

[Music]

Okay.

Welcome to lecture number seven.

So, we've been talking a lot

about this

Greco-Roman tradition, and you might have

wondered when we're going to get to the

Romans, to the Latin text,

and that's today, and it's principally

going to be by way of Virgil

and some Varro too. Virgil is probably

regarded as one of the most

influential and important of all the

Roman writers,

and it's especially the case that this

is because of pastoral, and also

georgic, both of which we're going to be

doing today, both of which are,

Virgil actually engaging with

environmental issues. He's known for a

third thing which is epic,

so he sort of does a take-off or

what you'd call it but Homer

wrote the Iliad

and Virgil writes the Aeneid, which is

arguably the most important

Latin epic, but doesn't really concern us

as we're principally concerned with

pastoral today,

and georgic. You already know pastoral

because of Theocritus, what we've done

with the Greeks

now, we're going to see it in terms of

the Romans but also this new form which

is georgic.

Georgic also a kind of nature writing so

let's just jump right in look at the  
Prezi.  
Okay, so notice that we've covered an  
awful lot of time here,  
Roman culture and with Rome.  
We started off in northern Africa,  
we were in Greek and Ireland, in  
the Mediterranean,  
but now we're in Rome in Italy.  
So we are firmly on the European  
continent here, and we've also moved  
across  
here timewise of course, most  
of that way up.  
So without further ado lecture number  
seven: so  
pastoral conclusion and georgic and with  
Varro something else  
Too, and that's going to be a kind of  
nature writing that  
is well perhaps a little surprising,  
you'll see what you think  
so Virgil, let me pop back on screen here,  
okay, bad time to pop on screen, I  
don't want to  
mess this up with the word there, so  
from his earliest Theocritus we  
had pastoral poetry imagining, a locus  
amanous  
as a way of one way or another, whether  
it was conscious or not, drawing  
attention to the contemporary state of  
the environment,  
and drawing attention that there were  
problems, so pastoral again  
often pops up when there are problems of

some sort, whether political problems, we  
saw that  
with the civil war and pastoral  
becomes  
pastoral art that we looked at, but it  
could be environmental problems as well.  
So just to get the chronology right  
here,  
we started off with early Greek writing  
with  
Hesiod, it's roughly contemporary of  
Homer  
some of the earliest Greek writing,  
Theocritus is later,  
but still later again is Virgil. Virgil  
is writing right about at the beginning  
of the Christian era,  
a little before and principally the  
century before, but he's 200 years after  
Theocritus, and he takes this  
pastoral project further, which is one of  
the reasons he's so interesting to us,  
as he wants to consider how we become a  
worthy environment as endangered in the  
first place,  
and the role of human action in  
endangering the environment so,  
that's why he's pretty interesting to us.  
Now I can pop on screen. There I am. To  
understand how Virgil draws attention to  
the environment we really need to look  
at Eclogue I.  
Eclogue I is far and away from our  
environmental point of view, the most  
important of his eclogues,  
and his eclogues are the most important

environmental writing he does with  
respect to pastoral,  
by the way people often get this  
confused, if you look at this word here  
“eclogue,” you might think that  
there is ecology in here, that  
etymologically our word ecology is  
related to it,  
it has nothing to do with our word  
ecology, so don't get thrown;  
it simply means “selections” in Greek,  
and but don't get confused there  
because  
of course, Latin is the language that  
Virgil is writing in but eclogue is  
an earlier word  
that is often used, that he uses in fact  
to describe what he does, but has nothing  
to do with ecology.  
Ecology just doesn't  
actually get  
coined until the second half of the 19th  
century  
by a German biologist who's a  
contemporary of Darwin  
named Ernst Haeckel. Ernst  
sorry I just got that word wrong, but  
I'm having a moment, I'll remember  
his name in a minute, but  
all you have to know, eclogue: nothing to  
do with ecology.  
I'm sorry I skipped the slide  
there, I changed the order there.  
What's so important is why I  
shifted the order here, because this  
really should be the concluding part of

this little  
section here, the first eclogue  
is important because  
it explores how we become fully aware of  
the environment,  
and why we don't do that until the  
moment of when it's lost, so the example  
would be  
Santa Barbara: the oil spill. Yes  
people were aware that they had a beach  
before the 1969 oil spill,  
but it's that oil spill that made people  
really aware of how important it was and  
how endangered it was, and what those,  
if you looked off the coast of  
Santa Barbara, those oil platforms, how  
they were endangering the environment.  
So writers may have written  
about the environment before Virgil and  
all, but Virgil wants to talk about  
how it can become endangered.  
It's a little confusing because he  
doesn't want to talk about how  
well, you'll see, it's about how someone  
actually leaves a place, but  
same basic notion here. So  
in the opening speech you have  
two  
individuals Meliboeus and Tityrus,  
and Meliboeus, so this is a dialogue then  
and there's  
just two people talking back and forth  
and  
all the conversation is dialogue so it  
opens with Meliboeus,  
attempting to draw his friend, Tityrus,'

attention to the environment,  
so he's talking about, from the very  
first line, a big spreading beach, a  
woodland muse, sweet  
fields, woods, and why is he talking about  
them, why is he sort of becoming forlorn,  
well because this has become lost to him,  
because he's been exiled from the fields,  
from his own fields, from his own farm, so  
again two guys, having a conversation,  
both farmers, both friends, Meliboeus is  
leaving,  
Tityrus, is staying. Meliboeus has lost  
his farm,  
and yet he's talking a great deal about  
his farm,  
Tityrus, however, Meliboeus  
spent first five lines talking about  
his farm  
and the fact that he's lost it and how  
beautiful it was,  
Tityrus responds by drawing attention to  
the political situation,  
where seemingly being oblivious to  
Meliboeus attempts to foreground the  
environment.  
So right off the bat, two guys talking  
about two different things,  
Meliboeus about the environment, Tityrus  
about  
politics. This will stand throughout the  
whole dialogue,  
Meliboeus then, so we're shifting back  
and forth the conversation, one guy spoke,  
another guy spoke, now the first person,  
Meliboeus is speaking again,

continues by observing in some detail  
how something is wrong environmentally,  
“in the fields, everywhere there is so  
much turmoil,”  
this is what he's talking about. Tityrus  
then  
gets his chance to talk, and he ignores  
Meliboeus again, and the fields and all  
that turmoil,  
and returns to a discussion of his  
patron.

We know, and it's not mentioned here by  
Virgil because Virgil is sort of masking  
political things too, but we know  
that very likely his patron is Caesar  
Augustus in Rome,  
that Tityrus has managed to get pretty  
high  
connected to Caesar Augustus, and wants  
to talk about him.

The key point here, which I've said  
but just to make it explicit, is while  
Tityrus keeps returning to politics,  
Meliboeus is repeatedly directing,  
and directing us in his reference to the  
environment,  
and Tityrus is ignoring that, and  
arguably, Meliboeus is sort of ignoring  
the political too,  
this opposition continues throughout the  
eclogue.

It's very important, and Virgil is sort  
of hitting us over the head with it, the  
way these two guys relate to it.

So, a little poll here, obviously we're  
not in the classroom but,

did you find Virgil boring? Remember the  
very first class I told you that  
the Epic of Gilgamesh was as good as  
it was probably going to get?  
It's not quite fair, I mean as we get to  
later stuff,  
Shakespeare, a lot of people  
think it's pretty good,  
and Thoreau is interesting enough.  
He's a fun read.  
But did you find Virgil boring? I'm just  
kind of curious, and why I'm actually  
asking  
is that most people do. So, one of the  
reasons I do these polls actually in a  
classroom,  
when we're actually in UCSB, so  
other people can  
see what other people think too,  
and if you thought it was boring,  
I can confirm from having taught this  
course before, and having asked this  
before,  
that most people in the room found a  
little boring,  
but just not an apology for why we  
have the readings, we have an explanation.  
I chose these not because they were the  
most interesting, or the most beautiful,  
or the most fun,  
but because they were the most  
relevant for the particular story that  
we were telling environmentally.  
We could look at other texts from the  
period that might be interesting  
environmentally, but



we're sort of tracing a theme here and

Virgil is the best,

but also because Virgil is absolutely,

the most influential when it comes to

pastoral, of anyone who ever wrote,

period. And that means we just have

to read them regardless of whether is

particularly fun,

sorry about that.

So Virgil's first eclogue continuing,

because Meliboeus is losing his

farm,

he makes very clear, and this is from the

very opening speech onward

that he is now profoundly aware of its

value,

which if he is anything like Tityrus,

may have escaped his attention prior to

his exile, so in short Meliboeus

has developed what we would call an

environmental consciousness.

So imagine, or go back to our original

example of how environmental

consciousness works, the local one with

Santa Barbara oil spill in 1969. That oil

spill happened, something profoundly big

happened with it,

and people became aware of the

environment. Nothing has happened in the

environment here to Meliboeus'

farm, but because he has exiled from it,

he has lost it too, the same way people

kind of lost their pristine beach and

had indeed lost their pristine beaches

in 1969,

Meliboeus has lost his farm and as a

consequence,  
he has developed an environmental  
consciousness, and he is trying to  
communicate it to his friend  
Tityrus,  
so and that becomes very clear, because  
all he's doing is  
this sort of  
poetic celebration of the environment  
from the very first line, he keeps saying  
Tityrus,  
look at this, Tityrus look at this.  
Anyhow let's, look in detail  
how he does this,  
and yeah be very clear about this he  
does not develop  
his environmental consciousness  
because the environment is  
changing  
around him, or other example when we  
talked about environmental  
consciousness, Rachel Carson that's  
exactly what she did,  
because the environment was  
indeed changing,  
she, by way of the fact that it's  
being dosed with  
all these pesticides, these  
biocides, DDT and all,  
but this approach, Virgil provides a  
nonetheless an  
insight into environmental consciousness,  
but it's not  
because something horrible is  
happening to  
the environment, but nonetheless even

though it's a little different,  
in that this person is changing,  
the sense of moving rather than the  
environment changing,  
Virgil was arguably one of the first  
people to  
systematically think about the idea of  
how environmental consciousness emerges,  
arguably, he is the one, I guess I've made  
that argument so,  
it's very important for us to look at  
as so getting back to our line by  
line reading of the poem,  
Meliboeus, as the poem  
continues politely but pointedly  
notes that Tityrus has neglected in more  
ways than one, so now we're 30  
odd  
lines into the poem, and  
Tityrus is going to be told  
that there's a problem,  
and one of the most moving lines of the  
poem, Meliboeus suggests that "the  
very pines,  
Tityrus, the very springs, very orchards  
called  
out for you," but you Tityrus weren't  
listening.  
So in the language of the poems,  
that the  
environment is screaming out to be  
seen,  
and yet Tityrus is totally ignoring, again  
going back to the '69 oil spills, like  
this beach, this pristine beach was  
yelling out,

trying to tell you how beautiful, how  
wonderful it is, and what did you do?

You just ignored it.

And there's a double sense that

Tityrus has ignored

his fields and the environment, and

he's still ignoring the

environment right before his

eyes, so it's one thing not to have

developed,

in Tityrus 's mind, not to have developed

environmental consciousness, but

Meliboeus

not to have done, but Meliboeus is vexed

because he just can't communicate

an environmental consciousness to

Tityrus, so

back to that question which I posed,

with respect to Rachel Carson, which

we'll see when we actually get to

her,

how do you communicate the value of the

environment?

How do you communicate environmental

consciousness to someone else?

And that's a real challenge, and

we'll see it's one of the great

challenges

still facing us today.

Aside, how do you communicate the

significance of the climate crisis to

someone

who just doesn't get it? Tityrus just

doesn't

get it, Meliboeus is really trying

to make him get it, but he just

doesn't.

A lot of the country in the United States now just doesn't get it, and a lot of people are trying to communicate it, and they're getting as frustrated as Meliboeus is here, and one last attempt to facilitate the environment appearing for Tityrus.

So really, it's not just communicating it but what Meliboeus wants him to do, he wants the environment to appear for Tityrus the way it does for him. He wants him to develop an environmental consciousness.

In the language of the poem, he wants Tityrus "to hear it calling out to him." In other words, the environment, the fields are desperately trying to be seen and heard, but Tityrus is not listening,

so Meliboeus launches into two protracted concluding speeches, both of which provide lush descriptions of the surrounding environment.

So this is his last sort of tour to force, big effort, to try to communicate what's going on here

In the first of these speeches, Meliboeus tries to draw attention to various features of the environment, familiar streams, bees feeding on willow blossoms, and a variety of different birds.

In each of these, I should note,  
they're very specific. This is not,  
you don't have to worry about this being  
particularly allegorical right here,  
because he is specifically saying,  
what kind of blossoms, willow  
blossom, what kind of doves,  
turtle doves, not meant to be allegorical  
but these are  
literal local plants and animals  
that he's talking about here, so he's  
clearly saying to  
Tityrus, look there are real issues  
here, real things here,  
and what becomes then a striking  
collision of literal and  
allegorical throughout the epilogue  
Tityrus response  
by drawing  
these response to these literal  
descriptions of the countryside  
by allegorically referencing the  
political situation,  
which Meliboeus has been neglecting, so  
even though Meliboeus gives this tour  
to force attempt to  
make Tityrus aware of the environment  
with all these  
wonderful local, real  
descriptions,  
Tityrus still wants to talk about  
politics.  
In other words, because his form is now  
lost to him,  
Tityrus has developed an  
environmental consciousness

and Meliboeus  
wishes to make Tityrus conscious of it by  
repeatedly drawing attention to it. So  
it's just, what we've been saying  
all along, I want to make it  
clear here, that's what's happening again  
and again and again, we saw in the very  
first line, Meliboeus trying to communicate  
the importance of  
the environment lost to him, and Tityrus  
being oblivious to it, and even after  
Meliboeus's  
persistent sort of all-out  
attempt to communicate it,  
it doesn't work. Tityrus on the other  
hand, let's talk about his position,  
because it is important. He offers the  
political  
causes for it, thus Meliboeus  
finds Tityrus neglectful of his duty to  
the land, but Tityrus repeatedly makes  
clear that Meliboeus has  
neglected his political obligations.  
Let's talk about that for a moment,  
what are the political obligations?  
What's going on here?  
Well why, is we have to ask the question  
which we've been focusing so much on  
environmental issues, we haven't,  
why is Meliboeus even losing his land,  
has become bankrupt,  
something like that, hasn't been  
paying his bills, no, he's been doing a  
great job of everything presumably,  
but what happens, after wars, and a  
war happened here,

this is 2,000 years ago, how  
favor was shown, and how  
rulers showed that they were happy with  
with generals and other people, so if you  
join the army and you're an important  
general, maybe you bring  
men with you to fight in the war and all,  
how does the ruler then  
compensate you at the  
end?

Often they would do it by giving land, by  
giving parcels of land, to show how happy  
they were. It's sort of  
payment and sort of a prize at the end.

Meliboeus's farm is one such land. Caesar  
Augustus has decided just to give it to  
someone else,

well why hasn't he done that because  
probably he doesn't know much about  
Meliboeus,

what Meliboeus is about, and doesn't  
really care about Meliboeus.

Tityrus on the other hand is a clever guy  
politically,

he's actually gone to Rome, and in the  
the argument here, it's actually said  
that he's gone to Rome,  
and he's actually made nice directly  
with Caesar Augustus.

So even though there's no mention of him  
being a soldier or anything,  
he did what he had to do politically to  
get in with the most important person in  
the country,  
and ensure that his farm wasn't being  
given away.



So in a way, Tityrus and he does counter  
this

make the counter argument to Meliboeus,  
I was taking care of my farm.

I made sure that I still have the farm. I  
am going to stay in my farm while you  
are being exiled.

Well that's right, but then of  
course Meliboeus is arguing that he's  
been neglecting his fields because he's  
been in Rome and he hasn't been taking  
care of his farm.

So you can see why both guys have an  
argument here and why both of them are  
going back

and forth, trying to get the  
other to be aware of why  
their position is the right  
position.

So it's clever on Virgil's part, and  
I should note that

at the time this is in written,  
probably eclogue one,

Virgil has actually lost his farm in a  
situation

not dissimilar to this, as far as we know,  
so if he really can understand the  
position

of Meliboeus and inhabit that character,  
and make us really feel

for that position, maybe that's why, and  
if he understands

that politics matter, maybe that's why  
at this point as well.

So these play out on two levels: this  
conversation going back and forth

on the one hand, it's a literal thing, so  
it's a literal environmental  
question, as far as Meliboeus is  
concerned, he's talking about things like  
willow  
blossoms and all, specific features in  
the environment, but Tityrus when he  
does talk about the environment, he talks  
about  
Cyprus among wayfaring trees, that's not  
meant  
to be literal, Cyprus he means  
those really  
tall Italian cypresses, you  
may have seen,  
and how they are much taller than other  
plants, not because he cares about that  
literally, because metaphorically that's  
what Rome is like. He's gone to the place  
there are like towers above everything  
else,  
that's Rome, and the tower's above the  
wayfaring trees,  
so that's Rome of which  
he's talking about.  
So they're both talking about the  
Environment, but the thing that  
Tityrus does  
is metaphorical rather than literal.  
By focusing these two competing  
viewpoints,  
one on the figurative, one on the  
metaphorical, it doesn't even reveal the  
full situation here, because  
what's really happening, and what  
Virgil wants to draw attention to,

because  
if he cared about just one or the other,  
he could have written a poem  
just celebrating the environment with  
Meliboeus speaking, kind of the way that  
we saw  
Sappho wrote a celebration in the  
environment, or he could have just  
written the  
the political thing here too, but what he  
wants to do  
is have us understand how these two  
are interrelated, that both guys have  
a position here that that makes  
kind of sense,  
that the political  
situation,  
unveiled language here Rome,  
being like a Cyprus and all,  
has profound heart-wrenching  
consequences to the environment too.  
So if you would have just heard  
Meliboeus here you wouldn't have known  
why he lost his farm and all, and what he  
did that was  
somewhat remiss, in that he didn't attend  
to the political situation here and  
attending to the political he would have  
made sure that  
his farm was preserved the way  
Tityrus did.  
It's arguably the case then, so why this  
has a big takeaway for us,  
that some pastoral,  
again is just allegorical, but  
so much of pastoral,

you have to realize that the figurative impacts, the literal, and ideally a work could, and should the way Virgil does here, explore how the figurative impacts the literal, the relationship between the two. He literally is bringing these two perspectives into dialogue by way of two characters, so it's a talk, back and forth is being discussed. And why that's important to us, and this is a big takeaway, to understand how an actions impact the environment, so it's not like Meliboeus's farm has been destroyed by some weather event, a hurricane, or tornado or something, it's nothing like that, it's been it's been lost to him by way of human action or his inaction, so we need to know, well exactly how this happened, if there's going to be meaning there, so in other words okay, you can say well, it was destroyed by a storm, so what? Or you could say it was destroyed by human action, but there is a question: what action? What did Meliboeus do or not do here, and Virgil offers up that explanation here. We know that he was remiss, and Virgil arguably is setting that out here, so

you might assume, like from our point of view, environmentally especially, that Meliboeus is the real hero here, and the Tityrus is sort of a protagonist, he really doesn't get it, but no, Meliboeus has a position too, both these guys are in different ways remiss. Yes, Tityrus has been remiss because he hasn't taken care of his farm, but in another way, Meliboeus has been remiss because he hasn't politically been taken care of his farm, ensuring that it was safe. So Virgil wants to play those two off, see the two positions, and at the end let that neither of these two people, as likeable as Meliboeus is, really has the right idea that is, really the two of them together that that have a more sensible. Because Virgil's first eclogue explores how consciousness in the environment emerges, how environmental consciousness emerges. It's going to be enormously influential. So one of the reasons we're particularly reading it, it's been argued that all pastoral after this first eclogue is going to be a reference one way or another to Virgil. He's just been enormously influential,

so when Petrarch kind of re-develops  
pastoral as the renaissance,  
which is a rebirth of classical learning  
in particular,  
works like this, when  
Petrarch starts writing, he's  
clearly very aware of  
pastoral by way of Virgil in the first  
decade on the potential  
for his type of writing, by way of  
Virgil, so an enormously important work,  
it's not the end of pastoral by any  
means,  
pastoral will continue well into the  
21st century even with  
work like Pocahontas or something, but  
pastoral is here,  
fully baked in a way and worked out in a  
way that a lot of people will become  
very aware of.  
So let's conclude pastoral.  
What is pastoral? (I'll get out  
of the screen for a minute) It's a  
complex mode of writing.  
It's continually being  
transformed, you can see  
even from Theocritus to Virgil, a couple  
hundred years it gets transformed a lot.  
Yes, it can be very literal in that sense  
a form of nature writing  
sure, but it can also be very  
allegorical,  
and we saw here how is allegorical  
regarding  
patronage and how you make nice  
with a ruler in Rome,

and Virgil's first eclogue is the shining example of this, it can be some combination of the two, it can be allegorical and pastoral and literal together, but when pastoral explores the intersection of nature writing and allegory, so that's when it does the two together and of course, Virgil's first eclogue, it may well be commenting on how an action can impact not just our relationship to the environment, but our awareness of it. So Virgil is clearly doing that here, what Meliboeus that inactions, how they resulted in the the treatment of the environment or Tityrus, in his actions, and how it resulted in his neglect of his fields, made an environmental impact but also, and this is what makes Virgil so important, our very awareness of the environment is perhaps under discussion here as it was in Virgil's first eclogue, how Tityrus ignored becoming aware of it, ignored environmental consciousness, or a better way of putting it, never achieved consciousness of the environment, whereas Meliboeus has achieved it before the eclogue even

begins, and that's what he's desperately trying to communicate.

But one thing to be clear about here, and it can be a little confusing, Meliboeus changes scenes here, rather than having the scene change about him, so what do I mean by that, is well, say you were at a place in your lifetime, there was a lot of environmental change going on, everything got developed into housing or something, you would then become aware of the environment, but that's not what's happening here with Meliboeus, the scene is not changing, the environment is not changing. He's moving, and that will become enormously influential for the rest, for the western tradition of literature and art as it sets this exile motif in play, and we're going to see that when we get to Amelia Lanier in the early modern period in England. So it's different one changing scenes is different than having a scene change about you, but still by way of this, Virgil is exploring environmental consciousness and how it emerges and he's exploring it in a way that will become



influential for generations of  
people.

So a fascinating work and an incredibly  
important work,

by the time in the renaissance people  
like Ben Johnson and Amelia Lanier  
will adapt this approach to directly  
explore how we'd be conscious of the  
environment,

at the moment of some endangerment, in  
other words, people like Ben Johnson  
will, and Amelia Lanier, who are  
contemporaries and writing in the same  
form

in the early 17th century. They will  
explore how  
this is not about changing scenes, but  
the scene changing itself, in particular  
how

London is radically changing  
environmentally at this period or the  
area  
surrounding it, the area incidentally  
going back to her earlier Gilgamesh  
discussion, the area outside the walls of the  
house that's changing.

Yeah hopefully this is all clear, it  
can be a difficult  
concept regarding  
the emergence of environmental  
consciousness and how it's  
communicated, or failed to be  
communicated, and why it's so important  
to pastoral,  
if it's not, the  
nice things about having these things

recorded

because, you can always go back again and

and review or you can always

contact me

directly, so but as I recall having

asked this question

a couple times in the past, people

generally

have the basic idea here, but if not

don't feel bad, just go back and

review, I would suggest.

So that ends pastoral,

Before I jump there, so we're going to

now talk about

georgic. Georgic is another form of

nature writing and

it actually formally gets inaugurated

here with

Virgil. So Theocritists sort of formally

inaugurated pastoral, but Virgil really

made a huge

imprint on it, in this case however it's

being formally inaugurated by

Virgil and

it's the second of his three most

important literary contributions, the

third which isn't really

of interest to us right now, which is

epic.

So, georgic can

function as a form of nature writing,

depicting life in the country.

(let me get out of the picture here for a

moment)

The difference is, and by the way, it's

often a

discussion of actual environments  
rather than metaphorically.

It can be metaphorical when it's a  
celebration of labor, but that gets to my  
point here:

pastoral, the life depicted  
in nature, was one of odium,  
one lack of labor, so in that sense it's  
like,  
before the fall in Eden, or like the  
golden race in Hesiod, nobody has to  
work, shepherds are just kind of  
lounging around, walking around with  
their sheep and all,  
but georgic by contrast  
is hard work and agriculture,  
it is there's no odium associated with  
georgic, in fact georgic will become  
quintessentially associated with hard  
work.

So if you map this back on to eden,  
yes the before the fall, was  
like pastoral life  
characterized by odium, after  
the fall,  
is very much like georgic literature.

Georgic is  
where you have to work, you have  
to do like Adam,  
"cursed is the ground for thy sake you  
know only through the sweat of your brow,  
only through hard work you're going to  
eat," that's the way it is.

So Virgil knowing obviously pastoral  
very well,  
nonetheless is going to focus on this

other type  
of agricultural labor,  
and it's interesting right, because  
if you think about it,  
people have been, will write all  
this pastoral literature and then  
writing it before Virgil, they're  
going to write ton of it after Virgil,  
and it's all celebrating a kind of  
agricultural  
existence that doesn't really match much  
with contemporary  
agriculture, whether it's now or 2,000  
years ago, because agriculture, and I can  
tell you this having grown up on a farm,  
that is true,  
agriculture requires a lot of hard  
back-breaking work.  
Pastoral doesn't acknowledge that.  
Georgic is an acknowledgement of that,  
and I'll jump back to that one in a  
minute, so while they're appearing in  
literature and  
in georgic, by the way, just to go back  
what we said about  
pastoral and being a mode, georgic  
can inhabit any literary  
form, georgic show up in a novel  
or poem, and you can have it in art  
too, so georgic landscapes almost always  
will depict whether  
described or painted or  
whatever, people working the environment.  
The word georgic incidentally comes from  
two Greek words:  
"gia" you may have heard this word, it's

the word for earth,  
and “ergon” which means to work. So what is  
georgic? It is to work the earth,  
and it pretty much sums up what it is  
right,  
it is labor, it's not odium, it's not  
free of labor, but  
it's labor. That's what georgic is,  
agricultural labor.  
So in terms of Eden, but  
also know that georgic maps rather  
nicely not to the golden age, which  
pastoral and Eden kind of line up with  
but  
to that modern age, and Ovid will  
reference this too, the iron age, so  
we do not live in a time of  
pastoral for the most part, and even  
agriculturally people working out on  
farms live in an  
era of georgic, so you can see this  
visually here, so this is a scene  
from a 16th century work by Peter Brugel,  
“The Elder,”  
and pastoral  
is, or in landscapes or shepherds  
with their sheep, so if you look  
down here  
this is a perfect pastoral scene,  
you have all the components there, you  
have a shepherd, you tell he's a shepherd,  
he has a shepherd's hook,  
you can tell that he's just looking off  
in space,  
not doing anything, he's not at all  
working hard,

and by the way, if you weren't quite sure  
if he's a shepherd, well he is,  
because well there are sheep in the  
scene  
too, so Brugel wants to say,  
Brugel sets out to  
create a pastoral scene in this work, and  
he does it,  
but georgic landscapes,  
as you would imagine, to pick  
farmers working the land, and that's what  
we have  
with this guy, how do you know  
he's a farmer, well he has a  
plow and an ox, and he's actually working  
in the land.  
It's metaphorical because he's doing a  
ton of work, it's not metaphorical,  
it's literal, but it's showing  
something big here,  
that he's actually terracing the land,  
here, so what is terracing, if  
you have a hillside  
and it's too steep to grow on, you create  
all these little steps,  
each little step is horizontal and flat  
and you can grow  
things there. You'd imagine all the work  
it would take to turn a hill  
into a terrace like this, you can't just  
do it with a plow here, wouldn't it be  
nice if this might work this way,  
but Virgil is trying to underscore, and  
he's thinking, well what's the  
most work a farmer would actually do,  
well hey taking one of those

hills and literally reshaping  
it into terrace, that's got to be a  
lot of work, so that's what I'll depict  
here, and that's what Brugel does.  
So if you're at all confused between  
pastoral and georgic,  
here it is pastoral, not doing a lot of  
work, hanging out with sheep,  
georgic, hard work, agricultural work,  
modern work, in the sense of  
this would be  
that drop bottom cloud that he's using  
is not something that the romans would  
have had, was developed during the  
medieval period, so Brugal was trying to  
actually show what  
real agricultural work is like in the  
fields, so  
they may seem very similar, so if you had  
looked at this  
picture, this painting before I  
drew attention to these, you might think  
wow, they're both pretty much the same,  
but they're  
actually quite different right,  
two very different approaches and you  
can think about this from an  
environmental point of view,  
how does this matter? Well in the one  
even though we know that pastoral  
landscapes were highly modified because  
often there was deforestation beforehand,  
and it's the pastoral enterprise and  
sense of letting sheep graze there to  
keep the forest down,  
but still it's seen as it's described as

minimal intervention in the environment,  
in other words, just letting the  
environment be the way it is, not doing  
anything to change it,  
whereas the other one, and approach  
georgic and Brugel's  
painting, is a great example of it,  
because  
there's a massive modification involved  
to the environment, it's changing  
a lot and Brugel underscores it by saying,  
you're even taking a hill  
and completely reshaping it, that's  
that's pretty big deal.  
So you can see from our modern  
perspective,  
they're very different, one  
sort of a hands-off approach to the  
environment,  
the other, changing it as  
required, including in as big a  
way as you can technologically do,  
which is what something like terracing  
is what's happening.  
So, let's talk about Virgil's georgic, so  
Virgil  
writes eclogues, and he also writes  
georgics,  
so I'll give you  
just a little background on why he does  
it here,  
Virgil is, actually, see remember Caesar  
Augustus  
played a role in the georgic, so Virgil  
writes in the narratives where Augustus  
and



in a roundabout way, Caesar Augustus had asked

Virgil to write the Georgics. He was sort of commissioned to do it, but not directly, but through sort of connections, why is it the case?

So Rome has a fascinating distinction in western history,

let me see if I can't pop up here and what that is, is Rome, the first city in the west to ever have a population of

1 million. That's huge, now

if you have a population of a million, there is infrastructure,

practical problems you need to attend to.

First,

food and water, how do you supply

everyone's food and water, well let's go

to water first because you probably know this,

Rome is famed for its aqueducts right,

aqueducts bring

in water from the hills outside

of

of Rome, and because the Rome is lower,

the aqueducts are actually to have

a pressurized water system

in Rome, believe it or not, so if you've

seen

some of these signature fountains in

Rome that are from the Roman era, and

2,000 years ago

there there's no pump pumping that water

to make those fountains

in the water come out, in fact, what's

happening is gravity  
is forcing water through pipes, pipes  
are coming to the fountain  
and then, because the water  
source is up higher  
then the fountain, water just pops up  
out of the ground.

That present the problem for the Romans  
by the way, because  
to have these pipes that were watertight  
or  
mostly watertight and work, they line  
them with lead, which of course is a  
problem because it's a poison for human  
beings,

but then shift to the other problem, and  
that is providing food for a million  
people, how do you distribute food for a  
million people?

Well you probably know the other iconic  
Roman thing that made this possible,  
and that is of course its infrastructure,  
its streets and roads, had a great  
system of roads but even so  
it's very difficult to  
transport something by way of road  
with a horse drawn cart, in fact by  
the time you get even to the 19th  
century, about the time that  
Thoreau was born  
in the United States, it was just as  
expensive and just as difficult  
to bring something 20 miles  
over land by way of horse and carriage,  
than it would be to  
try to bring it across the Atlantic by

way of boat,  
so it's very difficult, so you what you  
really want to do is have  
the food that you're transporting by way  
of roads as close as possible to  
the source, the city, the  
place it's going,  
so Rome is surrounded by all these  
beautiful  
villas and estates, and it's  
prime farmland and it's nice and close  
to the city,  
so how do you get the people there  
into the business of farming,  
they weren't too keen on doing it,  
because these are wealthy landowners and  
Rome now is the biggest city in  
the west  
ever, it's a really exciting place with a  
lot of diversions,  
most these people had this,  
their first home in the city,  
and these wealthy landowners wanted to  
spend time in the city,  
so what you have was Virgil,  
and we're going to see this with Varro  
too for another reason, but I won't,  
well I'll tell you in  
a second what it is, but Virgil's job is  
to make a celebration of country life, to  
make  
farming, the hard work of farming  
sound  
fun and worthwhile,  
and that's what the georgic set out to  
do, so you can see why Caesar Augustus,

wanting his city to be prosperous and  
making sure that there's  
sustained food  
for everyone, tries to get all these land  
owners to convert their estates to  
productive little farms, and  
his job is going to be doing it by  
way of a celebration of  
farming, you want to see Varro who's  
writing at the same time, roughly  
does the same exact thing, trying to get  
farmers to come and work there,  
but he's going to appeal to their  
pocketbooks and is going to argue,  
you can make a fortune if  
you happen to be lucky enough to have  
one of these farms surrounding Rome,  
so either way though the root  
mission here,  
and arguably the reason georgic comes  
into being when it does, anyhow  
is a celebration of hard work because  
it was needed by Rome. So  
let's go back to our prezī,  
okay let me get out of the screen here,  
so georgics are written after pastoral,  
the eclogues were written so right  
about  
30 years before the Christian era  
is inaugurated,  
begins georgic literature, although  
just  
same way we saw with pastoral, you can  
look to prior examples, and  
we did that with Sappho, was sort of  
pastoral existing before

Theocratists formally introduced it, and  
you could say the same,  
Hesiod in the works and days talks  
about georgic agricultural labor and all,  
but it's not really what we would think  
of as formal georgic at that point,  
keep in mind though so there's no  
confusion that  
Virgil's a roman writer, Hesiod is  
Greek, and the same way Theocritus is Greek  
and Virgil is Roman, so it was  
around before  
as a form, but it's really Virgil that  
puts it on the  
on the map, we'll do skip again here,  
it's another text in our tradition that  
encourages  
us to believe that human beings once  
lived at peace with the earth,  
so we had that with  
Eden in the Bible, we had it with the  
golden race, we had it was the golden  
age, we had it with pastoral literature,  
but now  
georgic too, because it maps perfectly  
with pastoral to the eudenix story, what  
I mean by that is,  
pastorals is prelapsarian,  
before the fall when there was no labor,  
then after the fall you have georgic, so  
and it actually there is explicit  
reference to that here in the text,  
and here it is, Virgil imagines  
just like the bible, just like Hesiod,  
just like Ovid, a perfect time,  
and here he gives a description

of it

in the text, "so earth yielded all of  
herself more freely when none begged her  
for her gift"

So this is not georgic labor, but this is  
before georgic labor, so  
the same story told again and again and  
again, by different people in different  
ways and different literary forms,  
but it all suggests that the earth,  
the relationship the human  
beings had with the earth was pretty  
perfect, and it's now lost.

Virgil however is now writing later  
than these other people, it's later than  
the Bible, it's later than Hesiod,  
and the story has been around literally  
for centuries, this idea,  
but he embellishes  
it, he adds a little more  
that they're, it not only was the  
great relationship we had with the  
planet, but we had a great relationship  
with each other, according to him,  
as "no tillers subdued the land,"  
no one was doing what we saw in  
that brutal painting of  
working with plausible and  
hurting the land,  
but how are people different, even to  
mark the field or divide it was unlawful,  
in other words, to  
to put a fence up and say this is my  
field and that's your field,  
this perfect time before all everything  
went wrong

there was no demarcating property there,  
why because men made gain for the common  
store,  
everyone worked together for the common  
good, no one  
even claimed to have personal property,  
everyone  
was pretty nearly a socialist in the way  
that they  
they worked, it was not for personal  
gain or profit but  
instead it was for the good of everybody  
else, for the common store, the common  
good.

So it's interesting how  
this was always imagined to be  
a great time,  
before we screwed everything up, whether  
it's Eden or the golden age or whatever,  
but people like Virgil was, I mean what  
would that be really like in that great  
time, and  
he has an answer here that would people  
would have gotten along in a much better  
way with each other,  
so and  
here we have "the great father himself,  
his willed the path of husbandry should  
not be smooth  
and made human art, human work, awaken  
the fields."

So this is not again Hebrew  
story, this is not the bible, and yet it's  
pretty darn similar to the bible, the  
great father himself, the great god of  
the whole thing,

will that husbandry, farming,  
will not be easy, and that's exactly what  
happens in the bible,  
so why are all these so similar, well  
historically we're in a  
all hearkening back to the same era,  
same part of the world, the Middle East  
where these stories would have spread  
around,  
so even though we will often think, and I  
will often talk about the Greco-Roman  
tradition being very different than the  
Judeo-Christian one,  
there is a lot of cross-pollination  
going on here, and you can see it with  
with Virgil here, that  
you could  
literally have  
taken that line "the great father himself,  
"is willed at the path of husbandry  
should not be smooth and has made  
human art awaken the fields," you could  
pretty much put that right in the Bible,  
translate it from Rome, from  
Latin into  
Hebrew, and it would make  
perfect sense in there so similar or the  
way that these are  
talked about together, very famous  
line from Virgil, from the georgic  
"toil conquered the world  
relentless unrelenting toil," that the  
line here is toil  
conquered the world and the idea and  
usually  
labor conquers all, this is a very



literal translation where  
we have the one we're reading from  
labor conquers all, so in other words  
nothing is going to come to you  
unless you work hard for it, and this  
is arguably, maybe we'll talk a little  
bit about when we get to the early  
modern period, but the so-called  
protestant work ethic is coming out of  
this too,  
although this is not Christian text  
nonetheless,  
coming out of this part of the world is  
the notion that we have to work hard for  
everything,  
and clearly the relationship that  
human beings now have, the kind of work  
that they're doing  
is a pretty adversarial one, so  
even the farmer's  
tools, I note here, they're called  
the hardy rustic weapons  
in Latin, the word is arma from  
which we get our word  
arms like firearms, without which the  
the crops could neither be sewn or  
raised so  
this is an adversarial relationship and  
is characterized by work,  
hard relentless work, and it is  
kind of like a battle, who are the  
combatants,  
human beings and the earth. Human beings  
have to  
overcome the earth so that they can  
eat and make a living,

and they will only do it through  
relentless toil to conquer the world, to  
conquer the earth.

One thing worth noting here is that  
in the pastoral, tradition and  
especially Virgil's eclogues  
there's a number of them, we just  
read one,

but it's an important one,

I tell you, you don't have to read  
them all, and I can give you a little  
spoiler here,

there's no mention of

how to be a shepherd, there's no  
mention of how to tend

sheep, or what kind of fields to have, or

how to shear sheep or anything

like that. So they're in no way

like a manual, like a useful manual.

The georgics however, contained a variety

of very practical suggestions regarding

husbandry, so the georgics are actually

are like a farming manual, and I can tell

you because I grew up on a farm and I'm

an urban farmer myself,

people still are interested in the

georgics in a practical way, if you go on

amazon or something like that, you will

find people

writing books that reference the

georgics about,

for specific advice on

farming and all.

I can tell you having grown up on a farm,

can save you a little work here too,

yeah don't do that, Virgil didn't

really have much of a clue about  
good farming, I mean it, really if  
you want to start looking to older works  
that introduce farming, you go to the  
renaissance,  
16th century, and forward, and especially  
really good advice,  
and that would be like in England and  
elsewhere, but go to  
19th century French intensive farming  
techniques outside of Paris, because  
when Paris, and Paris will be until  
the 19th century that it reaches a  
population of a million, and yet the  
same issue of how to feed all these  
people,  
and the farmland around Paris and even  
in  
Paris was very intensively being farmed  
in an  
incredibly clever way that really made  
our modern market  
gardens, which you get if you go to a  
farmers market,  
possible. So farmers markets, by the way,  
are this whole same thing we were  
talking  
about with georgic, these are local farms  
that provide food for cities, or even  
little cities like Santa Barbara, if you  
go to one of our farmers markets here,  
these farmers bring their food into the  
city,  
and I'm sorry,  
a little bit of a digression there, just  
just don't

try to do farming the way Virgil describes it.

It's very clever in a way, because Virgil is a very clever guy, to let you know that pastoral is a pretty, sort of fanciful thing, an ideological thing, but when we get to the actual work of the countryside, and georgic work, that scene is very real.

So Virgil is clear here that yes, you can talk about all this allegorically, about why we need to work and in general, but he also wants to be very clear that this is very practical advice he's offering up here, because they are meant to be basically farming manual, they have a lot of practical advice so, book one we read part of this, concerns the actual form implements, so this is why people, even today will read it so literally. So first thing you need to have, the right tools, the right arma, and what are those tools? You need plows, you need all sorts of things like that, and he sets out to describe all those. Book three is related to animal husbandry, so you need these things like plows and rakes and hoes and all, if you are growing plants, and he also talks about orchards too,

but book three then gets into the other aspect of farming, for some farms, most farms traditionally, which is also the raising of animals animal husbandry, so how do you raise pigs, how do you raise chickens, and things like that.

Book four is fascinating because it's all about beekeeping, and boy does he get a lot wrong there with beekeeping, but it again is meant to be very practical guide, again you can read it metaphorically, he intended it to be rendered metaphorically, but it's also meant to be very practical, and specifically, he talks about in detail, and this is where it's hard to, I mean this is where you realize that we've ended any hope of those particular passages being read allegorically, although people have tried, when he actually talks about how to make a plow, he means that as to how to make a plow, and how to raise plants, animals, he's writing in a very beautiful way and a sort of a celebration of how to make a plow and makes making a plow sound like fun.

But it's also the real thing, and again go back to his larger project, what he's been sort of

commissioned to do  
from, indirectly by the way of Caesar  
Augustus,  
he's trying to make  
something, even something as basic as  
making a plow,  
like a celebration, like a wonderful  
thing, I mean this country life is being  
described here,  
not like pastoral, but nonetheless like  
the life. I mean if you want to live a  
really good life and connect up with  
what is meaningful  
in life, go out to a farm,  
that's where you're going to have it.  
Incidentally this tradition doesn't die  
with  
Virgil in his georgics, but continues on for  
thousands of years including today.  
If you ever wondered why life of farmers  
is described as so wonderful, if you ever  
thought wouldn't it be great to go live  
out on a farm  
and where life is simpler and better and  
wonderful in so many ways,  
well in part Virgil, and again  
people did it before him, but Virgil  
especially,  
set the stage for celebrating that kind  
of life,  
and I can tell you, having grown  
up on a farm,  
it's not the way Virgil or people  
describe  
it, that's not the way even, I think  
there's a recent film as a

biggest little farm, I forget which, is  
the celebration of a farm  
in California, and it's very much in the  
georgic tradition, and often this is  
very  
hyperbolically described as being  
wonderful and all that,  
and farming life has  
its benefits,  
but it is not always the wonderful  
life that is portrayed in literature,  
and when people are doing it like this,  
and Virgil's case there's often a reason  
why they're doing it, it's not like  
Virgil went out to a farm one day and  
said,  
this is wonderful, I'm just going to  
describe exactly everything I see and  
make it sound so wonderful, because you  
know what, it is wonderful,  
that's not why he wrote this, he wanted  
to make it sound wonderful so people  
would go  
out there, farm that land, and help keep  
Rome as a strong city,  
and that's what Caesar Augustus wanted,  
and that's what Virgil wants to do for  
him.  
So what's interesting is  
Virgil is not the only person who writes  
a farming manual at the time, there are  
others,  
and one of them is Varro and  
let's get to him, another one of our  
roman writers,  
Varro's book is called, On Agriculture

and it is written about 36  
BCE, so it's a decade or so  
before Virgil writes the georgics and  
arguably, it had an influence on  
Virgil, so this is, in that sense Virgil  
is not the first  
farming manual by long shot written by  
Romans, and in fact there had been this  
other very popular one a decade before  
by Varro.  
There was an older one by a guy named  
Cato, and by the way these works are all  
both works by Varro and Cato entitled On  
Agriculture,  
De Agricola, and the first one,  
the one written by Cato, is arguably the  
first  
Latin book, it is the first work of  
connected Latin  
prose that we have, and that should tell  
you something pretty interesting,  
so when Roman culture  
consolidates,  
and we've seen now,  
we've seen with the Epic of Gilgamesh  
sort of predates  
written literature, and then it gets  
written down, I told you that happens the  
same with  
Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, it happens  
the same with **beowulf** in the English  
language,  
and here we have it, but the first  
written work that we know  
of was a farming manual, so when Rome  
began to grow,



and these people began to really  
consolidate themselves,  
the thing of greatest importance at  
first seemingly,  
is this agricultural project, it's  
just essential  
to keeping this, to making this city  
happen, to making this culture happen, to  
making Rome, the great power that it is,  
you have to feed all these people, and  
before  
Virgil took up writing a manual on how  
to do it,  
Cato was there, and then Varro.  
Both Cato and Varro take  
for granted that we no longer live in a  
golden age,  
in and they would likely totally agree  
with Virgil's sentiment that  
labor conquers all toil conquered the  
world, and they both set out  
very detailed plans for agricultural  
conquest,  
so there's nothing  
allegorical about these,  
Virgil, you can read him allegorically,  
people would read Cato and Varro  
allegorically in the sense there was a  
celebration of work and you should work  
hard and everything else you do in your  
life, in that sense, they're allegories,  
but they're really meant to be taken up  
as  
farming manuals, and in detail,  
and not just the,  
so imagine again who this is set out

for,  
and this would apply to Cato and Varro  
as well, as what we said about Virgil,  
these are for rich landowners right, so  
this is not for someone building,  
putting together a little garden the  
way I have at my house here, and  
where you grow some vegetables in your  
yard,  
this is for rich landowners to  
develop farms, so he talks about, they  
talk  
about the economics of it, they talk  
about how you get  
workers to do it, and by the way this is  
all done with slave labor at the time,  
so the keeping of slaves becomes a  
component of these farm manuals, and you  
think, why is that? Well  
on a large-scale farm, you need an  
agricultural staff to do it and  
in this case, it would be slaves, and then  
you have to like figure out how to  
manage them and all,  
and Cato and Varro want to help you with  
that, so yes they are farming manuals but  
not the kind of simple farming that you  
might think, hence  
Virgil because, he's so  
poetic with him,  
doesn't get into those sort of  
details, you can see why people are still  
looking to Virgil's  
farming manuals today, people might look  
to Cato and Varro, but not as much because  
it's not a poetic celebration, and it

does get into these gritty,  
in some cases very profoundly  
disturbing things like slavery.  
Let's talk about that,  
Cato for example, provides details on  
when to cut back on food rations with  
slaves,  
what's the proper age to sell them, so in  
other words,  
farm, labor, or someone working in the  
fields would be very good when they're  
younger, but when they get to be older,  
you have to keep feeding them and yet  
they don't they can't provide as much  
work,  
so in the ruthless calculations that  
someone like Cato does,  
he will tell you what age to sell  
them off, and someone else can  
feed them, and you keep getting new  
younger people and all  
to work in the fields because they  
can do more.  
It's ruthless and  
we're going to see how, like Cato and  
Varro, see the earth is just a resource  
and how we can optimize  
profit from it, see animals that way in  
particular.  
But I just want to underscore here they  
see people that way too,  
so it doesn't matter that we're  
talking about other human beings here,  
for these guys, what matters is  
profit, and if other human beings have to  
be enslaved to get you more profit,

so be it, and if you need to be ruthless  
in the way you treat them to optimize  
your profit,  
so be it, so if you  
if you think that slavery is an  
agricultural project,  
is just emerges in the United  
States in the 19th century  
Before,  
it's been around, it's been around for a  
long time and the underlying  
ethics, or lack of ethical  
precepts has been around for a long time  
too unfortunately.  
Did you find Varro boring?  
So I ask it in comparison to Virgil  
because Virgil is  
a very poetic writer, a great writer one  
that will inspire  
many people to come, but Varro  
is not a great writer, I don't think in  
that sense. Varro,  
he hits the major points,  
he describes what he wants to describe,  
but  
it's like reading a farming manual today,  
you're not you're not going to want to  
sit down and read a farming  
manual, if you're interested in reading a  
work of literature you're  
better to pick up a novel or a poem by a  
really great writer,  
but that's not what we have here, so  
apologies again because I know while  
reading some of this early stuff is  
difficult enough,

when you get to someone like Varro, it's pretty dry, sorry about that.

So let's continue with him, talking about what he writes in detail.

Cato and Varro imagine plants, animals, and the earth as not unlike slaves, and they of course lump slaves in too

here, this is not new with Roman writers, we saw it in the beginning with the Epic of Gilgamesh,

but these guys lay out detailed plans for the most efficient way possible to gain a profit from the earth,

from plants, from animals, from enslaved human beings,

so you might think, and we often talk about capitalism having emerged with the growth of so-called technological modernity,

it's actually argued angel of marx and engelfam actually argued that capitalism emerges with the rise of the working proletariat during the so-called industrial revolution, and I can see where people would make that argument, but underlying rationale for something like capitalism not on them, not modern capitalism for sure, but the underlying rationale, has been around for a long time, and I

think

as we go through the next few

lines from

from Varro, I think you can see it on

display here, and what I mean by that,

is, this is a group of people, wealthy

people,

intent on getting more wealth,

aggregating more wealth,

using their wealth and doing whatever

they have to do it, doesn't matter how

the earth is harmed, how animals

are harmed, what you do with plants, or

even other human beings,

this is about one thing, your profit,

don't forget that.

All these other things are just a means

to an end,

yeah that's a problem but anyhow let's

go.

They lay out, Cato and Varro,

the first factory farms, and again you

might think this is kind of a modern

thing,

if you read like Michael Pollan and all,

I'm talking about something

like Nominal versus Dilemma, very popular

work from the early 20th century, 21st

century,

that factory farms emerge in

the 20th century,

principally after the second world war,

but if you read what we're reading from

Varro, you'll see

that not only making farms more

efficient, but the large-scale farming

projects

clearly were being

implemented 2,000 years ago, as well.

Birds raised for food, for example,

first off, they're raised for one thing,

and one thing alone which is profit,

but the sheer scale of it the size of it

is like a factory farm, certainly at the

time. I'll give you an example in a

moment, but

know that this again is not like

people doing urban farming with

half a dozen raised beds

outside in their garden,

this is serious large-scale stuff,

that is run like a business, and for

one purpose alone,

and again, this is why the parallel

with capitalism,

it's profit, it's all about profit.

Varro

talks about the efficiency of

scale, this is something that will happen

during the so-called industrial

revolution,

and he, for example says if

you're going to grow pigeons, so first

off,

people in Rome, like us, that eat it

they ate various meat, one of them was

pigeons, they didn't grow chickens,

and significantly pigeons were the food

that they grew,

so if you're eating fowl, most likely

our go-to fowl that we would eat would

be chicken, their go-to would be pigeon.

So if you're going to be eating pigeons,  
you could just grow  
the way people had done in  
small scale  
like this, would be like family farming,  
what we sometimes call subsistence  
farming,  
you would keep some pigeons in  
your backyard, just the way I have  
chickens right over here,  
about 12 feet from me, or  
a chicken and  
very small-scale thing. Varro, Cato argue,  
that's not the way you make  
money, that's not the optimal way of  
building your profit,  
you need to create a big thing, a  
dedicated building for it  
that'll house 5,000 pigeons.  
5,000, that's huge, and that's why I said,  
it's like factory farming because  
that is like factory farming, this is not  
six or ten  
pigeons in your backyard, this is 5,000,  
huge  
building just for that, and the  
only way you're going to be able to do  
that  
is if you have a lot of money, so these  
wealthy landowners had the money,  
they could embark on this project, and  
again  
Virgil and his georgic  
celebrated this life and said  
you  
go do this it'll be great, country



life is wonderful.

Varro is taking in Cato too, a different

tax saying

use your money to make more money, if you

want to make a profit,

you're sitting on land that's going to

make you a

ton of money, but you have to do some

certain things like

build a building to house birds, build as

big as you can, build and hold as many as

5,000

because you'll get a huge return on

your money, and the only people that had

the money to do it were the ones who had

already

amassed significant capital.

One of the things that's striking about

Varro,

and I talked about it with slaves, that

he's just

inhumane the way he imagines keeping

slaves,

buy and sell them at the right

time and all, he does the same thing

with animals,

and he knows that they are sentient

beings,

and what I mean by that, pop back on here,

what I mean by that is,

he knows that these birds, for example,

pigeons

are feeling entities, that they

sense and know things, and one thing that

they've discovered, Cato and Varro, and people

on this project,

that if you have 5,000 birds and you're  
keeping them all in one big building,  
when you want to go ahead and get  
them to deliver to market and kill them,  
if you do it right there in that  
building,  
that's a problem, because you have  
ten thousand little eyes  
watching what you're doing, and they're  
suddenly seeing what this whole project  
is about, that what it's all there for  
was to keep them  
to be killed. According to Varro,  
if the birds realize that, they will  
become depressed they won't eat,  
and they will be smaller in size, and  
your profits will be lower,  
so he suggests you build a separate  
little building,  
a sequestarium, and our word sequester,  
obviously comes from that the joint  
Latin root here,  
you sequester the bird so they don't  
know what's happening, so when  
birds see someone come in and they see  
birds taking out,  
well they don't really know what's  
happening there right, maybe  
those birds are getting set free, maybe  
that's  
a good thing to be taken out, and as a  
consequence, they don't get too worried  
about it,  
they keep eating, they don't become  
depressed,  
but the underlying thing that's so

important here is that  
Varro is aware that these are thinking,  
feeling,  
creatures, that they are sentient, that  
they have emotions,  
and as a consequence, he does nothing  
there, I mean you think like if you had  
that realization one day and  
you just thought that these were  
these creatures that didn't think or  
feel at all, and suddenly one day you  
realized that they were,  
well gee, you might stop the whole  
project, and you might say I'm just not  
going to do this anymore, I had no idea  
of  
what kind of beings these were, but  
Varro says, ah no well that's a problem,  
but let's see how we can get around it,  
so  
when I drew the parallel slaves and all,  
and how ruthless he was,  
you can see it here, let's go  
to the next one.  
There is this,  
he unflinchingly pursues profit so  
when I drew  
connections to  
modern capitalism, this is why,  
he's concealing their deaths, just  
to fatten them up,  
by the way people have, looking Varro  
drawn other  
connections to modern things, you can  
see,  
you could compare the

project here  
with death camps and all, and keeping,  
so I'm thinking of the Nazis here,  
and you could see,  
concerning the fact  
that  
individuals were going to die, the same  
way it's being done with your birds,  
I think that's not unfair to  
make that connection, but I think it does  
break down very quickly,  
but you can see that sort of the  
underlying danger here, in both cases if  
you  
if you stop seeing sentient feeling  
beings, whether those are human beings,  
or birds or whatever, if you stop  
seeing it that way,  
the potential for horrific  
abuse  
and Varro lays it out here  
in terms of how you can abuse  
slaves or even the mass killing  
becomes possible again, I  
wouldn't  
push this too far and I think it  
does break down and I  
wouldn't want you to go away saying I've  
said that the same exactly, because  
they're not the same  
in many ways, but you can see  
what happens when a human being becomes  
so disconnected from the feelings of  
others,  
whether other people, or other feeling  
beings,

so this is it,  
but the way I describe it here,  
the ability to disassociate yourself  
from the feelings of  
others that's a  
disturbing  
idea, it's kind of a variation on the  
same,  
and if you if you think of others like  
you think of yourself,  
that's a different  
thing altogether, pop out for a second.  
I just want to underscore that  
that's the problem here when you  
disconnect yourself  
from other animals, other species,  
other human beings, I mean it's a  
huge potential  
issue, and it's not inherent in  
farming, it's not inherent even an animal  
husbandry,  
but it's a big issue here,  
and especially when it's done  
for the case of profit alone,  
it's  
an issue, so anyhow let's get back  
to here,  
another example, so it's not just  
that  
Varro wanted to sequester birds  
so they didn't know they were dying, but  
other ruthless descriptions here,  
the problem is if you have birds in  
the nest,  
in a building,  
and they're moving around a lot,

they're burning off the energy of the  
food, they're getting cardio right, so  
Varro suggests the better way to handle  
them is  
to break their legs in the nest, and if  
they have broken legs,  
they can't move, all they can do is eat  
and get fatter without legs so  
they can move around, they won't burn off  
those calories,  
and they will just get fatter more  
quickly than others,  
it sounds like an incredibly ruthless  
thing to do,  
well it is an incredibly ruthless thing  
to do, but  
if you're familiar, and I'm not gonna in  
this course get into  
what factory farms are like, I grew up  
on a smaller, kind of older family farm,  
but I've been to factory farms  
myself, and where they raise birds and  
in a modern building like I've been in  
for example,  
they raise not 5,000 birds but like  
18,000  
turkeys in a single building, but  
there's a law that was passed not that  
long ago in California,  
and it was kind of a milestone law, that  
you have to provide enough room whenever  
you're growing chickens for example,  
that they can turn around in the space,  
and that was heralded by  
animal rights activists as an  
achievement, that that law was passed,

but think about that for a moment the  
and that's other  
states too, but there are  
other states that don't follow this and  
what that means is,  
you're not doing what Varro is suggesting,  
breaking the legs of the birds, but  
you're packing them  
in so tightly that they can't even turn  
around,  
so if they can't move at all, then they  
don't get exercise either,  
is that more humane than breaking their  
legs, well I guess so,  
but an even more humane thing is  
have a law that lets them turn around,  
but wait that's all they can do is just  
turn around, they have  
no other moving room, this is why when  
you have  
pasture-fed chicken, you can buy this,  
it's a lot more expensive,  
where chickens have actually been  
allowed out on pastures where they can  
walk around,  
but Varro clearly is thinking about  
maximum profit, regardless of what it  
means for the animals, in this  
case the  
pigeons, and you can see the  
problem here, and you can see why I  
drew parallels to it to factory farming,  
because  
factory farms today are packing chickens  
in so close that they can't move,  
why are they doing that, and it's all for

one thing, profit.

Varro's laying

down that underlying mindset

2,000 years ago.

So let's pull some things together

that we've encountered,

and one of the reasons I want to do this

is when we talked about

Christianity, some of the things we want

to mention here,

Genesis which is

obviously a principle text in the

Christian tradition, you might have

thought that

this is only a problem with Christianity

or something, it's not, and one of the

reasons I gave you Varro

as an example, is such a great one and an

important one,

but also because to let that

this is not the Judeo-Christian

tradition but this is another

tradition and this tradition also has

profound problems with respect to how it

imagines animals, so you can't just

say

it's a Judeo-Christian tradition that

that is

resulted in the ethic that

we have toward animals today, it comes

out of other traditions,

and it also comes out of this, I don't

even call it tradition, this

mindset that we see developing here,

which is

the relentless pursuit of



profit, the underlying capitalist mindset  
that large-scale capital  
can produce more and more capital  
regardless of  
how it impacts people or animals or  
anything else, but anyhow,  
so disturbing things we've encountered  
so far this term,  
if there's no prohibition against the  
exploitation of other forms of life  
and in the myth of Gilgamesh,  
you have that right,  
you have that's what genus loki figures  
were, they  
keep exploitation from happening, but if  
you don't have those, if there's no  
protector of animals or  
features of the earth, if there's no  
genus loki of pigeons,  
you're beginning you have a problem here.  
Also to imagine us as fundamentally  
different from other life,  
and arguably the creation narrative in  
Genesis does that, human beings are  
created entirely differently,  
it opens up the possibility  
that we're  
fundamentally different, and especially  
if you're told you have dominion over  
these animals,  
you can kind of do  
whatever you want with them,  
so that's a problem, and by the  
way, you can say well,  
slaves are a little different because  
they're human beings,

but people often will find we don't have  
to go through how slavery worked in this  
period, and for one reason or another,  
being the group that the slaves come  
from or whatever, that you yourself  
are a superior type of being,  
both human beings, but you're a superior  
human being yourself,  
but anyhow if you see yourself  
fundamentally different, right  
and of course going back to the analogy  
of death camps, if you see yourself  
fundamentally different than other  
people,  
and what made the Nazi  
project  
possible was that this group saw  
themselves  
fundamentally different than Jewish  
people,  
then that became possible, in fact what I  
think is  
the most chilling line among an  
incredible number of  
chilling lines in Adolf Hitler's mein  
kampf, at one point he says,  
I don't know if I quoted exactly,  
but at one point in his life he came  
to see that Jewish people were not  
human beings, we're not human, or  
maybe he says earlier in his life  
he actually believed that they were  
human,  
but when he comes to that conclusion  
that they are not human beings,  
then it opens up the possibility for the

kind of thing we're seeing here,  
so again I'm not drawing genetic  
parallels there at all, but I  
am saying that when you disconnect  
yourself from another being,  
it opens up the possibility for  
their mistreatment, exploitation,  
murder.

If the physical realm is  
largely insignificant with soulless  
beings right, beings that  
don't have souls, as imagined  
then our treatment of the earth can  
become inconsequential,  
again, I don't want to go through details  
of religion  
of the Roman people at the time, but I  
am saying  
that this is the horrible end point  
of all this,  
if you think the Earth isn't important,  
then why  
not just not neglect it, why not do  
anything you want to it, and all the  
beings on it that aren't  
like you, it's a disturbing  
possibility here. So  
let's wrap up the georgics and  
agriculture  
and wrap up with the Romans as  
well.

It's not surprising if you've  
read these two  
that Varro's On Agriculture  
and Virgil's georgics appear in the same  
decade as they underscore that our

relationship with the planet  
is essentially adversarial,  
both accounts and it's  
the genesis account and Virgil's account  
here it's the idea that  
(get out of there for a moment) that  
this is decreed by  
god, it's also not surprising what we  
know about history that  
as Rome was growing, it was  
important to have these farms converted,  
these  
big estates converted to farmland so you  
just celebrate the farming life with  
Virgil or  
you appeal to the pocketbooks of people  
with Varro.

This adversarial relationship is  
central to the georgic  
ethic propounded by  
Virgil, it is human beings are separate  
from the planet,  
and it's a justification for the  
large-scale  
exploitation of plants and  
animals that we have  
in and Varro. Cato,  
we didn't read him but Cato was earlier  
by a century,  
and the same basic idea is put forth  
there,  
so, in a way, I want to be clear it's not  
just  
Virgil, not just Varro, it is part of  
a Roman ethic with respect to the  
relationship

to other beings, more generally and we could talk about slave culture in Rome, that would be a very complicated subject, but clearly it's how Romans related to other people was important, and it's interesting because although Virgil explored the dynamic by which individuals like Meliboeus gained an environmental consciousness, so this is the guy who understands environmental consciousness, it doesn't cause him to recast this tradition that we have from Hesiod on, to see our relationship to the planet as adversarial, right you would just assume that this guy who like Meliboeus, saw how important the trees were, told Tityrus they're calling out to you, and they need you, they're crying for you, how that guy, who who pioneers the representation of environmental consciousness and western thinking, and is an incredible milestone, how that guy then would say let's think of this as something that we have to work hard and force into the shape that we want it, so it's just an important thing to note, and in general

with this course and with history in general, even though you see things that may parallel what we have today like environmental consciousness, return to their original context in this case 2,000 years ago to Rome, yes, it is the beginning of environmental consciousness, yes, we can draw, and we can look at it to see the emergence of something but that is not this, to say that is the same exact thing that we mean today by environmental consciousness, because in this case it is clearly significantly profoundly different. This not only means that we finished with Varro and Cato and Virgil, but we've now finished with the Romans here as well, and the next thing that we have will jump way forward to the medieval period, so it's going to be huge, so we're moving along we covered a massive amount of time here and with medieval, we're going to be moving firmly into continental Europe and England as well, so big jump, big deal and a lot of interesting things coming, so I'll see you next class.

