temple and "in the centre I will have Caesar's image, the god who guards my shrine." He promises some day to sing the glories of Caesar and in the conclusion he again speaks of Caesar

as even now aspiring to tread the path to heaven after his great conquests in the East. How much policy and how much true admiration influenced Virgil we do not know. But if Epicurus, the great thinker and philosopher, is the inspiration of the poem advocating a quiet life of speculation and peace of mind, so Augustus, the worker and man of action, might be taken as the tutelary deity of one on the glorification of labor.

The invocation of the first book of the Georgics in which Virgil calls upon the rural deities to aid him in his efforts to teach the "husbandmen who know not the right path" seems to show much less likeness in spirit to Lucretius' invocation of Venus, the life-bestowing power of the world, "tibi suavis daedala tellus summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti," than does his invocation in the second book to Bacchus, "Father of the wine-press" for whom "the field blossoms and teems with vine-leaves of the autumn"; But in the introduction to the first book one may notice that such expressions as *incipiam canere, fudit ecum, mundi lumina*, are like these of Lucretius: *disserere incipiam, tellus animalia fundit, magni sidera mundi*. And the ex-

pression vos, o clarissima mundi lumina labentem caelo
quae ducitis annum shows a very decided trace of Lucretian
thought as shown in book 5 --1436.

In the last book of the De Rerum Natura, after treating
of diseases and their origin, Lucretius describes the great
plague at Athens. Just so in the third book after discuss-
ing diseases of sheep, Virgil gives a description of a
pestilence which once ravaged the districts about Noricum
and Timavus. This plague starts from the corruption of the
air- morbo caeli--in treating diseases Lucretius says ea
vis omnis morborum pestilitasque---per caelum venit---and
it delivers over to destruction all the flocks and all the
wild beasts, genus omne neci pecudum dedit, omne ferarum
as the people of Athens morbo mortique dabantur. Then it
poisoned the pools and tainted the pastures with corruption,
corrupitque lacus, infecit pabula tabo, which shows marked
likeness to aut in aquas^{caedit} aut fruges persidit in ipsas,
In both descriptions the symptoms of disease are similar.
Virgil says (a) incertus ibidem sudor, (b) aret pellis et
ad tactum tractanti dura resistit, (c) tum vero ardentes
oculi atque attractus ab alto spiritus, (d) it naribus ater

sanguis, (e) obsessas fauces premit aspera lingua, all of which show the influence of Lucretius as appears in the following, (a) sudorisque madens per collum splendidus umor, (b) frigida pellis duraque, (c) ardentis oculi, attractus ab alto spiritus, (d) fauces atrae sanguine, (e) ulceribus vocis via septa coibat---lingua---aspera tactu. The ulcers Lucretius here mentions, Virgil speaks of in the sacer ignis at the end of the description. When Virgil says that what has proved a remedy in one case "mox erat hoc ipsum exitio" he imitates Lucretius, "hoc aliis erat exitio letumque parabat." As in Lucretius the wild beasts avoid the stricken places and there are no birds in the sky, so in Virgil the wolf "does not nightly prowl around the flocks," to the very birds the air is an unkindly home, headlong they fall and leave their lives within a lofty cloud." The fields, folds, stables, and streams in Virgil are in the same condition as are the streets, temples, and water-pools of stricken Athens in Lucretius.

Several other incidents and description,--digressions from the plain, dry topics of agriculture, such as the one upon the effects of love in Virgil's third book and in book

two, the description of charms of country life, show marked Lucretian influence not alone in form and phrase, but also in thought. While several, such as the descriptions of the phenomena at the death of Julius Caesar, the one of the garden, the praises of Italy, and also the episode which concludes the poem, the legend of Aristaeus, show little likeness to those of Lucretius.

Besides longer passages and sentences which show resemblances, we find phrases and even words alone which recall some phrase or cadence of the *De Rerum Natura*. From book one of the *Georgics* one might note these for example:

a ferro mortalis vertere terram

b vertentes vomere glaebas

a incipiam canere

b disserere incipiam

a ferri rigor

b fera ferri corpora

a mundi astra

b aeterni sidera mundi

a armorum sonitum

b sonitus armorum

a--Virgil. b--Lucretius.

- a et aequora ponti
- b rident aequora ponti
- a ab radicibus imis
- b ab radicibus imis

In book two these perhaps are the most noticeable:

- a luminis oras
- b oras in luminis exit
- a nec vero terrae ferre omnes omnia possunt
- b ferre omnes omnia possent
- a tauri spirantes naribus ignem
- b equi spirantes naribus ignem
- a quae tenuem exhalat nebulam fumosque volucris
- b pulveris exhalat nebulam nubesque volantis
- a genitalia semina poscunt
- b genitalia corpora---semina appellare suemus
- a avia virgulta
- b avia per nemora
- a defectus solis varios lunaeque labores
- b solis uti varios cursus lunaeque meatus
- a gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum
- b gaudent in tristi funere fratris

- a implevere, tenent oleae armentaque laeta
- b possidere, tenent rupes vastaeque paludes
- a pendent circum oscula nati
- b nec dulces occurrent oscula nati praeripere.

From book three we have:

- a asper acerba sonans
- b asper acerba tuens
- a campos natantes
- b campi natantes
- a genus acre luporum
- b genus acre leonum
- a pervincere dictis
- b vincere verbis
- a alitur vitium vivitque tegendo
- b ulcus enim vivescit et inveterascit alendo

These are only a few of the more marked examples of such likeness. Many of these phrases which show resemblances are found, not in imitative passages such as the description of the plague, but in other places which seem to have little thought in common with the poem of Lucretius. It would seem as though Virgil had become so familiar with

the *De Rerum Natura* that he slipped, at times almost unconsciously, into the use of Lucretian words and phrases. This is particularly noticeable in the first three books.

Likewise in his use of qualifying adjectives we find Virgil imitating Lucretius very frequently. He speaks of the *bibula harena*, birds are *variae* or *pictae*, *curvum* was first applied to *aratrum* by Lucretius, *Bacchi Massicus umor* is like *lacteus umor*, *profundus* is applied to *saltus* and the *fruges* are *laetae*. Then we find Virgil using some words with the same meaning that Lucretius has given them, and that too an unusual one, as *corda* for intellect, *mollia* meaning flexible, *tristis*, bitter, specimen, proof, *foedera* meaning laws of nature, and *aridus*, of a sound.

But it is not only in the structure, form, and words that we find the influence of *De Rerum Natura* in the *Georgics*. If Virgil could have read what Bacon in his *Essay on Books* says in regard to the books to be merely tasted and those to be thoroughly digested, he would probably have placed the poem of Lucretius at the head of the latter list. For he has so well read and assimilated it that he shows its influence, in a greater or less degree, in the thought of all his writings. An outline of the life

of Virgil, spent as it was in the country, will, I think show why he was so susceptible to a poem on Nature as the *De Rerum Natura*.

Publius Vergilius Maro was born at Andes, a little village on the valley of the Po. His parents were of humble origin but were able to give their son the advantage of studying under some of the best known teachers of his time. His boyhood was spent at Andes and at Cremona, where he received the toga virilis on the day of Lucretius's death. He then went to Milan and afterwards to Rome where he studied under Siron, the Epicurean, and Epidius, who was also the teacher of Antonius and Octavianus. During the settlement of the veterans in northern Italy, Virgil lost his farm there, but, a little later, was given a small estate near Naples by Augustus. And here he spent most of his time during the rest of his life. In disposition, Virgil was retiring and decidedly unworldly. He enjoyed the quiet of country life and loved peace and time for study and speculation.

It is probable that while studying under Siron he became interested in the Epicurean philosophy. At that time, Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* first began to attract attention.

This poem on "Nature", which gives a scientific explanation of her underlying laws and also shows close observation and keen appreciation of her external aspects, naturally made a deep impression upon Virgil, lover of Nature that he was. For in many ways the thought of the poem seems to coincide with his love for speculation, and the life he lived close to nature--- a boyhood and early manhood passed in the North Country, untouched as yet by the degeneration of rural life as was Central Italy, and a later life near Naples in the beautiful Campanian villa district.

Virgil makes no direct reference to Lucretius but it is evident that he means Lucretius when in the second book line 490 of the Georgics he says,

"felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari!"

For Lucretius, as far as he was able, certainly had learned the causes of things and his purpose in writing his poem was to remove all fear of death.

Aside from the evident reference to Lucretius, Virgil in the passage quoted above, probably had in mind several passages in the De Rerum Natura.

sunt per quae possis cognoscere cetera tute. 1--403

nec poterant quibus id fieret cognoscere causis 5-1185

id licet hinc etiam cognoscere: 6- 167

The latter part of the quotation reminds one of the passage in the first book of the De Rerum Natura in which Lucretius extolls the "man of Greece" who, unterrified by the thunderbolts of heaven, goes beyond the "flaming battlements of the world." Then

quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim opteritur

and his victory sets us on a level with the heavens.

Another passage of similar thought is the introduction of the third book in which Lucretius again praises Epicurus because he has succeeded in relieving the minds of men of the fears of the gods, death and the torments after death.

In that eulogy he says,

Et metus ille foras praeceps Acherontis agendus

funditus humanam qui vitam turbat ab imo.

In book one line 932 Lucretius speaks of himself:

et artis religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,

Virgil probably had these places in mind when writing as he did.

In contrast to this life with its quiet and peace,
Virgil speaks thus of what the husbandman avoids,

illum non populi fascesq; non purpura regum
flexit et infidos agitans discordia fratres,---

----- nec ferrea iura
insanumque forum aut populi tabularia vidit
sollicitant alii remis freta caeca, ruuntque
in ferrum, penetrant aulas et limina regum;

hic petit excidiis urbem miserosque Penates,
ut gemma bibat et Sarrano dormiat ostro;

condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro,

hic stupet attonitus Rostris; hunc plausus hiantem

per cuneos geminatus enim plebisque patrumque

corripuit; gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum. 2--495

Virgil here makes clear his aversion to the struggle for political honors, the glory to be won by the orator, the seeking after the favor of the powerful, and the strife among those same powerful ones for greater wealth or some novelty to satisfy the moment, and also the discord, even bloodshed, attendant upon such a life. Lucretius in book three lines 59-86 expresses much the same feelings towards

public life. But he adds that it is the fear of death which drives men thus, while Virgil merely contrasts such strife with the quiet of country life, In lines 70-72 we find expressions much like those of Virgil, sanguine civili and gaudent in tristi funere fratris. In the latter part of book three Lucretius again speaks of the futility of struggle for public life and uses this expression qui petere a populo fasces saevasque secures.

In speaking of the blessings of the country Virgil shows how little he cares for wealth in these words,
si non ingentem foribus domus alta superbis
mane salutantum totis vomit aedibus undam,
nec varios inhiant pulchra testudine postis
inlusasque auro vestes Ephyreiaque aera,
alba neque Assyrio fucatur lana veneno,
nec casia liquidi corrumpitur usus olivi

2--461

In book two of his poem Lucretius writes,
si non aurea sunt iuvenum simulacra per aedes
lampades igniferas manibus retentia dextris
lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur
nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet

nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque tecta. 2---24

Although these passages may not have as close a likeness in mere words as some others, they show great similarity in feeling. They give evidence of a common meeting ground between the two poets and why Lucretius had so much influence over Virgil.

Lucretius, the philosopher, and Lucretius, the man, took somewhat different views of nature and we find evidence of both views in the Georgics. Virgil was naturally more optimistic than Lucretius and presents to us the charms of nature more often than her austere side. Such are his praises of Italy and the description of the garden and orchard near Tarentum. But it is in the shorter passages that we find the greater likeness.

a Zephyro putris se glaeba resolvit

b putribus in glebis terrarum

a praesertim se tempestas a vertico silvis incubuit

b praesertim cum tempestas ridebat

a tum pater omnipotens fecundis imbris Aether
coniugis in gremium laetae descendit et omnis

magnus alit, magno commixtus corpore, fetus 2---325

a--Virgil. b--Lucretius.

The Georgics were written for the purpose of showing the charms of rural life, to win the Roman back to the soil, but they also have the purpose of glorification of labor and so Virgil touches somewhat upon the austerity of nature to show the necessity of labor. Lucretius in his philosophical view of nature was inclined to be pessimistic and emphasize the old, worn-out side of nature showing her in a hard unyielding light. We find rather frequent passages in the Georgics which show imitation in this direction also:

- a vidi lecta diu et multo spectata labore
degenerare tamen, ni vis humana quot annis
maxima quaeque ^{manu} legeret. Sic omnia fatis
in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri 1--197
aut presso exercere solum sub vomere ---
et flectere luctantes iuencos 2--356
---- ----- bis vitibus ingruit umbra
bis segetem densis obducunt sentibus herbae
durus uterque labor -- 2-- 410
glabas cunctantis crassaque terga
expecta, et validis terram proscinde iuencis 2--236
- b quod superest arvi, tamen id natura sua vi

a--Virgil. B--Lucretius.

- b sentibus obducat hi vis humana resistat
vitae causa valido consueta bidenti
ingemere et terram pressis proscindere aratris 5--206
- a ipse labore manum duro terat, ipse feracis
figat humo plantes- 4--114
- b Atque ipsi pariter durum sufferre laborem
atque opere in duro durarent membra manusque 5-1359

In book three of the Georgics after treating of the care of the flocks, Virgil gives two descriptions (lines 339-383) of shepherd life, one in Africa and the other in Scythia, in which he shows the hardships of the shepherds and the difficulties in overcoming natural conditions. In book one line 60 he says:

Continus has legas aeternaque foedera certis
imposuit natura locis, quo tempore primum
Deucalion vacuum lapides iactavit in orbem,
unde homines nati, durum genus,

These lines are in imitation of the following from Lucretius:

et genus humanum multo fuit illud in agris durius,
ut decuit, tellus quod dura creasset. 5--925

In this passage Virgil after telling of the restrictions

nature sets upon what different places may produce, 'the iron rule of the world,' seems to imply that the race is the more hardy because of them. Then he calls upon the husbandman to work. Again in line 159 he tells the husbandman that unless he labors continuously he "will end where other men began and fall back upon acorns."

Yet in such instances as these,

exercetque frequens tellurem, atque imperat arvis 1---99

-----quibus ipsa -----

fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus 2--460

et cum exustus ager morientibus aestuat herbis

ecce supercilio clivosi tramitis undam

elicit? illa cadens raucum per levia murmur

saxa ciet scatebrisque arentia temperat arva 1--107

illa seges demum votis respondet arari

agricolae, bis quae solem, bis frigora sensit

illius immensae ruperunt horrea messes. 1---47

he plainly encourages the farmer by showing that the beauties and charm of nature are granted in return for the drudgery, it may be, of labor.

In speaking of nature Virgil often applies to material

objects, in imitation of Lucretius, such epithets as ignava, laeta, fortia, maligni, and infelix which give the suggestion of a ceaseless life permeating nature. It is perhaps because the De Rerum Natura brings to Virgil the explanation for these secret moving-principles and a proclamation of a reign of law in Nature, that it held such an attraction for him. Yet it is with the calm contemplation of the observer, not with the keen investigating eye of the scientist that he looked upon the phenomena of the heavens, and studied "by what force it is that deep seas learn to swell and burst their barriers."

In the sixth Eclogue, Silenus sings:

----- --uti magnum per inane coacta
semina terrarumque animaeque marisque fuissent
et liquidi simul ignis; ut his exordia 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 luciscere solem
altius, atque cadent summotis nubibus imbres
incipiant silvae cum primum surgere, cumque

rara per ignaros errent animalia montis 6---31

The expressions magnum, per inane, semina, liquidi ignis, and his ex primis, are Lucretian and the general sequence of the evolution of the world is taken from book five of the De Rerum Natura.

In the Georgics, in his plea to the Muses for inspiration Virgil says,

accipiant caelique vias et sidera monstrent 2--477

defectus solis varios lunaeque labores
unde tremor terris, qua vi maria alta tumescant
obicibus ruptis, rursusque in se ipsa residant,
quid tantum Oceano properent se tinguere soles
hiberni, vel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet.

in imitation of Lucretius's words:

qua fieri quicquid posset ratione resolvi,
solis uti varios cursus lunaeque meatus

noscere possemus----- -- - 5--772

propterea noctes hiberno tempore longas cessant 5--699

In the Aeneid at the feast given the Trojans by Queen Dido, after the libations to the gods, Iopas the bard, is introduced.

Hic canit errantem lunam solisque labores:

Unde hominum genus et pecudes; unde imber et ignes;

Arcturum pluviasque Hyadas geminosque Triones;

Quid tantum Oceanum^o properent se tingere soles

hiberni, vel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet 1--742

These three passages, one from each of the three great works of Virgil show how strong must have been the influence which the scientific explanations of the laws of nature, dear to him, given in the De Rerum Natura exercised over him. For they were written at different times in his life with long intervals between them. It is rather surprising to find such a passage in a poem touching so little upon subjects akin to nature as the Aeneid does. But there are a number of other passages in the Georgics which show marked likeness in both word and scientific thought. These are along much the same line:

a Libra die somnique pares ubi fecerit horas 1--208

medium luci atque umbris iam dividit orbem

b ubi anni nodus nocturnas exaequat lucibus umbras 5--687

a illic, ut perhibent, aut intempesta silet nox

semper et obtenta densentur nocte tenebrae

a--Virgil. B--Lucretius.

- a aut redit a nobis Aurora diemque reducit
nosque ubi primus equis Oriens adflavit anhelis
illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper 1--247
Luna revertentes cum primum colligit ignis

It reminds one of what Lucretius says of the origin of the sun:

- b At nox obruit ingenti caligine terras,
aut ubi de longo cursu sol ultima caeli
impulit atque suos efflavit languidus ignis
concurso itere et labefactos aere multo,
aut quia sub terras cursum convortere cogit
vis eadem, supra quae terras pertulit orbem 5--650

aut quia conveniunt ignes et semina multa
confluere ardoris consuerunt tempore certo 5--660

In his statements in regard to primitive life also, Virgil seems to accept the ideas of Lucretius.

- a ante Jovem nulli subigebant arva coloni; 1--125
ne signare quidem aut partiri limite campum
fas erat, in medium quaerebant.

b nec robustus erat curvi moderator aratri 5--933

- quisquam, nec scibat ferro molirier arva
- a tellus Chaoniam pingui glandem mutavit arista 1--98
concussaue famem in silvis solabere quercu. 1--59
- b glandiferas inter curabant corpora quercus. 5-939
- a et varius usus meditando extunderet artis 1-181
unde nova ingressus hominum experientia cepit 4-316
- b usus et impigrae experientia mentes
paullatim docuit pedetentim progredientes 5-1452
- a tum laqueis captare feras et fallere visco
inventum et magnos canibus circumdari saltus 1-140
- b nam fovea atque igni prius est venarier ortum
quam saepire plagis salum canibus ciere 5-1250

In regard to nature's reproduction of plant-life by seed,
Virgil says:

- inque novos soles audent se germina tuto credere 2-332
in imitation of Lucretius's,
novo fetu quid primum in luminis oras 5-782
tollere et incertis cernerint committere ventis

When relating the method of renewing the stock of bees
common in the eastern nations, Virgil says-

- visenda modis animalia miris 4-309

trunca pedum primo mox et stridentia pinnis
miscentur, tenuemque magis magis aera carpunt

which suggests the evolutionary theory of Lucretius given
in the fifth book and imitates these words:

orba pedum partim, manuum viduata vicissim 5--840

In book one lines 415-423 of the Georgics we find:

haut, equidem credo, quia sit divinitus illis
ingenium aut rerum fato prudentia maior;
verum, ubi tempestas et caeli mobilis umor
mutavere vias et Juppiter uvidus austris
denset, erant quae rara modo, et, quae densa, relaxat
veruntur species animorum, et pectora motus
nunc alios, alios, dum nubila ventus agebat,
concipiunt; hinc ille avium concentus in agris
et laetae pecudes et ovantes gutture corvi.

This scientific explanation of the feelings of the rooks,
the denial of heaven-bestowed inspiration, or a greater
foresight of things to come granted by fate, is decidedly
Lucretian in tone. The words species and motus are
materialistic. The expression naturae species ratioque is
used frequently by Lucretius and motus is one of the

properties of the atom. The general drift makes one think of this passage from Lucretius:

et partim mutant cum tempestatibus una raucisonos cantus

5-1083

But the passage quoted from Virgil comes in the midst of the prognostications of weather. These weather signs are to Virgil not mere antecedents of natural phenomena but are considered as divine indications sent for the guidance of men. For he warns the husbandman that the sun foretells greater things than weather and gives as examples the signs of foreboding which occurred at Caesar's death.

In describing the habits of bees, after speaking of their reverence for their king he writes:

His quidam atque haec exempla secuti
esse apibus partem divinae mentis et haustus
aetherios dixere; deum namque ire per omnis
terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum;
hinc pecudes, armenta viros, genus omne ferarum
quemque sibi tenuis nascentem arcessere vitas;
scilicet huc reddi deinde ac resoluta referri
omnia, nec morti esse locum sed viva volare

sideris in numerum atque alto succedere caelo 4-219

This doctrine of the World Spirit pervading all animal life is Stoic and directly opposed to the materialistic teachings of Lucretius's philosophy as shown in the following:

nullam rem e nilo gigni divinitus unquam 1-150

haud igitur constant divino praedita sensa

quando quidem ^{ne}nequent vitaliter esse animata 5-144

Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam naturam rerum 5-198

and divinitus is the word Lucretius uses when he denies divine influence. In this passage of the Georgics Virgil is, however, merely quoting it quidam dixere as the explanation given by others for the remarkable intelligence of the bees. But we find in the sixth book of the Aeneid these words addressed by Anchises to Aeneas when he visits his father in the lower world;

Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentis 6--724

lucentumque globum Lunae Titaniaque astra

Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus

Mens agitat molem et magna se corpore miscet

Inde hominum pecudumque genus vitae volantum

et quae marmoreo fert monstra sub aequore pontus

Ignes est ollis vigor et caelestis origo
seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardunt
Quin et supremo cum lumine vita reliquit
non tamen omne malum miseris nec funditus omnes
corporeae excedunt pestis -- -----
Ergo exercentur poenis, veterumque malorum
supplicia expendunt--

Here Virgil seems to accept for himself the belief in a
Divine Spirit, the immortality of the soul, and a punishment
after death.

But even in the Aeneid we find traces of Lucretius's
teachings. When Dido upbraids Aeneas for deserting her
and he pleads the commands of the gods, she exclaims:
Nunc Lyciae sortes, nunc et Jove missus ab ipso 4-377
interpres divum fert horrida iussa per auras
Scilicet is Superis labor est, ea cura quietos sollicitat.

Likewise in the first book of the Georgics, line 121
Virgil says that it is a Divine Providence which ordained
so many enemies to the work of the husbandman. For a life
of ease, such as men passed in the Golden Age, encourages
idleness and the necessity for labor and the overcoming of

obstacles makes mankind better and raises the power of inventiveness.

From these evidences it would seem that Virgil in his early life, passed as it was in the North Country, was so influenced by the old Roman Religion, held by the simple country folk and untouched by the atheism and philosophy of the Greeks so current in Rome, that the teachings of Lucretius held an antagonism as well as an attraction for him. And his belief in the miraculous seems to have interfered with a very firm belief in natural agencies. For the scientific explanation of the feeling of the rocks comes in the midst of signs given by divine will, and he says that Jove granted the bees greater intelligence in return for ancient services before he gives the theory of the anima mundi. All of this is in marked contrast to the teaching of Lucretius.

He would seem to hold that a quiet life of labor with the simple beliefs of the country people was a life of happiness as well as one of philosophical contemplation.

In the Eclogues we find a few phrases here and there and the song of Silenus which show that even at that time

Virgil was somewhat under the influence of Lucretius. And the last half of the fourth book of the Georgics, it is supposed, was written at a much later period than the rest and was not the original ending. In it we find little likeness in thought but some expressions which recall the De Rerum Natura.

From this it would seem that the influence of Lucretius upon Virgil was shown only in a slight degree in the Eclogues. It reached its height and was very marked while he was writing the first three Georgics but waned during the composition of the fourth Georgic and the Aeneid.