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Poetry and the Common Weal: Conceiving Civic Utility in British Poetics of the Long Eighteenth Century

Abstract

This dissertation pursues a twofold proposition: writers of the long eighteenth century widely presumed that poetry influenced the “common weal” (the common wellbeing, conceived as a national community); and this expectation guided poetic composition even at the level of strategy or “design.” I demonstrate this claim in a series of three case studies, each of which delineates an elaborate, intertextual dialogue in which rival authors developed divergent strategies for civic reform. My analysis emphasizes the category of poiesis (poetic making), negotiated within discursive conventions of neoclassical genres. Chapters 1 and 2 argue that two verse translators of *The Works of Virgil* exploited to different ends the convention that epic poetry shaped the “manners.” Whereas John Ogilby conceived the *Aeneid* as a work that inspired “obedience” to an absolute monarch, John Dryden refashioned Virgil’s poetry to serve a limited monarchy in the wake of the English Revolution. Chapters 3 and 4 argue that two satirists of the age of Walpole tackled the “Mandevillian dilemma,” which encouraged satirists, traditionally scourges of vice, to accommodate the controversial idea that private vices had public benefits. Whereas Edward Young imagined vanity as a passion that facilitated its own reform, Alexander Pope’s *Dunciad* proved that even published expressions of malice might have virtuous effects. Chapters 5 and 6 argue that two West-Indian georgic writers divergently confirmed the commonplace that georgics modeled good agricultural management. Whereas Samuel Martin appealed to local sugarcane planters as “practical philosophers” who made “interest” and “duty” agree, James Grainger courted a metropolitan audience, ebulliently portraying a form of colonial settlement flawed at its core: riddled with disease, neglected by absenteeism, and tragically dependent on transatlantic trade to sustain its human populations. Taken together, these case studies tell a story in which visions of mixed government gradually supplant visions of monarchical absolutism and criticism of powerful public figures is increasingly theorized as a positive force in the polity. By revising our investigation of the relationship between poetry and “politics” in the long eighteenth century, I suggest, we gain access to a sophisticated communitarian discourse about the role of the arts in sustaining government.

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POETRY AND THE COMMON WEAL: CONCEIVING CIVIC UTILITY
IN BRITISH POETICS OF THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Anna M. Foy

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Eighteenth Century

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Anna Meschan Foy

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A.F.
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ABSTRACT

POETRY AND THE COMMON WEAL: CONCEIVING CIVIC UTILITY IN BRITISH
POETICS OF THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Anna M. Foy

Co-Supervisors: Suvir Kaul and John Richetti

This dissertation pursues a twofold proposition: writers of the long eighteenth century widely presumed that poetry influenced the “common weal” (the common wellbeing, conceived as a national community); and this expectation guided poetic composition even at the level of strategy or “design.” I demonstrate this claim in a series of three case studies, each of which delineates an elaborate, intertextual dialogue in which rival authors developed divergent strategies for civic reform.

My analysis emphasizes the category of *poiesis* (poetic making), negotiated within discursive conventions of neoclassical genres. Chapters 1 and 2 argue that two verse translators of *The Works of Virgil* exploited to different ends the convention that epic poetry shaped the “manners.” Whereas John Ogilby conceived the *Aeneid* as a work that inspired “obedience” to an absolute monarch, John Dryden refashioned Virgil’s poetry to serve a limited monarchy in the wake of the English Revolution. Chapters 3 and 4 argue that two satirists of the age of Walpole tackled the “Mandevillian dilemma,” which encouraged satirists, traditionally scourges of vice, to accommodate the controversial idea that private vices had public benefits. Whereas Edward Young imagined vanity as a passion that facilitated its own reform, Alexander Pope’s *Dunciad*

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Taken together, these case studies tell a story in which visions of mixed government gradually supplant visions of monarchical absolutism and criticism of powerful public figures is increasingly theorized as a positive force in the polity. By revising our investigation of the relationship between poetry and “politics” in the long eighteenth century, I suggest, we gain access to a sophisticated communitarian discourse about the role of the arts in sustaining government.

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Introduction

This dissertation pursues a twofold proposition: British writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries presumed that published poetry influenced the “common weal” (the common wellbeing, typically conceived as a national community); and this expectation influenced poetic composition. This was not a naïve or unquestioned assumption, I suggest, but an understanding of public duty, civic obligation, and published writing typical of the period more broadly. It affected the development of neoclassical genres; it affected dedicatory practices; it affected the imitation and translation of foreign texts; it affected formal innovation; it affected formal critical analyses of poetry and other public responses to published verse. I demonstrate these claims in a series of three case studies, each of which examines rival approaches to a genre of classical origins: epic, satire, and georgic. I consider, first, verse translations of Virgil by John Ogilby and John Dryden; second, verse satire by Edward Young and Alexander Pope; and, third, “West-India georgics” by Samuel Martin and James Grainger. Taken together, these selections span a chronological period of a little more than a century (roughly 1650 to 1770).

This project grew out of an attempt to answer what seemed to be, upon its initial formulation, an esoteric question: Why did seventeenth- and eighteenth-century translators such as Dryden and Pope see fit to depart from the original sense of the parent text in their published translations? At the inception of my investigation, I expected to find a collection of discrete, particular answers, and, at first, that was indeed what I found. John Denham, for instance, used a free translation of Virgil called *The*

Destruction of Troy (1656) to mourn the decapitation of a king amid the republican-controlled Interregnum; John Oldham (1681) thought it would be amusing to give Horace the voice of a modern-day, urban “Wit” in a free translation of the *Ars Poetica*. But even with this tradition of literary “Imitation” in view,¹ free translations such as *Dryden’s Virgil* (1697) and *Pope’s Homer* (1715-26) that took on the entire corpus of a revered classical author posed a more stubborn interpretive challenge. These controversial projects, which received contemporary criticism for their impudence and infidelity, seemed to me to involve too significant an investment of authorial labor and time and too substantial an outlay of community credit (subscription sponsorship, paid partly in advance) to ascribe the translators’ artistic liberties to a passing whim or a desire for covert expression of minority political opinions. A poet taking on such a grand venture, I speculated, must have approached the task with something approaching a broad-minded public motive. He must have set about the project with a strategy of transmutation and transmission that would have been apprehensible as such to some (if not all) of his contemporary subscribers, perhaps even subscribers without significant knowledge of Greek and Latin.²

¹ Cf. Harold F. Brooks, “The ‘Imitation’ in English Poetry, Especially in Formal Satire, Before the Age of Pope,” *RES* 25 (1949): 124-40; Howard D. Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain: Studies in Augustan Imitation and Satire* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1969); and Frank Stack, *Pope and Horace: Studies in Imitation* (NY: Cambridge UP, 1985).

² In this, my project builds upon the notions of mixed audience articulated in Howard Weinbrot’s “The Imitation,” *The Formal Strain*, esp. 16. Weinbrot observes that “[t]he translator and Imitator as modernizer normally direct their work towards an audience substantially unfamiliar with the original; the more ‘creative’ Imitator demands familiarity with his source and believes that much of the reader’s pleasure comes from an active comparison of the two texts.” Although I have found this statement an excellent working hypothesis in examinations of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century translation and imitation, I have gradually moved away from some of the assumptions that undergird it: that is, that imitators like Dryden and Pope necessarily envisioned their ideal audiences as readers with confident knowledge of the classics (i.e., gentlemanly or aristocratic male readers); that readerly pleasure was normally conceived in this period as an experience independent of its relation to the civic; and that status of the Greek and Roman authors in question as pagans (non-Christians) had ceased to be a crucial component of imitative practice at this point in English / British history. The thesis governing the present study reflects an effort to make

The research that emerged from this hunch has since blossomed into a larger, more general claim about the discursive expectations that shaped seventeenth and eighteenth-century poetic production. On its face, it is not a novel thesis. Numerous scholars of early-modern literature have pointed out the public orientation of poetic writing in the period and have drawn attention to a substantial body of “moral-didactic” writing under that umbrella³; there is also a vast scholarly literature on the relationship between poetry and politics in the earlier period.⁴ I therefore expect that my more capacious claim that writers of this era addressed their work to the general good will meet with little resistance from long-eighteenth-century specialists. But this insight has so far been unevenly applied in existing studies of the period, especially when it comes to poetry, and especially when it comes to the imitative traditions associated with English “Augustanism.” Due in part to the foreignness of these earlier modes of discourse to

room for these possibilities. Rather than attempting to categorize eighteenth-century Imitations—an approach that begins by taking for granted the intended civic functions of a variety of types of imitative works—I have sought to demonstrate the complexity and centrality of the question of civic function for the practitioners themselves. For instance, Ogilby and Dryden both translated *The Works of Virgil* in a manner that does justice to the letter of the text in the manner of “paraphrase”; however, they did so with different civic ends in mind—civic ends that were, at the time, of foundational significance to ideas of English citizenship, ways of understanding the relationship between church and state, and ways of understanding political action in relation to the intentions of a divine agent, and ways of understanding English culture as a culture both similar to and different from Roman culture.

³ Insofar as this phenomenon is manifested at the level of poetic voice, in an orientation toward an audience (e.g., “the public”), and as an aspect of performance, descriptive statements that have proved especially helpful to me include: Suvir Kaul, “Introduction,” *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire: English Verse in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2000), esp. 8-19, 22-23; John Richetti, “Performance in Eighteenth-Century English Verse: Form and Expressiveness,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Richmond, VA, March 27, 2009); Richard Kroll, “Review: Steven Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Culture, 1649-1689*,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 57.4 (Autumn 1994): 406; J. Paul Hunter, esp. 11-14, “Couplets and Conversation,” *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. John E. Sitter (NY: Cambridge UP, 2001), esp. 11-14, 29. Throughout the project, I have avoided a mode of analysis that emphasizes partisan affiliations; however, my juxtaposition of rival approaches to poetic production are sympathetic to Christine Gerrard’s examinations of “the way in which poetic form both mirrored and embodied party-political debate in the early years of the century.” See “Political Passions,” *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, 37.

⁴ Scholarship of this nature discussed in the chapters that follow includes studies by Annabel Patterson, Stephen Orgel, Steven Zwicker, Tanya Caldwell, Paul Hammond, John Barnard, Howard Erskine-Hill, Howard Weinbrot, Maynard Mack, Laura Brown, Carole Fabricant, Pat Rogers, Rachel Crawford, John Gilmore, Keith Sandiford, Markman Ellis, and Jim Egan.

modern conceptions of the nature and function of poetic writing, the vague impression that writers like Pope shunted their civic energies into the emulation of esteemed classical models has often acted as a kind of explanatory placeholder for what was actually a complicated intertextual discourse about the status of England (or Britain) as a nation both similar to and different from Ancient Rome, possibly for the better. I have attempted in this project to make comprehensible some of the elements of Roman literary history that were taken up by British “Augustan” authors as images of historical transition that they wished to embrace, as models that they wished to emulate or transcend in their own civic service, and as notions of colonial governance that they wished variously to adopt and to reject.⁵

In all three case studies, my conclusions about the intentions and civic strategies of well-known authors depart significantly from the pictures painted in established scholarship. In the account that follows, Dryden emerges in his late career not as a disillusioned Jacobite sympathizer, looking to Augustan Rome with nostalgia and longing as the wished-for ideal of monarchical leadership, but as a theorist of limited monarchy

⁵ That is, I have sought to build on the work of Howard Weinbrot and Howard Erskine-Hill in particular. See *Augustus Caesar in ‘Augustan’ England: The Decline of a Classical Norm* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978) and *The Augustan Idea in English Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983). My approach finds a point of convergence between these two important studies. I follow Weinbrot in thinking that a good deal of late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century writing demonstrates thoughtful skepticism (among both Whigs and Tories) about the fitness of Augustus’s monarchical example for modern England / Britain, and I am admittedly more sympathetic to Weinbrot’s reading of Pope’s *Epistle to Augustus* than to Erskine-Hill’s. However, my adherence to this qualified “Whiggish” view of the period does not preclude an appreciation of the forms of reverence for Augustus’s example that characterized the mid-seventeenth-century in particular—a period of central concern in Erskine-Hill’s study—and that can still be glimpsed in the eighteenth century. Advocates of defining ideals of royal absolutism can be found among a few eighteenth-century figures discussed in the project (cf. Richard Blackmore, as late as 1728; also Samuel Martin; and, to a lesser extent, Edward Young). The dialogic structure of the present study attempts to come to terms with the diversity of long-eighteenth-century responses to what I take to have been a central civic question in the period: where to place the limited monarchy of England / Britain on a spectrum between absolutist monarchy and republicanism (or, more coarsely, between monarchical tyranny and republican anarchy)—a inquiry that conditioned and was conditioned by an interest in the Roman age of Augustus, which was often understood to have occupied a similarly liminal position.

who embraced the foundational shift in English government that he understood to be represented in the Revolution. Pope emerges in my account of the *Dunciad* controversy not as an elitist writer, decrying the degeneration of his day with an eye to grander classical models, but as a writer more invested in gaining the attention of “the people” than has often been assumed, and one whose testing of the limits of his “liberty” promised to excite the British realm of letters to a retaliatory exertion of its singular vitality. Moreover, Grainger emerges in my reading of *The Sugar-Cane* (1764) not as an incompetent, second-rate “Augustan,” laughed at by his fellow “wits” for singing of “rats,” but as a prescient and delicate-minded poet, steeped in classical knowledge and thoughtfulness about civic questions, who sought a means of bringing to Britons’ attention the undeniable flaws of an entrenched system of imperial slavery in which they were implicated by virtue of their commercial expenditures. In all three cases, my analyses give due consideration to the rival predecessors whom these self-identified “wits” engaged with their writing—lesser-known writers who have sometimes been dismissed or ignored as viable interlocutors in modern treatments of the subject. This has been a principal aim of my project: to show that by holding fast to a simple idea—a thesis with which many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars will concur—one can shed new light on a familiar phase of literary production.

In the process, I have sought to emphasize the singularity of this peculiar period of British literary history. The idea that the health of a society is somehow related to the production and dissemination of poetry—or, more generally, the arts—is by no means unique to Enlightenment Britain. Within the Western tradition, it is as least as old as Plato’s *Republic*, where Socrates strategically retained “hymns to the gods and praises of

famous men” in his plan for a state otherwise purged of potentially disruptive mimetic performances, and it has survived into our own era, both within and against W. H. Auden’s taut proposition that “poetry makes nothing happen.”⁶ But even in the long view of these questions, the period of British history comprised in my study constitutes a singular case. This was a period in which British writers developed a remarkable variety of theories about how societies should be organized in order to bring about the greater good, about how published writing of all kinds threatened or contributed to the general wellbeing, and about how poetry in particular affected the manners, morals, and imaginations of readers and auditors. This was a period in which a monarchical system of government was increasingly affected by a democratic sensibility—a combination that opened the door for politicians and poets alike, whether in opposition to the current regime or touting a majority opinion, to present themselves as would-be agents of positive social change. And this was a period in which poetry was a pervasive literary form. About half of published writing in Britain during the eighteenth century was verse.⁷ Whether issued in pamphlets or in more expensive folios, poetry was widely understood as a distinguished form of public speech, a form appropriate for remarking on current events, debating politics, and meditating on aspects of modern life. Moreover, the reading and writing of poetry were not considered the domain of specialists to the degree that they are today. Ordinary people composed poetry in their spare time, read it aloud for amusement, presented it to friends in letters; schoolchildren translated the

⁶ “In Memory of W. B. Yeats” (1940), in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 4th ed., eds. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy (NY and London: WW. Norton, 1996), 1368-69.

⁷ According to John Brewer, poetry “account[s] for 47 per cent of all titles.” See *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1997), 172.

classics into English verse. In this environment, it made sense to speak of poetry as having a relationship with a “common” reader and perhaps even a “common” wellbeing.

I: The Guiding Concept

The old-fashioned phrase in my title—“common weal”—facilitates the project’s principal conceptual intervention. Adapting to literary-historical ends a method employed by historians of ideas such as J.G.A. Pocock, Albert Hirschman, and J.C.D. Clark in the 1970s and 1980s and Paul Slack more recently, I take as my central analytical term a phrase rich in significance in an earlier period but perhaps less resonant in our own. To speak of the “common weal” in the early modern period was to speak of both the *common wellbeing*, as an idea, an ideal, and a felt reality, and the political body in which that idea might be realized: the *commonwealth*, a designation generally associated with the nation. The term has a long discursive history. “Common weal” was a term important in English law and political philosophy as far back as the fifteenth century, when local governments became “increasingly involved in ... regulating alehouses, vagrants, illicit sexual behavior, and unruly pastimes.”⁸ In politics, to proclaim one’s commitment to the common weal during this period was to employ what Slack has described as a rhetorically “flexible, all-purpose tool,” a tool that could be used on both sides of the same question to ends that may have been either sincerely reformist or hollowly politic.⁹ Its application in legal and political discourse quickly expanded to include not only local issues, but also national ones, and it incorporated a strain of philosophical abstraction in the process. Whether registering their commitment to the

⁸ *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (NY: Oxford UP (Clarendon), 1999), 5.

⁹ Slack, *From Reformation to Improvement*, 12.

common weal or claiming their intent to analyze it, theorists entertained a diversity of concrete concerns and intangible aspirations: the moral condition of society, its economic prosperity, its temperament and general happiness, the physical health of its populations, the presence of luxuries, the need for concrete improvements (roads, buildings, etc.), the need for social reform, the structure of the government. The term remained in common parlance in this sense throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before receding from general use around the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

As an orienting device, this analytical term serves two related ends. First, it serves a descriptive purpose. In its persistent semantic ambiguities, “common weal” comes closer than any other available term to portraying the distinctive orientation of much of the public poetry that was produced during the long eighteenth century while making room for a diversity of conceptions of nation, audience, and rhetorical strategy within that broader rubric. Writers addressing “Britain” or “Britannia” did not necessarily wish to differentiate between a political body and an idea of its wellbeing or between the imagined citizens of Britain and the actual readers of their published writings. Nor did they necessarily wish to differentiate between the nation’s monetary “wealth” and its citizenry or between the nation’s “wealth” and its “weal,” the health and wellbeing of its people. Indeed, a number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century genres often depended upon and explored such elisions. The royal panegyric, for instance, capitalized on a productive distance between realism and idealism by flattering a monarch into reform. Georgic discourse, occupying a similar space between concrete practicality and abstract principle, figured the nation’s “weal” as a product of well-

¹⁰ The *OED* labels “common weal, commonweal” “archaic.” The last colloquial citations of the are 1850 (for its sense as “the whole body of the people, the body politic”) and 1874 (for its sense as “Common well-being”).

managed “wealth.” And a great many long-eighteenth-century writers invoked the Horatian dictum that literature should “instruct” and “delight”: that is, it should serve at least one of these twin aims, or, better yet, it should instruct *by* delighting, a didactic ideal better captured by the phrase “poetry and the common *weal*” than the comparatively moral connotation of “poetry and the common *good*.” Not all of the writers whom I discuss here actually employ the term “common weal”; however, the nexus of cognates contained in the term and the rich discursive history lying behind it prove powerful enough in their residual conventions and biases to provide an anchor for the juxtapositions explored here.

This orienting term serves additionally to offer an entry point into the imaginative logic informing an earlier set of ideas about the dissemination and circulation of potentially influential texts. Consider Samuel Johnson’s definitions of “commonweal, commonwealth”:

1. A polity; an established form of civil life.
2. The publick; the general body of the people.
3. A government in which the supreme power is lodged in the people; a republick.¹¹

As the phrasing of Johnson’s definitions suggests, all three senses of the term turn on the image of the body politic: a “polity” identifiable as a unit because of shared conventions of “civil life,” a “general body” known as “the publick,” and a government “lodged in the people.” The image of the state as a human body or a group of human bodies that move collectively is a surprisingly capacious metaphor. As in Johnson’s definitions, it sustains both an emerging idea of a democracy—“a government in which the supreme power is

¹¹ *A dictionary of the English language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers. To which are prefixed A history of the language, and An English grammar.* By Samuel Johnson, A.M., 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London, 1756), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 4, 2010).

lodged in the people”—and the idea, longer-standing in England, that the monarch, who is often conceived as the head of the body, is the organ with “supreme power” over the rest of the body¹²: the agent responsible for providing nourishment to the constituent parts, managing the intake of luxuries, suppressing rebellions, purging inimical influences when the populace is ailing, and controlling the introduction of salutary foreign elements when it seems that such innovations might improve the general health of the state. One could speak of a “common weal” without imagining it as a community that fell within national borders, as in the idea of a “commonwealth of learning” or a “Christian common weal.” But in the case studies dealt with here, invocations of the common wellbeing are almost always shaped by a sense of the English or British nation as the community of primary concern, imagined both in comparison and in rivalry with other nations and peoples, ancient and modern. Largely through the metaphor of the body politic, this cluster of conceptions about the possible relationships between governments and citizens, between “polities” and individual actors, made room for eighteenth-century Britain’s peculiar hybridity (monarchical and democratic, religious and secular, aristocratic and mercantile, rural and urban¹³).

II: Critical Applications

¹² “Commonwealth” was of course one of the names of Cromwell’s republican government; however, the terms “common weal” and “commonwealth” were used to refer to monarchical government as well. See Slack (cited above) and Whitney R. D. Jones, *The Tree of Commonwealth, 1450-1793* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, Inc., 2000). “Common weal” was one of any number of terms used during the eighteenth century to theorize social reform and improvement: “common good,” “general good,” “public weal,” “general welfare,” and “weal-public.” These terms, like “common weal” itself, were in some cases direct translations of foreign phrases that appeared in continental and classical discourses on the subject of social and political reform (e.g., Fr. *bien commun, bien public*; Ital. *ben comune*; the Latin *res publica, res commnis*). The connection with the notion of a “republic” is especially obvious in the Latin phrases; however, “common weal” is also a wholly English term—a compound of Latinate and Teutonic etymological origins not readily translated back into Romance languages.

¹³ These pairings are J.C.D. Clark’s, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2nd ed (NY: Cambridge UP, 2000), 14-15.

Carrying forward this suggestive conceit can open up a new understanding of an earlier set of ideas about poetry's potential relationship to the civic wellbeing: ideas about how and where texts should circulate, to whom they should be addressed, and how the poet should position him- or herself as an agent of change in the common weal. It helps to render visible nuances of political affiliation and political outlook difficult to capture with party labels—nuances detectible not only as expressions of personal temperament, mood, or worldview, but also as strategies of influence that enact, rather than making explicit, visions of national reform and improvement, or as shows of confidence in the agency of an intended audience. To a staunch believer in absolute monarchy, for instance, the most efficient means of addressing the common weal was typically to win the monarch's ear; this was the ideology that had shaped the Stuart masque and the royal panegyric, both of which unfolded amid lavish displays of wealth and privilege in the confines of aristocratic and royal courts. Royal propaganda, somewhat more democratically, located the poet's capacity for civic influence in his or her ability to appeal to "the people" in ways that strengthened or reconciled them to a proper relationship with their rightful administrative agent—a strategy that gave some credence to public opinion as an agent of change in the commonwealth. More democratic still were performances addressed to "the public" that insinuated an oppositional relationship to the monarch or his ministers. And all of these strategies were informed in one way or another by an understanding of England (or Britain) as a hierarchical body whose stability was sustained, if not wholly guaranteed, by traditions that allocated the obligation to rule and its attendant educational duties by birth, with some mobility of station and educative opportunity for the "gentle" classes, and with notable restrictions on

these privileges, obligations, and duties for women, minority religious affiliations, and illiterate commoners. Any performance aimed at disseminating or imitating the classics necessarily grappled with this understanding. An investigation of poetry's relationship with the common weal in the early modern period therefore encourages a holistic vision of literary production and literary dialogue. As such, it draws from and engages with a variety of scholarly subspecialties: literary criticism, ideology critique, bibliography, cultural history, reception history, political history, the history of ideas, the history of science.

It also encourages a renewed attention to generic affiliations—a line of inquiry pursued centrally in the present study. A common feature of early-modern poetry manuals, treatises on poetry, and essays charting the “origin and progress” of poetry was the enumeration and discussion of various poetic “kinds”: hymns, odes, ballads, elegies, “lyrics” or songs, satires, eclogues, georgics, epics, stage drama (typically divided into comedy and tragedy), epithalamions, and love poetry.¹⁴ These generic labels, together with the historical and analytic discussions that attended their enumeration, provided the intellectual foundations for imagining a healthy variety of potential civic functions for poetry. Hymns and odes praised gods and important men (and sometimes women); tragedies, comedies, and epics represented the behaviors of princes by honoring good princes and mocking tyrants; elegies lamented the deaths of loved ones while

¹⁴ Cf. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London, 1589); Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* or *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London, 1595); René Rapin, trans. Thomas Rymer, *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poetry, Containing the Necessary, Rational, and Universal Rules for Epick, Dramatick, and other Sorts of Poetry* (London, 1674); John Sheffield, *An Essay on Poetry* (London, 1682); Charles Gildon, *The Complete Art of Poetry* (London, 1718); Lewis Crusius, *The Lives of the Roman Poets* (London, 1732); Hugh Blair, *Heads of the Lectures on Rhetorick, and Belles Lettres* (Edinburgh, 1767); Thomas Gray, *The Progress of Poesy. A Pindaric Ode*. (London, 1768). In the famous Romantic debate hashed out in *The Four Ages of Poetry* (1820) and *A Defence of Poetry* (comp. 1821-22), Thomas Love Peacock and Percy Shelley reprise this central question of the origin, civic function, and efficacy of poetry, although without the sustained attention to genre.

epithalamions rejoiced at a new marriage; and so forth. This way of thinking about poetry's social functions was invigorated by, though not limited to, a lingering notion of poetry as a form of public utterance integral to rituals and occasions of social assembly. The frontispiece illustration of Ogilby's translations of Virgil depicted a courtly ceremony in which the poet offered praise and instruction to a righteous monarch and his entourage; Grainger's *Sugar-Cane* is organized around a series of direct addresses to "the planter"; satire was routinely depicted as a genre that incorporated the donning and doffing of masks, whether to expose vice or to facilitate its lashing; dedications of all kinds sought out worthy aristocratic patrons, as if to insist that the reading of the text at hand should optimally occur in the space of the sprawling English estate of the addressee singled out in the document (or in others like it). Whether or not the poems in question were actually *read* by the monarchs or planters or vicious Britons to whom they were ostensibly directed, these patterns of address and elements of staging contributed to a sense of poetic production as a performance that took shape before an attentive audience in a social setting—a performance made public by the medium of print. The conversational quality of long-eighteenth-century verse, which has been singled out as a distinguishing feature of the period's poetic production, sustained and was sustained by this sense of performance.¹⁵

A corollary thesis of my main argument is that, thanks in part to this guiding sense of performance, generic distinctions not only provided a means of perceiving a variety of available routes to serving the common weal; they also provided a basis for conceiving and announcing forms of discursive innovation—interventions in an ongoing dialogue about how "the moderns" stood apart from "the ancients" and how poetry might

¹⁵ Again, see J. Paul Hunter, "Couplets and Conversation," esp. 11-12.

best contribute to the common weal in the modern era. Recent scholarship on long-eighteenth-century imitative practices has often emphasized creative, innovative, and “original” aspects of ostentatiously derivative forms of composition. In the present study, I put forward the harmonious thesis that eighteenth-century authors drew energy from purposeful contemplations of the civic function(s) traditionally attached to a given genre. The history of the ode offers perhaps the most efficient illustration of this phenomenon of generic adaptation. In the eighteenth century, the ode was, as it still is, a genre dedicated to expressions of praise, adoration, and rapt contemplation. This baseline expectation undergirded a variety of long-eighteenth-century odic experiments: Abraham Cowley’s English rendering of Pindar as an untamed, mercenary flatterer of local Greek potentates; Anne Finch’s mercurial meditations on *The Spleen* (1713) in unruly Pindaric stanzas; Thomas Gray’s more closed, more Horatian, comic-elegaic *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes* (1748) (to take just one of his many experiments with the ode form); John Keats’s reprisal of the ode to dramatize a private, secular mode of sacralization. Not all eighteenth-century odes were actually *expressive* of praise, adoration, and rapt contemplation, but most of them were undergirded in one way or another by this baseline understanding of the staging and nature of the odist’s discourse—an expectation that the poet might work both within and against in a modern adaptation of the genre.

The genres that I examine centrally here—epic, satire, and georgic—sustained an especially intimate and forceful association with authorial claims to influence the common weal in the long eighteenth century. All three genres were conceived as genres dealing with fundamental questions of management and government: respectively, the

government of princes and their people, the government of the passions, and the management of agricultural prosperity (conceived at the time as the basis of successful settlement). Moreover, all three genres were especially ripe for the kinds of strategic adaptations of classical genres for modern ends that theorists of the period associated with the term “design”: an intention for public dissemination, or, more technically, the organizing structures of a composition that could be expected to produce a predictable effect on a normative audience. All three genres had been thoroughly analyzed by neoclassical critics in printed treatises, sometimes in keeping with neo-Aristotelian conceptions of poetic influence, and sometimes in accordance with more imaginative, localized readings of important classical precedents (Joseph Addison’s treatise on Virgil’s *Georgics*, for instance). Although readily dismissed as narrow-minded and restrictive discussions of “the rules” of poetry, these discussions of points of style and structure were founded upon clear and sometimes compelling analyses of the intended civic function of a specific set of esteemed performances—Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, for instance. Writers of the day did not respond slavishly to these treatises and the conceptions of civic function that they delineated. On the contrary, they used the descriptions and prescriptions of contemporary theorists as compositional hints and as “rules” not only to follow, but to flout.

The three case studies developed here are intended to show this compositional practice in motion. Each case study discusses two comparable performances—for instance Ogilby and Dryden’s respective translations of Virgil’s corpus for modern England, which I argue were guided by divergent appraisals of the potential civic function(s) of the *Aeneid*. This technique of controlled juxtaposition illustrates both the

phenomenon of generic adaptation sketched above and the depth at which poetic compositions of the day were penetrated by contemplations of civic utility. In addition, it facilitates a perusal of the complex forms of intertextuality that persisted in the period—intertexts that not only brought together rival contemporary poets in dialogue, debate, and emulation, but also, in the very act of modernization, provided as a kind of backdrop for the performance an implicit commentary on the fitness of ancient poetic models for modern English / British culture. Thus, for instance, in producing rival adaptations of Virgil's *Aeneid* for a modern context, Ogilby and Dryden almost necessarily provided a statement about how (if at all) the original civic functions of Virgil's text and/or Virgil's civic role as a king's poet could and should persist into the modern era.

This organization serves the additional purpose of making comprehensible the battles of civic ideals shaping several literary exchanges that brought the so-called "wits" into rivalry and debate with their declared opponents, who were often described as "pedants" or "dunces." Unlike some of their more earnest contemporaries, "wits" such as Dryden and Pope typically did not lay out their civic intentions plainly. Instead, they left these strategies to be tested and enacted in the reading experiences of variously wise and unsuspecting audiences, and their performances very often taunted and entertained contemporary audiences by playing against established discursive expectations or otherwise calling into question the perceived necessity of public spirit. This approach took its shape from the battle between the Ancients and Moderns, whose most dramatic flourishing in the late seventeenth century pitted Richard Bentley's philological interpretations of the classics against the notion that classical literatures should serve a

gentlemanly education.¹⁶ My central juxtaposition of rival strategies for affecting the common weal defers to this dialogic structure, which not only provides a practical means of illuminating the civic rationales that guide “witty” performances otherwise difficult to explicate, but also, in this illumination, provide a fresh perspective on the insults that these sometimes heated exchanges elicited.

The resulting analysis balances conceptual rigor with detailed immersion in the particular nuances of a given generic dilemma. Each case study stands somewhat apart from the others in the history of ideas that it seeks to acknowledge, the generic expectations that it seeks to understand, the forms of evidence and analytical methods upon which it relies, and, indeed, the visions of “poetry” and “the common weal” that it seeks to unpack. At the same time, however, a historical progression can be glimpsed both within and around the edges of this loose collection of local investigations, which reveals a tendency toward cumulative innovation, such that the foundations of one theory are reoriented or otherwise adapted to the needs of a new moment. I will now offer a brief overview of that historical progression here, stopping along the way to highlight several terms and concepts that have remained central to the analysis.

III: Charting a History of Strategies of Civic Reform

At the start of the period covered in the present study, one of the most influential concepts in poetic theory (especially theories of “Heroick Poesie”) was the idea that poetry should reflect and inspire “obedience” to a righteous monarch. This concept locates a capacity for civic influence in the poet’s ability to render the monarch worthy of

¹⁶ See Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991).

the “obedience” of his peers, if not also to encourage the common people’s deference to the landed classes. Readily elided with ideas of divine right and ideals of obedience to divine law, this mode of poetic influence was conceived as a foundational capacity of poetic utterances to contribute something useful to the polity. Indeed, early-modern treatises charting the “origin and progress of poetry” routinely began with the mythical tale of Orpheus taming wild beasts with his sweet music, thereby rendering poetry the very basis of civilized existence.

Consider, as an illustrative example from this earlier chronological phase, Sir William D’Avenant’s discussion of the civic purpose of epic poetry in the Preface to his original epic, *Gondibert* (1650). Composed in exile during the Interregnum, and addressed to Thomas Hobbes, the prefatory essay lays out a theory of epic poetry, providing in the process what proved to be a seminal discussion of poetry’s relation to “the Foure cheef aides of Government”: “*Religion, Armes, Policy, and Law.*”¹⁷ D’Avenant begins by acknowledging as a problem the dissolution of the proper relationship between “Masters” and their subjects. “Wee haue obseru’d,” he notes, “that the People since the latter time of Christian religion, are more vnquiet then in former Ages; so disobedient and fierce, as if they would shake off the ancient imputation of being Beasts, by shewing their Masters they know their owne strength.”¹⁸ The problem, D’Avenant claims, is that attempts at government have relied unduly on physical coercions:

[W]ee shall not erre by supposing that this coniunction of Fourefold Power hath faild in the effects of authority, by a misapplication; for it hath rather endeauord

¹⁷ William D’Avenant, *The Preface to Gondibert, An Heroick Poem, Written by Sir William D’Avenant; with an Answer to the Preface by Mr. Hobbes* (Paris, 1650), in *Early English Books Online* (accessed July 7, 2010), 105.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

to preuaile vpon their bodys, then their minds; forgetting that the martiall art of constraining is the best; which assaults the weaker part; and the weakest part of the People is their mindes.

This line of reasoning then opens the door for an assertion of poetry's comparative coercive power over the "Minde":

[T]he subject on which they should worke is the Mind; and the Minde can never be constrained, though it may be gain'd by Persuasion: And since Persuasion is the principall Instrument which can bring to fashion the brittle and misshapen mettall of the Minde, none are so fitt aides to this important worke as Poets: whose art is more then any enabled with a voluntary, and cheerfull assistance of Nature; and whose operations are as resistlesse, secret, easy, and subtile, as the influence of Planetts.¹⁹

Poetry, in other words, delights its readers into submission. Its portraits of princely heroes invite admiration and contentment, and they teach the monarch and his peers—whom D'Avenant considers to be the models imitated by the rest of society—to carry themselves with dignity and appropriate deference. Poetry has great potential as an "aide of Government" in that respect. By contrast to the persuasions of "divines," D'Avenant argues, poetry does not rely on coercive threats, seconded by force, to keep people behaving well: "[T]he persuasions of Poesy in stead of menaces, are Harmonious and delightfull insinuations, and never any constraint; vnlesse the ravishment of Reason may be call'd Force. And such Force, (contrary to that which *Diuines, Commanders, Statesmen* and *Lawyers* use) begets such obedience as is never weary or grieu'd."²⁰ On these grounds, D'Avenant goes so far as to argue that poetry might effectively supplement all four of the floundering "aides of Government" and help them to work more efficiently in relation to one another.

¹⁹ Ibid., 106-07.

²⁰ Ibid., 109.

D'Avenant's concept may seem foreign on several counts: his notion that obedience is an essential basis for an orderly society, his notion that "Common" persons are ignorant and unteachable, his assumption (implicit here, but spelled out elsewhere) that women's only part in this picture is to obey their husbands and bear children, and, perhaps most of all, his idea that "Poesy" can "fashion the brittle and misshapen mettall of the Minde" and lead its readers to submit to its "Harmonious and delightfull insinuations" in predictable and even coercive ways, notwithstanding the unruly nature of humankind. One of my principal aims in this project has been to perform what I see as an act of translation: not only a translation of key terms, but an imaginative reconstruction of how the six writers in question appear to have envisioned their own poetry working on the minds and hearts of their readers. The idea that citizens should be obedient, for instance, is not so far-fetched. For all the fascination with civil disobedience that necessarily (and happily) pervades a democratic culture, most inhabitants of the contemporary United States presumably do not find it unreasonable to obey traffic patterns established by the state, to pay their taxes, to obey the laws, to obey the instructions of their superiors at work; moreover, most inhabitants of the contemporary United States would presumably find the possibility of a violent civil war disagreeable and undesirable. For us, too, then, a given community's ability to sustain such order—to keep civil war at bay—very often rests on the inculcation, from one generation to the next, of shared conventions about safe, civil behavior: "obedience," as it were. D'Avenant is making a claim about poetry's capacity to influence what we would call "culture."

A second nuance of this vision of the poet's place in the body politic proves relevant to subsequent history. D'Avenant writes of "Government" not as a burdensome administrative apparatus, full of bureaucrats pushing papers, but as an active and ongoing assertion of leadership that has a variety of tools (such as poetry) at its disposal: that is, "*Government*" with an emphasis on the French participial ending in its present progressive sense, as distinguished from the more passive idea of "governance" as the fact of sitting at the top of the heap, existing in the happy condition of being the one in command. This notion of "Government," with its attendant "aides," persisted in a similar form through the period treated in this project. Major poets such as Dryden and Pope and even some lesser-known poets of the day (some of whom I will discuss here) appealed to this notion that the poet could be a supplement to—or, as later poets would imagine it, a "check" to—the monarch's executive arm or the forms of social control exerted by the other "aides" of government mentioned here: the pulpit, the courts, the military, Parliament. According to this conception, poets' claim on the common weal rested in their ability to affect the "manners" (Latin *mores*, French *moeurs*) of their readers, a category that included all kinds of social and cultural norms and behaviors relevant to the life of the general public: attitudes toward authority and tradition, attitudes toward civic progress, sensibility toward convicts and prostitutes, codes of politeness, gender roles, religious convictions, and, to borrow Dryden's phrase, "Habits of the Mind." The poet's "Government" of the manners of his or her readers—or, in a few conceptions, the "passions" of his or her readers—was often conceived as a parallel task to the acts of government associated with monarchs and their parliaments. Indeed, masterful poets such as Virgil and Homer were sometimes described as monarchs or generals for the way

they governed the masses. And although this concept of poetic government was primarily gendered male, women writers of the period could be found appealing to it as well—Eliza Haywood, for instance, whose amatory fiction both painted the passions and sought to govern them in titillated readers.

What did not survive unaltered into the poetic productions of subsequent decades was the vision of the body politic upon which D’Avenant’s notion of poetic influence had drawn. If D’Avenant’s stark, Hobbesian vision of the relationship between human nature and (royal) civic authority can ever be said to have held sway, it certainly began to cede the field to an idea that the body politic may actually benefit from certain kinds of productively-controlled, internal conflict—and not only in the coerced *suppression* of disobedient, sinful, or self-assertive impulses, but in the harnessing of such energies so they might contribute vitality and growth to the body politic. Even in the contemporary work of John Ogilby, a royalist otherwise sympathetic to the vision of the body politic developed in D’Avenant’s theory of poetic influence, ambition was conceived as a means of uniting meritorious subjects with righteous monarchs; and, in the early eighteenth century, Edward Young eventually recast this concept in a satire designed to harness the vital energies of the love of fame (vanity)—a vision of the commonwealth still hierarchical in nature, but managed in its guiding system of rewards and promotions by an ambitious minister (Robert Walpole) rather than by the King himself. Like these two men, many subsequent writers—even royalist writers—displayed more confidence in the capacity of “common” readers (gentlemen commoners especially) and eventually women, too, as thinking, public-spirited agents of positive change in the commonwealth—readers

with the capacity to be instructed by and, indeed, to produce writing that promised to assist the “government” of the polity in a manner that D’Avenant had found appealing.

Moreover, by the time of D’Avenant’s death, there were already persuasive, alternative means of envisioning literature as a product of human art that might serve the polity not only by delighting its readers into submission, but also by delighting them into contemplation and reflection or—more boldly—providing them with a reading experience that sharpened the wits. In *Paradise Lost* (1667), John Milton, D’Avenant’s republican contemporary, had laid the groundwork for a hermeneutics of reasoned obedience by making Satan the structural hero of the work, whose attractiveness becomes, for the spiritually-minded, a force to *resist* rather than to submit to or to imitate. Although the republicanism undergirding Milton’s theological epic did not itself prove immediately influential, the notion that poetry could contribute to the common weal by testing its readers’ virtuous instincts proved especially attractive. Thomas Creech promoted one such theory in the Preface to his translation of Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura* (1682), a controversial text at time, whose materialist philosophy Creech identified (interestingly) as a primary influence on Hobbes. In the Preface, Creech explains nonchalantly that he has only published this translation as an afterthought: it had originally been written, he says, “for the satisfaction of a *Private Gentleman*,” but then “a *stronger Reason forc’d a Publication*, For I have heard that the best Method to overthrow the *Epicurean Hypothesis* (I mean as it stands opposite to Religion) is to expose a full system of it to publick view.”²¹ This titillating announcement is belied only by his omission of some of the naughtiest bits of the text (depictions of sex): “I have

²¹ Thomas Creech, trans., *T. Lucretius Carus the Epicurean Philosopher His Six Books De Natura Rerum Done into English Verse, with Notes* (Oxford, 1682), in Early English Books Online (accessed July 7, 2010), image 8, italics reversed.

endeavoured faithfully,” Creech writes, “to disclose his meaning, show him whole, and entire, unless in the Fourth Book, where some few Verses are omitted, for Reasons obvious enough.”²² Creech was the first English poet to translate and publish virtually the whole of Lucretius’s text—a gesture that registered comparative confidence in his “vulgar” (Latinless) readers’ ability to deal productively with a potentially dangerous text. Permissiveness, however, had its limits.

To be sure, the persistence of D’Avenant’s assumption that the foundations of a happy body politic rested on the “obedience” of the monarch’s subjects cannot be overestimated. This was an age in which writers routinely signed their dedications and personal letters, “Your most humble and obedient servant,” and even a theory of reception such as Creech’s is authorized by the presumption that reasoned obedience—both to God and to secular systems of government—will be the end result of the dissemination of a controversial text. Writers who eventually theorized productive resistance to the monarch (Dryden among them, as I will argue here) typically did so purposefully and carefully—and not only because they feared censorship or charges of sedition, but also because they may well have had faith that the most effective means of reforming and improving the body politic was to do so from within, keeping its organizing structures intact and realigning its animating energies rather than shaking it to its foundations. Writers after D’Avenant also proved reluctant to dispense with D’Avenant’s confidence in the possibility that a skillful writer could manipulate the passions and interests of his reader in an authoritative fashion—a concept that arguably borrowed credence from paternalistic and hierarchical visions of the social order. It was too useful and too central a precept of poetry and rhetoric to abandon. But it was

²² Ibid., image 11.

precisely this combination of divergent pressures—reformatory and traditional, subversive and community-spirited—that contributed to the richness and ingenuity of the didactic theories that flourished during the long eighteenth century.

The story that I tell here is therefore “Whiggish” only in the sense that it reveals a gradual emergence of confidence in “the people’s” potentially productive participation in the life of the body politic, even (or especially) as polite critics of governmental policy. The civic ideals that had sustained Stuart claims to absolutism did not suddenly give way to a more democratic set of ideals of government, and this history of development was reflected in (and arguably assisted by) a similarly gradual evolution of ideas in the realm of letters. Within the main stream of British poetics, an interesting variety of theories of social cohesion sprung up largely *within* the basically hierarchical vision of the body politic that had been articulated with such forcefulness in the early- to mid- seventeenth century, temporarily subverted by a republican experiment, reasserted more tentatively at the Restoration, and then realigned again in the 1688-89 Revolution. After all, Britons of the long eighteenth century very often took pride in their ability to manage internal conflict and bring about gradual change without razing to the ground the cultural and governmental systems that they collectively sustained and were sustained by. This ideal was embodied for many eighteenth-century writers in the Revolution itself, a peculiar series of diplomatic negotiations and threats of violence in which prominent parliamentarians had, in effect, asserted their liberties over and against the perceived excesses of the sitting monarch, ultimately returning willingly to their accustomed posture of obedience in the face of a monarch who promised to preserve their liberties.

This vision of the British common weal was also mirrored in—and, as political theorists increasingly saw it, *sustained* by—the healthy spirit of disagreement and debate that characterized public discourse in the republic of letters during the period. The battle between the ancients and moderns itself played out this idea of British culture: an idea that what happily distinguished Britain from contemporary absolutist regimes of continental Europe was the unique capacity of its citizens to harness their energies in polite (or semi-polite) public debate without the immediate, presiding authority of a monarch and without erupting into physical violence. “[G]reat Contemporaries whet and cultivate each other,” wrote John Dryden in 1693, “[a]nd mutual Borrowing, and Commerce, makes the Common Riches of Learning, as it does of the Civil Government.”²³ Such comments relied upon an idea of civic virtue less as well-trained deference to local authorities than as personal mettle, responsibly tested and honed in the public sphere—a conception of the commonwealth harmonious with emerging theories of the benefits of governmental checks and balances, rationalizations of the importance of free speech to the polity, and (as suggested above) arguments that well-focused rivalries—even rivalries *internal* to the body politic—could be the source of national betterment.

By the mid eighteenth century, Oliver Goldsmith can be found presenting himself in *The Citizen of the World* (1760) as “Lien Chi Altangi,” a Chinese journalist who admires the peculiar capacity of the British republic of letters both to produce well-meaning writers and to handle the troublemakers that may appear in their midst. “To do the English justice,” Goldsmith writes,

²³ *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 4: *Poems 1693-1696*, eds. A. B. Chambers, William Frost, and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley and LA: U of California P, 1974), 12.13-15.

their publications, in general, aim, either at mending the heart, or improving the common weal. The dullest writer talks of virtue, and liberty, and benevolence, with esteem; tells his true story, filled with good and wholesome advice; warns against slavery, bribery, or the bite of a mad dog; and dresses up his little useful magazine of knowledge and entertainment, at least, with a good intention. The dunces of France, on the other hand, who have less encouragement, are more vicious. Tender hearts, languishing eyes, Leonora in love at thirteen, ecstatic transports, stolen blisses, are the frivolous subjects of their frivolous memoirs. In England, if a bawdy blockhead thus breaks in on the community, he sets his whole fraternity in a roar; nor can he escape, even though he should fly to nobility for shelter.

Thus, even dunces, my friend, may make themselves useful.²⁴

A healthy skepticism about the success rates of works composed with overweening civic piety is offset with what has by this point become a fairly sophisticated, utilitarian analysis of the public benefits of literary production. In this account of the virtues of the British polity, England proves doubly superior to France on the basis of its manners. Most English writers are intent on improving the “common weal.” Precisely because of this well-meaning orientation (however “dull” its general quality), even the literary productions of “a bawdy blockhead” prove useful to the polity as a whole. They sharpen the wits of the local “fraternity” of readers and are, in turn, restrained from doing any real harm to the body politic.

IV: Methodology

My chosen methods and my approach to the work of literary historicism can be classed as a form of “historical poetics”²⁵: that is, a way of approaching poetry and

²⁴ *The citizen of the world; or letters from a Chinese philosopher, residing in London, to his friends in the east...*, vol. 2. (London, 1762), 47-48, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed 18 Aug. 2009).

²⁵ I have taken the term from *Crossing the Bar: Transatlantic Poetics in the Nineteenth Century* (March 5-6, 2010, Philadelphia, PA), a conference organized to contemplate shared methods, ideological aims, and diverse applications of “historical prosody” and historical poetics more generally. Also see the section of articles in a recent *PMLA* entitled “The New Lyric Studies” to which several of these conference participants contributed (123.1 (January 2008): 181-234). As a group, this collection of articles responds to

poetics that seeks to understand fundamental changes from one age to the next in the ways poetry is envisioned as a form of discourse, in the notions of poetic composition manifested in theoretical statements and practices of poetic composition, in expectations of genre and audience, and in metrical conventions and theories of scansion.²⁶ My project incorporates elements of this approach at several different levels.

The broad thesis shaping the project—the claim that writers of the long eighteenth century commonly assumed that poetry affected the common weal—employs the tools of historical poetics to outline a general difference between long-eighteenth-century ideas about poetry’s civic function and a more modern set of ideas about poetry’s civic function. This difference, roughly stated, is that, in the long eighteenth century, poetry was rhetorical.²⁷ It was said to have a peculiar capacity to move its readers: to appeal to and guide the imagination by presenting it with images to be imitated, rejected, enjoyed, or otherwise reflected upon in ways that promised to be conducive to the general wellbeing. Discussants of poetry today, by contrast, are more likely to conceive poetry as a mode of writing that is, by definition, non-rhetorical: non-coercive in its evocation of thoughts or emotions; uniquely capable of producing and conveying meaningful non-

Marjorie Perloff’s 2006 MLA address, printed as “Presidential Address 2006: It Must Change” (*PMLA* 122.3 (May 2007): 652-62), which contemplates a perceived decline of disciplinary interest in “the literary” as an end of poetic/rhetorical analysis. My transference of the methods and aims of historical poetics to the long eighteenth century has necessitated a departure from the idea of poetry as “the lyric” that has guided these recent methodological discussions. To this end, Virginia Jackson, “Who Reads Poetry?,” 181-87 and Yopie Prins, “Historical Poetics, Dysprosody, and *The Science of English Verse*,” 229-34, have been particularly helpful. I have not dwelled upon prosodic matters in the present study because it seems to me that the more central question of historical difference involves the question of poetry’s social function.

²⁶ The definition is my own, though the point about historical difference has been made by some of these nineteenth-centuryists and also by Hunter, *Couplets and Conversation*, with respect to the eighteenth century.

²⁷ Others to emphasize this matter of historical difference include J. Paul Hunter (ctd. above) and John Sitter, who emphasizes the “pragmatic, rhetorical temper of much of the period’s writing about poetry” (134) in “Questions in Poetics,” *Ibid.*, 133-56). I have also been influenced in my approach to this topic by M.H. Abrams’s classic study, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (NY: Oxford UP, 1958), especially by the invaluable diagram and discussion in the introductory section labeled “Some Co-ordinates of Art Criticism.”

meaning or ideational significance that exceeds any available prose sense; and in this relation to the ineffable, reliant upon structures and uses of language that connotative prose discourse is not well suited to develop.²⁸ Although it is out of the scope of this project to trace this difference systematically, the six performances at the center of my case studies have been selected to encourage reflection upon it. Several of the works examined here, as I understand them, have been particular blind spots for modern scholars who have not approached these materials as specialists in the comparative history of poetics, but have brought insights from a variety of different subfields (cultural criticism, biography, bibliography, postcolonialism, older forms of literary historicism) and have therefore not necessarily been centrally invested in the questions of historical difference that animate the present project.

Some of the institutional factors in this divergence have already been mentioned: the proliferation of verse forms in the eighteenth century (by comparison to today); paternalistic ideals and patterns of education that nourished confidence in the idea of poetry's influence trickling down to the masses from a well-read ruling class; and (I would add) a relative scarcity of reasons to be intimidated by poetry as a discursive form. In our modern era, film, television, audio recordings, and internet venues such as YouTube have overwhelmingly overshadowed poetry as media that we conceive as having the capacity to speak to the masses, to appeal to the general public, and therefore to influence cultural mores and public opinion—"the public" being the portion of the polity that matter most, according to our comparatively democratic ideals. Poetry has

²⁸ Historically, the shift toward this way of thinking about poetry was arguably already underway by the Romantic period, notwithstanding the substantial political investments of many of the poets we think of today as representing Romantic poetry (e.g., Barbauld, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley).

retained a correspondingly rarified position as “high art,” distinguished as such from “popular culture” and, to a significant extent, popular audiences.

This idea of poetry, although it has roots in the Romantic period and the nineteenth century, has been significantly shaped by the interventions of influential poets, critics, and academicians of the last century. Led by writers such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, early twentieth-century British and American modernists encouraged an idea of poems as literary objects with hard, crisp edges and a notion of poetry as a “difficult” form of writing, readily misapprehended by uninitiated outsiders. Breaking with the idea that poetry should draw upon and provoke passions and emotions, they railed against excesses of sentimentality and pathos in both writers and readers; they encouraged modes of critique that emphasized structural coherence rather than authorial personality or intent; they imagined the proper enjoyment of poetry as an aesthetic experience so refined that it did not necessarily stem from a pleasurable contemplation of “the beautiful” (cf. *The Waste Land*); and they left subsequent generations of readers and writers with what Charles Bernstein has called the “funny modernist legacy” of the isolated, “impersonal” poet, coolly indifferent to any anticipation of his or her audience.²⁹ Although this set of ideas about poetry’s essence, production, and appreciation has had its dissenters, it became extremely influential in subsequent poetic production and criticism, and it remains prevalent in scholarship on poetry and in English-reading cultures at large. Promoting the radical decontextualization of individual poems in order to facilitate “practical criticism” and “close reading,” the New Critics helped to convert high modernist values into a system of inquiry (and, to some extent, writing) that could be

²⁹ Charles Bernstein, Ann Lauterbach, Jonathan Monroe, and Bob Perelman, “Poetry, Community, Movement: A Conversation,” *Diacritics* 26.3-4 (Winter 1996): 210.

embraced enthusiastically in college classrooms. For all of the unsettling of New Critical approaches that has happened in recent decades, this way of thinking about poetry has had lasting effects on the way subsequent scholars have viewed eighteenth-century poetic production, including many of the poststructuralist critics and historians of “poetry and politics” with whom I am in dialogue here. During the same period, the eighteenth century has emerged as the era of the “rise of the novel,” thereby further enforcing a division between “poetry” and “prose” that I would argue is more reflective of our own understanding of what poetic discourse is supposed to do to the minds and hearts of its readers than it is faithful to the theory and practice of long-eighteenth-century writing.

I therefore begin with the observation that, although writers of the period often observed a distinction between “verse” and “prose” or “prose” and “poetry” in a manner that seems at times to resemble our modern divisions between these categories, early modern theorists of poetry explored this distinction with less interest in treatises and prefatory statements than they explored the differences and points of resemblance between poetry and its sister arts (painting in particular) and delineated the poet’s mode of speaking and teaching in relation to other modes of written discourse: history, holy scripture, moral philosophy, natural philosophy, and so forth. Sir Philip Sidney, for instance, pursuing the latter tactic at length in his foundational *Defence of Poesy* (pub. 1595), argues that the poet retains rhetorical advantages over the philosopher (who offers instructive precepts) and the historian (who offers instructive examples) because of the pleasing manner in which he figures forth imitable images of virtue:

For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions,

which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner. And, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue—even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste. . . . So it is in men (most of which are childish in the best things, till they be cradled in their graves): glad will they be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Aeneas; and, hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice; which, if they had been barely, that is to say philosophically, set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.³⁰

Rooted in a study of Plato and Aristotle’s respective theories of poetry’s civic function (theories originally developed for stage drama), Sidney’s notion of poetry as an enticement to learning and moral reform locates poetry’s rhetorical power not in its lyricism *per se*, but in its pleasing relation of interesting tales—its reliance, in other words, on narrative technique and character development that one might associate today with the short story or the novel. By extension, Sidney’s discussion locates poetry’s privileged discursive status not in its rarified distance from other, more prosaic forms of discourse, but in its comparative appeal to common readers: its distinctive potential to translate difficult ideas and principles of behavior that might otherwise to be difficult to disseminate and inculcate. “Neither philosopher nor historiographer could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgements,” Sidney declares, “if they had not taken a great passport of poetry, which in all nations at this day where learning flourisheth not, is plain to be seen.”³¹ Accordingly, while he defines poetry provisionally as a form of discourse composed in “verse,” Sidney extends the name of poet to two classical prose writers—Plato and Herodotus—on the grounds that both men dressed

³⁰ *The Defence of Poesy* (London, 1595), in *The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (NY: Oxford UP, 2002), 226-27.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 214.

their respective discourses (philosophical and historical) in the “skin” of poetry.³² Poetry, as Sidney defines it, is “an art of imitation...—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture—with this end, to teach and delight”³³; thus, writers who approach their subject by incorporating techniques of “feigning” to communicate ideas or inculcate moral lessons counts as exploiting rhetorical tools associated with poets.

The modes of analysis employed in the present study reflect a similar sense of the “poetic.” I presume throughout the project that the guiding aim of Britain’s most ambitious early-modern poets was not necessarily to produce an aesthetic object that facilitated a uniquely aesthetic experience, possibly glancing at important political actors along the way, but to utilize any number of rhetorical tools that had traditionally been associated with “poetry” (artful mimesis, indirection, affecting depictions of character, creative translation, etc.) to accomplish a productive civic end. Questions of content prove relevant throughout the analysis, as have forays into political philosophy, religious history, and the history of science. Not surprisingly, several of the writers discussed in the chapters to come frame their compositions as performances that draw upon modes of disquisition other than poetry. Young’s satirical examination of the love of fame emerges as an extension of the civic work of the Anglican minister; Grainger begs leave to be understood as a “physician” rather than a “poet” in his recommendation of local remedies for West-Indian disease; and Dryden’s prefatory discussions of Roman history in his

³² Ibid., 213. Plato’s philosophy “standeth upon dialogues, wherein he feigneth many honest burghesses of Athens to speak of such matters, that, if they had been set on the rack, they would never have confessed them” (213), and Herodotus, who was similarly “glad to borrow both fashion and, perchance, weight of the poets, ... entitled his History by the name of the nine Muses; and both he and all the rest that followed him either stale or usurped of poetry their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battles, which no man could affirm; or...long orations put in the mouths of great kings and captains, which it is certain they never pronounced” (214). For Sidney, in other words, poetic discourse is a form of mimesis with the license to employ the resources of fictionalization to achieve some higher form of truth-telling or some other didactic end similarly beneficial to the common weal.

³³ Ibid., 217.

translations of Virgil align the work of political philosophy, political history, and cultural diagnosis so fluidly with the work of literary criticism as to establish the “heroick” poet as a writer preeminent in his mastery of all of these fields of knowledge. In each case, the writer’s ability to establish, to work within, and perhaps even to play against his public persona was part of the performance, as was the negotiation of the relationship between the status of “poetry” as a discourse in relation to other forms of civic authority: science, the church, the state, the university system.

Following this logic, I have also taken the liberty of including one prose work among the six texts centrally under discussion—and, at that a prose work that has previously received relatively little attention from literary critics, having been an important document to historians of agriculture for some time. Samuel Martin’s prose *Essay Upon Plantership* (1750), which can be situated solidly in the georgic tradition, draws upon “poetic” resources long associated with Virgil’s verse *Georgics* to inculcate a vision of local civic improvement; this performance, in turn, provided the groundwork for James Grainger’s divergent strategy for civic reform in *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), a verse georgic similarly rooted in existing georgic traditions but marked by a comparative zeal for “fancy.” Martin’s inclusion here therefore serves a twofold purpose.

But this decision is the most obvious manifestation of a method utilized throughout the case studies. I have consulted any number of prose compositions during the course of the project and have discussed them fluidly alongside compositions that we can more readily describe as “poetry” today. Prefaces and dedications, I suggest throughout the project, were an essential component of the long-eighteenth-century poetic performances discussed here. Such introductory materials helped to frame and

orient the verse—to stage the performance—in a manner that local readers could apprehend as a proposal of civic contribution. When controversial verse was published anonymously, that was an important feature of the performance as well. The original anonymous publication of *The Dunciad* produced a great deal of consternation, interest, and speculation about the identity of its author—an early reception that I suggest had been carefully planned by Pope both to protect him from libel persecution and to stir up local notice of his performance as a signature Scriblerian production. The technique of removing such identifying features and framing devices to facilitate close investigation of the verse text—a technique typical of “practical criticism”—certainly had its merits as a way of enhancing skills of close reading; however, eighteenth century poems are typically not served by such experiments to the same degree that twentieth- or twenty-first century poems might be. Throughout the project, I have attended to the ways that prefaces and dedications staged a given performance, announced its desired relationship to the commonwealth and the common weal, and provided readers with tools of comprehension and evaluation.

At the local level, my methods of research reflect what I take to be common practice in historical poetics. Anchoring my investigations in close readings of the six performances that feature most prominently in the project, I have examined these works alongside poetic theory of the age and retrospective theory of later times,³⁴ triangulating

³⁴ As articulated by Max Cavitch, introductory comments, “Reading and Unreading Popular Verse,” *Crossing the Bar: Transatlantic Poetics in the Nineteenth Century* (cited above). His suggestion that one should study earlier eras of poetry alongside the theories of poetry that they produced is a distinctive feature of “historical poetics” (by contrast to earlier twentieth-century approaches to poetics), and his procedural description is general enough to encapsulate a growing trend in studies of poetry. I also profited especially from Meredith Martin’s discussion of the “productive instability” inherent in such an enterprise: a “daunting sense of historical specificity” (not to mention imagination) is necessary; we must create a glossary to produce sufficiently nuanced readings; and there are contemporary discursive challenges to prosodic studies as well, in an era when the phrase “the poet” has come to sound like a bad word, insofar as

my assessments in a manner that prioritizes the task of uncovering an earlier set of ideas about poetry's perceived civic function(s). My generation of theories about a given author's strategy has stemmed from multifaceted investigations of the text in question, its dedications and prefaces, and other features of its paratextual apparatus in its original published form(s): illustrations, annotations, appendices, layout and formatting. In some cases, the authors involved had significant control over the printing and dissemination of their writings. I have taken this bibliographical evidence into account whenever possible. To give structure to each reading, I have consulted what theorists of the period said about the poetic genres in question or the authors in question (as in the case of translated authors, for instance). I have also examined what contemporary readers have said in response to the publication of a given poem as a way of both seeking initiatory clues about how it was being read and verifying my working hypotheses about the strategy framing it.

My reliance on the case study as a way of structuring both my research and my writing has been practical as well as philosophical. The case study offers a means of assessing the unique actions of individual actors within a nexus of community expectations. As utilized in sociology and ethnography, the case study often relies upon a form of socio-cultural immersion—"fieldwork"—intended to facilitate the investigation of a single community, organization, event, or life history in a manner that yields insights into not only the conventions, habits, and institutions that structure social life, but also the differences of opinion for which they make room and ways that individuals work within, interrogate, or challenge these commonplaces. The present inquiry proceeds according to

it presumes forms of individual agency and coherent subjectivity not typically countenanced or investigated in the increasing trend toward cultural history ("Scanning the Bar: Why Do We Do Historical Prosody?," March 5, 2010).

a similar philosophy,³⁵ and it utilizes comparable methods of data collection and analysis, insofar I have attempted to produce an especially detailed picture of the discursive communities at hand by seeking out commentaries of multiple participants and contemporary observers. Through the story of “Augustan” literature that I tell here, a broad picture of a social consensus emerges—a social consensus different from the consensus that characterizes our own historical moment. But there were also significant points of disagreement even within that earlier consensus, and my presentation therefore seeks to mediate those disagreements in as evenhanded a manner as possible. I have adopted the terms of the participants whenever feasible and have attempted to describe their writings in a manner that they might approve, whether or not I personally agree with their tactics or their visions of community. In addition, I have sought to make room for some points of divergence and disagreement among conceptions of “poetry” as a discursive category and the “commonwealth” as a political and social entity, the latter having been a particularly malleable category, historically and conceptually: a category sometimes meaning “England,” sometimes “Britain,” sometimes the British Empire, and sometimes signifying, in practice, only a portion of the actual inhabitants of the nation (male peers, for instance). Throughout, I have sought to explicate, unpack, and see

³⁵ For instance, the case study ideally “provides information from a number of sources,” both longitudinally and contemporaneously, thereby “permitting a more holistic study of complex social networks and complexes of social action and social meanings” than a more one-dimensional investigation would allow (6); it “encourages and facilitates . . . theoretical innovation and generalization” in accounting for those behaviors (7); and it therefore “permit[s] the observer to render social action in a manner that comes closest to the action as it is understood by the actors themselves” (8), whether by incorporating interviews with the participants involved or simply by attempting to trace the contexts in which individual decisions and actions take shape. See Anthony Orum, Joe Feagin, and Gideon Sjoberg, “Introduction: The Nature of the Case Study,” *A Case for the Case Study* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991), 1-26. Also see Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd ed (NY: Oxford UP, 2008), esp. 52-62, who juxtaposes the case study with other research designs and delineates a number of composite methods.

provisional points of agreement among disparate arguments, all the while refraining from offering my own ethical or aesthetic evaluations of the works at hand.

The resulting discussion is relatively free of modern theory. This is because I have attempted throughout the project to explain long-eighteenth-century poetry by utilizing long-eighteenth-century poetic theory. Modern theories of government and poetry, in the present case, have served mainly to cloud the task of recovery and reconstruction. I have also found it necessary to reprise critical habits and modes of investigation that have been debunked as creative fictions by previous generations of scholarship, perhaps most notably my central focus on authorial strategy. Authorial strategy was a key concept for writers of the period. Published works were routinely prefaced with a comment about the author's "design." Thus my analytical entry point is calculated not only to demonstrate the depth and extent of this discursive expectation in long-eighteenth-century poetic discourse, but also to do so in a manner that pays deference to the means by which these authors measured each other's work and sought to be measured in turn. In other historical phases of poetic production, alternative points of entry may seem preferable for literary-historical investigation because those lines of inquiry predictably bear fruit: prosody and meter in nineteenth-century poetry and poetics, for instance, "impersonal" structural readings in high modernism, theories of compositional procedure and "method" in Romanticism, and so on. For related reasons, I have generally stopped short of making claims about a given author's psychological motives for either publication or authorship. These, I assume, were always complex. Perhaps more importantly, in a discursive environment in which writers habitually donned and doffed fictional personae in their writing, sometimes taunting their readers

with suggestions that their writing has been motivated by selfishness and malice, and habitually composing even their personal correspondence with an eye to eventual publication, actual psychological states of individual authors are less readily ascertainable, it seems to me, than the aspects of strategy and performance upon which I have chosen to focus.

V: Critical Limitations and Interventions

It goes without saying that the strain of historical difference that I emphasize here is only part of a larger story of the development of long-eighteenth-century poetry. Working both within and against the discursive phenomenon that I trace in the present project was the rise of “aesthetics” as a distinct field of study—a development that helped to establish poetry as a category of discourse whose relation to ordinary experience was indirect at best. John Brewer has shown, too, that this was the period that saw the rise of the cultural category of the fine arts³⁶—a cultural development that similarly attenuated poetry’s broad claims on the common weal. The present study attempts to provide a counterpoint to those histories.

My central emphasis of an aspect of historical difference contains inevitable biases as well. It would of course be possible in a study of eighteenth-century poetry—and has often seemed desirable—to lay the emphasis on points of formal, cultural, and historical continuity. By singling out shorter poems such as “Nocturnal Reverie,” “The Rape of the Lock,” “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,” and “The Castaway,” one can chart a history of the rise of the lyric that stretches from the “metaphysicals” to the

³⁶ *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1997).

Romantic odists and sonneteers and, in its formal distinctness, stands somewhat apart from the long history of the epic, which has often been presumed to enjoy formal and cultural continuities of its own. Cleanth Brooks charts just such a history of the lyric in his classic study, *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947), and he does so in an explicit attempt to “see...what the masterpieces had in common rather than to see how the poems of different historical periods differed.”³⁷ The idea that there is enough cultural continuity between the eighteenth century and our own to see something of our own habits of mind in the period has proved similarly useful for such seminal works of Marxist-inflected criticism as Laura Brown’s *Alexander Pope* (1985), which, for all its attention to the particularities of Pope’s own historical circumstances, develops a transhistorical notion of “ideology” and ideology critique that seeks, in one fell swoop, to debunk Pope’s mystifications and those mystifications of modern interpreters who would have us revere him.³⁸ I do not discount either approach. Both techniques of reading have had immediate payoffs in the classroom, and I am not yet convinced that the forms of deep contextual research undertaken in the present project—or, for that matter, the forms of literary-historical work that have become increasingly prevalent in the academy—are as readily or satisfyingly translated into undergraduate classrooms as the modes of seeking out formal unity and formal disunity that have prevailed in the last half century within New Critical and deconstructive techniques of reading.

³⁷ *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (NY: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1975), 193. Brooks describes the selection of poems for his book as an effort to fill in the chronological gaps between “Donne” and “the moderns” (193).

³⁸ For instance, Brown writes that Pope’s position at the center of the canon makes him “a lever against the whole canon of eighteenth-century studies”: to “attack” Pope is to attack the entire canon and those who celebrate it uncritically. See *Alexander Pope* (NY: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 5.

Nonetheless, there are good reasons to pursue the kinds of historical investigations that the theoretical interventions of Brown, among others, have encouraged us to take. In recent years, investigations of poetry's relation to politics in the early-modern period have become increasingly precise in their efforts to take poetry of the earlier period on its own terms, whether reading with the grain or against it,³⁹ and I certainly consider the present project to be part of that trend. Such investigations, at their best, combine curiosity, empathy, and imagination with a healthy dose of skepticism; and the Culture Wars, together with the rich variety of new and old "historicisms" that have emerged in their wake, have ensured that the scholarly dialogues emerging from and within eighteenth-century studies will continue to attract multiple rigorous modes of literary-historical analysis.

If my own approach diverges from this larger trend, it does so principally in the precision with which it highlights the question of early-modern poetry's civic orientation—an element of the project conceived as a contribution to the continuing discussion of "poetry and politics" in the earlier period—and also the optimism and empathy with which it regards the task of examining ideology. The latter tactic has also been a necessary piece of my analytical project. Some of the readings offered in the chapters that follow would not have been possible had I approached these performances in a posture that errs on the side of "indictment" rather than "advocacy," to borrow

³⁹ One can see something of this evolution in Steven Zwicker's work on Dryden, who had been a particularly difficult poet for the New Critics to appreciate because of his penchant for "occasional" poetry and propaganda (e.g., 1972, 1984, 1996). Zwicker began by resolving Dryden's approach to political poetry into a paradox—Dryden "rendered universal the transient issues and partisan stances of the political poet" (1972 xiii)—but gradually came to envision the polemical, partisan character of late seventeenth-century writing as an intriguing and important feature of late-seventeenth-century British culture. Also see the detailed studies of Christine Gerrard and Abigail Williams on partisan poetry of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Among those who read eighteenth-century works against the grain, Suvir Kaul has been especially influential to my own work.

Brown's terminology.⁴⁰ The project of ethical "indictment" is so easy in the case of a slave owner such as Samuel Martin as to render further investigation nearly superfluous; and James Grainger's georgic discourse resembles Martin's so closely in some spots as to appear to participate in the same nefarious civic project. I have therefore sought to demonstrate the payoffs of an investigative affect that errs on the side of "advocacy" without abandoning the forms of skepticism and self-reflection that invigorate such an inquiry.

There are, of course, philosophical limitations to extending such empathy, just as there are practical limitations to undertaking the kind of detailed research that I have undertaken here. Not all long-eighteenth-century authors have been as thoroughly studied as Dryden and Pope, and I could not have undertaken such detailed analyses of either poet without this existing scholarship. For similar reasons, a question that I do not attempt to answer in the project is how far the phenomena that I trace here extended into the poetic production of the period: how widely the forms of authorial experiment, the assumptions about poetry's relationship to the common weal, and the forms of intertextual dialogue displayed here. It seems likely that these dialogues represent especially intense flowerings of a general phenomenon. Writers such as Dryden and Pope (and even Ogilby, Young, Martin, and Grainger) put themselves forward as leaders of their communities in the publications discussed here and elsewhere in their careers, and it is likely that the question of how best to affect the polity with poetry penetrated their work more deeply and fully than it affected the work of such writers as Anne Finch, a major poetic talent of the day who refrained from publishing most of her poetry in her lifetime beyond manuscript circulation. Such a poet was not in a position to participate

⁴⁰ Brown, *Alexander Pope*, 1.

as prominently in experiments regarding poetry's civic utility as poets such as Dryden and Pope were. Nonetheless, women and "minor" writers of the day were certainly participants in these dialogues, and I have sought to include their voices in my discussion as well.

VI: The Case Studies

My case studies pursue three lines of inquiry suggested by the metaphor of the body politic, conceived in juxtaposition to and in conflict with rival nations or peoples: first, a consideration of two epic poets' negotiations of what they conceive to be a proper relationship between the English monarch and the "people" (Ogilby and Dryden); second, a consideration of two satirists' negotiations of what they conceive to be a proper relationship between the individual and the collective wellbeing in an age when "private vices" were said to have "public benefits" (Young and Pope); and, third, a consideration of two georgic writers' negotiations of what they perceive to be the rights, duties, and moral obligations of the English (or British) metropole in relation to its colonial provinces (Martin and Grainger).⁴¹

My first case study (Chapters One and Two) argues that two seventeenth-century translators of *The Works of Virgil* designed their publications with an eye to the convention that the *Aeneid* inspired obedience to a righteous monarch. In verse translations published from 1649 forward, John Ogilby sought to replicate and enhance

⁴¹ Following this logic, such investigations could fruitfully continue in the same vein in other directions during the same chronological period, and they could fruitfully continue into and beyond the Romantic period, when women writers began to assert the "rights of woman" with particular forcefulness, and when writers of both genders put increasing pressure on the question of what relationship "common" citizens (or even purchased slaves) should bear to the ruling apparatus of British government and the moral conscience of British consumers. This was my original intention, but time and space regrettably dictated that I truncate the project. I am content, at least, that this later ground has been emphasized in modern scholarship.

what was then seen as the original function of Virgil's poetry. Producing his translations during the Interregnum and early Restoration, Ogilby designed a series of lavish volumes in English and Latin that would serve as portable "Royal Entertainments," spectacles designed to inspire awe in the face of monarchical splendor and to provide insight into the nature of monarchical power, grace, and authority. John Dryden's translations of Virgil (1697), composed in the wake of the 1688-89 Revolution, cultivated a more irreverent spirit. Although Dryden reused Ogilby's illustrations, he refashioned Virgil's poetry to serve a limited monarchy in a new age. While retaining the earlier sense of the *Aeneid* as a treatise on monarchical government, Dryden designed a "pleasing entertainment" to invite even "the Ladies" to be skeptical about royal power and authority. His Aeneas emerged as not as an anointed exemplar of *pietas*, but as a politic "Gallant" who put on his piety as a tactical guise. In the hands of England's former Poet Laureate, subscription publication argued that the wealth of the nation emanated not from the King, but from his self-assertive subjects.

My second case study (Chapters Three and Four) argues that two protracted experiments in the "characteristical satire" were animated by the early modern commonplace that satire reformed the common weal by excoriating vice and purging the passions. Reverend Edward Young's *Love of Fame: The Universal Passion* (1725-28) conceived pride as a sin that provided the means for its own remedy. He modeled his jovial satirical persona on Horace because "the world is too proud to be fond of a serious Tutor"; his amusing character sketches, which portray the "love of praise" gone awry, were intended to excite individual readers' vanity so they might undertake their own reform. By contrast, Pope's behavior in the *Dunciad* controversy put into play a grander,

more Mandevillian notion of self-checking passion—an idea that private vices had public benefits. Pope flirted with the notion that the common weal would be enriched by his “self-love,” writ large as a passion animating public debate, stimulating commerce, and inspiring ingenious poets to seek lasting fame. His performance argued that “Self-love and Social be the same” (*Essay On Man*, 1733-35). Whereas Young, an ordained Anglican minister, imagined satire as a “supplement” to the pulpit and the law, Pope designed his satire to flout the limitations of libel law, harness uncharitable passions, and provide a check on governmental power.

My third case study (Chapters Five and Six) argues that the authors of two “West-India georgics,” conceiving the georgic as a genre that promoted good agricultural management, grappled with the difficult task of representing and stimulating virtue and “improvement” in a slave-based monoculture. Colonel Samuel Martin’s prose pamphlet, *An Essay Upon Plantership* (1750), borrowed a mode of indirect discourse from the Virgilian georgic to address the problems for plantership posed by a mid-century shortage of fertilizer. Envisioning the plantation manager as a “practical philosopher,” Martin counseled his fellow planters to treat their slaves humanely and allocate ground for subsistence crops—proposals that I argue were aimed at reimagining West-Indian agriculture as a self-sustaining system that would supply its own “dung” and might eventually support colonial self-government. Dr. Grainger referred explicitly to Martin’s pamphlet in the preface of *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), a blank-verse poem invoking a transatlantic “public weal.” Here Grainger invited Londoners to consider the sordid origins of their beloved sugar as one of many problems of British imperial “corpulence.” Although sustained aesthetically by a luscious ebullience, *The Sugar-Cane* portrayed a

form of settlement flawed at its core even when considered in its most ideal aspect—a culture riddled with disease, dependent on the slave trade to sustain its human population, and managed at a distance by absentee planters who spent their “opulence” in “other climes.”

Case Study I

Seventeenth-Century Virgilian Translation

This case study examines two seventeenth-century translations of the works of Virgil: John Ogilby's pioneering mid-century productions, first published in 1649 and subsequently expanded, rewritten, and embellished with annotations, illustrations, and a Latin edition in the years that followed; and John Dryden's late-seventeenth-century version, first published in 1697, which incorporated enough of Ogilby's distinctive paratextual features that it promised to rival and supplant the earlier text as the foremost English poetic translation of Virgil. I argue that for all the similarities in their respective projects of translation, Ogilby and Dryden developed two very different visions of the way a translation of the Virgilian corpus might promote the English (or British) common weal. Ogilby, translating Virgil during and after the Commonwealth and Protectorate, capitalized on the notion that Virgil was a timeless poet. He developed a literary performance and a "Royal Folio" that might disseminate Stuart ideals of royal magnificence and splendor. Dryden, translating Virgil in the immediate wake of the 1688-89 Revolution, appealed to refined notions of poetic utility and gradual historical change that had emerged during the battles between the Ancients and the Moderns. Adapting Virgil's poetry to the needs of a limited monarchy, he imagined the wealth of the nation in a much broader sense than Ogilby did and invited the interests of his audience to merge in a productive tension with the interests of the British monarch.

In pursuing this line of investigation, I have two linked aims. For one thing, a study of Virgil's reception necessarily reveals a great deal about seventeenth-century notions of poetry's civic influence. Virgil's poetry was more widely and explicitly analyzed with respect to precisely this issue than any other poet, ancient or modern. Early in the eighteenth century, Joseph Addison would later accord a similar treatment to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but even then, Addison stopped short of explaining what Milton's "Moral" was—that is, his notion of what the poem was intended to teach its readers about civic life. Seventeenth-century critics were, on the whole, more explicit in their analyses of Virgil's utility than they were of living poets. One can therefore learn a lot from these discussions about how poets and critics of the period were conceiving poetry's civic utility in general. From very early on in Virgil's seventeenth-century reception (indeed, in his sixteenth-century reception, if not before), one can see that poets' civic influence—particularly that of epic poets or "Heroick" poets—was very often being conceived as a capacity of affecting "the manners" (Lat. *mores*, Fr. *moeurs*), a civic category that loosely correlates with our modern idea of *culture*.

This avenue also provides a useful means of recovering an earlier way of conceiving the relationship between what we would describe today as "original" works and more imitative modes of poetic production. The advent of "Translation Studies" as a distinct field in recent years has drawn increasing attention to the ways seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practices of translation defy modern assumptions about the comparative value of original and derivative poetry in the earlier period.⁴² I am both drawing on and extending that work in pointing out that this distinction begins to fall

⁴² Cf. Stuart Gillespie and David Hopkins, eds., *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*, vol. 2, *1660-1790* (Oxford and NY: Oxford UP, 2005), which demonstrates the advancement of this scholarly subfield.

away if one conceives the earlier performances as performances of commitment to the common weal. During the seventeenth century, the translator had a civic role as a kind of cultural gatekeeper—a writer who assisted in the dissemination of both dangerous and potentially useful ideas, cultural models, and forms of knowledge within the commonwealth. In prefaces and dedications, English translators rationalized the introduction of something foreign into the commonwealth or the extension of access within the commonwealth to a classical body of writing to which those lacking an elite education did not typically have access (women, gentry on the rise, commoners of all kinds). As such, the translator had license to mediate the transmission of the parent text to accommodate the perceived needs of the readers for whom he or she translated, whether by providing prefatory comments and annotations, selecting out particular sections for translation (and omission), embellishing the original sense at the level of the line, or otherwise producing a text that promised to increase knowledge, provide amusement, or improve the manners of its new readers.

Virgil constituted something of a special case. To translate Virgil—and, at that, the entire Virgilian corpus—was to perform a very particular act of commitment to reforming and improving English culture. The Latin term “*translatio*,” indicating a transferal or a bearing “across,” imagines a westward movement of culture and arms from Greece to Rome and beyond, in a symbolic manifestation of Aeneas’s foundational journey from Troy to Italy westward and northward to Britain: *translatio studii et imperii*, a translocation of culture, knowledge, and imperial or political authority that, in a literary context, “typically involves the borrowing from, adaptation, and reinvention of ideas, beliefs and authority from an older culture into a new one, as symbolized by the founding

of a city or nation.⁴³ Virgil himself had developed his *Aeneid* on the “design” of Homer’s epics, as seventeenth-century critics understood them: the first six books corresponded roughly to the plot of *The Odyssey* and the last six books to the plot of *The Iliad*, albeit with a new hero, a retelling of the story of the Trojan War, and a new narrative of national foundation, borne forward from the ashes of a more Asiatic clime, that suited the *mores*, cultural disposition, and leaders of his own age. And this mode of appropriation had been used by numerous subsequent epic poets—most famously, Dante, but also ancient poets such as Statius and modern poets such as Tasso, Spenser, and, later, Milton and Richard Blackmore. In this context, a translation of *The Aeneid*—even a relatively literal one—carried unusual force as an act of mediation between ancient and modern civilizations.

As such, there is no reason to presume that even the most reverent, faithful Virgilian translators saw themselves as duty-bound to present their modern audiences with every possible nuance of the Virgilian original in the way we would understand it today or even in the ways that the most scrupulous, Latin-literate contemporary readers might have understood the text then. In our own era, an attitude of respect and reverence toward a translated text might readily lead to an interpretive effort to render the text with relative literalness, in a manner that provides access to the author’s original meaning; however, this was not necessarily the case for early-modern translators. By the mid eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson was still describing translation in essentially utilitarian terms as the product of the peculiar conditions and perceived needs of an advanced state of civilization in a community with a clear sense of itself as a group of

⁴³ Cf. Kimberly K. Bell, “‘Translatio’ and the Constructs of a Roman Nation in Virgil’s ‘Aeneid,’” *Rocky Mountain Review* 62.1 (Spring 2008): 13-14.

native speakers—the expected consequence of commerce with “distant nations,” the result of “curiosity sent abroad in quest of improvement,” and the byproduct of a culture with the leisure time and the desire to promote, within its borders, a knowledge of history, a knowledge of medicine, and a love of the arts.⁴⁴ Johnson’s analysis turns on a notion of translation as a response to civic need and a notion of the development of civilization in which basic needs are met (physical health, political stability, etc.) before the arts can flourish.⁴⁵ Thus, even amid the rise of a scrupulous historicism in the reception of the classics that is harmonious with a more modern idea of the civic function of translations (most famously, Richard Bentley’s philological interpretation of the Epistles of Philaris), theorists of the period did not necessarily advocate, as a philosophical goal of translation, reverence to the foreign author for its own sake. Rather, the philosophical goal of translation—at least as articulated by Johnson—was national improvement. By extension, the translation of Virgil was an act of mediation between Rome and England, Latin and modern English, that promised to improve the national culture.

One of the benefits of examining Dryden and Ogilby side by side, with these ideas of cultural transmission and reformation in view, is that such an examination offers a means of revisiting—and developing an enhanced understanding of—one of the most

⁴⁴ *Idler* 68-69 (August 1759), in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1963).

⁴⁵ See esp. pp. 212-13. Among the Romans, he argues, translation was not a priority. “Every man who in Rome aspired to the praise of literature, thought it necessary to learn Greek, and had no need of versions when they could study the originals,” and indeed “it does not appear that any man grew eminent by interpreting another.” The “first nation who felt the ardour of translation” was the Arab state that, in subduing part of the Greek empire “found their captives wiser than themselves.” In a quest for speedy improvements, and having “discovered that many might grow wise by the labour of a few,” they sought out works of medicine and philosophy and translated them into Arabic. “Whether they attempted the poets is not known,” Johnson observes. “[T]heir literary zeal was vehement, but it was short, and probably expired before they had time to add the arts of elegance to those of necessity.”

famous insults in English “Augustan” literature. Thanks to Dryden’s *Mac Flecknoe* (pub. 1682), Ogilby has been immortalized to posterity as “Uncle Ogleby,” whose “mangled” works line the way for the procession of the dunces amid the urban excesses of human excrement (or “Shadwell”):

No *Persian* Carpets spread th’ Imperial way,
 But scatter’d Limbs of mangled Poets lay:
 From dusty shops neglected Authors come,
 Martyrs of Pies, and Reliques of the Bum.
 Much *Heywood*, *Shirly*, *Ogleby* there lay,
 But loads of *Sh*—— almost choakt the way.⁴⁶

Dryden’s satire capitalizes on a double irony. Ogilby had himself been instrumental in planning Charles II’s coronation procession—an appointment that may well have reflected Ogilby’s ambition to be honored by Charles in a formal laureate position. (The office was eventually created for Dryden in 1668.) In tandem, the imagining of Ogilby’s works as so much toilet paper enacts a very precise diminution of the lavish form of bookmaking with which Ogilby had made his name as a printer. His Virgilian publications, like his printed memorial of the coronation procession, and like most of the maps and texts that Ogilby published during the Protectorate and Restoration, had been printed as “Royal Folios,” volumes distinct for their grand scale, their extravagant illustrations, and their publication on the finest paper that was then available.

My hypothesis here is therefore that in *Mac Flecknoe*, as in the later project of translation, Dryden was not merely ridiculing Ogilby for bad poetry, as we would understand that phrase today, but for what we might identify today as a cultural judgment: his love of court ceremony, his participation in court masques, his role as a supplier of pomp and circumstance for Charles, his rigid adherence to ideals of divine

⁴⁶ *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., vol. 2, *Poems 1681-1684* (Berkeley and LA: U California P, 1972), 56.98-57.104.

right—in short, his comparatively servile, reverent commitment to traditional monarchical ideals. Dryden in contrast, even while serving as England’s official Poet Laureate and Royal Historiographer, had distanced himself from the court, had reveled in public disputations, and had advocated “Wit” over “Dulness.” Rather than assuming that an English poet could affect the nation most nobly and efficiently by winning the ear of the monarch and his or her court—the assumption that had guided the earlier laureate work of Ben Jonson and Sir William D’Avenant—Dryden had adopted the role of propagandist, professional dramatist, and professional translator, effectively asserting that an English poet could best serve the nation by mediating between the monarch and “the people,” symbolically if not also practically.⁴⁷ It is probably not surprising that a poet who approached the laureateship this way would have waited until *after* he was no longer Laureate to undertake a major translation of the Virgilian corpus—a configuration somewhat at odds with Virgil’s own civic role as it had been conceived up to this point.

In accordance with both this guiding hypothesis and what I take to be the civic stakes of both translations, this case study examines a category of civic influence much broader than the category typically associated with “poetry” in modern treatments of the subject. I will not merely focus on striking turns of phrase at the level of the line; instead, I seek to explain how Ogilby, Dryden, and other Virgilian translators of this period address their work to the “manners” of their readers. As noted in the Introduction, this category encompassed a broad range of social and cultural norms relevant to the life of

⁴⁷ The outline of this way of seeing Dryden’s career is suggested by Edmund Kemper Broadus, *The Laureateship: A Study of the Office of Poet Laureate in England* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1966), esp. chaps 5-6; however, Broadus himself assumes that Dryden supports monarchical absolutism. Also see Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: U California P, 1983). It is significant that Dryden composed no masques to speak of during his tenure as Laureate; *The Secular Masque* (1700), written just before his death, was his most notable composition in the genre, a staple of Stuart absolutism.

the polity—a range much broader than prior investigations of the relationship between “poetry” and “politics” in these performances have tended to allow, insofar as it encompassed not only “political history,” but also such aspects of culture as codes of tolerance, cultures of debate, gender roles, and attitudes toward authority. And this was precisely the sphere of influence that Dryden imagined when he disparaged Ogilby as a “dull” translator in the Preface to *Sylvae* (1685):

What *English* Readers unacquainted with *Greek* or *Latin* will believe me or any other Man, when we commend those Authors [*Virgil*, *Homer*, et al.], and confess we derive all that is pardonable in us from their Fountains, if they take those to be the same Poets, whom our *Ogleby*'s have translated? But I dare assure them, that a good Poet is no more like himself, in a dull Translation, than his Carcass would be to his living Body. There are many who understand *Greek* and *Latin*, and yet are ignorant of their Mother Tongue. The properties and delicacies of the *English* are known to few; 'tis impossible even for a good Wit, to understand and practice them without the help of a liberal Education, long Reading, and digesting of those few good Authors we have amongst us, the knowledge of Men and Manners, the freedom of habitudes and conversation with the best company of both Sexes; and, in short, without wearing off the rust which he contracted while he was laying in a stock of Learning. . . . Thus it appears necessary that a Man should be a nice Critick in his Mother Tongue before he attempts to Translate a foreign Language. Neither is it sufficient that he be able to Judge of Words and Stile; but he must be a Master of them too: He must perfectly understand his Author's Tongue, and absolutely command his own. So that to be a thorow Translatour, he must be a thorow Poet.⁴⁸

Dryden's critique of Ogilby as a translator does not rest on Ogilby's ignorance of Latin, his misconstrual of the basic sense of Virgil's poetry, or even his command of English syntax at the level of the line. Dryden does not suggest that Ogilby does not grasp “English”; he suggests that Ogilby does not sufficiently know “the *English*”: their “few good Authors,” their “Manners,” their “habitudes,” and their habitual modes of

⁴⁸ *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Earl Miner, vol. 3, 4.29-5.26. Dryden impugns Ogilby again later on in his discussion, which is affixed to some of his earliest published translations of Virgil: “[A]ll that I can promise for my self, is only that I have done both [i.e., rendered Virgil's ‘Majesty’ and ‘conciseness’], better than *Ogleby*, and perhaps as well as *Caro* [Hanibal Caro, the Italian translator]” (8.18-21). Dryden refrains from disparaging Ogilby so explicitly in the prefatory matter of his own full translation of *The Works of Virgil*.

“conversation,” as gleaned from “the best company of both Sexes.” For Dryden, the “thorow Translatour” must be a “thorow Poet,” and the “thorow Poet” is, above all, a student of culture. The “Poet,” for Dryden, is not distinguished by expressive power *per se* (e.g., superior diction, superior craftsmanship as a stylist), but by a superior knowledge and understanding of the community in which his or her “Mother Tongue” takes shape. Language, for Dryden, is not an entity to be considered apart from questions of community. From Dryden’s perspective, Ogilby’s shortcoming as a translator is not his failure to produce a verse translation that is pleasing to the ear, but his failure to diagnose and respond to the needs and “habitudes” of his nation.

I therefore follow Laura Rosenthal in attempting to read the work of Restoration poets “for their representations of family, community, and nation” rather than for their representations of “the identities of individual characters, as well as the social forces that those characters engage, confront, and represent.” Rosenthal has shown that, in Restoration sex comedies, marriage is “neither the expression of authoritarian organization nor a contractual response to personal inclination but instead the *foundation* for familial and national strength and stability.”⁴⁹ I argue in the following chapters that the manners to which Ogilby and Dryden appeal in their respective translations of Virgil are seen as the foundation for national strength and stability: obedience, humility, and self-submission in the case of Ogilby’s translation, and skepticism, politely-contained envy, and congenial self-assertion in the case of Dryden’s.

I am not a classicist by training, and my discussion inevitably bears the marks of this bias. My principal aim here is neither to determine the accuracy of these

⁴⁹ “‘All injury’s forgot’: Restoration Sex Comedy and National Amnesia,” *Comparative Drama* 42.1 (2008): 8, 16.

seventeenth-century ideas about Virgil nor to assess the accuracy of a given poet's translation. Both issues are potentially pertinent to an analysis of a given poet's approach to improving the common weal; however, I have neither the space nor the expertise to take them on here. But I do wish to come to terms with the gesture of improvement implicit in *Dryden's Virgil*. Ogilby had been an innovator in his use of subscription sales to commission his lavish illustrations. This tactic was adapted to new ends in *Dryden's Virgil*, which incorporated both the illustrations that had been a selling feature of Ogilby's English and Latin editions and Ogilby's innovative system of inscribing the illustrations with the names, titles, and arms of the first subscribers (albeit in English rather than Latin). Dryden's retention of these features according to the terms of his contract reflects what I am arguing is a carefully-structured "design" to improve upon Ogilby's prior service to the nation at the level of poetry—"poetry" understood, in the broad sense described above, as an arbitration of culture.

Chapter One

Royal Magnificence and the Common Weal: John Ogilby's Virgilian *Opera* (1649 & foll.) as a Stuart Entertainment

John Ogilby was the first Briton to translate the entire Virgilian corpus for publication: the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*.⁵⁰ His *Virgil* first appeared in a spare octavo edition in 1649, the monumental year of the execution of Charles I, and a second version (this one an annotated translation) first appeared in print in 1654. Both versions provided serviceable renderings, in heroic couplets, of Virgil's works,⁵¹ and they proved to be a lucrative venture for the translator. Ogilby exercised significant control over the printing of his work almost from the start, eventually winning protective patents from Charles II, setting up a press in his own home, organizing the sales of his books, and securing a place for himself in a print market dominated by the Stationer's Company.⁵² His translations were republished at least six times through the Commonwealth, the Protectorate, and the Restoration, and he brought out a Latin version in 1658.⁵³ Ogilby's best-known editions of Virgil are still his illustrated folios (1654 & foll.), lavish volumes

⁵⁰ Excluding the *Appendix Vergiliana* (minor juvenilia, now thought to be spurious).

⁵¹ In my own experience, Ogilby's translations are possibly even more functional than Dryden's version in their rendering of plot elements. Although his syntactical inversions can be distracting, his inclusion of footnotes and sidenotes aids the identification of key figures (as in the *Aeneid*) and the discernment of the basic action.

⁵² Katherine S. Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (Folkestone, Eng.: Dawson, 1966), 28-29; Margret Schuchard, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Works of John Ogilby and William Morgan* (Bern: Herbert Lang / Frankfurt and Munich: Peter Lang, 1975), esp. 9-14, 19-21.

⁵³ Schuchard differentiates among publications of the unannotated first translation (1649, 1650, 1665), the annotated second translation (1654, 1668, 1675, 1684), and the Latin edition (1658, 1663), whose copy-text "was probably the 1641 edition of the imprimerie royale in Paris" (40).

whose design was projected as early as 1652. Printed on the finest French paper,⁵⁴ these volumes boasted conscientious annotations and more than one hundred “sculptures” that had been commissioned by an innovative system of subscription in which each of the first subscribers had his or her name, title, and arms engraved in Latin at the bottom of the illustrated plates (Appendix A). Anthony à Wood (1691) described Ogilby’s *Virgil* as “the fairest Edition that till then the English Press ever produced”—an edition “reserved for libraries and the Nobility.”⁵⁵ It provided the model for Ogilby’s subsequent publications, including his *Homer*, which Alexander Pope remembered as “that great edition with pictures” that had introduced him to the Greek bard when he was a child.⁵⁶

Thus far, Ogilby has received far less scholarly attention than his better-known successor in Virgilian translation. Although Ogilby has become an increasingly interesting figure to scholars of the history of the book, his rather undignified appearance in Dryden’s *MacFlecknoe* (1682) has relegated him to the category of “dunce” for many years. I follow Annabel Patterson in thinking that Ogilby was not necessarily the dunce that he was (or is) reputed to have been.⁵⁷ This case study aims to provide a framework for assessing his distinctive vision of the English common weal and therefore also his importance to English literary history. Virgil, I argue, provided Ogilby with an important model for his pious, industrious mode of civic service. Virgil was, as Ogilby conceived him, a king’s poet who united ambition with humility and discretion with talent. As Ogilby imagined him, Virgil had supported the nation by addressing himself to the ear of

⁵⁴ Schuchard notes that it very likely came from France and that a firsthand examination attests to its quality (14).

⁵⁵ Annabel Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U California P, 1987), qtd. 170.

⁵⁶ Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (NY: Norton / New Haven: Yale UP, 1985), 44.

⁵⁷ *Pastoral and Ideology*, 169-70.

the monarch and his noblest servants, and his work proved useful beyond its own historical moment by glorifying righteous monarchical government and modeling virtue for the noblest men in the land. With his translations of the Virgilian corpus, I argue, Ogilby attempted a parallel service for modern Britain.

Ogilby is now well established as a royalist translator—one who stayed loyal to the Stuarts throughout the Commonwealth and Protectorate and whose Virgilian translations bear the marks of this loyalty.⁵⁸ My discussion of Ogilby's *Virgil* builds upon and extends this scholarship. Assessing Ogilby's approach to Virgilian translation in a manner that bridges all of his published versions from 1649 forward,⁵⁹ I highlight two questions central to a consideration of Ogilby's orientation toward the British common weal.

First, I ask why the task of translating and publishing the works of Virgil might have presented itself as a profitable endeavor to a writer in Ogilby's position as a gentleman who had shown little previous interest in "Poesie." While answers to this question may seem self-evident to those familiar with Virgil and the history of Virgilian reception, the points emphasized below have not been spelled out clearly or fully in existing scholarship on the subject. Part of the work of this chapter is therefore to explain why, in seventeenth-century terms, Virgil seemed to be a poet whose entire corpus was worth translating in its entirety. The answer, at least in part, is that Virgil's poetry was widely conceived as poetry profitable to the modern common weal—poetry thought to cultivate moral integrity and civic virtue in a manner conducive to civic order, especially

⁵⁸ For full discussions see Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 170-85, and Van Eerde, *John Ogilby*, esp. chaps. 1-3, whose broad lines have been confirmed by subsequent scholars.

⁵⁹ Ogilby actually produced two different translations of Virgil, a curiosity discussed subsequently.

monarchical order. I seek to explain why Virgil's seventeenth-century interpreters (particularly royalists in Ogilby's vein) presumed that this was the case.

Secondly, I ask in more specific terms than have been employed previously what brand of royalism Ogilby's Virgilian publications promoted. Here again, conceiving the production of a translation as a strategic contribution to the common weal proves useful, for the concept carries with it a sense of the national body addressed by the translator. Ogilby, I argue, appealed to a vision of civic influence in which the monarch is the highest embodiment of civic virtue and the poet who contributes the most to the nation is the poet who has the ear of the monarch and his most loyal noble servants. In his Virgilian publications, Ogilby envisioned the wealth of the English nation emanating principally from the king and his most loyal subjects—a notion of civic influence that had shaped the Stuart masque and that would continue to shape Ogilby's later endeavors as a writer, cartographer, and printmaker. Ogilby envisioned the strength of the British common weal persisting in its inheritance of Roman, patriarchal traditions; he envisioned its righteousness as a consequence of the progress of Christianity that Augustus's *Pax Romana* was perceived as having enabled; and, although he incorporated a historicist strain into his translation typical of this period of Virgil's reception, he emphasized notable parallels between the Roman common weal and its British counterpart. Indeed, he imagined Virgil's corpus acting on modern England in much the way that it had acted on ancient Rome: instructing the monarch and his loyal servants in the ways of good government, bringing glory on righteous monarchical assemblies of the present (as of the past), and confirming the righteousness of monarchical government as a natural phenomenon over and against republican ideals.

I. Ogilby's *Virgils* within a Career of Royal Service

Ogilby did not begin his public life as a writer or printer. His first translations of Virgil, which marked the starting point of his literary endeavors, first appeared in print when he was nearly 50 years of age. Ogilby had begun as a dancer. Born in Scotland, the son of a member of the Merchant Taylors Company, he is said to have “bound himself” at a fairly young age to a London dancing master in Gray’s Inn Lane.⁶⁰ By the 1620s, he performed in one or more of the Duke of Buckingham’s “great masques” at court, where he would have come into contact with King James “and perhaps danced with Prince Charles,” as his modern biographer conjectures.⁶¹ Although badly injured in a dance performance (and permanently lamed because of it), Ogilby remade himself as a dance master, a choreographer, and a businessman invested in theatrical pursuits. By the early 1630s, presumably utilizing the contacts he had made during his time at court, he journeyed to Dublin to assist in the construction and direction of Ireland’s first theater. Thomas Viscount Wentworth, Lord Chief Deputy of Ireland, was developing a viceregal court in Dublin that promised to be “a microcosm of the one in Whitehall,” and Ogilby lent his hand to this project.⁶² Receiving the official title of “Master of the Revels in and through the Kingdom of Ireland,” he helped to supervise the new theater’s construction, hired actors, and may have written and choreographed some of the performances. These activities came to a halt with the Irish Rebellion of 1641. Ogilby had two narrow escapes from death before arriving back in England, “penniless” and “patron-less,” amidst the

⁶⁰ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby*, qtd. 17.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 22.

turmoil of civil war.⁶³ Because the theaters were closed by state mandate during the Interregnum, the pursuits in which he had defined his expertise were at least temporarily lost to him. He seems to have begun his translations of Virgil during this period or soon thereafter.

This was, in any case, the way Ogilby dated his Virgilian turn. As he described it some years later in the Preface to *Africa* (1670),

[I]n the first Fluctuations of the late Grand Rebellion, I being left at leisure from former Employments belonging to the quiet of Peace wherein I was bred, in stead of Arms, to which in parties most began to buckle, I betook my self to something of *Literature*, in which, till then, altogether a Stranger; And drawing towards the Evening of my Age, I made a little Progress, bending my self to softer Studies, adapted to my Abilities and Inclinations, *Poesie*: And first Rallying my new rais'd Forces, a small and inconsiderable parcel of *Latin*, I undertook no less a Conquest, than the Reducing into our Native Language, the Great Master and Grand Improver of that Tongue, *Virgil*, the Prince of *Roman Poets*.⁶⁴

Ogilby stops short of envisioning his literary endeavors as a continuation of his “former Employments.” Indeed, nowhere in this Preface does he say what those “former Employments” were: perhaps he assumes that Charles II, his dedicatee and addressee, already has some knowledge of those activities. Nonetheless, within the trajectory of his career, as he describes it here, the translation of Virgil emerges as kind of transitional endeavor for Ogilby—transitional not only in the sense that it necessarily promised to mediate between Latin and English, Rome and Britain, but also because of the way it serves in his account to connect the portions of his career interrupted by the war—the “late Grand Rebellion,” as he terms it. His deferent orientation toward the monarch provides a sense of continuity throughout these transitions, linking with a common

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁴ *Africa being an accurate description of the regions of AEgypt, Barbary, Lybia, and Billedulgerid, the land of Negroes, Guinee, Aethiopia and the Abyssines...* (London: Printed by Tho. Johnson for the author, 1670), image 2, reel 139:01 in Early English Books Online (accessed June 13, 2010). Van Eerde describes this Preface as Ogilby’s “only effort at autobiography” (11).

purpose and a common point of focus the pursuits of the masquer to the pursuits of the man of letters, the duties of the Master of Revels to the duties of the book maker.

And the Virgilian corpus itself serves an intermediary function, occupying as it does an important middle ground between peace and war, “soft[ness]” and manly vigor. Requiring Ogilby to learn new skills (in particular, to augment his “small and inconsiderable parcel” of boyhood Latin), Virgilian translation emerged for Ogilby as a form of royal service parallel to military service. With an elaborate military conceit, Ogilby imagines himself carrying out the translation with the verve of a military “Conquest”—a parallelism authorized, we might infer, by the content of the *Aeneid* itself, which famously begins, “Arma virumque cano” (“Arms, and the Man I sing”⁶⁵), and which figures forth the military conquest necessary for Aeneas to found Rome.⁶⁶ And yet, for all its thematic resonances, this foray into “*Poesie*” is the very stuff of “Peace”: a peaceable, “leisure” activity that presumably retains something of the peaceable, principled character of the world in which the translator was “bred.”

Moreover, this entry into the realm of “*Literature*” prepares Ogilby to take on a series of increasingly ambitious, peacetime activities—feats in English letters and bookmaking that are all conducted with the same royal orientation. He enumerates these

⁶⁵ *The works of Publius Virgilius Maro translated, adorned with sculpture, and illustrated with annotations by John Ogilby ...* (London: Printed by Thomas Roycroft for the author, 1668), 128, in Early English Books Online (accessed June 13, 2010). Unless otherwise noted, quotations are drawn from this edition, which is almost identical in its textual content to the 1654 annotated version, including pagination and annotations. It includes slightly different prefatory materials and accoutrements (related to the honoration of Charles II) and, by virtue of these freedoms, proves more comparable to *Dryden’s Virgil* than the earlier editions, which were published amid republican rule.

⁶⁶ Ogilby’s annotations suggest that he was well aware of this thematic point of focus. He actually emphasizes the military theme in his annotations to the opening lines of the poem: “Some blame our Poet for putting Arms before the Man, because the first six Books discourse more of him, the last more of Arms,” he observes, “but they forget that the second Book sets Arms out to the height, charactering both Valour and Deceit, a most prudent Leader, and a most daring Souldier exactly” (128). I have silently regularized the use of italics in my transcriptions of Ogilby’s annotations because he is not consistent in his italicization.

feats in the paragraphs that follow: paraphrases of Aesop’s fables; translations of Homer (which required him to learn Greek); folio illustrations of Charles II’s coronation; an illustrated version of the Bible; an epic based on the life of “Charles, *the Royal Martyr*”; and then, after losing both this original epic and a large store of printed folios in the Great Fire of London, a relatively late, independent venture into geography and cartography, his *Africa* being the first work in a projected four-part series attempting “the Reducement of the whole World.”⁶⁷

This prefatory discussion already reveals a good deal about Ogilby’s conception of civic service—a conception that I will suggest he had formed long before, at least in its broad outlines, by the time he took up the task of translating Virgil. Ogilby hints at a vision of the arts as a product of civilized society. He hints at a conception of “Peace” as the predictor of a happy, settled nation. And his ongoing deference to royal authority is especially striking. Ogilby points out specifically, for instance, that his translation of the *Iliad* was completed “with much Cost and Labor, . . . being Dedicated to His Sacred Majesty, and Crown’d with His Gracious Acceptance.” The formality of his phrasing resembles the language of the Dedication, too, where he addresses his “*Dread Sovereign*” in flattering tones and presents his atlas with a correspondingly deferential image of subservience:

*Thus Prostrating at Your Sacred Feet, that which if Your Majesty be pleased to receive with a Smile, Your Subjects through Your British Monarchy, not onely Ambitious in obeying Your Commands, but ready to follow, in what they may, Your Royal Example, will give the Work also a Civil Reception.*⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Preface to *Africa*, images 2-4.

⁶⁸ Dedication to *Africa*, image 5.

It is easy to see why one of the commendatory poets attached to *Dryden's Virgil* would have referred disparagingly to “the lewd Rhymes of groveling *Ogleby*.”⁶⁹ Ogilby imports into his language an elaborate sense of ceremony, as if to replicate within the text the rituals of bowing and curtsying observed at court. His discourse is imbued with the ideology of absolute authority: the monarch smiles, his subjects are pleased; the monarch commands, his subjects obey; the monarch sets the “*Royal Example*” for his subjects to follow. But Ogilby does not “grovel” unthinkingly. His Preface, like his Dedication, outlines a clear concept of loyal service as a desire to obey the dictates of the monarch and the promise of a good reputation—ambitions almost indistinguishable from one another. His Virgilian edition, he says, was

the fairest that till then the *English Press* ever boasted.

Yet this first Endeavour rais'd my Reputation no farther, than to be accounted a Good *Translator*, a Faithful *Interpreter*, one that had dabled well in another's *Helicon*; but I, greedy of more, having tasted the sweetness of a little Fame, would not thus sit down, but ambitious to try my own Wing, endeavor'd to Sore a little higher.⁷⁰

Ogilby therefore moves on to Homer's *Iliad* “swoln with the Breath of a general Applause” and already projecting a “double Design, not onely to bring over so Antient and Famous an Author, but to inable my self the better to carry on an *Epick Poem* of my own Composure.”⁷¹

What Ogilby does *not* spell out plainly here is why he set himself to translating Virgil in the first place—why a former masquer, a dance master, and a theater manager would see Virgil as the gateway into “*Literature*” and “*Poesie*,” why he would take up Virgil even as he was “drawing towards the Evening of [his] Age,” why he would

⁶⁹ *Works of John Dryden*, V.59.82.

⁷⁰ Preface to *Africa*, images 2-3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, image 3.

conceive this literary labor as an active (if not militant) response to the English Civil Wars and the republican government established in their wake, and why he would take on the entire Virgilian corpus. Indeed, even in the prefatory comments that introduce his translations of Virgil themselves, Ogilby says very little about why he chose to translate Virgil (and the works of Virgil) at this particular time—about what he imagines this translation contributing to the common weal. He may presume that the ideology behind this selection is already abundantly self-evident: the decision to translate the works of Virgil constitutes a statement in itself, not unlike the decision to write an original epic in honor of the “martyred” Charles I or the decision to publish an illustrated edition of the recent coronation ceremony or to map the globe in honor of the sitting king.

The subsequent sections flesh out this aspect of Ogilby’s design. I ask what knowledge of Virgil’s legacy Ogilby might have been taking for granted in translating Virgil, in doing so at this particular moment, and in doing so as a royal servant whose established credentials did not include particular expertise in “*Literature*” or “*Poesie*.” I emphasize those features of Virgil’s legacy that Ogilby’s publications seem to emphasize, and I comment on Ogilby’s particular approach along the way. This discussion should go some distance toward explaining (among other curiosities) why Ogilby might have been willing to attach to his name to two translations of Virgil that differed from one another significantly at the level of the line. In turn, it will lay the groundwork for an appreciation of what sets Ogilby apart as a translator of Virgil, from the lavishness of his textual productions to his promotion of several paradoxes of good government: the notion that arts might serve both as an adjunct to arms and as their remedy, the assumption that lasting “Peace” is enabled by military conquest and strong executive authority, and the

conviction that faithful service combines ambition with humility, obedience with innovation.

II: Why Virgil?

I will begin with what may be an obvious point: in starting his literary career with Virgilian translation, Ogilby was cutting his teeth on one of the most venerated authors of all time. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Virgil was quite possibly the most widely read and most widely disseminated of classical authors. Carefully studied in the original Latin throughout the period, Virgil's corpus had amassed over a millennium and a half of critical commentary by the time Ogilby sat down to translate it.⁷² His poetry was a staple of the Latin curriculum. In addition to being quoted in maxims, alluded to gravely,⁷³ imitated or adapted in vernacular compositions, and translated piecemeal, all three of Virgil's major works had been translated in their entirety by 1589⁷⁴—a testament to the general impression that he was a poet worthy of general knowledge and wide dissemination, a poet who readily contributed to the common weal.⁷⁵ In becoming the

⁷² This commentary began while Virgil was still writing the *Aeneid*. Cf. R. J. Tarrant, "Aspects of Virgil's Reception in Antiquity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 56-72.

⁷³ Cf. Dryden's own solemn citation of Virgil in one of the epigraphs to *Annus Mirabilis*, "u[r]bs antiqua ruit, multos dominata per annos" (II.363), translated by Dryden as "An ancient and imperial City falls," *Works* V.2.490.

⁷⁴ Abraham Fleming's translations of the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* were published in 1589; the entire *Aeneid* was first published in English translation in 1513 (Douglas) and then again in 1573 (Phaer and Twyne). See Frost and Dearing, *The Works of John Dryden*, VI.1191-92.

⁷⁵ If confidence in Virgil is implied in the mere act of translation, it is further confirmed in translators' prefaces. One of John Vicar's stated motives for translating the *Aeneid* (1632) is "the common good and public utility" (image 3). Ogilby's English *Works of Virgil* echoes the sentiment: its "Life of Virgil" recommends the author's person with the note that he "was of such winning candour, that none could forbear to love him" and the poetry with the observation that Virgil's grave is "at this day crowned with a Laurel, which (as they say) grows there of it self, as the tribute of Nature due to his Immortal Art" (1668 image 6). Had Thomas Phaer not died before completing his sixteenth-century *Aeneid*, he surely would have included some prefatory remarks along these lines: Phaer appears to have been a man particularly concerned with the health of the body politic. A lawyer and a physician, he published a number of treatises meant to further general knowledge about medicine and the law; his philosophy as a translator of Latin is to

first English translator to take on all three Virgilian works together, Ogilby was not introducing into circulation a little-known author; he was investing in a sure thing.

Thus, his selection of Virgil as a gateway into “*Poesie*” afforded him certain practical advantages. For one thing, during the project of translation, Ogilby had at his disposal a variety of earlier translations and commentaries to consult—presumably no small consideration for a first-time translator who apparently had only a “small and inconsiderable parcel of *Latin*” at his disposal when he began the task.⁷⁶ Additionally, in wooing subscribers to his illustrated editions, Ogilby relied on Virgil’s status as one of the greatest poets of all time. And neither of these considerations could be separated from the cultural statement that such a translation enacted: in developing “the fairest Edition that till then the English Press ever produced,” Ogilby was making obeisance to an author already widely revered.

Ogilby was surely drawn to Virgil’s poetry, too, because he admired and emulated the mode of civic service that Virgil and his works were often taken to embody, a form of national service oriented toward a righteous monarch. Until relatively recently, the so-called “Augustan” reading of Virgil—the understanding of Virgil and his works as fundamentally supportive of Augustus’s rule—was not typically called into question.⁷⁷

And Ogilby, like many readers of the day, looked kindly upon Augustus and the

avoid keeping valuable works confined “among a few” (Lally xiii-xvi). Eventually expanded by Thomas Twyne, Phaer’s translation became “the *Aeneid* of the English Renaissance” for vernacular readers (xii). See Steven Lally, ed., *The Aeneid of Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twyne: A Critical Edition Introducing Renaissance Metrical Typography*, *The Renaissance Imagination* 20 (NY: Garland, 1987).

⁷⁶ Van Erde notes this possibility as well (29-30).

⁷⁷ For an example of the modern “ambivalent” or “non-Augustan” reading of Virgil (also dubbed the “pessimistic” approach), see Richard F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge UP, 2001). *Dryden’s Virgil* is arguably one of the rare early cases; however, its assimilation of the “Augustan” reading is extensive in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*, even if the text itself facilitates a new didactic function.

Augustan legacy, especially by comparison with later readers.⁷⁸ Octavian's rise to power, it was thought, instilled order upon the chaos of civil war; it paved the way for the *Pax Romana* (and therefore the birth of Jesus); it established a peaceful "universal" empire; and Augustus and his advisor, Maecenas, were respected in turn for their patronage of a number of distinguished poets and men of letters of their day, including Virgil—perceived munificence that was taken as the sign of a flourishing, civilized realm.⁷⁹ It was therefore easy to see Virgil honoring these achievements with his poetry. All three of Virgil's major works contained allusions to or even addresses to Julius Caesar and his chosen successor—references readily viewed as celebrations of a dynastic form of monarchical government, for Octavian was Julius Caesar's great nephew. Moreover, the occasions of all three works coincided with key moments in Augustus's ascendancy (a correspondence that I will touch on subsequently). And the *Aeneid*, generally considered Virgil's greatest work, was presumed to have been written specifically for Augustus's benefit and with his support. Understood to identify Augustus with Aeneas, Virgil's epic was viewed as a panegyric, a handbook providing instruction in the ways of good monarchical government, an argument for Augustus's dignified origins (insofar as Aeneas is rendered a progenitor of the Julian line), and therefore also a lasting testament to Augustus's greatness.

⁷⁸ Cf. Winfried Schleiner, "Aeneas' Flight From Troy," *Comparative Literature* 27.2 (Spring 1975): 97-112; Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Augustan Idea in English Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983); and Howard D. Weinbrot, *Augustus Caesar in 'Augustan' England: The Decline of a Classical Norm* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978). I take Erskine-Hill and Weinbrot to be tracing the same history from different vantage points (chronological and otherwise): Erskine-Hill, in his focus on the earlier portion of the period, emphasizes the pro-Augustan bent.

⁷⁹ "Augustus" did not actually take on the honorific title until 27 B.C.E.—two or so years after Virgil began the *Aeneid* and some time after he had completed the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*. He was still known as "Octavian" before this point, even though he had technically gained the name "Gaius Julius Caesar" when he was adopted by his great uncle in 44 B.C.E. Although I have generally tried to observe these distinctions in my discussions of Roman history, I have blurred them occasionally for the sake of discursive efficiency. These distinctions were not always clearly observed in the earlier period, as in Ogilby's case, discussed below.

In the logic of mid-seventeenth-century Virgilian criticism, of course, these two points of appeal—Virgil’s perceived eminence and his monarchism—were virtually, if not completely, inseparable from one another. Virgil’s perceived greatness had to do not only with craftsmanship narrowly considered, but also with the perceived benefit of that craftsmanship for the common weal: how it supported the particular government of his own time (Augustus) and how it supported the general principles that that government was taken to embody (righteous monarchical government). Indeed, Virgil’s craftsmanship was so widely admired during this period in part because it was perceived as being so thoroughly penetrated with the sensibility that sustained a righteous monarchical government: a dignified, decorous embrace of monarchical rule as part of a natural, hierarchical order manifesting divine Providence.⁸⁰ Thus, in asking why Ogilby turned to Virgil when he did and as he did, one is necessarily coming to terms with an earlier way of imagining the formation of civic life as a natural phenomenon (confidence in the great chain of being, for instance) and with an earlier set of ideas about poetic function. Mid-seventeenth-century declarations of Virgil’s greatness as a poet did not narrowly reflect a sense of his poems as carefully wrought aesthetic artifacts, attractive through the ages because of that artistry, and receptive to all sorts of contemplation on the basis of that aesthetic appeal. During this period of the seventeenth century, to celebrate Virgil’s greatness was very often to see him modeling and promoting values constitutive of an orderly, Christian body politic.

III: The Virgilian Character

⁸⁰ A. K. Clarke grapples with a similar set of issues in “The Scope of Virgil’s Influence,” *Greece and Rome* 16.46 (Jan. 1947): 8-16.

In both this chapter and the next, I will mention several specific ideas about Virgil's didactic utility that rose to prominence during the seventeenth century. But perhaps the most efficient way to describe this way of thinking is to say the following: for readers of this period (and for many readers since) Virgil's poetry seemed to be imbued at every level with a decorous, dignified character—a character combining humility with confidence, compassion with fortitude, prudence with moral probity, and thereby embodying both a notion of civic virtue considered to be the foundation of good government and a temperament consistent with righteous Christian comportment. Virgil's poetry was readily taken to represent a more advanced stage of civilization than Homer had depicted—an advancement all the more obvious as such because Virgil had so carefully and strategically imitated Homer in the structure of his epic (Books 1-6, the *Odyssey*; Books 7-12, the *Iliad*) and because Roman civilization was known to have superseded Greek civilization historically, absorbing elements of Greek culture into its culture as its sophisticated social organization and imperial administration gained sway over a significant portion of the known world.⁸¹ The *Aeneid* charts a westward movement from Troy to Italy—a movement long taken to represent this geographical and chronological movement from Greece to Rome and beyond, the *translatio studii et*

⁸¹ One certainly sees the juxtaposition between Homer's primitivism and Virgil's sophistication shaping Dryden's late work and the *Battle of the Ancients and Moderns* more broadly, which was of course animated by questions of transhistorical value and progress, and Ogilby is arguably dabbling with these questions as well. For instance, the prefatory materials to Ogilby's *Iliad* (1660) deal at length with the partly oral transmission of his epic poems, the problem of locating the "Country" from which Homer hailed, and therefore also the cultural constitution(s) of the Greek city states: "[Homer's] life was in a manner itinerant, from one place to another; after his death he no sooner became eminent but most of those Countries through which he had past, and either by his Verses or Actions had left some memorable Testimonies of his being there, arrogated to themselves his birth, as the greatest honour they could receive, for which they might be renoun'd by all succeeding Ages"—a contest "so universall, that some scruple not to affirm all Cities were engaged in the quarrel" (image 19). The idea of the progress of civilizations is arguably implicit in Virgil's own poetry: by consistently imitating Greek models (Theocritus, Hesiod, Homer), he is able to argue a movement from a more primitive state of society to a more regularized, more established form of civilization.

imperii that undergirded the very idea of “translation” during this period. Virgil’s restraint, decorum, and dignity of bearing were qualities readily viewed as the constitutive unit of an orderly, hierarchical society, and this character could be linked to any number of aspects of his poetry: his versification, his similes, his hero, his depictions of warfare, his manner of deploying “machines” (i.e. gods and goddesses), the deliberateness with which he plans the whole poem.

Virgil’s “careful Magnificence” and “cal[m] daring,” as Alexander Pope would later put it,⁸² were also reflected in narrative features of Virgil’s legacy. The *Aeneid*’s story of national foundation, in which the hero submitted himself majestically to a divine plan, garnered particular attention during early Stuart England and even during the Restoration, when English monarchs were seen (by themselves and by their supporters) as leaders boasting divine deputation and ruling by divine right.⁸³ Moreover, the vocational trajectory manifested in Virgil’s *oeuvre*, in which the poet submitted himself confidently to the service of a righteous monarch, was seen as having hierarchical underpinnings of its own. Medieval interpretive traditions emphasizing Virgil’s “triadic biography” saw in the sequential composition of Virgil’s three major works (the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*) a symbolically resonant, incremental progress from works of lesser ambition to works of greater ambition⁸⁴:

This biographical sequence was regarded by the Middle Ages as a hierarchy grounded in the nature of things—a hierarchy not only of three poetical genres, but also of three social ranks (shepherd, farmer, soldier), and of three kinds of style. It extended to three corresponding trees (beech – fruit-tree – laurel and

⁸² *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt, vol. 7 (New Haven: Yale UP, 1967), 12.

⁸³ In 1660, Ogilby recommended Homer’s *Iliad* as a “Royal Entertainment” with precisely this rationale.

⁸⁴ Elena Theodorakopoulos, “Closure: The Book of Virgil,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 155-56. Theodorakopoulos suggests that “the sense of a totalizing teleology within the *oeuvre* really is stronger [in Virgil] than in any other ancient poet.”

cedar), locales (pasture – field – castle or town), implements (crook – plow – sword), animals (sheep – cow – horse). These correspondences were reduced to a graphic schema of concentric circles, known as *rota Virgilii* (Virgil’s wheel).⁸⁵

Subsequent interpreters of Virgil did not necessarily insist on this array of symbolic components, but the Virgilian *rota* did not disappear as an interpretive framework: in Renaissance England, “bucolic [wa]s still regarded as preparatory to epic,” and there was still a lingering sense of Virgil’s triadic *oeuvre* as a progression from low to high, with the *Aeneid* representing the lofty peak of Virgil’s civic and poetic achievements.⁸⁶ It had been undertaken with characteristic Virgilian circumspection insofar as it was the product of years of artistic training and preparation and insofar as it had sought out monarchical authorization, favor, and protection in the process.

IV: Aeneas’s Sensitive Heroism

The Virgilian character was manifested perhaps most obviously in the figure of Aeneas, whose actions and demeanor embodied *pietas*, a word suggesting both “piety” and “pity,” both filial duty and national pride. Evident especially in the battle scenes, as Pope suggests, Aeneas’s *pietas* emerged with memorable vividness in the famous tableau of Aeneas’s flight from Troy with his father and his household gods on his back and his son at his side—a scene that captured the imaginations of Renaissance readers in particular, appearing as it did in emblem books, poems, and even free-floating similes as a shorthand for filial duty.⁸⁷ Within the narrative of the *Aeneid*, the tableau emerges in flashback as part of a story that Aeneas tells to Dido of what misadventures have brought

⁸⁵ Richard Neuse, “Milton and Spenser: The Virgilian Triad Revisited,” *ELH* 45.4 (Winter 1978): 607, qtg. Curtis.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 607.

⁸⁷ See Schleiner, “Aeneas’ Flight,” 97-112.

him to Carthage—a framework that sustains a certain degree of interpretive wiggle room.⁸⁸ In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, these complexities of presentation were often ignored or explained away in deference to readings that made Aeneas the “paragon of filial piety” and the “exquisite patterne” of princely virtue⁸⁹—an interpretation that also lent itself, especially once the early Stuarts had assumed the throne, to a valorization of traditions emphasizing patriarchal priorities in dynastic succession.

It was therefore easy for readers of this period to see in the details of Virgil’s verse a thorough portrait of the hero’s pious commitment to his family and his national heritage. As Ogilby translates the scene, for instance, Aeneas tends to his sacred duties with obvious *gravitas*. Preparing to bring with him into exile not only his household gods (the narrower sense of *penates*), but his “Countrey-Gods,” Aeneas instructs his father, Anchises, to look after this sacred charge:

Dear Father, take our Countrey-Gods, unfit
 For me to touch, return’d from so much Blood,
 And such great Battails, till the Living Flood
 Cleanse me again.
 O’re my broad Shoulders, on my Neck, this said,
 Above my vest a Lions skin I laid,
 And take the load; *Ascanius* did embrace
 My hand, and follow’d with no equal pace,
 My Wife behind, and through dark Streets are born.⁹⁰

Suggestive of the promise of a baptismal cleansing or a postdiluvian remaking, and certainly indicative of pious habitudes, Aeneas’s language also shows him negotiating a

⁸⁸ I will elaborate on this point in the next chapter with reference to Dryden’s presentation of this episode. Also see Schleiner’s discussion, which has been invaluable to the present analysis for its effort to track shifts of interpretive emphasis in a long period comprising the phase of Virgil’s reception that concerns me here.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 111, qtd. 96.

⁹⁰ *Works of Virgil* (1668), 225.

deft transition between the spirit of military valor more typical of the *Iliad*—a spirit evidenced earlier in the episode, in Priam’s palace and the streets of Troy—and the spirit of caretaking that will characterize his own brand of heroism throughout the epic.

Ogilby’s Aeneas is not a wimp. He is depicted here as a strong and manly hero: note the “broad Shoulders” and the “Lions skin” draped across them.

Nonetheless, the very act of carrying his family toward safety effects a shift in Aeneas’s heroic priorities, in the way he bears his princely duties:

I that but now did shows of Javelins scorn,
And thickest Ranks of *Greeks*, begin to fear
Each breath of Wind, and smallest Noise I hear,
Troubled alike both for my Load and Son.⁹¹

Later readers of Virgil greeted with skepticism the suggestion that “fear” was an attitude becoming to a hero⁹²; however, the characterization resonated readily with early modern audiences predisposed to admire Aeneas and to see him as the embodiment of the obedient, selfless attitude at the foundation of settled government (obedience to God, obedience to his earthly vicegerents). In the naturalistic illustration that Ogilby commissioned for his 1654 edition of *Virgil* and reprised for later versions (Appendix A), a muscular, helmeted Aeneas stands tall even with his father on his shoulders. The image of Aeneas’s assembled family (with Creusa set slightly apart) is visually connected by its triangular composition to an image of a dignified set of municipal buildings and city gates in the background. More Pantheon than Whitehall, this illuminated background detail helps to establish *pietas* as the very basis of the Augustan civilization that the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁹² I will pursue this point in the next chapter.

Aeneid was taken to celebrate⁹³—if not of the Trojan state whose heritage Aeneas carries into exile, then certainly of the Roman nation that he will ultimately found. Both this orientation toward the collective good and this care for the future are clearly anticipated in Aeneas’s claim that he was “Troubled alike both for my Load and Son” as he departed from his war-torn home. Ascanius’s “embrace” of Aeneas’s “hand” hints that the transmission of this ethos of filial piety has already begun, even if the young boy, “follow[ing] with no equal pace,” falls somewhat short of his father’s heroic stature.

This virtuous image of Aeneas lent itself to a specific understanding of the *Aeneid* (or, indeed, of all epic poetry) as poetry that influenced people with characters like that of Aeneas—that is to say, princes. Sir William D’Avenant founded his seminal theory of “Heroick Poesie” on the assumption that it provided models of virtuous behavior to monarchs and aristocrats—men that, in turn, provided living models of virtue for the rest of the nation. Indeed, in the Preface to *Gondibert* (pub. 1650), D’Avenant placed particular emphasis on the aristocratic audience of “Heroick Poesie” (i.e. epic poetry). It is not “needfull,” he wrote, addressing Thomas Hobbes,

that Heroick Poesie should be leuell’d to the reach of Common men; for if the examples it presents prevaile upon their Chiefs, the delight of Imitation (which we hope we have prov’d to be as effectuall to good as to evil) will rectifie by the rules, which those Chiefs establish of their own lives, the lives of all that behold them; for the example of life, doth as much surpasse the force of precept, as Life doth exceed Death.⁹⁴

A zealous royalist, D’Avenant had written the Preface to *Gondibert* in exile, having escaped to France after being arraigned by Parliament for treason and imprisoned in the

⁹³ I am speculating here about the source for the image of the grandest building in the series of edifices. The Pantheon was originally built by Marcus Agrippa (Octavian’s minister and close friend) as a temple to all the gods, and it was known for its dome: Cassius Dio suggested that it got its name because its “vaulted roof...resembles the heavens” (History of Rome 53.27.2). “Pantheon, Rome,” Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheon,_Rome (accessed June 19, 2009).

⁹⁴ *A Discourse Upon Gondibert an Heroick Poem* (Paris: Chez Matthieu Guillemot..., 1650), 30, in Early English Books Online (accessed June 15, 2010).

early 1640s. (Part of *Gondibert* was written in the Tower of London in the early 1650s, while he was awaiting trial for high treason.) These dire circumstances are perhaps registered specifically in his assertion that “[t]he common Croud (of whom we are hopelesse) we desert.” Nonetheless, the ideas and assumptions guiding his broader argument, especially as regards the centrality of the court as a model of virtue to be imitated by the rest of the nation, are part and parcel of older laureate traditions to which D’Avenant was apparently still holding fast: he professes his commitment to a vision of Christian monarchical sovereignty as a beneficent form of hierarchical government whose happy stability over time was both the source and the product of a natural and therefore pervasive “delight of Imitation” in relation to esteemed examples, both past and present.⁹⁵

According to this logic, the monarch not only served as the living symbol of England and the head of the body politic in an administrative sense; together with an entourage of “the most necessary men” (attendant nobles and deputized “Chiefs”), he or she also served as a national model of morality and dignity, a concept readily animated by a faith in the divine right of monarchs and frequently discussed in aesthetic terms. In the preface to *Cynthia’s Revels, Or the Fountain of Self-Love* (pub. 1616), Ben Jonson had addressed Elizabeth’s court as “the Special Fountain of Manners”: a “*Bountiful and Brave Spring*” that

waterest all the Noble Plants of this Island. In thee, the whole Kingdom dresseth it self, and is ambitious to use thee as her Glass. Beware then thou render Mens Figures truly, and teach them no less to hate their Deformities than, to love their Forms: For, to Grace, there should come Reverence; and no Man can call that

⁹⁵ Cf. his conclusions elsewhere that “Nature, for the safety of mankind, hath ... (by dulling and stopping our progresse with the constant humour of imitation) given limits to courage and learning, to wickednesse and to error, as it hath ordained the shelves before the shore, to restrain the rage and excesses of the Sea” (17-8).

Lovely, which is not also Venerable. It is not Powd'ring, Perfuming, and every day smelling of the Taylor, that converteth to a Beautiful Object: but a Mind shining through any Sute, which needs no False Light, either of Riches or Honours, to help it.

Note that a general “ambitio[n]” to imitate (and to receive favor accordingly) is taken for granted here: this is the natural phenomenon that maintains the whole system and that ideally leads to the proper apportioning of “love” for good human “Forms” and “hate” for “Deformities.” Imitation effects, in other words, corrections of virtue and vice, a project whose proper end is “Reverence” for “Grace.” The court is therefore encouraged to “render Mens Figures truly” in a manner that proceeds from and inspires a self-sustaining, self-evident integrity of “Mind.” Obsequious displays of superficial beauty are threats to the court’s efficacy as “the Special Fountain of Manners.” Jonson’s aim is to discourage this phenomenon lest it have negative consequences for the “teach[ing]” that he expects the court’s example to accomplish. True to his word, during his tenure serving James I, Jonson became a merciless satirist of courtiers whom he thought did not live up to this large national responsibility—an indication of his commitment to the ideal of civic influence associated with a truly “graceful” court and a court poet dedicated to the important end of moral reform. The *Aeneid* was readily associated with this model of civic influence, albeit by providing a resolutely positive example in the figure of Aeneas—a character fit for monarchical and courtly imitation.

V: *Virgil* and the Common Weal

The Virgilian character would therefore have spoken to Ogilby, perhaps first and foremost, for the aristocratic and monarchical values that it seemed to promote. Patterson has noted topical references in the language of Ogilby’s *Pastorals* that would have

resonated with other royalists during the Commonwealth and Protectorate, but Virgil's appeal went beyond the *Pastorals*, and it went beyond poignant allusions to sequestration (confiscation of lands).⁹⁶ Given Ogilby's decision to translate the entire Virgilian corpus, given his regular reprinting of *Virgil* through a period of several decades, and given the expensiveness and high quality of the folios for which he was best known (permanent showpieces for any aristocratic library), Ogilby was presumably not interested in translating Virgil *merely* for the topical allusions that such a project allowed him to make at any given moment. To be sure, in the timing of his translations, Ogilby, like other Virgilian translators of this period, was exploiting a parallelism between the history of Augustan Rome and the history of modern England—a shift from a republican government to a monarchical government.⁹⁷ However, he surely could have exploited this parallelism by translating a mere portion of Virgil's *oeuvre*.⁹⁸ Richard Fanshawe's *Aeneid* 4 (1648) offered a concluding “summary of Rome's civil wars,” complete with “explicit links between Rome's civil wars and England,” and it highlighted Virgil and Horace's involvement in the earlier turmoil.⁹⁹ Denham's *Destruction of Troy* (1656) took a related tack in its dramatic rendering of Priam's tragic demise:

On the cold earth lyes this neglected King,
A headless Carcass, and a nameless Thing.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ *Pastoral and Ideology*, esp. 170-72, for topical references. Patterson's discussion recognizes the broader appeal of Virgil's poetry (179-80): the *Aeneid* and *Georgics* are outside her purview in a study of pastoral. But she does tend to point to particularities of tone and *poeme-à-clef* correspondences rather than stressing the structural features and hermeneutic traditions that I am emphasizing here.

⁹⁷ Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 171-73.

⁹⁸ For a number of relevant examples from the period, see Colin Burrow, “Virgil in English Translation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 21-37. Virgilian translation was very often royalist; the republican James Harrington (1659) was an obvious exception.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, qtd. 26.

Suggestive as a specific allusion to the beheading of King Charles, this narrative of royal “destruction” was further animated by a tradition that Aeneas, Priam’s descendant and the legendary founder of Rome, compelled to flee the fallen city of Troy shortly after Priam’s death, was also a progenitor of Brutus, the legendary founder of Britain.¹⁰¹ If taken to imply a journey that paralleled recent English history, Denham’s “translation” of Virgil not only mourned the loss of Charles I; it also beckoned a continuation of the story. The conquest and (re)instatement of the exiled Charles II would recall Brutus’s fulfillment of Aeneas’s journey westward from Troy.

Ogilby, too, must have had in mind this specific geographical sense of translation as *translatio studii* and *imperii*: the literary assertion of (or, as they might have seen it, the acceptance of) a historical movement of imperial authority, cultural authority, and pious government “across Latium,” from Greece to Rome to Britain. But this was one part of a broader statement and a broader possibility for local reform and local influence. Presumably Ogilby translated the works of Virgil because he thought that the Virgilian character had something to offer modern England.

And Virgil’s corpus had, indeed, come to represent a distinctive form of classical dignity, decorousness, and reverence for the gods that was worthy of modern absorption and imitation. One finds readers of this period imagining this imitative engagement with the Virgilian text (especially the *Aeneid*) as both an active and a passive process. In his

¹⁰¹ For sixteenth-century translators such as Phaer and Twyne, the exiled “pious Aeneas” had been seen not only as the progenitor of a British royal line—a lineage that was actually traced, by historians of the day, through the Plantagenets—but also as a representation of the temporal and geographical movement of Christian piety, Christian learning, and Church authority from Rome to the British Isles, understood as either the westward diffusion of Roman Catholicism or the Protestant purification that occurred as a part of that movement. This conception was bolstered by both the tradition that Virgil’s pious prince was either the prefiguration and/or progenitor of Christian kings who ruled with divine right and the tradition that Virgil was prophetic, if not Christian himself: there was a strong medieval tradition of reading the Fourth Eclogue as a prophecy of the coming of Christ.

Apology for Poetry, Philip Sidney encouraged deliberate mimicry of Aeneas's imitable manner of self-government:

Only let Aeneas be worn in the tablet of your memory, how he governeth himself in the ruin of his country: in the preserving his old father, and carrying away his religious ceremonies, in obeying the god's commandment to leave Dido though not only all passionate kindness, but even the human consideration of virtuous gratefulness would have craved other of him.¹⁰²

Edmund Spenser, somewhat more neutrally, saw Virgil "ensampl[ing]" the character of "a good governour and virtuous man" in the figure of Aeneas.¹⁰³

Here again, Aeneas's good reputation—the elision of his character with the character of a good Christian, the sense that his behavior provided the basis for a treatise concerning good government and gentlemanly comportment—remained closely bound up with Virgil's reputation as an especially irreproachable classical poet. By the mid-seventeenth century, few other pagan authors (if any) had been translated as often as Virgil had, as early, as completely, and with such veneration for the wisdom, dignity, and ongoing usefulness of the unmediated original. Amidst a flowering of Renaissance Ovidianism, Ovid's lasciviousness was routinely apologized for, explained away in allegorical interpretation, or edited out entirely through selective imitation and translation¹⁰⁴—a trend illustrated conversely by the fact that Christopher Marlowe's

¹⁰² Schleiner, "Aeneas' Flight," 98.

¹⁰³ "Letter of the Author," prefaced to *The Fairie Queene*, in *The English Renaissance: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, ed. Kate Aughterson (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 307.

¹⁰⁴ Ovid's Renaissance reception has received a great deal of scholarly attention—both the phenomenon of allegorizing Ovid's "fables" and, more recently, the question of whether Ovid's "moral licentiousness" was actually *easier* to excuse than his "famously daring speech (*audacia*)" and his status as a political exile from Augustan Rome (James 2003 344). For an overview, see Richard Hardin, "Ovid in Seventeenth-Century England," *Comparative Literature* 24.1 (Winter 1972): 22-62, which summarizes the influential medieval tradition of seeing Ovid as "a covert Christian who had written erotic lyrics and fables in order to convey sacred doctrine and moral wisdom" (45). Hardin differentiates England's comparatively cautious interpretive tradition from Italy's racier tradition, follows it into George Sandys's 1632 edition of the *Metamorphoses*, notes exceptions to the general trend, and considers the decline of interest in allegorical interpretation in the late seventeenth century. Hardin has also examined Elizabethan imitations of Ovid's *Heroides* to similar ends ("Convention and Design in Drayton's 'Heroicall Epistles,'" *PMLA* 83.1 (Mar.

version of *Ovids Elegies* (c. 1600) was sentenced to “conflagration” for “obscenity.”¹⁰⁵ Lucretius, whose *De Rerum Natura* was not translated in its entirety until 1682, was preceded in editions of the 1680s with a lengthy preface excusing the author for his atheism, comparing him apologetically to Thomas Hobbes, and rationalizing his contemporary relevance with an appeal to readerly skepticism as a civic virtue.¹⁰⁶ Even Homer, whose reputation was on the rise by the mid to late seventeenth century, (and whom Ogilby himself would later translate), was still seen as a poet less immediately appropriate for modern audiences than the Roman writer whom John Donne had hailed as the “king of poets”¹⁰⁷: Homer’s Greece was taken to represent a coarser, more primitive form of civilization than Virgil’s Rome, and many of Homer’s heroes remained suspect for similar reasons (e.g. the wrathful and violent Achilles; the philandering trickster, Odysseus).¹⁰⁸

1968): 35-41). Tendencies to allegorize Ovid did not preclude either an interest in the more titillating aspects of his work or an interest in reconciling him (to a certain degree) to monarchical ideologies; my point here is that, among pagan poets, Virgil tended to be viewed as the least dangerous and the most readily assimilated to modern life. The *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid’s raciest work, was first translated in full by Thomas Heywood around 1625. M. L. Stapleton’s modern edition of this translation offers a useful introduction to Renaissance Ovidianism (*Thomas Heywood’s Art of Love: The First Complete English Translation of Ovid’s Ars Amatoria*. Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 2000). I have also benefited greatly from Heather James’s recent article, “Ovid and the Question of Politics in Early Modern England,” *ELH* 70.2 (2003): 343-73, which asks, among other things, how Renaissance readers dealt with Ovid’s vexed relationship with Augustus.

¹⁰⁵ As Stapleton reports, it was “ordered ‘for immediate conflagration’ by the archbishop of Canterbury (Whitgift) and the bishop of London (Bancroft) for obscenity” (6).

¹⁰⁶ Creech, Thomas, trans. *T. Lucretius Carus the Epicurean philosopher his six books De natura rerum done into English verse, with notes* (Oxford, 1682. Accessed EEBO 5 June 2009). John Evelyn had translated Book 1 for publication in 1656, but it was not until Thomas Creech’s 1682 translation that England saw a complete (or virtually complete) translation of *De Rerum Natura*. Richard Kroll discusses the dissemination and influence of atomism during the Restoration in *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991).

¹⁰⁷ Schleiner, “Aeneas’ Flight,” 97.

¹⁰⁸ As Schleiner observes, “only a later age would compare the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with the *Aeneid* and award Homer the prime laurels” (97). Also see Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books*, who cites Virgil’s early preeminence (esp. 122-23) en route to discussing Homer’s eventual emergence as Virgil’s legitimate rival (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991).

By contrast to these other authors, whom seventeenth-century disseminators of the classics often approached with the philosophy of needing to separate the wheat from the chaff, Virgil had typically been treated as if he could be almost wholly assimilated to modern life. John Harington (c. 1591) summed up his appeal this way:

But what need we further witnes, do we not make our children read Virgil commonly before they can understand it, as a testimonie that we do generally approve it? And yet we see old men study it, as a prooffe that they do specially admire it; so as one writes very pretily, that children do wade in Virgil, and yet strong men do swim in it. (qtd. Sills 130)¹⁰⁹

Striking a similar note, Richard Stanyhurst (c. 1582) compared the reading of Virgil's *Aeneid* to the prospect of eating of a fruit whose rind was as tasty and nourishing as its interior—an experience that promised to benefit both superficial readers (who read only for the plot) and inquisitive readers (who sought a more profound sort of edification):

What deepe and rare pointes of hidde[n] secrets *Virgil* hath sealed vp in hys twelue bookes of *Aeneis*, may easily appeare to such reaching wits, as bend their endeouours, to the vnfoldeing thereof; not only by g nibbling vpon the outwarde rine of a supposed historie, but alos by groaping the pyth, that is shind vp within the barke and bodie of so exquisite and singular a discourse. For whereas the chief praise of a wryter consisteth in the enterlacing of pleasure with profit: our author hath so wisely alayde the one with the other, as the shallow reader may be delighted with a smooth tale, and the diuing searcher may be aduantaged by sowning a pretious treatise.¹¹⁰

Stanyhurst's conceit refers specifically to the tradition of reading the *Aeneid* both as a compelling tale of adventure and as a princely treatise. Nonetheless, his emphasis on Virgil's integrity as an author—the sense that the insides of his poetry were at least as

¹⁰⁹ See Kenneth Sills, "Virgil in the Age of Elizabeth," *The Classical Journal* 6.3 (Dec. 1910): 123-31.

¹¹⁰ *The first foure bookes of Virgils Aeneis, translated into English heroicall verse* (London, 1585), image 2, in *Early English Books Online* (accessed June 3, 2009). The word "sowning" is not incorrectly transcribed.

For points of contrast to this quotation and the previous quotation, see Heather James' discussion of the controversies that Ovid inspired among teachers and translators (esp. 344-46). Apropos of these questions of teaching through fables, there is probably much more to say about Ogilby's own foray into fables—in his case, imitations of Aesop—but it is beyond the scope of the present project to examine these questions, which would necessarily require an examination of Dryden's fables as well (i.e. *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700)).

valuable as its colorful outer surface—confirms the general trend of seeing Virgil as a poet of character, a poet prized for the way he balanced accessibility with maturity of thought, sophistication with uprightness, and for the way he allied “pleasure with profit” in the bargain. Valued for his morality, his philosophical wisdom, and his linguistic prowess, he was seen as a universally edifying poet, even without significant interpretive mediation.

This commonplace helps to explain the patterns of mediation and dissemination adopted in Ogilby’s publications. Translators of this period (including Ogilby himself) often apologized that they could never do justice to so “inimitable” an author¹¹¹—a gesture of reverence that served to vindicate the translator’s “weak” or imprecise “performance[s]” as the product of an admirable *attempt* to imitate Virgil that nevertheless fell short of the esteemed original. Thus it makes a kind of sense that Ogilby would not have balked at producing a second English translation that differed so strikingly from his first, whether to avoid copyright violations or for some other reason¹¹²: if a vernacular translation necessarily provided only an approximation of the venerable original, perhaps one approximation served nearly as well as the next. This approach to translation complements the decision to publish a Latin edition alongside the

¹¹¹ For instance, as John Boys wrote humbly in the Preface to his translation of *Aeneid* 6 (1660), *The more excellent a work is in the Original, the more difficulty it still gives to the Translator. But since I have ventur’d upon it, although the charge of a rash undertaker may (haply) be made good against me, yet my weak performance herein may in some measure be excused, because (as I have said) the work in its self is so inimitable.* *Aeneas his descent into Hell as it is inimitably described by the prince of poets in the sixth of his Aeneis* (London, 1661), image 6, in *Early English Books Online* (accessed June 3, 2009). I cite Ogilby’s comment further below.

¹¹² Ogilby had sold the copyright for the first (1649) translation to the Crook brothers, who brought out a second edition the following year, and I am speculating here that Ogilby may have written a new translation for the 1654 annotated edition to avoid infringement. I have not found previous scholarship dealing specifically with this question. Van Eerde makes a few comments about the copyright question (46) but does not comment on the technicalities; Schuchard clearly observes a difference between the “first translation” and the “second translation” of Virgil but does not speculate on the causes.

English version—versions sold, in a majority of cases, to the same patrons.¹¹³ In providing these multiple *Virgils*, Ogilby asserted, in effect, that those subscribers who could appreciate Virgil in the original Latin should avail themselves of the “inimitable” original, and those who could not should content themselves with a reasonably “Faithful” English rendering.¹¹⁴

VI: *Virgil* and the Commonwealth

Among comparable classical writings, then, the Virgilian corpus had been seen as both an especially unthreatening candidate for “Faithful” translation and as poetry especially inclined to contribute positively to the modern common weal—conventions that Ogilby was certainly relying upon and confirming in turning to Virgil. And yet, if there was ever a time when the publication of a translation of Virgil might have appeared to be a subversive activity, the Commonwealth was surely that time. To publish a faithful translation of Virgil’s *oeuvre* in the way that Ogilby did, amidst a civil war and an experiment of republican government, was to propose Virgil as an antidote to the ills of the present—to assert, in essence, that England had abandoned its dignified character and to assert the dignity of the Virgilian character over and against the indignities of the present.¹¹⁵ It was to celebrate such civic virtues as piety, respect for tradition and family,

¹¹³ About three fourths of the subscribers for the 1654 Virgil subscribed to the 1658 Latin edition. See Sarah L.C. Clapp (esp. 367), “The Subscription Enterprises of John Ogilby and Richard Blome,” *Modern Philology* 30 (1933): 365-79. Van Eerde follows Clapp (40). Schuchard confirms this number as well (49) and points out additionally that the honored subscribers for the 1668 English annotated edition were virtually identical with the honored subscribers for the 1654 edition: “The reprint became desirable, because a considerable number of copies of the first edition were destroyed in the Great Fire. The subscribers’ names to the plates are the same..., but five names are obliterated without replacement” (54).

¹¹⁴ Preface to *Africa*, quoted above. Ogilby describes the fidelity of the translation as a self-evident quality.

¹¹⁵ As Colin Burrow puts it, “[T]he *Aeneid* offer[ed] consoling prophecies to lost causes” (26)—though presumably Ogilby, whose king was ultimately restored to the throne, did not think that his cause had been lost in the end.

respect for state authority, decorousness, and selflessness of national service (qualities that, by implication, were lacking in the present), and to do so by translating an Augustan poet who had been particularly associated with the monarchical ideologies suggested in the label “Augustan.” It was also to imagine Virgil’s poetry influencing Englanders in these respects—providing a positive model to be imitated along the lines of the comments of Spenser, Sidney, Jonson, and D’Avenant.¹¹⁶

And, crucially, this reverent gesture—this demonstration of respect for Virgil, the Augustan legacy, and the didactic potential of Virgil’s poetry—came even at the expense of celebrating the nation for which he had produced the translation. In the Dedicatory Epistle to his first translation of Virgil (1649), Ogilby amplified the ineffability *topos* by crediting his inability to do justice to Virgil not to his modest linguistic training, but to the deficiencies of the culture that had produced it. He called his translation “but the shadow, and the cold resemblance of *Virgil*, ... relish[ing] more of *Thrace* than *Greece*, having been bred in phlegmatick Regions, and among people returning to their ancient barbarity.”¹¹⁷ Writing of “Our Nation” being “at present under a cloud,” Ogilby referred to dedicatory custom itself in the present perfect rather than the present tense, as if to register doubt about its persistence into the future. “It hath been the custome of the most knowing men,” he began, “to dedicate their Labours to Persons of that quality, from whom with justice they might expect both protection and honour,” and he complimented his dedicatee, the Marquis and Earl of Hertford, for being “endowed with those abilities

¹¹⁶ Patterson’s effort to think through the “quietism” of the gesture is useful here (178-79). I am not inclined to view Ogilby’s Virgilian translation as wholly quietist in the sense of being passive in the face of conflict: such powerful didactic traditions were associated with the *Aeneid* in particular that a translator in Ogilby’s position could readily have seen his publication training the next generation of royal and aristocratic leaders of England.

¹¹⁷ *Works of Virgil* (1649), image 4.

of Judgment and Science, to know, and place an exemplary value upon Dedications of this nature.” He closed by apologizing “that our *English* Wooll may seem but an unworthy habit for that *Muse*, which from her conception was adorn’d with all the gold and spoils of *Italie*, the most glorious Mistresse of the world.” “[I]f your Lordship shall be pleas’d to smile upon the dresse she now wears,” Ogilby predicted hopefully, “[this translation] may live to be receiv’d (when time shall ripen more ornament of Sculpture and Annotations), with none of the meanest attempts of this nature”—a prediction that served doubly to announce his plan to produce a lavishly-illustrated annotated edition (which he did in fact do, just five years later) and to anticipate the restoration of civic order implied by such a production.

In referring to “Our Nation” being “at present under a cloud,” Ogilby was clearly denouncing the civil wars that had been raging for over a decade in his native Scotland, in his adopted home of Ireland, and in England itself, and he may also have been glancing at the beheading of Charles I, which occurred in January of 1649. The timing of his publication therefore established it as a royalist performance, presumably published with a royalist audience in view—a point that Annabel Patterson and Katherine Van Eerde, among others, have elaborated. But it is worth noting, too, that if this Virgilian *Works* can be called royalist propaganda, it was royalist propaganda of a very particular kind. In producing a translation of the *Works of Virgil*, Ogilby was employing a strategy more subtle, more idealistic, and arguably more conducive to publication than the strategies adopted by some of his contemporaries. Jason McElligott has examined royalist notebooks from this period that used “sexual libel...to denigrate the Parliamentarians’ carefully constructed self-image, and thus to destroy their ability to inspire fear or awe

among the populace”—a tactic enabled by the production of the newsbooks “in conditions of strict secrecy.”¹¹⁸ Ogilby’s reference to the “cloud” distressing the “present” might as easily refer to the generalized moral failings attributable to civil war as to the objectionable behavior of the Parliamentarians in particular. And there was nothing lewd or scurrilous about Ogilby’s dedicatory denigration of England’s “ancient barbarity” or its present resurrection, notwithstanding the implicit proposal that Britannia would benefit from a second Roman conquering. His own revivification of the Virgilian character, done as it was in the name of civilization, suggested a comparative commitment to providing positive exemplars rather than taking pot shots—holding himself above the fray in the hopes of encouraging the restoration of national glory.

It is possible, too, that Ogilby enjoyed a certain immunity in publishing a classical translation—and, at that, an exhaustive translation rather than an allusion-rich fragmentary rendering along the lines of John Denham’s *Destruction of Troy*. Commenting on the lavishness of Ogilby’s 1654 edition (lavishness having been an aesthetic more appropriate to celebrations of Stuart absolutism than contributions to Cromwell’s England), Van Eerde has observed that it may well have been Virgil’s status as an esteemed classical poet that made such a project feasible:

Lavish tombs and elaborate funerals were out of style during the Commonwealth; ostentation of any sort (save religious piety) was suspect. But classical learning was irreproachable; and to have one’s name, title, armorial bearings and various honours displayed on an engraving, set in a book together with some hundred other dignitaries – such display might fit well to the taste even of the Protector and of his secretary of state, Milton. Although neither of these men is represented, Edward Bysshe, Garter King of Arms under the Commonwealth, commissioned a plate. And the names of many of the great men of the old order appeared...¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ “The Politics of Sexual Libel: Royalist Propaganda in the 1640s,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67.1 (2004): 75.

¹¹⁹ *John Ogilby*, 40.

Among classical authors, Virgil was, certainly, as “irreproachable” as they came.¹²⁰ The content of his writings probably would not have seemed actively threatening to Commonwealth and Protectorate censors: the figure of Aeneas embodied ideals of “piety” harmonious with ideals that the Puritans advocated, and Cromwell had been known to present himself as a second Augustus.¹²¹ Moreover, Ogilby did not frame his translations of Virgil as overtly oppositional works. He made no explicitly derisive comments about the Parliamentarians and, indeed, provided no explicit prefatory statement about why he was translating Virgil in the 1649 edition (examined above) or in subsequent editions.

Indeed, in assessing Ogilby’s translation as an active contribution to the common weal—even as a staunchly royalist contribution to the common weal—it seems important to emphasize the guiding traditionalism of the gesture: the serene assertion that Virgil was an irreproachable poet worthy of the reverence he had long been accorded, worthy of fine bookmaking (the finest that England had to offer), and worthy of a prominent place in an aristocratic library. Nonetheless, Van Eerde’s comment brings up two key points difficult to reconcile to an understanding of Ogilby’s *Virgils* as merely quietist literary productions.

First, there is the issue of the subscription lists for the annotated and Latin editions. If Edward Bysshe was the only prominent Commonwealth officer listed among

¹²⁰ I have made the case here that, when it came to questions of dissemination, not all classical learning was equally “irreproachable” during this period, even if *being* learned in the classics and being influenced by that learning remained a guiding cultural ideal (for gentlemen at least).

¹²¹ Blair Hoxby, “The Government of Trade: Commerce, Politics, and the Courtly Art of the Restoration,” *ELH* 66.3 (Fall 1999): 603. This is a vexed subject. Cromwell has often been accused of aping monarchical codes of behavior, but modern scholars have looked with increasing skepticism on this scholarly commonplace. See Laura Lunger Knoppers, “The Politics of Portraiture: Oliver Cromwell and the Plain Style,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 51.4 (Winter 1998): 1282-1319.

Ogilby's subscribers,¹²² then his presence here emerges more as a token gesture to the regime in power than a signal of Ogilby's wholehearted effort to reconcile to the established, Cromwellian government an essentially royalist project, defined as such by royalist patrons, royalist readers, and therefore royalist debts and obligations.¹²³ I have already highlighted the language of national disavowal in the Dedicatory Epistle to Ogilby's first translation: rather than suggesting an effort on the translator's part to speak to the nation as a whole, symbolically or otherwise, this prefatory statement shows Ogilby seeking out readers (like his dedicatee) who share his vision of the hierarchical basis of civilized government and who may find themselves in a position to improve "Our Nation" in accordance with Virgil's esteemed model. Although Ogilby does not actually retain the full discussion in later editions, the prefatory comments that he does offer frame the later publications as fulfillments of the promise made in 1649 that, "time shall ripen more ornament of Sculpture and Annotations"—ornaments befitting "that *Muse*, which from her conception was adorn'd with all the gold and spoils of *Italie*, the most glorious Mistresse of the world." Ogilby's brief dedication to the 1654 annotated edition (which is repeated in the 1668 edition) "*present[s]... for discharge of my Obligation, this second English Virgil, inlarg'd in Volume, and beautiful with Sculpture and Annotations,*" thereby confirming this project as a continuation of Ogilby's own original concept. Thus, it seems reasonable to expect that, in locating subscribers for his annotated and Latin editions, both before and after the restoration, Ogilby sought out a

¹²² Bysshe was also a man of "mixed" political allegiances and "sympathies." See Peter Sherlock, "Bysshe, Sir Edward (c.1610–1679)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4285>, accessed 22 June 2009]

¹²³ As yet, there has been no exhaustive scholarly analysis of the subscription lists to Ogilby's *Virgils* along the lines of John Barnard's analysis of the subscription lists of *Dryden's Virgil*. I am therefore speculating based on hints in Clapp, Van Eerde, and Schuchard.

network of largely loyalist (and wealthy) genteel or aristocratic patrons. In this respect, Ogilby's decision to translate the Virgilian corpus in the heyday of civil conflict and republican government should not be construed as an active gesture of inclusion and reconciliation with Cromwell's regime—a way of finding common ground with republican leaders or republican principles of governance. Instead, as Patterson suggests, during the Commonwealth and Protectorate, Ogilby's *Virgil* provided a means of “defin[ing] the aristocracy as keepers of the flame, those on whose loyalty would depend the regeneration of the monarchy from its virtual annihilation.”¹²⁴

In addition, there is the matter of Ogilby's lavish illustrations and annotations. This element clearly meant a lot to Ogilby. He emphasized it not only in the prefatory comments mentioned above, but also in the more exhaustive autobiographical account offered in the Preface to *Africa*, where he also detailed his adaptation of these techniques to subsequent endeavors in printmaking. The “*Royal Folio*,” as Ogilby called it, became his trademark—and one strongly indicative of a royalist ideology, as Van Eerde recognizes. Indeed, Ogilby described the transition from the first translation to the second translation in vocabulary suggestive of what he elsewhere referred to as a “Royal Entertainment”¹²⁵:

[F]rom a *Mean Octavo*, a *Royal Folio* Flourish'd, Adorn'd with Sculpture, and Illustrated with Annotations, Triumphant with the affixt Emblazons, Names, and Titles of a hundred *Patrons*, all bold Assertors in Vindication of the Work, which (what e're my Deserts) being Publish'd with that Magnificence and Splendor, appear'd a new, and taking Beauty, the fairest that till then the *English* Press ever boasted.

¹²⁴ *Pastoral and Ideology*, 185.

¹²⁵ See dedicatory comments to Ogilby's *Iliad* (1660). Ogilby also used the word “Entertainment” to describe Charles II's coronation ceremony in the Preface to *Africa*. I will discuss both subsequently.

Often incorporating this sense of splendor, an “Entertainment” in this period was an elaborate ceremony (often semi-public in nature) that glorified the monarch as the center and source of civic power, inspired awe and respect in the monarch’s servants (considered in a hierarchical relation to one another), and secured bonds of fealty and protection between the monarch and his servants.¹²⁶ In the sections that follow, I will pursue the thesis that, as early as 1649, the former masquer and eventual organizer of Charles II’s pageant through the city of London, was developing a concept of his *Virgil* as a “Royal Entertainment,” to be distributed eventually by subscription to a network of royalist aristocrats. Building upon Patterson’s characterization of Ogilby’s aristocratic patrons as “keepers of the flame” during the Commonwealth and beyond, and borrowing from Stephen Orgel’s classic analysis of the ideologies of power associated with the Stuart masque, I argue that Ogilby imagined his *Virgils* (especially his illustrated *Virgils*) as selectively-disseminated “Royal Entertainments.”

At the heart of this concept was an understanding of Virgil’s *Aeneid* (and, indeed, Virgil’s corpus as a whole) as poetry that figured forth imitable models of virtue, honor, good character, and good breeding along the lines suggested above. But the conception of this didactic experience as a highly ornamented affair—the highest example of English bookmaking—transferred the ideology of the Stuart entertainment to the material page.

¹²⁶ A survey of EEBO titles containing the word “entertainment” (325 hits, conducted 25 June 2009) suggests that the word was used most commonly (by a significant margin) to describe a banquet, ceremony, or celebration held at court, at an estate, or at some other semi-public venue—for instance, the reception of a foreign leader by the English King or the reception of the English King and Queen by prominent subjects, towns, or organizations. Almost all hits were seventeenth-century publications. In this period of the seventeenth century, the word “entertainment” carried not only the sense of an “interesting employment” or “amusement” (*OED* 8a), but also a “[r]eception (of persons)” (10), as in the “[h]ospitable provision for the wants of a guest” (10b). Thus an additional sense of the term, now obsolete, was “[t]he action of maintaining persons in one’s service, or of taking persons into service,” (2a) or “the state or fact of being maintained in or taken into service” (2a), as in the “[p]rovision for the support of persons in service (*esp.* soldiers)” (2b).

The volumes' very lavishness and their intended civic function were reminiscent of the court ceremonies that had been designed by Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and others for James I and Charles I—pageants performed by aristocratic courtiers and professional dancers (like Ogilby) who enjoyed the honor of acting directly in the monarch's service and in the monarch's immediate community. In this respect, Ogilby's translations of Virgil conveyed not only an indirect commentary on the tribulations of civil war (the answer to which was always, for Ogilby, the restoration of the rightful order of English government), but also a material means of perpetuating—albeit at a temporal and geographical distance—the education, the lavish experience, and the ideology of royal entertainments like the court masque, whose civic function (as Orgel has described it) was to establish the monarch as the center and source of national authority, national power, and national wealth and, with that truth in view, to investigate the nature of monarchical power. Ogilby wrote in the Preface to *Africa* of the “Peace” in which he had been “bred”—a reference to a state of civilization in which arts (such as the masque) could be cultivated and enjoyed and one in which virtue was instilled in the nation's leaders *through* the arts. In this respect, then, Ogilby's *Virgils* would have been conceived as part of an effort to keep constructive cultural and educational practices alive—and, by this means, to prepare the next generation of loyal aristocrats to take over the leadership of England when the interregnum that Ogilby later referred to as the “grand Rebellion” had run its course.

VII: A Textual Royal Entertainment

In its content and in the didactic structures associated therewith, Virgil's poetry certainly had much in common with the court masque. The *Aeneid*, like the court

masque, had at its center an idealized princely figure thought to embody virtue, merit, and honor. Its subsidiary characters (including the gods themselves) were very often princely or aristocratic in their bearing and station, thereby representing variations on the main themes of princely governance. And vicious characters such as the tyrant Mezentius provided a counterpart to Aeneas's virtuous behavior, in something of the way that the antimasque complemented the masque: it represented "a world of disorder or vice, everything that the ideal world of...the courtly main masque...was to overcome and supersede."¹²⁷ There were pastoral elements in early Stuart masques as well—elements reminiscent of the form and content of Virgil's *Eclogues*. Although the *Georgics* may have spoken less readily to Ogilby than the other two parts of Virgil's oeuvre, it had in common with the others a central concern for the civic value of peace.¹²⁸ Particularly in James I's court pageants, "the highest virtue" had been "that of the pacific king, not a warrior, but a classical scholar and poet."¹²⁹ Peace had outranked even honor as a royal attribute. Virgil's corpus intoned these themes prominently,¹³⁰ as did the translator's own effort to improve his "small parcel of *Latin*" while translating the "king of poets" into English verse.

To be sure, Ogilby emphasizes the theme of peace prominently in his translations.

Rhymed "Arguments" to the *Bucolicks* declare a guiding moral for each poem, as if to

¹²⁷ Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U California P, 1991), 40.

¹²⁸ That is, because the happy husbandman's virtue is defined by his ability to work the land rather than to defend it, and because, historically, Virgil's *Georgics*, published as Augustus's military conflicts were ending, and dealing centrally with the theme of how to restore devastated or neglected farmlands (as in a time of war), can be seen as a work composed as part of the recovery effort after the Roman civil wars.

¹²⁹ Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 65.

¹³⁰ As in the famous tableau of the flight from Troy, Aeneas's *pietas* defined his character against the more violent forms of heroism and military glory explored in Homeric epic. See the Introduction to Stanley Lombardo's *Aeneid* (esp. xxxii-xxxvii), which elaborates on the ways the plot of Virgil's epic emphasizes this theme—for instance, in the delay of battle until the final books of the epic and the preference for one-on-one armed combat as a solution to full-scale military conflict. Aeneas is not a "pacifist," Lombardo points out, but, "efficient warrior that he is, he is essentially a man of peace" (xxxii).

insist that these poems do not merely convey rustic shepherds' dialogues, but teach lessons about good princely governance, through allegory or otherwise. And in these rhymed arguments, Ogilby reliably draws out morals related to the theme of peace. He emphasizes the benefits of a peaceful settlement under a righteous monarch; he envisions the social bonds that good leadership nurtures; he stresses the problems that war poses to the development of good character:

*Sad Melibœus, banished, declares
What Miseries attend on Civil Wars:
But happy Tityrus, the safe Defence
People enjoy under a settled Prince. (1st Eclog)*

*Since Kings as Common Fathers cherish all,
Subjects like Children should lament their fall:
But Learned Men, of Grief should have more sense,
When violent Death seizeth a gracious Prince. (5th Eclog)*

*Best Princes Peace affect, and more delight
Their Subjects to preserve, than their own right;
But those who follow War, no power can aw;
Swords make Oppression just, and Madness Law. (9th Eclog)¹³¹*

These arguments were included even in Ogilby's 1649 edition of *Virgil* (with only minor variations). At the conclusion of the civil wars and throughout the Commonwealth and Protectorate, these interpretive guides quietly asserted the righteousness of the royalist position over and against the misdirected violence, "Oppression," and "Madness" of the republican usurpers and the government that they established (illegally and corruptly, as Ogilby saw it). In their positive emphasis of patriarchal order and princely duty, these arguments anticipated a moment when the restored monarch might reassert the true nature of righteous princely power.

¹³¹ *Works of Virgil* (1668), 1, 19, 38.

Moreover, these arguments encouraged discouraged Ogilby's readers from remaining content with the surface meaning of the *Eclogues*—that is, enjoying a series of poems in which a number of shepherds talk to one another, joke with one another, and entertain themselves with musical contests—and encouraged readers instead to draw out lessons about good government from the dialogue, the actions, and the attitudes of individual shepherds. Thus, for instance, in the First Eclogue, the unhappy figure of Melibœus comes to signify the state of dispossession, considered even in a philosophical sense. In tandem, the figure of Tityrus (“a name assumed by *Virgil* to represent himself under the condition of a Shepherd,” Ogilby explains in an annotation¹³²), comes to signify a desired form of happy settlement. “We are of Lands, and sweet Fields, dispossesst,” Melibœus cries at the start of the poem, addressing Tityrus. “We flie our Country: Thou in shade at rest, / Fair *Amarylliis*, mak'st the Woods resound.”¹³³ Ogilby remarks in his notes that by “*Amarylliis*” Virgil intends “the City of *Rome*”¹³⁴—a reading that imagines Virgil insisting, even through the figure of a rustic shepherd who does not know Augustus, that the authority of Rome might restore these “Woods” at the periphery of the empire to a happier state. Ogilby remarks further upon the symbolism of Tityrus's comparatively contented position: “Ingenuously and appositly is our Shepherd [*Virgil*] seated under a *Mast-tree*, from which the Antients received not only shelter, but sustentation; to intimate the Tranquility of his Condition, the Competency of his Fortune.”¹³⁵ Tityrus's first words reveal this tranquil condition as the product of righteous patronage:

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

This quiet Shepherd, from a God we found;
 For he shall be my God: Oft from the Dam,
 I'll bath his Altars with a tender Lamb.
 He (as thou seest) permits my Herds to feed,
 And me to descant on this slender Reed.¹³⁶

Ogilby's notes identify as the source of this contentedness Augustus himself, "the first who in his life time had Divine honours conferred upon him." Ogilby's treatment foreshortens Octavian's rise to absolute power: he refers elsewhere on the page to Brutus and Cassius being "defeated by the Emperor"—a titular designation that makes peace and prosperity the product of the authoritative presence of a king revered as divine.

Consider, in a related vein, Ogilby's depiction of Aeneas's peaceable nature as compared to Dryden's characterization. In the seventh book, when Aeneas and his men finally reach Italy, their intended place of settlement, the Prince's first action is to send a peace offering to the King of Latium. Ogilby's translation depicts a transparent diplomatic gesture:

Aeneas Chosen Persons did prepare,
 That to the Court his Embassie should bear,
 And for the *Trojans* terms [*sic*] of Peace propound,
 With Royal Presents, all with Olive crown'd.
 They hasten to perform what he enjoyn'd:
 He, to a shallow Trench, slight Works design'd,
 Erects a Fort, and Camp-wise did begin
 His first abode to fence with Bulwarks in.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 356. Dryden's version reads as follows:

The Pious Chief, who sought by peaceful Ways,
 To found his Empire, and his Town to raise;
 A hundred Youths from all his Train selects;
 And to the *Latian* Court their Course directs:
 (The spacious Palace where their Prince resides;)
 And all their heads with Wreaths of Olive hides.
 They go commission'd to require a Peace;
 And carry Presents to procure Access.
 Thus while they speed their Pace, the Prince designs
 His new elected Seat, and draws the Lines:
 The *Trojans* round the place a Rampire cast,
 And Palisades about the Trenches plac'd. (VI.7.203-14)

Ogilby's translation depicts the orderly, ceremonial deputation of the peace-seeking "Embassie." The Prince supplies the ambassadors with "Royal Presents" to present to the foreign court and crowns them "with Olive" (a detail that he glosses twice in his annotations as a sign of peace). They then "hasten to perform what he enjoyn'd," leaving the industrious prince to the business of designing a provisional camp in their absence—"slight Works," as Ogilby describes them, including a "shallow Trench," a "Fort," and a "first abode" (his own house?) fenced in with "Bulwarks." Dryden's translation, too, emphasizes peacefulness as an aspect of both Aeneas's demeanor and his colonizing project; however, Dryden's rendering of the episode invites an understanding of Aeneas's formal proposal of peace as a coercive tactic—either a diplomatic mission designed as a pretext for war or a political tactic intended to establish the reputation of the "Pious Chief" as a prince "who sought by peaceful Ways, / To found his Empire, and his Town to raise." Rather than an "Embassie," Aeneas sends one hundred hand-picked "Youths"—not merely a diplomatic consort, but a large assembly suggestive of his capacity to command military force. The chosen group is commissioned "to require a Peace"—diction suggesting coercive tactics rather than a heartfelt effort to reach out to the foreign "Court" and conciliate on equal terms. They carry gifts not to offer evidence of the Prince's generosity, but to "procure Access." And as they depart speedily on their mission, the rest of the Trojans undertake the construction of the "new elected Seat" that the Prince has designed for himself—something more than a mere military camp, it seems, given both the insinuated context of the plan and the reference to the designed area as a "Seat." Thus the Olive wreaths, in Dryden's translation, appropriately serve to conceal and obfuscate rather than to reveal and ornament: Aeneas "all their heads with

Wreaths of Olive hides.” In its global effects, Dryden’s version of the passage suggests that the effective prince disguises the promise of military conflict (the youths’ helmets) with the promise of diplomacy (the olive wreaths) or, conversely, backs the proffering of peace with the threat of violence. In Ogilby’s version, by contrast, war is always a last resort. In an authentic fusion of symbol and significance, the dutiful prince bestows an image of peace upon his subjects and inspires in them the righteous sentiment of peacefulness.

Orgel has demonstrated that a central function of the court masque was to assert monarchical power as a natural force: to celebrate the king as “the tamer of nature,” to show the monarch “asserting his control over his environment,” to reveal this ordering intellect as an extension of a divine order, and thereby to display monarchy as a natural phenomenon within the narratives of the masque.¹³⁸ Ogilby’s incorporation of this philosophy into his translation of Virgil may already be obvious in the passage quoted above, in which the prince commands, his subjects “hasten to perform” what he has commanded, and the prince’s peaceable, orderly character is immediately imprinted both upon their appearances and upon the plot of land that he has “design’d” for temporary settlement. But Ogilby emphasizes the naturalness of monarchical government—even absolute monarchical power—throughout the narrative.

Consider the first book of the *Aeneid*, which tells the story of Aeneas’s shipwreck on the shores of Carthage in a violent storm. The storm, as Virgil depicts it, has been stirred up by Juno, who in her jealousy and her hatred for the Trojan people has convinced Aeolus, keeper of the winds, to unleash a tempest that will at least delay Aeneas’s ships (if not prevent them from reaching Italy altogether). Then Neptune,

¹³⁸ *Illusion of Power*, 52, 55.

realizing that Juno has transgressed upon his demesne, soon calms the seas. Figuring Aeolus and, later, Neptune as governors of natural elements, the scene lends itself to the masque's familiar trope. Moreover, the affects and relationships of dominance developed within the narrative reveal monarchy (even absolute monarchy) as a comfortable norm. Although the sequence is rife with conflict, with Juno attempting to subvert Neptune's rightful realm, Ogilby translates the sequence in a manner that impresses a dignified image of monarchical authority upon every local exchange, especially upon the male figures depicted in the story. Juno's enticement to Aeolus to loose the winds predicts a "beauteous" consequence of his obedience, positively foreshadowing Aeneas's divinely-sanctioned marriage of a local Italian queen in the process; and Aeolus's reply, in turn, conveys the instinctive disposition of a dignified, loyal subject:

The fairest, *Deiopeia*, I will joyn
 To thee in VVedlock, to be ever thine;
 For this great service, she thy Bed shall grace,
 And make the Father of a beauteous Race.
 When *Aeolus* said, 'Tis thy part to enjoyn
 Commands, great Queen, but to Obey, is mine:
 Thou in this Realm and Throne didst me invest,
 And by thy means, 'mongst Gods with *Jove* I feast;
 Thou me o're Storms and Tempests didst advance.¹³⁹

Aeolus twice repeats his gratefulness for the dominion and the privilege that have been accorded him by his superiors; he follows Juno's command in an unbroken chain of authority; and, even when Juno's commands are later dismissed by her angry brother as "Fraud," "Malice," and excessive "confidence of your High Birth," Aeolus's character remains unimpeachable, in accordance with the etiological history with which is initially introduced. Jove, seeing the need to contain the "rebellious Winds," had appointed a guardian who could "Cal[m] their Fierceness by sever Commands"; and Aeolus is

¹³⁹ *Works of Virgil*, 130-131.

positively described as “a King, who knows when to restrain, / And, when commanded, how to loose the Reign.”¹⁴⁰

Neptune, for his part, emerges as the superior power in the episode. Although clearly angry when he discovers that his sister has schemed “Without our leave to vex thus Heaven and Earth,” he is not unsettled, and he quickly restores natural order, serenely reiterating the authority by which he had obtained his power and reminding Aeolus of the proper region of his vicegerency:

How dare you raise such mighty Hills as these?
Whom I - - - But first swoln Waves we must appease;
Nor shall I thus such Crimes hereafter spare.
With speed depart, and to your King declare,
Not the Sea’s power, and mighty Trident, fell
To him, but me; let him in thy house dwell,
Eurus ‘mongst Rocks, in those Courts *Aeolus* may
Command, and in the Winds close Prison sway.
Sooner then said, he calms the Sea, then clears
The Skye from Clouds, the sun again appears.¹⁴¹

Dryden’s version, by contrast, refrains from naturalizing monarchy to the same degree and avoids the temptation to divide the landscape into capable male rulers and irrational female rulers.¹⁴² Dryden portrays a more unsettled series of assertions of authority, in which rival princes vie for dominance, and even Jove is not above installing a tyrant when necessity dictates. Dryden’s version begins with a history in which “the Father of the Gods,” fearful of the danger that the winds could do, “Impos’d a King, with arbitrary Sway, / To loose their Fetters, or their Force allay.”¹⁴³ This seemingly minor detail, by turns, reflects poorly upon the character of all of the other principal actors implicated in the scene: Jove for appointing Aeolus, Juno for being willing to bribe him, Aeneas for

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 132, 130.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 132.

¹⁴² Chapter Two continues this analysis.

¹⁴³ *Dryden’s Virgil*, V.1.90, 93-94.

being made the “Father of a happy Line” in Aeolus’s image, and Neptune for feeling threatened by these incursions on his authority.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, even “Imperial Neptune,” in Dryden’s version, might seem to speak with more bluster than natural authority:

Is it for you to ravage Seas and Land,
 Unauthoriz’d by my supream Command?
 To raise such Mountains on the troubl’d Main?
 Whom I———But first ’tis fit, the Billows to restrain,
 And then you shall be taught obedience to my Reign.

...

[Aeolus’s] Pow’r to hollow Caverns is confin’d,
 There let him reign, the Jailor of the Wind:
 With hoarse Commands his breathing Subjects call,
 And boast and bluster in his empty Hall.¹⁴⁵

“Imperial Neptune,” in Dryden’s version, may seem to bear a resemblance to the insolent tyrant whom he rebukes.

VIII: The Role of the Illustrations

The didactic function of Ogilby’s translation is asserted all the more forcefully in the annotated editions produced from 1654 forward, introduced as they are by a courtly scene of celebration and instruction. Ogilby’s frontispiece depicts an enthroned Augustus surrounded by a courtly entourage (Appendix B). Virgil sits at the bottom of the assembly with scrolls of his poetry scattered about his feet; he reads a passage from the sixth book of the *Aeneid* to Augustus and other assembled listeners. Floating above the image is a Latin quotation of Julius Caesar Scaliger, explicit assurance that “you can be neither a better nor a more polished person from any precepts of the philosophers than from a reading of Virgil.” This courtly setting, complete with Octavia fainting at the mention of the young Marcellus, helps to set the stage for an understanding of the *Aeneid*

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., V.1.111

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., V.1.190-94, 199-200.

(and presumably all of Virgil's works) as philosophically sturdy, panegyric verse originally composed under the protection of a capable prince, for his benefit, and for the benefit of his loyal supporters.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, far from suggesting that these princely lessons were strictly directed to the peculiar circumstances of Augustus's reign, Ogilby's presentation suggests that the literary lessons originally intended for Augustus and his court translate readily to a modern context and a modern audience, if not actually to a court setting. The present tense of the arguments' advice implies as much, and the paratextual apparatus does much to suggest that the modern sponsors of this work are, at least in a symbolic sense, inheritors of the cultural authority of the Age of Augustus—addressees for whom Virgil's original lessons are still relevant. Subscribers to both the Latin and English editions had their names and titles engraved in Latin beneath each illustration, together with their family coat of arms (Appendix D). The sponsors of Ogilby's Virgil were therefore visually inscribed into a Roman tradition. Their arms, their Latinized titles, and their Latinized British names literally frame the images that Virgil's poetry evokes; John Ogilby's name, too, appears in Latin beneath his frontispiece portrait (Appendix B). The implication is that Ogilby's noble and genteel sponsors are modern counterparts to the

¹⁴⁶ Marcellus was Octavia's son, Augustus's nephew and chosen heir, who had by this point died of an illness, thwarting a smooth transition in the Augustan line. The so-called "Marcellus" passage appears in *Aeneid* 6 as part of Anchises' prophecy that Aeneas will found a distinguished Roman line. Here Aeneas, watching the unborn shades of his descendants appear before him, sees a beautiful young man whose head is enveloped by "Night with gloomy Clouds" (349). Anchises tells him "with abortive Tears" that this will be Marcellus:

The Roman Progeny too great had seem'd,
Had Heaven bestow'd this Jewel so esteem'd. ...
Ah pitied Youth! if thy hard Destiny
Thou overcom'st, thou shalt *Marcellus* be.

The frontispiece image enacts an apocryphal tale, related originally by Servius and Donatus and remembered by Ogilby in a marginal annotation: "*Virgil* reciting this Book before *Augustus* and *Octavia*, she at the mention of her Son *Marcellus* swooned, and was so taken with the Poet's commemoration, that she gave him for every verse which concern'd her Son ten *Sestercies*; ten *Sestercies* are about 78 pound, 2 shillings 6 pence of our Money" (349).

courtiers and noble Roman families shown at Augustus's court in the frontispiece illustration. While Ogilby's subscribers become the modern auditors of Virgil's ancient advice, Ogilby himself becomes the modern counterpart to Virgil in an image of royal entertainment that bore at least a passing resemblance to those architecturally-balanced, carefully-orchestrated court ceremonies in which Ogilby had participated in his youth.

Completing the assembly in the 1668 Restoration edition is the symbolic presence of Charles II, who appears in the form of a royal warrant, which is displayed at the front of the volume. The warrant extends royal protection to Ogilby and his heirs for a period of fifteen years by granting "*Our Trusty and Wel-beloved Servant, JOHN OGILBY, Esquire, ...the sole Privilege and Immunity of Printing in fair Volumes, Adorned with Sculptures, Virgil Translated, Homer's Iliads, Æsop Paraphrased, and Our Entertainment in passing through Our City of London, and Coronation.*"¹⁴⁷ Ogilby's *Virgil* is not actually dedicated to Charles, in either English or Latin, but Ogilby's presentation implies that his noble dedicatee¹⁴⁸ stands in for the King.¹⁴⁹ In the Restoration edition, stretching above the dedication is an elaborate banner emblazoned with the British monarch's coat of arms.¹⁵⁰ The design includes the initials "C R" (Carolus Rex); the motto of the Order of the Garter, "HONI SOIT QUI MAL [Y] PENSE" (Shamed be he who thinks ill of it); and the phrase "DIEU ET MON DROIT," (God and my right), the motto of the English

¹⁴⁷ *Works of Virgil*, image 2.

¹⁴⁸ Addressed as "William, Marquess and Earl of Hertford, Viscount Beauchamp, and Lord Seymour."

¹⁴⁹ In the unannotated edition, Ogilby confirmed his sense of obligation verbally, in nuances of his dedication, as I noted above, and he perpetuated this idea in the 1654 edition by announcing that his production of the illustrated edition has fulfilled his established obligation.

¹⁵⁰ I understand this to be a British royal coat of arms rather than an English one because the lion rampant and the harp, symbols of Scotland and Ireland, respectively, are displayed in the second and third quadrants.

monarch from Henry V forward (Appendix C).¹⁵¹ These Latin phrases and French-language mottos invoke a history of Franco-Latin origin on behalf of modern Britain—a history consonant with the westward (and northward) movement of Aeneas and his descendents.

In the process, the royal banner invites the reader to appreciate, as an authoritative precedent for modern notions of divine right, Virgil's narrative presentation of Aeneas as a pious, divinely-assisted founder of Rome. Ogilby had explicitly emphasized this theme in his 1660 dedication of Homer's *Iliads* to Charles II: citing Alexander the Great's reputed consultation of Homer, Ogilby further recommended the volume with the observation that "*that which may render [Homer] yet more proper for Royal entertainment is, That he appears a most constant Assertor of the Divine right of Princes and Monarchical Government*" (image 5). In the case of Virgil, this connection may have seemed so obvious that it did not need to be spelled out beyond the paratextual hints mentioned above. During the seventeenth century, Virgil's epic design was widely understood to have confirmed Octavian in his claim to be "Imperator Caesar Divi filius Augustus," the chosen son of Julius Caesar, who had himself been deified after his death. Ogilby's notes tend to encourage such a view. He handles the matter delicately, as in this gloss of an apostrophe addressed to "*Caesar*" in *Georgics* 1:

Augustus, whom our Authors flattery inserts among the Deities, for as *Scaliger* notes, the antient Poet, intending to dedicate their Labours to persons of Eminence, were so superstitiously bold, as to implore their Assistance and Influence, with the same reverence they used to their Gods. Thus our Author invokes *Augustus*, *Ovia*, *Germanus*, *Lucan Nero*, *Flaccus Vespasian*, *Stadius Domitian*; Nor is this yet wholly to be ascribed to *Virgils* Flattery, but to a real truth; for though no other Emperours were (till after death) admitted into the number of the Gods, *Augustus* had Divine honours conferred upon him in his life

¹⁵¹ This header also appears before the "Life of Virgil" and reappears subsequently at the head of the *Georgics*.

time (as is already noted) which may afford some ground of excuse for our Author in this particular, above the rest.¹⁵²

There is a sense throughout the passage that Augustus, mortal though he may have been, may also have been unusually deserving of extraordinary panegyric treatment, even from the perspective of a discerning onlooker such as Virgil. Ogilby does not presume that Augustus was actually divine, but he credits the “real truth” that Augustus’s claim to divinity was taken more seriously in its own day than any other Emperor’s similar claim. Maintaining a philosophical distance from erring pagan beliefs, Ogilby carefully differentiates Roman “superstitio[n]” from this “real truth”; with politic skepticism, he considers whether the accordance of “Divine honours” to Augustus in his own lifetime should be ascribed to “*Virgil’s Flattery*” alone. And yet, the judiciousness with which he finally “afford[s] some ground of excuse for our Author in this particular” affirms and indeed replicates Virgil’s judicious character rather than insisting on a rigid distinction between pagan errors and modern righteousness, between the forces that sustained Augustus’s claims of divinity and the forces that sustain Charles’s modern appeal to a Christian “DIEU” and “DROIT.”

These alignments had a firm basis in European convention. Christian interpreters of Virgil from the classical period forward had widely understood the *Pax Romana* of Augustus’s reign as a historical development that paved the way for the coming of Christ. Although Augustus was pagan, it was assumed that his rise to power had been in some sense divinely sanctioned and divinely directed: through him, God had acted in history. Virgil was thought to have assisted this action materially. His celebrations of Octavian’s rise to power in the *Aeneid* and even in the earlier works (the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*)

¹⁵² *Works of Virgil*, 49.

were understood to have supported the cessation of the Roman civil wars and the ushering in of the *Pax Romana*; his Fourth Eclogue was read as a prophecy of the coming of Christ.¹⁵³ Few readers were so bold as to suggest that Virgil was Christian before Christ¹⁵⁴; however, Virgil was routinely honored with the epithet “divine” (the implication being that his poetic gifts could only be accounted for in terms of a godly dispensation). Moreover, it was commonplace to view him as an unknowing Christian prophet¹⁵⁵—a “great and pure-minded poet whose sentiments often verged on Christianity,”¹⁵⁶ whose fortuitous circumstances aligned him with a grand historical narrative of Christianity’s emergence as a world religion, and whose works could therefore be read and profited from by Christians for ages to come. Aeneas, distinguished by his *pietas*, was thought to have prefigured or otherwise exemplified a form of pious kingship advocated by Dante and others in modern government. The didactic potential of the *Aeneid* was understood along similar lines: Aeneas’s journey offered an imitable example of pious kingship in action (an example understood to have been modeled on and/or for Augustus) while some of the other monarchical figures discussed during the course of the epic (e.g. the tyrant Mezentius) embodied negative examples, modes of kingship to be shunned, avoided, and detested through the ages.

¹⁵³ Ella Bourne offers an efficient modern survey of the history of the messianic reading in “The Messianic Prophecy in Vergil’s Fourth Eclogue,” *Classical Journal* 11.7 (April 1916): 390-400.

¹⁵⁴ That is, Virgil who died in 19 B.C.E., predeceased Jesus’s birth. But this did not stop some from claiming him as a pre-Christ Christian. St. Jerome dismissed such a view as “puerilio,” but, as Bourne notes, “[T]he very emphasis of St. Jerome’s denial is an indication of the prevalence of the belief” (393).

¹⁵⁵ This interpretation persisted well into the eighteenth century. See, for instance, John Martyn’s mid-century commentary on the Fourth Eclogue (104-40), which skillfully negotiates several well-established interpretive cruxes en route to confirming Virgil as both a historical supporter of Augustus and an unwitting Christian prophet (Virgil. *Pub. Virgilii Maronis Bucolicorum eclogae decem. The Bucolicks of Virgil, with an English translation and notes.* (London, 1749) in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed January 3, 2008).

¹⁵⁶ Bourne, “The Messianic Prophecy,” 397.

Ogilby does not advocate such interpretations naively, especially as far as the elision between Roman religions and Christianity is concerned,¹⁵⁷ but he encourages an ancient-modern alignment consistent with these others. His translation of the Fourth Eclogue is introduced by a clear interpretive cue:

*Here Sibyl is appli'd to Pollio's Son;
Her Propheties, his Genethalicon;
But Christ's Birth he by happy Error sings,
The Prince of Poets Crowns the King of Kings.*¹⁵⁸

The “Sibyl” was a prophetess who had predicted (possibly drawing from fragments of Isaiah) the birth of a child who would bring on a Golden Age.¹⁵⁹ Virgil was thought to have imitated these writings in the Fourth Eclogue in his praise of the unborn son of a contemporary addressee (e.g. Pollio, as Ogilby has it here). In turn, this imitation was assumed to have contributed to the “*happy Error*” of his prediction of the coming of Christ. Ogilby efficiently renders this fateful transmission in the parallel structure of the first couplet (“Sibyl[?]’s text] ... Pollio’s Son; / Her Propheties, his Genethalicon”); he sets off the dramatic irony of the prophecy with the inverted sentence structure of the third line, a kind of hysteron proteron; and he then closes off the movement tidily in the final line, where he envisions Virgil’s “*happy Error*” manifested in the symmetrical image of “[t]he Prince of Poets” crowning “the King of Kings.” A historical gloss accompanies the argument:

Asinius Pollio, General of the German Army, having taken Salone, a Town in Dalmatia, was at his return to Rome honored with a Triumph, and the Consulship. The same year he had a Son, whom from the City he had taken, he

¹⁵⁷ For instance, Ogilby does not presume that the *Aeneid* represents historical fact, and he recognizes Virgil’s artistry accordingly. “It was commonly reported,” Ogilby writes, “that *Aeneas* fled away from his Countrey, having first betray’d it; which, *Virgil*, to take off, layes his banishment wholly upon Fate...” (128).

¹⁵⁸ *Works of Virgil*, 16.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Martyn (1749), 105 for a thorough, near-contemporary account.

named Salonius. The Birth of which Child, Virgil Celebrates in this Eclog, intermixing the praises sometime of his Father Pollio, sometime of the Emperor Augustus; and applying to that particular occasion, what the Sibyls had prophetically written of our Saviours Incarnation. With this Poem the ancient Christians were so far delighted, that those of Greece translated it into their own Language, and St. Jerome sticks not to affirm, that Virgil was a Christian, even without Christ. Certain it is, he had the happiness by this Eclog to make such; Secundianus[,] Verianus, and Marcellianus, men wholly of another Religion, were converted to Christianity by reading it.¹⁶⁰

Yet again, Ogilby succeeds in confirming the commonplace without relying unduly on outlandish stories or unreasoned interpretations. Although it was not literally true that Octavian already went by the title “Augustus” in 40 B.C.E., when Pollio received the consulship,¹⁶¹ it was probably fair to suggest that he was the sole ruler of Italy in 37 B.C.E., when the Eclogues were first published, and the interpretation is otherwise restrained. Ogilby marshals confirmed historical facts and judgments of established authorities; he indicates the power of Virgil’s poetry through anecdotes and reported commentaries rather than personal attestations. Virgil, Ogilby suggests, may not have understood the extent of his participation in a divine plan, but his poetry bears the residue of that participation. It can be enjoyed and profited from accordingly by modern audiences who have the benefit of historical perspective.

Ogilby’s “sculptures,” even though they depicted scenes from Roman history and Roman fiction, therefore had the cumulative effect of asserting continuities between Augustan Rome and modern England: the modern aristocracy, like the ancient one, is arranged in a hierarchical formation, with a king at its physical center. Ogilby’s presentation encourages the equation of the ancient Roman court and courtiers with a modern English court and courtiers. It encourages a sense of this continuity, too, as the

¹⁶⁰ *Works of Virgil*, 16.

¹⁶¹ The title “Augustus” (“Revered One”) was conferred on Octavian by the Roman Senate in 27 B.C.E.

product of a geographical and temporal movement of culture and imperial power—*translatio studii et imperii*—from Greece to Rome through France and finally to England. Moreover, published as it was after a period of civil war and republican government, Ogilby's translation invites a willing reader to dwell upon Augustus's past example—in particular, his rise to power with the demise of republican government—as a prediction of what may happen for England. In this respect, Ogilby elevates the Augustan model over and against the indignities of the present, in much the same way that his first preface had coveted the riches of Italy even at the expense of his native English wool.¹⁶²

IX: Spectacle, Monarchical Glorification, and the Illustrated Royal Folio

It is worth noting here that the idea of developing and disseminating a royal entertainment in the manner that Ogilby did, limited though his audience would have been by virtue of the price of the annotated volume, extended the civic function of the royal entertainment as it had been conceived under the early Stuart monarchs—broadened it outward, beyond the narrow confines of Whitehall, if not by reaching out to the general public *per se*. Paul Hammond has observed that the ideology of the divine right of kings, as rationalized by James I in particular, “gave added emphasis to the sacredness of the king's person,” thereby restricting the accustomed semi-public aspect of royal entertainments during the reigns of the early Stuarts:

[B]oth James [I] and Charles [I] were reluctant to allow the ordinary people access to their physical presence: James endured his ceremonial entry into London with tetchy ill-humour, while Charles refused to hold one at all, and retreated from many public exercises of his monarchical role, replacing royal

¹⁶² His subsequent use of the same technique in Charles II's coronation ceremony worked, conversely, to a similar end: calling upon the esteemed Augustan model to honor his king, his city, and by association his nation (SPQL, as he labeled it). Cf. Paul Hammond, *The Making of Restoration Poetry*, *Studies in Renaissance Literature* 16 (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 112-13.

progresses with private hunting expeditions, and continually finding excuses for postponing the ceremonies at which he would touch for the King's Evil. The authoritarian portraits and statues of Charles which seem so striking and poignant to us were not widely distributed at the time, and few of his subjects had any idea either of his physical appearance or of his symbolic code.¹⁶³

But upon his restoration, Charles II "repaired the mistake of Charles I,"¹⁶⁴ and of course Ogilby himself played a significant part in planning Charles II's triumphal entry and coronation progress through London. As Ogilby later recalled in the Preface to *Africa*, participating in this "Splendid" event gave him the idea to produce a printed, illustrated account of the entertainment:

[B]eing order'd by the *Commission of Triumphs*, to Banquet His Majesty at the Cities cost with a *Poetick Entertainment*, Marching with his Train of Nobles through his Imperial Chamber to His Coronation at *Westminster*, the Argument being great, seeming almost impossible to set forth the Dear Affections, and unexpressible Joys of all His Loyal Subjects, especially of His *Metropolis London*, at His so Happy Restauration; and that the Glory of so Bright a Day, the most Splendid that e're this Nation saw, should not close with the Setting-Sun, but appear a shining Trophy to Posterity; I, at my own proper Cost and Pains, brought it to light once more, in a *Royal Folio*, containing the whole Solemnity, the Triumphal Arches and *Cavalcade*, delineated in Sculpture, the Speeches and Impresses Illustrated from Antiquity.¹⁶⁵

Ogilby is apparently not writing hyperbolically here: his description of the event agrees with Pepys's eyewitness account of the dazzling splendor.¹⁶⁶ And yet, as in his description of his first royal folio, (that of his subscription-sponsored Virgil,¹⁶⁷) Ogilby's language invokes with predictable precision the ideal of monarchical munificence

¹⁶³ *Making of Rest. Poetry*, 108.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 112-13.

¹⁶⁵ Preface to *Africa*, image 3.

¹⁶⁶ "So glorious was the show with gold and silver," Samuel Pepys wrote, "that we were not able to look at it—our eyes at last being so much overcome with it" (qtd. Hammond 113-14). Hammond usefully contextualizes this coronation ceremony (and Ogilby's part therein) in his discussion of "The King's Two Bodies."

¹⁶⁷ "[F]rom a *Mean Octavo*, a *Royal Folio* Flourish'd, Adorn'd with Sculpture, and Illustrated with Annotations, Triumphant with the affixt Emblazons, Names, and Titles of an hundred *Patrons*, all bold Assertors in Vindication of the Work, which (what e're my Deserts) being Publish'd with that Magnificence and Splendor, appear'd a new, and taking Beauty, the fairest that till then the *English* Press ever boasted."

associated with the court masque and other royal entertainments during this period. In the passage quoted above, Ogilby's language of light, brightness, and illumination, forges a clear connection between the image of the "most Splendid [Day] that e're this Nation saw" and the image of the "shining Trophy to Posterity" that the book then becomes. The physical book promises not to let "the Glory of so Bright a Day" diminish "with the Setting-Sun."

Ogilby produced his royal folios of Virgil with precisely this civic function in view: this idea of a glorious, glittering royal ceremony, emblematic of the wealth and eminent virtue and greatness of the monarch, and distributed to the most faithful of the monarch's entourage to mimic the kinds of courtly spectacles that had once been more strictly confined to the physical space of Whitehall. Ogilby himself referred repeatedly to his engravings as "Adorn[ments]" and his annotations as "Illustrat[ions]," as if envisioning the Virgilian text encircled by a corona of glittering pictures and illuminated wisdom (Appendix E).¹⁶⁸ He procured for his "Royal Folio" the finest French paper, thereby augmenting the impression of having spared no expense. And his volume certainly conveys a sense of the ideology of the royal entertainment as Orgel has described it, with its courtly scene of instruction and celebration and the monarchal figure (Augustus, Aeneas, Charles II) at the physical and thematic center of the performance as the principal auditor and onlooker and also the principal focal point for the audience. Moreover, in his subscription ventures, as in a court ceremony, the participants were carefully selected, their parts carefully positioned in the architecture of the space of

¹⁶⁸ This language is repeated in both the title pages of his annotated editions and the Preface to *Africa*.

performance, and the motions well orchestrated so as to maintain a clear sense of the hierarchical structures governing the common weal and the monarch's relation thereto.¹⁶⁹

Carrying the obligation to delight and entertain while instructing, royal entertainments of this period were commonly described in the period as “spectacles”¹⁷⁰: dazzling shows full of expensive costumes, elaborate theatrical devices, elaborate scenery, music, and, especially in the case of the masque, rhetorical displays that complemented the visual spectacles. The civic function of these performances consisted partly in the spectacle itself—the excessive display of wealth, power, and princely generosity. Such performances constituted a “measure of the magnanimity and liberality of princes,” as Orgel puts it.¹⁷¹ Sebastiano Serlio, an important Italian architectural theorist of the period, described the entertainment's psychological impact this way:

The more such things cost, the more they are esteemed, for they are things which stately and great persons doe, which are enemies to niggardlinesse. This I have seen in some Scenes made by Ieronimo Genga, for the pleasure and delight of his lord and patron Francisco Maria, Duke of Urbin: wherein I saw so great liberalitie used by the Prince, and so good a conceit in the workeman, and so good Art and proportion in things therein represented, as ever I saw in all my life before. Oh good Lord, what magnificence was there to be seene . . . but I leave all these things to the discretion and consideration of the judicious workeman; which shall make all such things as their pattrons serve them, which they must worke after their owne devises, and never take care what it shall cost.¹⁷²

Serlio's exclamation at the brilliance of the entertainment put on for the Duke of Urbino, “Oh good Lord, what magnificence was there to be seene,” typifies the reactions that such performances were intended to provoke: bedazzlement, awe, and the spontaneous conviction that such displays of princely power and “liberalitie” were glorious human

¹⁶⁹ Again, see Orgel, *Illusion of Power*; Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, comments on Ogilby's “pre-selected and self-selected audience” (170)—a use of subscription sponsorship that I am suggesting harmonizes with the cultural practices associated with the pre-selected and self-selected membership of the masque.

¹⁷⁰ Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 18.

¹⁷¹ *Illusion of Power*, 7.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, qtd. 7.

achievements, worthy of awe and respect. There were certainly some in the period who found such expenditure excessive, wasteful, and vain¹⁷³; however, as Serlio's comment suggests, contemporary witnesses often found these spectacles convincing and moving precisely *because* of the scale of expenditure involved, and because they found worthy the civic relations that such spectacles embodied and represented.

Ogilby was well credentialed in the business of spectacle. Not only had he been a performer in Stuart masques; his theatrical pursuits in Ireland associated him with the Beeston companies, whose productions were particularly influenced by the masque, who placed particular value in spectacle, and who “seem to have depended on lavish theatrical devices much more than did the rival Blackfriars company.”¹⁷⁴ Ogilby's conception of Virgil's muse being “adorn'd with all the gold and spoils of *Italie*, the most glorious Mistresse of the world” may also reflect his knowledge of the Italians' reputation for court spectacles and his respect for their influence on English court ceremonies of this period—an influence particularly evident in the incorporation of Palladian architectural elements into theater designs and courtly aesthetics. And, as noted above, Ogilby himself apparently had enough of a reputation for pageant production that he was asked to create a “*Poetick Entertainment*” for Charles II's coronation—an experience that inspired him, in turn, to commemorate the “Entertainment” in book form.

Ogilby would have seen his volumes themselves, like his work in the city, fulfilling the traditional civic end of the royal entertainment: to secure bonds of loyalty between the monarch and his subjects, to dramatize and reinforce the nature of monarchical power, and to elicit awe among the monarch's subjects in proportion to their

¹⁷³ Famously, William Prynne, discussed by Orgel esp. at 43-44.

¹⁷⁴ Tom H. Towers, “The Lineage of Shadwell: An Approach to MacFlecknoe,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 3.3 (1963): 327.

stations.¹⁷⁵ In other words, precisely because of the excessive displays of expenditure that they involved, these performances and ceremonies had an educative, socializing function (according to loyalists, at least). At a moment in English history when these activities had officially ceased and when the Court was physically inaccessible as a locus of community, Ogilby would have had reason to see his translations of Virgil fulfilling something like this educative function. And after the restoration of Charles II, this function could be dramatized all the more clearly.

X: The Virgilian *Rota* as a Model for Ogilby's Royal Service

At the front of his *Africa*, obliging himself to map the world in the name of the restored King of England, and promising to do so with the verve of a modern truth-seeker, Ogilby addressed his royal dedicatee as a second Augustus:

*Whilst I, Dread Sovereign, to clear all difficulties, am busie exploring Old Tales, Fictions, and Hear-says of the Antients, Collecting and Translating better and more Modern Authority, especially Eyewitnesses, our late Sea Voyagers, that I might not weary Your Sacred Ears with any thing, if possible, but undoubted Truth, May Your Majesty, though Your Claim be Just, and Your Sword able to Intitle You Emperor of the Universe, Your Thundring Sovereigns already Commanding the Sea, and Royal Standards by Land, fixt in Possession in the four Regions thereof, rather by Your Example at Home, and Mediation abroad, Reconcile those Ruffling Princes that delight in War, settling them in Leagues of Amity; for which so great a Blessing, may they, You being the best of Gods Vicegerents on Earth, Crown also the King of Peace, a second Augustus, whose Piety and Prudence hath once more shut up the Temple of Janus, binding in Perdurable Fetters, Bloody and All-destroying War for ever.*¹⁷⁶

The reference to shutting up the Temple of Janus is of course a reference to the cherished *pax romana*, the “peace” accompanying Augustus’s expansion of the Roman Empire to what were then seen as “Univers[al]” proportions. What may seem to us today to be a

¹⁷⁵ See Orgel’s discussion (esp. Ch. 2). I have also benefited greatly from James Garrison’s study of the theory and practice of panegyric, *Dryden and the Tradition of Panegyric* (Berkeley: U California P, 1975).

¹⁷⁶ Dedication to *Africa*, image 5.

contradiction in terms—the notion that imperial expansion (“*Mediation abroad*”) should instill peace in foreign lands—emerges for Ogilby as the nature of righteous leadership. Only with a strong, central authority can peace prevail: the “*best of Gods Vicegerents on Earth*” will surely have no trouble “*Reconcil[ing] those Ruffling Princes that delight in War*” or “*settling them in Leagues of Amity.*” Appropriately, then, by a similar paradox, it is only by “*Collecting and Translating better and more Modern Authority*” that the modern nation begins to rival the ancient example. And, of course, it is only by submitting himself to a righteous prince in undertaking this project that the loyal subject’s own progress is guaranteed.

I have already mentioned Ogilby’s emulation of what one recent scholar has described as Virgil’s “*triadic biography.*”¹⁷⁷ This compositional sequence rendered Virgil the “*paradigmatic hero of a teleological narrative of progress*” and, as I would suggest additionally, knitted together the story of Virgil’s progress as a poet with the story of Octavian’s successful rise to power. Patterns of dedication (or what were perceived as such) showed the poet moving incrementally closer to the monarch’s person: the *Eclogues* were generally presumed to have been dedicated to Pollio, Octavian’s lieutenant; the *Georgics* to Maecenas, Octavian’s close advisor; and then the *Aeneid* to Augustus himself. Moreover, the composition and publication of all three works coincided with key phases of Octavian’s ascendancy. Rustic dialogues in *Eclogues* 1 and 9 tell the story of the sequestration of lands near Virgil’s birthplace (Cremona and Mantua) for Octavian’s veterans after the Battle of Philippi, the implication being that the *Eclogues* themselves might have been composed as part of Virgil’s suit for the return of his family estate, eventually granted by a special dispensation from Octavian. The

¹⁷⁷ Theodorakopoulos. “Closure: The Book of Virgil,” 155.

Georgics, published in 29 B.C.E., just two years before Octavian became Emperor Augustus, are readily viewed as verses supportive of the reconstruction effort necessary for a nation devastated by civil war. And the *Aeneid*, which was begun soon after the *Georgics* were finished, charted Augustus's descent from the legendary founder of Rome—a feature that, again, was readily understood as part of an elaborate piece of propaganda written in support of the Emperor. The labor of more than a decade, the *Aeneid* was composed and published in conjunction with Augustus's decisive establishment of his authority as the supreme ruler of the Roman Empire.

This narrative of the poet's development informed not only the way Spenser and, later, Milton framed their respective careers, but also, as I am suggesting, the way Ogilby framed his own.¹⁷⁸ Ogilby may be glancing at Spenser in his description of the way his translation of Virgil made him “ambitious to try [his] own Wing” and “endeavou[r] to Sore a little higher,” and he surely has in mind the Virgilian vocational model in the story that he tells of his literary career in the Preface to *Africa*—a story that bears a notable resemblance to Virgil's *Vita* even in its details. This vocational progress, like Virgil's, begins with a foreshortened, early pastoral phase (the “Peace” in which Ogilby was “bred”) that must eventually give way to the business of war. Not unlike Virgil, Ogilby must remake himself after hardships that nearly ruin him (first after the civil war, then

¹⁷⁸ Spenser and Milton's respective uses of the Virgilian *rota* to organize their own works have been a subject of much scholarly discussion. See Neuse, “Milton and Spenser,” and, more recently, Rebeca Helfer, “The Death of the ‘New Poete’: Virgilian Ruin and Ciceronian Recollection in Spenser's *The Shepherdes Calender*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 56.3 (Autumn 2003): 723-56. I will not venture to distinguish among the ways these three poets used the Virgilian *rota* variously as a template for a poetic career, for scholars do not always agree; however, I presume that there *were* some important differences in the ways that Renaissance poets used Virgil's *Vita* as a template for their poetic careers, and I am attempting to show that Ogilby both resembled others of his day in taking Virgil as a reference point and, potentially, departed from them in the way he made the Virgilian template serve his purposes. For instance, Ogilby placed significant stress on the way Virgil's *Vita* enacted an ideal reciprocity of service and protection between poet and monarch. In *Paradise Lost*, by contrast, Milton is concerned much less with earthly kings and instead stresses the relationship between the poet and God, represented within the text as a regal figure.

again, after the Great Fire). The “Evening” of Ogilby’s “Age,” in true Virgilian fashion, is dedicated to a series of epic compositions: first, the translation of Virgil, then translations of Homer (alongside imitations of Aesop), then his own original epic. And these labors are staged as a kind of progress, whereby each successive task builds on the gains of the previous task and, indeed, surpasses them, promising to bring increasing glory on both the monarch and his nation. Ogilby moves from Latin translation to Greek translation (a transition implying increasing linguistic prowess) and from the task of creating “a shining Trophy to Posterity” in honor of Charles II’s coronation to “do[ing] something for Gods sake” in the form of an illustrated Bible (a transition implying the augmentation of the “*Royal Folio*” model of printmaking). By a similar mechanism, Ogilby’s early “Reduction” of the works of Virgil into “our native Language,” tentative though the project may have been at first, ultimately paves the way for the “Reducement of the whole World” into cartographical order. While Charles II takes his crown as a second Augustus, Ogilby takes his place as the faithful maker of books whose service has assisted his monarch’s ascent.

Nor does Ogilby imitate Virgil slavishly in his adaptation of the Virgilian *rota* to his own career. The progress from Virgil to Aesop, being a project of translation rather than loose imitation, moves not from a low genre to a higher genre or from a lower style to a higher style, but from high to low—from majestic to “plain,” from long to “short,” from a major author to a “*Minor*” one. And it is interesting to note that Ogilby’s adaptation of the Virgilian model extends to categories well beyond genre and style and, indeed, beyond “*Poesie*.” The principal vocational trajectory described here is, indeed, a progress of poetic pursuits: first Virgil, then Aesop and Homer, then an original epic,

until the Great Fire gave him reason to reconsider this route, and he “resolv’d to desist; and shutting up the Fountain of the *Muses*, left Clambering steep *Pernassus*, and fell into the beaten way, and more frequented Paths of *Prose*.” But this literary trajectory had merged early on with a career in bookmaking—an area of expertise that ultimately proved especially useful when Ogilby finally committed himself wholly to geographical pursuits. In these episodes, Ogilby depicts himself “So[aring]” incrementally not only in his linguistic and literary endeavors, but also in his acquisition of personal wealth—his capacity to spend lavishly on righteous causes. His translations and paraphrases of Virgil, Homer, and Aesop earned him a good living (or so he implies); he then produced the volume commemorating Charles’s coronation “at my own proper Cost and Pains”; and then the Bible, he says, “by my own sole Conduct, proper Cost and Charges, at last appear’d the largest and fairest Edition that was ever yet set forth in any Vulgar Tongue.” This sequence of remunerations, he implies, was the product of well-focused industry. Ogilby claims that he planned the coronation folio because, after “being order’d by the *Commission of Triumphs*, to Banquet His Majesty at the Cities cost with a *Poetick Entertainment*,” the experience inspired him to commemorate the event with a “*Royal Folio*” produced at his own expense, reflecting that “the Glory of so Bright a Day, . . . , should not close with the Setting-Sun,” as noted above. And then as he “busied [him]self” with the preparations for this volume, he says, it occurred to him that he might transfer the same techniques to a Bible. “[N]either sparing Cost nor Pains, to dress and set forth my own Volumns with all the Splendor and Ostentation that could be, I thought it also Religious, and the part of a good Christian, to do something for Gods sake,” he

writes.¹⁷⁹ He covered the production costs of this venture as well. Thus, Ogilby's own rise to prominence comes to mirror that of the patron whom he celebrates and honors.

Given these ongoing demonstrations of initiative, it is not surprising that the Preface should conclude by linking his descent from the heights of Parnassus with the projection of yet another major vocational ascent already in progress: his foray into cartography, a series of ventures that in 1671 would win him the title of Royal Cartographer, revised to "His Majesty's Cosmographer and Geographick Printer" early in 1674, just two years before his death.¹⁸⁰ This end was utterly consistent with the way Ogilby had conducted his national service. Throughout his career, Ogilby remained very obviously committed to defining his work by its addresses to the head of the body politic—a commitment that, in the end, even overshadowed his commitment to "*Poesie*." A posthumous portrait (1682) depicts Ogilby presenting the subscription list for *Britannia*, one of his late atlases, to the King and Queen of England.¹⁸¹ This was very much the way Ogilby had conducted his career, whether in poetry or otherwise: directing his gaze toward the court, envisioning the monarch as the center of earthly power and authority, and consistently seeking royal protection, support, and approval for his ventures in dance, in the theater, in literature, in bookmaking, and ultimately in cartography.¹⁸² It is therefore easy to see why Ogilby took on the Virgilian mantle at a key, transitional moment in his professional life. Virgil's corpus embodied precisely the

¹⁷⁹ Preface to *Africa*, image 3.

¹⁸⁰ See Van Eerde, *John Ogilby*, 133 for details on the latter. One wonders whether Ogilby was discouraged in his pursuit of the role of king's poet by Dryden's obtainment of the office of Poet Laureate (and, later, Royal Historiographer) in the period from 1668 to 1770.

¹⁸¹ This portrait is included in the "map of London" published by William Morgan, Ogilby's adoptive grandson (Van Eerde 72).

¹⁸² Van Eerde includes many more details along these lines, including Ogilby's obtainment of a series of warrants that gave him the right to import fine French paper without paying taxes. Ogilby's career is a paradigm of this model of royal service, full of petitions and patents and special dispensations.

kind of royal service by which he defined his own life work: an incremental rapprochement between a talented poet and a righteous king, whereby the poet petitioned the monarch in times of need, the monarch reciprocated, the poet demonstrated his gratefulness and loyalty in works of increasing ambition and complexity, the monarch reciprocated, and the nation benefited in turn.

Appendix A: Aeneas's Flight From Troy, Ogilby's *Works of Virgil* (1668)VIRGIL'S *ÆNEIS*.

227

Troy I re-visit, gird on shining Arms
 All Dangers to renew, through all Alarms
 Ilium to search, and once more Dangers try:
 The Walls I first, then gloomy Gates draw nigh;
 Obscur'd with Night, back, I my own steps trace
 With searching Eye, and with a wary pace,
 Horror each where, nay Silence strikes a fear.
 Thence home I went, hoping to find her there.
 But in the House the cruel *Greeks* I find,
 And eating Fire rowl'd to the Roofs with Wind;
 Then Flames ascend, Smoke towrth in the Air:
 To *Priam's* Seat and Palace I repair;
 There *Phoenix* and *Ulysses* guard the Spoils
 In *Juno's* Temple, and forsaken Iles.
 From all parts hither *Dardan* Treasure came,
 Sav'd from the 'Gods, and Temples sunk in Flame;
 Goblets of Gold, rich Robes in ^s heaps are laid,
 Youth, fearful Matrons, orderly array'd,
 Stood round about.
 Bold also, I the Streets with Clamour fill,
 And call through Shades, ingeminating still
 Fondly again, again *Crenusa*. Here
 To me in quest, thus raging every where,
 Appears her Shade, and sad similitude,
 And her known Form a ^b larger Shape indu'd;
 Speechless I was, upright did stand my Hair,
 When thus she spake, with words appeasing care.
 Why so much pleaseth thee a task so vain,
 My dearest Lord, since thus the Gods ordain?
 Neither must thou transport me from these Lands;
 The King of high *Olympus* countermands.
 Thou shalt, long exil'd, plough vast Seas, before
Hesperia's found, where through a fertile Shore
 The *Lydian Tybers* gentle Waters glide.
 Glad things wait there, a Realm, a Royal Bride;

G g s Spare

(f) By *La Cœcis* expounded those from which Oracles were given.

(g) According to the Military Custom of gathering all the Prey together into one place, by which the Victor plac'd the Spoils with the Spoils of what their Labours had compass'd.

(h) This *Transon* refers to her *Apollonis*, or *Deifying*; For the *Ancients* (with her) attributed a larger proportion of Power to this *Goddess* than to *Juno*. *Lipsius* and *Dionis* suppose, that she was not so idolized, but only appear'd bigger to *Aeneas* by reason of his fear. *La Cœcis* observes, that the Apparitions of the Dead are greater than the Persons themselves were in Life.

Appendix B: Frontmatter to Ogilby's *Works of Virgil* (1668)Appendix C: Header in Ogilby's *Works of Virgil* (1668)

Appendix D: Illustration in Ogilby's *Works of Virgil* (1668)

Daphnis sic se loquitur
Tantum pariter respondit.

Daphnis sic se loquitur
Tantum pariter respondit.

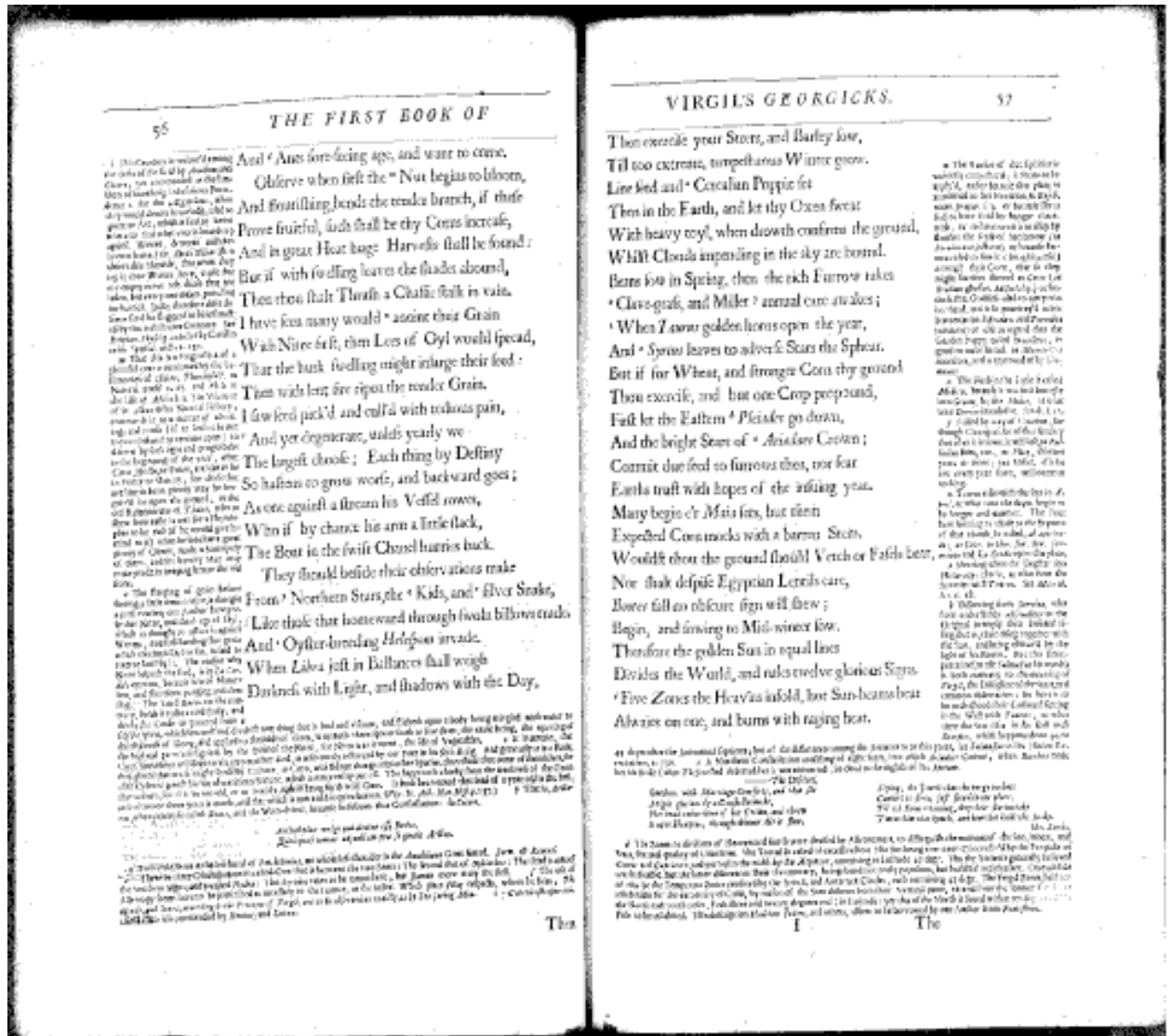
Daphnis sic se loquitur
Tantum pariter respondit.

Eclog. IV. VIRGIL'S *BUCOLICKS*. 17

Who shall from 't' In extract a Golden Age,
And to 'thy Pleasur all the World engage.
Thou Child being Consul, Poëts shall that year
Be most renown'd, then * glorious daies appear.
If any point of Antient Crimes remain,
Thou shalt chose them in thy happy Reign;
And, from perpetual fear, all Nations free,
He, a God, shall Gods mixt vvith Heroes see,
And they for him, Ruling both Sea and Land
Subjected by his Mighty Father's hand.
But unto thee, sweet Boy, Earth shall afford
Fruit Fruits, and Prefers of her own accord,
From spreading Ivy blushing berries thour,
With soft *Acanthus*, and th' *Aegyptian* root.
The pregnant Goats shall home full Udders bear,
Nor shall tame Cattel, cruel Lions fear.
Thy* Cattle stov'ns shall sprout for thy delight,
The Serpens dye, and treacherous Aconite,
And every vvhite *Affrican* Rocks grow.
As soon as thou the * *Hermes* *Aethiack* know,
And great Achievements of thy *Parnassus* kam,
And vvhate tree *Veneric*, thy self discern;
Then by degrees lands flourishing vvith Corn
Shall dangle Grapes vvith purple clusters fill,
And pure Honey from hard Oaks distil.
Some priests of Antient Fraud will yet be found,
Which bids to Sea, and *Trovas* vvith vvall's surround;
And Virgin *Champaign* in long furrows rear,
A breed * *Typho* in new *Age* bear
Choice Heroes, and another War employ,
Mighty * *Aethiack*, etc again to *Troy*.
When ripening years make thee a gallant Man,
Sea-men shall leave the boyish Ocean;

D Not

Appendix E: Textual Layout of Ogilby's Works of Virgil (1668)



THE FIRST BOOK OF

55
 And 'Aries fore-facing age, and want to come,
 Observe when felt the " Nut begins to bloom,
 And flourishing buds the tender branch, if thine
 Prove fruitful, such shall be thy Cows increase,
 And in great Heat bags Harvests shall be found;
 Else if with feeding leaves the shades abound,
 Then thou shalt Thrust a Chaffin stalk in vain.
 I have too many would " assure their Grain
 With Nuts first, then Lees of Oyl would spread,
 That the bulk feeding might enlarge their feed:
 Then with last fire sige upon the reade Grain.
 I few feed pack'd and cold with tedious pain,
 And yet degenerate, uuld yearly we
 The largest chooke; Each thing by Destiny
 So hafens to grow worse, and backward goes;
 As one against a stream his Vessel rows,
 Who if by chance his arm a little slack,
 The Boat in the swift Chanel hurries back.
 They should beside their observations make
 From " Northern Stars, the " Kids, and " silver Snake,
 Like those that homeward through swale billows make
 And " Oyl-bearing Helios invade.
 When Libra just in Bullances shall weigh
 Darts with Light, and shadows with the Day.

VIRGIL'S GEORGICS.

57
 Then exercise your Steers, and Barley sow,
 Till too extreme, tempestuous Winter grow.
 Line seed and " Cerealian Poppie set
 Thin in the Earth, and let thy Oxen sweat
 With heavy toyl, when drowth confines the ground,
 While Clouds impending in the sky are bound.
 Beans sow in Spring, then the rich Furrow takes
 " Clave-grass, and Milder " annual care assures;
 " When Taurus golden horns open the year,
 And " Spring leaves to advance Stare the Sphære.
 But if for Wheat, and stronger Corn thy ground
 Then exercise, and but one Crop prepared,
 Fast let the Eastern " Pleiades go down,
 And the bright Stars of " Androsæ Costen;
 Commit due seed to furrows then, nor fear
 Earths trust with hopes of the ensuing year.
 Many begin e'r Maïs sows, but thin
 Expended Cows macks with a barren Steer.
 Wouldst thou the ground should Verch or Falls bear,
 Nor shak despite Egyptian Lencis care,
 Lower fall no obscure sign will shew;
 Begin, and sowing to Mid-winter sow.
 Therefore the golden Sun in equal lines
 Divides the World, and rules twelve glorious Signs.
 " Five Zones the Heav'ns unfold, but Sun-beams beat
 Always on one, and burns with raging heat.

[Marginal notes on the left page:]
 The first of the four seasons is the spring, which is the best time for sowing, because the earth is then soft and the weather is temperate. The second is the summer, which is the worst time for sowing, because the earth is then hard and the weather is hot. The third is the autumn, which is a good time for sowing, because the earth is then soft and the weather is temperate. The fourth is the winter, which is the worst time for sowing, because the earth is then hard and the weather is cold.

[Marginal notes on the right page:]
 The first of the four seasons is the spring, which is the best time for sowing, because the earth is then soft and the weather is temperate. The second is the summer, which is the worst time for sowing, because the earth is then hard and the weather is hot. The third is the autumn, which is a good time for sowing, because the earth is then soft and the weather is temperate. The fourth is the winter, which is the worst time for sowing, because the earth is then hard and the weather is cold.



Chapter Two

Decorous Irreverence and the Common Weal: *Dryden's Virgil* (1697) as a Translation Fit for a Limited Monarchy

“I confess my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live.”

—Dryden

Cleverly adapted from a mid-seventeenth-century Latin edition of Virgil's collected works,¹⁸³ the frontispiece to John Dryden's translation of *The Works of Virgil* (1697) depicts the laureation of a poet who has proven his mettle. Here a togaed figure, holding a book in his right hand, bends to accept his laurel crown from Apollo, identifiable by the lyre cradled in his left arm. Between them hovers a winged cherub, memorializing the transaction with an escutcheon that reads, “*Dryden's VIRGIL: Printed for Jacob Tonson*” (Appendix A).¹⁸⁴ In its original context at the front of the Imprimerie Royale's Latin edition of Virgil, the scene made a relatively straightforward claim for Virgil's ongoing relevance to contemporary letters. In its original context, the laureate was clearly meant to represent Virgil, and the laureation scene as a whole proclaimed the timeless value and self-evident eminence of Virgil's poetry—a timelessness and eminence made manifest in the fact of the modern reprinting of the Latin text for ongoing contemporary consumption.

¹⁸³ Issued by the Imprimerie Royale in Paris in 1641. William Frost, ed. and annot., *The Works of John Dryden*, vols. 5-6 (Berkeley and LA: U of California P, 1987), VI.889.

¹⁸⁴ *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. William Frost, textual ed. Vinton A. Dearing, vols. 5-6 (Berkeley and LA: U of California P, 1987).

But in its new British context, the laureation scene provides a more ambiguous statement about the author of the poetry that it honors and the nature of the poetic feats that it announces and celebrates. After all, this British publication is not merely a reprinting of Virgil's Latin poetry, but a new English *translation* of Virgil's Latin poetry—a subtle reminder that Virgil's reputation is mediated in the British context by writers and readers for whom Latin is not, properly speaking, a native tongue. Moreover, the work at hand is “*Dryden's Virgil*,” a poetic translation executed by a British author with claims of his own to the title of laureate. Dryden's association with the laurel wreath had been pervasive, albeit ambiguous in its symbolic significance. It was so pervasive, in fact, that Dryden's English contemporaries continued to refer to Dryden casually as “the laureate” during the 1690s, after he no longer held the office of Poet Laureate¹⁸⁵: Dryden had refused to convert to Protestantism to accommodate William III as the legitimate co-monarch of England, and, with this crucial alteration in the way he configured his public obligations, he found alternate ways to define his voice as the voice of the English nation. The frontispiece to *Dryden's Virgil* is evocative of this history. Insofar as the laureate figure can be taken to represent Dryden himself, the scene provides a crisp statement about the place of *Dryden's Virgil* within a longer vocational trajectory. Having been honored and remunerated as England's official Poet Laureate and Royal Historiographer by two English kings, “Mr. *DRYDEN*” now retains his laurel crown by virtue of “Apollo” alone—that is, by a combination of the poetic mettle that he proves in his renovation of Virgil's poetry for a modern British audience and the public

¹⁸⁵ For examples, see Paul Hammond, “Some Contemporary References to Dryden,” *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*, eds. Paul Hammond and David Hopkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 359-400, nos. 47, 53, 58. Hammond's “Contemporary References” also offers a representation of Dryden as Apollo (no. 51)—an unflattering portrait, in this case, but nevertheless one that emphasizes the theme of Dryden's superior poetic judgment.

support that he continues to receive in Britain. He retains his laurel crown, the frontispiece hints, even *without* his Laureate office and therefore even without the direct deputation, protection, and remuneration of the sitting monarch. Dryden has reversed in his own vocational trajectory the incremental rapprochement between monarch and loyal subject embodied in the Virgilian *rota*.¹⁸⁶

This chapter examines the civic role that Dryden carved out for himself with these late-career translations of Virgil, a role that is to some extent anticipated in this suggestive adaptation of the frontispiece illustration from the Imprimerie Royale's Latin edition.¹⁸⁷ In *Dryden's Virgil*, as in much of his previous work, Dryden took upon himself the mantle of the nation's poet; however, by translating Virgil as and when he did, Dryden moved beyond the roles of monarchical advisor and royally-appointed court propagandist to embrace the role of an independent authority crowned as such by British citizens rather than by the monarch himself. In the translation itself, he broke with the earlier tradition of seeing Virgil as a writer whose unmediated verse proved eminently useful to modern monarchies.¹⁸⁸ Undertaking a deliberate—and, as some saw it,

¹⁸⁶ Dustin Griffin traces a complementary trajectory in Dryden's dedications: a tendency to take increasing liberty in relation to his dedicatees. See *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (NY: Cambridge UP, 1996), chap. 4.

¹⁸⁷ I assume provisionally that Dryden had some say in the choice of this frontispiece and the devising of its adaptation. It was not necessarily typical for a poet to have so much control over this aspect of the publication. Luke Milbourne, for one, assumed that the frontispiece was devised by Tonson (see below); however, the extant contract suggests that Dryden had greater control over the details of this publication than was typical. See *Works*, VI.1179-83. Why this frontispiece is not specifically mentioned in the contract, I cannot say: Dryden and Tonson reused other elements of Ogilby's paratext (mostly noted in the contract) but avoided reusing his frontispieces.

¹⁸⁸ See Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). Helgerson considers Spenser, Jonson, and Milton an unofficial but "true laureate company," defined by their commitment to timeless ideals, but does not count Dryden a member because of his lifelong commitment to occasional poetry (6-11). In addition to departing from Helgerson's mode of evaluation, I am revising Helgerson's thesis slightly: the epic (even the translated epic) promised longer-term efficacy than Dryden's occasional poetry.

“impertinent”¹⁸⁹—renovation of Virgil’s corpus, Dryden sought to accommodate the monumental shift in English government embodied in the Glorious Revolution. Drawing on ideas of poetic utility that had been well articulated in mid- to late-seventeenth-century French neoclassical criticism, Dryden developed a translation of Virgil’s corpus fit for a limited monarchy. He transformed the *Aeneid* from a work meant to inspire obedience into a work that invited skepticism about monarchical power and monarchical professions of piety. He reoriented and reshaped the rest of Virgil’s corpus to reinforce this function. With the cooperation of Tonson and the collaboration of his fellow “Wits,” Knightly Chetwood and Joseph Addison,¹⁹⁰ Dryden made Virgil “speak such *English*, as

¹⁸⁹ Luke Milbourne’s term (esp. 4-5).

¹⁹⁰ Chetwood supplied the “Life” and the “Preface to the *Pastorals*,” Addison the “Preface to the *Georgics*.” Dryden had apparently hoped to write these pieces himself but ran out of time. See Frost, *Works*, 845. My working hypothesis here is that Chetwood and Addison composed their respective portions of the volume in deference to Dryden’s overarching “design,” even if these sections remain subtly distinct from the sections composed by Dryden. I suspect that Chetwood and Addison’s contributions were meant to be passed off as Dryden’s compositions—or, rather, were meant to be *recognized* as outside contributions passed off as Dryden’s compositions. Dryden and Tonson do not prominently advertise the fact that Chetwood and Addison authored these sections: no separate bylines appear in the frontmatter or at the beginning or end of these essays. Dryden mentions the matter only in passing in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*: “Two other friends of mine, who desire to have their Names conceal’d, seeing me straitned in my time, took Pity on me, and gave me the Life of *Virgil*, the two Prefaces to the *Pastorals*, and the *Georgics*, and all the Arguments in Prose to the whole Translation: Which perhaps, has caus’d a Report that the two First Poems are not mine...” (337.12-17). Whatever impression Dryden may have hoped to produce with this admission, contemporary readers certainly took note of the collusion. Responding either to this passage or to local “Report[s]” or to some combination of the two, Luke Milbourne took for granted that Dryden’s “friends” had helped him fulfill his contract, and he suspected (by contrast to the argument that I am putting forward here) that these collective efforts, unified though they may have been by friendship, could not be reconciled to a guiding design: e.g., “This *Eclogue* [the Fourth *Eclogue*] is of a piece with the rest of Mr. D.’s; and as to the *Subject* of it, it would puzzle a *good Critick* to reconcile Mr. D.’s *Prefatory Talk*, *Ruæus* his *Preface*, and the *Argument His Friends* gave him for it together. But let who will compose that *Quarrel* [compose that quarrel]” (62). Milbourne did not consider, of course, that “Mr. D.’s *Prefatory Talk*” and “the *Argument His Friends* gave him for it together” were not meant to be reconciled with “*Ruæus* his *Preface*.” However, his sense that there was something conspiratorial and clubbish about the enterprise as a whole was contemporaneously echoed by Sir Richard Blackmore, who referred disparagingly to the Wits of Will’s Coffee House as “*those Gentlemen, who by Assisting, Crying up, Excusing and Complementing one another, carry on their Poetical Trade in a Joynt-Stock*” (Preface to *King Arthur* 1697 ii)—a possible reference not only to the tendency of the Wits to “*Assis[t]*,” “*Excus[e]*” and “*Complemen[t]*” one another in writing, but also to the subscription publication of *Dryden’s Virgil*, which had the feeling of a “joint stock company,” as Barnard has observed (2000 178).

he wou'd himself have spoken, if he had been born in *England*, and in this present Age."¹⁹¹

This project of revision involved a striking departure from the notion that the monarch was the center and source of civic authority. With *Dryden's Virgil*, Dryden became the first British poet to be sponsored in the labor of composition by a system of subscription.¹⁹² The subscription list confirmed that this project was supported materially by an array of Britain's most eminent citizens, Whigs and Tories alike: Ministers of Parliament, local civic servants, Protestants, Catholics, aristocratic women, physicians, lawyers, authors, artists, academics, clergymen, advisors to the King, servants in the King's household, and potential heirs to the throne of England.¹⁹³ First subscribers were prominently displayed throughout the publication: Dryden and Tonson adapted 100-odd plates from Ogilby's lavish mid-century editions of Virgil, and, much as Ogilby had done before, Tonson and Dryden had the arms, titles, and offices of the first subscribers emblazoned beneath these illustrations (Appendix B). Conspicuously absent, however, was the royal sponsor whom one might have expected to see taking his place at the head of such an assembly. Despite an otherwise momentous display of titles and arms, including a handful of first subscribers titled "Princes," neither the reigning monarch nor his exiled predecessor appeared among the subscribers or the dedicatees. Tonson had apparently assumed that Dryden would dedicate the translation to William III, but Dryden had roundly refused, deciding instead to dedicate its three sections (the *Pastorals*,

¹⁹¹ Dryden, Dedication of *Aeneis*, V.330.36-331.1.

¹⁹² William Frost, citing Alexandre Beljame, "Dryden's Virgil," *Comparative Literature* 36.3 (Summer 1984): 199-200.

¹⁹³ See John Barnard's analysis of both the bipartisan composition of the subscription list and the effort to include England's most powerful citizens ("Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons of *The Works of Virgil* (1697)." *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*. Eds. Paul Hammond and David Hopkins. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. 174-239). On this point, Barnard builds on the work of James Anderson Winn (*John Dryden and his World*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1987. 474-85).

Georgics, and *Aeneis*) to a Catholic recusant and two prominent non-jurors. The resulting publication allied the author's promise of national representation with an undeniably oppositional impulse. Visually buoyed by a bipartisan assembly of subscribers representative of Britain's ruling elite, "Mr. *DRYDEN*" placed himself in a position to be crowned "Wit's Universal Monarch" at the King's expense.¹⁹⁴ Nor did Dryden make any promises here (as he had previously, by virtue of his office as Laureate) to merge the interests of the monarch with those of the people in a manner resolutely confirming his loyalty to the former. Here he avowed only that in completing the translation, he had, "in some measure, acquitted [him]self of the Debt which [he] ow'd the Publick, when [he] undertook the Work."¹⁹⁵ In this respect, one might say that in *Dryden's Virgil*, British poetry boasted a civic authority not only parallel to, but also potentially at odds with, British monarchical authority.

In describing the intended civic function of *Dryden's Virgil* in this way, I am departing from the prevailing scholarly interpretation of the work, which is to see this translation as an essentially partisan production, expressive of Dryden's feelings of displacement and disillusionment after the loss of the laureateship and the change in government that had brought it about.¹⁹⁶ While taking on board Steven Zwicker's

¹⁹⁴ See H. St. John's commendatory poem (V.61.12). Granville also takes up similar themes and imagery (63-4).

¹⁹⁵ Dryden, *Postscript*, VI.807.9-11.

¹⁹⁶ Particularly influential studies have been William Frost, *Dryden and the Art of Translation* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1955), esp. 62-64, 81-92, which took Dryden's translations seriously for the first time; Steven N. Zwicker, "Politics and Translation," *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry: The Arts of Disguise* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984), which set forth the influential hypothesis that Dryden's deviations from the parent poem reflected his anti-Williamite discontentment, repeated in *Vergil at 2000: Commemorative Essays on the Poet and His Influence*, ed. John D. Bernard (NY: AMS Press, 1986); and Dryden's standard biography, James Anderson Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1987), which proceeds according to the prevailing thesis that Dryden's late career was a time of disillusionment and displacement for the poet. For reiterations and further developments of Zwicker's thesis, see Patterson (1987), 185-92; Garrison (1992), 234-47; Erskine-Hill (1996), chap. 6; Burrow (1997), 28-30; P. Hammond (1999), esp. 218-82; and Caldwell (2000); also, tentatively, Frost's editorial work (1987), esp. VI.847, 870-

influential description of the “anti-Williamite” stance of *Dryden’s Virgil*, I do not presume that this oppositional posture was expressive of the political sympathies of a beleaguered Jacobite or colored by a melancholy, disenchanted psychological state. Indeed, I will suggest here that it is possible to view *Dryden’s Virgil* as a playful performance characterized by spirited irreverence and good humor—certainly a lively performance, and, at times, a performance that can make a person laugh out loud. Moreover, I will argue that, whatever Dryden’s personal feelings may have been during this period, and however disappointed or relieved he may have been about James II’s exile, he had significant incentives for producing a translation that spoke, not to the narrow interests of the Jacobites, but to the needs and predispositions of the nation as a whole. Thanks to John Barnard’s recent scholarship on the subscription list of *Dryden’s Virgil*, we now know that Dryden produced his translation for a surprisingly diverse, prominent, and notably bipartisan assembly of readers, composed almost equally of Whigs and Tories (with a slight bias toward the Whigs).¹⁹⁷ I build on Barnard’s study by arguing that, in the terms of seventeenth-century dedicatory practice, Dryden had “obliged” himself to these subscription sponsors, both as a hand-picked assembly of individual readers and as a representative sampling of those who controlled the future of the nation. Thus, while I confirm the established scholarly understanding of *Dryden’s Virgil* as an oppositional publication (oppositional particularly in relation to royal power),

76. A variation on this reading aligns Dryden’s translation with the values of late-seventeenth-century French royalism: see Thomas (2001), chaps. 4-5. A notable exception to the general trend is Richard Morton, *John Dryden’s Aeneas: A Hero in Enlightenment Mode* (Victoria, BC: English Literary Studies, 2000), which envisions Dryden as a willfully modern translator.

¹⁹⁷ “Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons of The Works of Virgil,” in *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. by Paul Hammond and David Hopkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 174-239. Barnard considers textual questions only minimally. To the extent that he offers an interpretation of the text alongside his bibliographical findings, he confirms Zwicker’s thesis (215); I am arguing, however, that his findings lead us in a different direction. I concur with Barnard’s suggestion that this subscription venture was intended as a “unifying cultural project” (223; also 201, 211).

I do not see Dryden's translation expressing a minority position. Instead, I contend that the translation reflected an attitude toward royal authority that many Whigs would have applauded. In this late-career performance, Dryden embraced the momentous changes comprised in the term "Revolution"¹⁹⁸—changes that set post-Revolution Britain apart from early Stuart England, from rival European nations (especially France and Italy), and from Augustan Rome itself.

I: An Enigmatic Swan Song

One of the difficulties attending an assessment of *Dryden's Virgil* is that this late-career performance of commitment to the common weal embodied paradoxes, apparent contradictions, and counterintuitive combinations that proved puzzling and interesting even in Dryden's own day. Ogilby's civic orientation had been comparatively straightforward. Boasting no particular poetic credentials, Ogilby took for granted Virgil's self-evident eminence and his ready assimilability to a modern context. In taking on the task of translating the Virgilian corpus, Ogilby was, in a sense, taking on the Virgilian mantle; and he ultimately expanded that mantle to accommodate a variety of civic activities (including printmaking and mapmaking), all undertaken in the name of the reigning monarch. Dryden approached the project of translation from a different direction altogether. His frontispiece effectively announced that this well-credentialed former Poet Laureate, testing his mettle by translating the quintessential poet of nation and empire, was doing just fine without the king's help. In this context, the monumental subscription venture that sponsored the project—a venture that had in fact been *enabled*

¹⁹⁸ Postscript, VI.808.5.

by Virgil's eminent status¹⁹⁹—also stood out as a point of departure from a royalist tradition of interpretation that celebrated the modern monarch's sponsorship, protection, and authorization as an incarnation of Augustus's revered example.²⁰⁰

The place of his translation within Dryden's vocational history accentuates this tension. If Dryden had translated the works of Virgil during an earlier phase of his career, his dedicatory performance would have sustained a more perfect picture of the Virgilian vocational ideal than Ogilby himself had been able to achieve in his mid-century translation of Virgil. As England's first official Poet Laureate and Royal Historiographer, Dryden had enjoyed a unique status among English poets: Charles II had created an office just for him—a solitary office, parallel in this respect to the solitary nature of monarchy itself.²⁰¹ This was as vivid a manifestation of the order of descending authority as one could find in English law and English government, and it came as close to replicating the Virgilian civic role as one could find in English poetry. And yet, rather than producing a translation of the Virgilian corpus during the period when he still had the Virgilian mantle on his shoulders, so to speak, Dryden contracted with Tonson to produce a translation of *The Works of Virgil* he was a publicly confirmed Catholic, and his refusal of the laureateship upon William and Mary's ascent to the throne placed him in a position similar to that of the “non-jurors” who refused to swear allegiance to the

¹⁹⁹ See John Barnard, “Early Expectations of Dryden's Translation of Virgil (1697) in England and on the Continent,” *Review of English Studies* 50 (1999): 196-203.

²⁰⁰ This royalist tradition included contemporary or near-contemporary French translators and annotators of Virgil, some of whom are discussed by Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, esp. 180-85. Segrais, de la Rue, and the Italian translator Hannibal Caro may also be royalist, continental foils for *Dryden's Virgil*, though more scholarship needs to be done on this point.

²⁰¹ The office had been created for Dryden by *letters patent*. See Edmund Kemper Broadus, *The Laureateship: A Study of the Office of Poet Laureate in England* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 59-64.

sitting co-monarchs amid the peculiar circumstances of the Revolution settlement.²⁰² Further emphasizing this tension, Dryden elected to dedicate his translation to three aristocrats variously at odds with the sitting monarch in much the way that he was. This new configuration of obligations placed Dryden distinctly at odds not only with contemporary English “Government,” as he himself observed,²⁰³ but also with the classical precedent for civic service thought to be embodied in Virgil’s *oeuvre*. Not only did Dryden eschew the opportunity to mimic Ogilby’s vision of England’s wealth as a lavish display produced in honor of monarchical power and authority; he made the monarch an orienting point of reference in a negative sense, by virtue of the monarch’s absence from an otherwise prominent assembly of patrons and by virtue of the resistance to monarchical authority embodied in his three noble dedicatees. It is no coincidence that Ogilby’s frontispiece image of royal instruction “has no fixed location” in the 1697 volume, as Paul Hammond has observed.²⁰⁴ Dryden’s public orientation in this late-career work came closer to that of a Country poet than that of a Court poet.

Equally curious, when viewed in the light of earlier approaches to Virgilian translation, is the proprietary gesture constituted by the label “*Dryden’s VIRGIL*.” Even as it sustains the buoyant prediction that the translation of one “Prince of Poets” by another will produce great poetry indeed, the label retains a hint of self-assertion on the part of the translator and publisher—an attitude that departs notably from the more obviously humble, reverential demeanor that Ogilby and other mid-century translators

²⁰² Interestingly, the public nature of this alteration in his orientation toward the commonwealth reflected Dryden’s own peculiar circumstances as the holder of an office that had originally been created specifically for him: Dryden was technically a commoner and a non-clergyman, so this question of conscience would have held less authority and significance had the circumstances been otherwise.

²⁰³ “‘Tis enough for me, if the Government will let me pass unquestion’d...” (Postscript 808.12).

²⁰⁴ *Dryden and the Traces of Classical Rome* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 228.

had adopted toward Virgil and the Virgilian legacy. In this earlier philosophy of translation, Virgil had seemed to require little or no mediation. But *Dryden's Virgil* refuses to take for granted the self-evident, timeless perfection of Virgil's *Aeneid*, as Ogilby and others of the period had done. The Dedication of Dryden's *Aeneis* is loosely organized as a defense—an embattled stance repeated in Chetwood's biography of Virgil and his Preface to the *Pastorals*.²⁰⁵ This tactic of defending Virgil so prominently, at multiple points within the volume, has the effect of making newly contentious the issue of Virgil's ongoing relevance. In a previous generation of his reception, Virgil had seemed to require no defense—indeed, Virgil was *himself* a defense against modern “barbarities.” In Dryden's hands, the visual promise that “*Dryden's VIRGIL* deserves a laurel wreath” serves unapologetically to invite the inference that this English translator has triumphed precisely because Virgil needed an update if he was to speak to modern Britain.

This gesture seems to have gone over well with some of Dryden's contemporaries, several of whom commended Dryden pointedly for his improvement upon Ogilby's more servile translation.²⁰⁶ Contemporary references to *Dryden's Virgil* as a principal portal to Virgil's poetry “do not suggest the use of translations as utilitarian cribs to revered ancient classics,” as Stuart Gillespie has recently observed, but instead imagine them “as altogether superior alternatives, allowing readers to feel they can

²⁰⁵ The Dedication of the *Aeneis* includes a defense of the epic as a genre, a defense of Virgil as a “heroick poet” and a civic servant, a defense of the *Aeneis* as a poem, a defense of Aeneas as a hero, and then a defense of the translator himself “for presuming to Copy, in my course of *English*, the Thoughts and Beautiful Expressions of this inimitable Poet” (318.19-21). Complementing this tactic, Knightly Chetwood's biography of Virgil defends Virgil's character in “*A short Account of his Person, Manners and Fortune*” (28 ff.), and Chetwood's Preface to the *Pastorals* includes “*a short Defence of Virgil, Against some of the Reflections of Monsieur Fontanelle*” (37), the former of which helps to cast doubt upon the traditional equation of Virgil's perfect designs with a sense of the Virgilian character (conflating the poetry with the man) as a character defined by dignity, decorum, grace, and moral rectitude.

²⁰⁶ *Works*, V.58.42, 59.82, 60.12.

dispense with those classics.”²⁰⁷ It is therefore fitting that Dryden cultivated no personal association with the Latin editions of Virgil whose production Tonson would eventually oversee during the early eighteenth century.²⁰⁸ *Dryden’s Virgil* ushered in an attitude toward English literary translation in which the assertion of national identity and national pride—pride in one’s native “tongue,” native culture, and native government—took precedence over the impulse to venerate the work of esteemed foreign poets.²⁰⁹

This approach had its critics, to be sure. Luke Milbourne, for one, was incredulous at what he perceived as a failure to do justice to one of Virgil’s principal claims on the modern common weal: the integrity of the Virgilian character. In his 232-page critique of Dryden’s translation (1698), Milbourne observed with sarcasm and scorn that the “Virgil” he had encountered in Dryden’s translation was a “Virgil” whom he did not recognize at all:

I must needs own *Jacob Tonson’s* Ingenuity to be greater than the *Translator’s*, who, in the *Inscription* of his fine *Gay* in the Front of the Book, calls it very honestly *Dryden’s Virgil*, to let the Reader know, that this is not *that Virgil* so much admired in the *Augustæan age*, an Author whom Mr. *Dryden* once thought *Untranslatable*, but a *Virgil* of another Stamp, of a courser *Allay*; a silly, impertinent, non-sensical *Writer*, of a various and uncertain Style...; who could never have been known again in the Translation, if the *Name of Virgil* had not

²⁰⁷ “Translation and Canon Formation,” *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: 1660-1790* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7. Gillespie is discussing Matthew Prior’s 1725 comment about Dryden and Pope’s epic translations:

Hang HOMER and VIRGIL, their Meaning to seek,
A Man must go poke in the LATIN and GREEK;
They who love their own Tongue, we have reason to hope,

Have read them translated by DRYDEN and POPE. (from “Down-Hall; A Ballad,” qtd. 7)

²⁰⁸ An edition published at Cambridge, *Publii Virgilii Maronis Bucolica, Georgica, et Æneis, ad optimorum exemplarium fidem recensita* (Cambridge, 1701); also, a version of the Delphin edition dedicated to Queen Anne and published “CUM PRIVILEGIO,” *P. Virgilii Maronis opera interpretatione et notis illustravit Carolus Ruæus, Soc. Jesu, jussu christianissimi regis, ad usum serenissimi Delphini. Juxta editionem novissimam parisiensem* (London, 1712), in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (accessed 17 June 2010).

²⁰⁹ Gillespie, “Translation and Canon Formation,” 7.

been bestow'd upon him in *large Characters* in the *Frontispiece* and in the *Running Title*.²¹⁰

Milbourne holds Dryden accountable for reneging on what he sees as the Virgilian translator's foremost obligation to the public: providing his vernacular reader with access not only to the letter of the original text, but also to the spirit of the much-revered original. "[T]here's scarce the *Magni Nominis Umbra* to be met with in this Translation," Milbourne grumbles, "which being fairly intimated by *Jacob*, he needs add no more, but *Si Populus vult decipi decipiatur*."²¹¹

Nor was Milbourne incorrect in perceiving that there was something different about both the "Virgil" presented in Dryden's translation and the manners that the modern act of Virgilian translation could be taken to represent. Among other hints of "impertinen[ce]," the published volume contains surprisingly few annotations. In visual terms, Dryden's verse translation appears utterly unencumbered by the commentary tradition (Appendices C-E). The few annotations that Dryden does provide are incorporated into the volume as endnotes rather than footnotes or sidenotes, and even here, Virgil's modern editor is still surprisingly thrifty in his communication of basic contextual glosses: Dryden's "Notes and Observations" include, on average, only 1.77 comments per poem or book (in most cases, a gloss of a single line or a single passage).²¹² Simultaneously simplifying the job of the typesetter, relieving Dryden of

²¹⁰ *Notes on Dryden's Virgil in a Letter To a Friend: With an Essay on the Same Poet* (London: Printed for R. Clavill, 1698), in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (accessed EEBO July 5, 2009), 4.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4. Respectively, "the shadow of a great name," and, "If the people wish to be deceived, let them be deceived."

²¹² Several of those (e.g. *Past.* 6, 8, 9, 10; *Aen.* 2) include little more than a reference to another commentator or translator or the ascription of an allusion to another work. *Aeneis* 6, with seven, has the most notes of any poem or section: *Past.* 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 1, 1; *Geor.* 1, 1, 3, 3; *Aen.* 4, 1, 1, 1, 1, 7, 3, 2, 2, 3, 0, 4. All told, the annotations for the whole 640-page volume of the *Works of Virgil* stretch to just sixteen pages (pp. 625-40). As a point of contrast, John Martyn's English commentary on the Latin text of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue alone stretches to nearly thirty-seven pages (1749 104-40).

some of his editorial burdens, and paving the way for sly revisions of Virgil's sense at the level of the line,²¹³ this editorial decision also carried with it considerable ideological implications. Dryden eschewed the opportunity to encircle Virgil's sacred verse with a corona of accumulated commentary as Ogilby had done before.

That this eschewal represented a deliberate affront to the traditions made sacred in Ogilby's lavish volumes is made clear at the end of the Postscript, where Dryden supplies a breezy explanation for his minimalist approach to textual annotation:

[T]he few Notes which follow, are *par manière d'acquit*, because I had oblig'd my self by Articles [i.e. in his contract with Tonson], to do somewhat of that kind. These scattering Observations are rather guesses at my Author's meaning in some passages, than proofs that so he meant. The Unlearn'd may have recourse to any Poetical Dictionary in *English*, for the Names of Persons, Places, or Fables, which the Learned need not: But that little which I say is either new or necessary. And the first of these qualifications never fails to invite a Reader, if not to please him.²¹⁴

Dryden has his tongue firmly in his cheek here. The casual mention of his "oblig[ation]...by Articles," glancing at the "Articles of Grievances" that were read aloud at William and Mary's Scottish coronation, enacts a strikingly cavalier attitude toward an interpretive tradition that one recent scholar has described as "comparable only...with that of the Bible and of a few other important Christian works."²¹⁵ The editorial practice of providing "guesses at my Author's meaning in some passages" rather than "proofs that

²¹³ By eschewing Ogilby's method of line-by-line annotation, Dryden can open up and close off avenues of traditional interpretation at will—perhaps even insinuate a narrative or an avenue of interpretation that does not actually accord either with the available facts or with the interpretive precedents established by revered critical authorities. At the level of the line, his chosen textual format leaves a reader free to speculate about the identities and motives of individual actors and the significance of various events without obvious editorial intrusion and guidance. Dryden's principal interpretive guidance appears in the sweeping dedicatory comments, critical prefaces, and biographical discussions that introduce the verse translations. Within the margins of the verse translation, subtle interpretive guidance appears in the form of small brackets demarcating occasional triple rhymes—an inclusion that allows Dryden to draw lay emphasis on certain key lines, both aurally and visually (Appendix E).

²¹⁴ *Works*, VI.810.29-37.

²¹⁵ M. Geymonat, trans. Nicholas Horsfall, "The Transmission of Virgil's Works in Antiquity and the Middle Ages" *A Companion to the Study of Virgil*, ed. Nicholas Horsfall (NY: E.J. Brill, 1995), 293.

so he meant” represents a rather irreverent approach for a Virgilian translator of any age. Notwithstanding this air of carelessness, Dryden was actually very well acquainted with what had previously been said about Virgil. J. McG. Bottkol and William Frost have documented both Dryden’s reliance on the heavily-annotated Dauphin Virgil as his Latin text (then the premier annotated Latin edition) and his consultation and incorporation of fragments from a surprising array of earlier English translations of Virgil.²¹⁶ How else could he have known what interpretations might qualify as “new”? And precisely *because* we know that Dryden knew what he was doing,²¹⁷ this passage serves to frame Dryden’s approach to textual interpretation as a deliberate and deliberately *irreverent* departure from tradition. Rather than using his annotations to record and respectfully sift through centuries of careful textual commentary, thereby buttressing his own endeavor in translation with the authority of tradition, Dryden insinuates here, close to the bitter end of the volume, that he has had little concern for the way Virgil has been interpreted up to this point. His priorities, he claims, lie with “invit[ing]” and perhaps also “pleas[ing]” a contemporary reader.

With the benefit of historical distance, one can discern with some confidence what tradition Dryden was sloughing off: a tradition of interpretation that saw monarchical government—in particular, absolutist monarchical government—as the timeless form of government celebrated and supported in Virgil’s timeless poetry. Virgil’s European reception had been closely entangled with these political ideals throughout the seventeenth century, as I argued in the previous chapter. In the immediate

²¹⁶ Bottkol, “Dryden’s Latin Scholarship,” *Modern Philology* 40.3 (1943): 241-54; Frost, *Works*, VI.862-70 and line-by-line annotations. Also see Taylor Corse, *Dryden’s Aeneid: The English Virgil* (Newark: U Delaware P, 1991), who emphasizes Dryden’s echoes of earlier English authors.

²¹⁷ There are additional indications within the volume itself that I will touch on throughout my discussion.

wake of the English Revolution, however, Dryden perceived that Englanders would not find “invit[ing]” or “pleas[ing]” the ideologies of royal magnificence that translations such as Ogilby’s had proffered. After all, James II had been effectively exiled by his own people because they feared that he was a tyrant.

The enigma that remained, of course, was how Dryden wished to replace this earlier royalist tradition of interpretation—that is, in what sense he thought his reframing and revision of Virgil might succeed in making the Roman poet “speak such *English*, as he wou’d himself have spoken, if he had been born in *England*, and in this present Age.” Nowhere in *Dryden’s Virgil* did he spell out an explicit rationale for this change. But Milbourne perceived at least that there *was* a change: he recognized that Dryden had, in essence, altered the Virgilian character, giving him a “Style” different from the majestic style usually associated with Virgil. What Milbourne found so difficult to grasp was the civic basis for that change, precisely because of its *newness* as a diagnosis of British government and culture. “Tho we own Mr. *D.* may be a *Republican* now, it’s but agreeable to his Character,” Milbourne sneered. “[F]rom *the Beginning* he was an [*allosprosillos*²¹⁸], and I doubt not but he’ll continue so to the *end of the Chapter*; but his Argument to prove *Virgil* such, is as ridiculous as a Man could wish.”²¹⁹ Dryden, Milbourne realized, had come close to making Virgil a “Republican.”²²⁰

²¹⁸ “[O]ne who leans now this way, now that”—someone fickle who cannot be counted upon as an ally and who may not know right from wrong. The word is sometimes used in Homer as an attribute of Ares to describe his tendency to fight on both sides of the Trojan War (*ad litt.* Jack Lynch, 30 May 2007).

²¹⁹ *Notes on Dryden’s Virgil*, 8.

²²⁰ Milbourne may be referring specifically to Dryden’s claim that Virgil was “still of Republican principles in his Heart” when he wrote the *Aeneid* (280.18-19); however, his comments about the “co[a]rser All[o]y” in Dryden’s translation, together with his indignant citations of Dryden’s meditations on the original “Moral” of the *Aeneid* (cited below), suggest that he has sniffed out a project of revision that goes beyond the biographical claim.

II: Revolution and the Rise of the Epic Critic

The rationale guiding this revision of Virgil has remained comparatively obscure to modern readers because it stemmed, not from discursive expectations privileging the right or duty to express one's personal opinions and party affiliations in print (codes of discourse more familiar to us today), but from seventeenth-century generic convention and, more broadly, from seventeenth-century discursive expectations regarding poetry's capacity to influence "the manners" of its readers. In the previous chapter, I quoted examples of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century interpreters of Virgil who admired the Virgilian character and encouraged aristocratic or gentlemanly readers to imitate Aeneas's comportment. These writers were imagining the *Aeneid* as a work that contributed to the common weal not simply by registering the translator's personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction with any particular monarch, but by figuring forth, inviting the admiration of, and thereby strengthening the civic virtues at the foundation of good monarchical government *in general*: piety, nobleness of bearing (especially among princes and aristocrats), deference to and respect for righteous princes. In accordance with this idea, Ogilby had modeled the figure of the loyal servant in his dedicatory addresses, he had tweaked his translation to emphasize Aeneas's natural dignity and princely integrity, and he had developed a lavish volume that might inspire awe and respect for royal power.

During the course of the seventeenth century, these theories of poetic influence received increasingly crisp articulation, especially in French neo-Aristotelian criticism.²²¹

²²¹ As these theories developed, the idea that poetry affected "the manners," interestingly, was not the only way of imagining poetry's effects on the common weal. Dryden himself argued in the Dedication of the *Aeneis* that whereas epic poetry affected "the manners," tragic drama affected "the passions." But, as in this juxtaposition, the epic's connection with "the manners" remained particularly close during this period

Most notably, René Le Bossu's *Traité du Poëme Épique* (Paris 1675; trans., London 1695) provided a thorough and extremely influential analysis of epic poetry along these lines.²²² Le Bossu incorporated into his very definition of epic poetry this idea that the epic was a "Discourse invented by Art" to "to form the Manners" of its readers.²²³ According to this analysis, the epic poet contributed to the common weal not simply by throwing his public authority behind one administration or another, but by influencing his readers' *mores* in accordance with the needs and predispositions of the culture, the government, and the historical moment that he addressed.

In the case of the *Aeneid*, as Le Bossu analyzed it, Virgil had supported Augustus's rise to power by developing a narrative, an epic hero, and a vision of monarchical righteousness that would please and instruct Augustus and, at the same time, inspire the "Vulgar" to admire and obey Augustus. Le Bossu's analysis of this point was animated by a distinctly historicist understanding of the authorial strategy shaping the *Aeneid*.²²⁴ He argued that Virgil had designed his famous epic to accommodate an

of literary history. After all, among poetic genres, the epic retained a particularly grand scope, often dealing with questions of national destiny and national identity, and it encompassed in its narratives all kinds of social and cultural norms falling under the rubric of "manners": religious rites, religious convictions, codes of politeness, attitudes toward authority and tradition, attitudes toward civic progress, attitudes toward foreigners, conventions of hospitality, inheritance patterns, gender roles, marriage customs, educational traditions, intellectual training.

²²² A. F. B. Clark rehearses much of this history in his chapter on Le Bossu, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England (1660-1830)* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard, 1925 / NY: Russell & Russell, 1965). Also see H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., *The Theory of the Epic in England 1650-1800*, University of California Publications in English 15, eds. Hooker, Hustvedt, and Wecter (Berkeley and LA: U California P, 1944).

²²³ *Treatise of the Epick Poem...*, trans. by W. J. (London, 1695), reprinted in *Le Bossu and Voltaire on the Epic*, ed. Stuart Curran (Gainesville: Scholars Facsimiles & Reprints, 1970), 6. The comment reads in full: "The *EPOPEA* is a Discourse invented by Art, to form the Manners by such Instructions as are disguis'd under the Allegories of some one important Action, which is related in Verse, after a probable, diverting, and surprizing Manner" (6).

²²⁴ Compare René Rapin's universalist approach (trans. Thomas Rymer, 1674): "[T]he most judicious, the most admirable, the most perfect design of all Antiquity, is that of *Virgil* in his *Aeneads*; all there is great and noble, all proportionable to the *Subject*, which is the establishment of the Empire of *Rome*, to the *Heroe* who is *Aeneas*, to the glory of *Augustus* and the *Romans*, for whom it was compos'd. Nothing is weak or defective in the *execution*, all there is happy, all is just, all is perfect" (I.xix.26). While adhering to an *ut*

important change in the Roman commonwealth—a change in government that required a corresponding change in Roman manners. With Augustus’s rise to power, Le Bossu reasoned, Rome underwent a “Revolution” in government—a decisive shift from a “Commonwealth” to a “Monarchy.”²²⁵ Virgil therefore “designed” his epic narrative, developed the characters, and honed his style in a manner that promised to reshape the *mores* of a monarch and a people accustomed to republican *mores*. He wrote the *Aeneid* to teach Augustus how to behave like a king and to win him the obedience and respect of a people accustomed to “*their Liberty*.”²²⁶ In light of this persuasive end, Le Bossu reasoned further, Virgil developed a tale of national foundation to convince “the Vulgar” that “the great Revolutions, which happen in States, are brought about by the appointment and will of God.”²²⁷ As Le Bossu unpacked this strategy, “the Poet was oblig’d to represent his *Hero* free from all manner of Violence, and elected King by brave and generous People [in Latium], who thought it an Honour to obey him, tho’ they might lawfully have been their own Sovereigns, and have chosen what form of Government they pleas’d.”²²⁸ Virgil’s persuasion of the Roman people to “obey” Augustus, as Le Bossu described it, stemmed from the potency of this textual example.

Dryden knew Le Bossu’s analysis as well as anyone in England did. Dryden had

pictura poesis model of analysis, Rapin clearly has more than aesthetic ideals in mind: earlier in his essay, Rapin explicitly invokes the Aristotelian notion that “Arts” should be “subordinat[e]” to “Polity, whose end in general is the publick good” (I.vii.9).

²²⁵ Le Bossu, *Treatise on the Epic*, 21-31 (I.ix).

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

²²⁷ “Religion has always had a most powerful influence over the minds of the Vulgar,” Le Bossu observed. Thus the *Aeneid* “makes it appear, ‘That the great Revolutions, which happen in States, are brought about by the appointment and will of God: That those who oppose them are Impious, and have been punish’d according to their Demerits. For Heaven never fails to protect the Heroes it makes choice of, to carry on and execute its great designs’” (28).

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

been the first English writer to mention Le Bossu in print.²²⁹ Almost two decades before he contracted with Tonson to translate Virgil, Dryden had cited and discussed Le Bossu's treatise in order to claim for the English stage some of the same principles of poetic composition and influence that the French cleric had claimed for the epic. Within *Dryden's Virgil* itself, the English poet repeats and, indeed, extends Le Bossu's analysis of Virgil's original reasons for writing the *Aeneid*.²³⁰ And with a nod to Le Bossu's theory of epic influence, Dryden writes at length in the Dedication of the *Aeneis* of the way the epic influences what he calls "habits of the Mind," habits variously rooted out and inculcated over the long term.²³¹

In light of Le Bossu's theoretical intervention, the prospect of undertaking a relatively literal translation of Virgil during the 1690s—and doing so, as I am suggesting here, for the counterintuitive purpose of subtly *altering* Virgil's original design in light of the English Revolution—must have presented itself as an intriguing creative challenge for a poet in Dryden's position. Having been purposefully involved in literary translation since 1680, Dryden had theorized at length about the translator's liberties. The question

²²⁹ *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), cited further below. Mulgrave (1682) was the second Englishman to cite Le Bossu.

²³⁰ Dryden's analysis of Virgil's motives for writing the *Aeneid* follows four full paragraphs of historical discussion of the various factors contributing to the fall of the Commonwealth and the emergence of a monarchical government, and the discussion of Virgil's "mature" effort to weigh the needs and predispositions of his time is itself quite detailed. Dryden considers Virgil's private obligations to Augustus, his reflection on the history of republican Rome, his prediction that that "settlement" would continue into the future, his estimation of Augustus's character, and his estimation of the Roman mores. "These things, I say, being consider'd by the Poet, he concluded it to be the Interest of his Country to be so Govern'd: To infuse an awful Respect into the People, towards such a Prince: By that respect to confirm their Obedience to him; and by that Obedience to make them Happy. This was the Moral of his Divine Poem: Honest in the Poet: Honourable to the Emperour, whom he derives from a Divine Extraction; and reflecting part of that Honour on the *Roman* People, whom he derives also from the *Trojans*; and not only profitable, but necessary to the present Age; and likely to be such to their Posterity" (281.11-36).

²³¹ For Dryden, the epic poem influences "the Manners" and tragic drama "the Passions": "The Passions... are violent: and acute Distempers require Medicines of a strong and speedy operation. Ill habits of the Mind are like Chronical Diseases, to be corrected by degrees, and Cur'd by Alteratives: wherein though Purges are sometimes necessary, yet Diet, good Air, and moderate Exercise, have the greatest part.... One puts off a Fit like the Quinquina, and relieves us only for a time; the other roots out the Distemper, and gives a healthful habit" (271.32-272.10).

of poetic utility remained a pressing question throughout the period: Dryden undertook the translation amidst the battle of the books, which pitted Bentley's nascent philology against Wotton's conviction that the classics should be used to prepare gentlemen for careers of public service.²³² And, perhaps most importantly, Dryden addressed an audience particularly sophisticated in its acquaintance with epic discourse. Virgil, who was studied in the curriculum throughout the period in question, was among the best-known classical authors, and Le Bossu's treatise on the epic was cited with commendation by virtually everyone who talked about the epic during the 1690s.²³³

Indeed, Le Bossu's treatise brought a compelling question to the table, thanks in part to its incorporation of several particularly resonant political terms ("Revolution," "Monarchy," "Commonwealth," "Religion"): Was Virgil's design, as analyzed by Le Bossu, an appropriate design for modern audiences—namely, English audiences? In a previous generation of Virgilian interpretation, Ogilby had presented Virgil's corpus, in English and Latin, as a royal entertainment as useful in modern England as it had been in ancient Rome. But, after the monumental events of 1688-89—after a disobedient nation had sacked one monarch and installed another under constitutional arrangements that apparently limited the monarch's power and recognized the liberties of the people—was the Virgilian design of any further relevance?

This was actually a matter of significant debate. The Revolution was "a rare event in that its rationalization postdate[d] its occurrence," as Gerald Straka has

²³² Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994) and *Between the Ancients and Moderns: Baroque Culture in Restoration England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1999).

²³³ Cf. the Earl of Mulgrave, Samuel Wesley, Richard Blackmore, John Dennis, John Dryden, Luke Milbourne, Le Bossu's translator, Joseph Addison (who uses Le Bossu's techniques to discuss Milton).

observed,²³⁴ and not all agreed about whether this regime change was justified, what fundamental alteration in English government (if any) it had brought about, and what it portended for the future of England. There were some Britons—perhaps many Britons—who presumed that obedience remained the basis of a settled body politic.²³⁵ Indeed, Virgil’s design, as analyzed by Le Bossu, was the basis of two original epic experiments during the 1690s.²³⁶ But other interpretations of the Revolution were possible. William’s own propagandists argued that there were rare times when the people had the right to overthrow a tyrannical monarch who abused his rightful executive powers.²³⁷

Moreover, as a matter of cultural-historical diagnosis, there was an argument to be made that, if English culture and English manners had ever been characterized by an inclination to “obey” an absolute monarch (as in the early Stuart era, for instance), the Revolution marked a turning point. Monarchical power was now being tested and contained in practical and philosophical terms by Parliament, by the re-framing of the

²³⁴ “Introduction,” *The Revolution of 1688: Whig Triumph or Palace Revolution?* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1966), viii. This point has been reinforced by a number of subsequent historians, as Abigail Williams notes, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681-1714* (New York: Oxford UP, 2005), 94-95. Williams herself focuses on Whig arguments (esp. Ch. 3) in relation to alternative contemporary theories. For examples of the philosophical tenor, see the collections of contemporary documents assembled by Straka and also John Miller, *The Glorious Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London and NY: Longman, 1997).

²³⁵ Cf. Milbourne’s response to Dryden’s discussion of Virgil’s moral, quoted in n. below.

²³⁶ Samuel Wesley, *Life of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour* (1693) and Richard Blackmore, *Prince Arthur* (1695). Both writers modeled their designs loosely on the “Action” and the original “Moral” of the *Aeneid*, which they praised (not surprisingly) for being the greatest epic of all time and the “most easily accommodated to the present Age, supposing the Christian Religion in the place of the Pagan,” as Blackmore put it (image 10). Wesley, praising the *Aeneid* for its imitable hero (among other things), gives this plot summary of his epic: “My principal Hero was perfect, yet imitable, and that both in active and contemplative Life. He leaves his own Kingdom to save and conquer another, endures the greatest hardships, is reduc’d to the lowest ebb, nay is at last forc’d to suffer Death it self. Yet after all, he emerges from his Misfortunes, conquers all his Enemies, fixes Laws, establishes Religion, Peace, and his own Empire, and is advanced higher than any Conquerour ever was before him” (images 11-12). Blackmore’s *Prince Arthur* maintained a fairly close allegiance to plot elements of the *Aeneid*, as Dennis observed in his critique, and it was also prefaced with an explicit announcement of that imitation, which is partially quoted above: “In this Work,” Blackmore explained, “I have endeavour’d mostly to form my self on Virgil’s Model, which I look on, as the most just and perfect and the most easily accommodated to the present Age,” etc. (image 10).

²³⁷ Cf. Straka, *Revolution of 1688*, 8-13.

English constitution, and by the righteous self-assertions of certain prominent Britons. In 1688-89, members of Parliament, acting both as small groups of individuals and as a body, had invited William into England, had helped to push James out of England, had negotiated the terms of William's co-monarchy with Mary, and had determined the order of William and Mary's succession. For the first time in English history, England had co-monarchs. For the first time in English history, the male monarch who was vested with the state's sole executive power (William) did not have the right to pass the throne to any children that he might have apart from his wife. In an earlier age, the guiding principles of England's royal succession had been more readily represented in the famous Virgilian tableau of a solitary prince fleeing Troy with his son at his side and his father and his household gods on his back. Even after Charles I was beheaded, the crown eventually went to his exiled son. On the occasion of the Revolution, however, the power of the English state had not been contained in the king's body, symbolically or otherwise: fearing execution amid anti-Catholic riots, James had fled from the country, throwing the Great Seal into the Thames upon his departure.²³⁸ For a period of almost two months, England was not only without a *de jure* monarch, but also without a formally inaugurated *de facto* monarch. Having assisted that dethronement publicly and behind the scenes, Parliament then took upon itself the task of "set[tl]ing sure Succession" in the English monarchy.²³⁹ In so doing, it prioritized the perceived needs of the British common weal over the perceived demands of traditional policy. Rather than honoring the established

²³⁸ See Miller, *The Glorious Revolution*, 14 for a detailed descriptions of these events that touches further on the theme of patriarchal succession: "James decided to flee partly because he feared for his safety but also because, if a 'free parliament' met, he would have to agree to an inquiry into his son's birth: "'Tis my son they aim at and 'tis my son I must endeavour to preserve, whatever becomes of me.'"

²³⁹ *Works*, V.1.8.

pattern of royal succession, Parliament honored a perceived civic obligation to reject the temporal and spiritual tyrannies embodied in James.

No one was in a better position than Dryden to appreciate the philosophical implications of these events more or less as I have described them here or to see these events as the culmination of governmental and cultural changes that had been brewing for a long time. Dryden's published poetry chronicles the assaults on the monarchical prerogative that English government had experienced during the second half of the seventeenth century. Born during the truncated reign of Charles I, and soon enveloped in the tumult of civil war, Dryden composed one of his first public poems as a tribute to Oliver Cromwell (*Heroique Stanzas*, 1659). He then advised and composed propaganda for two monarchs encumbered by the burdensome task of "restoring" the English monarchy to what it once had been: first, a king recently returned from exile (Charles II), and then a king who was ultimately driven into exile after a controversial, three-year reign (James II). *Annus Mirabilis*, the poem generally presumed to have won Dryden the laureateship, addressed several early Restoration crises in an ominous year (1666): the Great Fire of London, the plague, and the losses incurred in the recent Dutch wars. As Laureate, Dryden presided over the Exclusion Crisis (*Absalom and Achitophel*, 1681) and converted to Catholicism to accommodate James's short reign (*The Hind and the Panther*, 1687). Then, in a change of public status that may well have reflected his perception that the center of English political power had finally shifted decisively, Dryden lost his official connection with the monarchy amid the regime change of 1688-89—a series of events that he himself described as a "Revolution."²⁴⁰ If anyone was in a position to understand the English Revolution as a watershed moment in English history,

²⁴⁰ *Works*, VI.808.5.

it was surely the poet who had served as England's Restoration Laureate and Royal Historiographer for the bulk of his public career and who had relinquished his royal post, on cue, with that moment of national transformation.

III: Toward an Assessment of the "Moral" of *Dryden's Virgil*

According to Le Bossu, epic writers first determined a "Moral" that they wanted to inculcate in their readers and then developed a "Design" around that "Moral."²⁴¹ Thus, in Le Bossu's reading, Virgil had developed the *Aeneid* around a "Moral" fit for his own times: he encouraged Augustus and subsequent Roman Emperors to recognize that "mild and moderate" conduct is essential to the survival of the state, and he attempted to convince the Romans to obey a prince who conducted himself in that manner.²⁴² My contention is that Dryden, with Virgil's example before him,²⁴³ designed his translation to inculcate a new moral, fit for his own culture, his own government, and the exigencies of his own historical moment. This moral would necessarily bear some resemblance to Virgil's original moral, insofar as the kind of paraphrase that Dryden undertook in this translation obliged him to retain large structural aspects of Virgil's design and a perceptible verbal fidelity to the original verse as well; however, Dryden's moral would encourage a view of monarchy and of civic virtue quite different from the kind that Virgil (as interpreted by Le Bossu) had attempted to inspire in the Romans.

²⁴¹ Clark, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics*, esp. 243-48, 256-59, shows that a variety of later commentators on Le Bossu emphasized this point. In Le Bossu's usage (and in the usage of others, Dryden in particular, who followed him), "Moral" is a broad technical term referring to civic lessons inculcated by the epic, not necessarily lessons narrowly in keeping with Christian morals.

²⁴² Le Bossu, *Treatise on the Epic*, 27.

²⁴³ According to Le Bossu, Virgil imitated the designs of both of Homer's epics in his *Aeneid*, but did so in a manner that would inculcate a moral fit for his own age. Dryden might be understood to be imitating Virgil in this respect.

Nowhere in *Dryden's Virgil* does Dryden actually spell out this new moral except to suggest that he does not much care for the original moral of the *Aeneid*. In the Dedication of the *Aeneis*, Dryden remarks that he has “elsewhere confess’d, and still must own” that he considers the “Moral” of Virgil’s poem “not to be so Noble as that of *Homer*”²⁴⁴—a comment promptly singled out by Luke Milbourne as a slight against “Monarchy.”²⁴⁵ Dryden’s coyness regarding his own intentions harmonized with Le Bossu’s theory of influence, which held that the moral was that fundamental lesson of the poem that would be inculcated—or, as Dryden put it, “insinuated”²⁴⁶—into one’s readers through such elements as the structure of the narrative, the development of its central characters, and the relationships of the characters to one another. The purpose of the reading experience, in other words, was to discover the moral—or, rather, to be influenced by the lesson that the poet wished to inculcate, perhaps even unknowingly.

Despite the absence of explicit commentary on the subject of Dryden’s design for translating Virgil,²⁴⁷ it is possible at this point to sketch out the moral around which Dryden organized his translation by simply reversing the logic of Le Bossu’s analysis of

²⁴⁴ *Works*, V.277.19-20. Dryden also outlines Virgil’s original “Moral” at length, dedicating some four paragraphs to a delineation of the historical circumstances that necessitated it and defending it on the grounds “that *Virgil*’s [Moral] was as useful to the *Romans* of his Age, as *Homer*’s was to the *Grecians* of his; in what time soever he may be suppos’d to have liv’d and flourish’d” (277.22-25). Dryden had “elsewhere confess’d” his preference for Homer’s moral (i.e. the *Iliad*’s moral) in the prefatory material to *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), during which discussion he claims that Homer’s moral has been the basis for his *Conquest of Granada* (staged 1670).

²⁴⁵ Cf. these excerpts: “That the Moral of the *Aeneis* is less Noble than that of the *Ilias*, I know no Reason to grant.... How comes Obedience to an excellent Prince to be a requisite inferior to that of Unity among little Confederates? Tho we own Mr. D. may be a Republican now, ... his Argument to prove Virgil such, is as ridiculous as a Man could wish” (8).

²⁴⁶ See the above quotation of the prefatory material to Dryden’s *Troilus*. Within *Dryden's Virgil*, he develops an idea that epic poetry influences “habits of the Mind.”

²⁴⁷ Cf. Johnson, who refrains from spelling out the “moral” of *Dryden's Virgil*, even though his discussion of the work registers an awareness of many of the issues I discuss here.

Virgil's original authorial motives.²⁴⁸ Simply put, if Virgil thought Roman citizens should become meeker in the face of a newly-instated monarchical government, then Dryden thought Britons should become habitually bolder and more skeptical of monarchical power in the wake of the English Revolution. Whereas Virgil had reasoned "that all Men might be happy if they would be quiet" in the face of Augustus's new claims of sovereignty,²⁴⁹ Dryden reasoned that England might be "happy" if a forceful contingent of its subjects proved discerning, bold, and self-interested enough to keep the chosen monarch in check. These were the "manners" required in a nation governed by a limited monarchy, and these were therefore the manners that his translation of the Virgilian corpus would seek to model and elicit. Accordingly, *Dryden's Virgil* recognized an important space between obedience and disobedience. Without actively encouraging disobedience (armed or otherwise), it rewarded a certain skepticism about some of the principles for which Ogilby had contended so forcefully: the idea that the monarch was infallible, the idea that he was a divinely-anointed vicegerent, the idea that obedience to God was always equivalent to obedience to the monarch, the idea that loyalist English aristocrats should be keepers of the flame for an ousted monarch.

IV: Obedience, Obligation, and the Dedicatory Address

As I observed in the previous chapter, the dedication of a Virgilian translation actually served as part of the work's promise of civic influence: the poet obliged himself to a noble patron and thereby portrayed himself observing and committing to the social

²⁴⁸ Again, we know that Dryden was well acquainted with Le Bossu's analysis of Virgil's motives: as noted above, Dryden reiterates and expands liberally upon this analysis in the Dedication of the *Aeneis* (esp. 277.4-281.36).

²⁴⁹ *Works*, V.282.17-20.

bonds at the basis of good government—principles that were then reimagined in a narrative form within the translated verse itself (especially in the *Aeneid*). For Ogilby, the “manners” at the foundation of good government included deference to persons of noble stature (i.e. loyalist aristocrats); industry (conducted ambitiously, but still in accordance with this deferential attitude); and unremitting obedience to royal authority. Thus, in his dedications, Ogilby showed himself deferring to the dedicatory customs eschewed by his republican contemporaries, honoring his patron’s parallel commitment to those customs, fulfilling protracted obligations to his patron (i.e. in the eventual production of his lavishly-ornamented *Virgils*), and disavowing the rebellion of his contemporaries as the revival of ancient “barbarity.” Dryden’s approach to dedication reflects an altered conception of the manners at the foundation of good government. He makes room for “*Liberty*” and self-assertion in both his dedicatees’ oppositional stance (as noted above) and his own performance of commitment to his patrons. In his dedicatory addresses, he finds a more permissive way of imagining obligation, obedience to authority, and commitment to the hierarchies at the basis of the English settlement than Ogilby would have countenanced.

Interestingly, Dryden’s most vivid modeling of this reformulation of the ideal English subject appears in a portion of the Dedication of the *Aeneis* in which Dryden compliments Mulgrave, not for his prominence in English government, but for his knowledge of poetry. The passage begins routinely enough. Dryden has been arguing, in opposition to both Aristotle and André Dacier (the French critic), that epic poetry is superior to tragic drama. He appeals to the Earl of Mulgrave as a neutral judge in the matter:

I submit my Opinion to your Judgment, who are better qualified than any Man I know to decide this Controversie. You come, my Lord, instructed in the Cause, and needed not that I shou'd open it.²⁵⁰

So far so good. Up to this point, notwithstanding the introductory incursion against Aristotle's authority and the ostentatiously digressive manner that he adopts throughout the dedication, Dryden remains suitably within the realm of expectations supplied by dedicatory custom. Indeed, he is setting himself up to make an elaborate compliment. As a preeminent English poet who has been at the forefront of critical theory throughout his career, Dryden himself is more obviously "qualified" than his dedicatee to "decide" the "Controversie" outlined at the beginning of his dedication, so his gesture of deference toward this noble aristocrat is framed all the more strikingly as an act of willing adherence to dedicatory custom.

But, in its very elaborateness, this gesture of deference sustains an element of play. In a flattering appraisal of the Earl's *Essay on Poetry* (the poem in which Mulgrave had commended Le Bossu's demystification of the "sacred mysteries" of classical epic), Dryden makes room even *within* dedicatory custom for a psychologically complex notion of what it means to admire one's social superiors. Without departing from the energetically deferential spirit with which the passage began, Dryden makes room for a conception of obedience as the endpoint of a protracted mental process rather than an instinctual posture or state of being—a train of thought more varied and conflicted in its constitutive facets than anything that Ogilby would have allowed:

Your *Essay on Poetry*, which was published without a Name, and of which I was not honour'd with the Confidence, I read over and over with much delight, and as much instruction: and, without flattering you, or making my self more Moral than I am, not without some Envy. I was loath to be inform'd how an Epick poem shou'd be written, or how a Trajedy shou'd be contriv'd and manag'd in better

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 273.20-23.

Verse and with more judgment than I cou'd teach others. A Native of *Parnassus*, and bred up in the Studies of its Fundamental Laws, may receive new Lights from his Contemporaries, but 'tis a grudging kind of praise which he gives his Benefactors. He is more oblig'd than he is willing to acknowledge: there is a tincture of Malice in his Commendations. For where I own I am taught, I confess my want of Knowledge.²⁵¹

Feigned though it may be, a rich picture of the Poet Laureate's reaction to the anonymous publication of Mulgrave's *Essay* emerges here. The passage moves toward a major compliment (the most conventional of dedicatory ends): Mulgrave's *Essay* is a work of true merit, and it has earned the poet's genuine admiration and affection. Along the way, however, Dryden's enters into murkier dedicatory territory: the acknowledgement of envy, the suggestion that the beneficiary of aristocratic munificence might chafe at the obligations created by that generosity, the remarkable idea that "there is a tincture of Malice" in "Commendations" made merely out of a sense of duty without a feeling of gratefulness to fill out the relation. It is hard to imagine Ogilby conceiving himself even in the abstract as a poet giving only a "grudging kind of praise" to "his Benefactors." Dryden's presentation infuses the patron-poet relationship with a sense of competition: the poet, prideful about his particular area of expertise, imagines that "where I own I am taught, I confess my want of Knowledge"—a statement congruent to Dryden's passing observation that "[a] Subject, 'tis true, may lend to his Sovereign, but the act of borrowing makes the King inferiour, because he wants, and the Subject supplies."²⁵²

Appropriately, then, as Dryden conducts his compliment toward a resolution, he locates in his patron a fitting counterpart to his own grudging praise. Mulgrave, as Dryden imagines him here, had recognized in advance the way his aristocratic station

²⁵¹ Ibid., 273.23-36.

²⁵² Ibid., 272.18-20. This may be a glancing reference to Dryden's lending of money to Charles II during his laureateship, and it certainly articulates the economic situation of the English crown after the Revolution.

would affect the reception of his public work, and he had developed a strategy that proved capable of outfoxing a poet well conditioned to adhere superficially to convention and custom when the occasion required:

Nothing had been more easie than to commend a Patron of long standing.... But to come Anonymous upon me, and force me to commend you against my interest, was not altogether so fair, give me leave to say, as it was Politick. For by concealing your Quality, you might clearly understand how your Work succeeded; and that the general approbation was given to your Merit, not your Titles. Thus like *Apelles* you stood unseen behind your own *Venus*, and receiv'd the praises of the passing Multitude: the Work was commended, not the Author: And I doubt not this was one of the most pleasing Adventures of your Life.²⁵³

Notice that Dryden exposes as inauthentic and overly “easie” the reflex commendation of a patron for his “Titles”—an aspect of English manners that Ogilby would have considered foundational to the happy ordering of the English settlement. Consider, too, the feigned indignation with which Dryden scolds his patron for “forc[ing]” him to go against his “interest,” as if to assume not only that the “interest” of an English subject is sometimes at odds with the interests of his superiors (a conception foreign to Ogilby’s royalism), but also that acting in one’s own interest is among the Englishman’s basic rights and accustomed habits. This is all a performance, of course, playfully executed more or less within the bounds of dedicatory tradition, but Dryden is clearly enacting in his own dedicatory persona a habit of seizing and defending his “*Liberty*.” Moreover, his presentation envisions the aristocratic counterpart to this self-assertive commoner as a man similarly knowledgeable about the art of concealment and similarly deft in his manipulation of local conventions. Mulgrave, Dryden asserts, does not rely solely on his high birth to sustain his social position. Indeed, he takes “pleas[ure]” in “Adventures” that test his ability to guide, influence, and please the public in a kind of a controlled

²⁵³ Ibid., 274.19-30.

experiment, whereby the accustomed politeness of his peers and the fawning compliments of poets hoping for handouts are temporarily taken out of the equation. By this means, his real finesse in government can be satisfyingly measured and assessed apart from the privileged social position that his birth has accorded him. Being “Politick,” this noble lord directs and observes the “Multitude” from a distance, receiving “general approbation” for his “Merit” rather than his “Titles”—though those titles are, interestingly, printed as a matter of course at the front of the Dedication, just as Dryden signs the Dedication conventionally as “Your Lordships, most Humble, / Most Obliged, and most Obedient Servant.”

V: Toward an Appraisal of Aeneas’s Politic Manner

Dryden’s approach to translating the *Aeneid* can be briefly summarized as a strategy of making available a similar sense of play within both Aeneas’s character and Virgil’s narrative of national foundation. Dryden’s Aeneas emerges, by turns, as a prince circumspect in his negotiations with people who wield power over him, and, in diplomatic relations with his subjects and his peers, abundantly reliant on the sly techniques of self-representation that Dryden’s dedicatory persona attributes to Mulgrave. Framed by suggestive dedicatory comments, Dryden’s verse makes available what might be described as a Machiavellian interpretation of Aeneas’s foundation of Rome: a way of understanding successful conquest, alliance, and settlement as the product of a distinctive combination of prudent planning, diplomatic maneuvering, media manipulation, and good luck (or, rather, opportunity seized to the prince’s advantage).²⁵⁴ Aeneas, as

²⁵⁴ Dryden’s interest in Machiavelli has been explored only in passing. Cf. Paul Hammond, *John Dryden: A Literary Life* (NY: St. Martin’s, 1991), 4, 17-18; also, Bruce King, “Absalom and Achitophel:

Dryden renders him, is a prince who predictably *claims* that he is on a divine mission and, in many instances, walks the walk of a man who is led by his piety; however, his divine appointment cannot be taken for granted. His words and actions bear ongoing scrutiny on precisely this point.

To effect this revision, Dryden took advantage of the complexity of Virgil's representation of divine intervention in human affairs. In the *Aeneid*, Dryden had at his disposal a narrative that both retained the potential to *suggest* modern ideas of divine right and necessarily failed to represent Christian ideals in any strict sense. Roman polytheism did not map on to Christian theology in any easy one-to-one correspondence. There were enough points of congruence for a translator or reader to overlay a monotheistic vision on the main arc of the narrative and even on its details: Juno, the deity principally opposed to Aeneas's foundation of Rome, must ultimately answer to Jupiter (king of the gods, who is aligned in the story with the Fates). Nonetheless, there were ambiguities even here. Jupiter, who comes the closest of all the gods to an image of a patriarchal Christian divinity, does not have authority over the Fates.²⁵⁵ Thus, the interventions of less powerful deities (e.g. Venus, Juno), the commands delivered by messenger deities (e.g. Mercury), and the actions in the natural world attributed to Roman gods and demi-gods (e.g. Aeolus's loosing of the winds, which is then contained by

Machiavelli and the False Messiah," *Etudes Anglaises* 16 (1963): 250-54. For Machiavelli's English reception, see Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul / Toronto: U Toronto P, 1964); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975); Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: from the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994). Dryden's Dedication of the *Aeneis* recalls the central conceit from the Dedication of *The Prince*, which compares the perspectival positioning of the landscape painter (standing in a valley to look at a mountain or vice versa) to the perspectival positioning of the people and the prince: the prince's advisor regards the prince's situation from below and vice versa.

²⁵⁵ As Dryden remarks suggestively in his dedication, "the Gods cannot controul Destiny" (325.9-10), a comment opaquely supported by the additional observation, "[I]t was a moot Point in Heaven, whether [*Jupiter*] cou'd alter Fate or not. And indeed, some passages in *Virgil* wou'd make us suspect, that he was of Opinion, *Jupiter* might defer Fate, though he cou'd not alter it" (293.9-12).

Neptune) could be variously understood as attempts to represent direct divine intervention and as figures of speech—“Machines,” as neoclassical critics would say—invented by Virgil to explain occurrences that might otherwise be attributable to other causes. “Oh, how convenient is a Machine sometimes in a Heroick Poem!”, Dryden remarks in his Dedication, and he considers at length the possibility that Virgil employs “Machines” to dramatize actions that could have been performed without them.²⁵⁶ Sprinkling his discussion with comments like these, Dryden rejects the opportunity to cast Aeneas’s story as the unfolding of a divine plan in which the hero prevails as a matter of divine power and right.

But Dryden’s revisions are perhaps most readily apprehensible at the level of character development. Thanks in part to the complexity of Virgil’s divine apparatus, the “Heav’ns” are predictably “unsearchable” in this translation, as Zwicker has observed,²⁵⁷ and Aeneas’s behavior bears a logical relationship to this inscrutability. *Dryden’s Virgil* amplifies the possibility that Aeneas himself is uncertain about whether his journey is predestined at all. In Aeneas’s first appearance in the epic, for instance, when he finds himself caught in a violent sea storm, Dryden’s “Pious Prince” could as easily pass for an ordinary man in distress as a hero distinguished by his devout confidence in his divine mission:

...Heaven it self is ravish’d from their Eyes.
Loud Peals of Thunder from the Poles ensue,
Then flashing Fires the transient Light renew:
The Face of things a frightful Image bears,
And present Death in various Forms appears.
Struck with unusual Fright, the *Trojan* Chief,
With lifted Hands and Eyes, invokes Relief.
And thrice, and four times happy those, he cry’d,

²⁵⁶ *Works*, 296.31-32; 295-99, 313-16.

²⁵⁷ Zwicker, “Politics and Translation,” 201.

That under *Ilian* Walls before their Parents dy'd.

...

Thus while the Pious Prince his Fate bewails,
Fierce *Boreas* drove against his flying Sails.²⁵⁸

This is a vulnerable moment even for Ogilby's Aeneas²⁵⁹; however, Aeneas's frailty is especially apparent in Dryden's translation. While in Ogilby's version the Trojan hero can be found "sighing" serenely, his arms stretched toward the heavens, Dryden has him "[s]truck with unusual Fright," "invok[ing] Relief," and "bewail[ing]" his "Fate"—all amplifications of Virgil's Latin.²⁶⁰ Dryden does not insist upon Aeneas's lack of piety. His verse is equivocal on precisely this point, bringing together as it does an explicit reference to Aeneas as a "Pious Prince" (an epithet that does not actually appear in the original Latin passage); the hint that "Heaven it self is ravish'd from [the Trojans']

²⁵⁸ Ogilby's translation reads:

When from the *Trojans* sight dark Clouds restrain
Heaven and the Day, black Night broods on the Main;
The high Poles thunder, and thick darts Fire
Inflames the Skye, swift ruine all conspire.
Straight are *Aeneas* Limbs benum'd with Cold,
Who sighing, up to Heaven his hands did hold:
Then said, O happy, more than happy you,
Who near *Troy's* Wall dy'd in your Parents view!

...

Then from the North a sudden gust did rise,
Took them a Staies, and Waves advanc'd to th' Skies.

²⁵⁹ Ogilby, *Works of Virgil* (1668), 131 (my emphasis); Dryden, *Works*, V.347.130-47 (my emphasis).

²⁶⁰ "Fright" is not explicitly mentioned in Virgil's verse, though it is implied, the commentators presumed, by the detail of Aeneas's cold arms. As Ogilby puts it, "So the Interpreters expound *Frigus*, not fear of death, saith *Servius*, for the dead he calls happy immediately, but of the manner, by Wate; for the Soul being conceiv'd to be of a Fiery Substance, was thought to be wholly destroy'd by the contrary Element." Dryden has therefore amplified precisely this aspect of the passage, creating almost out of whole cloth the line that reads, "Thus while the Pious Prince his Fate bewails." He covers his tracks with a pointed comment in the Dedication that basically replicates Ogilby's gloss, albeit (significantly) *within* a lengthy defense of Aeneas's character—a technique whose rhetorical effects I will comment on subsequently. Dryden argues that "his fear was not for himself, but for his People," remarking of this particular passage (interestingly with no reference to *Servius* or any other ancient commentators), "I have...been inform'd, by Mr. *Moyl*, a young Gentleman, whom I can never sufficiently commend, that the Ancients accounted drowning an accursed Death: So that if we grant him to have been afraid, he had just occasion for that fear, both in relation to himself, and to his Subjects. I think our Adversaries can carry this Argument no farther, unless they tell us that he ought to have had more confidence in the promise of the Gods..." (292.16-31). And so Dryden proceeds, effectively spelling out the opposing "Argument" with the pretense of defending Virgil's hero from his detractors. Dryden's handling of the passage—particularly his explicit inclusion of the word "Fright"—is all the more telling in light of John Dennis's contemporary gloss (discussed below).

Eyes”; and also several insinuations at the level of narrative description that Aeneas is neither so “Pious” that he faces the prospect of “present Death” with utter tranquility nor so certain of his “Fate[d]” foundation of Rome that this certainty carries him through the storm.²⁶¹ These equivocations notwithstanding, with Ogilby’s translation in view, one might say that Dryden does decidedly *less* than his predecessor to inspire in his readers an early confidence that this Trojan Prince is on a journey commissioned by “Heaven it self.”²⁶²

In addition, from the very start, Dryden puts into play a refined understanding of “the Manners” as a civic category—an understanding that paves the way for his departure from the royalist tradition of interpretation embodied in Ogilby’s translation in which Aeneas represented a wholly pious, dutiful prince whose comportment was worthy of

²⁶¹ For an alternate reading, see Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Perception*, 143. Curiously, Thomas, a proponent of the “pessimistic” reading of Virgil, nevertheless sees Dryden emphasizing Aeneas’s piety as an expression of his royalism.

²⁶² There is also some evidence that Dryden would have expected at least *some* of his contemporaries to scrutinize his rendering of this important, early passage: in 1696, amid a scathing critique of Richard Blackmore’s *Prince Arthur*, John Dennis had laboriously analyzed this particular scene (in the original Latin) to make the point that Blackmore’s command of his medium is vastly inferior to Virgil’s. Dennis’s methods are instructive, insofar as they confirm the dissemination of Le Bossu’s methodology, and his discussion bears topical relevance to this particular scene. Dennis points out, for instance, that “the Fear of *Aeneas* is not directly express’d” in this famous passage (79). At first Dennis uses this observation against Blackmore. Recognizing this interpretation as a standard interpretation of the scene, Dennis derides Blackmore’s comparative clumsiness in the management of his own plot and character development (e.g. 74-78) and the lack of subtlety that distinguishes his imitation of the scene in *Prince Arthur* (78-80). Dennis then turns the argument on its head, with an end that is instructive here: Virgil’s presentation leaves open the possibility (Dennis claims) that “the Words, *Aeneae solvuntur frigore membra*, express no Fear” at all (81). “Indeed, why should he be afraid?” Dennis asks rhetorically. “He knew very well, that he should survive this Storm. He had divine Assurance for it, and he was perfectly Pious” (81). In light of Dennis’s comment, we can say: 1) in light of contemporary interpretations of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Dryden very clearly exercises his interpretive license in making explicit Aeneas’s “Fright,” and 2) in making this fear explicit, Dryden makes room for the interpretive possibility that the prince is not as “perfectly Pious” as he is sometimes reputed to be. I suspect that Dennis, who sided with the “Wits” in the *Prince Arthur* controversy, composed this commentary in a pointed effort to complement the civic work attempted in *Dryden’s Virgil*. Dennis’s larger point in this section is that Blackmore, imitating in *Prince Arthur* both the original moral and the action of the *Aeneid*, unwittingly makes his English hero *impious* rather than pious. Dennis’s critique of Blackmore therefore dovetails neatly with Dryden’s presentation of Aeneas, as I am explicating it here: in both cases, the prince figure is, in his actions, less pious than some of his defenders might wish him to appear. What makes the collusion all the more interesting—or what I am suggesting was a collusion—is that Dennis was a Whig and a supporter of William, identifying himself as such in the prefatory materials to this critique.

aristocratic and gentlemanly imitation. As I argued above, even *within* Dryden's dedicatory confirmation of the bonds of obedience and protection at the foundation of the commonwealth, he makes room for a certain tension between feeling and action, essence and appearance. His lively address to Mulgrave argues that even an orderly, peaceable subject might remain only superficially deferent to those to whose patronage and protection he enjoys. It suggests further that a meritorious leader, refusing to take for granted his high birth as a guarantee of his popularity, might employ deceptive tactics to gain intelligence about the reception of his leadership. As Dryden presents the relationship, both figures are defined by their habit of looking beyond appearances, their tendency to conduct themselves in accordance with the exigencies of power politics, and their willingness to exploit local custom and expectations of politeness to achieve their desired ends. Dryden's *Aeneis* invites a complementary understanding of the actions and motivations of Virgil's hero, who emerges by turns in the narrative as an adventurer in a position of deference and a leader attempting to settle his people. Dryden invites his readers to see Prince Aeneas as a deliberative tactician whose successes can be understood as a product of his opportunism in the face of changing fortune.

I made this case briefly in the previous chapter, where I juxtaposed Dryden's narration of Aeneas's arrival in Italy with Ogilby's. Dryden's rendering of the episode, I argued, encourages a reader to see Aeneas as a tactician whose outward gestures do not necessarily reflect either his internal psychological state or the political "designs" motivating his behavior. Whereas Ogilby portrays Aeneas as a figure of rectitude and piety, genuinely desirous of peace with the local people, Dryden's Aeneas proffers peace

as a coercive tactic. This portrait is made available well beyond the seventh book,²⁶³ and it can be traced with telling precision in relation to the themes of obligation and obedience mentioned above.

I will now extend this argument by considering the episode that Dryden describes as “the most pleasing entertainment of the *Aeneis*”²⁶⁴: Aeneas’s sojourn in Carthage. Located near the beginning of the epic, this episode is not the most likely candidate for an analysis of Aeneas’s characterization as a deliberative tactician. Within the grand narrative of Aeneas’s foundation of Rome, it readily appears as a moment of wandering—a moment when Aeneas and his men get blown off course, literally and figuratively. Caught in a violent storm, they find themselves at the mercy of Dido, Queen of a nascent Tyrian colony, to whom they appeal for hospitality and assistance. After she grants their request, Aeneas and his men stay for several months in Carthage, during which time she “entertains” them (in the seventeenth-century sense of the term) and she and Aeneas have a romantic affair. Thus, it would be easy to treat the union as a mere

²⁶³ Dryden, *Works*, V.302.2-3. Zwicker arrives at similar conclusions about this episode; however, he attributes this curiosity to personal bias rather than (as I am arguing) a strategic reimagining of Virgil’s didactic potential for post-Revolution England. Zwicker writes of “book 7 (Aeneas’s entry into Latium)” that “the steady shading of the language, the consistent impulse to render entry as conquest, can only be the translator brooding over the injustice and perhaps the inevitability of such conquest of Latium by Aeneas and of England by William III” (1984 186). I am arguing that there *is* actually an alternative explanation available for this effort to “render entry as conquest,” here and elsewhere in the volume. With an eye to the Revolution settlement, Dryden was reconceiving monarchical power and monarchical prerogative as human by nature and therefore subject to earthly limitations (e.g. the limitations placed on the monarch by Parliament). Dryden’s modifications with respect to the theme of conquest were surely attributable to Dryden’s particular bias against William III, who was readily seen by Jacobites as a conqueror who backed his entry into England with the threat of military conflict; however, there is no need to end the reading there. As I argued in the previous chapter, there was a strong tradition of seeing the *Aeneid* not only as a work aimed at pleasing, instructing, or otherwise commenting upon the behavior of *particular* monarchs (e.g. Augustus, Charles II, James II, William III), but also examining the nature of monarchical power *in general*.

²⁶⁴ In full, Dryden takes it upon himself to “affirm in honour of this Episode, that it is not only now esteem’d the most pleasing entertainment of the *Aeneis*, but was accounted so in his own Age” (i.e. by Ovid, whom he then cites). Dryden is not only taking a certain liberty in making Ovid the authority for the ancients’ prioritization of this episode (Ovid having been a poet known for his lasciviousness and his attention to the passions).

deviation from the real political business of the epic, which is to establish a Trojan colony in Italy. Nonetheless, Dryden makes available even here an understanding of Aeneas's behavior as the behavior of a politic prince.

VI: Anonymity, "Wonder" and the Strategic Importance of the "Survey"

Aeneas's politic manner emerges first and foremost as a habit of circumspection: a demeanor, an affect, and a way of seeing the events before him that is figured in narrative terms both as a tendency to gather information before undertaking a formal negotiation and as an ability to manage his persona according to the needs of a given circumstance. As in Dryden's portrait of Mulgrave, Aeneas habitually observes his circumstances from a distance, shrouded in anonymity, before allowing others to know him by name and station and therefore encounter or judge him as a prince with an agenda. Camping beyond the city of Carthage the night of his shipwreck, he "r[i]se[s]" at dawn the morning after, "the Coast and Country to survey, / Anxious and eager to discover more."²⁶⁵ With "true *Achates*" at his side,²⁶⁶ he gathers intelligence about Dido's circumstances first from Venus, who appears in the forest as a maiden huntress, and then from a series of "survey[s]" enhanced by that initial encounter. Venus recounts the full story of Dido's husband's death (at her brother's hand) and her consequent flight from Tyre to Africa. Assuring Aeneas that his "scatter'd Fleet" is already "join'd upon the Shoar,"²⁶⁷ she then lends Aeneas and Achates a disguise so they might enter the city of Carthage without detection:

They march obscure, for *Venus* kindly shrowds,

²⁶⁵ *Works*, V.357.423-24.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 357.432.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 361.541.

With Mists, their Persons, and involves in Clouds:
That, thus unseen, their Passage none might stay,
Or force to tell the Causes of their Way.²⁶⁸

As Dryden would say, this is one of those instances in which a reader might see Virgil employing a “Machine . . . only for Ornament, and not out of Necessity.”²⁶⁹ It would be possible for a shipwrecked sailor to gather the information divulged by “Venus” from a local huntress, and one can readily imagine him entering the city anonymously *as if* shrouded in mists and involved in clouds—that is, without his royal entourage, which would draw attention to him as a person of standing. The language of Dryden’s translation consistently sustains this interpretation, suggesting that the clouds are a Virgilian ornament and that the Trojan Prince may simply be traveling in common clothing without his entourage for the purpose of reconnaissance: “Conceal’d in Clouds, (prodigious to relate²⁷⁰) / He mix’d, unmark’d, among the buisy Throng, / Born by the Tide, and pass’d unseen along.”²⁷¹

Nor do the cautionary tactics end with the purposeful gathering of local news from reliable local inhabitants. Aeneas and Achates gather intelligence firsthand from a vista overlooking the town, where “The Prince,” “Now at a nearer Distance,” regards the busy townspeople “with Wonder.”²⁷² Occupying a position close enough to “hea[r], from ev’ry part, / The Noise, and buisy Concourse of the Mart,”²⁷³ Aeneas witnesses the “buisy Pains” of transforming a plot housing “Huts, and Shepherds homely Bow’rs” into a flourishing city replete with “stately Tow’rs,” “Gates and Streets,” banks, temples, the

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 362.570-73.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 316.16-17.

²⁷⁰ That is, in light of Dryden’s dedicatory comments, the parenthetical “prodigious to relate” might be taken to refer to the awkwardness of the figure of speech: for modern readers, it is “unnatural” or even “freakish” (*OED* 3) to speak of a prince’s anonymous mixing with the crowds as a concealment in clouds.

²⁷¹ *Works*, 363.613-15.

²⁷² Ibid., 362.581-82.

²⁷³ Ibid., 584-85.

“Foundations for a Theatre,” “mighty Columns” hewn from “Marble Quarries,” and the governmental order that one might expect of such structures: a government defined by its shared religious practices, its established “Laws,” its “holy Senates ... elect[ed] by Voice,” and its “striving Artists.”²⁷⁴ One might readily assume that the information that Aeneas is assimilating here will prepare him not only for his subsequent encounter with Queen Dido, but also for the eventual foundation of his own flourishing colony. And, on both counts, what is striking about Dryden’s presentation of the episode is the frequency with which he employs the word “Wonder” to describe Aeneas’s affective relationship to his surroundings during this exploratory phase. Aeneas gazes with “Wonder” not only as he surveys the scene of Carthage’s busy settlement, but also as he examines the historical scenes and figures depicted on the temple walls, anticipating the queen’s arrival,²⁷⁵ and then again as he watches Dido being approached by “his Friends,” several men representative of the “*Trojan* Throng” from which he has become separated in the storm.²⁷⁶ Ogilby, in all of these instances, had envisioned Aeneas not “wondering,” but “admiring”—a term connoting a combination of surprise, respect, and awe rather than a state of active inquiry.²⁷⁷ Dryden’s Aeneas registers not only surprise or amazement, but also, with some consistency, curiosity.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 362.580-363.637.

²⁷⁵ Aeneas gains courage as he regards the images (on which more in a moment), and his wonderment grows as he anticipates the arrival of the queen whose Amazonian likeness is depicted on the temple walls:

What first *Aeneas* in this place beheld,
 Reviv’d his Courage and his Fear expel’led.
 For while, expecting there the Queen, he rais’d
 His wond’ring Eyes, and round the Temple gaz’d. (363.632-35)

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 366.718-20.

²⁷⁷ Aeneas “admires” the nascent town in the process of construction (182); he is “much admiring” as he gazes at the images on the temple walls and awaits Dido’s entrance (184); Aeneas and Achates “both admire” the band of Trojans that they see approaching Dido (185).

²⁷⁸ Dryden arguably amplifies the sense of the parent text somewhat in filling out this trio with wonderment. Both “admire” and “wonder” are reasonable renderings of the Latin *miro*, *mirare*, the word that Virgil employs in the first two instances cited above. In the third instance, however, the parent text has

While watching his friends petition Dido, for instance, Dryden's Aeneas refrains from revealing himself until he has thoroughly "survey[ed]" the situation before him, has heard what his friends say about him and about their own situation, has heard Dido's response, and has therefore allowed the initial encounter with Dido to play out to a point at which he knows he might safely and effectively intervene *in propria persona*:

The Prince, unseen, surpriz'd with Wonder stands,
 And longs, with joyful haste to join their Hands:
 But doubtful of the wish'd Event, he stays,
 And from the hollow Cloud his Friends surveys:
 Impatient 'till they told their present State,
 And where they left their Ships, and what their Fate;
 And why they came, and what was their Request:
 For these were sent commission'd by the rest,
 To sue for leave to land their sickly Men,
 And gain Admission to the Gracious Queen.²⁷⁹

Note the sense of eagerness with which Aeneas, "Impatient" to learn more, checks his initial desire to "join [the] Hands" of his friends. Remaining "doubtful of the wish'd Event"—a phrase again suggesting skeptical forethought on Aeneas's part—Aeneas waits until his compatriots disclose several details of potential relevance to the development of a plan of action: "where they left their ships," what "Fate" they endured (e.g. what condition both the ships and their sailors might be found in), the Trojans' reason for arriving in Carthage, their specific "Request" for help from "the Gracious Queen," and her response to that "Request." Dryden presents his reader with little if anything in the scene that does not have a precedent in the parent poem, and yet his subtle shift of emphasis in the matter of Aeneas's motives makes available an understanding of

Aeneas more neutrally "seeing" or "observing" (*video, videre*) his assembled friends as they petition Dido. Ogilby, as noted above, does render Virgil's *videt* "admire," presumably to rhyme it with "desire." Dryden therefore had an English precedent for making Aeneas "wonder" what will happen next at this crucial juncture in the narrative.

²⁷⁹ Dryden, *Works*, 366.723-32.

the scene crucially distinct from the understanding that Ogilby's presentation had encouraged. In Ogilby's rendering, Aeneas and Achates are shown "Longing" to "imbrace their Friends" throughout the passage. The expression of this "rash desire" is checked only by their "Fear" of what will happen if they reveal themselves too soon.²⁸⁰ In Dryden's rendering, by contrast, Aeneas's "long[ing]" to embrace his friends is circumscribed by the hero's "doubt" and his watchfulness. No "Fear" enters into the equation here. As Dryden renders the scene, Aeneas is not "Impatient" to reunite with his friends, but "Impatient" to hear how they will be received. And he is impatient not necessarily because he remains empathetically invested in their physical wellbeing—or not *only* because he remains invested in their wellbeing—but because he wants to plan his next move. He wonders whether he should advance or retreat.

What Aeneas discovers as he watches the scene unfold is that the Carthaginian Queen is already predisposed to help the shipwrecked Trojans. She is biased in their favor to an even greater extent than the norms of Mediterranean hospitality might lead one to expect.²⁸¹ Not only does she find herself taken with Aeneas's attractive physique;

²⁸⁰ The full passage reads:

When straight the Prince did with great concourse
Antheus, Sergestus, and Cloanthus too,
 And other *Trojans*, in the Tempest tost
 By raging Billows, to another Coast,
Aeneas and *Achates* both admire,
 Hope bids them on, Fear stops their rash desire
 T'imbrace their Friends; but still in doubt they shrowd,
 Longing Spectators in the hollow Cloud,
 To know what hapned to their Friends, and where
 They left the Fleet, what business brought them there... (185).

²⁸¹ I.e. as suggested not only by Aeneas's Mediterranean adventures (as imagined by Virgil), but by Odysseus's (as imagined by Homer). The *Odyssey* is structured as a series of encounters with local inhabitants of varying willingness to obey the codes of hospitality modeled for Telemachus in the households of Nestor and Menelaus. When Aeneas rises with the dawn to explore Carthage, Virgil glances at precisely this range:

It look'd a wild uncultivated Shoar:
 But whether Human Kind, or Beasts alone
 Possess'd the new-found Region, was unknown. (*DV* 357.425-27)

she also has various political considerations in view. Dido is, as she says herself, troubled by those “doubts” that might be expected to “atten[d] an unsettled State”²⁸²—“doubts” subsequently described in practical terms by her sister, Anna, with respect to neighboring rivals and ongoing threats of Tyrian invasion.²⁸³ Establishing an alliance with these exiled foreigners might help Dido to populate and stabilize her nascent colony.²⁸⁴ Moreover, her current plight—her “cruel Fate,” as she puts it—bears a notable resemblance to that of Aeneas and the Trojans: widowed and driven into exile, she, too, has sought to reestablish her “State” in a new location with the blessing of “Heav’n.”²⁸⁵

Dido’s warm response to Ilioneus’s petition further confirms this hypothesis. Welcoming the Trojans familiarly, she promptly directs them to “dismiss [their] Fears.” “Who has not heard the story of your Woes?” she offers reassuringly. Citing her knowledge of “[t]he Name and Fortune of your Native Place” and “[t]he Fame and Valour of the *Phyrgian* Race,” she takes immediate steps to extend a kind reception. She offers help repairing their fleet; “Ships of Convoy for your guard” if they wish it; and, if they wish it, a longer-term sort of hospitality:

By comparison to the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid* incorporates few significant beastly or superhuman creatures; however, Aeneas’s tryst with Dido is a Roman counterpart to Odysseus’s dalliances with the bewitching Circe and Calypso.

²⁸² Ibid., 368.791.

²⁸³ Ibid., 452.43-453.71.

²⁸⁴ It is not altogether clear why this alliance would stabilize her colony. Perhaps (as in the passage cited below) she simply needs help constructing and “defend[ing] the *Tyrian* Tow’rs.” There are also suggestions near the end of the episode that she wishes that her union with Aeneas had left her with an heir. And there are further hints that Anna herself, fulfilling a pattern of sibling rivalry evident in Dido’s backstory, fans the flames of Dido’s desire for Aeneas precisely so she will lose her grip on the kingdom, leaving it vulnerable to Anna’s eventual usurpation.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 368.790, 371.886. There are hints throughout this early encounter that she has taken an interest in the Trojans thanks in part to this resemblance, whether because she has in mind a specific political alliance or simply because she sympathizes with their condition. When Aeneas gazes in “Wonder” at the images depicted upon the temple walls, he sees an elaborate depiction of the Trojan conflict. This detail hints that Dido and her people have not only heard of the Trojans, but already identify with their story. Its prominent position on the temple walls suggests an especially forceful identification. Nearby is a depiction of the Amazon Penthesilea—an image that immediately predicts Dido’s entrance within the narrative and further suggests, on the Carthaginians’ part, a glorification of feminine leadership in general. The implication is that the Trojans’ story bears a similar iconographic importance.

[W]ou'd you stay, and joyn your friendly Pow'rs,
 To raise and to defend the *Tyrian* Tow'rs;
 My Wealth, my City, and my Self are yours.²⁸⁶

Dido, in other words, is not merely acting the part of a good host. Realizing the full, seventeenth-century sense of the diplomatic “entertainment,” she has a formal political alliance in mind. Indeed, she shows herself embracing that possibility with a kind of reckless abandon that predicts her eventual downfall. Dryden draws attention to this triple rhyme with a bracket²⁸⁷—an emphasis that paves the way for a politicized understanding of any number of other passages that might otherwise be construed as evidence of disinterested generosity, romantic affection, or hospitable cultural norms. Here, for instance, Dido explains to Aeneas, who has finally revealed himself, why his plight strikes a chord with her:

Enter, my Noble Guest; and you shall find,
 If not a costly welcome, yet a kind.
 For I my self, like you, have been distress'd;
 Till Heav'n afforded me this place of rest.
 Like you an Alien in a Land unknown;
 I learn to pity Woes, so like my own.²⁸⁸

Aeneas promptly recognizes Dido's assertion that she has “learn[ed] to pity Woes, so like my own” as a form of political “Interest,” thereby replacing her language of sentiment with language of diplomatic negotiation. He tells the story of the Trojan siege with an eye to this point of appeal. “[S]ince you take such Int'rest in our Woe,” he begins, addressing Dido and the assembled company, “And *Troy*'s disast'rous end desire to know: / I will restrain my Tears, and briefly tell / What in our last and fatal Night

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 368.790-805.

²⁸⁷ This is the policy throughout the volume. I comment on it subsequently.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 371.886-91.

befell.”²⁸⁹

VII: Aeneas’s Management of His Persona

Thus, in Dryden’s *Aeneis*, Aeneas’s encounter with Dido does not simply represent a moment of mutual admiration in which a graceful prince is “entertained” by an attractive African queen; it invites an “entertained” reader to probe the motives of Aeneas and Dido, respectively, as they attempt to turn this newfound opportunity to their mutual advantage. Throughout, the episode sustains and rewards protracted speculation about the internal states of both characters: their fears, their worries, their passions, their political interests, the tactical concerns running through their minds. Moreover, due to the epistemological richness of Dryden’s presentation, Aeneas’s “Wonder” can be seen setting the stage for a storytelling session intended to satisfy Dido and the Trojans’ own wonder—their “desire to know.” And his satisfaction of their curiosity does not necessitate his conveyance of the straight truth about his behavior during the fall of Troy or even his identity as a Trojan prince carrying forward the Trojan line from his fallen city.²⁹⁰ Indeed, as Dryden depicts Aeneas’s examination of the pictorial representations of Troy in the Carthaginian temple, the “Picture” on the wall moves him as much because he sees in it an opportunity to make a connection with the Trojans as it does because it provokes in him tender memories of the city and the people that he has left behind:

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 379.13-380.1.

²⁹⁰ Regarding the latter, Dryden remarks in the Dedication: “*Aeneas* cou’d not pretend to be *Priam*’s Heir in a Lineal Succession: For *Anchises* the Heroe’s Father, was only of the second Branch of the Royal Family: And *Helenus*, a Son of *Priam*, was yet surviving, and might lawfully claim before him. It may be *Virgil* mentions him on that Account. . . . *Aeneas* had only Married *Creusa*, *Priam*’s Daughter, and by her could have no Title, while any of the Male Issue were remaining. In this case, the Poet gave him the next Title, which is, that of an Elective King. The remaining *Trojans* chose him to lead them forth, and settle them in some Foreign Country” (283.34-284.9). Thus, glancing at William III, Dryden insinuates that it was ultimately in Aeneas’s interest to light out from Troy, leaving Creusa behind, because only then would he find himself a princely position.

He stop'd, and weeping said, O Friend! ev'n here
 The Monuments of *Trojan* Woes appear! ...
 He said, his Tears a ready Passage find,
 Devouring what he saw so well design'd;
 And with an empty Picture fed his Mind. (364.644-52)

The word “empty” suggests that Aeneas sees the Carthaginians nourishing only a partial knowledge of the “*Trojan* Woes.”²⁹¹ With this detail, Dryden’s presentation insinuates that even here, behind his tear-stained visage, before he has even met Dido face to face, the Trojan prince is already making plans to turn the story to his advantage. Dryden’s presentation therefore invites his readers to suspect that Aeneas, drawing upon what he has gleaned from these temple walls, from Venus’s reports, and from Dido’s own speech, will spin the tale in a manner that promises to endear him personally to Dido.

One of the most obvious candidates for rhetorical enhancement is Aeneas’s “Valour,” an issue to which Dryden draws substantial attention in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*.²⁹² Aeneas’s tremulousness in military conflict is hinted at in even the most skeletal version of the story of his exile from Troy: rather than dying “under *Ilian* Walls” in the heat of battle as so many Trojan heroes had done, Aeneas flees from the city while it is still under siege, meets up with his companions outside the city walls (apparently a planned rendezvous), and then departs promptly from Troy with a fleet of ships.²⁹³ Not

²⁹¹ “Empty” is a curious choice here. It seems to mean, “Void of certain specified contents” (*OED* 2b), perhaps shaded with the sense of “Wanting solidity and substance; unsatisfactory, vain, meaningless” (6b).

²⁹² See esp. 287.33-294.18. Dryden largely draws from the French translator Segrais’s arguments on Aeneas’s behalf—a technique that insinuates that Louis XIV’s absolutism demands awkward interpretations of Virgil.

²⁹³ Aeneas himself recognizes his departure from the heroic codes of his age. Consider his reaction to the sea storm in the first book, where he wishes that he had died on the Trojan plains of battle “before [his] Parents”:

Struck with unusual Fright, the *Trojan* Chief,
 With lifted Hands and Eyes, invokes relief.
 And thrice, and four times happy those, he cry’d,
 That under *Ilian* Walls before their Parents dy’d.
Tydides, bravest of the *Grecian* Train,
 Why cou’d not I by that strong Arm be slain,

surprisingly, then, as Aeneas relates the tale of his escape to Dido, he describes himself as having had valiant instincts at several important turns. He claims, for instance, that, upon hearing “th’ Alarms” that Greeks had invaded the walled city, he was resolutely “Spurr’d by my courage” and patriotism to assist the Trojan cause; “fi’rd” by “my Country”; “inspir’d” with a “sense of Honour, and Revenge”; and, indeed, “Resolv’d on death, resolv’d to die in Arms.”²⁹⁴

His reported actions tell a more equivocal story about the passions and codes of conduct that governed his behavior amid the siege.²⁹⁵ Upon discovering that the city was under attack, rather than rushing into combat alone, Aeneas says that he paused “first to gather Friends, with them t’ oppose, / If Fortune favour’d, and repel the Foes,” the implication being that he wished to test his military prowess not as a singular warrior (in the manner of Hector or Achilles), but with the protection of a phalanx of able supporters.²⁹⁶ He and his comrades soon devised a plan to utilize “borrow’d Arms”—

And lye by noble *Hector* on the Plain... (347.135-41)

Significantly, Virgil leaves the cause of Aeneas’s regret unstated; however, Dryden lays emphasis on these last three lines by composing them in a triplet set off with a bracket. At issue is the Iliadic ideal: glory achieved in battle that augments the hero’s posthumous reputation.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 392.423-28. He reiterates this sentiment throughout his account. See his “bold...Speech” to those who fighting alongside him (393.473-78)—a speech that subtly echoes the sound, if not the sense, of the St. Crispin’s Day speech of Shakespeare’s *Henry V* (“we, feeble few, conspire / To save a sinking Town, involv’d in Fire...”). Also see his comparison of himself and his comrades to “hungry Wolves, with raging appetite”: “So rush’d we forth at once, resolv’d to die, / Resolved in Death the last Extrems to try,” etc. (393.479-89).

²⁹⁵ Particularly at issue are his claim to have been motivated by his physical courage and his desire to die gloriously in battle. Dryden renders the language of the original in such a way that one might understand Aeneas to be revealing this tension unconsciously through his speech. Consider the language of desiring “Death” in this passage:

I strove to have deserv’d the Death I sought.
But when I cou’d not fight, and wou’d have dy’d,
Born off to distance by the growing Tide,
Old *Iphitus* and I were hurry’d thence,
With *Pelias* wounded, and without Defence. (397.588-92)

Note the hint that Aeneas, for all his rhetoric about seeking death in battle, is “Born off” along with “Old *Iphitus*” to a place distant from the battlefield because they “wou’d have dy’d” if they stayed there any longer.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 403.425-26.

confiscated Grecian armor—to make their way through the battle in disguise, therefore “[l]et[ting] Fraud supply the want of Force in War” at a moment when they knew themselves to be “[o]ppress’d with odds.”²⁹⁷ Finally, Aeneas and several others retreated into the palace with the stated intention of “d[ying]” in its defense “or disengag[ing] the King,” whom he suspected was in danger.²⁹⁸ Once in the palace, Aeneas did indeed witness Pyrrhus killing King Priam—and brutally so, upon the sacred altar: Aeneas watched in horror without doing anything to intervene.²⁹⁹ Soon finding himself “[d]eserted at [his] need” by his comrades, who had apparently met their deaths already,³⁰⁰ Aeneas then wandered past Vesta’s temple, where he spied “graceless *Helen* . . . lurk[ing] alone” on the porch.³⁰¹ And here, at last, Aeneas’s more violent instincts emerged. “Trembling with Rage” at the thought of Helen’s “Guilt” in the Trojan conflict, Aeneas meditated slaying “the Strumpet,” as he calls her, before thinking better of the idea and returning home to reconvene with his family, at which time the plan for their flight from Troy emerged.³⁰²

A second candidate for misrepresentation is Aeneas’s relationship with his wife, Creusa, who did not make it out of Troy during the anxious escape. It is convenient for Aeneas that Creusa has not accompanied him into exile: his bachelor status leaves him available to form political unions with marriageable queens (like Dido) and princesses

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 397.526, 574-75.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 397.594.

²⁹⁹ Pyrrhus (Achilles’s son) also kills Polites, Priam’s son, in plain sight of his father. Priam, who has donned his armor, attempts to defend himself with a javelin, but he is too frail and feeble to match the ruthless Pyrrhus.

³⁰⁰ The passage reads: “Deserted at my need, my Friends were gone. / Some spent with Toil, some with Despair oppress’d, / Leap’d headlong from the Heights; the Flames consum’d the rest” (403.771-74).

³⁰¹ Ibid., 403.771-76.

³⁰² Ibid., 404.783-84. Aeneas considers first that “a Souldier can small Honour gain, / And boast no Conquest from a Woman slain” (404.793-94); then muses that “the fact” will “not pass without Applause, / Of Vengeance taken in so just a Cause” (795-96); and finally has a change of heart when his “Mother” (Venus) appears to him and counsels him otherwise.

(like Lavinia, whom he ultimately marries). But, in Dido's case, this bachelor status can be used to advantage only if he manages to represent himself as greatly regretting Creusa's loss. As Dryden observes leadingly in the Dedication, "[I]t was not for nothing, that this Passage was related with ... tender Circumstances. *Aeneas* told it; *Dido* heard it: That he had been so affectionate a Husband, was no ill Argument to the coming Dowager, that he might prove as kind to her."³⁰³ And in the verse itself, this is precisely what Aeneas does. In the account that he offers to Dido and the assembled crowd, Creusa's loss can be accounted for by the simple fact that she "kept behind" as they were leaving the city—that is, she walked behind him, whereas his father was on his back and his young son was at his side.³⁰⁴ When he got to the rendezvous point, however, he was frantic to discover that she was the only one "wanting" from the assembled crowd: "not one was wanting, only she / Deceiv'd her Friends, her Son, and wretched me."³⁰⁵ Braving the city streets once more, he then hurried back into the city to search for her, whereupon he encountered her ghost and she urged him to continue into exile—or so he claims.

In describing Creusa's loss this way, Aeneas's account of the fall of Troy argues that the teller is, indeed, "so affectionate a Husband" that he risked life and limb to reunite with his beloved wife immediately upon his apprehension of her absence. But, again, an alternate account emerges through the lines, as it were—a hint that Creusa's "loss" was willfully orchestrated with an eye to the diplomatic opportunities that necessarily lay ahead. If Aeneas's claim to have spoken with his wife's ghost in the hours after her death seems specious in its own right—another case of a "Machine"

³⁰³ Ibid., 291.28-31.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 411.986.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 412.1008-09.

representing actions that otherwise might be accomplished without it—there are even more provocative hints sprinkled through Aeneas’s language that he has failed to disclose the full story of his anxious departure. Twice, Creusa is described as “forsaken”³⁰⁶—a term that implies intentional abandonment on Aeneas’s part (and, indeed, accurately predicts his treatment of Dido). One may wonder pragmatically, along these lines, why Aeneas did not choose to keep Creusa as close to his person as were his son and his father. On this point and several others, the diction is, at most, equivocal in its attribution of agency. In both Dryden’s prefatory discussion and Aeneas’s speech, Creusa is consistently described as “lost.” In Dryden’s Dedication, she is said neutrally to have been “lost for ever to her Husband,”³⁰⁷ and in Aeneas’s first-person account of his flight from Troy, the Prince himself becomes the grammatical agent of this “loss” for a fleeting moment:

Alas! I lost *Creusa*: hard to tell
 If by her fatal Destiny she fell,
 Or weary sate, or wander’d with affright;
 But she was lost forever to my sight.³⁰⁸

Note the ambiguity of the phrase “hard to tell,” which might refer either to the act of discerning what happened to Creusa or to the act of *relating* that episode (or to both at the same time). These hints are enhanced by a series of references to “deviousness” and sinuous wandering that refer as predictably to Aeneas’s devious route as to Creusa’s fatal

³⁰⁶ First, he refers to “my forsaken Wife” in his contemplation of Priam’s death (403.768), and then Venus uses the same term when she encourages Aeneas to return home to collect his family: “Recall to mind / Whom you forsake, what Pledges leave behind. / Look if your helpless Father yet survive; / Or if *Ascanius*, or *Creusa* live” (404.810-13). Creusa also refers to herself as “your now forgotten Wife” as she urges Aeneas to “maintain” the “Pledges of [his] Love” by “Tak[ing] us along, to share your Destiny” (407.921-408.925). Within the immediate context of the story, Creusa is urging Aeneas not to subject himself to death alone, but to let his family die with him; however, thanks in part to Dryden’s pointed diction, the passage has broader resonances. An available implication is that he has broken one of his familial “Pledges” in strategically “losing” Creusa upon his departure.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 291.21-22.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 412.1002-05.

course through narrow Trojan alleys: “by choice we stray / Through ev’ry dark and ev’ry devious Way”; “while through winding Ways I took my Flight; / And sought the shelter of the gloomy Night”; and, finally, Creusa’s ghostly prediction for Aeneas’s journey to come, which reads like a sentence of forced penance for irresponsible behavior: “Long wandering Ways for you the Pow’rs decree: / On Land hard Labours, and a length of Sea.”³⁰⁹

VIII: A Destabilization of Aeneas’s “Pious” Character

With details like these, Dryden’s translation makes available an understanding of Aeneas’s character and his political successes that depends neither on the assumption that Aeneas’s journey is directly sanctioned by the gods nor on the perception that Aeneas is driven exclusively by *pietas*. “A Man may be very Valiant, and yet Impious and Vicious,” Dryden muses, ostensibly in an effort to disprove the overriding importance of valor as a heroic quality.³¹⁰

But the same cannot be said of Piety; which excludes all ill Qualities, and comprehends even Valour it self, with all other Qualities which are good. Can we, for Example, give the praise of Valour to a Man who shou’d see his Gods prophan’d, and shou’d want the Courage to defend them? To a Man who shou’d abandon his Father, or desert his King in his last Necessity?³¹¹

Aeneas, of course, does just this: he deserts Priam in “his last Necessity” and witnesses “his Gods prophan’d” in the same brutal blow.³¹² This reluctance to intervene, Dryden’s presentation insinuates further, reflects a broader pattern of behavior distinguished by

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 411.996-97; 412.1000-01; 413.1058.

³¹⁰ “In reality, they who believe that the Praises which arise from Valour, are superiour to those, which proceed from any other Virtues, have not consider’d (as they ought), that Valour, destitute of other Virtues, cannot render a Man worthy of any true esteem” (288.21-26). Dryden relies heavily on this tactic in the Dedication: defending Aeneas to impugn him (or, rather, to have his *readers* criticize Aeneas).

³¹¹ Ibid., 288.28-35.

³¹² One could also argue that Aeneas abandons his Father, but that inquiry is beyond the scope of this discussion.

physical cowardice, a spirit of self-preservation, and a compensatory reliance upon fraud over force. The insinuation that Creusa has been similarly “forsaken” by the Trojan Prince only enhances the supposition: if “Piety” in its original Latin sense encompasses “tender Affection to Relations of all sorts,” as Dryden defines the term in his Dedication, then Aeneas can hardly be said to embody *pietas*.³¹³

Insofar as it entertains these possibilities, Dryden’s translation makes available a newly mottled understanding of Aeneas’s character. For Ogilby, Aeneas had been a self-evidently righteous epic hero, imitable for his moral rectitude, his graceful and patriotic conduct, his commitment to family, his humble submission to a divine plan, and his embodiment (in that famous tableau of fated flight) of an ideal of patrilineal succession considered the basis of the good monarchical government in general. As Dryden presents him, however, Aeneas does not have to be seen as a demigod, a valiant warrior, or even a wholly moral prince. He can be seen merely as a master strategist whose political successes reflect his well-tested habit of planning ahead and presenting himself and his cause in ways that take advantage of that planning. Dryden therefore unsettles the prior royalist understanding of the Trojan Prince as a hero whose earthly successes reflected his divine appointment and his abundant “Piety.”

This shift is authorized by a reimagining of both Virgil and Virgil’s poetry as agents of civic service. Dryden’s Dedication of the *Aeneis* describes Virgil as a poet who

³¹³ Dryden defines *pietas* very clearly as a cluster of attributes that cannot be fully “expressed” with any modern term: “Those Manners were Piety to the Gods, and a dutiful Affection to his Father; Love to his Relations; Care of his People; Courage and Conduct in the Wars; Gratitude to those who had oblig’d him; and Justice in general to Mankind. Piety, as your Lordship sees, takes place of all, as the chief part of his Character: And the word in *Latin* is more full than it can possibly be expressed in any Modern Language; for there it comprehends not only Devotion to the Gods, but Filial Love and tender Affection to Relations of all sorts” (286.1-10). Any number of details in Dryden’s definition might be applied as foils to Aeneas’s questionable behavior at various points in the story. For instance, Dryden’s assertion that *pietas* included “Gratitude to those who had oblig’d him” frames his treatment of Dido as yet another transgression. I will discuss this example at greater length subsequently.

“was still of Republican principles in his Heart” when he wrote the *Aeneid*³¹⁴—a statement that not only extends to an analysis of Virgil’s original authorial motives, Dryden’s characteristic gesture of recognizing in “the manners” a certain distance between feeling and performance, but also paves the way for an understanding of the *Aeneid* as a work whose narrative potentialities reflect the author’s original ambivalence about supporting Augustus. Nowhere does Dryden go so far as to assert that Virgil’s original intention was to undermine Augustus’s claims to authority. On the contrary, he argues very clearly that Virgil, “having maturely weigh’d the Conditions of the Times in which he lived,” concluded that it was in “the Interest of his Country” to be “Govern’d” in the manner ushered in by Augustus’s rise to power, and he therefore determined to use his *Aeneid* “to infuse an awful respect into the People, towards such a Prince: By that respect to confirm their Obedience to him; and by that Obedience to make them Happy.”³¹⁵ Moreover, Dryden describes his modern translation of Virgil as a performance sprinkled with “omissions” and “Additions” that “will seem...not stuck into [Virgil], but growing out of him”³¹⁶—the implication being that the moral that Dryden imagines anew for Virgil’s poetry will be different from the moral that Virgil originally intended for his own age. But both of these statements are buttressed by the sense that Virgil was himself poised on the crest of a sea-change between republican government and culture and monarchical government and culture—a liminality that brings Virgil’s text fleetingly into alignment with the needs and circumstances of present-day Britain, whose government and culture are moving in the opposite direction.³¹⁷

³¹⁴ Ibid., 280.18-19.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 281.11-31.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 329.28-32.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 287.24-29. Dryden and Chetwood do a great deal of work to enhance this sense of Virgil as a

At the level of the reading experience, Dryden's destabilization of Aeneas's character results from a complex interaction between Dryden's digressive dedicatory comments, which offer playful and sometimes provocative guidance about how to approach the verse, and the verse translation itself, which sustains (without insisting upon) a probing, imaginative inquiry into Aeneas's motives. Dryden's dedicatory comments are presented as hints and insights rather than interpretive mandates. The Dedication of the *Aeneis* is very long, and Dryden's prose unfolds in what he describes as a "loose," "Epistolary" style distinguished by its avoidance of "Method."³¹⁸ But in a circuitous discussion in which an experienced and knowledgeable translator finds reason to call Achilles a "Booby" for "roaring along the salt Sea-shore, and...complaining to his Mother, when he shou'd have reveng'd his Injury by Arms,"³¹⁹ one comes across any number of memorable remarks about Aeneas and his journey that help to direct a reading experience toward precisely the kinds of nuances that I have outlined above. During the

reluctant servant of Augustus whose "native" inclinations made him a republican but whose prescience helped him to see what a profound and lasting change Augustus's rise to power was both responding to and helping to realize. Chetwood's biography of Virgil is extremely long (especially by comparison to Ogilby's "Life of Virgil"), and it envisions Virgil's relationship with Augustus not as a smooth ascent from the *Eclogues* (dedicated to Augustus's colonial lieutenant, Pollio) to the *Georgics* (dedicated to Augustus's advisor, Maecenas) to the *Aeneid* (dedicated to Augustus himself), but as a series of shifting, provisional alliances with Augustus's vicegerents and eventually with Augustus himself. Dryden's treatment of the Fourth Eclogue (which I do not have time to discuss here) helps to detach the *Aeneid* from a providential narrative in which both Augustus's rise to power and Virgil's support thereof can be seen as a kind of preordained conjunction of virtues that paved the way for the coming of Jesus Christ. To similar ends, Dryden's Dedication of the *Aeneis* traces in detail, over several generations, the Roman history leading up to the reign of Augustus—a process by which the Commonwealth gradually, but perhaps not inevitably, becomes a shell of its former self. In Dryden's words, the "Commonwealth" under the first triumvirate "look'd with a florid Countenance in their Management, spread in Bulk, and all the while was wasting in the Vitals" (279.22-24). Dryden's tripartite dedication may reflect this reading of Roman history: these three men, he says, were "publick Spirited Men of their own Age" in that they were "Patriots for their own Interest" (21-22), and the triumvirate at the helm of his own translation might have been seen in something of the same sense.

³¹⁸ This comment should be taken as a gesture of self-definition against the French example—specifically, the French translator Segrais, whose "Preface [to the *Aeneid*] is a perfect piece of Criticism, full and clear, and digested into an exact Method.... Yet I dwell on many things which he durst not touch: For 'tis dangerous to offend an Arbitrary Master: And every Patron who has the Power of *Augustus*, has not his Clemency" (287.24-29).

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 291.21-23.

course of his discussion, Dryden finds reason to observe (among many other things) that Aeneas had little “confidence in the promise of the Gods”³²⁰; that he is “an ill Precedent for [our] Gallants to follow”³²¹; that Virgil “colours the falsehood of *Aeneas*” in the Dido episode³²²; and that Virgil’s detractors have criticized him for making Aeneas “inconsistent” in his character: “Acknowledging, and Ungrateful, Compassionate, and Hard-harted; but at the bottom, Fickle, and Self-interested.”³²³ Of the sexual union dubbed “the Intrigue of the Cave”—i.e. Dido and Aeneas’s consummation of their mutual attractions during a rainstorm—Dryden quips jauntily: “That the Ceremonies were short we may believe, for *Dido* was not only amorous, but a Widow.”³²⁴ Furthermore, amid a lengthy defense of the Roman author himself, Dryden shows himself propping up his fellow poet with an ostentatiously flimsy excuse that, in fact, deftly upends what had been a powerful tradition of seeing Virgil as figure of classical rectitude. “If the Poet argued not aright,” Dryden reasons, “we must pardon him for a poor blind Heathen, who knew no better Morals.”³²⁵ This is not *all* that Dryden says about Virgil or his poem in the Dedication—which is largely structured, as I have noted, as a *defense* of Virgil, Aeneas, and the epic—but the wry permissiveness of a critical manner that would entertain and take pleasure in such impertinences, however fleetingly, must have been striking indeed for contemporary readers who associated the name of Virgil with a soberer poetic spirit. Even (or especially) when issued only in passing, comments like these create an atmosphere of playfulness and irreverence that licenses the kinds of

³²⁰ Ibid., 292.30-31.

³²¹ Ibid., 294.21-22.

³²² Ibid., 298.34.

³²³ Ibid., 295.2-4.

³²⁴ Ibid., 295.14; 302.24-25.

³²⁵ Ibid., 303.23-24.

interpretive liberties that I have taken above, and they offer a number of meaningful hints about what kinds of interpretations Dryden's verse will actually sustain.

Indeed, these hints would presumably fall flat if they were not consistently borne out in the verse, which, as I have attempted to demonstrate, sustains a significant degree of scrutiny about Aeneas's affect, his assiduous attention to the temporal world, his rhetorical deceptions, and his guiding motives. This scrutiny can be pursued so far into the narrative as to subvert a commonplace understanding of the Dido episode as a moment of wandering—an unplanned shipwreck that distracts Aeneas and his people from their ultimate goal of national foundation.

I have already argued that Dryden's translation goes to great lengths to sustain and indeed encourage an understanding of Aeneas's arrival in Carthage as a series of "surveys" that demonstrate intense vigilance on the Prince's part, and I have suggested further that Dryden's Aeneas goes to great lengths to represent himself and his exile in a positive light. What is at stake in this exchange, Dryden's presentation suggests, is not only Aeneas's romantic pleasure, but also the wellbeing of the exiled assembly that he leads. It is in his interest and in the interest of those who have chosen to follow him to endear himself to those in a position to help them in a time of need, and his politic manner facilitates that political end. Beyond this general consideration, Dryden insinuates a second, less passive motive for the intensity of the hero's surveillance during his approach to the Carthaginian palace: Aeneas needed to "refi[t] his Ships" and "refres[h] his Weather-beaten Souldiers on a friendly Coast."³²⁶

The contours of this interpretation are again sketched out in Dryden's digressive Dedication, where he expounds at length upon the arcane question of the duration of the

³²⁶ Ibid., 311.21-22.

“Action” of the *Aeneid* (i.e. Does it last more or less than a year?).³²⁷ Reiterating the arguments of several French critics of the day, Dryden presents the question of duration as a debate between those who take at face value Aeneas’s attempt to settle in Italy immediately after his father’s death in Sicily (“*Ronsard’s* Followers,” he calls them,) and those who oppose the “*Ronsardians*”: most notably, the French translator Segrais, whose “computation is not condemn’d by the learned *Ruæus*.”³²⁸ Dryden himself joins the latter group: he admits that there are “Suppositions on both sides” but ventures that “those of *Segrais* seem better grounded.”³²⁹ And what is most interesting about this debate—or, rather, what Dryden *says* about this debate—is less the numerical computations themselves³³⁰ than the way the discussion invites a reader to appreciate the chronology of Aeneas’s voyage as the product of planning rather than mere happenstance. By outlining the arguments and “Suppositions” on both sides of the debate, Dryden retraces the chronology of Aeneas’s voyage several times over. In so doing, he ties Aeneas’s sojourn in Carthage and his subsequent Italian campaign to a seasonal cycle. As Dryden sums up Segrais’s argument and lines it up with textual details:

[T]he Feast of *Dido*, when she entertain’d *Aeneas* first, has the appearance of a Summer’s Night, which seems already almost ended, when he begins his Story: Therefore the Love was made in Autumn; the Hunting follow’d properly when the Heats of that scorching Country were declining: The Winter was pass’d in jollity, as the Season and their Love requir’d; and he left her in the latter end of

³²⁷ Le Bossu, Dryden says, has left the matter “doubtful” (309.26). And while recognizing that “the whole Dispute is of no more concernment to the common Reader, than it is to a Ploughman, whether *February* this Year had 28 or 29 Days in it” (27-29), Dryden’s enters into the controversy, he says, “for the satisfaction of the more Curious, of which number I am sure your Lordship is one” (29-31). The discussion is animated by a sense of play thanks in part to the sheer arcaneness of the topic and the lengths to which Dryden is willing to go to belabor the issue.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 310.23-24. Ruæus was the editor of the Delphin edition of Virgil, a heavily annotated edition sponsored by Louis XIV that was for much of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the most authoritative Latin edition of Virgil.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 311.22-23.

³³⁰ Whereas the *Ronsardians* compute a compass of “almost a Year and [a] half” (310.1) from the storm at the beginning of the poem to the death of Turnus at the end, their opponents argue that the main action of the poem “may be reasonably judg’d the business but of ten Months” (311.12).

Winter.³³¹

Together with Segrais's hint that Aeneas went to Carthage because he needed to "refi[t] his Ships" and "refres[h] his Weather-beaten Souldiers on a friendly Coast," this delineation of Aeneas and Dido's love affair invites a reader not only to appreciate Virgil's presentation of this love affair as a compelling, naturalistic representation of the progress of amorous affections, but also to think pragmatically about the timing of Aeneas's sojourn. Aeneas and his men spend the fall and winter months in Carthage, thereby giving them the time, energy, and resources to rest and regroup; they then depart definitively for Italy in early spring, leaving Dido behind to mourn Aeneas's departure, but undertaking the Italian campaign in good weather. Without pointing too obviously toward the political angle, Dryden insinuates that Aeneas's lengthy sojourn with Dido is motivated largely—although perhaps not exclusively—by the pragmatic concerns of an ambitious prince with limited material resources at his disposal.

This understanding is borne out in the details of the verse as well. At the level of character development, both Aeneas's conscientious vigilance in his approach to Carthage and his careful management of his persona throughout the episode can be accounted for, at least in part, by his desire to form bonds with Dido that will achieve his desired end of refreshing his troops. Several details in his survey of Carthage's construction confirm the "Wealth" that Dido herself mentions in her initial offer of hospitality to Ilioneus: the busy "Mart," the "mighty Columns" hewn from "Marble Quarries," and the "Golden Burthen" that appears in an apiary conceit (suggesting the prosperity of the hive).³³² Moreover, the precision of Dryden's rendering of the Trojans'

³³¹ Ibid., 311.23-29.

³³² Ibid., 362.580-363.610.

initial petition to Dido encourages a reader to notice that Aeneas reveals himself to Dido and accepts her invitation of hospitality only *after* she has offered to help the Trojans refit their ships, provide them with a protective convoy, and share her “Wealth.”

Dryden’s presentation insinuates further—even beyond Segrais’s reported “Supposition”—that this had been the plan from the start. In a second descent into seemingly arcane details of Roman astronomy (again, apparently following Segrais³³³), Dryden notes that Ilioneus, who leads the embassy to Dido, “attributes . . . to Orion” the tempest that has blown Aeneas and his ships to Carthage.³³⁴ Here, Dryden’s presentation invites a reader to wonder whether Aeneas and Ilioneus, calculating that “the *Heliacal* rising of Orion . . . either causes, or presages Tempests on the Seas,” had decided to set sail from Sicily to Italy—their first attempt—at precisely the time when a storm was expected.³³⁵ In other words, it invites a reader to wonder whether Aeneas, drawing on his astronomical knowledge and that of his advisors, has *intentionally* placed his ships in way of an anticipated tempest in the hopes of being blown ashore, apparently by accident, and taken in by a gracious host.³³⁶ This reading, however unappealing it may seem at the level of narrative realism, is subtly confirmed by the verse quoted above. When Ilioneus and a handful of others petition Dido for help, they are said to have been “sent commission’d by the rest, / **To sue for leave to land their sickly Men,** / And gain Admission to the Gracious Queen.” That some of Aeneas’s men are not only weatherworn and traumatized by the tumultuous journey but also “sickly”—and possibly

³³³ It is beyond the scope of this argument to consider whether Dryden is actually misrepresenting the letter or the spirit of Segrais’s argument. He may well be doing so as part of a broader effort to show himself (*ad clerem*) seizing liberties where the French poet cannot.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 312.17-18.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 312.26-28.

³³⁶ By this logic, Ilioneus’s independent petition to Dido might have been part of the plan as well: by this means, Aeneas could assess the Queen’s receptivity before subjecting the whole of his crew to a potentially inimical encounter with a foreign people.

still under quarantine—suggests that they were in need of succor even before they encountered the sea storm.

IX: An Altered Epic Design

According to Le Bossu, one of Virgil's original rhetorical goals had been to dupe the Romans into accepting Augustus as a righteous monarch. "Religion has always had a most powerful influence over the minds of the Vulgar," Le Bossu observed. Thus the *Aeneid* "makes it appear, 'That the great Revolutions, which happen in States, are brought about by the appointment and will of God: That those who oppose them are Impious, and have been punish'd according to their Demerits. For Heaven never fails to protect the Heroes it makes choice of, to carry on and execute its great designs.'"³³⁷

Dryden injects doubt into his presentation of Virgil's narrative at several crucial points. As Dryden presents it, no longer does Virgil's epic argue definitively that "the great Revolutions, which happen in states, are brought about by the appointment and will of God." Dryden's presentation resolutely sustains the possibility that Aeneas's temporal successes are the product of tactical planning rather than direct divine intervention. Virgil's gods, as Dryden presents them, are "Machines," reflective of an extinct pagan belief system that the poet manipulated to account for, "colour," and defend his hero's actions. Dryden's presentation of Aeneas's journey and Aeneas's character casts additional doubt on the possibility that "Heaven" has *chosen* Aeneas "to carry on and execute its great designs." It demonstrates that Aeneas is not himself convinced that "Heaven" has chosen him or will unceasingly protect him. It enhances the possibility that Aeneas himself is neither wholly trustworthy nor wholly pious. And it further

³³⁷ Le Bossu, *Treatise of the Epick Poem*, 28.

suggests that some of his earthly successes may, in fact, reflect his *impiety*: his willingness to abandon his king and his immediate relations in their time of need to achieve his own political goals; to gamble with the lives of his people so he might ensure the future success of his colony (i.e. by subjecting them to the risks necessarily attendant on enduring a violent sea storm); and to misrepresent the truth on both counts so he might win the heart of a widowed Carthaginian queen.

Moreover, in Dryden's rendering, Aeneas can be understood to present his piety as an excuse for neglecting his earthly obligations. Aeneas's abrupt departure from Carthage—a departure that he attributes to the necessities of a divinely-commanded mission—is actually well timed to accommodate an early spring campaign, as outlined above, but it leaves Dido so bereft, jealous, and enraged that “at last” she “becomes her own Executioner,” as Dryden puts it.³³⁸ Ogilby had presented the episode in a manner that counterpoised Aeneas's pious righteousness and his dignity of personal comportment with Dido's monstrous and irreligious descent into self-consuming lust. Aeneas's “Looks and Language her sick Fancy feeds” in Ogilby's rendering.³³⁹ Aeneas's eventual departure from Carthage is therefore justified not only by his “Obedience” to a divine command to move on, but also by his prudent removal from the very picture of feminine volatility and bad governance. Dryden, in contrast, encourages his readers to envision this “Noble episode” as a romance, “wherein the whole passion of Love is more exactly describ'd than in any other Poet”; Aeneas and Dido, respectively, fill the roles of “the deserting Heroe and the forsaken Lady.”³⁴⁰ Thus, in Dryden's presentation, Aeneas's professed obedience to the commands of the gods appears as yet another a rhetorical

³³⁸ Dryden, *Works*, 298.8.

³³⁹ Ogilby, *Works of Virgil*, 261.

³⁴⁰ Dryden, *Works*, 297.25-26; 296.22-23.

ploy—this time, a ploy intended to not to endear the prince to Dido, but to relieve him of his “obligations” to her.

Again, this altered understanding emerges most forcefully in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*, albeit with Dryden’s characteristic indirectness of presentation. There, amid yet another review of various arguments marshaled for and against Aeneas and Virgil, Dryden outlines what he claims is his opponents’ argument against Virgil:

[Virgil], they say, has shewn his Heroe with these inconsistent Characters: Acknowledging, and Ungrateful, Compassionate, and Hard-harted; but at the bottom, Fickle, and Self-interested. For *Dido* had not only receiv’d his weather-beaten Troops before she saw him, and given them her protection, but had also offer’d them an equal share in her Dominion.... This was an obligation never to be forgotten; and the more to be consider’d, because antecedent to her Love. That passion, ’tis true, produc’d the usual effects of Generosity, Gallantry, and care to please, and thither we referr them. But when she had made all these advances, it was still in his power to have refus’d them: After the Intrigue of the Cave, call it Marriage, or Enjoyment only, he was no longer free to take or leave; he had accepted the favour, and was oblig’d to be Constant, if he wou’d be grateful.³⁴¹

This passage precisely anticipates the nuances registered in the verse as explicated above. Aeneas had obliged himself to Dido in accepting her offer of assistance; the assistance had been proffered at first as the basis of a political rather than a merely personal union; and the “Intrigue of the Cave”—Aeneas and Dido’s sexual union—had consummated the deal. Within the Dedication itself, Dryden ultimately defends Aeneas (or, rather, Virgil) from the charge of inconstancy; however, throughout this discussion, he retains the terms of debate set by his so-called opponents. He therefore follows the logic that he has already put in play in the passage quoted above, offering his readers a means of understanding the episode as a conflict that turns on a difference of opinion regarding Aeneas’s “obligement” to Dido. Aeneas’s “abrupt departure” from Carthage does indeed “loo[k] like extream ingratitude,” Dryden concedes.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 295.1-17.

But at the same time, ... *Virgil* had made Piety the first Character of *Aeneas*: And this being allow'd, as I am afraid it must, he was oblig'd, antecedent to all other Considerations, to search an Asylum for his Gods in *Italy*: For those very Gods, I say, who had promis'd to his Race the Universal Empire.³⁴²

Still in character as *Virgil*'s modern defender, Dryden now pursues the argument further into the intricacies of the competing "obligations" that affect Aeneas's behavior: "Cou'd a Pious Man dispence with the Commands of *Jupiter* to satisfie his passion; or take it in the strongest sense, to comply with the obligations of his gratitude? Religion, 'tis true, must have Moral Honesty for its groundwork, or we shall be apt to suspect its truth; but an immediate Revelation dispenses with all Duties of Morality."³⁴³

The insight that Dryden is pushing towards here is of course that professions of piety can be and have been used to sanction political behaviors deemed morally objectionable by non-believing parties³⁴⁴: Dido appeared as an "Infidel" because "she wou'd not believe, as *Virgil* makes her say, that ever *Jupiter* wou'd send *Mercury* on such an Immoral Errand."³⁴⁵ This line of argument significantly affects an understanding of the character of the "false Knight."³⁴⁶ According to Dryden, Aeneas "still lov'd [Dido]," and "struggled with his inclinations, to obey the Gods."³⁴⁷ And this is precisely the picture painted by Dryden's verse. When Mercury descends with the message that Aeneas must dawdle no longer in Carthage, Dryden's Aeneas proves hesitant in his reaction to the "stern Command":

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 295.26-31.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 295.31-296.3.

³⁴⁴ Thanks in part to the specificity of Dryden's language, the line of argument that Dryden is pursuing here had significant resonances in post-Revolution England—that is, the language of obligation and also the language regarding "immediate Revelation," which pushes toward an understanding that *all* religions are subject to this kind of manipulation. The example that Dryden marshals to illustrate his point comes from the Old Testament rather than the New Testament, but the irreverence of the insinuation still comes across clearly.

³⁴⁵ Dryden, *Works*, 296.7-9.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 299.23.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 296.15-16.

The Pious Prince was seiz'd with sudden Fear;
 Mute was his Tongue, and upright stood his Hair:
 Revolving in his Mind the stern Command,
 He longs to fly, and loaths the charming Land.
 What wou'd he say, or how shou'd he begin,
 What Course, alas! remains, to steer between
 Th' offended Lover, and the Pow'rful Queen?
 This way, and that, he turns his anxious Mind
 And all Expedients tries, and none can find:
 Fix'd on the Deed, but doubtful of the Means;
 After long Thought to this Advice he leans...³⁴⁸

In Ogilby's rendering, Mercury's annunciation lights Aeneas "on fire" to "pay Obedience to the God's Commands"; in Dryden's rendering, Aeneas is shown "Revolving in his Mind the stern Command" for a significant space before he determines to act upon it. In the latter case, Aeneas's desire and loathing are shown to *coincide* conveniently with the divine command from the start, but the poet's more definitive announcement that Aeneas is "Fix'd on the Deed, but doubtful of the Means" is delayed for several lines. Moreover, because the problem of how to inform Dido of his departure appears in the interim, it is not at all clear to what extent and at what point (if at all) Dryden's Aeneas has overcome his fear of "offend[ing]" his "Lover" and the "Pow'rful Queen" by the time he consults his advisory council.³⁴⁹ As Dryden observes in the Dedication, "It seems he fear'd not *Jupiter* so much as *Dido*."³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 465.404-466.413. Ogilby's version reads as follows:

Aeneas, struck with Terror at this sight,
 Stood speechless, and his hair did stand upright;
 Now all on fire to leave those happy lands,
 And pay Obedience to the God's Commands:
 What shall he do, or with what prologue win
 A patient Audience from the raging Queen?
 His active Soul a thousand waies divides,
 And swift through all imaginations glides;
 But this with wavering thoughts did best agree... (273)

³⁴⁹ Dryden tinkers repeatedly with language of "obedience." Aeneas is reliably slow to "obey" the commands of the gods because he gets so caught up in weighing his earthly choices—and, at that, exploring courses of action that are not necessarily depicted as being wholly honorable. When Aeneas pauses in Priam's palace, meditating on the prospect of killing Helen, Venus disparages his "Madness" and

X: Dryden Among the Ladies

Dryden's presentation of this episode significantly alters the didactic potential of the epic as a whole. To see Aeneas genuinely torn between his "obligation" to Dido and his "obligation" to his mission of national foundation (and his fears of the consequences of disappointing either camp) is to see the Prince as a flawed human actor for whom the divine calling is neither so certain that it lights a "fire" in him to obey nor so potent that it drowns out all other earthly considerations. On the contrary, Dryden's Aeneas finds temporal concerns distinctly compelling. And Dryden's Dedicatory comments not only invite such an understanding of the text; they actively encourage it—and encourage it of one group in particular. Interestingly, in this section of his discussion, Dryden reaches out specifically to "the Ladies," a category of readers that had gotten comparatively short shrift in Ogilby's volumes. The comment appears as a qualification of Dryden's ostentatiously belabored defense of Aeneas's military valor and courage, and it provides Dryden's starting point for the line of argument about "obligation" that I have quoted above:

I need say no more in justification of our Heroe's Courage, and am much deceiv'd, if he ever be attack'd on this side of his Character again. But he is Arraign'd with more shew of Reason by the Ladies; who will make a numerous Party against him, for being false to Love, in forsaking *Dido*. And I cannot much

his "unmanly Rage" (404.808, 810), scolds him for "neglect[ing]" her "Commands" (808-09), counsels him to think of his family, and directs him to return home: "Enlighten'd thus, my just Commands fulfill; / Nor fear Obedience to your Mother's Will" (405.823-24)—wording that itself, in highlighting a relationship of submission to *maternal* authority, upsets the patriarchal vision that Ogilby had so predictably emphasized. Ogilby, in contrast, has Venus descending "In her full Glory," declaring "Her Deity," wringing Aeneas's hands, and "countermand[ing]" sweetly with "her Rosie Lips": "What grief, dear Son, hath thee distemper'd thus? / Where is your Duty and Respect to us?" (220). Thus, in Ogilby's rendering, Aeneas has neither been dishonorable nor disobedient in thinking of killing Helen: his "sad Soul" has simply misapprehended the true cause of the Trojan War (the "inexorable Gods"). He swiftly demonstrates his "Duty and Respect to us" (i.e. God) by following Venus's command as soon as it has been issued.

³⁵⁰ Dryden, *Works*, 299.12-13.

blame them; for to say the truth, 'tis an ill Precedent for their Gallants to follow. Yet if I can bring him off, with Flying Colours, they may learn experience at her cost; and for her sake, avoid a Cave, as the worst shelter they can chuse from a shower of Rain, especially when they have a Lover in their Company.³⁵¹

This technique is typical of Dryden's approach to Virgil: by plucking from the Carthaginian sojourn, on the "Ladies'" behalf, what Pope might have described as a "well strained" moral,³⁵² Dryden deftly deflates the established interpretive convention of seeing the unmediated *Aeneid* as a handbook suitable for instructing gentlemen through the ages.

Dryden's habitually embattled disquisitionary posture not only seeks out polemics as an explanation for human behavior, attributing Virgil's representation of Dido (for example) to Virgil's perception that he was "engag'd in Honour to espouse the Cause and Quarrel of his Country against *Carthage*"³⁵³; it also envisions a nation of readers habitually engaged in discussion and debate—and not only politically-enfranchised male

³⁵¹ Ibid., 294.16-25.

³⁵² *Peri Bathous* XV: "For the Moral and Allegory: These you may extract out of the Fable afterwards, at your leisure: Be sure you *strain* them sufficiently."

³⁵³ Dryden, *Works*, 298.26-27. Dryden insinuates that this bias may also reflect Virgil's misogyny: "*varium & mutabile semper femina*, is the sharpest Satire in the fewest words that ever was made on Womankind; for both the Adjectives are Neuter, and *Animal* must be understood, to make them Grammar. *Virgil* does well to put those words into the mouth of *Mercury*. *If a God had not spoken them, neither durst he have written them, nor I translated them*" (299.4-10). Chetwood's "Life of Virgil" echoes the intimation by bringing up (and then affecting to dismiss) the question of Virgil's sexual orientation—a comment that may be glancing at William III, who was suspected of being homosexual—and then by broadening the discussion to consider a larger question of cultural influence, which Chetwood claims to be offering for Virgil's "Vindication." "[H]owever he stood affected to the Ladies," Chetwood remarks of Virgil, "there is a dreadful Accusation brought against him for the most unnatural of all Vices, which by the Malignity of Humane nature has found more Credit in latter times than it did near his own. This took not its rise so much from the *Alexis*, in which Pastoral there is not one immodest Word; as from a sort of ill-nature, that will not let any one be without the imputation of some Vice; and principally because he was so strict a follower of *Socrates* and *Plato*" (31.23-32.1). The implication (which may emerge neither as pleasurable nor as logically for a modern reader as insinuations made elsewhere in the volume) seems to be that misogyny went hand in hand with homosexuality—or perhaps with homosexuality as embraced in Socratic and Platonic philosophy, inflected by ugly aspects of Phoenician culture (which Chetwood discusses subsequently). The technique of harnessing contemporary moral prejudices to dethrone Virgil—or, more broadly, defending Virgil in order to excite skepticism about him—is typical of both Chetwood's "Life" and Dryden's Dedication. In the former case, associating "Vice" with Virgil's person destabilizes the traditional Virgilian character, which had for so long been associated with moral rectitude.

readers. The ladies “will make a numerous Party against” Aeneas, he predicts, “for being false to Love, in forsaking *Dido*”; and although Dryden “cannot much blame them,” his posture indicates that he sees the translator’s civic role as that of a resolute defender of the poet whom he translates, mediated in accordance with the interests and predispositions of his modern audience. The translator is forced to mediate, in this circumstance, between interests and cultures almost irreconcilably distinct from one another. As Dryden puts it, “to leave one Wife and take another, was but a matter of Gallantry at that time of day among the *Romans*”—a point of manners, he implies, that he cannot abide for his own people and his own “time of day,” even though he can at least nominally forgive his poet for being a product of his own culture and his own time: “If the Poet argued not aright, we must pardon him for a poor blind Heathen, who knew no better Morals.”³⁵⁴ In this negotiation, Dryden models a politeness born in and of debate: the capacity to take an interested position provisionally even as he acknowledges that he “cannot much blame” the other “Party” for arguing what it will, in accordance with its own interests. Indeed, one might say that his poetry is designed to stir up, harness, and direct debate along precisely these lines. Various baiting and anticipating into being the self-assertive hermeneutic “Liberties” of his readers, Dryden’s presentation is calculated to coax out opposing arguments not only in relation to the figure of the “false Knight,” but also in response to the acrobatic defenses of Virgil that he proffers in his own dedicatory comments. Virgil, as Dryden translates him, is a poet who will only contribute to the British common weal if his readers remain actively attuned to his cultural biases, actively critical of his didactic limitations, and actively skeptical of the

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 303.9-10, 23-24.

way he utilizes his “Dispensing Power.”³⁵⁵

It is no coincidence, of course, that “the Ladies” are imagined leading the charge against Aeneas. Their involvement in the Dido episode follows a cultural logic (or, as Dryden might have seen it, a pattern of nature) whereby men identify with male characters and women identify with female characters. These cultural associations align themselves all the more forcibly because of the cultural association of the genre of the romance (as Dryden is envisioning it here) with female readers. But of course there is a larger point to be made about the way Dryden envisions a central role for “the Ladies” in the assault on Aeneas’s character. By the late seventeenth century, “the Ladies” were the very definition of a “Vulgar” audience: they typically did not receive formal Latin training and therefore had limited means of measuring Dryden’s interpretive liberties against Virgil’s original text. They were, by definition, the audience most precisely registered in Milbourne’s frustrated dismissal, “*Si Populus vult decipi decipiatur*” (“If the people wish to be deceived, let them be deceived”). Dryden’s translation carries with it a gesture of demystification that effects a reversal precisely along the lines of Le Bossu’s division between the two principal audiences of the *Aeneid*: the prince and the people, or, as Le Bossu has it, Augustus and “the Vulgar.” The *Aeneid*, according to Le Bossu, served the dual function of teaching Augustus to behave like a king and duping “the Vulgar” into accepting Augustus as their king, even against their interests. Thus whereas, in the case of the “Vulgar” audience, Virgil used “Religion” to pull the wool over their eyes, as it were, he showed Augustus that this was a useful way to render the people submissive. Dryden does precisely the opposite in his translation. Addressing himself to the people *rather than* the king, he encourages his audience to examine the coercive

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 300.5.

tactics that successful princes so often employ.

Dryden's approach is subversive on several levels. His ideal reader, as he makes very clear in his Dedication, is not necessarily an aristocrat or even a gentleman with a classical education, but a "Judicious" reader distinguished by an enhanced perceptual capacity, especially with respect to linguistic nuances, and a willingness to allow a "well-weigh'd Judicious Poem" to "gro[w] upon him" (or her) over time.³⁵⁶ Some of "the Ladies," Dryden implies, may even count themselves among this distinguished group. And anticipating the skeptical reaction of "the Ladies" as he does necessarily effects a complementary subversion. The royalist tradition of interpretation embodied in Ogilby's translation had envisioned Virgil as a poet whose claim on the modern common weal persisted in his vision of a patriarchal, patrilineal system of government and culture. In post-Revolution England, of course, a very different approach to customs of patrilineal succession had prevailed within the monarchy itself: in a notable aberration from established norms of inheritance, the throne had gone not to James II's infant son, but his married daughter. Appropriately, then, in a direct challenge to this earlier Stuart vision of the common weal, Dryden dedicates the very image of patrilineal succession not to a

³⁵⁶ Dryden distinguishes three types of readers according to their respective powers of linguistic discernment: (1) "Mobb-Readers," who "like nothing but the Husk and Rhind of Wit" and "prefer a Quibble, a Conceit, an Epigram, before solid Sense, and Elegant Expression" (326.28-30); (2) "a middle sort of Readers... such as have a farther insight than the former; yet have not the capacity of judging right," nor are "yet arriv'd so far as to discern the difference betwixt Fustian, or ostentatious Sentences, and the true sublime" (327.12-19); and (3) "the most Judicious: Souls of the highest Rank, and truest Understanding," who enjoy the capacity to appreciate "a well-weigh'd Judicious Poem" that "insinuates it self by insensible degrees into the liking of the Reader" (328.1-11). This hierarchy, Dryden suggests, does not map directly onto class distinctions or achievements in formal education, but reflects one's capacity to participate in a refined form of communication and perception and, as such, to profit from a refined form of learning: "The more" a judicious reader "studies" a "well-weigh'd Judicious Poem,... the more it grows upon him; every time he takes it up, he discovers some new Graces in it" (328.11-13). This important departure from D'Avenant's epic hermeneutics is implicit throughout Dryden's discussion, which employs extended *comparisons* to class distinctions (e.g. "I appeal to the Highest Court of Judicature, like that of the Peers"; "such things as are our Upper-Gallery Audience") and pointed references to the shortcomings of formal schooling (e.g. "The young Gentlemen themselves are commonly miss-led by their Pedagogue at School, their Tutor at the University, or their Governour in their Travels") (326-28).

lord, but to a lady. The engraving that depicts Aeneas's flight from Troy is inscribed "To y^e Right Hon^{ble} Mary Countess Dowager of Northampton," thereby acknowledging the figure of the "forsaken Lady" at the expense of the "the deserting Heroe" (Appendix F).³⁵⁷ That the Countess is described as a "Dowager" illustrates the technique of destabilization all the more clearly. Dryden often calls Dido a "Dowager." He has therefore assigned the plate to a reader whose public identity and life experience can be expected to incline her to sympathize with Dido and Creusa against Aeneas.³⁵⁸ He seeks to bring her into the episode along precisely the "Party" lines sketched out in his Dedication—that is, party lines determined by gender.

And there is evidence that at least one contemporary "Lady" was as actively and perceptively engaged a reader of this translation as Dryden had anticipated. Lady Mary Chudleigh is perhaps best known for a poem entitled "To the Ladies" (1703), in which she decried nuptial "obe[dience]" to tyrannical husbands as a cultural condition that unnecessarily thwarted the education of "Ladies"—a theory of obedience, in other words, that harmonized tellingly with concepts developed centrally in *Dryden's Virgil*. Delineating the character of domestic governance by fear, Chudleigh urged her addressees to harness their "pr[ide]":

[S]hun, oh! shun that wretched state,
 And all the fawning flatt'ers hate.
 Value yourselves, and men despise:
 You must be proud, if you'll be wise.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 410. Consider, too, the contemporary resonances of this demotion: in the Convention's debate about what language to use to describe James II's withdrawal from England, the Lords rejected the Commons' assertion that he had "abdicated the government" and left the throne "vacant." They preferred "the more neutral term 'deserted'" (Miller 20). As Dryden renders Aeneas's situation, of course, "deserted" still retains the full emotional sense of "abdicated": James himself had neglected his obligations to his nation by retaining his Catholic affiliation.

³⁵⁸ There is a second "Dowager" among the plates in the Dido episode, and there are multiple ladies assigned plates in this portion of the volume.

³⁵⁹ *The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (NY: Oxford UP, 1987), 36.

But Chudleigh also wrote a commendatory poem specifically for *Dryden's Virgil*. Here, adopting imagery of enlightenment, she praises Dryden's performance with language that demonstrates an apprehension of precisely the hermeneutic possibilities that I have described here. Her muse, she says, watches with "Wonder" as the poet's "boundless Wit" conveys "Light" and "Heat" to "distant Worlds":

[Virgil's] now the welcom Native of our Isle,
And crowns our Hopes with an auspicious Smile;
With him we wander thro' the Depths below,
And into Nature's Close Recesses go;
View all the Secrets of th' infernal State,
And search into the dark Intrigues of Fate.³⁶⁰

Chudleigh's language echoes Mulgrave's praise of Le Bossu's demystification of the "sacred mysteries" of classical epic. For her, the "continu'd Splendour" of Dryden's performance persists in its disclosure of nature's "Secrets"—"Principles of all things" that had been shrouded by "Triumphant Darkness" and "Gloom" in an earlier phase of English history.³⁶¹

XI: Obligation and the Common Weal

In Dryden's diagnosis, the problem posed by the Revolution was a problem of competing obligations. James II's rule had challenged the earlier conviction—so redolent in Ogilby's notion of the royal entertainment—that the bonds of fealty and protection that secured the foundation of the body politic reflected a natural alignment among the English subject's duties to God, King, and Country. That noble Lords and clergymen registered their resistance to William III with the refusal of oaths demonstrates the

³⁶⁰ "To Mr. Dryden, on his excellent Translation of Virgil," in *The Works of John Dryden*, 1188-89.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1188-89.

continued potency of the feudal concept of obligation even at this relatively late date in the early modern era. Both of the terms used for this act of resistance during the 1690s, “non-juror” and “recusant,” indicate a refusal to accept the royal “entertainment” (i.e. the foundational royal invitation of protection and mutual obligation) in the form that had been extended by William and Mary and the Parliamentarians who negotiated their ascension.³⁶²

This act of refusal had played out in a different way with respect to James himself; however, the relationships between monarch and subject cultivated during his reign and in its aftermath were comparable on this issue. Throughout the Exclusion Crisis and the Revolution, one discerns a pervasive sense among English subjects that they felt torn between a sense of obligation to the monarch and to God, between duties to the nation and duties to the man at its helm—a conflict that might be understood to have paralleled James’s own struggle to reconcile his Catholicism with his duty to his (largely Protestant) subjects. Whigs and Tories alike articulated this sense of conflict. The Earl of Clarendon (a Tory) wrote in 1688 that “I can with a very good conscience give all liberty and ease to tender consciences but I cannot, in conscience, give those men leave... to come into employments in the state who by their mistaken consciences are bound to destroy the religion I profess.”³⁶³ Whigs argued consistently that “monarchy was a human institution” that “existed” to “dispense justice and protect the subject’s person and property”—a function that justified the removal of a monarch who abused his powers—and they argued that James’s Catholicism “made it virtually certain” that such a removal

³⁶² That is, “non-juring” means non-*swearing*, and a “recusal” suggests the non-acceptance of an offer—in general terms, “refus[al] to submit to an authority or comply with a command or regulation” (*OED* 1A).

³⁶³ Miller, *The Glorious Revolution*, qtd. 5.

would be required in his case.³⁶⁴ The agreements pounded out during the course of the Parliamentary negotiations of 1688-89 encountered particular sticking points in relation to the question of how to reconcile the ascension of William III with traditions of hereditary right and the question of how to describe James's departure from the kingdom—sensitivities that reflect an ongoing effort to reconcile the moral duties of respectful monarchical subjects, the moral duties of a pious conscience, and the vision of a monarchical state that supported and was supported by those commitments.³⁶⁵

Dryden perceived that what was at stake in this tumultuous period was, in large part, the very question of how to commit oneself to the collectivity. The forms of disobedience, non-juring, and recusancy countenanced during the Revolution and in its immediate wake were not consistent with an earlier royalist vision of the collective wellbeing. As Ogilby had envisioned the English common weal, obedience to King and Country were in perfect alignment with obedience to God. For Ogilby, royal authority, when properly respected, enforced divine order in the temporal world; disobedience was necessarily a rebellion against both man's law and God's. The royal entertainment was understood to manifest and strengthen the bonds of fealty and protection along precisely these lines: obliging oneself ceremonially to the monarch (and vice versa) provided a palpable means of buttressing the English settlement, promoting the advancement of civilization, and establishing an environment in the temporal world that lent itself to the achievement of eternal salvation. Monarchical obedience, in this conception, was a posture of humility eminently *consistent* with Christian ideals: it presumed a posture of

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 17.

³⁶⁵ Miller, 19-20, describes debates over the question of co-monarchy and the question of what language to use to describe James's exile ("abdication" or "desertion" rather than, say, "expulsion"—a term that would imply disobedience).

submission to the monarch as God's anointed vicegerent and therefore also, almost necessarily, a posture of piety and respect for Christian virtue, of which the monarch himself could be considered the highest earthly embodiment.

By retaining Ogilby's mid-century illustrations, Dryden had a means of dramatizing his eschewal of the obligations represented ceremonially in the royal entertainment and reconfiguring his obligations in a manner representative of the changes brought about in the Revolution. As noted above, Dryden's tripartite dedication, obliging him to three figures of opposition, buttressed Dryden's own oppositional stance in relation to royal authority and power (specifically, his refusal of the laureateship and his public affiliation with Roman Catholicism). Among themselves, however, Dryden's dedicatees modeled several distinct ways of configuring their obligations to God, King, and country and therefore several different ways of opposing or resisting royal power.³⁶⁶ Hugh Clifford, second Baron Chudleigh, the dedicatee of the *Pastorals*, was a confirmed Catholic who was suspected of conspiring to incite a Jacobite uprising and a French invasion in the early 1690s.³⁶⁷ Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield, the Protestant dedicatee of the *Georgics*, had intermittently opposed both the ousted monarch (for his Catholicism) and the sitting monarch (to whom he had refused to swear allegiance).³⁶⁸ John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave and Marquess of Normanby, dedicatee

³⁶⁶ Modern scholars have sometimes read Jacobite sympathies into this gesture (e.g. Caldwell 2000), but it seems to me that, in these dedications, Dryden does not envision the nation as a Jacobite would: as a hierarchy with a singular, righteous monarch at the top, the highest manifestation of virtue in the realm, and his loyal servants supporting their rightful leader with reverence and obedience. Instead, he finds three dedicatees who embody three distinct relationships with royal power—both with the sitting monarch and with his exiled predecessor. Of these, only Clifford models clear Jacobite sympathies.

³⁶⁷ See Frost, *Works*, esp. 889-91. Chudleigh was brought up on charges of high treason and then released.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 911. Chesterfield had abandoned James II because of his "religious policies" and refused to act as James' regent in exile; however, he also refused to swear his allegiance to William, despite having initially helped to raise forces in support of the Dutch prince. Specifically, he "voted against making William the

of the *Aeneis*, who remained comparatively involved in English politics after the Revolution, led the Tory opposition throughout the 1690s. His loyalties were mixed as well, and they shifted intermittently from the Revolution forward: having voted initially “to associate William and Mary on the throne,” he then “refus[ed] to take an anti-Jacobite oath in 1696” and had therefore lost his place on the Privy Council by the time *Dryden’s Virgil* was published.³⁶⁹ Occupying a nebulous interval between obedience and disobedience, the dedicatees’ oppositional postures announce no single, overarching complaint or interest. What unites these patrons is their common insistence on remaining in England (rather than following James II into exile) while retaining a posture of skepticism and resistance—publicly and privately—in relation to the head of the body politic.

The subscription venture further enhances the statement that the ceremonial exchange of obedience and protection embodied in the royal entertainment could no longer sufficiently represent the bonds of loyalty, affection, and mutual obligation at the foundation of the British body politic. In *Dryden’s Virgil*, as noted above, Dryden became the first English poet to be sponsored in the labor of composition by subscription. Given Dryden’s earlier Laureate career, this monumental development made subscription publication a viable alternative to royal sponsorship—perhaps even a superior alternative, insofar as Dryden earned more from this translation *per annum* than he had in his Laureate office.³⁷⁰ By refusing to dedicate his translation to a sitting monarch, and by dedicating his translation instead to not one but *three* figures of opposition, Dryden

king in 1689, declined to take an oath in 1694 supporting William’s title, and refused in 1696 to sign an oath of association confirming William’s title and denying those of James and his son” (Frost 911).

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 941.

³⁷⁰ CITE Frost, Winn; cite passage from *DV* in which D remembers lending the king money.

eschewed the opportunity to mimic the gesture of the Stuart masque with its proffering of wealth in the direction of the king, its celebration of the king's magnificence, and its encouragement of reverence and awe in the face of monarchical power. If the accumulated wealth of Dryden's subscription venture (considered in its monetary form) was directed toward any single person, it was directed toward the poet himself. And if the accumulated wealth of this subscription venture (considered more abstractly) was directed at any single *idea*, it was directed at the prospect of honoring the achievements of English culture.³⁷¹

Within his elaborate dedications and his Postscript, Dryden uses a variety of terms and gestures to describe his commitments to causes, individuals, and ideas beyond himself and his craft—not only “obligation,” but also “devotion,” “duty,” “love,” and “debt.” In light of his *Aeneis*'s central exploration of the theme of “obligation,” however, Dryden's concluding declaration that he has “oblig'd [him] self by Articles” (i.e. in his contract) to Tonson and his subscribers provides a crucial reimagining of the “obligation” as a constitutive feature of British “entertainment” in the full seventeenth-century sense of the term. Dryden's relationship with Virgil, with his contemporary audience, and with a prior history of Virgilian interpretation is being conceived as a contractual arrangement precipitated by the interests and “pleas[ures]” of a paying public. Dryden's claim that his editorial labor has supplied what is “either new or necessary” to “invite a Reader, if not to please him” retains the earlier sense of the “entertainment” as a hospitality ritual, undertaken in such a way as to forge and reinforce political bonds, albeit with an understanding that these alliances have been ceremonially configured in such a way that they might address the immediate needs of the present and the near future. That this

³⁷¹ See Barnard, “Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons,” 174-239.

performance of obligation is being conceived as a *contractual* relationship is no coincidence. Not only was this the era that saw the publication of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), which argued for a contractual, "natural rights"-based conception of English government in opposition to Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*; this was also an era in which the gestures of English hospitality extended to and accepted by William of Orange (later William III) were proffered by means of a series of strategically-worded written documents embodying variously formal, legal statuses as contracts.³⁷²

It is also no coincidence that the labor of poetic translation is being conceived here as a labor underwritten by an *economic* relationship in something of the modern sense of the term—a "debt" to "the Publick," as Dryden says elsewhere in the Postscript. The governmental change brought about by the Revolution was, in part, a financial revolution—a change in the structure of the way taxes were levied upon and collected from the people. After the Revolution, tax collection became a matter of routine, and "William III and his successors were more dependent upon Parliament for money than any of his predecessors."³⁷³ No longer could the British monarch be seen as the singular source of civic power, authority, protection, and—in the most literal sense of the term—wealth. In his turn to subscription sponsorship, Dryden was, in part, reconceiving the poet's obligations in terms deferential to this important shift. Consider, for example, the symbolic resonances of this elaborate conceit, which envisions the role of the translator as the task of importing such foreign goods as will enhance the wealth of the nation:

³⁷² In the Dedication of the *Aeneis* Dryden refers to Spencer, Chapman, and Cowley as the "*Magna Charta* of Heroick Poetry" (331.18)—a reference that further confirms his thinking along these lines.

³⁷³ Miller, *The Glorious Revolution*, 54.

If wounding Words are not of our growth and Manufacture, who shall hinder me to Import them from a Foreign Country? I carry not out the Treasure of the Nation, which is never to return: but what I bring from *Italy*, I spend in *England*: Here it remains, and here it circulates; for, if the Coyn be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I Trade both with the Living and the Dead, for the enrichment of our Native Language. We have enough in *England* to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of Magnificence and Splendour, we must get them by Commerce. Poetry requires Ornament, and that is not to be had from our old *Teuton* Monosyllables....³⁷⁴

Notice the way Dryden's reference to "things of Magnificence and Splendour" as things *inherently* foreign in their substance turns on its head Ogilby's dedicatory reverence for the glittering spoils of Italy. The strength of the English nation, as Dryden presents it here, rests in the freedom with which coins circulate and exchange hands, thereby "enrich[ing] our Native Language" *at the expense* of the foreign.

Not surprisingly, then, the obligations articulated most forcefully in *Dryden's Virgil* are neither the translator's perceived obligations to God nor his perceived obligations to the monarch, but his perceived obligations to the nation. Adopting precisely these terms, Dryden posits a general principle of human behavior that explains both Virgil's original composition of his works and, implicitly, his own approach to translating Virgil: "To love our Native Country, and to study its Benefit and its Glory, to be interested in its Concerns, is Natural to all Men, and is indeed our common Duty."³⁷⁵ The presentism and nationalism of this gesture extends to Dryden's adaptation of Ogilby's subscription plates. Ogilby had appealed to the Augustan model as a corrective and an antidote to contemporary English ills—the revival of "ancient barbarity," as he put it. He had inscribed the illustrated volume with the names of its sponsors in Latin, as if to encourage his subscribers to recover, in their own image, the image of Roman

³⁷⁴ Dryden, *Works*, 336.3-13.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.11-13.

monarchism. In *Dryden's Virgil*, by contrast, the translating poet is announced by his English name, the list of subscribers is entirely in English, and the first subscribers' names are rendered in English rather than Latin beneath each engraving. All titles, offices, ties of inheritance, and counties of origin are spelled out in English rather than Latin; the illustrations are keyed to the English text rather than supplemented with captions from the relevant Latin text.³⁷⁶ *Dryden's Virgil* clearly prioritizes an English language system and an English political organization rather than an emulation of the Roman model. This new manner of keying the illustrations to the English text contributes a lively immediacy to both the volume, as a monument to the post-Revolution era, and the reading experience, considered in practical terms. There is a powerful sense here that the modern poet is using this translation to speak directly to his contemporaries, sometimes even personalizing the textual encounter. For instance, "*the Hon[orable] John Granville second Son to John EARL of BATH[,] one of the Com[mittee] appointed by Act of Parliam[ent] for Examining[,] Taking[,] & Stating the Publick Accounts of the Kingdom,*" upon perusing the plate that has been assigned to him, will find himself directed to line 799 of *Georgics* IV, which reads, "Behold a Prodigy!"³⁷⁷

In the process, rather than insisting that modern Britons should imagine themselves as the inheritors of the culture and the cultural authority of Augustan Rome, *Dryden's Virgil* invites the reader to recognize defining differences in national culture. If, in ancient Rome, "Patronage and Clientship always descended from the Fathers to the

³⁷⁶ I have benefited from Frost's emphasis of this technical point (Calif. ed. vii) and his elaboration of the related issue of assimilating Roman culture (esp. 872-73).

³⁷⁷ Zwicker observes further that this system allows Dryden to praise and insult his subscribers individually. I am highlighting a more playful example than the examples he discusses, but the basic point remains the same: *Dryden's Virgil* enhances the immediacy of the interaction between English translator and modern audience.

Sons,” as Dryden asserts in the Dedication of the *Pastorals*, then Dryden himself adheres to Roman custom in only one of three dedications: within the dedication of the *Pastorals*, he makes himself “your Lordship’s by descent, and part of your Inheritance,” but he refrains from invoking the Roman precedent in the other two dedications.³⁷⁸ Thus the translator’s opportunistic adherence to Roman custom is framed as a matter of rhetorical convenience rather than a principle to live by—an appeal to foreign tradition shaped by the demands of a particular occasion (i.e. flattering Lord Clifford for his knowledge of “*Roman History*,” thereby preparing both his dedicatee and his other readers for the hermeneutic experience that follows).

Dryden’s handling of the compliment also invites attention for the way he sets adherence to custom apart from “natural inclination.” “[T]he natural inclination, which I have to serve you, adds to your paternal right,” he insists to Lord Clifford, “for I was wholly yours from the first moment, when I had the happiness and honour of being known to you.”³⁷⁹ Couched though it is in a gesture of deference, this distinction opens the door for an appreciation of the Englishman as a citizen prepared to give voice to his “natural inclination” when necessity dictates, even at the expense of established law, custom, and (more specifically) “paternal right.” This speculation would have had a clear point of reference in the English approach to honoring patrilineal customs of inheritance. In the recent accession of William and Mary, the throne had gone to a daughter (Mary) rather than a son (James II or his infant son, James Francis Edward Stuart). The heir apparent is also a daughter (Anne, James II’s youngest daughter) rather than a son. And in a complementary aberrancy from largely patrilineal inheritance practices, a subscriber

³⁷⁸ Dryden, *Works*, 7.25-26, 29-30.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 30-33.

named “*Dorothy Brownlowe*” is described on her plate as “*Daughter & Coheiress of S[ir] Richard Mason[,] K[night,] Clerk Comtroler of ye Greencloth to K. Charles ye 2^d.*”³⁸⁰ If Romans can be said to have “follow’d their Principles and Fortunes to the last,” as Dryden claims, English *mores* differ from Roman *mores* on this crucial point: for Britons, there are rare occasions when tradition and custom must give way to the “natural inclination” to preserve the “happiness” and “honor” of the national community, its families, and perhaps even its individuals—persons connected to one another by bonds of affection, “habits of the Mind,” and nature irreducible to feudal conceptions of patriarchy, fealty, protection, and obligation.³⁸¹

XII: Conceiving National Unity Anew

The central importance of this idea of a distinct “native Country” that can be embraced as an entity happily *distinct* from Augustan Rome reflects Dryden’s decisive departure from the vision of absolutism cultivated by Ogilby. In a sense, the monarch *was* the nation for Ogilby. His strong central authority instilled peace and inspired loyal subjects to undertake productive deeds; the dynastic succession of which he was a part provided the means for a lasting settlement, spanning generations. Improving the common weal therefore occurred most efficiently by addressing the monarch directly: his subjects would flourish as and when the monarch did because their reverence for his augustness made them obedient. Accordingly, the virtues of the obedient monarchical

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 482. Brownlowe had the plate modified to incorporate the honorific “Lady” when her husband became a baronet in July 1697—a modification that Barnard aptly observes was in keeping with her “fulsomely” thorough self-description and her “self-asserti[ve]” insistence on being described as a “Coheiress.” See “Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons,” 202.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 28-29.

subject—duty, earnestness, rectitude, decorousness, humility—were utterly consistent with those of the devout subject.

The Revolution posed significant problems for this earlier way of envisioning order within the common weal. The events of the Revolution had demonstrated that holding fast to the absolutist vision cultivated by Ogilby was becoming increasingly less tenable in England. The Jacobite Earl of Lauderdale's contemporary translation of the works of Virgil was composed in exile and remained unpublished in his lifetime—a symbol of the fortitude of a loyal supporter of his rightful English king and the rightful condition of the English nation, envisioned necessarily from a vantage point *outside* the British Isles.³⁸² Many saw the Revolution as a *reformation* of the English monarchy—a vision that necessarily departed somewhat from Ogilby's vision, whether in its celebration of the realignment of church and state that Parliament's actions had enabled or in its emphasis on the constitutional foundations of English government that Parliament's actions were perceived as having recovered. Wesley and Blackmore composed original modern epics more or less along these lines: they saw the *Aeneid's* original design as a basis for celebrating the realignment of the English state with the English church.³⁸³

³⁸² As one might expect, the rationale for translation offered in the posthumous publication of Lauderdale's translation confirms a philosophy of respectful fidelity to the style and substance of the parent text: [*O*ur Translator has not taken the Liberty, or very rarely, to Paraphrase upon his Author, a Vice too much in use at this Day; but has endeavour'd to give you his genuine Sense and Meaning in as few Words, and as easie a Turn of Language, as the Majesty of Virgil's Stile, and the Interpretation of the Original, wou'd permit' (image 5). See *The works of Virgil, translated into English verse. By the Right Honourable Richard late Earl of Lauderdale* (London, 1709), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Mar. 12, 2009).

³⁸³ Both writers paid homage to the newly-installed Protestant monarchs, Wesley by dedicating his epic to "Her Most Sacred Majesty," Queen Mary, and Blackmore by depicting William III as a rightful descendent of his hero, Prince Arthur. In addition, both writers developed narratives of military conflict and cultural foundation in which the basis of civil society emerged from the triumphs of Christian heroes over their enemies: Wesley takes as the "Action" of his epic "the *Redemption of the World*" (image 11) and Blackmore the legendary founding of Britain, which he imagines involving Arthur's triumph over Lucifer. Blackmore is more obviously invested in questions of national character, though Wesley's dedication of the

But Dryden focused instead on the ways the Revolution had created competing obligations for British subjects and might predictably continue to do so in the future. Taking on the Virgilian corpus as a publicly-confirmed Catholic, Dryden envisioned the commonwealth in a manner that depended neither on the idea of a descending order of monarchical authority to which Ogilby had appealed nor on the idea of an English state whose strength resulted from its realignment of church and state. Without presuming that there was any single, eternal, monarchical order uniting Augustan Rome and modern England, and without presuming, indeed, that the *monarch* could be the single, unifying force in English government, he saw Britain committing itself to a form of monarchical government distinguishable from both Stuart England and Louis XIV's France in its rejection of the kinds of "tyrannies" that infringed upon the rights and liberties of the English people.³⁸⁴ The instatement of a Protestant monarch, rather than ensuring the conversion of the nation to Protestantism, was accompanied by a certain degree of toleration for dissenting religious groups.³⁸⁵ Moreover, Parliament's supervision of this instatement predicted a new phase of British government. The battles between the monarch and Parliament that had characterized English government for much of the seventeenth century were finally culminating in a new path: a "limited" monarchy, a government in which civic power was shared in a productive tension between the

work suggests that national categories concern him, too. These two works (especially Wesley's) have so far received little attention from modern scholarship, and as it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss them in detail, I can offer little more than this contextualization of *Dryden's Virgil*.

³⁸⁴ For instance, Louis XIV's 1685 Edict of Fontainebleau revoked the freedoms of conscience that had been afforded to French Protestants with the Edict of Nantes (1598) and made Protestantism illegal. Most Huguenots were forced to flee France and went to England (among other places).

³⁸⁵ Miller, *The Glorious Revolution*, esp. 41-52, 60-67. The passage of the Toleration Act in 1689 was, in a sense, enabled by James II's departure: his own efforts to repeal the Test Acts had been met with resistance out of fear that he wished to establish a Catholic, absolutist state. Limited in its practical effects on religious freedom (for instance, because Catholic worship was not protected), the Toleration Act "recognized the existence of the religious pluralism which had been a fact of life since the 1640s" (60).

monarch and Parliament and in which one branch of government might therefore be conceived as having the potential to “check” another.³⁸⁶ Further complicating this structure were the competing interests and obligations of a diverse political body. Rather than imagining Britain as a pyramid with a monarch at the top, the manifestation of the highest virtue and wealth in the realm, keeping the nation intact by inspiring awe and admiring emulation in the peers and the commoners below him, Dryden imagined the strength of Britain arising from a well-orchestrated assortment of competing interests, ambitions, and rivalries.

I have already made reference to a number of paratextual features and moments within the text of *Dryden's Virgil* that contribute to this vision of the British commonwealth as a nation animated by competing interests, ambitions, and rivalries. Dryden's patterns of dedication convey this sense, as do the dedicatory comments addressed to the “Politick” Earl of Mulgrave. The Dedication of the *Aeneis* is controlled by the sense that debate and disagreement are inescapable—that “the Ladies” can be expected to “make a numerous Party” against the “deserting” prince, for instance, against a powerful royalist tradition of ignoring Creusa's abandonment and seeing Aeneas's desertion of Dido as morally justified. In comments like these, patriarchy itself is exposed as a negotiable basis for British government and culture. But *Dryden's Virgil* is not merely deconstructive in its subversion of these earlier Stuart ideals. Instead, Dryden walks a fine line between unsettling *as norms* the normative cultural ideals that Ogilby had taken for granted and promoting a new idea of Britain's national cohesion.

³⁸⁶ Dryden uses the term “check” both within *Dryden's Virgil* (cf. V.107.5; 279.18) and in his Preface to *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700), where he conceives the “Satyrical Poet” as “the Check of the Laymen, on bad Priests.”

This vision emerges most powerfully in Dryden's subscription list. As John Barnard has shown, the subscription list of *Dryden's Virgil* combined national representativeness with *diversity* of representation—a composition resulting in what Barnard has aptly described as a configuration of “overlapping and competing groups and networks.”³⁸⁷ Far from favoring Jacobite or anti-Williamite subscribers for this project—a choice that would have obliged the translator to a narrow body of loyalists sponsors of his poetic labors—Dryden and Tonson went to great trouble to assemble a bipartisan group of sponsors, representative of the nation as a whole.³⁸⁸ Dryden's subscribers included a great many of William's supporters, and they also included members of William's cabinet, members of the royal household, and “three of the seven signatories to the letter of invitation to William.”³⁸⁹ Bipartisanship appears to have been a central goal for both Dryden and Tonson: they achieved close to a half-and-half apportioning of Whigs and Tories, with a slight bias toward the Whigs.³⁹⁰ All told, the subscribers' list of *Dryden's Virgil* included a truly unprecedented grouping of prominent, powerful civic offices and public roles. Dryden's purchasing public (and therefore his intended readership) included, among others, the Exchequer and his assistants, both Secretaries of State, the Attorney General and Solicitor General, “half of the six highest-ranking officers in the land” in the order of their processing in Parliament, and seventy-five MPs.³⁹¹ As Barnard delineates it, Dryden's subscription venture also brought together a cross-section of surprisingly various modes of civic authority (as mentioned above,

³⁸⁷ “Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons,” 181.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 180 ff. Dryden and Tonson actively courted and in some cases hand-selected their subscribers. A surplus of would-be first subscribers gave Dryden and Tonson some room to be selective in the sponsors whom they emphasized visually in the volume.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, esp. 180-81, 185. Barnard calculates percentages for MPs among the first and second subscribers.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 181-85.

literati, politicians, lawyers, physicians, academics, soldiers, etc.), and a readership including a number of women and a number of commoners as well. Additionally, I have determined in an examination of the local affiliations of the first subscribers, as inscribed beneath the illustrations, that *Dryden's Virgil* addressed patrons in nearly every historical county of England, with outposts in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales (Appendix G).³⁹² This degree of cartographical representation was a remarkable late-life achievement from the perspective of a poet who had launched his Laureate career with a comparatively tenuous claim on the nation: an apostrophe proposing the London “Metropolis” as a figure for the whole of England (*Annus Mirabilis*, 1667).

Even as it attaches importance to the persistence of hierarchical structures within English society, this assembly departs in an important way from D’Avenant’s earlier notion of civic influence, in which epic readers were essentially male aristocrats and members of the court who provided living models of the forms of virtue that wives and commoners, in turn, obeyed and imitated. Echoing this shift, Dryden imagines his ideal reader simply as a “judicious reader”—a reader distinguished by his or her perceptual capacities rather than his or her birth or formal education. But Dryden’s most pointed revision of the hermeneutic traditions surrounding the *Aeneid*’s princely readership may be his simultaneous appeal to the earlier sense of the *Aeneid* as a treatise on monarchical

³⁹² Colored counties represent: 1) localities specified extraneously in the inscription (e.g., “in y^e County of Lincolne” or “in Northampton Shire”), and 2) localities suggested by a hereditary and/or royally-conferred title, including those mentioned in inscriptions to second sons and wives (e.g., “the Hon^{ble} John Granville second Son to John EARL of BATH...” signifies Somerset County). Hereditary titles referring to cities or towns were taken to be representative of the county as a whole (as in the previous example). I did not include domains specified in royal offices enumerated apart from hereditary titles. For instance, the map of county representation omits the jurisprudential and Irish domains suggested in: “the Right Hon.^{ble} James Bertie, Earle of Abingdon and Barron Norreys of Rycott[,] Cheife Justice, and Justice in Eyre of all his Maj.^{ty} Parks, Forests, & Chaces on the South side of Trent, and L^d Lieutenant & Custos Rotulorum of the County of Oxon”).

government³⁹³ and his retention of the title “Prince” among his subscribers. The subscription plates of *Dryden’s Virgil* honor not one, but six different aristocrats as “Prince” or “Princess”:

- Princess Anne of Denmark (*Aeneis I*), daughter of James II and next in line for the throne of England, as determined by the English Settlement
- Prince George of Denmark (*Aeneis I*), Anne’s husband
- Prince Charles, Duke of Richmond (*Georgics III*), the illegitimate son of Charles II and Louise de K rouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth
- Prince Charles, Duke of St. Albans (*Aeneis V*), the illegitimate son of Charles II and Nell Gwynne
- Prince William, Duke of Gloucester (*Aeneis V*), Anne’s only child to survive infancy³⁹⁴

Most surprising of all is the inclusion of a third “Prince Charles” (*Aeneis II*), the Duke of Somerset, who had no particular claims to the English throne beyond the fact that he was commonly referred to as “the Proud Duke” by his contemporaries.³⁹⁵ Significantly

³⁹³ *Works*, 352, 342, 208, 486, 512. I have already attempted to convey that sense in my close reading of the text. Further buttressing this sense are Dryden’s repeated references to Aeneas as a “Prince” or “Sovereign” in his Dedication.

³⁹⁴ *Works*, 378. Anne’s third child and oldest son, William was about seven at the time of the publication of *Dryden’s Virgil*. He died in 1700. His presence among Dryden’s subscribers further challenges the Jacobite reading of *Dryden’s Virgil*, for Prince William was seen by his contemporaries as the Protestant counterpart to James II’s infant son:

On the day of his baptism, 27 July 1689, he was declared duke of Gloucester by his uncle William III, although the creation was never formalized; the report of his baptism in the *London Gazette* states that he was named William, but he is called in other sources William Henry. The birth of a healthy child to Anne was presented as an endorsement by providence of the revolution of 1688, which now had its protestant heir to counterbalance the Catholic James Francis Edward, infant son of the exiled James II and thus also Gloucester’s uncle.

See Matthew Kilburn, “William, Prince, duke of Gloucester (1689–1700),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed July 12, 2009.

³⁹⁵ Charles Seymour may be included here because he was a quintessential prince in the Machiavellian sense of the term: a man who rose to prominence and power through a combination of ambition, political prowess, apt timing, and several favorable turns of Fortune’s wheel. The sixth-born (and “second surviving”) son of Charles Seymour, second Baron Seymour of Trowbridge, he gained the title of Duke when his older brother, the fifth Duke of Somerset, died unmarried “after being shot by a Genoese nobleman, Horatio Botti, in revenge for Somerset’s allegedly insulting behaviour towards his wife” (*ODNB*, cited below). In 1682, he married “the twice-widowed Lady Elizabeth Thynne, *n e* Percy (1667–1722). . . , the greatest heiress in England.” From then on, “as the possessor of a vast estate (worth perhaps  20,000– 30,000 by the first decade of the eighteenth century) and the second dukedom in the kingdom, he began to

altering the didactic promise of the translation, these subscription plate titles create a sense of contest within the English monarchical succession. They stop short of depicting the English royal succession as a singular path with a foregone conclusion. To be sure, there is a sense of priority within the assembled list: Princess Anne, and Prince George of Denmark, the Heir Apparent and her husband, enjoy pride of place at the beginning of the *Aeneis*, and they are the only two figures actually named as “Princes” in the collated list of subscribers at the front of the volume.³⁹⁶ But, insofar as this pair is presented alongside a number of potential rivals to the throne, and insofar as the subscription plates elevate potential candidates with only tenuous claims on the throne, Dryden’s presentation encourages a surprising degree of agency on the part of pretenders to the throne of England. It rewards their ambition.

Complementing this sense of competition within the monarchical succession is a sense of tension among the principal governors of England. Dryden and his collaborating “Wits” reorient the textual hierarchy that had established the *Aeneid* as the culmination of Virgil’s civic and poetic achievements—the mature, heroic flight for which the *Pastorals* and the *Georgics* were merely apprentice training, as Spencer and others had imagined

receive a steady stream of honours and responsibilities” under Charles II, James II, William and Mary, and Anne and George. The *ODNB* relates a revealing anecdote about his relationship with James II:

When James II requested him, as gentleman of the bedchamber in waiting, to introduce the newly arrived papal nuncio, he refused on the ground that any contact with the Holy See was, in law, treasonous. Upon the sovereign offering him a pardon he refused; when James asked him if he did not know that the king was above the law, Somerset replied that ‘whatever the king might be, he himself was not above the law’ (*Bishop Burnet’s History*, 3.188). This staunch refusal led to the forfeiture of all his posts.

Somerset then joined with William of Orange, with reservations, at the Revolution. He was “associated with the opposition” at certain points during the 1690s but retained good relations with the court throughout the period. See R. O. Bucholz, “Seymour, Charles, sixth duke of Somerset (1662–1748),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed July 12, 2009.

³⁹⁶ Announcing their privileged status to the general reader, this collated list may also serve an obfuscatory end: it hides from the inattentive reader the fact that the honorific “Prince” has actually been bestowed upon a number of other pretenders in the subscription plates—a tactic very much in keeping with Dryden’s passing remark, tucked away in the Postscript of *Dryden’s Virgil*, that “‘Tis enough for me, if the Government will let me pass unquestion’d” (808.12-13).

it.³⁹⁷ Instead, Dryden and Addison praise the *Georgics* as the pinnacle of Virgil's corpus. The *Georgics* is, in Dryden's words, "the best Poem of the best Poet."³⁹⁸ Addison echoes the judgment in his critical preface to the translation. Disclaiming the critical tendency to ignore the *Georgics* in favor of Virgil's other works, he labels the *Georgics* as "*Virgil's* Master-piece," and he asserts firmly that Virgil "has not only excell'd all other Poets, but even himself in the Language of the *Georgics*," thereby according to the agricultural treatise the interpretive confidence and expectations for didactic promise that had previously been accorded to the *Aeneid* and the *Pastorals*.³⁹⁹ The result is a volume in which Virgil's potential for ongoing civic service is presumed to rest more on the advice that he offers to self-sufficient, English country gentlemen than on the advice and power that he offers to the sitting monarch and his subordinate peers. In political-symbolic terms, a classical poet who had been previously celebrated for his ongoing relevance as a Court poet is now being praised as a Country poet.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁷ See "E.K.'s" prefatory epistle to *The Shepherds Calendar*, esp. ll. 146-167, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, eds. William A. Oram et al. (New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1989).

³⁹⁸ *Works*, V.137.11.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, V.145.16-146.27; 149.27; 149.27-29.

⁴⁰⁰ This departure from established interpretive convention, like many of Dryden's departures from tradition, has the flavor of a cagey substitution rather than an explicit and earnest corrective. Nowhere does Dryden actually flag his revision as a revision. To make his case, he quietly tweaks the familiar conceit of vocational maturation to make the middle-aged composition representative of the peak of Virgil's creative verve:

Virgil wrote his *Georgics* in the full strength and vigour of his Age, when his Judgment was at the height, and before his Fancy was declining. He had, (according to our homely Saying) his full swing at this Poem, beginning it about the Age of Thirty-Five; and scarce concluding it before he arriv'd at Forty. ... There is requir'd a continuance of warmth to ripen the best and Noblest Fruits.... (Ded. *Georg.* 138.1-6, 9-10)

Notice the way Dryden's conceit casts a silent barb at the *Aeneid*: to follow Dryden's logic, the *Aeneid* was composed after Virgil's "Judgment" was no longer "at the height," "his Fancy was declining," and (perhaps most crucially) his spiritedness was waning. Having been praised as the most mature and noble of Virgil's works in standard royalist interpretations, the *Aeneid* is now recast as a work not fully ripe. All the while, Dryden registers his awareness of the tradition of the Virgilian *rota* that he is undermining and revising—albeit in a manner perhaps not readily evident as such to those not well acquainted with the tradition. Putting a new twist on the Spenserian conceit of avian flight, Dryden imagines Virgil's progress not as a clean, incremental, upward trajectory, but as a series of upward and downward movements that suggests an erratic process of trial and error:

This shift helps to explain the language that Dryden uses to describe his national commitments. He avows repeatedly that he writes “for the honour of my Country,” that he wants to “d[o] Justice to my Country,” and that he is “better pleas’d to have been born an *English Man*” than he would have been to have been born in other places.⁴⁰¹ For Dryden, the nation is both a nativity (the place where one has been born and bred and has learned to speak) and a “Country”—a term often conceived in opposition to the “Court,” in its full seventeenth-century sense, but also overlapping with “County” in this period, thereby signifying a tract of land, especially rural land.⁴⁰² The nation to which the translator obliges himself here is ordered at several levels by a sense of competitiveness *within* the commonwealth, and yet there is still a sense of cohesion animating the whole—cohesion forged not *despite* debate and independent self-assertion, but *through*

[Virgil] cou’d not forbear to try his Wings, though his Pinions were not harden’d to maintain a long laborious flight. Yet sometimes they bore him to a pitch as lofty, as ever he was able to reach afterwards. But when he was admonish’d by his subject to descend, he came down gently circling in the air, and singing to the ground: Like a Lark, melodious in her mounting, and continuing her Song ’till she alights: still preparing for higher flight at her next sally, and tuning her voice to better musick. (Ded. *Past.* 4.20-28)

That lovely final image of the “Lark” strikes a traditional note, and yet Dryden unfurls the avian conceit with an extravagance that borders on comedy. He applies the conceit not to a vocational progress within Virgil’s *oeuvre* as a whole, but to Virgil’s progress within the *Pastorals*, and he depicts this series of flights less as a product of habitual circumspection and trained ambition than as periodic expressions of youthful bravado and lust for liberty:

In the three first [*Pastorals*] he contains himself within his bounds; but Addressing to *Pollio*, his great Patron, and himself no vulgar Poet, he no longer cou’d restrain the freedom of his Spirit, but began to assert his Native Character, which is sublimity.... ’Tis true he was sensible of his own boldness.... He remember’d, like young *Manilus*, that he was forbidden to Engage; but what avails an express Command to a youthful Courage, which presages Victory in the attempt? Encourag’d with success, he proceeds farther in the Sixth, and invades the Province of Philosophy. And notwithstanding that *Phœbus* [*Apollo*] had forewarn’d him of Singing Wars, as he there confesses, yet he presum’d that the search of Nature was as free to him as to *Lucretius*, who at his Age explain’d it according to the Principles of *Epicurus*. (4.29-5.11)

Notice the way Dryden engages the traditional characterization of Virgil as a circumspect poet while at the same time valorizing a form of “youthful Courage” that borders on disobedience. Luke Milbourne was not far from the mark in ascribing to Dryden’s translation a character of “sill[iness]” and “impertinen[ce].” As Dryden depicts him here, the youthful Virgil is almost a romantic figure, exercising “the freedom of his Spirit,” expressing “his Native Character,” and flouting even Apollo’s advice in his “presum[ption] that the search of Nature was as free to him” as it was to the most adventurous of philosophers.

⁴⁰¹ *Works*, V.325.24; 287.11; 281.9-10.

⁴⁰² Perez Zagorin, “The Court and Country: A Note on Political Terminology in the Earlier Seventeenth Century,” *English Historical Review* 77.303 (Apr. 1962): 306-11.

established rivalries, and constant reconfigurations thereof. What binds his British addressees together, Dryden's presentation suggests, is not the constant, controlling, awe-inspiring presence of a singular royal authority, as Ogilby would have it, but the land that they commonly inhabit, the conviction that they share common political interests and a common history, and the language that has commonly influenced their development as communities and individuals.⁴⁰³ In Dryden's presentation, the character of English—like the character of those who speak it, he implies—compares positively to the character of French and Italian. In these other nations, he writes, heroic poetry is written wholly in Alexandrines because, "as I suppose, they found their Tongue too weak to support their Epick Poetry, without the addition of another Foot":

Their Language is not strung with Sinews like our *English*. It has the nimbleness of a Greyhound, but not the bulk and body of a Mastiff. Our Men and our Verses over-bear them by their weight; and *Pondere non Numero* [By weight, not by number] is the *British* Motto. The *French* have set up Purity for the Standard of their Language; and a Masculine Vigour is that of ours. Like their Tongue is the Genius of their Poets, light and trifling in comparison of the *English*; more proper for Sonnets, Madrigals, and Elegies, than Heroick Poetry.⁴⁰⁴

Dryden's idea of English-speaking Britain as a collectivity prospering in the present is therefore enhanced by a sense of competitiveness with other nations—both contemporary nations (especially France and Italy) and nations of the past, including England's own past.⁴⁰⁵ "[H]aving perhaps a better constitution than my Author," Dryden muses, "I have

⁴⁰³ Dryden's notion of the English constitution may be influenced by the sense that "clime" has a formative effect on the manners; however, he appeals more prominently to the idea that the nation is bound by the common cultural experience of learning the same language and becoming assimilated to the customs (discursive and otherwise) expressed in and dictated by that language.

⁴⁰⁴ *Works*, V.322.14-16; 18-26.

⁴⁰⁵ In setting up this rivalry as a rivalry principally with France and Italy (and England of the recent past), Dryden establishes several tensions and allegiances at once. For one thing, he sets up the English monarchy as a limited monarchy in opposition to these other, more absolute forms of monarchical government. This juxtaposition is further enhanced by William's association with the Dutch Republic, which was at war with the French in this period, pushing back against their expansionist policies. In this respect, Dryden hints, William III may in fact be a perfectly appropriate leader for England. As the

wrong'd him less, considering my Circumstances, than those who have attempted him before, either in our own, or any Modern Language" (4.10-13)—a hint of rivalry that he later glosses specifically in relation to French and Italian translations (see esp. 323.26-324.29), having sufficiently lampooned Ogilby himself so many years before.⁴⁰⁶

This clever negotiation of the dilemma of the *traduttore traditore* appears very early in the volume. Like other comments sprinkled throughout Dryden's dedications, this concept of translation as a task performed for those who speak one's native language gives the translator license to stray from his Virgilian original in deference to the needs of the present. And here again, Dryden configures his obligation not as an obligation first and foremost to the sitting monarch, imagined to be standing in for the people he rules, but as an obligation to a territory and its inhabitants, who might unite in their skepticism of the sitting monarch. In details like these, Dryden is effectively reconceiving the sense in which Virgil is being borne "across Latium" into modern Britain. He has insisted that Virgil must "speak English" as if he had been born a native speaker; he has stated his preference for the "new and necessary" over the traditionally sanctioned; he has reconfigured Virgil's modern readership as a readership that either excludes the sitting monarch or, at most, considers him to be merely *listening in* on a native English poet as he addresses himself to his "native Country"; and, in his paratext and the verse itself, as I

Stadtholder of a confederation of seven Dutch Provinces, William of Orange was actually well prepared to lead Britain, which Dryden is imagining in this late-career work as a confederation of distinct interests at multiple levels: national (e.g. Ireland, Scotland, England), local (e.g. historical counties), and personal. Further enhancing the sense that the character of the English monarch—present and potential—has something in common with the character of the native Briton is Dryden's language of "Masculine Vigour," defined against the more effeminate French and Italian forms but also constituted in part by "the Ladies'" own liveliness. Dryden embraces a form of native wildness in keeping with the Danish woodwose on George's coat of arms.

⁴⁰⁶ *Works*, V.4.10-13). For the French and Italian rivalries, see esp. V.323.26-324.29.

have sought to argue, he has developed a new way of conceiving Virgil's ongoing utility—a new way of “translating” him into a modern context.

Appendix A: Frontmatter to *Dryden's Virgil* (1697)

THE
WORKS
 OF
VIRGIL:
 Containing His
PASTORALS,
GEORGICS,
 AND
ÆNEIS.

Translated into English Verse; By
 Mr. *DRYDEN*.

Adorn'd with a Hundred Sculptures.

Sequiturque Patrem non passiva Æneis. Virg. Æn. 2.

LONDON,
 Printed for *J. S. Taylor*, at the *Judges-Hall* in *Fleet-street*,
 near the *Inner-Temple-Gate*, MDCXCVII.

1100 p

1100 p
 1.5.1. 638.7

Appendix B: Illustration with Coat of Arms in *Dryden's Virgil* (1697)

20 VIRGIL'S Part. V.

The Fifth Pastoral.

O R,

D A P H N I S.

The Argument.

Mopsus and Menalcas, two very expert Shepherds at a Song, begin one by confess to the Memory of Daphnia, who is suppos'd by the first Critics to represent Julius Cæsar. Mopsus answers his Friend, Menalcas pretends he knows not the whole Epique consisting of an Epique and an Apologue.

M E N A L C A S.

SINCE on the Down our Flocks together feed,
And since my Voice can match your tuneful Reed,
Why sit we not beneath the generous Shade,
Which Hedges, intermix'd with Elms, have made?

M O P S U S.

Whether you please that Silvan Scene to take,
Where whistling Winds uncertain Shadows make:
Or will you to the cooler Cave retire,
Whose Mouth the curling Vines have overspread?

M E N A L C A S.

Your Men and your Tears command the Choice:
As you only teach you in Voice.

M O P S U S.

What will not that professing Shepherd dare,
Who thinks his Voice with Phoebus may compare?

M E N A L C A S.

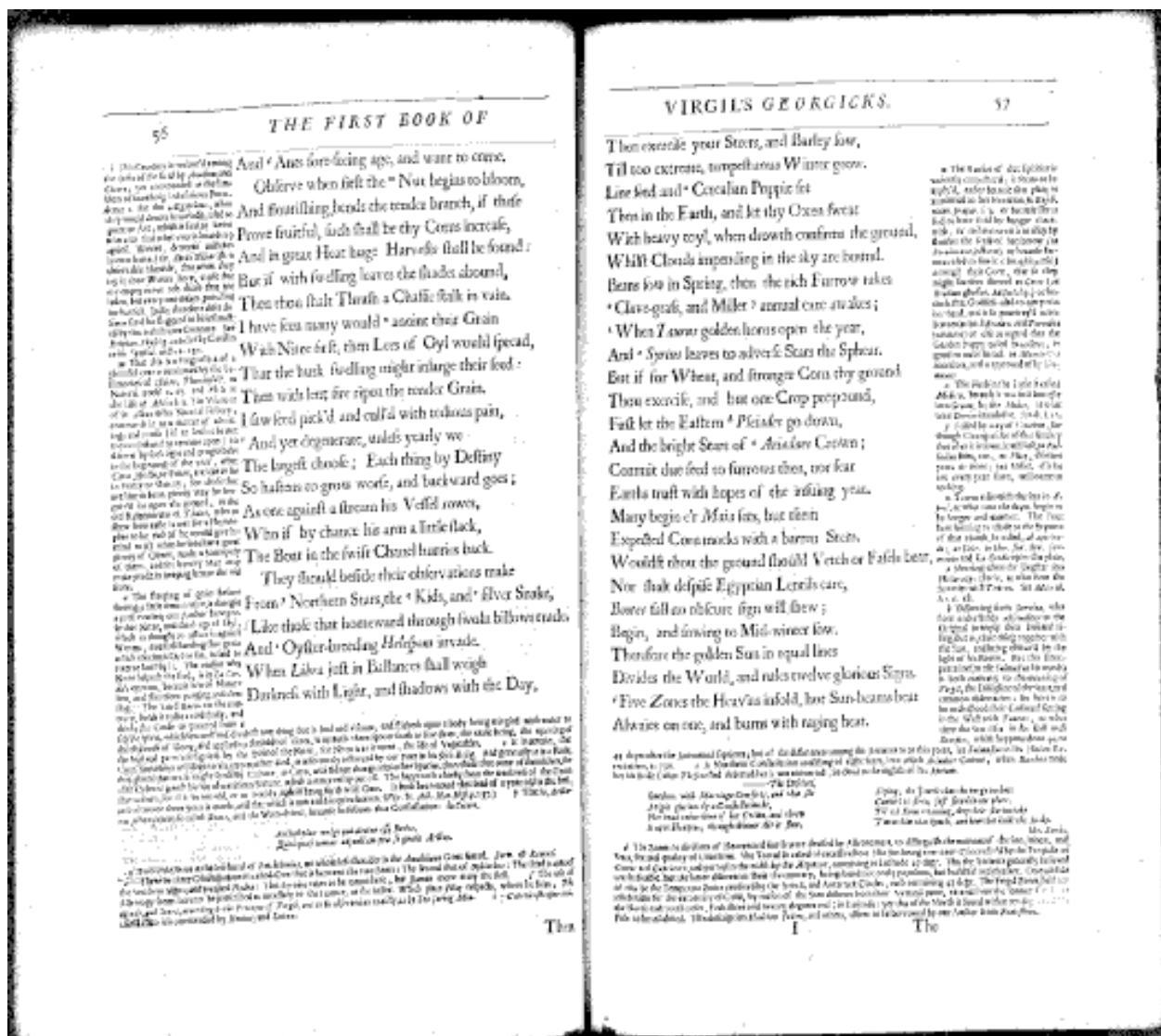
Begin you first, if e'er Phoebus's Train,
Or dying Phoebus have inspir'd your Lays:



To the Right Hon.^{ble} James
and Baron Murray of Roseneath
in Court of all his Maj.^{ty}
the South Side of Trent and
Rector of the

Bertie, Earl of Abington
Chief Justice and Justice
of the Common Pleas and Chancery
at Westminster and Chief
Justice of the

Appendix D: Textual Layout of Ogilby's *Works of Virgil* (1668)



55 THE FIRST BOOK OF

And 'Airs fore-facing age, and want to come,
 Observe when first the " Nut begins to bloom,
 And flourishing buds the tender branch, if thine
 Prove fruitful, such shall be thy Coas increase,
 And in great Heat bags Harvests shall be found;
 But if with feeding leaves the shades abound,
 Then thou shalt Thrust a Chaffin stalk in vain.
 I have too many would " assure their Grain
 With Nuts first, then Lees of Oyl would spread,
 That the hark feeding might enlarge their feed:
 Then with last fire sige the reade Grain.
 I few feed pack'd and cold with tedious pain,
 And yet degenerate, uald yearly we
 The largest chook: Each thing by Destiny
 So hafens to grow worse, and backward goes:
 As one against a stream his Vessel rows,
 Who if by chance his arm a little slack,
 The Boat in the swift Chanel harns back.
 They should beside their observations make
 From " Northern Stars, the " Kids, and " silver Snake,
 Like those that homeward through swale billows make
 And " Oyl-branding Helios invade.
 When Libra just in Bullances shall weigh
 Darts with Light, and shadows with the Day.

VIRGILS GEORGICKS. 57

Then exercise your Steers, and Barley sow,
 Til too extreme, tempestuous Winter goes.
 Line seed and " Cerealian Poppie set
 Thin in the Earth, and let thy Oxen sweat
 With heavy toyl, when drowth confirms the ground,
 While Clouds impending in the sky are bound.
 Beans sow in Spring, then the rich Furrow takes
 " Clave-grass, and Milder " annual care studies;
 " When Taurus golden horns open the year,
 And " Spring leaves to advent Stars the Sphære.
 But if for Wheat, and stronger Corn thy ground
 Then exercise, and but one Crop prepared,
 Fast let the Eastern " Pleiades go down,
 And the bright Stars of " Androsæ Coast;
 Commit due seed to furrows then, nor fear
 Earths trust with hopes of the ensuing year.
 Many begin e'r Maïs sows, but thin
 Expended Coas macks with a barren Stern.
 Wouldst thou the ground should Verch or Falls bear
 Nor shak despite Egyptian Lencis care,
 Lower fall no obscure sign will shew;
 Begin, and sowing to Mid-winter sow.
 Therefore the golden Sun in equal lines
 Divides the World, and rules twelve glorious Signs.
 " Five Zones the Heavns unfold, but Sun-beams beat
 Always on one, and burns with raging heat.

[Small annotations in the left margin of page 55, including references to Virgil's text and other works.]

[Small annotations in the right margin of page 57, including references to Virgil's text and other works.]

[Large block of English text at the bottom of page 57, likely a commentary or translation of the preceding Latin text.]

Appendix E: Textual Layout of *Dryden's Virgil* (1697)

VIRGIL'S Geor. I

58

Yet is not the Success for Years assur'd,
 285 Tho' chosen is the Seed, and fully cur'd;
 Unless the Plow, with his Annual Pain,
 Renews his Choice, and calls the largest Grain.
 Thus all below, whether by Nature's Curse,
 Or Fate's Decree, doom'd are fill to waste.

290 So the Boats heavy Crow the Currents fling,
 And, slow advancing, struggle with the Stream:
 But if they slack their hands, or cease to strive,
 Then down the Flood with headlong haste they drive.
 Nor must the Ploughman less obdurate the Soles,

295 When the Rills, Drags, and sallow rise,
 Than Snykers homeward bent, who cut their Way
 Thro' th' idle's heavy Swoights, and Oyster-breeding Sea.
 But when th' ox's Ballance, hung on high,
 Betwixt the Nights and Days divides the Sky,

300 Then Yoke your Oxen, for your Winter Gain;
 'Till cold Zephyrus comes with driving Rain.
 Linford and fruitful Poppy bay warm,
 In a dry Season, and prevent the Storm.
 Sow Beans and Clover in a rotten Soil,

305 And Milk mix'd from your Annual Yowl,
 When with his Golden Hoofs, in full Career,
 The Bull beats down the Barriers of the Year;
 And Age and the Day forsake the Northern Sphere.
 But if your Care to Wheat alone extend,

310 Let Mars with his Sifters first descend,
 And the bright Genes Diadem downward bend:
 Before you trust in Earth your future Hope;
 Or else expect a Illish busy Crop.
 Some Swains have sown before, but most have found

315 A lousy Harvest, from the grudging Ground.
 Vile Vetches wou'd you sow, or Lentils lean,
 The Growth of Eggs, or the Kidney-bean?

Begin

GEOR. I. GEORGICS. 59

Begin when the slow Winter defends,
 Nor cease your sowing till Mid-winter ends;

320 For this, thro' twelve bright Signs Apollo guides
 The Year, and Earth in several Climes divides.
 Five Goddess bind the Skies, the aerial Zone
 Glows with the pulling and repelling Sun,
 Far on the right and left, th' extremes of Heav'n,

325 To Frosts and Snows, and bitter Blasts are giv'n.
 Between the north and east, the Gods assign'd
 Two habitable Seas for Humane Kind;
 And crook their limits out a sloping way,
 Which the twelve Signs in brazenous order lay.

330 Two Poles turn round the Globe; one seen to rise
 O'er Scythian Hills, and one in Capricorn lies.
 The first fulfils in Heav'n, the last is shield'd
 Below the Regions of the nether World,
 Around our Pole the fiery Dragon glides,

335 And like a winding Stream the Beas divides;
 The left and greater, who by Fate's Decree
 Abhor to live beneath the Southern Sea;
 There, as they say, perpetual Night is found
 In silence brooding on th' unhappy ground;

340 Or when Aurora leaves our Northern Sphere,
 She lights the downward Heav'n, and rises there.
 And when on us she breaths the living Light,
 Red Jovis kindles there the Tapers of the Night.
 From hence uncertain Seasons we may know;

345 And when to reap the Grain, and when to sow:
 Or when to sell the Farrow, when 'tis meet
 To spread the flying Carcase for the Flock.
 Observe what Stars arise or disappear;
 And the four Quarters of the rolling Year.

350 But when cold Weather and continual Rain,
 The labouring Husband in his Hoop returns:

Let

Appendix F: Inscription, Aeneas's Flight from Troy, *Dryden's Virgil* (1697)

To *the* Right Hon.
Duchess of



Mary Countess
Northampton.

ÆN. II. ÆNEIS. 253

950 He said, the crackling Flames appear on high,
And driving Squalls dance along the Sky,
With Pluto's rage the rising Winds conspire,
And near our Palace rove the flood of Fire.
Haste, my dear Father, (tis no time to wait),
955 And load my Shoulders with a willing Freight:
What e'er befalls, your Life shall be my care,
Ours Death, or ours Deliv'rance we will share.
My hand shall lead our little Son, and you
My faithful Consort, shall our Sops pursue.
960 Next, you my Servants, heed my first Commands:
Without the Walls a ruin'd Temple stands,
To low hollow'd once, a Cyprian nigh
Shoots up her venerable Head on high,
By long Religion kept: there bend your Feet,
965 And in divided Parties let us meet:
Our Country Gods, the Relicks, and the Bands,
Hold you, my Father, in your gualid's Hands:
In me 'tis impious holy things to bear,
Bad as I am with Slaughter, new from War:
970 'Till in some living Stream I cleanse the Gull
Of dirt Debauch, and Blood in Buzel spill.
Then, ord'ring all that Providence cou'd provide,
I clorb my Shoulders with a Lion's Hide,
And yellow Spoils: Then, on my bending Back,
975 The welcome load of my dear Father take.
While on my better Hand *Æneas* hang,
And with unequal Faces tripe along,
Æneas kept behind: by choice we stray
Through ev'ry dark and ev'ry devious Way.
980 I, who 'm bold and dauntless just before,
The Groves Dump and thick of Lances bear,
As ev'ry Shadow now am fix'd with fear:
Not for my fill, but for the Charge I bear.

Td

Appendix G: Cartographical Representation, *Dryden's Virgil* (1697)

Of ENGLAND.



Case Study II

Early Eighteenth-Century Satire

Satyr and Libelling have been practiced from the Beginning of
Letters in every Nation, yet I'd be glad to know what Vices do they
really prevent.

—*London Journal*, 14 Sept. 1728

This case study examines two overlapping satirical experiments from the 1720s and 1730s: Edward Young's *Love of Fame: The Universal Passion* (1725-28) and several poems produced during Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* controversy (1727-33). Young and Pope have sometimes been discussed in tandem by modern scholars.⁴⁰⁷ I build on this scholarship by proposing that both satirists embraced a conception of satire's civic function as an exercise in governing the passions of one's readers. In his *Discourse Concerning the Origin and Progress of Satire* (1693), Dryden had declared that "the End or Scope of Satire is to purge the Passions."⁴⁰⁸ I argue that Young and Pope tested this concept of satire's civic function—put it into practice. Young conceived the "love of fame" as a "universal passion" that provided the means for its own refinement. Cultivating a laughing, reasonable persona, he envisioned satire as a "shining *supplement*

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Charlotte E. Crawford, "What Was Pope's Debt to Edward Young?," *ELH* 13.3 (Sept. 1946): 157-67; Douglas Lane Patey, "Art and Integrity: Concepts of Self in Alexander Pope and Edward Young," *Modern Philology* 83.4 (May 1986): 364-78; Howard D. Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain: Studies in Augustan Imitation and Satire* (Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 1969), esp. 59-164; Daniel W. Odell, "Young's Night Thoughts as an Answer to Pope's Essay on Man," *SEL* 12.3 (Summer 1972): 481-501; Suvir Kaul, *Thomas Gray and Literary Authority: A Study in Ideology and Poetics* (Stanford: Stanford UP / Delhi: Oxford UP, 1992), 16-52. For Young's relationship to the Scriblerians, see James May, "A Critical, Reader's Edition of Edward Young's Satiric Poetry: *Love of Fame* and *Two Epistles to Mr. Pope* (PhD diss., U of Maryland, 1982); "Edward Young's Responses to Jonathan Swift," *Swift Studies* 18 (2003): 63-79; and "Swift Sent Pensioner Young to the Sawpit, but Relished the Doctor 'As He Deserves,'" in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Fourth Munster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Hermann J. Real (Munich, Germany: Fink, 2003).

⁴⁰⁸ Dryden, *Works*, IV.77.29-30.

of publick *laws*.” Pope, in contrast, flouted the spirit of libel law, staying barely within its letter. He envisioned the commonwealth enriched by his “Self-love,” writ large as a passion exciting public debate, stimulating commerce, and inspiring ingenious poets to seek lasting fame. Whereas Young had encouraged his readers to thwart more “disagreeable” passions, Pope sought to harness and find vent for such violent passions as malice, envy, anger, and indignation.

In pursuing this line of argument, one of my principal aims is to demonstrate and make sense of the close connection between generic theory and political philosophy during the long eighteenth century. In the previous case study, I argued that Ogilby and Dryden’s epic translations, composed at times of cultural and governmental revolution, drew upon the convention of the epic as a handbook for princes to assert anew the ideal relationship between the monarch and the people. In the two chapters that follow, I show that two prominent satirists of the early eighteenth century designed their work to address what I call the “Mandevillean dilemma,” which brought verse satire into dialogue with compelling new ideas about the relationship between selfish, private behaviors and the public good. Satire had traditionally been conceived as a genre that ridiculed vice and folly and promoted virtue; this commonplace demanded revision in the age when Bernard Mandeville famously argued that “Private Vices” have “Public Benefits.” If private vices *did* have public benefits, then what was the public-spirited satirist to do? Should the well-meaning satirist ridicule virtue and promote vice? Given that satirists were notorious for testing the limits of utility and good taste, and given that Mandeville himself has often been seen as a satirist, did Mandeville’s theory simply provide contemporary satirists with a new license to make mischief?

These were not idle questions. Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, which caused quite a stir when it was published together with *An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools* in 1723, capitalized on stark terminological inversions so as to bring out the guiding paradox of "Private Vices, Public Benefits" all the more provocatively. But, in so doing, Mandeville was arguably giving extreme enunciation to an emerging tendency in political and economic philosophy to envision "vice" and "folly" as inevitable and possibly even vital components of a flourishing commonwealth. During the course of the seventeenth century, English political theorists had come increasingly to prize as civic virtues forms of selfish and calculatingly self-interested behavior not necessarily reducible to pious, humble Christian ideals. The Revolution had authorized a conception of an active polity characterized by the bold self-interested assertions of its constituent members: in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*, rather than advocating unreflective obedience to men of place, Dryden proffered a model of service playfully infused with "envy" and a "tincture of malice." These concepts found corollaries in economic philosophy. Intellectual historians such as Albert Hirschman have traced to the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the origins of neo-capitalist theories of government that saw avarice as a potentially productive, minor vice—a "softer" passion that promised to spur ambitious, industrious behavior and could be made to "check" more violent impulses in theories of countervailing passions.⁴⁰⁹ As I will show in Chapter Three, one can even find Anglican ministers of the period influenced by the increasingly utilitarian, secular mode of analysis that considered certain kinds of sins useful for the development of a Christian body politic.

⁴⁰⁹ *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, 20th Anniv. Edition (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997). Also Milton L. Myers, *The Soul of Modern Economic Man: Ideas of Self-Interest, Thomas Hobbes to Adam Smith* (Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 1983).

In selecting Young's *Universal Passion* and Pope's *Dunciad* controversy for comparison and juxtaposition, I have drawn together two performances (or, rather, two sets of performances) whose intertextual connections and animating rivalries are less obvious and less pointed than Dryden's rivalry with "Uncle Ogleby" in the task of Virgilian translation had been. Both Young and Pope composed "formal verse satire"—that is, satire composed according to a traditional classical structure whereby "Part A" mocked a selected vice and "Part B" encouraged the opposing virtue.⁴¹⁰ Thus there are more direct formal juxtapositions to be made than the juxtaposition that I have drawn here. In addition, both satirists adopted divergent approaches to imitating Horace—a divergence to which I have gestured occasionally but have nevertheless not made my central focus here. Instead, I have taken as my point of entry a philosophical dilemma that, in my assessment, influenced the ways these two poets structured their verse, controlled its dissemination, and envisioned its efficacy in the commonwealth. This has been a challenging focal point for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the way it threatens to dilute my analysis of the abiding intertextual relationship between the two poets. But the main lines of divergence should emerge clearly enough to be instructive. Simply put, Pope was more daring than Young in his willingness to depart from both the pyramidal, hierarchical vision of England that one can see manifested perhaps most clearly in John Ogilby's writings, and Pope was more daring, too, in his willingness to commit himself to a secular vision of the common weal. *The Dunciad* was understood by some of its early contemporaries as a poem whose composition had been actuated by malicious, "unchristian" passions, and it was alternately appreciated and denounced for

⁴¹⁰ Cf. Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain*, 59-75, and Mary Claire Randolph, "The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire," *Philological Quarterly* 21 (1942): 368-84.

the way it stirred up similarly sinful passions in its readers. It is understandable that Young, who was taking Anglican orders at about the time he was publishing *The Universal Passion*, would have sought to dedicate himself purposefully to the prospect of facilitating spiritual improvement in its readers. But it is interesting, too, to see how thoroughly he has assimilated the utilitarian mode of civic analysis that came peculiarly into tension, in the Mandevillean moment, with the civic project of assisting spiritual reform.

This point of entry has the additional advantage of providing access to what I understand to be an aspect of eighteenth-century theories of government that is particularly difficult for modern readers to appreciate: a way of conceiving the body politic and the human heart and mind as collections of competing passions and interests, some more virtuous than others, that can be excited and controlled in predictable ways. Chapter Three stresses the implications of this concept for an investigation of eighteenth-century poetics. Scholarship on formal verse satire has been heavily inflected by the New Critical idea of a poem as a well-wrought urn, whose internal structures are ideally arranged in pleasing symmetries that promise to provoke a refined aesthetic response in a well-trained reader. The logical outgrowth of this way of conceiving poetry is a mode of aesthetic judgment that seeks to differentiate between “good” and “bad” formal verse satire by considering how well the poet selects his or her a topic that will lend itself to tidy moral distinctions, etched as such in the “urn” of the verse. This way of envisioning poetic production, hermeneutic experience, and didactic strategy will almost necessarily obscure what I take to be the most interesting features of Edward Young’s “design” for satirical reform. Young imagined his readers coming to the text with passions that

needed to be accounted for in the selection of a satirical persona: prideful readers were resistant to being told what to do, he assumed, so it made sense to present them with a jovial satirical persona that would cajole them into seeing the world the way he wanted them to see it. I have sought to make comprehensible these rhetorical choices, which interact complexly in Young's work with a vision of the commonwealth as a political body actuated by the pursuit of reputation.

Chapter Four stresses the importance of the idea of the body politic as a collection of competing passions in an appraisal of Pope's counterintuitive approach to satire in the 1728 *Dunciad*. Scholarship on Pope has been heavily influenced by a biographical way of reading that envisions his late poems as the expressions of a "gloomy Tory satirist," disgusted by hack writing, political corruption, and the degenerate state of British culture, and wishing (perhaps) that by mocking the emblems of that degeneration he can gain some kind of control over a world that he feels is not his own. This way of approaching Pope's writing, however appropriate a model it may be for appraising a work such as the deathbed *Dunciad* (1743), does not lend itself to a consideration of the rhetorical strategies that might have seemed appealing to a poet who was committed to a vision of England (or Britain) as a polity with a balanced constitution, animated by competing tensions among its constituent parts—a vision, in other words, that comes closer to the idea of the polity to which Dryden had appealed in his translation of Virgil. In *Windsor Forest* (1713), Pope had envisioned the British landscape, in its most ideal form, as a landscape embodying "harmonious confusion"—a translation of the classical notion of *concordia discors* into a modern setting:

Not *Chaos*-like together crush'd and bruis'd,
But as the World, harmoniously confus'd:

Where Order in Variety we see,
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree.⁴¹¹

A poet committed to this vision of national prosperity will have good reason *not* to compose texts that promise to convert his readers to his own worldview by imitation or coercion. Instead, he might be inclined to promote the common weal by introducing into circulation a text that promises to excite his readers into a posture of harmonious confusion, agreeing in their disagreement, or animating the body politic with a diversity of irreconcilable oppositions, brought productively into tension with one another. This is the theory that I put forward to explain the puzzling structure of Pope's 1728 *Dunciad*, which was well-calculated to produce just such a reaction: in it, Pope centrally ridiculed an element of character that many readers would have identified as virtue, and he was apparently pleased with the passionate backlash that the poem produced.

This is not to say that all of Pope's readers would have seen what game he was playing in *The Dunciad* (or would have appreciated it as such), and, indeed, I have included in my analysis Young's ambivalent response to the performance *en route* to making that case. Young had previously seen himself as one of Pope's allies. Often counted among the "Wits" himself (although a "graver" one than Swift and Pope), Young had called out to Pope in the opening lines of *The Universal Passion* as England's quintessential Horatian satirist, politely acknowledging the recent lull in Pope's production of satire (for Pope had been consumed by the editing of Shakespeare, among other things):

Why slumbers *Pope*, who leads the tuneful Train
Nor hears that Virtue, which He loves, complain?
Donne, Dorset, Dryden, Rochester are dead,

⁴¹¹ *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One-Volume Edition of the Twickenham Text with Selected Annotations*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale UP, 1963), ll. 13-16.

And Guilt's chief Foe in *Addison* is fled;
Congreve, who crown'd with Lawrels fairly won,
 Sits smiling at the Goal while Others run,
 He will not Write; and (more provoking still!)
 Ye Gods! He will not write, and *Mævius* will.
 Doubly distrest, what Author shall we find
 Discreetly Daring, and Severely Kind,
 The Courtly *Roman*'s shining path to tread,
 And sharply Smile prevailing Folly dead?
 Will no superior Genius snatch the quill,
 And save me on the Brink, from Writing Ill?⁴¹²

Young, of course, is deferentially hoping to take Pope's place as the preeminent Horatian satirist of his day, and he may well have with *The Universal Passion*. With the composition of *The Dunciad*, Pope embraced a decidedly more Juvenalian strain of satire: a mode of authorial self-effacement, accomplished through the dramatization of passionate self-expression (presumably feigned) that promised to provoke resistance rather than to cajole his readers into agreement.

This transition can be mapped along the lines of party politics as well, Young having been a well-pensioned supporter of Robert Walpole, and Pope having been a poet increasingly aligned with the Tory opposition in his later years. But I have tried to discuss these political alignments less as party affiliations, constitutive of worldview, than as divergent visions of the British commonwealth as an animated body of competing passions and interests. Young and Pope can seem like very similar poets. Both authors employed end-stopped heroic couplets in their satire; they both negotiated between the particular and the general with the "characteristical satire" (a term to be discussed subsequently); they both produced "philosophical poems"; they mocked some of the same men and women in their satire; and, perhaps most notably, they both explicitly

⁴¹² *The Universal Passion. Satire I. To His Grace the Duke of Dorset* (London, 1725), 3, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Dec. 16, 2009).

adopted Horace as a satirical model in some of the poems in question, Young by loosely imitating Horace's jovial manner and Pope by following up the *Dunciad* controversy with a series of formal verse Imitations of Horace.⁴¹³ I therefore seek an understanding of their differences not merely as expressions of personal loyalties or degrees of psychological contentment with the Walpolean regime, but as divergent strategies for engaging their contemporary readers in reading experiences that might be profitable for the collectivity, if not also for the individual readers contained in it.

A brief word on terminology. One of my central conceptual interventions in this case study involves taking seriously the idea, traced usefully by Dustin Griffin, that satire can “purge the passions,” both in the sense of giving vent to a besetting humor (like malice) and in the sense of exciting or quelling the passions of their readers.⁴¹⁴ When writers of this period discussed “the passions,” they were typically referring to strong emotions, affections, or appetites that caused humans to suffer or motivated them to act: love, lust, ambition, envy, wrath, avarice, fear or pity, excesses of grief and longing. The term typically overlapped with, but was not wholly synonymous with, the traditional notion of “vice” or “sin”—hence the interest of the concept for a writer negotiating the “Mandevillian dilemma.” Indeed, with the emergence of the Enlightenment, the term “passions” was increasingly employed as a kind of technical, analytical term to delineate an element of human nature or human psychology without relying on Christian moral categories.

⁴¹³ Points of overlap between Young's addressees and Pope's have not yet been sufficiently explored in modern scholarship; however, Pope's recycling of passages from Young's early writings has been catalogued and commented upon. See Charlotte Crawford, “What Was Pope's Debt...?,” esp. 157-58; also Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain*, 109-12, 126-28.

⁴¹⁴ “Venting Spleen,” *Essays in Criticism* 40.2 (Apr. 1990): 124-135.

Thus, for instance, Pope includes in the annotations to his translation of *The Iliad* the following comment about Homer's treatment of the passions. "We are now past the War and Violence of the *Ilias*," Pope writes, demarcating a moment late in the epic when the heated energy of the battlefield conflict and the reader's attendant excitement have begun to subside:

[W]e may look back with a pleasing kind of Horror upon the Anger of *Achilles*, and see what dire Effects it has wrought in the compass of nineteen Days: *Troy* and *Greece* are both in Mourning for it[;] Heaven and Earth, Gods and Men, have suffer'd in the Conflict. The Reader seems landed upon the Shore after a violent Storm; and has Leisure to survey the Consequences of the Tempest, and the Wreck occasion'd by the former Commotions, *Troy* weeping for *Hector*, and *Greece* for *Patroclus*. Our Passions have been in an Agitation since the opening of the Poem; wherefore the Poet, like some great Master in Musick, softens his Notes, and melts his Readers into Tenderness and Pity.⁴¹⁵ (486)

This passage offers a sense of both what writers of this period meant when they discussed "the passions" and how at least one eighteenth-century writer conceived the poet as governor of the passions. Pope has adapted Aristotle's analysis of catharsis to his analysis of Homer's strategy for affecting the common weal: the poet structures the narrative and the character of the hero to provoke a normative, emotional reaction in its audience. Thus Homer, as Pope describes him, is both a painter of the passions and a governor of the passions. Homer paints the passions so he can govern them. His passion-filled narrative produces a predictable reaction in his audience that in some respects reflects the actions he has described. Homer's civic work is therefore comparable to that of an instrumentalist or conductor—"a great Master in Musick"—who leads a musical piece through the requisite tonal shifts of its constituent movements and controls the crowd accordingly: at first exciting or "agitating" their passions, then

⁴¹⁵ *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 8, ed. Maynard Mack (London: Methuen & Co. / New Haven: Yale UP, 1967), 486.

allowing them “a pleasing kind of Horror” as they look back on the destructive nature of Achilles’ wrath, and finally encouraging a “melting” and softening of the heart to end the experience.

The neo-Aristotelian concept of purgation as a cleansing and venting of passion that will contribute to civic order provided a crucial reference point for both poets; however, Young and Pope did not limit their conceptions of governing the passions to this particular notion of purgation as catharsis. Both writers—especially Pope—explore a variety of complementary ways of thinking about purgation: vomiting, venting, defecating, urinating, braying. In addition, both writers demonstrate their investment in the idea that the passions provoked by a given text do not merely calm readers into a state of aesthetic contemplation, but move them to examine the movements of their own passions, to commit violent acts, or even to write. The following analysis highlights these important points of divergence.

Chapter Three

Jovial Judgment and the Common Weal: *Love of Fame: The Universal Passion* (1725-28) as an Exercise in Refining the Passions

Five years Pope's senior, Edward Young was the son of an Anglican clergyman. Attending Winchester College and then Oxford, partly on scholarship, Young received his degree as doctor of civil laws in 1719 and eventually took orders himself. By this point, Young had already found his way into the London literary scene and had made connections with major literary figures of the day. Young addressed one of his earliest published poems to Lord Bolingbroke in 1714; his *A Letter to Mr. Tickell* (1719) is a panegyric upon Addison's death. It was Young who was walking with Jonathan Swift during the summer of 1720 when the latter famously predicted of himself that he would eventually expire "like that tree," from the top downwards; and Alexander Pope's library contains a signed copy of one of Young's earliest poems.⁴¹⁶ Thanks in part to these connections, Young was apparently able to support himself principally (or exclusively) from his writing during this early period.⁴¹⁷ He made a name for himself early on as a panegyrist and a poet enamored of pious themes.⁴¹⁸ But *Love of Fame: The Universal Passion* (1725-1728), which appeared in print around the time Young was taking orders,

⁴¹⁶ James E. May, "Young, Edward (*bap.* 1683, *d.* 1765)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed online Feb 7, 2010. Also see May, "A Critical, Reader's Edition of Edward Young's Satiric Poetry: *Love of Fame* and *Two Epistles to Mr. Pope* (PhD diss., U of Maryland, 1982), esp. 1-11.

⁴¹⁷ May writes that "[w]ithout any inherited wealth and with only his fellowship for subsistence into his forties, Young long supported himself through literature, writing dedications and poems aimed at preferment, tragedies for benefit nights, and popular poems self-published with copyrights later sold for profit." See "Young, Edward," *ODNB*.

⁴¹⁸ Cf. *Epistle to Lord Landsdoune* (1713); *The Force of Religion; or, Vanquished Love* (1714); *On the Late Queen's Death and His Majesty's Accession to the Throne* (1714). Also, *A Poem on the Last Day* (1713).

seems to have put him on the map as a major English writer of his age. Later eras have sometimes remembered Young for his later work—in particular, *Night Thoughts* (1742-45) and *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759). But during the 1720s and 1730s, Young was actually considered by his contemporaries to be one of the foremost satirists of his age, together with Pope, Swift, and John Gay.⁴¹⁹ In 1728, Allan Ramsay counted Young one of the “quadruple alliance.”⁴²⁰ Swift, echoing this idea, famously described Young in his private correspondence as “the gravest among us”—a satirist perhaps too “grave” for the “present age to relish as he deserves,” but nevertheless a “wit” like himself.⁴²¹

Young’s performance in *The Universal Passion* also helped to confirm his reputation as a poet who “must torture his invention / To flatter knaves, or lose his pension.”⁴²² Here Young adapted Dryden’s tactic of securing multiple dedicatees for a single composition, presumably in part to enhance his remuneration for the work. Originally issuing *The Universal Passion* from 1725 to 1728 as seven separate “Satires,”⁴²³ Young was able to secure for the poem multiple patron-dedicatees. These included the Duke of Dorset, son of the dedicatee of Dryden’s *Discourse Concerning the*

⁴¹⁹ James May, “Critical, Reader’s Edition,” 15-25.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, qtd. 19.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, qtd. 22.

⁴²² Jonathan Swift, “On Poetry: A Rhapsody” (1733), in *The Complete Poems*, ed. Pat Rogers (NY: Penguin Books, 1989), 530.

⁴²³ The so-called “first edition” of the poem was originally published by James Roberts from 1725 to 1728 in seven sequentially-numbered folio publications, each of them titled *The Universal Passion*. In 1728 the seven satires were drawn together and published by Jacob Tonson as a fine-paper octavo “second edition,” introduced by an authorial preface, and emblazoned with the somewhat more descriptive title, *Love of Fame: The Universal Passion. In Seven Characteristical Satires*. For details, see James May, “Hidden Editions in Satires I and II of Edward Young’s *The Universal Passion*” and “The Authority of Accidental Variants in the Tonson Second Edition of Edward Young’s *Love of Fame*,” both in *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 37 (1984): 181-86, 187-97. It is my own hypothesis (not May’s) that one of the advantages of this distinctive pattern of publication was that Young could rationalize multiple dedications; however, May does see Young attempting above all to maximize his monetary profits in the publication of this work.

Original and Progress of Satire (1693), and also the royal minister Robert Walpole, who eventually awarded Young an annual pension of £200 for the performance.⁴²⁴ This distinctive pattern of publication also had the advantage of advertising Young's composition in stages before it was published as a unit—in essence, winning it a reputation with the public to enhance the sales of the first collected edition.⁴²⁵ Not surprisingly, then, by the time the collected edition of *The Universal Passion* was published in 1728 (Jacob Tonson's so-called "second edition," a fine-paper octavo edition with an authorial preface and a fuller title), Young had managed to drum up a good deal of interest in the poem. In total, he is said to have earned £3000 for *The Universal Passion*—a sum that, if accurate, far exceeded the amount that Dryden had earned in his monumental subscription translation of Virgil, even if it did not approach the £9000 that Pope had earned for his subscription translations of Homer in the preceding decade.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (NY and Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 156-57.

⁴²⁵ I am getting this idea partly from Young himself, who announces at the start of the Preface to the 1728 collected edition that "THESE Satires have been favourably received at home, and abroad"—an assertion, in other words, that "reputation," which is a major theme in the poem, has been a consideration in the publication pattern from the start. May suggests somewhat more pragmatically that the strategy of separate publication could have been intended to pave the way for a subscription publication (see "Hidd. Ed.," cited above). There are mentions of an ambition for subscription publication in Young's correspondence from the mid 1720s, and this plan could explain the presence of two separate editions of the 1725 first and second satires: May reasons that Young intended to use the publication of the first two satires as advertisement for an intended publication of *The Universal Passion* by subscription. It is not clear either why the original plan for the subscription was postponed or why Young at first published the work with Roberts but then sold his copyright to Tonson; however, May suggests on the basis of private correspondence from the period that Young was motivated by economic factors on both counts. "[T]he postponement of the subscription would have opened the market for an expensive fine-paper issue of the satires," and Young may have sold the rights to Tonson "because their apparent success assured a good price from Tonson for the satires" (185).

⁴²⁶ For the Young figure, see Griffin, *Literary Patronage*, 159 n. For Dryden and Pope, Frost offers the numbers £1400 and £9000, respectively, "Dryden's Virgil," *Comparative Literature* 36.3 (Summer 1984): 199. Barnard sets the figure for *Dryden's Virgil* a little higher: "between £910 and £1075 from Tonson and the subscribers, and probably £400 or £500 for his dedications." See "Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons of *The Works of Virgil* (1697)," in *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*, eds. Hammond and Hopkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 177.

In accordance with these rather ingenious tactics of self-promotion, Young's *Universal Passion* delicately accommodated selfishness as an inevitable and potentially productive animating feature of human behavior. Balancing his dual affiliation as a "wit" and an Anglican minister, Young developed a form of satire intended to delineate, mock, reform, and therefore channel to constructive ends a passion alternately described as the "love of praise," the "love of fame," and sometimes more baldly, "pride"—that is, the desire for a good reputation.⁴²⁷ He condemned the love of fame as a passion productive of vice, folly, and sin; however, he also recognized its civic benefits. Drawing upon conventions associated with formal verse satire as a genre, he staged a central tension between his religious counsel—that is, the assertion that pride was a sin—and his philosophical accommodation of the love of fame as a boon to the common weal. The love of fame was a universal feature of human behavior, Young argued, and one that not only contributed to human vice and folly but also provided the means for its own correction and refinement. He imagined his poetry chastising and harnessing self-love in a manner that enhanced processes of "purgation" already in motion in the temporal world

⁴²⁷ The latter phrase appears in the title of the "second edition" (1728), discussed below; the phrase "love of praise" appears in a prominent place early in the first satire: "The *love of praise*, howe'er conceal'd by art, / Reigns more, or less, and glows in every heart" (6). The terminology that Young uses to describe this "universal passion" may be intentionally ambiguous and various. The poem offers numerous alternative terms and phrases (e.g. pride, ambition, envy, vanity, "public face")—a pattern in keeping with the abiding notion that this "universal passion" mixes with a variety of other passions and manifests itself in a variety of vices, foibles, and behaviors. Unless otherwise noted, all citations of Young's poem refer to *Love of Fame, The Universal Passion*. In *Seven Characteristical Satires*, 2nd ed.: "Corrected, and Alter'd" (London, 1728), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 9, 2009). This was, for all practical purposes, the first collected edition of the poem, and it contains an authorial preface that I have mined centrally. I would normally be inclined to consult the first edition; however, it seemed to me in this case more practical to quote from the so-called "second edition" than to refer to each of the seven individual satires from its individual folio. There is still no widely available critical edition of the poem in either the first or the second edition. *The Poetical Works of Edward Young*, vol. 2 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970) does not produce the original eighteenth-century typography; it silently fills in omitted letters of names in the text of the verse; and its rendering of both the authorial preface and the verse departs in subtle but important ways from the wording of the texts that I have examined. James May's doctoral dissertation, cited above, remains unpublished.

without neglecting the potential spiritual consequences of a social system that rewarded prideful behavior.

I: The Structure, Tone, and Texture of *The Universal Passion*

The structure of *The Universal Passion* is deceptively straightforward. Written exclusively in heroic couplets, Young's seven verse satires run from 17 to 37 pages each (in the octavo edition). The bulk of the composition is dedicated to satirical depictions of the "love of fame" as a ridiculous, pervasive, foolish human passion. An introduction and conclusion to the collected poem are incorporated into the verse of the first and second satire, respectively; however, the vast central section of the composition is dedicated largely to the exposition of a series of linked character sketches in which the love of fame is revealed as a motivating feature of human behavior.

In Satire II, for instance, Young portrays (among others) "*Codrus*," whose "Erudite ambition" is manifested in the purchase of multiple editions of expensive books.⁴²⁸ Satire III offers (among other portraits) a portrait of "*Balbutius*," whose critical prescriptions about the rules of poetry are issued with an unmistakable air of self-importance:

Balbutius muffled in his sable cloak,
Like an old Druid from his hollow oak,
As ravens solemn, and as *boading*, cries,
Ten thousand worlds for the Three Unities!⁴²⁹

Continuing in the same vein, Satires V and VI are dedicated to the follies of "*Britannia's* Daughters."⁴³⁰ Here we meet women such as "keen *Zantippe*," who "vent[s] her

⁴²⁸ Young, *Universal Passion*, 28.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

thunders, and her lightnings play[s] / O'er cooling *gruel*, and composing *tea*," and also "lovely Daphne," who "reigns" over "the *Belle-lettre*" with a posture of superiority:

With legs tost high on her Sophee she sits,
Vouchsafing audience to contending wits;
Of each performance she's the final test;
One Act read o'er, she prophesies the rest.
And then pronouncing with decisive air,
Fully convinces all the town———*she's fair*.⁴³¹

"Characteristic-Writing" was a genre with precedents in such classical works as Theophrastus's *Characters*. It was described and developed by Isaac Casaubon, Jean de La Bruyère, Joseph Addison, Henry Gally, and others in the years leading up to the composition of *The Universal Passion*. However, Young was the first in English "to combine characters written in the manner of La Bruyère with verse satire,"⁴³² and Young was also innovative in his effort to combine these "characteristical satires" thematically by describing the various manifestations and effects of a single, "universal passion."⁴³³ Sometimes painting a given character in one or two lines, and sometimes allowing a portrait to unfold over several verse paragraphs, Young presents his audience with what

⁴³¹ Ibid., 88, 91-92.

⁴³² Charlotte E. Crawford, "What Was Pope's Debt to Edward Young?," *ELH* 13.3 (Sept. 1946): 160. Crawford elaborates on this history (esp. 159-61), discusses the meaning of "characteristical satire," and describes its influence on Pope.

⁴³³ In Theophrastus's *Characters*, short, discursive essays isolated social characteristics to be avoided (e.g. "Dissimulation," "Loquacity," "Sordid Parsimony," "Abandon'd Impudence," "Abominable Impudence") and then painted brief, detailed portraits of those personality types in a manner facilitating the recognition and avoidance of the behavior. Thus, for instance, "the Dissembler" is said to be someone who "openly condoles with" those who "have met with any Misfortune, ... tho' at the same Time, he rejoices in his Heart," or who, "when he meets with his Enemy, seems desirous to lay aside all Enmity, and to have a friendly Correspondence with him" (120). With similar effects, the essay "On Loquacity" delineates the unsociable consequences of "*an Intemperance of Speech*" in a kind of vignette: "When you are in Company with a Loquacious Man, whatever Discourse you begin, he immediately interrupts you, tells you that you mistake the Matter, that he perfectly understands it, and, if you will but have the Patience to hear him, will fully instruct you" (163). See Henry Gally's English translation of Theophrastus, *The moral characters of Theophrastus. Translated from the Greek, with notes. To which is prefix'd A critical essay on characteristic-writings ...* (London, 1725), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 5, 2009).

he calls “a catalogue of *British* fools,”⁴³⁴ diverse in their appearances but similarly guided in their misbehavior by the love of fame. Prominent focal points include superficiality of courtiers (esp. Satires I and IV); excesses of cultural acquisition, from flowers to books to erudition to wit (esp. Satire II); problems of poetic criticism and poetic fame (esp. Satire III); political machinations and social-climbing (Satire IV); as noted already, the particular follies and vices of women (Satires V and VI); and pitfalls of the great (Satire VII). By the end of the poem, Young’s seven “characteristical satires” have touched on a variety of habits and activities—largely upper-class activities—that were viewed at the time as the very stuff of civilized life: going to church, building immense estates, frequenting the balls and plays of high society, wooing lovers, amassing the material signs of high culture, conducting scholarship, conducting politics, composing poetry, setting oneself up as a critic, setting oneself up as a politician, and so forth. The implication is that aristocrats and aspiring gentry remain peculiarly subject to the love of fame and that, within this category, women display reputation-seeking behavior to a degree that deserves its own separate treatment.

Buoying these character sketches is a good-humored note of moral and social disapproval—a tone of mild judgment that was not inconsistent with the civic role and the expected intellectual habitudes of an ordained Anglican minister of the period. Young deliberately eschewed Juvenal’s impassioned satirical manner, preferring instead to mimic Horace’s mode of “smiling” satire, and the tone adopted throughout much of the piece embodies this loosely Horatian satirical mode.⁴³⁵ The love of fame is silly and perhaps also sinful, Young seems to say; it is both a folly and, in the technical sense of

⁴³⁴ Young, *UP*, 10.

⁴³⁵ Young explains his preference for Horace in his Preface to the 1728 collected edition. I will elaborate on this choice subsequently.

the term, a vice, insofar as it incorporates and empowers such traditional Christian sins as pride, envy, and avarice. The guiding message is therefore that one should do one's best to reflect upon and correct the more egregious manifestations of one's own reputation-seeking behavior. Along these lines, Young departs from his descriptive mode intermittently to interpret his character sketches and offer explicit advice. For instance, the passage concerning "*Balbutius*," the self-important critic, concludes with a ringing apostrophe that both diagnoses the *faux pas* and proposes avenues for its amelioration:

Ye Doctors sage, who thro' *Parnassus* teach,
Or quit the tub, or practise what you preach.⁴³⁶

To similar ends, transitions and interludes comment on the illusory nature of the love of fame or analyze its hold on the human psyche. Fame is twice described as a "bubble": a "bubble the Reserv'd enjoy, / Who strive to grasp it, [and] as they *touch*, *destroy*," and, in a related image, a stream of "*bubbles* on the rapid stream of Time, / That rise, and fall, that swell, and are no more, / *Born*, and *forgot*, ten thousand in an hour."⁴³⁷

Balanced with this general tendency toward rebuke and critique are several strategically-placed forays into the panegyric mode. These positive exempla establish, *in bono*, an approach to the love of fame to be admired and mimicked. Young posits models of virtue in Queen Caroline and King George, and he develops the occasional fictionalized character sketch with a similar end in view (e.g., "prudent *Portia*," Satire V⁴³⁸). But many of Young's panegyric flourishes double as addresses to his patrons. Satire I begins with an address to the Duke of Dorset, son of one of Dryden's preferred

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 78, 40.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 114-15.

dedicatees, that juxtaposes the Duke's aloofness from fame with the fame-seeking tendencies of poets (like Young himself) whom Dorset supports with his patronage:

My Verse is Satire; DORSET, lend your ear,
 And *patronize* a Muse You cannot *fear*.
 To poets sacred is a DORSET's name,
 Their wonted passport thro' the gates of Fame;
 It *bribes* the partial reader into praise,
 And throws a glory round the shelter'd lays;
 The dazzled Judgment fewer faults can see,
 And gives applause to *Bl*——,⁴³⁹ or to Me.
 But You decline the *mistress* we pursue;
 Others are fond of *Fame*, but *Fame* of You.⁴⁴⁰

Thus the “shelter'd lays” receive a kind of reflected glory that dazzles the judgment and disguises “faults”; Dorset's “name,” by contrast, being attached to a lord of true merit, attracts “Fame” by its more genuine nature. Following a similar pattern, Young's dedication of the satires on women (V and VI) depicts Lady Elizabeth Germain as a lady so virtuously retiring that the poet did not know her personally before he solicited her patronage:

I sought a patroness, but sought in vain.
Apollo whisper'd in my ear — — — “*Germain*. — —
 I know her not — — “ Your reason's somewhat odd;
 “ Who knows his patron, now? reply'd the God.
 “ Men write, to *me*, and to the *world*, unknown;
 “ Then steal great names to sheild them from the Town.
 “ Detected *worth*, like *beauty* disarray'd,
 “ To covert flys, of *praise* itself afraid;
 “ Should *she* refuse to patronize your lays,
 “ In vengeance write a Volume *in her praise*.⁴⁴¹

Here again, Young exploits a defining juxtaposition between patron and poet. Young's virtuous dedicatee is a singular soul whose true “*worth*” is evidenced in her retirement

⁴³⁹ Identified by Horace Walpole as “Blackmore”—that is, Richard Blackmore, author of *Prince Arthur* (among other works), and a poet that Pope would later associate with an especially fulsome, “thundering” mode of flattery.

⁴⁴⁰ Young, *UP*, 3.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

from the social circles that attract most women of station; fame-seeking poets, resembling the vast majority of “*Britannia’s Daughters*,” practice a deceitful form of self-promotion. They “steal great names to shield them from the Town.” And they take shelter behind these reputations of the “great” not because they fear the “*praise*” that might surround their work as a consequence of circulating in public, but because they wish to augment the “Town’s” opinion of their work. They wish to associate their names with “names” more worthy (or, at least, more *famous*) than their own.

II: *The Universal Passion* and the Pattern of Formal Verse Satire

Thus far, the most obvious means of explaining Young’s satirical strategy has been to discern in his satire the presence of two epideictic poles: an attack on vice and folly and a corresponding celebration of virtue. Howard Weinbrot, building on the work of Mary Claire Randolph, has shown that *The Universal Passion* adheres to a bipartite verse structure typical of formal verse satire from the Restoration through the mid eighteenth century, whereby “Part A” of a given poem unmasks a given vice or folly and “Part B” promotes the opposing virtue.⁴⁴² Critics such as André Dacier and John Dryden had encouraged modern satirists not to neglect the promotion of virtue in their satire, plain “invective” having been an especially pervasive form of satire in the period, and Young can be understood to have followed these critical prescriptions in *The Universal*

⁴⁴² Howard D. Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain: Studies in Augustan Imitation and Satire* (Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 1969), esp. 59-75, 95-128; also “The Pattern of Formal Verse Satire in the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century” (*PMLA* 80.4 (Sept. 1965): 394-401). Weinbrot bases his analysis particularly on Randolph’s “Structural Design of Formal Verse Satire,” *Philological Quarterly* 21 (1942): 368-84, which develops an influential analysis of the bipartite structure of classical verse satires admired in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Lucilius, Horace, Persius, Juvenal); Weinbrot extends Randolph’s analysis by tracing an awareness of this “pattern of formal verse satire” in theoretical treatises on satire (e.g. Dacier, Dryden) and original satirical compositions of the period (e.g., Young, Pope, Johnson).

Passion.⁴⁴³ He alternates between blame and praise at the local level when, for instance, he at first ridicules “*Balbutius*” for his pomposity as a critic and then immediately proposes steps for its amelioration.⁴⁴⁴ And Young might also be said to enact a broad progression within the satires as a group, insofar as his most prominent complaints about the general prevalence of vice and folly—“Part A” of the classical structure—appear in Satire I, and the most prominent and elaborate panegyrics appear in the final satire, where discussions of King George and Robert Walpole help to isolate for examination and imitation what Weinbrot dubs “Virtuous Ambition.”⁴⁴⁵

This formalist approach goes some distance toward explaining Young’s approach to promoting the common weal with satire. It recognizes in *The Universal Passion* a discursive formula common to a number of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century performances in formal verse satire; it locates this pattern in influential classical examples; it isolates several important contemporary theoretical statements that advocate attention to this formula (e.g., Dacier, Dryden); and it surveys the influence of these prescriptions on the practice of a number of major and minor verse satirists of the period. We know, in other words, that by the early eighteenth century, the discursive conventions of formal verse satire had been purposefully and influentially analyzed in the manner of Le Bossu’s late-seventeenth-century treatise on the epic; and even if, in practice, any number of other satirists of the period disregarded or proved ignorant of these prescriptions, we have good reason to think that Young knew this critical literature and

⁴⁴³ Weinbrot’s research has demonstrated the influence of Dryden’s *Discourse Concerning the Origin and Progress of Satire* and has helped to establish Young as a poet who very clearly followed Dryden’s advice in the development of his central design. The point about “invective” is my own. Dryden himself gestures toward the proliferation of English invective in the *Discourse*; he considers England superior to the ancients in their production of satire.

⁴⁴⁴ Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain*, 113-14, offers an extensive list of alternative examples.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 115; “Pattern of Formal Verse Satire,” 401.

took it seriously.⁴⁴⁶ But I depart from Weinbrot in my conception of how and why Young incorporates the conventional epideictic poles into *The Universal Passion*. As Weinbrot has assessed *The Universal Passion*, Young clearly adheres to the conventions of formal verse satire in this composition; however, he does not do so very well. Juxtaposing *The Universal Passion* unfavorably with Pope's formal verse satires, Weinbrot faults Young for his longwindedness, his tendency to alternate between praise and blame "with ... a vengeance" at the local level, his specious patterns of pension-seeking (dramatized with fulsome panegyrics within the poem), and his failure to posit a singular virtue in crisp opposition to the folly that he has been ridiculing throughout the poem.⁴⁴⁷ A more praiseworthy approach, Weinbrot implies, would have involved the selection of a topic that allowed a neater, more uncontroversial replication of the classical formula: the excoriation of bad taste and the promotion of good taste, for instance, or the ridicule of bad judgment and the encouragement of common sense.⁴⁴⁸ I want to propose a different way of understanding the purpose of Young's neoclassical performance. Rather than employing the classical discursive formula to posit an untroubled opposition between "virtue" and "vice" in his treatment of a modern question of morality or ethics, Young adheres to these conventional discursive forms in order to dramatize the difficulty of distinguishing absolutely between "virtue" and "vice" when it comes to the love of fame.

⁴⁴⁶ Weinbrot points out that Young seems particularly attentive to Dryden comments (esp. "Pattern," 400).

⁴⁴⁷ *The Formal Strain*, 113. I will address a number of Weinbrot's specific concerns during the course of my discussion. Among other curiosities, Young sometimes urges the *suppression* of the love of fame—thereby making humility its opposite—and at other times seems to accept the presence of the love of fame as a productive inevitability or even a potential spur to positive civic achievement.

⁴⁴⁸ "By the time the reader arrives at [the final satire]," Weinbrot writes, "he has been wearied by its repetition..., and he is likely to be unhappy with the implications of the fawning encomium of Walpole, unconvinced by the splendor of his King, and ... perplexed and disturbed by ethical and satiric contradictions at the core of the poem, many of which are related to Young's inappropriate selection of subjects of praise to balance those of blame" (1969 116).

This negotiation is perhaps most immediately visible at the local level. Consider the deftness of Young's moral pronouncements about the love of fame in a passage that appears early in the second book—a passage well positioned to establish the reader's expectations for the character sketches that follow. Here we are introduced to a character named "Florio," a man obsessed with a rare tulip that grows in his garden. Exotic tulips were a status symbol among the English upper classes in the early eighteenth century. Young diagnoses this fad, interestingly, not as an expression of avarice or materialism in the strictest sense of these terms, but as a behavior reflective of the collector's desire for social clout—probably an apt diagnosis⁴⁴⁹:

... *Florio's* Fame, the product of a shower,
Grows in his garden, an illustrious flower!
Why teems the Earth? Why melt the vernal Skies?
Why shines the Sun? To make **Paul Diack* rise.
From morn to night has *Florio* gazing stood,
And wonder'd how the Gods could be so good;
What shape? what hue? what ever nymph so fair?
He doats! he dies! he too is *rooted* there.
O solid bliss! which nothing can destroy,
Except a cat, bird, snail, or idle boy.

**The name of a Tulip.* [Young's note.]⁴⁵⁰

One can see immediately where this story is going. "Florio," as he is comically depicted here, has begun to convince himself that the universe revolves around his beloved tulip, and his bubble is about to burst. As Young puts it, "In Fame's full bloom lies *Florio* down at night, / And wakes next day a most inglorious Wight; / The tulip's dead."⁴⁵¹

"Florio" will inevitably get his comeuppance. He has been "*rooted*" by his earthly

⁴⁴⁹ Young may also be glancing at the "tulipomania" of a century before whose more recent incarnation in the South Sea Bubble Young had experienced firsthand, having invested (and lost) a substantial sum himself. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss all of the potential socio-cultural implications of Young's rather tolerant posture toward this episode, my subsequent analysis attempts to make room for such a reading.

⁴⁵⁰ Young, *UP*, 24-25.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

obsessions as surely as his flowers are rooted in dirt, and his foolishness will necessarily be exposed by the flower's finite lifespan. But notice the playfully hyperbolic character of Young's description of Florio's vainly obsessive behavior. The tone of moral condemnation is gentle: "Florio's" passion is not really hurting anyone but himself, Young's presentation implies, though it does look awfully silly.⁴⁵²

This jovial, accommodating affect governs the subsequent lines as well, where the generalized character sketch of "Florio" is quietly transformed into a personal anecdote about one of the satirist's "friends" who had been beset by the same obsession. "Beware, O Florist, thy ambition's fall," Young counsels wryly:

A friend of mine indulg'd this noble flame,
A Quaker serv'd him, *Adam* was his name;
To one lov'd Tulip oft the master went,
Hung o'er it, and whole days in rapture spent;
But came, and mist it, one ill-fated hour:
He rag'd! he roar'd! "What *Dæmon* cropt my flower?"
Serene, quoth Adam, "lo! 'twas crusht by me;
Fall'n is the *Baal* to which thou bow'dst thy knee."⁴⁵³

The moral advice implicit in the narrative of the tulip's destruction is of course that Young's "friend"—whom he politely does not single out by name—has indeed been both foolish and spiritually short sighted. He has dedicated himself blindly to illusory things. And yet, Young's presentation cushions the blow, not only by quietly describing Florio's animating passion as a "noble flame," but also by prefacing the anecdote with the relational detail: Florio is one of us, he seems to say. Moreover, rather than condemning his friend's behavior directly, he puts the harshest and most direct moral condemnation in the mouth of "Adam" the Quaker. Young's mimicry of Quaker "thees" and "thous"

⁴⁵² Compare Weinbrot's gloss of the moral message of the passage, which stresses Florio's "passiv[ity]," *The Formal Strain*, 110. Weinbrot's reading of this episode sets up Young for an unfavorable comparison with Pope's recasting of the episode in Book IV of the deathbed version of *The Dunciad* (111-13).

⁴⁵³ Young, *UP*, 25.

reads as a kind of cultural parody: the portrait marks Adam as a religious dissenter perhaps too scrupulous in his “Serene” snub of another man’s idolatry. Young therefore keeps at arm’s length the rigid moral perspective embodied in Adam’s crushing of Florio’s beloved flower. His satire takes a moderating stance on the moral question: yes, “Florio” is technically guilty of pride and vanity, the Reverend suggests, and he could probably stand a dose of Christian humility reminiscent of Adam’s habitual posture toward material things, but there is no reason to condemn him harshly. After all, his love of plants is doing no harm to anyone but himself (or so it seems from Young’s portrait). Furthermore, as a practical matter, to insist on the spiritual shortcomings of Florio’s floral obsession only provokes his resentment: his “rag[ing]” and “roar[ing].” In the process, it destroys what might reasonably be admired as a beautiful thing: a rare tulip.

To return, then, to the matter of how Young deploys existing conventions of formal verse satire, what is striking about Young’s presentation is less the fact that he incorporates into his verse the standard movement from ridicule to correction, blame to praise, than the fact that he employs the standard pattern of formal verse satire to advocate a modicum of tolerance for the reputation-seeking fool. Rather than positing absolute extremes of vice and virtue (for instance, by labeling the love of fame as a sin and labeling its absence as a virtue), Young adapts the conventional formula in a manner that facilitates a delicate moral-ethical analysis of the passion at hand. The character sketch ends with a kind of call and response that signals the moment for the satirist’s judgment of the offense. An unnamed speaker (perhaps “Florio” himself, or an imagined reader who sees himself in Florio) registers a protest against the moral judgment implied

in the narrative; and Young, rather than resisting the protest outright, credits the protester's defense:

“ But all men want *amusement*, and what crime
 “ In such a Paradise to fool their time? ”
 None; but why proud of this? to Fame they soar;
 We grant *they're Idle*, if they'll ask no more.⁴⁵⁴

This passage constitutes the end of “Part A”: the moment of judgment. Not surprisingly, then, the vocabulary of sin is abundantly present here: most notably, “pride,” but also “idleness,” and even self-condemning phrases within the protester's speech that resonate with the same Christian language of sin and redemption (“Paradise,” “crime,” “fool their time”). The passage therefore serves to isolate for contemplation the sin primarily at issue in the behavior: pride. But, interestingly, even here, the Reverend-satirist shows himself curbing the impulse to judge. He resists the opportunity to condemn the “*amusement*” itself as covetousness or the indulgence of luxury: it is no “crime” to worship a flower, he allows. Thus “*Idle[ness]*” comes to sound almost like a neutral term here: Young has already circumscribed the category of “*amusement*” as a zone governed rightly by a vocabulary of legal permission. The final line, with its playful drama of “[grant]ing” liberties and imposing conditions, further confirms the sense of the exchange as a kind of bargaining session, in which the Reverend refrains from overstepping the prescribed boundaries of his moral discourse.

Moreover, just as Young tempers the blaming impulse in his presentation of Florio's passion in “Part A,” in his reflections in “Part B” he tempers the impulse to praise. “We smile at Florists,” Young writes, by way of conclusion to the episode; “we despise their joy / And think their hearts enamour'd of a toy”:

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 26.

But are those wiser whom we most admire,
 Survey with envy, and pursue with fire?
 What's he, who sighs for wealth, or fame, or power?
 Another *Florio* doating on a flower,
 A short-liv'd flower, and which has often sprung
 From sordid arts, as *Florio*'s out of dung.⁴⁵⁵

Structurally speaking, this is the moment when one might expect the satirist to posit a positive model for imitation in light of the conventions of formal verse satire. Young registers and confirms that expectation in his adoption of the comparative and superlative forms regarding “wis[dom]” that “we most admire.” And yet, what he offers in this “Part B” of the pattern is not, in the end, an imitable image of greatness and dignity (aristocratic or otherwise), but a staged refusal to complete the juxtaposition presupposed by the satirical discourse: “But *are* those wiser whom we most admire?” he asks rhetorically. As Young himself explains this evasion of the panegyric mode, it has been specifically calculated to diminish “envy” in his readers: by stopping short of indulging the view that Florio’s “doating” on a “short-liv’d flower” is somehow less admirable or less wise than doting on “wealth, or fame, or power” would be, Young resists this early opportunity to excite this grander, more public form of glory-seeking in his audience.⁴⁵⁶ Driving home the leveling gesture, the final lines affirm that the successful attainment of “wealth, or fame, or power” is a “short-liv’d flower” that “has often sprung /... out of dung” like Florio’s tulip. In the process, the satirist both confirms the initial attitude of tolerance toward Florio’s worship of the flower and clarifies the spiritual issue at hand: Florio’s foolishness rests less in the pursuit of an idle “amusement” at the expense of achieving greater things than in the privileging of an ultimately illusory earthly “Paradise” over the glory that awaits above. If this particular passage can be said to posit

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁵⁶ Young’s discussion of “*true* ambition” is reserved for the final satire. I discuss it subsequently.

a model of virtue for imitation, that model is comprised in the satirist's own tolerant attitude. Young models an outlook on vice and folly that recognizes the sin without condemning the impulse or comparing the sinner unfavorably to more ambitious figures. The satirist's humility and balanced judgment contrast with Florio's prideful excesses.

III: The Love of Fame and the Common Weal

It is perhaps not surprising that Young's posture toward his titular topic would be as nuanced as it is. Historically, the love of fame had been a fraught subject—a complexity that Young appears to have relished. In selecting this analytical focus for his satire, Young was deliberately engaging a well-established philosophical discourse in which it was not altogether clear whether the love of fame was a “virtue” or a “vice,” a boon or a detriment to the common weal.⁴⁵⁷ Numerous writers, ancient and modern, had commented upon the “love of fame” as a motivating “passion” in human behavior and had considered both its nature and its advantages and disadvantages as an organizing component of civil society. However, not all were agreed upon whether the love of fame should be encouraged or discouraged. For the strictest Christian thinkers, the answer was clear: the love of fame was a sin. Condemnable as “vainglory,” it fed on pride and envy and bent the mind away from the contemplation of true godly glory; to fail to counsel against the love of fame was to lead one's readers astray.⁴⁵⁸ Classical writers had been more divided on the issue. One could find ancient philosophers and historians

⁴⁵⁷ In delineating this tension, I have relied upon Albert Hirschman's account. See *The Passions and the Interests: Political Argument for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, 20th anniv. ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997).

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-11. Hirschman cites Dante and Aquinas. Augustine himself condemns fame-seeking; however, in his discussion of Roman culture, he makes room for the idea that one vice—in this case, the love of fame—might “check” other vices.

denouncing immoral, destructive, or unattractive versions of the passion; however, one could also find them citing the general usefulness of the pursuit of “honor” and “glory” in civic life.⁴⁵⁹ After all, when taken at face value, the pursuit of honor was utterly consistent with the desire to be *honorable*—to merit praise and rewards for one’s good deeds and one’s commitment to the community. Even in cases when the pursuit of reputation and decoration devolved into social climbing and sycophancy, the pursuit of approval from one’s community was arguably one of the softer vices—a less destructive form of selfishness than other forms of selfishness might have been (malice, envy, the desire for political power for its own sake, and so forth).⁴⁶⁰

And the latter strain of thinking had come to seem increasingly tenable in the early modern period. Albert Hirschman observes that “during the Renaissance, the striving for honor achieved the status of a dominant ideology as the influence of the Church receded and the advocates of the aristocratic ideal were able to draw on the plentiful Greek and Roman texts celebrating the pursuit of glory.”⁴⁶¹ Dramatists such as Corneille drew on this ideology in the plots of their tragedies⁴⁶²; and, throughout the

⁴⁵⁹ I have taken bibliographical hints from Robert Faulkner, *The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2007) and James Bowman, *Honor: A History* (NY: Encounter Books, 2006), both of whom offer something of a history of the topic during the course of arguments that we would do well to describe and promote, in a contemporary American context, what Faulkner calls “truly great ambition” (4). Faulkner draws heavily from classical examples, especially Aristotle, Thucydides, and Cicero, whom he analyzes both for their promotion of “truly great ambition” and their reservations about the negative moral and political effects of fame-seeking in its less noble forms. The love of fame is also a central thematic concern in classical epic. The desire for *kleos* (heroic glory, achieved especially through celebrated feats in battle) is embodied in different ways and to different degrees in the behavior of Hector, Achilles, and Odysseus. *Pietas* emerges for Aeneas as an alternative to *kleos*: the pursuit of national, imperial glory, joined to personal integrity and divine sanction and differentiated on the one hand from the bloody deeds of Achilles and on the other from Odysseus’s radical deception.

⁴⁶⁰ I am extending the reasoning that Hirschman employs/investigates in *The Passions and the Interests*. Hirschman is most concerned to explain the intellectual history that gradually made avarice a “softer” vice; he points to ideas about the pursuit of honor as a kind of forbear to the intellectual trends that he traces, but he does not make clear whether, or at what points in history (classical or modern), the pursuit of honor is being seen as a lesser vice.

⁴⁶¹ *The Passions and the Interests*, 11.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 11.

seventeenth century, cultural practices prizing the pursuit of honor and reputation exerted a powerful force in British society (the acquisition of titles, for instance).⁴⁶³ The heroic ideology was not without its detractors, to be sure. François de la Rochefoucauld, a writer who proved particularly amenable to Swift during the 1720s and 1730s, is counted by Hirschman among those writers who “cooperated in this ‘demolition of the hero,’” whether because they objected to the ideal on religious grounds, because they rejected its political and didactic associations (as in *Dryden’s Virgil*), or for some other reason.⁴⁶⁴ Nonetheless, by the time Young set out to compose *The Universal Passion*, Western European writers were proving comparatively open to the idea that a pervasive desire for reputation and honor might contribute positively to the common weal. Moreover, thanks in part to the caveats that had been issued by religious dogmatists and other “demolish[ers]” of the heroic-aristocratic ideal, they had reason to tackle the question in quite a sophisticated manner.

Consider, as a point of reference nearly contemporary to Young, Joseph Addison’s discussions of “the love of fame” in the pages of *The Spectator*.⁴⁶⁵ In No. 73, citing Cicero, Addison offers a qualified defense of the civic utility of the “love of fame.”

⁴⁶³ Faramerz Dabhoiwala, “The Construction of Honor, Reputation and Status in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 201-13.

⁴⁶⁴ Hirschman cites Bénichou (1948) and Huizanga (1945). He observes that, by the mid to late seventeenth century, “[w]riters from a number of Western European countries cooperated in this ‘demolition of the hero,’ with those from France—the country that had perhaps gone farthest in the cult of the heroic ideal—playing the major part” (11). I do not know of a systematic study of “the love of fame” as a discourse in the early modern period; however, individual studies contain useful hints about broad developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cf. Deborah Boyle, “Fame, Virtue, and Government: Margaret Cavendish on Ethics and Politics,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62.7 (April 2006): 251-89; Robert A. Manzer, “Hume on Pride and Love of Fame,” *Polity* 28.3 (1996): 333-35; and E.M. Thron, “Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels*: Multiplicity and Unity,” *SEL* 11.2 (Spring 1971): 235-47. Thron argues that Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels*, which offers an elaborate allegorical representation of the relationships among self-love, flattery, virtue, and fame, is modeled in part on Theophrastus’s *Characters* (to be discussed below for their relevance to Young).

⁴⁶⁵ May, “Critical, Reader’s Edition,” 79, cites seven *Spectator* essays that discuss the love of fame as an animating passion: numbers 73, 106, 139, 224, 255-57.

“[H]owever unreasonable and absurd this Passion for Admiration may appear in such a Creature as Man,” Addison muses, “it is not wholly to be discouraged; since it often produces very good effects, not only as it restrains him from doing any thing which is mean and contemptible, but as it pushes him to Actions which are great and glorious.”⁴⁶⁶ Addison’s comment accommodates, without explicitly engaging, the traditional Christian condemnation of “vainglory.” He neither describes the love of fame as a “sin” nor counsels against its indulgence on those grounds; instead, he highlights the “unreasonable and absurd” appearance of the passion as a deterrent to its bald indulgence. At the same time, however, he presumes that a given passion—in this case, the love of fame—does not have to be *inherently* virtuous or attractive to produce “very good effects” in the body politic. With this possibility in view, he develops a two-pronged defense of the love of fame’s civic utility. The “Passion for Admiration,” Addison suggests, acts as both a curb on bad behavior and a goad that stimulates good behavior. Even if they are not virtuous and worthy of admiration, fame-loving citizens will want to *appear* virtuous and worthy of admiration (therefore keeping in check their grosser impulses)—a phenomenon that presumably lays the groundwork for a civilized, secure, form of society that protects modes of peaceful, private meditation where Christian virtue perseveres. The love of fame also serves as a stimulus to “great and glorious” actions insofar as it prompts ambitious individuals to undertake challenging feats—especially publicly beneficial feats—that will increase their standing in the community. By this means, selfishness contributes doubly to a well-ordered, vigorous commonwealth. Private vices have public benefits.

⁴⁶⁶ Thursday, May 24, 1710-11, *The Spectator*, vol.1, 11th ed. (London, 1733), 284, in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (accessed July 1, 2010).

Within this broad vision of his subject, Addison then offers a prescription for monitoring gross manifestations of the love of fame at the level of individual experience.

He distinguishes between “the wise man” and “the fool,” two figures differently “actuated” by the love of fame:

The first endeavours to shine in himself, and the last to outshine others. The first is humbled by the sense of his own infirmities, the last is lifted up by the discovery of those which he observes in other men. The wise man considers what he wants, and the fool what he abounds in. The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation, and the fool when he recommends himself to the applause of those about him.⁴⁶⁷

Addison again stops short of adopting a language of Christian virtue and vice, even if the concept he develops here is in some respects harmonious with advice and imagery that can be found in sermons of the period.⁴⁶⁸ Indeed, the stoic psychological ideal embodied in the “wise man” suggests his reliance on a tempered form of pride (he is “happy when he gains his own approbation”) as an alternative to envy’s corrosively antisocial tendencies (being “lifted up by the discovery of [infirmities] which he observes in other men”). But perhaps the more important point is that each character bears a slightly different relation to Addison’s general theory that the love of fame is a typically “absurd” but useful actuating passion: the desire for external “applause” is especially foolish and absurd in its appearance, and the desire for self-bestowed “approbation” emerges as a form of virtuous self-reflection and self-sufficiency that marks the demeanor of the independent citizen.

Given the complexity of these moral and ethical issues, an especially engaging feature of *The Universal Passion* for its earliest readers would surely have consisted in

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 284.

⁴⁶⁸ Consider Samuel Clarke’s comments, *A Sermon Preach’d at the Parish Church*, esp. 12-17, ctd. subsequently.

the way Young deployed the conventions of formal verse satire to contemplate the status of the love of fame as an aspect of human behavior worthy of praise or blame. As thinkers such as Addison had rationalized it, even if the love of fame did not have a virtuous nature or a virtuous appearance, it had “very good Effects” on the common weal—a line of reasoning whose delicate negotiation of qualitative and utilitarian notions of virtue resists absolute determinations of moral-ethical worth. In this respect, contemporary interest in *The Universal Passion* would have emerged, not only in appreciating Young’s *extension* of a classical pattern of formal verse satire to an aspect of human behavior that had not previously received such treatment in Christian verse, but also in observing the way he negotiated the conventional, epideictic poles of the performance.

Moreover, thanks to the poet’s own mixed allegiances as an aspiring “wit” and an aspiring Anglican minister, the substance of Young’s argument about how reputation-seeking influences the common weal would presumably have been all the more interesting to those who knew him by reputation. Would Young, the earnest, attention-seeking poet, embrace Addison’s basically secular outlook on the matter? Or would the pension-seeking minister condemn that outlook on the grounds that to recognize the civic utility of the love of fame in the temporal world was to lead one’s readers astray? Presumably a poet who had begun his career with a string of panegyrics had left himself little room for a stark, moral condemnation of a passion that he himself occasionally refers to as “the love of praise”; and yet, as an aspiring English “divine” with some spiritual authority, he could hardly ignore the moral question, both because he was at this point in his career still seeking preferment within the Anglican establishment and because

his stance on the matter could carry some advisory weight with his potential readers. One of the most intriguing aspects of the satire from the perspective of its earliest audiences must have been to observe the gradual unfolding of Reverend Young's analysis of "the love of fame."

IV: Private Vices and their Public Benefits in *The Universal Passion*

With this rhetorical tension in view, what is striking about *The Universal Passion* is the degree to which Young accommodates Addison's secular view of the matter without failing to intone the traditional Christian conviction that vainglory is a sin. I have already offered a sampling of this compromise in my analysis of the "Florio" episode. There Young's employment of Christian terminology, his own humble affect, and his cautionary narrative of the tulip's demise illustrate the traditional moral-theological principle that the love of fame, as manifested in Florio's obsession with the flower, is a folly to be avoided on spiritual grounds. At the same time, however, Young makes room for the idea that reputation-seeking behavior should be viewed as a *lesser* vice or "folly"—an "idle" amusement with narrowly private repercussions for the individual sinner—rather than as a grave threat to public order. Young does not insist, for instance, that gardening is itself sinful; rather, he singles out Florio's attitude toward the flower as the problem. In this respect, Florio emerges as a reputation-seeking "fool" along the lines of Addison's model, albeit with the moral-spiritual resonances of his idolatry made plain.

This tonal compromise characterizes the vast majority of Young's poem. The first and most prominent gesture in *The Universal Passion* is the unmasking of the love of fame as a passion productive of vice and folly—a gesture that unites the role of the

Reverend-spiritual advisor with the posture of the satirist or philosopher who sees the love of fame as “absurd.” Satire I surveys various foolish manifestations of the love of fame in all degrees of society. A gently mocking tone dominates the piece until one reaches the final satires. It is not until the second half of Satire II (Satire “The Last”) that Young signals that his so-called “catalogue of *British* fools” has been completed and that he is about to enter into a discussion of what Weinbrot terms “Virtuous Ambition.”⁴⁶⁹ Describing the “swarm of themes that settles on my pen” as so many “summer flies” that he must “shake off” to proceed, Young contents himself that he has “point[ed] out” the “prey” for later authors to pursue for themselves and figures his final verses as the product of a hurried effort to produce a finished poem for his demanding publisher: “That duty done, I hasten to compleat / My own design; for *Tonson*’s at the gate.”⁴⁷⁰

The completion of this “design” includes the articulation of a surprisingly explicit case for seeing the love of fame as a “universal passion” productive of positive civic ends. Having spent the bulk of his seven satires depicting the love of fame as a principal source of human folly, Young now pursues the argument that the love of fame has been instilled in humankind by God to stimulate public deeds that serve as the very basis of civilized society:

The Love of Fame in its *effects* survey’d
 The Muse has sung; be now the *cause* display’d:
 Since so diffusive, and so wide its sway,
 What is this Power, whom all mankind obey?
 Shot from above, by heaven’s indulgence came
 This generous ardor, this unconquer’d flame,
 To warm, to raise, to deify mankind,
 Still burning brightest in the noblest mind.
 By large-soul’d men, for thirst of fame renown’d,
 Wise *laws* were fram’d, and sacred *arts* were found;

⁴⁶⁹ Young, *UP*, 166.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

Desire of praise first broke the *patriot's* rest,
 And made a bulwark of the *warrior's* breast;
 It bids *Argyle* in fields, and senates shine.
 What more can prove its origin divine?⁴⁷¹

Following this line of reasoning, Young allows that the love of fame “exerts a double force” in society. It produces both “blots” and “beauties,” both dignified accomplishments and silly, vain behaviors. And even the silliest, most vain behaviors can have productive civic effects:

Pursuit of fame with pedants fills our schools,
 And into *coxcombs* burnishes our *fools*;
 Pursuit of fame makes solid learning bright,
 And *Newton* lifts above a mortal height;

....

Would you then fully comprehend the whole,
Why, and in what *degrees* Pride sways the soul?
 (For tho' in all, not equally, she reigns)
 Awake to knowledge, and attend my strains.

Ye Doctors! hear the doctrine I disclose,
 As true, as if 'twere writ in dullest prose;
 As if a letter'd dunce had said “ 'tis right,”
 And *imprimatur* usher'd it to light.

To *glorious deeds* this passion fires the mind;
 And closer draws the *ties* of humankind,
 Confirms *society*; since what we prize
 As *our* chief blessing, must from *others* rise.⁴⁷²

The reference to “*glorious deeds*” particularly recalls Addison’s defense of the love of fame. Young has expanded the idea by infusing his analysis with an intermittent language of Christian sin and redemption (“pride,” “blessing,” “heaven’s indulgence”) and by illustrating his point with a series of oxymorons suggestive of polished society: “pedants fill[ing] our schools,” “*fools*” burnished into “*coxcombs*,” selfishness of sentiment converted into the bond that “closer draws the *ties* of humankind.” As Young

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 168-69.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 169-70.

describes it, human society in its very nature is a paradox: social bonds emerge from the selfish tendency to claim collective ownership of other individuals' good deeds.

Several subtleties of presentation are worth fleshing out here, especially as regards Young's posture in the longstanding debate over the love of fame's status as both a virtue and a vice, both a threat and a boon to the common weal. First, in the lines quoted above, Young very clearly and explicitly makes room for a notion of *effective* virtue: an idea that private vices can have beneficial public effects. This lengthy passage introduces a bald equation between the "Love of Fame" (quoted at the top of the passage) and "Pride" (quoted near the bottom). Although Young had often stopped short of equating these two terms so firmly with one another during the main body of the poem, he embraces the verbal substitution rather plainly here. His explanation of the divine "*cause*" of the love of fame is at first offered with an eye to the classical phrase—"the Love of Fame"—and then recast in Christian theological terminology amid an address to "Ye Doctors," which signals a "doctrine ... disclose[d], / As true, as if 'twere writ in dullest prose":

Would you then fully comprehend the whole,
Why, and in what *degrees* Pride sways the soul?

...

To *glorious deeds* this passion fires the mind;
 And closer draws the *ties* of humankind,
 Confirms *society*; since what we prize
 As *our* chief blessing, must from *others* rise.

The syntax of the passage makes "Pride" the grammatical antecedent of the deictic "this passion" rather than "Love of Fame" itself, which had been introduced as a key term many lines earlier. Perhaps it should therefore be no surprise that Jonathan Swift responded to *The Universal Passion* with a poem titled, "On Reading Dr Young's Satires

/ CALLED ‘THE UNIVERSAL PASSION’, / BY WHICH HE MEANS PRIDE.’”⁴⁷³ This is, in fact, precisely the argument developed by Young in the final satire of the poem—an argument anticipated, too, in his titular pun on the notion of pride as the “universal sin,” as Swift plainly recognized. It would surely have been additionally noteworthy to a reader like Swift that Young had eschewed the opportunity to equate the classical idea of the love of fame with the more terminologically specific “vainglory,” instead preferring to associate it with the broader theological category of “pride”; I will subsequently gesture toward the discursive context conditioning that selection. For the moment it suffices to recognize the way Young’s notion of pride as “the universal passion” harmonizes with the theory of origins presented in the passage. The “unconquer’d flame” at the topical center of Young’s poem is said to have been sent “by heaven’s indulgence” to “deify mankind”—that is, to make mortals think that they can be like gods. *The Universal Passion* argues, in other words, that pride, in its self-deifying tendency, has contributed to some of civilization’s most glorious deeds through the ages. This passage therefore develops a kind of compromise between the Addisonian analysis of the “very good effects” of the love of fame and the ministerial stance concerned with a traditional vocabulary of Christian sin.

Helping to frame this section of the poem as a utilitarian analysis of the relationship between private vices and their public benefits, Young identifies the final satire as a satire dealing with “public” manifestations of the love of fame. “The Follies past are of a private kind,” he writes at the start of the main body of the final satire:

Their sphere is small, their mischief is confin’d;
But daring men there are (awake, my muse,
And raise thy verse) who bolder frenzy chuse;

⁴⁷³ *The Complete Poems*, ed. Pat Rogers (NY: Penguin Books, 1989), 317-18.

Who stung by glory, rave, and bound away;
The *world* their Field, and *human-kind* their Prey.⁴⁷⁴

By extension, then, the final satire emerges as one dealing with public matters. It deals with public matters both in the sense that it describes the effects of the love of fame on “great,” ambitious public figures such as Alexander the Great and Walpole, who take “[t]he *world* as their Field,” and in the sense that the satirist turns here to a generalized mode of philosophical inquiry—an effort to “comprehend the whole,” as he puts it, and to do so (he implies) from a perspective that is broad enough and secular enough to complement the vision of the commonwealth adopted by civic leaders such as Walpole and George I.

This public / private binary also allows Young to accommodate, as harmless and potentially productive minor vices, a great many individual manifestations of human foolishness that might otherwise be described as “sins.” The “pedants” who “fil[l] our schools” and the “fools” who are burnished by their love of fame into “*coxcombs*” are among masses of individuals whose behavior can be said to be neither wholly virtuous in the Christian-moral sense(s) of the term nor particularly useful to the common weal by a more secular measure, but who are at least *restrained*, by their vanity itself, from indulging misbehavior of a high order.⁴⁷⁵ Follies of this kind are designated “private” in Young’s utilitarian analysis both in the sense of unfolding behind closed doors, beyond the public eye, and in the sense of involving private individuals, therefore remaining local in their effects. “Their sphere is small, their mischief is confin’d,” as Young puts it, making explicit an argument that had been implied, without being fully explained, in the

⁴⁷⁴ Young, *UP*, 163.

⁴⁷⁵ Regarding the *coxcombs*, consider the eighteenth-century association of “politeness” with polishing or burnishing. See David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700-1789* (London: Longman, 2003), 21-22.

content of his character sketches within the bulk of the first six satires: leisure amusements, domestic activities, habits of mind that are expressed in love affairs or court intrigues. These private vices have public benefits.

A riskier and more threatening manifestation of the love of fame, Young asserts, besets “public” personalities responsible for the fates of nations. The selfish pride of the “*Grecian* chief” (Alexander the Great) cannot be breezily dismissed as a “private” folly, innocuous and productive when viewed from the perspective of the general good. When placed at the helm of the burgeoning Macedonian Empire, Alexander’s perverse selfishness stimulated violent wars, razed entire cities to the ground, and seemed to revel in the havoc that it wreaked on humankind:

The *Grecian* chief, th’Enthusiast of his pride,
With Rage, and Terror stalking by his side,
Raves round the globe; he soars into a God!
Stand fast *Olympus!* and sustain his nod.
The pest divine in horrid grandeur reigns,
And thrives on mankind’s miseries, and pains.
What slaughter’d *hosts!* what *cities* in a blaze!
What wasted *countries!* and what crimson *seas!*⁴⁷⁶

Embodying a gross manifestation of the selfish “passion” that Young has been tracing throughout the seven satires, Alexander’s example argues that “pride,” when perversely indulged by humans in positions of political and military power, has few, if any, public benefits.

V: “Characteristic-Writing” and the Question of Virtue

In accordance with the conventions of formal verse satire, Alexander’s monitory example is not left unaccompanied by an opposing example of virtue. On the contrary,

⁴⁷⁶ Young, *UP*, 163.

although Young generally proves cautious while proffering virtuous examples, this final satire praises Robert Walpole's administratively-skillful pursuit of "peace" as the positive, public counterpart to the example of Alexander the Great—a tactic that, as noted above, modern scholars have often criticized as "fulsome" on Young's part, so much so that it threatens to undermine the ethical integrity of the work. I will return subsequently to both this critique and the complicated example of Walpole. For the moment, however, it is worth pausing for a moment to take stock of the epideictic complexities of Young's presentation of the love of fame as a vice and an animating passion in civic life. Young's *Universal Passion* puts into rotation multiple binaries at once: not only alternations between virtue and vice, praise and blame, but also distinctions between public and private, great and small, individual and collective, male and female, prideful and humble, false and true. These interpenetrating oppositions contribute to an intricate moral-philosophical framework that invites comparison and juxtaposition in the manner of formal verse satire; however, they also develop (and thereby encourage) a mode of moral-philosophical judgment that turns on the assessment of individual characters in diverse situations. Young's presentation encourages a mode of psychological inquiry that presumes that the passions motivate human behavior in complex combinations. As such, it allows for *gradations* of blame with respect to individual manifestations of the love of fame.

This was the didactic and philosophical advantage of combining an adherence to the conventions of formal verse satire with an experiment in "characteristical satire." As Henry Gally observed of "Characteristic-Writing" in 1725, this mode of verbal

portraiture permitted minute observations of the movements of the passions in the human “Heart”:

[T]he Heart of Man is frequently actuated by more Passions than one: And as the same Object does, by its different Position, afford to the Spectator different Representations, so does the same Affection of the Mind, by exerting it self after a different manner, lay a real Foundation for so many distinct Characters. The under Passions may, by their various Operations, cause some Diversity in the Colour and Complexion of the Whole, but 'tis the Master-Passion which must determine the Character.⁴⁷⁷

In *The Universal Passion*, Young has transferred this technique to the project of tracing the diverse manifestations of a single “Master-Passion” within a variety of individual characters.⁴⁷⁸ Among these, Young also provides any number of surprising or counterintuitive examples as illustrations of his central claim—a tactic presumably calculated not only to stir up interest at the level of the reading experience, but also to invite reflection upon the acuity of Young’s individual psychological diagnoses (and therefore the “truth” of his guiding thesis about the prominence and universality of the love of fame as an animating passion). Young observes, for instance, that “Some for *renown* on scraps of Learning doat, / And think they grow immortal as they *quote*”⁴⁷⁹—a suggestion, in other words, that scholars are as motivated at the individual level by the desire to be reputed wise as they are by the possibility of attaining wisdom. Young also diagnoses a variety of forms of material acquisition as outgrowths of the desire for reputation: the Lord who “overload[s]” his estate with “Antique statues”; the “Squire” who prides himself on his “Courser,” his “well-breath’d Beagles,” and his “sleek Gelding,” all of them nimble and well-trained for hunting; the aesthete who refuses

⁴⁷⁷ See Gally’s edition of Theophrastus, *The Moral Characters of Theophrastus* (London, 1725), 33-34, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 5, 2009).

⁴⁷⁸ Again, compare Theophrastus, an important model for characteristic writing, who had used character sketches in a different way: he had highlighted a variety of distinct traits to be avoided.

⁴⁷⁹ Young, *UP*, 8.

“*salmon*” and demands that “*turbot*” be purchased instead.⁴⁸⁰

To similar ends, Young’s character sketches argue that even an apparent *lack* of concern for one’s good reputation can be revealed as a manifestation of the love of fame, as in this brief portrait of “*Amasia*”:

Amasia hates a Prude, and scorns restraint;
Whate’er she *is*, she’ll not *appear* a saint:
Her soul superior flies formality;
So gay her air, her conduct is so free,
Some might suspect the nymph not *over-good*—
Nor wou’d they be mistaken, if they should.⁴⁸¹

Amasia portrays herself as—and may even see herself as—a “soul superior” who rejects the “restrained” ideals of feminine virtue that were understood to control women’s desire for a good reputation. But Amasia’s seeming scorn for these social categories, Young argues, actually reflects an effort to control her public image. Her gay “air” and free “conduct,” however accurately they may convey her penchant for sexual adventurousness, are revealed in his satire as cultivated attitudes that serve the self-defensive purpose of going flagrantly against the grain of social expectation. Amasia portrays herself to the world as a “nymph” because of the social leverage she thinks that reputation accords her. As such, she serves doubly as proof of Young’s thesis that “what [humans] aim at” by “vice” and “folly” “is, generally, publick opinion, and esteem.” Not only is her apparent lack of concern for her reputation exposed as a product of the love of fame; her defining character trait is revealed as the product of a related deception. According to her name, “Amasia” is known for indulging *amorous* passions; however, Young’s presentation argues that her amorous reputation and perhaps her amorous behaviors themselves can ultimately be traced to a love of fame, insofar as her desire to

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 14, 19, 47.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 125-26.

control her reputation has confirmed and sustained her indulgence and repetition of these behaviors.

This “characteristical” structure brings together, with the patterns of formal verse satire, a philosophical-descriptive mode more suggestive of diagnosis than judgment. The poem’s accumulation of diverse portraits of the love of fame puts forth an argument about the prevalence of the love of fame in society. As Young declares in his Preface, “[W]hat men aim at by [vice and folly] is, generally, publick opinion, and esteem. Which truth is the subject of the following Satires; and joins them together, as several branches from the same root.”⁴⁸² This argument emerges both within and against the patterns of formal verse satire that structure the seven-part composition, and it is to some extent in tension with that moral framework (in all its complexity). Young does not make entirely clear, for instance, whether he envisions the love of fame itself as a vice or as a neutral passion, productive of the vicious and foolish effects evident in the portraits of characters such as Amasia. Sometimes he seems to want to have it both ways, as in his concluding equation of the love of fame with “Pride.” For the most part, however, the characteristical arrangement provides a grounding for an ethical analysis that has been described as “contradict[ory] at its core” and a didactic experience that navigates those moral-ethical questions.⁴⁸³

It seems fairly clear that, in Young’s presentation, Alexander the Great is far more blameworthy than “Florio.” Florio indulges a foolish obsession with a rare tulip; Alexander “thrives on mankind’s miseries, and pains.” A reader is invited to reflect upon this difference. By virtue of his status as a “chief,” Alexander manifests the dubious

⁴⁸² Ibid., image 5.

⁴⁸³ Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain*, 116.

moral condition of his soul on a grand scale: his imperial pursuits wreak havoc on the common weal. Florio's floral obsession emerges as a minor vice on both counts. It is, after all, a private preoccupation that proves worrisome only to the more scrupulous of Florio's neighbors (namely, Adam the Quaker). Moreover, Young's presentation suggests in several different ways that, in a properly diversified nation, such individual, minor vices do little (if anything) to harm the general condition of humankind. Indeed, insofar as they serve as curbs to more violent manifestations of the passions, "small" vices may even be seen collectively as beneficial contributors to public order—as not only the products, but also the agents of peace and civilization.

In addition to this, Young allows that the love of fame can, in certain circumstances, stimulate inherently virtuous acts. Young hedges a bit on this point. Positive exempla such as the Lady Elizabeth Germain, who shies away from the possibility of public praise, tend to confirm the spiritual lesson brought home by the portrait of Florio: in traditional Christian terms, the love of fame's opposing virtue is humility. But Young's nuanced approach to the patterns of formal verse makes room for an additional possibility as well: the love of fame, when combined with true public spirit, can be considered an active virtue and a counterpoint to the selfishness embodied in other manifestations of the passion. That Young has chosen to develop this argument within the conventional binaries of formal verse satire helps to establish, as a tension, the two forms of virtue for which he makes room: humility and ambition, the one more closely associated with traditional Christian ideals (not to mention royalist ideals of civic obedience) and the other more closely associated with emergent theories that the British body politic was well served by the cultivation of certain forms of self-interest. In the

satires as a group, Young places a significant didactic emphasis on the importance of humility. Nonetheless, his embrace of a form of public spiritedness that is nourished, in some ways, by vanity emerges with particular clarity and verbal precision in his concluding declaration that the love of fame “exerts a double force” in society. Here his examples suggest not only that “little” fools and coxcombs can be beneficial to the common weal despite themselves, but also that the love of fame (“pride”) can “fir[e] the mind” to accomplish deliberately “*glorious deeds*”: patriotic acts of military prowess, the development of laws, contributions to the arts, and so forth.

Young’s attention to the category of “mind” is significant. Having made substantial room for an idea of the love of fame’s *effective* virtue—that is, that this animating passion, even if it is inherently sinful, has what Addison calls “very good effects” on the common weal—Young comes very close to declaring here that the love of fame can, in some cases, be considered part of the necessary mental condition for virtuous public action. Confirming this suggestion, Young’s concluding discussion of the potentially positive manifestations of the “universal passion” isolates three different types of “ambition,” each of them embodying a slightly different relationship to “virtue” in precisely this sense. First, there is ambition in the “*truly-noble mind*” that is “ever joyn’d” with “sister-virtue” (e.g., the Roman Lucretia); second, there is ambition in “*meaner minds*” that merely “puts virtue’s aspect on” (e.g., “False *Julius [Caesar]*” and his assassins); third, there is ambition “*in basest minds*” that wears “[n]o mask” but “in full light pricks up her ass’s ears” (e.g., all the foolish behaviors that Young has “sung” so far).⁴⁸⁴ Thus, in its most ideal form, “ambition” consists of the kind of public spirit

⁴⁸⁴ Young, *UP*, 170-71.

that animates a noble “*mind*” to undertake a noble civic project. The love of fame can be productively combined with a desire to contribute to “the welfare of mankind.”⁴⁸⁵

In service of this analysis, Young adopts a prescriptive distinction very like Addison’s distinction between the self-sustaining “wise man” and the applause-seeking “fool”:

Ye *vain!* desist from your erroneous strife;
 Be wise, and quit the false *sublime* of life.
 The *true* ambition there alone resides,
 Where *justice* vindicates, and *wisdom* guides;
 Where *inward* dignity joins *outward* state,
 Our *purpose* good, as our *achievement* great;
 Where publick *blessings* publick *praise* attend,
 Where glory is our *motive* not our *end*.⁴⁸⁶

Young’s fine distinction between “motives” and “ends” encourages a form of ambition motivated not by the desire for popular applause, but by a divinely-instilled pursuit of the “good.” Ambition might normally be perceived as a kind of pride—a vice condemned in opposition to the humble posture that Young has advocated elsewhere, as in both the attitude that he models in the Florio episode and the retiring nature embodied in Lady Elizabeth Germain’s flight from “praise.” But Young embraces a certain psychological nuance here. He imagines “*true* ambition” as a humble form of ambition—a deference to worthy causes and worthy, virtuous ideals that is distinguishable, in spirit, from the gaudier, more selfish, glory-seeking version of ambition that might be understood to motivate “Ye *vain!*”

Robert Walpole emerges as the living exemplum of this notion of “*true* ambition”—the positive English/British counterpart to the example of Alexander the Great. Walpole is praised for his administrative prowess, with a particular emphasis on

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 172.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 172.

the ways his management “bids our *wealth* increase, / And lulls us in the downy lap of *peace*”:

Her *arts* triumphant in the Royal smile,
Her publick *wounds* bound up, her *credit* high,
Her *commerce* spreading sails in every sky.⁴⁸⁷

Addressed as “the RIGHT HONOURABLE Sir ROBERT WALPOLE” on the half title, Walpole is honored implicitly for the merit evidenced in his upward mobility: by the time Young published his collected satires, Walpole had not only been knighted by George I, but had also risen from the rank of commoner to the position of a royal minister with enough *de facto* managerial power to be hailed by Young as the “pilot of the realm.”⁴⁸⁸ By the mid to late 1720s, when Young was composing this final satire, Walpole was well on his way to becoming the controversial figure that history now remembers.⁴⁸⁹ Young, interestingly, recuperates this controversial status within his panegyric to Walpole as the proof of his central arguments about the love of fame as an animating passion. Walpole’s controversial status emerges as both an effect of the British “follies” that he has been tracing and a necessary product of the kind of public work that Walpole’s administration has undertaken:

How all mankind will be surpriz’d, to see
This flood of *British* folly charg’d on thee?
...
The cause is plain, a cause which we must bless;
For caprice is the Daughter of *success*,
(A bad effect, but from a pleasing Cause!)
And gives our Rulers undesign’d applause.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 162.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 175. The occasion that Young celebrates in the poem is the King’s voyage to Brunswick, Hanover, which had kept him away longer than expected, and which left Walpole at the helm. Walpole therefore emerges as the minister in charge of Britain who has risen to his prominent position of leadership through merit.

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. Bertrand A. Goldgar, *Walpole and the Wits: The Relation of Politics to Literature, 1722-1742* (Lincoln: U Nebraska P, 1976), chap. 2.

⁴⁹⁰ Young, *UP*, 162.

The controversy that Walpole has inspired, in other words, is the proof of his “*true* ambition,” his true public spirit—his virtuous resistance to the temptation of seeking unanimous popular “applause” in the public sphere. Writing from “the downy lap of *peace*,” the Reverend-satirist can confirm the palpably happy effects on the common weal of a leader who, rather than allowing his course to be guided by popular applause, seeks approbation in his own successes. In Young’s words, “Would’st thou be *fam’d*? have those high deeds in view / Brave men would act, tho’ *scandal* should ensue.”⁴⁹¹

VI: Toward an Assessment of the Reverend’s Pragmatic Accommodation of Sin

Young was arguably pushing the spiritual envelope in celebrating the public benefits of sin to the degree that he did in *The Universal Passion*. The address to “Ye *vain*,” for instance, authorizes a form of commitment to the temporal world that he himself counseled against in a sermon composed and published during the same period as his characteristic satires.⁴⁹² First delivered upon the death of George I to an audience that included George II and Queen Caroline, *A Vindication of Providence: Or, A True Estimate of Human Life* (del. 1727, pub. 1728) is structured as a meditation on a passage from *Colossians* (3:2) about “*Set[ting] your Affections on Things above, and not on*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁴⁹² It is difficult to determine whether Young composed the sermon before or after the poem. Indeed, they appear to have been composed at the same time. David Anderson notes that *A Vindication of Providence* was first delivered in 1727 in response to the death of George I and was published not long thereafter (quite likely in an expanded version); however, judging from personal correspondence of the period, Young may have finished writing the piece as early as October of 1724 (iii). See Anderson’s editorial introduction to the second edition (Los Angeles: University of California [William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Augustan Reprint Society 225-26], 1984). All quotations of Young’s sermon refer to this edition, though I am departing from Anderson in abbreviating the sermon as Young’s *Vindication* rather than his *True Estimate* in anticipation of Pope’s claim in *An Essay on Man* that he will “vindicate the ways of God to man”—phrasing that could very well be meant to recall Young’s writings.

*Things on the Earth.*⁴⁹³ It includes, not surprisingly, a lengthy discussion of “Ambition.”⁴⁹⁴ Warning against “the Terribleness of [Ambition’s] Fall, which the Scripture sets in the strongest Light,” Reverend Young expounds upon the story of Babylon’s fall for a full ten pages as a monitory example that might dissuade the ambitious from putting too much stock in temporal things.⁴⁹⁵ By comparison, *The Universal Passion*, leaves a reader with more ambiguous counsel about the spiritual rewards that public service can bestow.

Perhaps even more striking among the claims that Young makes in *The Universal Passion* is his argument that “Pride” is responsible for any number of great and glorious deeds at the very foundations of civilization. Although the comment is arguably presented within the poem as a philosophical *description* of humankind rather than an exhortation for his parishioners to be prideful, Young’s employment of the theological Christian term makes plain an argument that has elsewhere remained either ambiguous or merely implicit. Nowhere in the *Vindication* does he make this claim so baldly, or with such apparent relish.

Otherwise, however, Young’s analyses of the passions in the sermon and the satire overlap with one another to a surprising degree. In the *Vindication*, Young plainly envisions “Vanity” and the “Desire of Approbation” as divinely-endowed, selfish passions potentially less harmful to the public than to the vain individual. Early in the sermon, for instance, he pauses to reflect upon both the beneficent causes of the desire for posthumous fame and the potentially adverse effects of this passion on the happiness and wellbeing of “Men of *Talents*”:

⁴⁹³ Young, *Vindication of Providence*, 1.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

There is no stronger Infatuation than this Desire of chimerical Immortality. It is very strange; but the Secret of it is this: God implanted in the Soul a violent Desire of *Approbation*, in order to stimulate Men into an Attainment of his own Approbation, which is the most valuable; as he implanted in the Soul strong *Hope*, and *Fear*, and *Love*, that he himself might be the Object of them, as my Text directs: But as these *Affections* when they top short on *Temporals*, become *Pains*; so this violent Desire of *Approbation*, when it stops short at Men, becomes, tho' most admirably wise in God's Design, that ridiculous, and seemingly unaccountable Folly of which I speak: and the wisest of Men, not attending to this, have sometimes started in Surprize and Shame, on discovering that some of their noblest Designs had their Rise, and Termination in that most despicable Point, the *Opinion of Men*. Thus you see that the Thirst of *Approbation*, when misapply'd becomes a Folly, and incurs shame, which it would most Avoid.⁴⁹⁶

This analysis of the “Desire for *Approbation*” harmonizes with the notion sketched out in *The Universal Passion* that the love of fame “exerts a double force” on humankind, even though the sermon emphasizes and articulates more clearly the crucial distinction between the temporal world and the spiritual world. In the sermon, as in the satire, Young considers not only the ways this passion makes humans suffer, but also the ways it can lead them to undertake worthwhile accomplishments—in this case, achieving divine approbation. And Young makes even clearer here his incorporation of a spiritual strain that distinguishes his analysis from Addison's more secular division between the “wise man” and the “fame-loving fool.” As Young describes the effects of the love of fame on humankind, no one is immune from the foolish mental habits associated with the desire for approbation. Even “the wisest of Men ... have sometimes started in Surprize and Shame, on discovering that some of their noblest Designs had their Rise, and Termination in that most despicable Point, the *Opinion of Men*.”

Moreover, in the sermon, as in the satire, Young makes room for the idea that “*Va[nity]*,” by contrast to other vices and follies, “is often Nourish'd by *Virtue* itself.”⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 17-18.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 76. Young argues on these grounds that “[w]e ought *particularly* to guard against This Folly.”

This concept is implicit in the passage quoted above, and it is developed explicitly at several other points in the sermon. While stopping short of counseling his parishioners to be vain,⁴⁹⁸ Young labels vanity “the most distinguish’d Son of Folly”; he pursues the inverse argument that “*Virtue* is always enfeebled by a Neglect of Praise, which is a Food of it”; and he carefully distinguishes “*Emulation*” from “*Envy*” on related grounds.⁴⁹⁹ “*Emulation*,” according to Young, is “an Exalted, and Glorious Passion, Parent of most Excellencies in Human Life. It is Enamour’d of all *Virtue*, and *Accomplishment*; its generous *Food* is *Praise*; its sublime *Profession*, *Transcendency*; and the *Life* it pants after, *Immortality*.”⁵⁰⁰ *Envy*, by contrast, is “the most *Deformed*, and most *Detestable* of all the Passions”:

[A]ll other Passions seek *Good*, but *Envy Evil*. All other Passions propose *Advantages* to themselves; *Envy* seeks the *Detriment* of Others.... *This is Diabolical*. *Anger* seeks *Vengeance* for an *Injury*; an *Injury* in *Fortune*, or *Person*, or *Honour*; But *Envy* pretends no *Injuries*, and yet has an *Appetite* for *Vengeance*: *Love* seeks the *Possession* of *Good*, *Fear* the flight of *Evil*, but *Envy* neither; All her *Good* is the *Disadvantage* of Another.⁵⁰¹

For Young, then, the forms of selfish aspiration associated with “envy” differ crucially from the forms of selfish aspiration associated with “emulation.” The one comprises grossly anti-social feelings and behaviors; the other is characterized by the desire to please God and humans alike.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁸ See the full discussion (esp. 74-77), which depicts the vain person unattractively as “a Beggar of Admiration” and relates its temporal affections to those cultivated by the ambitious.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50-51, 21.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁰² Young has arguably taken a similar tack with “Ambition” (esp. 53-70), which he exposes as a passion particularly subject to temporal disappointments but also recognizes as a passion that often goes uncensored by the public (68).

It is hard to say how orthodox these pronouncements would have appeared to Young's contemporaries. "Vainglory" is routinely decried as a sin during the period,⁵⁰³ and Young manages to sidestep this dogmatism both by insisting throughout most of his satires that the love of fame has foolish (if useful) effects and by adopting terms other than "vainglory" when he wishes to accommodate, as potentially positive civic forces, passions related to the desire for earthly reputation (the "desire of approbation," the "love of fame," "vanity"). Albert Hirschman has described a similarly significant terminological slippage in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century discussions of avarice as an animating passion in civic life: although avarice had traditionally been condemned as a sin, subtle terminological changes adopted particularly in moral-philosophical writings helped to pave the way for an accommodation of avarice as a softer passion or as "interest." Adding to the drama in "Dr. Young's" case, as Swift has long since observed, was his explicit accommodation of "Pride" as one of these alternatives—and, at that, his accommodation of pride within a group of satires whose character sketches elsewhere intoned the traditional idea that pride was a sin. Young, who framed himself as an

⁵⁰³ Cf. *The Whole Duty of Man* (1657), a devotional manual widely reprinted throughout the period, which plainly condemns "Vain-glory" as a "Sin." Setting the "great thirst after the praise of men" in opposition to "Humility," the manual refers the reader to "the words of our Saviour, *John* v. 44, *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?*" and declares firmly that vainglory "is not only a Sin, but such an one as hinders the receiving of Christ into the heart" (148-49). See Richard Allestree, *The whole duty of man, laid down in a plain and familiar way for the use of all, but especially the Meanest Reader. Divided into XVII Chapters. One whereof being read every Lord's Day, the Whole may be read over Thrice in the Year. Necessary for all Families. With Private Devotions for several Occasions* (London, 1729) in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Feb. 19, 2010). In sermons of the early eighteenth century, one routinely encounters the exhortation to adopt a habitual attitude of humility in the face of life's vicissitudes: "Let nothing be done through Strife or Vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3). The commonplace is quoted by John Cock in *Advice to the clergy in six sermons, representing their dignity and duty, with the addition of two other sermons, wherein the clergy are concerned, as well as the laity, if not more; and I am afraid both of them too much. By John Cock, a Presbyter of the Church of England* (London, 1705), 37, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Feb. 24, 2010). Also see Samuel Bradford, who cites the same verse in *Christian religion the occasion: not the Cause of Division. A sermon Preached before the King, at St. James's, On Sunday January 22. 1715/16. By Samuel Bradford, D. D. Prebendary of St. Peter's in Westminster, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty. Published by His Majesty's Special Command* (London, 1716), 26.

innovator in both *The Universal Passion* and the *Vindication*, surely intended this aspect of his performance to seem clever and to some degree novel.⁵⁰⁴

Nonetheless, Young's philosophical and rhetorical boldness need not be taken as a flagrant departure from the intellectual trends of his day. In the era when Bernard Mandeville, with his famously counterintuitive logic, declared charity societies a threat to society, Young was not the only Anglican minister who worried about the moral ambiguity of public-spirited deeds. In 1725, speaking at St. James's Westminster upon the "Occasion of the Erecting a CHARITY SCHOOL, as a House of EDUCATION for WOMEN-SERVANTS," Samuel Clarke, an influential Anglican preacher, found reason to meditate upon the difficulty of knowing what ends one's charitable acts will finally serve: "an encouragement to *Idleness*," for instance, or a support of party, or an "occasion of Pride," or an occasion of "raising persons *Above* those Circumstances in which they might be employed most usefully to the Publick."⁵⁰⁵ This problem is in some sense the reverse of the problem identified by Young, who was concerned with the relationship between private vices and public benefits: Clarke worries that private virtues could have detrimental public effects. But Clarke's rather simple, twofold resolution to the problem of alms-giving bears some resemblance to the common-sense analyses developed by Young. One can limit the disjunction between good intentions and bad effects, Clarke argues, by choosing the "*Objects*" of one's charity carefully.⁵⁰⁶ And one should also be sure to approach good works in the right spirit:

⁵⁰⁴ See *UP*, image 5; *Vindication*, Dedication and Preface.

⁵⁰⁵ A sermon preach'd at the parish-church of St. James's Westminster, on Sunday April 18, 1725. upon occasion of the erecting a charity-school, as a house of education for women-servants. By Samuel Clarke, D. D. Rector of St James's Westminster (London, 1725), 16, in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (accessed Mar. 1, 2010). On Clarke's influence, see Alan Brinton, "The Passions as Subject Matter in Early Eighteenth-Century British Sermons," *Rhetorica* 10.1 (Winter 1992): 55.

⁵⁰⁶ Clarke, *Sermon*, 17.

The *Same* thing, in *different* Circumstances, is not the *Same* thing. A *Particular good Action*, done with a *Particular View* of *vain-glory* and *popular Applause*; ceases to be a religious Action, and falls short of its Reward. The *Same* Action performed with *such* a View, and in *such* a manner, as to have a direct and proper Tendency to *promote* and *incourage* the universal *Practice of Virtue* in the World; is, in the most *immediate* and *real sense* of the words, a *glorifying of our Father which is in Heaven*; 'Tis causing men (as much as in Us lies,) to make acknowledgment of *God*, and to order their Lives as being under a perpetual sense of his Inspection and Government.⁵⁰⁷

Clarke's analysis is reminiscent of Addison's prescriptive distinction between the "wise man" and the fame-loving "fool," though Clarke ties the counsel more explicitly to an admonition of constant, beneficent godly surveillance. This is precisely the distinction presumed by Young in his discussion of "true ambition," an analysis similarly tied to the question of doing public works in the proper spirit.

Nor was Young alone in developing in his writings an unusually limber analysis of the relationship between individual sinners and the "public" collectivity. In a sermon of 1717, Philip Bisse, the Bishop of Hereford, defined "Vain-glory" and "Hypocrisy" as distinctively private sins that charity societies, because of their public nature and their public orientation, did not need to fear. Addressing "*the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*," Bisse took as his text the same verse from Matthew that encouraged doers of "*good Works*" to let their "*light shine before Men*"⁵⁰⁸—a passage readily interpreted as both a qualified defense of reputation-attentive alms-giving and an admonition of the "Danger of losing the Reward of good Works" by pursuing them in a selfish spirit.⁵⁰⁹ Bisse, eager to promote and celebrate the mission of

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁰⁸ "Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

⁵⁰⁹ *A sermon preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; at their anniversary meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday the 21st of February, 1717. By the Right Reverend Father in God, Philip, Lord Bishop of Hereford* (London, 1718), 3, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Feb. 24, 2010).

the assembled Society, exhorted the corporation to let its light shine bright without fear of incurring a spiritual debt.⁵¹⁰ “Hypocrisy and Vain-glory” are very clearly “Sins,” Bisse asserts; however, they are

Sins only of individual Men, and cannot properly be incurred by Societies, incorporated for a Publick Good. Nor can such personal Faults of any private Member in these Bodies (could that be supposed) any ways vitiate, or in Reason, dishonour their main Design. It is by the good Providence of GOD, that, in this degenerate Age, many Charities, Great and Munificent, have been cast into these Channels, wherein they run clear and free of all such Defilements, as might corrupt the most flowing Liberalities of private Men.⁵¹¹

By this reasoning, then, private “Defilements” can be productively finessed by channeling individual, vainglorious energies into “Publick” corporations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, an organization intended to improve the Christian foundations of British colonial settlements.⁵¹² Bisse almost wholly eschews the opportunity to preach the spiritual obligation of humility to his assembled audience. Instead, he develops a lengthy meditation on the pressing needs, the practical obstacles, and the logistical goals that necessarily attend an attempt to sustain a “*City set on an Hill, which cannot be hid*”—comments that he offers as a way of “inspir[ing]” his audience “to proceed...with Vigour” in their collective endeavor.⁵¹³ “Corporations erected for Charitable Uses are, in their Nature, made to be *seen of men*,” Bisse declares. “The greater Applause they obtain in the World, the more zealous will others be induced to assist in the Work: And that Pomp and Appearance, almost of Ostentation, wherein they

⁵¹⁰ Ironically, perhaps, by 1718, Bisse would “introduc[e] a new investigation into the use and abuse of diocesan charitable investments.” See William Marshall, “Bisse, Philip (*bap.* 1666, *d.* 1721)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed online March 17, 2010.

⁵¹¹ Bisse, *Sermon*, 3-4.

⁵¹² Bisse uses a language of purgation here, but his reasoning borrows from legal discourses of bankruptcy and economic liability: he conceives the “corporation” as mechanism by which a collective “Design” for charitable contribution proves exempt from the spiritual debts that might be incurred by its constituent members.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, 4, 25.

are sometimes shewn to the Eyes of the Multitude, hath its Use; and infuseth, as it were, a Spirit of Charity into the Mass of Mankind.”⁵¹⁴

VII: Toward a Theory of Satire as a Genre that Purges the Passions

With its adaptation of a legal-economic discourse to an analysis of spiritual debts and its argument that popish displays of charitable giving are justified by their public “Use,” Bisse’s sermon speaks to the conceptual sophistication with which individual vices were imagined in relation to the public weal during the early eighteenth century. More specifically, it illustrates a contemporary means of imagining public entities as “Channels” for sins and defilements—means of cleansing energies that might otherwise corrupt even the “most flowing Liberalities” of private individuals. This is one of any number of contemporary ways of imagining a purgation of the affections, passions, or humors. Neo-Aristotelian literary theory of the period, as noted in the introduction to this case study, attributed the powers of “purgation” to well-structured stage drama and literary texts. In this context, purgation was imagined as an aesthetic cleansing, whereby the reader or audience member’s identification with the hero’s suffering produced a refined response that had been imagined by Aristotle as a productive mixture of fear and pity that facilitated a sustained contemplation of virtue. Satirical theory complemented these conceptions by imagining the act of literary production itself as a purgation or venting of humors or passions.⁵¹⁵ My thesis here is that similar conceptions of purgation inform the “design” of Young’s *Universal Passion*, which was after all a “public”

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹⁵ Dustin Griffin, “Venting Spleen,” *Essays in Criticism* 40.2 (Apr. 1990): 124-135.

(because *published*) work that brought together a community of readers for a controlled didactic experience.

This strategy of purgation might be described as an effort to complement, through art, a network of curbs, goads, and “Springs” to action that Young argues were established by God to create order and progress in human societies.⁵¹⁶ As has already been noted, Young imagines the commonwealth as a political body actuated by a variety of competing passions. The passions, he argues, are in some respects a curse (to the extent that they consist of or contribute to vice and folly and therefore cause pain and misery), but they are also a blessing: God has instilled humankind with “pride” in order to fire the mind to “glorious deeds,” to make humans accountable to one another, and thereby to draw the ties of humankind closer. Because the passions are the source of great liveliness and human achievement, even in their more sinful manifestations, the writer who wishes to reform or improve the common weal will not wish to suppress them entirely—to banish them from the commonwealth. Instead, he will attempt to harness, control, and refine them in productive ways—to warn against the more sinful kinds of passionate indulgence and to promote the forms of indulgence that might fire the mind to “glorious deeds,” draw the ties of humankind closer, and undertake reflection productive of spiritual reform.

This was more or less Young’s strategy in the *Vindication of Providence*, which can be classed as an example of the burgeoning homiletic genre dealing with the “government of the passions.”⁵¹⁷ Young’s abiding exhortation that his auditors (or

⁵¹⁶ As he puts it in the Preface to the *Vindication*, the passions are “such Powerful, and Universal Springs, that almost all the Pleasures, Pains, Designs, and Actions of Life are owing to Them” (italics reversed).

⁵¹⁷ Alan Brinton, “The Passions as Subject Matter in Early Eighteenth-Century British Sermons.” *Rhetorica* 10.1 (Winter 1992): 51-69.

readers) set their “*Affections*” on “*Things above*” is of course an exhortation that they govern their passions in beneficial ways. And Young might be said to appeal to the more selfish passions of his auditors (or readers) in the argument that he develops in the sermon. His discussions of the passions demonstrate in a variety of sensible ways that the improper indulgence of the passions will cause pain and suffering; by extension, then, one can increase one’s happiness and pleasure by setting one’s affections on “*Things above*.”

The “*State of Celebacy*,” for instance, looks particularly grim to Young, thanks in part to the temporal pains that it causes. “Our Paternal *Affections* must be drawn off, like a Mother’s *Milk*, or they will corrupt, and turn to Disease,” he warns.⁵¹⁸ Having children, he contends, provides a means of allowing the passions to flow in their “natural” channels:

He that has Children *multiplies* himself, and gives Happiness many Channels by which to flow in upon him: Letting the Heart stream out in Tenderness on its proper Objects, as it is the greatest Duty, so it is the greatest Blessing of Life: To have no one, to whom we heartily wish well, and for whom we are warmly concerned, is a deplorable state.⁵¹⁹

Selfishness is a key feature of Young’s vision of the common weal: he envisions human reproduction not only as a divinely-imposed “Duty” to propagate the species, but also as a pleasurable form of self-multiplication that allows “Happiness” to “flow in upon” the parent and “Tenderness” to “stream out” toward the child. Some selfish passions, then, should be routinely indulged. “Paternal *Affections*” should be allowed to flow freely toward their “proper Objects.”

⁵¹⁸ Young, *Vindication*, 13.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

Other passions, however, are less productively, less virtuously vented in their more “natural” states, as in the case of the “Enemies” of “Men of *Power*,” “Fortune,” and “Reputation”:

Men are so fond of themselves, as to think that All others *can* do, they *should* do for them. This is unjust, but this is true. And hence it is, that all the *Uneasy*, instead of venting their Passion by striking the Air, as it is natural for the Peevish in their Gusts of Rage to do, vent it often on Men in Power, by shooting their Arrows at them, *even bitter Words*; Because Men are apt to think they contract an Importance, from the Importance of those they injure.⁵²⁰

That anger is designated a “natural” passion, bestowed by God, does not, in this case, mean that it necessarily leads to virtue. Indeed, Young’s portrait suggests that some angry people who vent their anger on “Men in Power” may be motivated by envy, the grossest of the selfish passions. At the same time, however, anger does not always have wholly negative causes or effects in Young’s presentation. Elsewhere in the sermon, he accommodates anger as “*Indignation*,” which he describes as “a Just, and Noble Passion” that “none but the Noble-Minded feel”—a “generous Zeal for Right, an Heroick, and laudable Anger at the Prosperity of Undeservers.”⁵²¹ Indignation is not said to be “vented”; it is described as an “elevated Passion” that produces more internal pain in the sufferer than aggressive, outwardly-directed harm. Causing severe “Pang[s]” in the breast of the person in whom it swells, indignation is the “Fever,” the violent but noble “Inflammation of Mind” that led to Cato’s death.⁵²²

Cato’s example works further to suggest that some passions are inherently more tender and less painful than others, both to the individual who experiences them and to others within striking distance of that individual. Anger, indeed, was a common

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 46.

⁵²² Ibid., 46-47.

touchstone in sermons dealing with the government of the passions, as Alan Brinton has observed in his survey of the subject. Anger's associations with violence of expression provided a kind of "paradigm case" that illustrated the need to quell the passions.⁵²³ And Young, interestingly, must go to some lengths to recuperate Cato as a figure whose "violent Deportment" upon his suicide was, on the whole, justified and virtuous.⁵²⁴ In general, however, Young's presentation of the passions in the *Vindication*, as in *The Universal Passion*, confirms the commonplace that more violent passions should be avoided and more tender passions cultivated in their stead. As Brinton observes, the early eighteenth-century homiletic genre dealing with the "government of the passions" has "roots in the rhetoric of the ancient Stoics (especially Seneca): while the Stoics ostensibly recommended the extirpation of the passions, they in fact resuscitated the pathetic in terms of the so-called *eupathe*, which are really just 'kinder, gentler' *pathe* which are not disruptive of the inner life."⁵²⁵ In keeping with this trend, Young embraces the Stoic ideal of a serene demeanor affected mainly by "kindler, gentler" passions. Young's central concern with the love of fame reflects its status as a kind of middle ground between "Paternal Affections," that reliably seek a social good when given a proper outlet, and anger, which tends to obey more violent, anti-social tendencies. The love of fame is an inherently social, generally non-violent passion; however, it has both beneficial and absurd effects, the latter of which Young assumes can be refined and

⁵²³ Brinton, "The Passions as Subject Matter," 58.

⁵²⁴ *Vindication*, 46. Young argues that Cato "died of" indignation: "He thought no Man worthy to triumph over Liberty, and Rome. And That violent Deportment shown at his *Death*, which has, *hitherto*, been wrongfully imputed to a Ferocity of *Temper*, was, I think owing to this accidental *Passion*, which was the *Cause of his Death*; This Fever, This noble Inflammation of Mind, This Indignation for *Cæsar's unjust Success*. My Conjecture clears his Character in *that Respect*, and makes it more consistent with that Humanity which he, in a peculiar Manner, manifested on many occasions in his laudable Life, which was worthy our Emulation, though his Death was Detestable at the best." See 46-47.

⁵²⁵ Brinton, "The Passions as Subject Matter," 54.

improved upon by a processes of isolation and reflection that emphasize, as positive ends, the desire for divine approbation and public good rather than the desire for public applause. The example of Cato offers a parallel example of this notion of purgation. The “Peevish” are batted about by “Gusts of Rage” and “shoo[t] their Arrows” with apparent lack of discrimination; Cato’s demeanor, by comparison, reveals a less selfish, more virtuous, more righteously-directed version of anger. The potential for individual improvement emerges in the space between these characters.

And yet, even if he adheres to this Stoic ideal of character, Young does not adhere to the related thesis that the passions should be governed principally by “reason”—a commonplace in sermons dealing with the government of the passions.⁵²⁶ Unlike contemporary ministers such as Samuel Clarke, Young does not insist that sinful passion consists of “a kind of usurpation, ‘when the passions, instead of obeying reason, over-rule and govern it’” (Brinton 57).⁵²⁷ His definition of the passions as “virtues” and “sins” is notably complex, as observed previously. Moreover, rather than asserting reason’s primacy as the governor of the passions, Young tends instead to point to practical, affective solutions to problems of “government,” individual and collective, whether by directing one’s attention to worthy objects (a cognitive process that might be described as the manifestation of judgment, sense, or affection rather than the exercise of “reason”); by obeying the natural, divinely-inspired courses of the passions; or by turning the passions against themselves. The *Vindication* itself is structured to appeal to the

⁵²⁶ This posture becomes especially visible in *The Universal Passion*, as I will show shortly.

⁵²⁷ Brinton is quoting Samuel Clarke, another of whose sermons I have examined above. Brinton does not himself point out that Young departs from contemporary “ethical” sermon-writers on this count; however, he does mention Young’s *Vindication* (64), and his analysis makes room for the ideas that I am developing here. Further evidence of Young’s rejection of the idea that the passions must be governed by reason is quoted below.

selfishness of his audience because “*where we have a Self-concern, we have an Attention,*” as he puts it in the Preface: the main argument is that the passions cause greater pain, in the temporal sense of the word, if indulged without a proper sense of “*Things above.*” *The Universal Passion* is similarly pitched to its readers’ “Self-concern,” as I will now show, even if Young does not articulate his didactic concept in his authorial Preface with the completeness and directness that one might expect of a writer who cultivates such an earnest literary persona.

VIII: Young’s Prefatory Proposal for Civic Improvement in *The Universal Passion*

Taking amelioration rather than outright banishment of vice and folly as his civic goal,⁵²⁸ Young describes his satirical design as an attempt to move the passions in ways that maximize happiness, serenity, and agreeability for the “reasonable and virtuous man”:

No man can converse much in the world, but, at what he meets with, he must either be insensible, or grieve, or be angry, or smile. Some passion (if we are not impassive) must be mov’d; for the general conduct of mankind is, by no means, a thing *indifferent*, to a reasonable and virtuous man. Now to smile at it, and turn it into ridicule, I think most eligible; as it hurts our selves least, and gives vice, and folly the greatest offence: And that for *this* reason; because what men aim at by them, is, generally, publick opinion, and esteem. Which truth is the subject of the following Satires; and joins them together, as several branches from the same root. An unity of design, which has not (I think) in a set of Satires been attempted before.⁵²⁹

Dryden had proposed several decades before that that modern satire “ought to treat only

⁵²⁸ Young outlines his strategy for civic reform during the course of several paragraphs, and quoting it piecemeal does not quite do justice to the way his discussion moves from a pragmatic recognition that published satire “may not do much good” in the world to a pipe dream of “chac[ing misconduct] out of the world with satire” to a consideration of the problem that the “general [mis]conduct of mankind” poses for the spiritual wellbeing of the “reasonable and virtuous man” (only a portion of his anticipated audience, as he subsequently makes clear).

⁵²⁹ Young, *UP*, images 4-5.

of one Subject; to be confin'd to one particular Theme; or, at least, to one principally."⁵³⁰ In fulfilling this prescription, Young also offered a sophisticated answer to Dryden's declaration that "[t]he End or Scope of Satire is to purge the Passions."⁵³¹ His concept makes room for two kinds of selfishness. As an affective response to the world's ills, he argues, smiling at the world is healthier for the "reasonable and virtuous" individual than darker reactions (grief, anger, insensibility), presumably because it makes life sensibly lighter than these other passions might (i.e., "hurts ourselves least" in the here-and-now) and delimits the negative spiritual consequences of ruminating excessively on the prevalence of vice and folly (i.e., thwarts despair, indignation, and callousness, thereby "hurt[ing] ourselves least" as concerns our fitness for divine salvation). Perhaps it goes without saying that the diagnosis of the problem of human misconduct that he ultimately provides is well calculated to accomplish this end. If the root cause of vice and folly is indeed the love of fame as his satires seek to prove, then humankind is blessed indeed. After all, the love of fame is described within the satires (as in the *Vindication of Providence*) as a passion that, even in its more foolish forms, can have "very good effects" on the common weal.

In addition, smiling satire strikes at the root of vice and folly because it draws upon the selfish tendencies of the passion that feeds them: it "offen[ds]" vanity into self-reflection.⁵³² That is, if British men and women of the early eighteenth century really *were* "universally" beset by the love of fame, as Young argues throughout his satire, then

⁵³⁰ *Discourse Concerning the Origin and Progress of Satire, Works*, IV.79.7-8.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 77.29-30.

⁵³² Young makes a similar argument in the *Vindication of Providence*. There, at one especially striking turn, he argues, "If this Account of the Passions be just, let us turn them against themselves; Let us be Angry with *Anger*, ashamed of *Shame*, afraid of *Fear*, pity *Envy*, and moderate our Fondness for *Love*" (50). He then goes on to show that these passions "all act directly counter to their own Purposes, and are the *Reverse* of That which they pretend to" (51).

his anticipated readership would necessarily be motivated to avoid resembling the foolish characters that he mocks in his verse. One wonders whether Young arrived at this concept by contemplating the passions *en masse* or by simply reversing the logic of the traditional civic function of satire. In Dryden's *Discourse Concerning the Origin and Progress of Satire*, as in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discussions of satire more broadly, satire had long been conceived as a genre that worked by shaming or "defam[ing]" its victims.⁵³³ By taking as his subject the love of fame itself, Young was incorporating into the content of his satire a psychological insight that had often been taken for granted as the hermeneutic basis for satire's claim on the common weal. The result is a composition with a "unity of design" that boasts a particular efficiency of conception with respect to purging the passions. In Young's presentation, the love of fame—the desire for "publick opinion, and esteem"—both creates the predicament that he is trying to ameliorate and, with the help of well-aimed satire, provides its own remedy.

Young now clarifies his initial proposal by appealing to an idea of countervailing passions. Albert Hirschman has shown that moral philosophers of the early eighteenth century found increasingly attractive the idea that softer, less harmful passions (namely avarice, in early capitalist thinking) could be made to "check" more harmful passions (seditious impulses, for instance). In accordance with this concept, Young imagines his amiable approach to satire as a way of providing an outlet for a softer passion (amusement) in order to thwart the indulgence of more violent passions (such as anger) in himself and his readers:

⁵³³ *Works*, IV.67.13, 28. "Defamation" was a legal term for libel, slander, and scandal, and Young may be insinuating this threat in his verse treatment of the love of fame; however, he does not actually use the term. See Knopf (esp. 155), cited below, for terminological details.

Laughing at the misconduct of the world, will, in a great measure, ease us of any more disagreeable passion about it. One passion is more effectually driven out by another, than by reason; whatever some may teach. For to reason we owe our passions; had we not reason, we should not be offended at what we find amiss. And the *cause* seems not to be the natural cure of any *effect*.⁵³⁴

In breaking with the contemporary conviction that the passions were best governed with reason, Young also eschews the notion of the proper government of the passions as a dignified suppression, whereby the desire for worldly pleasures is made subordinate to the goal of virtuous self-government. Amusement itself—pleasure—can provide a positive incentive to affective improvement. Reason is involved in the process of judgment; however, it does not provide a “natural cure” for the suffering caused by the passions. The passions serve as their own best governors. They are the “*cause*” of human suffering, and they provide its “natural cure.”

With a similarly pragmatic didactic rationale, Young declares that his satirical persona imitates Horace’s geniality and good humor and keeps Juvenal’s moral indignation merely “in [his] eye, but rather for emulation, than imitation.” By modeling an indignant or otherwise rigid posture toward sin and folly, Young argues, his satire would produce an unproductively resistant response in his audience, not well gauged to win the credit of his readers:

[*L*]aughing Satire bids the fairest for success. The world is too proud to be fond of a serious Tutor: And when an Author is in a passion, the laugh, generally, as in conversation, turns against him. This kind of Satire only has any delicacy in it. Of this delicacy *Horace* is the best master: He appears in good humour while he censures; and therefore his censure has the more weight, as supposed to proceed from Judgment, not from Passion. *Juvenal* is ever in a passion; he has little valuable but his Eloquence, and Morality: The last of which I have had in my eye, but rather for emulation, than imitation, thro’ my whole work.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ Young, *UP*, image 5.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, image 6.

Here again Young posits as an ideal the picture of dignity and self-respecting restraint that characterized sermons on the “government of the passions” during this period. And yet, the tactic that he proposes for cultivating this character in readers and authors alike involves not the assertion of reason, but the indulgence of a modicum of “pride.” The good-humored genial tutor, not overly dogmatic in his moral judgments, wins the respect and collusion of the vain readers he hopes to instruct. As Young himself explains it, then, the posture of tolerance that he adopts in his character sketch of Florio and elsewhere in the volume does not stem from a sense that one should be tolerant on principle (a moral-political ideal more familiar to us today), but from a strategic, practical response to the problem of vice and folly in the temporal sphere.

In distinguishing between the Juvenalian satirical persona and the Horatian satirical persona, Young was drawing upon Dryden’s influential juxtaposition between the two Roman poets, albeit without adhering to his predecessor’s preference for the “Pleasure[s]” afforded by Juvenalian satire.⁵³⁶ Dryden had described Horace as the “best, for amending Manners”—a satirist who offered a “Pleasant Cure” for the ills of his age, “with all the Limbs preserv’d entire,” whereas “*Juvenal*’s Times requir’d a more painful kind of Operation.”⁵³⁷ By contrast to Juvenal, who “always intends to move your Indignation” and “always brings about his purpose,” Horace “means to make his Reader Laugh,” though “he is not sure of his Experiment.”⁵³⁸ This difference, Dryden suggested, had been partly a product of personal profile and partly a product of differences in the needs and cultures of the ages in which the two poets lived, the Augustan “Court” having

⁵³⁶ *Works*, IV.73.11.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, IV.71.35; 72.1-2, 4-5.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, IV.72.19-22.

been “superiour to that of *Nero*.”⁵³⁹ Horace, to be sure, had embraced a kind of satirical invective in his early career, writing many of his odes and epodes “Satirically, against his private Enemies”; however, he “purg’d himself of this Choler, before he enter’d on those Discourses, which are more properly call’d the *Roman* Satire.”⁵⁴⁰ When “the monarchy of his *Caesar* was in its newness[,] and the Government but just made easie to the Conquer’d People,” Horace’s self-regulating approach to satire reflected his context.⁵⁴¹ Horace’s “proper Quarry” became “Folly” rather than “Vice”: “the defects of Humane Understanding, or at most the Peccadillos of Life, rather than the Tragical Vices, to which Men are hurri’d by their unruly Passions and exorbitant Desires.”⁵⁴²

Young’s suggestion that Juvenal is “ever in a passion,” like his reference to the passions that he describes in his first six satires as private “Follies” that prove generally unthreatening to the common weal, reflects Dryden’s account of Horace’s approach to laughing satire. According to Dryden, Horace had dedicated his satire to conveying “the Rules of a Happy and Virtuous Life”—instruction that proves more “general” than Juvenal’s.⁵⁴³

[T]is the business of *Horace* to instruct us how to combat our Vices, to regulate our Passions, to follow Nature, to give Bounds to our desires, to Distinguish betwixt Truth and Falshood, and betwixt our Conceptions of Things, and Things themselves: To come back from our prejudicate Opinions, to understand exactly the Principles and Motives of all our Actions; and to avoid the Ridicule, into

⁵³⁹ Ibid., IV.58.10-11.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., IV.58.32-33; 59.1-3. Chambers and Frost, citing Rudd (1966), note that Dryden has taken liberties with this chronology.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., IV.66.14-16. Dryden implies that this difference also reflected Augustus’s mode of authority and Horace’s proximity thereto: “Horace, as he was a Courtier, comply’d with the Interest of his Master, and avoiding the Lashing of greater Crimes, confin’d himself to the ridiculing of Petty Vices, and common Follies” (68.25-28). Under the reign of Domitian, “Enormous Vices” appeared that had been unknown in Augustus’s era. For Juvenal, “Little Follies were out of doors, when Oppression was to be scourg’d instead of Avarice: It was no longer time to turn into Ridicule, the false Opinions of Philosophers; when the *Roman* Liberty was to be asserted” (65.29-32).

⁵⁴² Ibid., IV.62.13-30.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., IV.59.6; 61.27.

which all men necessarily fall, who are Intoxicated with those Notions, which they have received from their Masters; and which they obstinately retain, without examining whether or no they are founded on right Reason.

In a Word, he labours to render us happy in relation to our selves, agreeable and faithful to our Friends, and discreet, serviceable, and well bred in relation to those with whom we are oblig'd to live, and to converse.⁵⁴⁴

Horace, then, is an eminently sociable poet: upright in his conduct, distinctive for his “Urbanity” and his command of “Civil Conversation,” but not so strictly moral in his judgments that he fails to live up to the *mores* and social obligations with which his satire is principally concerned.⁵⁴⁵ Young’s notion that his Horatian manner will subtly accommodate his readers’ pride borrows from this conception of Horace’s civilized character and context.

Continuing in the same pragmatic strain, Young explains why he has avoided the model of satirists such as Rabelais. Just as his imitation of Horace’s good-humored manner avoids the Scylla of moral stringency, he argues, it avoids the Charybdis of laughing indecently. Raucous, indecent satire simply does not effect civic reform as predictably as “Delicacy” does. Appealing to the lower side of human nature undermines the authority of the satirist. Rather than effecting positive changes in the reader, the indelicate satirist turns the joke back on himself:

There are some Prose-Satirists of the greatest Delicacy, and Wit; the last of which can never, or should never succeed, without the former. An Author, without it, betrays too great a contempt for mankind, and opinion of himself; which are bad Advocates for reputation, and success. What a difference is there between the *merit*, if not the *wit* of *Cervantes*, and *Rabelais*? The last has a particular art of throwing a great deal of Genius, and Learning into frolick, and jest; but the Genius, and the Scholar is all you can admire; you want the Gentleman to converse with, in him. He is like a criminal who receives his life for some services; you commend, but you pardon, too. Indecency offends our pride, as men, and our unaffected taste, as judges of composition. Nature has wisely form’d us with an aversion to it: And he that succeeds in spite of it, is,

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., IV.74.29-75.8.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., IV.63.18; 61.33.

aliena venia, quam sua providentia Tutior [“more secure in the pardon of others, than in the prudence of his own person”].⁵⁴⁶

Here Young makes clear that the satirical author should allow himself the same selfish protection of his self-opinion and his reputation that he elsewhere presumes will govern his audience’s reaction to his work. The successful satirical author avoids indecency because he does not want to cut a bad figure: to betray “too great a contempt for mankind, and opinion of himself; which are bad Advocates for reputation, and success.” This suggestion further confirms Young’s idea of satirical purgation as a strategy of working within the constraints of a congenial, polite, discourse—courting “pride” rather than “offend[ing]” it, winning it over rather than stimulating “aversion[s].” Although he does not use the word here, Young’s notion of satirical purgation might be described as an idea of *refinement*. His approach to governing the passions imagines both taking advantage of and reinforcing a “reasonable and virtuous” character and a civilized mode of social relations, for humans are inclined by “Nature” to aspire to a higher state.

IX: To Be Relished As He Deserves?

Young’s *Universal Passion* has not withstood the passage of time. Despite the moral-ethical complexities that I have outlined above, Young’s moralizing sounds to a modern ear like conventional moralizing. With no real plot, no scurrilous insults, and no pot-shots at contemporary politicians to amuse and provoke, the poem’s structure can seem repetitive and its texture polished to the point of dullness. Moreover, whether despite or

⁵⁴⁶ Young, *UP*, images 7-8, qtg. Valerius Maximus 6.2.0. I have altered a seventeenth-century translation slightly. It reads: “more secure in the pardon of others, than in the providence of the person” (263). *Q Valerius Maximus his collections of the memorable acts and sayings of orators, philosophers, statesmen, and other illustrious persons of the ancient Romans, and other foreign nations, upon various subjects together with the life of that famous historian / newly translated into English* (London, 1684), in Early English Books Online (accessed February 3, 2010).

because of the urbane politeness of Young's approach to satire, the fulsomeness of his panegyrics, together with his known behavior as a pension-seeker, have contributed to the impression that Young, the man, failed to rise above the social phenomenon traced in his satires. In Weinbrot's words, "Young hoped to offend no one and to please the powers-that-be."⁵⁴⁷ Swift's much-quoted observation that "[t]he Doctor is not merry enough nor angry enough for the present age to relish as he deserves," has seemed to confirm the modern impression.

With the bare bones of Young's rather complex didactic approach in view, I hope I have cast some new light on Swift's comment. Swift's assessment reads as a gloss on "the Doctor's" didactic strategy rather than his person—it comments on Young's deliberate avoidance of what Young calls the more "disagreeable" passions. In addition, it places a fresh emphasis on the suggestion that Young *should* be "relish[ed] as he deserves"—that is, that his performance deserved to be relished by its contemporary readers even more than it already was.

This aspect of Swift's comment is even more intriguing since, from what we can tell, Young's characteristical satires received notable acclaim from contemporary readers, even if they were not relished to the degree that Pope and Swift's writings were. The poem's multiple early editions have already been mentioned. Perhaps more interestingly, in an age when a great many writers were ridiculed as "dull" (including writers such as Defoe and Haywood, whom we "relish" today), Edward Young was not counted among the dull writers. Young appears in *The Dunciad*, but not as a dunce.⁵⁴⁸ A composition

⁵⁴⁷ *The Formal Strain*, 97.

⁵⁴⁸ In any case, he is not unambiguously among the dunces. One possible negative reference to Young will be discussed in the next chapter; however, another is presumably positive: he is mentioned with "G——"

titled *A New Session of the Poets, for the year 1730* showed Dullness rejecting Young as a candidate for her laurels: “She confess’d that his plays might pass for good things, / But his satyr too much abounded with stings.”⁵⁴⁹ And Young’s “smiling” approach to satire was praised as an effective strategy, as in the following Horatian imitation, which depicted a poet determining to imitate Young:

Good-natur’d YOUNG, well-learned and well-bred,
Studies to lay prevailing folly dead.
How gently he the well-tun’d Satire deals,
Smiles while he strikes, and while he wounds he heals!
Me – – too, will satires write, tho’ nothing mean;
But on each finger measures out his Spleen.⁵⁵⁰

Young’s talent for satire was repeatedly ranked with that of Pope, Swift, Gay, and Congreve.⁵⁵¹ And the handsome pension that he received from Walpole attests further to the perception among some contemporary readers that *The Universal Passion* had done a real service for the common weal. Although it was true that, by 1767, Oliver Goldsmith found reason to remark that “Young’s Satires were in higher reputation when published, then they stand at present,” Young’s immediate contemporaries clearly considered Young’s satire a source of “profit and delight.”⁵⁵²

My aim here is not to recuperate Young as a poet who should have stood the test of time, either through the eighteenth century or into our own age, but rather to recover a sense of why Young’s project might have seemed more interesting and “witty” to Young’s contemporaries than it did to later audiences, both at the level of the line and in its larger concept. I have already done some work to unpack the latter. As for the

and “S——” (Gay and Swift) among the plagiarized authors whose images are exploited by Curll (1728, II.96).

⁵⁴⁹ May, “Critical, Reader’s Edition,” qtd. 18.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., qtd. 18.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 18-20.

⁵⁵² Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain*, qtd. 96; May, “Critical, Reader’s Edition,” qtd. 20. See Weinbrot, 95-96 and May, 15-25 for fuller accounts of this early reception history.

former, it is worth returning to the matter of Young's approach to characteristical portraiture—a feature of his verse that, as I have suggested, was intended to assist in a form of purgation whereby vanity is made to bring about its own reform. *The Universal Passion* now reads as a “general” satire, in which the characters mocked in the verse look for the most part like stock characters and other fictitious entities, created for the purpose of moral instruction. This aspect of the poem surely contributes to the modern impression of its dullness. Perhaps it makes Young's theory of purgation sound unduly idealistic as well. There is evidence, however, that contemporary readers took many of these apparently “general” portraits to refer to specific, living Englanders—a detail that I would argue significantly affects our understanding of the didactic experience that the poem seemed to its earliest readers to provide, as well as our understanding of Young's own “design” for civic reform.⁵⁵³ In 1979 (too late to be taken into account by the important formalist criticism of the 1960s) Antony Coleman pointed out that an extant copy of the published poem, heavily annotated by Horace Walpole, indicates that many of Young's characteristical portraits were originally interpreted as “particular” satires.⁵⁵⁴ Horace Walpole was not yet a teenager when *The Universal Passion* first began to circulate in print, and many (perhaps all) of his notes were made retrospectively, some of them as late as 1785. But Coleman has located other extant copies with annotations—an indication that “Walpole in annotating the poem was following well-established

⁵⁵³ I am, indeed, assuming that Young intended for the poem to be read this way. He hints as much in the opening lines of the Preface (quoted subsequently), and his ample references to contemporaries within the poem encourages this kind of identification. More scholarship will have to be done on the poem's early reception to determine whether early readers came to a consensus in their identification of pseudonymous portraits of particular persons and whether that consistency of identification seems to reflect Young's intentions.

⁵⁵⁴ Antony Coleman, “Walpole's Annotations in a Copy of ‘Love of Fame, The Universal Passion,’” *Notes and Queries* 26 (1979): 551-54. Based on internal evidence, this is the same copy of the 1728 London edition that appears in digital form on ECCO (the edition that I am quoting here).

practice.”⁵⁵⁵ Moreover, Walpole’s annotations may be fairly accurate. Walpole reported in 1788 that, although many of these “facts” were “new to . . . most of the present age,” they had been “known perhaps at the time to my Nurse and my Tutors,” and he claimed further that “my memory is still so fresh, or rather so retentive of trifles which first made impression on it” that the recollection seemed to him to be trustworthy.⁵⁵⁶

This unannounced feature of Young’s didactic project brings to life his theory that *The Universal Passion* made vanity provide the means for its own reform.⁵⁵⁷ In its alternation between named patrons and celebrities and pseudonymous portraits, the poem’s characteristic organization creates a kind of hermeneutic game whereby readers are invited—indeed encouraged—to identify themselves and others in the verse and are thereby playfully exposed as seekers and monitors of reputation. “I am not conscious of the least malevolence to any particular person thro’ all the Characters,” Young declares coyly in the opening lines of his Preface, “tho’ some persons may be so selfish, as to engross a general application to themselves.”⁵⁵⁸ Young’s adoption of a jovial, accommodating Horatian persona throughout these sketches therefore emerges as a crucial tactical choice, as does his incorporation of several different techniques for naming the personalities whom he compliments and gently mocks in his satire. Several compliments to contemporary aristocrats demand a literal filling in of blanks—a technique that Pope would later adapt lavishly to the project of ridiculing contemporary British writers. Satire IV, for instance, names several contemporary aristocrats (would-be patrons, perhaps?) within a qualified defense of the impulse to write and publish poetry:

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 551.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., qtd. 551.

⁵⁵⁷ Coleman himself does not make this thematic connection. I am therefore expanding upon it here.

⁵⁵⁸ Young, *UP*, image 2.

For some, tho' few, there are large-minded men,
 Who watch unseen the labours of the pen,
 Who know the muse's worth, and therefore court,
 Their deeds her theme, their bounty her support,
 Who serve, *unask'd*, the *least pretence* to wit;
 My sole excuse, alas! for having writ.
 Will *H*———*t* pardon, if I dare commend
H———*t*, with zeal a patron and a friend?
A———*le* true wit is studious to restore,
 And *D*———*t* smiles, if *Phæbus* smil'd before,
P———*ke* in years the long-lov'd arts admires,
 And *Henrietta* like a muse inspires.⁵⁵⁹

Walpole's annotations fill in the blanks and identify these figures, respectively, as "Simon Harcourt, Lord Chancellor," "John Duke of Argyle, the General," "Lionel Duke of Dorset," "Thomas Earl of Pembroke," and "Henrietta Hobart, wife of [] Howard, afterwards C[ounte]ss of Suffolk" (Appendix A).

The inclusion of passages like this one invited Young's early readers to make similar identifications of the pseudonymous portraits, which constitute the "largest group of annotations" in Horace Walpole's copy.⁵⁶⁰ The sketch of Balbutius, for instance, was taken as a reference to John Dennis, solemnly crying, "Ten thousand worlds for the Three Unities!"⁵⁶¹ Lady Anne Egerton's name is supplied for the following portrait of "Delia" (Appendix B):

More than *one* steed must *Delia*'s empire feel,
 Who sits triumphant o'er the flying *wheel*;
 And as she guides it thro' the admiring throng,
 With what an air she smacks the *silken* thong?
 Graceful, as *John*, she moderates the reins,
 And whistles sweet her diuretick strains.
Sesostris-like, such Charioteers as *these*
 May drive six harnest *monarchs* if they please.
 They *drive*, *row*, *run*, with love of Glory smit,

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 75.

⁵⁶⁰ Coleman, "Walpole's Annotations," 552.

⁵⁶¹ Young, *UP*, 46. This portrait is quoted at greater length above.

*Leap, swim, shoot-flying, and pronounce on wit.*⁵⁶²

Walpole's annotation explains that she was "daughter of Scroope Duke of Bridgwater, married first to Wriothlesley Duke of Bedford from whom she was parted, and during which separation she often drove a coach and six to Newmarket; afterwards wife of William Earl of Jersey."⁵⁶³ Horace Walpole identifies a great many figures identified in this manner, many of them women, and many of them otherwise distinguishable as "private" persons—that is, living inhabitants of Britain, locally known for some defining "folly," such as Lady Anne Egerton's liberated, polyandrous escapades.⁵⁶⁴

This aspect of *The Universal Passion* will have to be studied more closely to determine whether, to what extent, and in what spirit Young's "general" portraits were identifiable to his contemporaries as particular, "private" persons.⁵⁶⁵ But if it was actually the case that a great many "characters" in the poem (especially in the first six satires) were originally identifiable as living personages, this strategy of public shaming adds a certain real-world heft to his abiding insinuation that vanity can serve as the means of its own reform.

⁵⁶² Ibid., 91.

⁵⁶³ Coleman, "Walpole's Annotations," qtd. 553.

⁵⁶⁴ Notably, this particular passage capitalizes on a metaphor comparing Lady Anne's mode of governance to that of Sesostrius, a legendary king of Egypt—by definition, a "public" figure.

⁵⁶⁵ Interestingly, some of the most colorful and memorable character sketches are not identified with particular persons in Walpole's annotations. Neither the character of Florio, who is said to resemble a "friend" of the satirist, nor the character of Amasia is identified with one of Young's living contemporaries in Horace Walpole's annotated copy of *The Universal Passion*. Further studies will need to be conducted on the other extant annotated copies of the poem to determine whether these other characters were, in fact, identified by contemporary readers, whether Young was perceived as having offered a mix of truly "general" and patently allusive characters in the poem, or whether it is possible to answer these questions at all. Also noteworthy with respect to the intertext(s) discussed in this case study is the fact that several figures appear in *The Universal Passion* who would later find a place in Pope's formal verse satires, many of them designated as such in Walpole's notes: the Duke of Chandos, the Earl of Burlington, Arbuthnot, Paul Dartiquenave ("Darty his ham-pye" in the Imitation of Horace's *Satire II.i*). The implication may be that Pope "borrowed" from and "improved" upon his predecessor (H.W. n. p. 23).

What we know about the immediate reception of the poem both enriches and complicates an assessment of this aspect of Young's design. James May notes, for instance, that in the spring of 1725, "the sale of *Satire II* was promoted with a letter from a lady who has fallen out of love after having seen the excesses of her beau in Young's portrait of him."⁵⁶⁶ Quoting the portrait of "young *Florello*," who is said to have been seen "[o]f late at *White's*" with a "blank...look" and a "discompos'd...mien" because his "coat" was too "*plain*,"⁵⁶⁷ the young woman remarks that the original's "very *Life*" was "not half so *lively*." She promotes the poem accordingly as an "Extraordinary *Cure*" that deserves to be published "in Justice to the Skill, and Reputation, of the Learned *Doctor*, who effected it."⁵⁶⁸ Questions of authenticity aside, this letter suggests that contemporary readers did, indeed, perceive the poem as a work intended to reform the common weal by directly attacking private expressions of vanity. And yet, it seems noteworthy that the lady does not insist that the real "young *Florello*" has in fact been convinced by Young's portrait to change his vain behavior. Rather, Young's portrait is praised because it has precipitated the lady's own self-preservation. The real "beau" has presumably gotten his earthly comeuppance in a manner reminiscent of the crushing of Florio's flower: his lover has fallen out of love with him. Of course, we cannot know for certain what spiritual lessons this "beau" might have taken from such experience. Perhaps more interestingly, the young lady herself has apparently not been moved by her beau's example to correct her own vanity. On the contrary, as May reports, "Young is praised as a poet second only to Pope as she observes that she would rather be painted by this poet

⁵⁶⁶ "Critical, Reader's Edition," 17-18.

⁵⁶⁷ Young, *UP*, 36. These lines were not substantially altered from the first edition, though "mien" was spelled correctly at first.

⁵⁶⁸ May, "Critical, Reader's Edition," qtd. 18, emphasis altered.

than all but he who pictured Mrs. Arabella Fermor.”⁵⁶⁹ Even as the young lady’s comments confirm that “the Doctor’s” moral prescriptions have not reformed her own vanity, they prove his central diagnosis of the pervasiveness of the love of fame.

It is hard to know how to use this early reception history to gauge the socio-cultural tone that Reverend Young intended for the poem to set, especially with respect to the private “follies” enumerated in the first six books of the poem. A lively sense of fun animates that early advertisement, especially if we understand it to have been written, as May suggests, *as an advertisement* rather than as (or in addition to being) an authentic description of an early reader’s experience.⁵⁷⁰ One can detect in the epistolary testimony a kind of collusion with Young’s project, if not actually a confirmation that he was correct in diagnosing the pervasiveness of the love of fame. It is therefore tempting to read this sense of play back into *The Universal Passion*—to see Young embracing, with a wink and a nudge, the fascination with celebrity that was becoming a hallmark of his age, not to mention the emerging philosophical preoccupation with the possibility, articulated most memorably by Mandeville, that private vices such as the accumulation of luxury goods could have positive effects on the public weal.

Nonetheless, I am inclined to see Young accommodating these cultural developments with a somewhat “graver” tone, as Swift suggested long since. If Young recognized that a great many private follies “confin’d” their “mischief” to a small “sphere,” and if he diagnosed and accepted the prevailing concern with reputation as a potential boon for the British common weal in this and other respects, he also stopped far short of appearing to condone moral transgressions for their own sake, especially in cases

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁷⁰ May describes this letter as an advertisement; I am taking his suggestion one step further.

in which those transgressions impinged upon the “law.” Most prominent among his condemnations of private vice is a self-declaredly Juvenalian moment, late in the sixth satire, when Young mounts an especially strident attack on adulterous British women:

Are there among the females of our isle
Such faults, at which it is a fault to *smile*?
There are. Vice, once by *modest nature* chain'd,
And *legal ties*, expatiates unrestrain'd,
Without thin *decency* held up to view,
Naked she stalks o'er *law*, and *gospel* too.
Our matrons lead such exemplary lives,
Men sigh in vain, for *none*, but for their *wives*;
Who *marry* to be *free*, to range the more,
And wed one man, to wanton with a score.
Abroad too kind, at home 'tis stedfast hate,
And one eternal tempest of debate.⁵⁷¹

In the opening lines of the first satire, Young conceives satire as a “shining *supplement* of publick *laws*”—a means of affecting the manners “[w]hen the *Law* shews her teeth, but dares not bite.”⁵⁷² His comment about “[o]ur” adulterous “matrons” drives home this conception of satirical reform. These wives are condemned for “expat[iat] [ing] unrestrain'd” over legal and moral restraints—marrying “to be *free*” rather than to love, honor, and obey their husbands. In the service of this defamation, Young’s satire exploits what was, at the time, a legal loophole for avoiding libel prosecution: “innuendo,” the technical legal term for obfuscating the name of a specific person intended in a satire or otherwise to utilize language that could be interpreted in innocuous senses.⁵⁷³ Although working within the law, he has seized for himself a modicum of satirical liberty as a way of supplementing the reformatory power of church and state.

⁵⁷¹ Young, *UP*, 144.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁷³ C. R. Kropf, “Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8.2 (Winter 1974-75): esp. 159-61, 164-65.

X: *The Universal Passion* and the British Common Weal

In developing this concept of satirical reform, Young necessarily presumed that the “publick *laws*” supplemented by the satirist-reformer were good, just, and justly executed, even if they were limited in their power to affect “private” conduct. He presumed further, as noted previously, that the pursuit of worldly honor played a supplementary role in civic governance, both by shaming men and women into good behavior and by leading them to accomplish great deeds. On both counts, he was putting forth a vision of the common weal supportive of the vision and policies developed by Robert Walpole and his supporters during the reign of George I. Walpole, acting on behalf of the King, bestowed offices, honors, and remunerations on “those who had acted with *Courage* and *Honesty* for the Preservation of our *happy* establishment,” as one of his newspapers put it.⁵⁷⁴ A British order of chivalry called The Most Honourable Order of the Bath was founded in 1725 by George I as a complement to the hereditary peerages, baronetcies, knighthoods, and honorable societies already in existence. Walpole himself was knighted as part of this order, as of the more elite Order of the Garter. Although anti-government voices of opposition decried these practices of preferment as subversions of the English constitution—corrupt appropriations and extensions of royal power by a *de facto* “Prime Minister”—supporters of Walpole defended the practice on constitutional grounds. They described the honors as “*Incitements to public Virtues*, instead of *Alurements to political Vices*” and “pointed out that pensions and places were

⁵⁷⁴ Simon Targett, “Government and Ideology During the Age of Whig Supremacy: The Political Argument of Sir Robert Walpole’s Newspaper Propagandists,” *The Historical Journal* 13.2 (1994): qtd. 309.

given only to men of considerable fortune, with a considerable stake in society, with much to lose by a constitutional revolution.⁵⁷⁵

Young clearly hoped to win this kind of honor and remuneration with *The Universal Passion*. At the front of his collected 1728 edition, he offered the following account of his mixed motives for writing the satires:

These satires have been favourably received at home and abroad. I am not conscious of the least malevolence to any particular person through all the characters; though some persons may be so selfish as to engross a general application to themselves. A writer in polite letters should be content with reputation; the private amusement he finds in his compositions; the good influence they have on his severer studies; that admission they give him to his superiors; and the possible good effect they may have on the public; or else he should join to his politeness some more lucrative qualification.⁵⁷⁶

Notably, Young does not insist that his public motives for writing outweigh all the rest, even if the tone and content of his discussion suggest an abiding public spiritedness.

Introducing his discussion with the modest promise that a local reputation is already in the making for his published work, Young describes his authorial motivations in a manner that conveys an image of “private” discipline without failing to register both the selfish motives that have attended the composition and its publication (monetary and otherwise) and the public aims linked to them. He shows his readers that he has reflected upon and attempted to eschew those unduly selfish, writerly motives that might actually do some civic harm (namely malice). Striking a note of earnestness, dignity, and moderation, he appears rational and balanced. He conveys a sense of an author who has actually considered the civic motive at every turn, however selfish he may recognize his “private” motives to be.

Further clarifying this statement of purpose, Young’s Preface closes with an

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., qtd. 309; 308.

⁵⁷⁶ Young, *UP*, image 2.

allegory adapted from Plato's "fable of the birth of *Love*," in which "modern *Poetry*" is imagined as "the son of the *Goddess Poverty*, and the god *Riches*":

[H]e has from his *father*, his daring Genius, his Elevation of thought, his building castles in the Air; his prodigality; his neglect of things serious and useful; his vain opinion of his own merit, and his affectation of preference, and distinction. From his *mother*, he inherits his indigence, which makes him, a constant beggar of favours; that opportunity, with which he begs, his flattery; his servility; his fear of being despis'd, which is inseparable from him. That Poetry, like Love, is a little subject to *blindness*, which makes her mistake her way to preferments, and honours; that, she has her Satyrical *Quiver*; and lastly, that she retains a dutiful admiration for her *father's* family; but divides her favours, and generally lives with her *mother's* relations.⁵⁷⁷

So Young rationalizes his modestly obsequious approach to civic service and anticipates his binary approach to the prospect of satirical reform: his combination of satire with panegyric, his sense that the desire for approbation can lead to great public deeds, and his bald admission that this sort of public ambition looks for monetary rewards. He hopes, of course, that such rewards will confirm his true merit.

This explanation accounts for not only Young's ingenious means of seeking out patrons for his individually-published satires—a tactic that increased both the "reputation" of his work and its earnings—but also offers a means of understanding Young's fulsome sallies into the panegyric mode, which have seemed to some scholars be "unconvinc[ing]" as promises of the integrity of both the patron and the addressee.⁵⁷⁸ Young performs, in his satire, the very mode of reputation-seeking that he both rationalizes as a foundational, ordering mechanism in the common weal and seeks to use as a means of effecting spiritual reform. Thus, this element of the poem merits appreciation not merely as an expression of Young's own integrity (or lack thereof), but

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., images 10-11.

⁵⁷⁸ Although Weinbrot is careful to avoid a wholly biographical mode of analysis, his presentation suggests that Young's application of the patterns of formal verse satire may have been compromised by his inability to understand the hypocrisy of his performance.

also as an outgrowth of his commentary upon the love of fame as a universal passion. Young's incorporation of panegyrics within his verse represents a strategic amplification of the "praise" function that critics such as Dacier and Dryden had counseled modern satirists not to neglect in their satire. But because Young elects to promote virtue by means of panegyrics to actual persons (rather than by invoking abstractions or fictional characters), he develops an intriguing second dimension of his central thesis: his panegyrics enact the patron-poet relationship as a social relationship animated by the love of fame. In this formulation, poets "steal great names to sheild them from the Town"; they are playfully chided for considering Dorset's name "[t]heir wonted passport thro' the gates of Fame"; and although Young praises Dorset ostentatiously for "declin[ing] the *mistress* we pursue" and Lady Elizabeth for shying away from the praise that Young then accords her, the prominence of these compliments leaves a reader to contemplate the possibility that reputation-seeking behavior typically animates the patron's side of the relationship as well. Far from being unaware of the "ethical and satiric contradictions" posed by the fulsomeness of his forays into the panegyric mode, Young acknowledges and even highlights these contradictions. He stages his panegyric addresses to his patrons as moments worthy of observation and reflection for precisely the way they display the author himself as a fame-loving creature happy to indulge his patrons' love of fame.

Walpole's example therefore emerges as a twofold solution to the problem of vice and folly in the body politic. As a private individual, he represents the possibility of attaining true merit, even amid adversity, by joining his love of fame to a public spirit. As a public figure, he proves willing and able to govern the passions of the body politic

in a manner conducive to the general wellbeing. The final verse paragraphs of *The Universal Passion* praise Walpole for handling, with dignity, what could have been an awkward and dangerous situation for Britain: George I had been delayed by a storm during a trip to Brunswick, and the reins of power (Young implies) had fallen temporarily to Walpole. The final verse paragraph of *The Universal Passion* considers, rhetorically, Walpole's private disposition on that occasion:

What felt thy *Walpole*, pilot of the realm?
 Our *Palinurus* slept not at the helm,
 His eye ne'er clos'd; long since inur'd to wake,
 And outwatch every star, for *Brunswick's* sake.
 By thwarting passions tost, by cares opprest,
 He found thy tempest pictur'd in his breast.
 But, *now*, what joys that gloom of heart dispel,
 No pow'rs of language – but his own, can tell;
 His own, which *Nature*, and the *Graces* form,
 At will, to raise, or hush the *civil* storm.⁵⁷⁹ (175)

The reference to Walpole's "pow'rs of language" points to his much-lauded oratorical skills in parliamentary debate—a context in which "thwarting" and otherwise governing the passions necessarily comes into play.

But Young hints at a poignant irony in his suggestion that Walpole's "peace" has been brought about by an astute governance of private passions. As noted previously, the limit case for the private vices countenanced in his satire is the case of adulterous transgressions (specifically, *women's* adulterous transgressions). In raising the pitch of his satire to a Juvenalian condemnation of "vice" on that particular issue, Young may have been glancing at Catherine Walpole, wife of Robert Walpole, who was rumored to have had extramarital affairs during the time of his ascendancy.⁵⁸⁰ Indeed, there has been

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁵⁸⁰ Stephen Taylor, 'Walpole, Robert, first earl of Orford (1676–1745)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed 21 March 2010.

speculation that Horace Walpole (b. 1717) was not Robert Walpole's biological son. The vague references to his "thwarting passions," his "cares opprest," and the "tempest" in his breast not only invoke the image of the storm encountered by George I, but also the language of the passage condemning female adulterers⁵⁸¹: "Abroad too kind, at home 'tis stedfast hate, / And one eternal tempest of debate." This interpretive possibility would render Lady Catherine the negative counterpart of Lucretia, whose usefulness to the Roman republican cause had turned on her embodiment of the desire to align both her private person and her public image with sexual virtue (and against tyranny). Or perhaps the implication is that these "private" distresses have had a kind of public benefit. They have turned Walpole's energies toward politics—shunted his energies from private follies to public ambitions.

⁵⁸¹ Walpole himself is thought to have had numerous affairs and fathered a child out of wedlock; however, Young does not emphasize the problem of male infidelity in a parallel to this attack on women.

Appendix A: Abbreviated Names, *The Universal Passion* (1728), Annotated by H. Walpole

Sat. IV. *The Universal Passion.* 75

And barren *Labeo*, the true *mumper's* fashion,
 Exposés *borrow'd brats* to move *compassion*.
 Tho' such *my self*, vile bards I discommend,
 Nay more, tho' gentle *Damon* is my friend.
 "Is't then a crime to *write*?" — if talents rare
 Proclaim the God, the crime is to *forbear*;
 For some, tho' few, there are large-minded men,
 Who watch unseen the labours of the pen,
 Who know the muse's worth, and therefore court,
 Their deeds her theme, their bounty her support,
 Who serve, *unask'd*, the *least pretence* to wit;
 My sole excuse, alas! for having writ.

Will ¹*Harcourt* pardon, if I dare commend
Harcourt, with zeal a patron, and a friend?

²*Argyle* — le true wit is studious to restore,
 And ³*Dorset* smiles, if *Phæbus* smil'd before,

⁴*Pembroke* in years the long-lov'd arts admires,
 And ⁵*Henrietta* like a muse inspires.

¹ Simon Harcourt, Lord Chancellor.

But

² John Duke of Argyle, the General.

³ Lionel Duke of Dorset.

⁴ Thomas Earl of Pembroke.

⁵ Henrietta Hobart, wife of Mr Howard, afterwards C^s of Suffolk.

Appendix B: Sample Notation, *The Universal Passion* (1728), Annotated by H. Walpole

Sat. V. *The Universal Passion.* 91

More than *one* steed must ^x*Delia's* empire feel,
 Who sits triumphant o'er the flying *wheel*;
 And as she guides it thro' the admiring throng,
 With what an air she smacks the *silken* thong?
 Graceful, as *John*, she moderates the reins,
 And whistles sweet her *diuretick* strains.
Sesostris-like, such Charioteers as *these*
 May drive six harness *monarchs*, if they please.
 They *drive, row, run*, with love of Glory smit,
Leap, swim, ^{xx}*shoot-flying*, and pronounce on *wit*.

O'er the *Belle-lettre* lovely *Daphne* reigns;
 Again the God *Apollo* wears her chains.
 With legs tost high on her *Sophee* she sits,
 Vouchsafing audience to contending *Wits*;
 Of each performance she's the final test;
 One Act read o'er, she prophesies the rest;

^x Lady Anne Egerton, daughter of George Duke of Bridgewater,
 married first to Christopher Duke of Bedford, from whom she was
 parted, and during which separation she often drove And
 a coach & six to Newmarket; afterwards wife of William
 Earl of Jersey.

^{xx} Emblem of Deceit and Flux

Chapter Four

Self-Love and the Common Weal: The *Dunciad* Controversy (1727-1733) as an Experiment in Purgative Retribution

In 1733, writing to Pope from Dublin, Swift reported that local readers of the first epistles of the anonymously-published *An Essay on Man* (1733-1734) had attributed it not to Pope, but to Edward Young.⁵⁸² One can see why this would have been the case. Pope's *Essay on Man* echoes the compositions discussed in the previous chapter, not only in its description of the project as an attempt to "vindicate the Ways of *God* to Man"—phrasing reminiscent of Young's *Vindication of Providence*—but also in its central argument about the divine cause and civic utility of the passions.⁵⁸³ Pope celebrates the "Passions" as "the Elements of Life"; he recognizes "happiness" as an ordering, animating feature of human behavior; he cites potentially virtuous effects of "Vanity," "Ambition," and the "Passions" more generally; and he describes "Self-love" as a divinely-bestowed "Spring of Motion."⁵⁸⁴ Indeed, the argument that "*Self-love*" and the "*Social*" are "the *same*" emerges as a kind of refrain (III.149, 318; IV.396), culminating

⁵⁸² Dated May 1, 1733, *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, vol. 3., ed. David Woolley (NY: Peter Lang, 1999), No. 1036. This was also the letter in which Swift argued that Young was not "merry" or "angry" enough to be relished as he deserved.

⁵⁸³ Pope's phrasing is most obviously reminiscent of the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*; however, the substituted term—"vindicate"—bears scrutiny for precisely this reason. See *Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 3: *An Essay on Man*, ed. Maynard Mack (London: Methuen & Co. / New Haven: Yale UP, 1970), I.16. For ease of reference, line numbers follow the Twickenham edition; however, I have substituted the typography from the earliest Dublin editions to suit my argument in the present case. The phrasing has not changed in these passages.

For Young's later work as a challenge to *An Essay on Man*, see Daniel W. Odell, "Young's Night Thoughts as an Answer to Pope's *Essay on Man*," *SEL* 12.3 (1972): 481-501. Odell argues that Young considers Pope's *Essay* to have "overlooked the gospel" (481) and to have been overly influenced by Bolingbroke's deism. For Young, "God has given man alone in all the created universe the gift of immortality, which makes him capable, if he chooses to be virtuous, of endless material, intellectual, and spiritual progress" (483).

⁵⁸⁴ *Essay on Man*, ed. Mack, I.170; II.261-70, III.111-12; II.245, 201-02, 183, III.269-71; II.59.

in this remarkable concluding conceit, which compares the beneficent movements of self-love to ripples in a pond:

GOD loves from Whole to Parts: but human soul
Must rise from Individual to the Whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful Lake;
The Centre mov'd, a Circle strait succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads,
Friend, Parent, Neighbour, first it will embrace,
His Country next, and next all Human-race,
Wide, and more wide, th'O'erflowings of the mind
Take ev'ry Creature in, of ev'ry kind;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And Heav'n beholds its Image in his Breast.⁵⁸⁵

Pope apparently took great pleasure in his earliest readers' identification of *An Essay on Man* as the work of an ordained "divine."⁵⁸⁶ With Young's writings in view, one can see why Pope had reason to expect that it might initially be understood as such: his notion of the passions as principal sources of both human suffering and public wellbeing bore at least a passing resemblance to Young's earlier pronouncements.

That *An Essay on Man* had *not* actually been composed by an Anglican "divine" was, of course, part of the game. The *Essay on Man* was published in four sections ("Epistles") over a period of about a year—a strategy similar to the strategy that Young had employed previously in the piecemeal publication of *The Universal Passion*. In

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., III.149, 318; IV.396; IV.361-72.

⁵⁸⁶ See especially his letters to Caryll (e.g., 8 March 1732/33, 23 October 1733, 1 January 1733/34). Maynard Mack elaborates in the introductory materials to the Twickenham edition (1964 esp. xv-xvii). In the poem's early reception, Mack notes, "there was scarcely a hint of the moral or theological criticism that was to dog the *Essay* later" (xvi-xvii). Also see Pope's response to Swift's letter about the early, mistaken identification of *An Essay on Man* (28 May 1733): "I wish you would come over. All the mysteries of my philosophical work shall then be clear'd to you, and you will not think of me as you do of Dr. Y. that I am not merry enough, nor angry enough: It will not want for Satire, but as for Anger I know it not; or at least only that sort of which the Apostle speaks, 'Be ye angry and sin not'" (Sherburn III.372). Pope registers his awareness of the spiritual questions involved in his perceived transgressions according to the ethical sermon writers of the day. See Alan Brinton's discussion of Samuel Clarke's sermon on this text in, "The Passions as Subject Matter in Early Eighteenth-Century British Sermons," *Rhetorica* 10.1 (Winter 1992): 56.

Pope's case, however, the strategy served less to augment the buzz about a new poem than to coax the poem's earliest readers into a trap: after gaining an early reputation as the work of an Anglican minister, the poem was then revealed as the work of a writer notoriously distant from that appellation. Pope was Catholic (or at least publicly identified as such); during the years leading up to the publication of *An Essay on Man*, he had been decried as irreligious and selfish—an author motivated by “Self-love” of the worst kind; and, with the publication of the final epistle of the *Essay*, Pope stoked the flames of disapproval by revealing the poem's dedicatee as the deist Henry St. John, First Viscount Bolingbroke, contributor to the *Craftsman* and leader of the Tory opposition to Walpole. The implication, then, was that the *Essay* was the work of Bolingbroke's philosophical protégée. The poem promptly solicited charges of unorthodoxy once it had been disseminated more widely, its suspect personal associations had been made plain, and its readers had had time to examine its contents in full.⁵⁸⁷ Helen Deutsch has described Pope's tendency to render himself “at once an inimitable original and a faulty imitation”⁵⁸⁸; this mode of emulative deformation shaped Pope's intertextual relationship with Young.

Indeed, the central claim of this chapter is that, by comparison to Young, Pope developed and enacted a grander, bolder, more threatening notion of the satirist as a

⁵⁸⁷ Maynard Mack, “Introduction,” *An Essay on Man* (London: Methuen & Co. / New Haven: Yale UP, 1970), xv-xxii. The controversy on the continent was particularly fierce: the mathematician, logician, and Protestant theologian Jean Pierre de Crousaz, then a professor at Lausanne, accused Pope of Leibnitzian sympathies—a controversy translated back into English by Samuel Johnson. See O. M. Brack, Jr., “Introduction,” *A Commentary on Mr. Pope's Principles of Morality, Or Essay on Man (A Translation from the French)*, vol. 17 (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2004). James McLaverty argues that “Pope was pursuing a policy of creating confusion about authorship of the *Essay on Man* right up to the publication of the *Works* of 1735, and that he intended [Walter] Hart's poem [on revealed religion] to add a final twist to the plot by being mistaken for his own.” See *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (Oxford and NY: Oxford UP, 2001), 108.

⁵⁸⁸ Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996), 2.

public reformer whose indulgence of vice proved essential to his strategy for governing the passions. The majority of my analysis focuses on the *Dunciad* controversy—a series of published exchanges that gave meaning to *An Essay on Man* and was framed in retrospect by it. In *The Dunciad*, Pope responded to the Mandevillean dilemma by ridiculing virtue and reveling in his own vices, particularly his vices as an author pursuing personal pleasure and lasting fame. Pope’s contemporary readers therefore very quickly called him to task for his perverse assaults on the reputations of innocent Englanders. They denounced his authorial motives as malicious and spiteful in a public exchange that was known at the time as a “Paper War.” It pitted passions against passions in a lively manner that brought reputations and private individuals into conflict with one another rather than achieving the neat, hierarchical alignment of ambitions and vanities that Young had counted upon. Throughout this exchange, Pope proved willing to stimulate passions more violent, more unruly, less “Christian,” and less obviously tempered by reason than the passions that Young had sought to cultivate.

These differences are registered in Pope’s deliberately broad terminology in *An Essay on Man*. The term “Self-love” encompassed not only softer passions such as vanity and filial love, but also violent, potentially anti-social passions such as emulation, envy, resentment, malice, lust, anger, and self-serving ambition. By the same token, the term “Social” encompassed, not only amiable forms of civic interaction such as friendship, hospitality, and polite literary exchanges, but also aggressive and even violent forms of interpersonal contact. Thus, Pope’s “philosophical” poem provided a fitting commentary on the paper wars stimulated by the *Dunciad* controversy. Although much of my discussion focuses on *The Dunciad*, I will also return at the end of the chapter to

the *Essay* and a formal *apologia pro vita sua* published in the same year: Pope's *First Satire of the Second Book of Horace, Imitated* (1733), the first of a series of formal Horatian Imitations. These two works commented upon and reinvigorated the *Dunciad* controversy in ways that have so far gone unrecognized in modern scholarship on the subject. In addition, they helped to fill out Pope's rather impudent intertextual relationship with Young. While controversial at the time, these poems proved restrained and ambiguous enough at the level of the line to win Pope the sympathetic attention of posterity. He emerged, indeed, as a poet who resembled Young in his equipoise, his thorough absorption of Christian and classical philosophy, and his righteous, reasonable, gently passionate persona.

This is precisely the element of Pope's writings that Swift "relishes" in his 1733 letter to Pope about the early Dublin reception of *An Essay on Man*. Swift's famous evaluation of Young as a poet neither "merry" nor "angry" enough for the present age to "relish as he deserves" appears in this same letter, and it follows from a lengthy discussion of Pope's comparative ability to stir up the passions in his own age without endangering his reputation with "posterity":

How great a noise...you make, by your ill nature in not letting the honest villains of the times enjoy them selves in this world, which is their onely happiness, & terrifying them with another. [...O]f all men living, you are the most happy in your enemys and your friends.... I love to hear them reproach you for dullness; Onely I would be satisfied, since you are so dull, why are they so angry? Give me a shilling, and I will answer you, that posterity shall never know you had one single enemy, always excepting those whose memory you have preserved. All things in verse good or bad that London produces, are printed here, among the rest, the *Essay on Man*, which is understood to come from Doc^{tr} Young. No body names you for it here (we are better judges, and I do not railly) It is too Philosophical for me, It is not equall, but that author our friend, never wants some lines of Excelent good sense. *What is, is best.* is the thought of Socrates in Plato, because it is permitted or done by God. I have retained it after reading Plato

many years ago. The Doctor is not merry enough nor angry enough for the present age to relish as he deserves.⁵⁸⁹

As an Anglican dean himself, Swift could hardly have failed to recognize that the means by which he encouraged Pope to punish the “honest villains of the times,”⁵⁹⁰ like the “ill nature” that he ascribed to Pope, was not a passion that ministers typically counseled their flocks to foster.⁵⁹¹ Nonetheless, this is precisely what Swift takes to be so amusing and appealing about Pope’s performance.⁵⁹² He confirms Pope in the guiding strategy of *The Dunciad* (for “a shilling,” as he puts it); he assures Pope further that *An Essay on Man* has proved in its early Irish reception that it will enjoy a similar fate; and he classifies the central argument of *An Essay on Man* as a legitimate, Christianized version of a classical philosophical ideal: “*What is, is best*,” a phrase echoed at several key points in the finished poem in confirmation of the provocative, central argument that men and women should defer to a divine plan imperceptible in its totality.⁵⁹³ Whereas Young had argued hopefully that the pursuit of reputation could lead to a greater good, Swift sees Pope counting on a perverse reversal in reputation, possibly even an injustice: the

⁵⁸⁹ Swift, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 367.

⁵⁹⁰ That is, he embraces Pope’s “ill-nature[d]” refusal to let his satirical victims “enjoy them selves in this world,” which he claims will be “their onely happiness,” and he similarly embraces Pope’s project of “terrifying them with another” world: terrifying them not with infernal damnation, but with the unhappy, posthumous infamy to which they were already condemned, like so many flies trapped in amber.

⁵⁹¹ As he observes elsewhere in the passage, “facit indignation versum, is only to be applyed when the indignation is against general vilany, and never operates when a villain writes to defend himself”—a suggestion, in other words, that the behaviors manifested by some of Pope’s “angry” detractors in the *Dunciad* controversy (not to mention Pope himself) should not be equated with the noble passion embodied in Cato’s suicide.

⁵⁹² Swift’s seeming breach of his own duties as an Anglican “divine” is noteworthy. His collusion with Pope has him playing a game in which his obligations to satire are brought into tension with his obligations to the Church.

⁵⁹³ Although readily apprehended as an essentially orthodox Christian position, this aspect of the poem was perceived at the time as flouting the doctrine of revelation. See Brack, “Introduction,” esp. xx-xxi, and McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning*, 107-41. In the context of my present argument, this aspect of the poem is also noteworthy because it serves to rationalize the unchecked pursuit of the passions. In quoting this phrase, “What is, is best,” Swift may be either giving Pope ideas or demonstrating his understanding of Pope’s plan, for the parts of the poem that include this phrase—or one like it—were published somewhat later.

distortions of hindsight would render him more saintly to future generations than he appeared to his own age—and would render his detractors more villainous in turn.

I: The Problem of Pope's Modern Reputation

In an era when published materials of all kinds are readily available on ECCO, any injustice involved in Pope's early reception is readily correctible, thanks in part to Pope's own interventions. Pope not only "preserved" the names and attributes of his "enemies" in *The Dunciad Variorum*, but also saved many of their printed responses in a private collection, thereby providing a kind of catalogue upon which modern scholars have been able to elaborate in mapping the controversy. In their colorfulness, their vehemence, and their multiplicity, these early comments make a fascinating site of inquiry in a study dedicated to the idea that poetry should benefit the common weal. According to a number of his detractors, Pope had not only failed to do civic good with *The Dunciad*, but seemed bent on doing harm to the polity. An investigation of Pope's strategy for affecting the common weal must therefore begin by taking seriously the content of these early responses—an argument that Pope apparently expected would be obscured by the passage of time.

This recalibration is additionally necessary because posterity has, as Swift predicted, been kinder to Pope than to his contemporary detractors. The recuperative efforts of scholars such as Maynard Mack have encouraged modern audiences to see Pope as a poet "more sinned against than sinning" in his exchanges with the so-called "dunces."⁵⁹⁴ Mack's biography, the standard scholarly biography of Pope, remains a

⁵⁹⁴ Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (NY and London: Norton / New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1985), 475. This quotation of *King Lear* is often cited as an illustration of Mack's "advocacy" of Pope. Cf.

common gateway to Pope's poetry and legacy. Thus, despite Swift's hint that Pope's conduct in the *Dunciad* controversy perverted the conventional distinction between "chimerical Immortality" and the more blessed pursuit of "things above"⁵⁹⁵—indeed, despite many hints among Pope's contemporary readers that he appeared irreligious and amoral by the standards of his own day—Pope has often been seen as a poet very *like* Young in his temperament, his taste for moderation, and what has been seen as a thorough and basically conventional absorption of the Christian and classical traditions.⁵⁹⁶ Although the so-called "humanist" perspective on Pope and his oeuvre has by no means gone unchallenged, poststructuralist readings offered by such scholars as Laura Brown, Pat Rogers, Carole Fabricant, and Brean Hammond have tended to capitalize upon, rather than upending, the traditionalist associations conjured by the account of Pope's motives promoted by Mack and others.⁵⁹⁷ After all, the lingering idea of Pope as a poet who wished to be seen as the righteous moral and cultural arbiter of his own age legitimates modern analyses aimed at demystifying the hegemonic ideologies—past and present—that Pope and his works have often been understood to represent and advocate: political conservatism, imperialism, protection of moneyed and aristocratic

Brean Hammond's survey of twentieth-century Pope criticism, "Introduction," *Pope* (London and NY: Longman, 1996), 6.

⁵⁹⁵ Pope and Swift knew that their letters—or, at least, the ones that they chose not to burn—would be read by posterity and perhaps also by their contemporaries. These documents therefore need to be counted into their complex efforts to control their posthumous reputations (and each other's).

⁵⁹⁶ This impression has influenced the manner in which data about the *Dunciad* controversy has been collected. For instance, the categories of attack singled out by J.V. Guerinot in his essential bibliographical study emphasize the "purely personal" nature of the arguments against Pope, and Guerinot's declaredly corrective portrait of the typical "hack writer" of Grub Street buttresses the argument against the "dunces" from the other side. See *Pamphlet Attacks on Alexander Pope, 1711-1744: A Descriptive Bibliography* (London: Methuen & Co., 1969), esp. xxix-xlv.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. Brown, *Alexander Pope* (London and NY: Basil Blackwell, 1985); Rogers, *Hacks and Dunces: Pope, Swift and Grub Street* (London and NY: Methuen, 1980); Fabricant, "Pope's Moral, Political and Cultural Combat," in *Pope*, ed. B. Hammond (London and NY: Longman, 1996). For a fuller description of Pope's critical history during the 1970s and 1980s (the turn in Pope's reception that I am emphasizing here) see B. Hammond, "Introduction," *Pope*, esp. 1-13.

interests, class snobbery, canon-formation, and (in some assessments) sexism.⁵⁹⁸ Even those scholars who have tried not to take sides in these debates have often found compelling the commonplace of Pope as an earnest moralist and the biographical mode of analysis that sustains it.⁵⁹⁹

Modern evaluations of Pope's intentions have not fully come to terms, however, with a second interpretive possibility: Pope did not wish to appear righteous in *The Dunciad* or in its aftermath—at least, not to the reading “public” of his own age.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁸ That is, to refuse “to accede to Pope’s assertions of meaning, coherence, and morality,” as Brown puts it, is to presume that Pope wished to be a moral arbiter and a moral exemplar in his poetry, whether or not he perceived himself as “a consistent advocate of the beliefs and ambitions of the capitalist landlords and of an imperialist consensus,” as Brown takes him to be (qtd. Hammond 8). As a pioneer in this mode of inquiry (especially with respect to Pope’s work), Brown puts the case somewhat more starkly than later scholars in this vein do. However, even Fabricant, who moves toward an appraisal of Pope’s attention to “Posterity” that has become central to my own argument, deconstructs Pope’s “heroic self-projections” in order to retain him as a figure who represents (or desires) “hegemonic control” (Hammond 51, 54). I agree with Fabricant’s assessment of the *Epilogue to the Satires* (along with several other late poems) as works that “appear to lack a convincing objective correlative for the moral outrage and invective expressed, an absence which leaves only the image of a dramatic, bloated, all-consuming, sublime Self that takes over center stage” (43); however, Fabricant folds her account back into a familiar biographical reading that I am moving away from here. Rather than envisioning Pope’s drama of self-exposure as part of a strategy for addressing the ethical questions of his own day (as I will argue here), Fabricant cites, in passing, “Pope’s basically conservative temperament, which naturally shied away from outrightly subversive (as opposed to merely censorious) treatments of society” (46), and she then pursues a more oblique argument that Pope was self-absorbed: his desire “both to translate complex ideological issues into clear-cut moral categories and to address posterity” exceeded the available moral-political causes (48). I will take up Rogers’ influential argument subsequently.

⁵⁹⁹ For instance, Vermeule (2000), Richardson (2000), Goldsmith (2002). In a related trend, studies attempting to read Pope’s politics “with the grain” rather than against it have tended to buttress the Bredvoldian notion of Pope as a “gloomy Tory satirist,” righteously opposed to the corruptions of the so-called “Robinocracy.” See Louis I. Bredvold, “The Gloom of the Tory Satirists,” in *Pope and His Contemporaries: Essays Presented to George Sherburn*, eds. James L. Clifford and Louis A. Landa (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux [Octagon Books], 1978).

⁶⁰⁰ Again, Fabricant and Deutsch have come perhaps the closest to articulating this possibility; Fabricant’s focus on a distinction between Pope’s contemporary and posthumous reputations has been especially useful to me here; and Richardson, in a sympathetic strain, has pointed out the remarkable self-absorption of Pope’s late writings. James McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning*, has also shown that Pope exercised significant control over not only the material text of his published works, but also the manner in which they were received—a reception conceived as an intentional provocation. I am not suggesting, of course, that previous scholarship has failed to register the problem of Pope’s dubious moral position in *The Dunciad* controversy. On the contrary, any number of scholars have been troubled by this aspect of the poem; however, those who have registered this aspect of Pope’s “moral” writing as a problem have tended to explain it away or to see it as something that we should overlook if we are to read it with the grain or appreciate its poetry. For an illustrative example, see Aubrey Williams’s influential book, *Pope’s Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1955), where he introduces his analysis with a lengthy consideration of the possibility that “Pope’s attacks on the dunces were often unfair and ill-

Instead, he hoped to be perceived by contemporary audiences as many of his enemies did in fact perceive him: as a lively and mercurial menace to the common weal. An early advertisement for the poem quoted a description of Milton's Satan as an announcement of the project:

He, as an Herd
Of Goats or timorous Flock together throng'd,
Drove them before him, Thunder-struck pursu'd,
Into the vast Profund.⁶⁰¹

This Satanic image of Pope remained potent throughout the early years of *The Dunciad's* reception, buoyed by Pope's ambiguous status as a figure who coupled unmatched poetic talent with dubious eccentricities. As Dryden had been during his late career, Pope was irrevocably connected to Catholicism, thanks in part to his name. Pope played upon this stigma in much the way that he dramatized his physical deformities: he exploited (and helped to propagate) the popular impression that he was a freak of nature whose writerly excesses might be accounted for by his divine malformation. He never apologized for his perceived transgressions in the *Dunciad*. Instead, he published a philosophical poem that elicited charges of amorality and irreligion; he set himself to the composition of a number of poems that figured his "Self-love" so prominently that modern scholars have proved increasingly reluctant to explain away his apparent solipsism⁶⁰²; and, during the course of the 1730s, he secured his associations with Bolingbroke in ways that helped to figure his oppositional stance as a stance of anti-social, governmental defiance that stopped just short of treason.

founded" (1)—a meditation that paves the way for an assertion that the purpose of literary criticism is not to consider the moral question at all, albeit while authorizing this analytical posture with the passing observation that "no one has seriously maintained that the *Dunciad* as a body of meaning is intrinsically immoral" (1). Subsequent scholars have increasingly moved away from this idea of the function of poetic criticism; however, the assumption that Pope saw himself as a righteous moralist has lingered.

⁶⁰¹ 27 May 1728, qtd. by R. H. Griffin, "The 'Dunciad' of 1728," *Modern Philology* 13.1 (May 1915): 7.

⁶⁰² See Fabricant (1988), Vermeule (2000), Richardson (2000).

By the end of the decade, Pope was gleefully adopting a devilish guise even *within* his verse, as in this strident moment of self-defense from the second dialogue of the *Epilogue to the Satires* (1738), where he identifies himself as a zealous defender of the “Public Weal”:

Yes, I am proud; I must be proud to see
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me:
Safe from the Bar, the Pulpit, and the Throne,
Yet touch'd and sham'd by *Ridicule* alone.⁶⁰³

In this passage, Pope amplifies Young’s earlier notion of satire as a “shining supplement of public laws” to such a degree that he has very nearly inverted it. The forms of pride that Young had recuperated in *The Universal Passion* retained a much milder aspect: vanity, public-spirited ambition, the desire to perfect the better half of human nature. His threat, in dialogue, to render himself more fearsome than “God” infuses the second couplet of the pair with an ambiguous sense: depending upon where one locates the antecedent of “Safe,” either “Pope” imagines himself as so powerful a satirist that he can influence “Men” in ways that the law, the Church, and the executive arm of the state cannot, or he is himself “Safe” from these other forms of social control but “touch’d and sham’d” by the lively ridicule that his own satire provokes. With the *Epilogue to the Satires*, in other words, the English republic of letters becomes a potential agent of civic change—saintly or diabolical—not only because it promises a “supplement” to “public laws,” but also because well-aimed compositions “touch” and “sham[e]” the passions, the manners, and the human heart in ways that preempted institutional forms of civic power.

This interpretive possibility has been especially difficult for modern readers to perceive in part because Pope himself provided us with an especially persuasive,

⁶⁰³ *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 4: *Imitations of Horace*, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen & Co. / New Haven: Yale UP, 1961), 217, 208-11.

alternative picture of his character and his motives for writing and publishing satire. Taking trouble to amass written testimony from his close friends about his warm, generous, private character,⁶⁰⁴ Pope also relentlessly edited and “improved” his own writing with “posterity” in view. Before his death, he appointed the moralizing William Warburton to oversee posthumous editions of his *oeuvre*—an appointment that has, despite some important subsequent corrections, largely succeeded in encouraging modern audiences to see Pope as a would-be moralist and a poet more conventional in his ethical-philosophical pronouncements than he actually appeared to his contemporaries to be.⁶⁰⁵ Of particular note to the present study is the fact that the so-called “deathbed” version of *The Dunciad*—the version of the poem intended to endear Pope to posterity—has, as Pope hoped, remained the version of the poem most often encountered by modern readers.⁶⁰⁶ This final version of the poem is vastly altered from the earliest published

⁶⁰⁴ Swift’s correspondence has been essential in this respect. Thought to have had a hand in the “design” of *The Dunciad* from the very start, Swift apparently took some delight in encouraging Pope “to hale those Scoundrels out of their Obscurity by telling their Names at length, their Works, their Adventures, sometimes their Lodgings, and their Lineage”—a much-quoted comment that has helped to lead scholars to imagine the early *Dunciad* as a righteous attack. See David Vander Meulen, *Pope’s ‘Dunciad’ of 1728: A History and Facsimile* (Charlottesville: U P of Virginia, 1991), qtd. 11. If Swift really thought that the men and women mocked in the first *Dunciad* were “Scoundrels,” he was one of the only contemporary readers to think so. More likely, he knew that his correspondence with Pope would be published, and he planted this comment to mislead “posterity.” See Vander Meulen, esp. 9-15, on Swift’s collusion with Pope on the design of *The Dunciad*. Swift stayed with Pope in 1726, and the plan was apparently hatched then, either wholly or in part.

⁶⁰⁵ James McLaverty, “Warburton’s False Comma: Reason and Virtue in Pope’s *Essay on Man*,” *Modern Philology* 99.3 (Feb. 2002): 379-92.

⁶⁰⁶ See Valerie Rumbold’s discussion of this point, “Editor’s Preface,” *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 3: *The Dunciad* (1728) & *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729) (Edinburgh, London, et al.: Pearson Education Ltd. / Longman, 2007). Rumbold notes the relative occlusion of the anonymously-published, 1728 edition of the poem in the standard scholarly edition of Pope: “Sutherland’s treatment [of the poem in the Twickenham edition] has meant that, of the three major versions of the *Dunciad* (1728, 1729, 1743), the version least present to readers in the second half of the twentieth century was precisely the version encountered by the original readers.” Vander Meulen, *History and Facsimile*, xii, makes a similar point. *Dunciad* B (the Cibber version) may also be more often read than *Dunciad* A (the Theobald version), although this is hard to say with certainty: Aubrey Williams’ invaluable classroom edition, *Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), includes only *Dunciad* B. But I suspect that the largest interpretive obstacle to the vision of the *Dunciad* controversy that I am pursuing here may be the fact that *Dunciad* B has so thoroughly conditioned modern scholars’ sense of Pope’s intentions in earlier versions of the poem. Even Rumbold and Vander Meulen, who have helped to shift the focus to earlier

version of the poem, and it encourages a very different understanding of Pope's "passions" and his civic motives than earlier versions of *The Dunciad* had. In eighteenth-century terms, it had a different "design." Whereas the deathbed *Dunciad* invites an interpretation of Pope as a self-appointed enemy of moral and political corruption, railing against the cultural degeneration of his own age, the earliest version of the poem proffered a poetic design so unaccountable that it would almost necessarily elicit passionate responses from its earliest readers—an enigma bolder than any enigma of poetic design that Dryden had developed during the course of his own infamous career.

II: Heroes and Villains, Virtue and Vice in the Early and Late *Dunciads*

In the earliest published version of *The Dunciad*, Pope took the Mandevillean dilemma by both horns. Satire had typically been conceived as a genre that ridiculed vice and promoted virtue. In the 1728 *Dunciad*, Pope not only set the stage for his bald self-promotion as the Satanic embodiment of vice; he also ridiculed a quality of mind that in other circumstances would have been labeled as a "virtue." The hero of the original *Dunciad*, Lewis Theobald ("Tibbald," as Pope calls him) is characterized by above all by his civic piety—his earnestness as a would-be servant of the English polity. When we first meet Tibbald, he is sitting "supperless" and "[s]tudious, with all his books around," writing and "flounderer[ing]" in "mere despair," and "pin[ing], unconscious of his rising

editions, infuse their editorial discussions with an interpretation of the 1728 *Dunciad* as a poem intended to ridicule "the mercantile culture of the City of London" (R 8) or to defend Pope from the personal insults and humiliations that he had long endured (V M e.g., 12-14). My argument here is that the 1728 edition *sustains* this later understanding of Pope as a "gloomy Tory satirist" whose design was to mock hack writers and debased emblems of cultural corruption; however, this is not the way he thought the poem would be read by his contemporaries and this was not the way his earliest readers, in fact, interpreted his "design." In the discussion that follows, I have taken seriously the so-called "dunces'" complaints not only as symbolically-potent cries of resistance, but also as substantive responses to the poem that help us to see how Pope's performance flouted contemporary discursive expectations.

fate”⁶⁰⁷—a situation comparable to pious Aeneas’s plight in the Mediterranean tempest at the start of Virgil’s epic.⁶⁰⁸ The cause of Tibbald’s despair, Pope gradually reveals, is that he lacks an obvious means of contributing to the “public weal.” Mourning the recent death of “great *Settle*,” poet of the City of London,⁶⁰⁹ whom he recognizes as having been the principal defender of Dulness’s “cause,” Tibbald casts about for a means of contributing to the polity in *Settle*’s stead:

But what can I! *my Flaccus* cast aside,
Take up th’ *Attorney*’s (once my better) *guide*?
Or rob the *Roman* geese of all their glories,
And save the state by cackling to the Tories?⁶¹⁰

After this brief moment of indecision, Pope’s poet-hero resolves firmly to dedicate himself anew to his literary endeavors. He commits himself to the nation’s service in a stern self-consecration to the collective cause, even before he has established a clear course of action:

Yes, to my country I my pen consign,
Yes, from this moment, mighty *Mist!* am thine,
And rival, *Curtius!* of thy fame and zeal,
O’er head and ears plunge for the public weal.⁶¹¹

Framed by this introductory image of self-martyring public “zeal,” the remainder of the poem narrates Tibbald’s journey to the center of the British literary marketplace and

⁶⁰⁷ All citations and quotations of the 1728 and 1729 editions of *The Dunciad* follow Valerie Rumbold’s *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 3: *The Dunciad* (1728) & *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729) (London: Pearson Education Ltd. / Longman, 2007), 1.99-104.

⁶⁰⁸ There are clear verbal and thematic echoes here. Aeneas, similarly “unconscious” of his fate, had prayed to the gods for succor at a moment when he thought the storm would surely drown his ship; Tibbald, “[s]inking from thought to thought,” prays to the Goddess of Dullness in her capacity as the “directing soul” of “business” (135). Perhaps most importantly in this intertext, Aeneas’s defining virtue is his *pietas*.

⁶⁰⁹ That is, Elkanah Settle.

⁶¹⁰ 1728 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, I.175, 179-82.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, I.183-86.

presents a vision of the civic progress attending his anointment by the Goddess of Dulness as the new King of the Dunces.

Consider, in contrast, Pope's 1744 portrait of England's Poet Laureate, Colley Cibber, the "Hero" of the version of *The Dunciad* perhaps better known to "posterity":

Swearing and supperless the Hero sate,
Blasphem'd his Gods, the Dice, and damn'd his Fate.
Then gnaw'd his pen, then dash'd it on the ground,
Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound!
Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there,
Yet wrote and flounder'd on, in mere despair.
Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay,
Much future Ode, and abdicated Play;
Nonsense precipitate, like running Lead,
That slip'd thro' Cracks and Zig-zags of the Head;
All that on Folly Frenzy could beget,
Fruits of dull Heat, and Sooterkins of Wit.
Next o'er his Books his eyes began to roll,
In pleasing memory of all he stole,
How here he sipp'd, how there he plunder'd snug
And suck'd all o'er like an industrious Bug.⁶¹²

In addition to being "supperless" (that is, unable to earn a satisfactory living from his works), Bays is irreligious, egocentric, and unattractive. He abandons his unfinished works like so many "Abortion[s]"; he gnaws on his pen in a posture of Satanic self-absorption; he reflects with "pleas[ure]" on all that he has plagiarized from other authors. Pope preserves several lines and phrases from the 1728 *Dunciad* in this version. Bays, like Tibbald, "[s]ink[s] from thought to thought, a vast profound!" But with this accumulation of new details, the poet-hero's emptiness of mind now signifies an authorial habit of unseemly parasitism rather than a rarified selflessness lacking direction and sparkle. Pope's "Tibbald" had been a bad poet, but not a bad man; "Bays" emerges as the very emblem of moral and creative self-debasement.

⁶¹² Quotations and citations of this late edition follow Rumbold's edition, *The Dunciad in Four Books* (London: Pearson Education Ltd. / Longman, 1999), I.115-30.

Pope alters the “Hero’s” moment of indecision as well: he prolongs it by almost twenty lines. In the process, he transforms the hero from a selfless martyr for the “public weal” into a self-serving lackey for men and women in power:

What can I now? my Fletcher cast aside,
 Take up the Bible, once my better guide?
 Or tread the path by vent’rous Heroes trod,
 This Box my Thunder, this right hand my God?
 Or chair’d at White’s amidst the Doctors sit,
 Teach Oaths to Gamesters, and to Nobles Wit?
 Or bidst thou rather Party to embrace?
 (A friend to Party thou, and all her race;
 ’Tis the same rope at different ends they twist;
 To Dulness Ridpath is as dear as Mist.)
 Shall I, like Curtius, desp’rate in my zeal,
 O’er head and ears plunge for the Commonweal?
 Or rob Rome’s ancient geese of all their glories,
 And cackling save the Monarchy of Tories?
 Hold — to the Minister I more incline;
 To serve his cause, O Queen! is serving thine.
 Ev’n Ralph repents, and Henly writes no more.
 What then remains? Ourselves. Still, still remain
 Cibberian forehead, and Cibberian brain.
 This brazen Brightness, to the ’Squire so dear;
 This polish’d Hardness, that reflects the Peer;
 This arch Absurd, that wit and fool delights;
 This Mess, toss’d up of Hockley-hole and White’s;
 Where Dukes and Butchers join to wreath my crown,
 At once the Bear and Fiddle of the town.⁶¹³

Notice the way this later version of the story buries the possibility of “plung[ing] for the Commonweal” amid half a dozen other courses of action that are fleetingly articulated and then dismissed, among them returning to acting, returning to religion (further confirmation that he had long since left it behind), and “Teach[ing] Oaths to Gamesters.” “[F]orm’d by nature, Stage and Town to bless, / And act, and be, a Coxcomb with success,” Bays has made a career of farming out his bad character.⁶¹⁴ His ultimate

⁶¹³ Ibid., I.199-224.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., I.109-10.

inclination to join himself to “the Minister” is represented as a mode of service both reflective and productive of stasis—“What then remains? Ourselves. Still, still remain”—and born of a tendency to make his public commitment, such as it is, resemble his personal preferences rather than the other way around. Only in the grossest, meanest similitude does Bays’s mottled villainy resemble the comparatively innocent “fools” burnished successfully into “coxcombs” by their education in *The Universal Passion*. Cibber’s forehead, with its “polish’d Hardness,” takes center stage as an empty vessel that mechanically mimics and “reflects” the language and disposition of his superiors in a comic perversion of an earlier royalist notion of imitation of peers and royalty as a basis for civic cohesion. The laureate wreath itself brings together the peerage and the people (“Dukes” and “Butchers,” “Smithfield Muses” and “ears of kings”) in a comic distortion of Dryden’s legacy as Laureate.⁶¹⁵

The modern idea of Pope as a snobbish, disenchanted, conservative critic of the cultural and political degeneration of his age has been buttressed by this later version of *The Dunciad*. The deathbed *Dunciad* pitted principled outsiders against a debased status quo, righteous defenders of civic virtue against corrupt government ministers and their villainous counterparts in cultural production. But this was not the performance puzzled over by the earliest readers of *The Dunciad*. The polarities developed and exploited in earlier versions of the poem followed more directly from the polarities developed during the Battle of the Books, which pitted “wits” against “pedants,” liveliness against

⁶¹⁵ That is, Dryden’s title and office were conferred by the monarch; however, rather than remaining cloistered in the court, he conducted his laureateship in a manner that engaged the category of “the people,” composing propaganda that was sold in the literary marketplace.

“dullness,” poetic ingenuity against ingenuous piety.⁶¹⁶ Indeed, some of Dryden’s declared enemies reappear prominently in *The Dunciad* (Blackmore, Ogilby)—and within a poetic design that bears at least a superficial resemblance to *Mac Flecknoe*. In addition, Lewis Theobald himself, whose *Shakespeare Restor’d* (1726) had politely corrected Pope’s editorial excesses, is now known to have been an important forbear of modern editors of Shakespeare⁶¹⁷—a figure more akin to the philologist Richard Bentley than to the hacks of Grub Street that the *Dunciad* has often been thought to be principally mocking.⁶¹⁸ If the early “design” of *The Dunciad* made a coherent argument about the problem with “dullness” (an open question, I will suggest), that argument did not include an attempt to claim that Pope and his friends were comparatively “virtuous” in the traditional, Christian sense of the term.

On the contrary, in the earliest versions of *The Dunciad*, where images of teeth-gnashing and industrious bugs and discarded “Embryo[s]” do not yet overwhelm the exposition, Pope’s presentation tends to suggest that dullness *is* piety—piety rendered active in the public realm (therefore a modern version of *pietas*). The foremost attributes of the Goddess of Dulness include versions of the cardinal Christian virtues:

Four guardian *Virtues*, round, support her throne;
 Fierce champion *Fortitude*, that knows no fears
 Of hisses, blows, or want, or loss of ears:
 Calm *Temperance*, whose blessings those partake
 Who hunger, and who thirst for scribbling sake:
Prudence, whose glass presents th’ approaching jayl;
 Poetic *Justice*, with her lifted scale;
 Where in nice balance, truth with gold she weighs,

⁶¹⁶ Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994) and *Between the Ancients and Moderns: Baroque Culture in Restoration England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1999).

⁶¹⁷ Peter Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), e.g., 1-11.

⁶¹⁸ Cf. Pat Rogers, *Hacks and Dunces: Pope, Swift and Grub Street* (London and NY: Methuen, 1980).

And solid pudding against empty praise.⁶¹⁹

Even here, before Pope has introduced his readers to the self-martyring hero of the poem, “Dulness” emerges as the tutelary goddess for those writers who take an unduly self-sacrificing approach to poetic production. These writers are motivated by a stoic willingness to endure ridicule and hunger for the sake of literary production and to sacrifice the pursuit of “gold” in favor of the pursuit of “truth”—associations highlighted, in this early version, by the allegory of “*Poverty*” and “*Poetry*” as “shiv’ring sisters” who share the same bed.⁶²⁰

This line of interpretive possibility proves strong enough, in this early version, to sustain an appreciation of any number of the figures who participate in the games celebrating Tibbald’s coronation: they are very *like* Tibbald himself in their self-sacrificing zeal. Consider these famous portraits of Daniel Defoe and Eliza Haywood, the former of whom appears “on high,” above the races, and the latter of whom appears as a contestant:

Ear-less on high, stood pillory’d *D[efoe]*
 And *T*—— flagrant from the lash, below:
 There kick’d and cudgel’d *R*—— might ye view,⁶²¹
 The very worstead still look’d black and blue.

See in the circle next, *Eliza* plac’d;
 Two babes of love close clinging to her waste;
 Fair as before her works she stands confess’d,
 In flow’r’d brocade by bounteous *Kirkall* dress’d,
 Pearls on her neck, and roses in her hair,
 And her fore-buttocks to the navel bare.⁶²²

⁶¹⁹ 1728 *Dunciad*, I.34-42.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, I.21-22. The verse paragraph depicting Dulness’s attendant virtues is repeated verbatim in the later version; however, it is not preceded there by the allegory of the shivering sisters—a detail that, together with the collected force of many other minor alterations, contributes to a reorientation of the meaning of the image in much the way that Dryden had transformed Virgil to develop a new “design,” fit for English modernity.

⁶²¹ Rumbold, 56, notes several possibilities for both of these blanks.

⁶²² 1728 *Dunciad*, II.127-30; 137-42.

Defoe is being remembered for having been pilloried for *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1703) and Haywood for frontispiece portraits that exposed her ample bosom.⁶²³ Neither portrait is particularly flattering (to say the least), and yet both bear a subtle resemblance to that picture of Tibbald, plunging “O’er head and ears . . . for the public weal” so recklessly that he has not yet chosen a prudent course of action. “Earless” Defoe exposes himself to the pillory, and Haywood exposes her authority in amatory matters.

III: Early Responses to *The Dunciad*

Although Pope’s published writings had rarely lacked critics, *The Dunciad* unleashed a torrent of printed responses in pamphlets, newspapers, and edited collections.⁶²⁴ The first edition of *The Dunciad* was published anonymously, and the proper names of the victims were insinuated rather than spelled out, using techniques similar to those Young had used in the *Universal Passion*; however, these gestures served less to disguise the identities of the satirist and his victims than to lend a titillating aura of uncertainty to the project.⁶²⁵ Readers wondered what could have motivated someone to

⁶²³ See Rumbold’s note on the latter, 57: no single portrait fits the description, though some details (especially the “fore-buttocks” and rose) do bear a resemblance to George Vertue’s frontispiece to *Secret Histories, Novels and Poems* (1725).

⁶²⁴ The metaphor is Pope’s. See “Martinus Scriblerus, of the Poem” (1729): “[Our Poet] lived in those days, when (after providence had permitted the Invention of Printing as a scourge for the Sins of the learned) Paper also became so cheap, and printers so numerous, that a deluge of authors cover’d the land.” See 1729 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, 163. Modern scholars (cf. Guerinot) have confirmed the assessment.

⁶²⁵ Although many readers assumed that Pope was an author of the *Bathos* and *The Dunciad*, the initially anonymous publication of both works stimulated public speculations. For instance, there was an early suspicion that both the *Bathos* and *The Dunciad* were Pope-Swift collaborations, as some internal evidence from these early publications demonstrates, and there were early critics who thought that *The Dunciad* was too malicious and crude to be Pope’s. The subsequent publication of the *Dunciad Variorum* identified Pope as the author through the editorial notes of “Martinus Scriblerus” and Co. Accordingly, it was undertaken with the legal protection of Burlington, Oxford, and Bathurst. See Rumbold, esp. 114, for details.

write such a mean, ugly, seemingly purposeless poem, replete with vulgar images and baseless assaults on good men and women. *The Dunciad*'s earliest readers marveled at the author's "Envy" and "Malice," his unchecked venting of "Spleen," "Spite," and "Ill Nature"; they emphasized his lack of Christian charity.⁶²⁶ Far from seeing *The Dunciad* as an attack directed narrowly at Grub Street "hacks," early readers found the performance threatening and worthy of comment because it attacked such a representative sampling of what English letters had to offer the world. "[A]ll Degrees of Writers are there lampoon'd," one reader declared in dismay⁶²⁷; another writer counted among Pope's victims the "most shining Ornaments of the Age"⁶²⁸; still another accused Pope of "libeling the whole Body of the most perfect Writers of the Nation."⁶²⁹ It was hard to account for a work that lacked not only "Charity, Humility, and Good-nature," but also the most basic sense of patriotism.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁶ A selection of epigraphs from the frontispieces of some of these early publications demonstrates the immediacy, directness, and texture of these complaints: "Thee, great Scriblerus, Malice still inspires, / And with cold Venom damps the Poet's Fires: / A snarling Elf, who breaks the Critick's Trust, / With Spleen condemns, and always is unjust..." (*Compl. Coll.*, June 1728 – Guerinot 117); "'Tis best sometimes your Censure to restrain, / And charitably let the Dull be vain: / Your Silence there, is better than your Spite; / For who can Rail as long as they can Write?" (*Ess. on Dunc.*, June 1728 – 127-28); "Who rich in Spleen, tho' meanly poor of Spirit, / Wou'd raise false Fame by crushing real Merit" (*Ess. Upon Taste*, June 1728 – 130); "Awd by no Shame, by no Respect controll'd: / In Scandal busy, in Reproaches bold: / With witty Malice, studious to defame; / Scorn all their Joy, and Laughter all their Aim" (*Chars. of the Times*, Aug. 1728 – 151).

⁶²⁷ James Ralph, *Sawney. An Heroic Poem. Occasion'd by the Dunciad* (London, 1728), ii, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed August 31, 2008). On these grounds, Ralph addresses *Sawney* to a broad group: "I have endeavour'd [in the forthcoming piece of satire] to make my self easy in the Imagination, that every one, who can make any pretension to *Poetry* and the *Muses*, is, in a manner, concern'd, because all Degrees of Writers are there lampoon'd; and whoever is even commonly solicitous for the general Reputation of his *Countrymen*, ought to do their Characters all the justice in his power, especially since our *Authors* can venture with so much Charity, Humility, and Good-nature, to affirm, that their Favourite Goddess *Dulness*, glancing all over *Parnassus*, Beholds an hundred sons, and each a Dunces" (ii).

⁶²⁸ Preface to *The Battel of the Poets. In Two Cantos.* (image 108 ff.), in *Tales, epistles, odes, fables, &c. With translations from Homer and other antient authors. To which are added Proposals for perfecting the English language* (London, 1729), 109, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 22, 2009).

⁶²⁹ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 131.

⁶³⁰ Ralph, *Sawney*, ii.

The question of Pope's moral character took center stage. "The two *Popes* profess the same Religion," one reader wrote, "but 'tis doubted whether either of them believe in Christ. The *Great Foreigner* pretends to forgive all manner of *Sins*; the *Little Briton* does not think there is such a Thing, as *Sin* in the World."⁶³¹ "O! dire Effects of Masqu'd Impiety!" cried Hugh Stanhope, author of *The Progress of Dulness. Which will serve for an explanation of the Dunciad* (1728), who denounced Pope for "impos[ing]" his "Dumbness" on "the World" with the confused design of his poem.⁶³² Addison and Spenser, Stanhope argued, had drawn "Vice and Virtue" like "living Persons." They kept their readers "[a]t once instructed and well-pleas'd," proceeded with an appropriate combination of "Wit" and "Wisdom," inculcated "sweet Morals," and led their readers "by *Music*" to "*Sense*":

But *Pope* scarce ever *Force* to *Fancy* joins,
 With *Dancing-Master*'s Feet equips his Lines,
Plumes empty *Fancy*, and in *Tinsel* shines.
 Or, if by chance his Judgment seems to lead,
 Where one poor Moral faintly shews its Head;
 'Tis like a Judge, that reverently drest,
 Peeps thro' the Pageants, at a Lord May'rs Feast;
 By Starts he reasons, and seems Wise by Fits,
 Such Wit's call'd *Wisdom, that has lost its Wits*.⁶³³

Numerous readers expressed puzzlement and dismay at Pope's self-serving ridicule of financially struggling writers. They diagnosed Pope as a writer beset "by an uncommon Contempt of all Men less wealthy than himself" and criticized *The Dunciad* for both the content of its satirical arguments and the circular manner in which they were

⁶³¹ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 146.

⁶³² Hugh Stanhope, *The Progress of Dulness. By an eminent hand. Which will serve for an explanation of the Dunciad* (London, 1728), 5, 7, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Apr. 14, 2010).

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 2, 3.

developed.⁶³⁴ “It is, thro’ the Whole, a merciless Satire on Poverty, the Hunger, the Necessity and Distress of particular Men,” wrote one observer. Pope “reproaches his Enemies as poor and dull; and to prove them *poor*, he asserts they are *dull*; and to prove them *dull*, he asserts they are *poor*.”⁶³⁵ Another reader wondered what could be made of Pope’s self-asserted “Authority” in literary matters “when we . . . behold the calamitous Condition of Want, and Wretchedness, exposed and lashed, as if it were a decent or a proper Subject for Ridicule and Satire.”⁶³⁶ Summing up these critiques, James Ralph decried *The Dunciad* as “[a] Piece of unjustifiable *Satyr*, which was calculate[d] only to gratify a malicious Temper, and scandalize some innocent and deserving Persons, an[d] after all appears an idle, empty, trifling Piec[e] of Nonsense, that can put us in mind only o[f] the *Mountains* in Labour, and the *Devil’s* Swine sheering, where there was an horrible Outcry to no purpose.”⁶³⁷ Ralph, who had been spared in the 1728 *Dunciad*, found himself duly lampooned in *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729), no doubt in part because his portraits of Pope’s character had so precisely captured the contrast between devilishness and innocence that the *Dunciad* controversy seemed to stage. In *Sawney. A Heroic Poem* (1728),⁶³⁸ one of the better known satires of *The Dunciad*, Ralph had depicted the protagonist as “a mimick Sage of huge Renown,” who sought refuge at a comfortable distance from the hubbub to relish the pain that he had caused: “[R]etir’d” to

⁶³⁴ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 146.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶³⁷ Ralph, *Sawney*, iv.

⁶³⁸ “Sawney” means a “simpleton” or “fool” (OED 2); in its adjectival form, “[f]oolish,” “foolishly sentimental,” or (with some uncertainty expressed by the OED’s authors) “canting” or “wheedling” (OED 1). “Sawney” can also be a derisive term for a Scot. I know of no biographical reason to presume that the latter sense applies here, despite Pope’s close association with the Irish Swift throughout the reception of *The Dunciad*; however, an essay in *The Craftsman* from this period (No. 48) describes a form of belligerent argumentation reputedly typical of “*Scotch Highlanders*” that may have appeared to describe Pope’s rhetorical posture in *The Dunciad*. According to this style, the disputant is poised for an attack from the start: “[E]very Man sit[s] with a little *Durk* or *Dagger* drawn before him, in order to silence the first antagonist, who presumes to dispute or contradict his assertions” (28).

“*Twick’nam* Bow’rs,” Pope “enjoys his Wealth, / His Malice and his Muse: In Grottos cool / And cover’d Arbours dreams his Hours away.”⁶³⁹ By 1732, a collection of *Dunciad* was introduced with the epigraph “*Evil be thou my Good*”—a statement that similarly envisioned Pope as a Satanic figure who took pleasure in his perverse inversions of the categories of virtue and vice at the foundations of Christian morality.⁶⁴⁰

Thus, in the angry and imaginative responses provoked by *The Dunciad*, Pope’s character rapidly emerged as the mirror image of Tibbald’s. Whereas Lewis Theobald had been mocked (by Pope) for his self-martyring public spirit, Pope was said by his detractors to have been motivated by malice, envy, and spite—selfish anti-social indulgences harnessed to a public performance disseminated without an obvious civic purpose in view. And on this count, Pope had clearly run afoul of one of the most fundamental civic obligations of the published satirist as those obligations were then perceived: to refrain from indulging malice and ill nature in the satirical composition. Young, for instance, had been careful to confirm in *The Universal Passion* that he was “not conscious of the least malevolence to any particular person thro’ all the Characters”⁶⁴¹—a misleading statement with respect to his strategy of particularized portraiture, as noted previously, but apparently earnest as a description of his affective relation to the composition, given that we know of no contemporary complaints to the contrary. Even Pope’s friend Swift, who laid greater claims than Young did to the satirist’s liberty “to laugh,” presumed that a satirist would take care not to reveal

⁶³⁹ Ralph, *Sawney*, image 18.

⁶⁴⁰ This is perhaps a more playful usage, but the metaphor nevertheless registers the common complaint. See Richard Savage. *An author to be let. Being a proposal humbly address’d to the consideration of the knights, esquires, gentlemen, and other worshipful and weighty members of the solid and ancient society of the bathos. By their associate and well-wisher, Iscariot Hackney* (London, 1732), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Apr. 23, 2010).

⁶⁴¹ Young, *UP*, image 2.

“Malice” among his besetting motives for composing and publishing satire. “There are two Ends that Men propose in writing Satyr,” Swift mused in an *Intelligencer* article of 1728/9. “[O]ne of them [is] less Noble than the other, as regarding nothing further than personal Satisfaction, and Pleasure of the Writer, but without any View towards *Personal Malice*; the other is a *Publick Spirit*, prompting Men of *Genius* and *Virtue*, to mend the World as far as they are able.”⁶⁴²

But this moral mandate had been articulated most famously by Joseph Addison in the pages of the *Spectator*.⁶⁴³ Addison specifically discusses the case of anonymously-published satire, so the comment seems especially appropriate as a gloss on the earliest version of *The Dunciad*. It resonates with the complaints of Pope’s detractors throughout the *Dunciad* controversy, as with Young’s prefatory promise of self-restraint:

There is nothing that more betrays a base, ungenerous Spirit, than the giving of secret Stabs to a Man’s Reputation. Lampoons and Satyrs, that are written with Wit and Spirit, are like poison’d Darts, which not only inflict a Wound, but make it incurable. For this Reason I am very much troubled when I see the Talents of Humour and Ridicule in the Possession of an ill-natured Man. There cannot be a greater Gratification to a barbarous and inhuman Wit, than to stir up Sorrow in the Heart of a private Person, to raise Uneasiness among near Relations, and to expose whole Families to Derision, at the same time that he remains unseen and undiscovered. If, besides the Accomplishment of being Witty and Ill-natured, a Man is vicious into the bargain, he is one of the most mischievous Creatures that can enter into a Civil Society. His Satyr will then chiefly fall upon those who ought to be the most exempt from it. Virtue, Merit, and every thing that is Praise-worthy, will be made the Subject of Ridicule and Buffoonry.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴² No. 3, *The Intelligencer* (London, 1729), 18-19, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed 30 July 2009). Swift is contemplating the controversial success of John Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*. The passage continues: “With Regard to the former [motive], I demand whether I have not as good a Title to laugh, as Men have to be ridiculous, and to expose Vice, as another hath to be vicious. If I ridicule the Follies and Corruptions of a *Court*, a *Ministry*, or a *Senate*, are they not amply paid by *Pensions*, *Titles*, and *Power*, while I expect and desire no other Reward, than that of laughing with a few Friends in a Corner? Yet, if those who take Offence, think me in the Wrong, I am ready to change the Scene with them, whenever they please” (18-19).

⁶⁴³ No. 23. Addison was not the only critic to make this complaint. See P.K. Elkin’s survey of the common claim that certain satirists were themselves sinful, *The Augustan Defence of Satire* (London: Oxford UP, 1973), esp. Ch. 4.

⁶⁴⁴ Elkin, *Augustan Defence*, qtd. 55-56.

This is, of course, just what Pope seemed to his contemporaries to have done, as if in deliberate disobedience of Addison's prohibition: his "Wit" had gotten away from him. He had "inflamed" vice rather than correcting it; he had ridiculed "Virtue, Merit, and every thing that is Praise-worthy." Thus, from the perspective of its earliest readers, the author of *The Dunciad* was one of Addison's "poison'd Darts," threatening to "inflict" an "incurable Wound" in "Civil Society." Pope would promptly turn the same complaint back on his critics, some of whom had published their critiques of *The Dunciad* anonymously. But as these writers had understood their own publications, they were justified even in their nameless attacks on an obvious miscreant. By causing gratuitous suffering to undeserving "private Person[s]," Pope had displayed his "base, ungenerous Spirit" to the whole of England and beyond.

Interestingly, *The Dunciad's* earliest readers puzzled over this perceived self-debasement almost as much as they railed against the perceived injury to "Civil Society" threatened by Pope's unaccountable satire. By the time he published *The Dunciad*, Pope enjoyed an international reputation as the preeminent English poet of his age. This reputation loomed large in early responses to *The Dunciad*, not only because it authorized the performance as a potentially meaningful and potent one—a composition not to be dismissed—but also because it sat so strangely with all that Pope had accomplished so far. Some designated this late-career period of Pope's career a fall from grace. "A Poet renown'd for Politeness, and Fire / Has stain'd all his Laurels in Puddles and Mire," one critic wrote.⁶⁴⁵ Others pressed the point that the publication of such nasty writing seemed

⁶⁴⁵ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 144.

decidedly at odds with Pope's self-interest. An early reader of *The Dunciad* argued on these very grounds that Pope could not possibly be its author:

Since Mr. POPE has obtain'd such an universal Name over all *England*, and the neighbouring States, so that even Foreigners, as it is very rightly observ'd, have translated him into their own Language; is it consistent with Reason, that he should debase himself so much, as to vent his Scandal upon those very Men, who, for the most part, are his Admirers, and so run the risk of losing that vast Reputation, which he has so firmly rooted into the Hearts of all the World?⁶⁴⁶

Another reader, sounding a more tragic note, saw this latest, snarling phase of Pope's work as the straw that broke the camel's back—the fulfillment of a pattern whereby Pope' reneged on his obligations to the public one time too many and ultimately got what he deserved in return:

The Publick might, perhaps, have forgiven Mr. *Pope's* patching up a Translation from different Hands, which he himself had promis'd them, or bartering an imperfect Edition of *Shakespear* for plentiful Subscriptions (and some other Disappointments of that Nature); this they would have patiently suffer'd, and thought their Pardon due to that great Genius, which once gave them the *Iliad*: But when, instead of clearing the Way of Fame, he maliciously busieth himself in the spurning back others,
 When being grown too fond to rule alone,
 Bears, like the *Turk*, no Brother near the Throne,
 in libeling the whole Body of the most perfect Writers of the Nation; might it not be well expected that they would have so little Command of their Passion, as to return him his own Usage?⁶⁴⁷

From the perspective of these more contemplative contemporary critics, in other words, Pope's conduct in the *Dunciad* controversy offered a living counter-argument to Young's assertion that the love of fame was a universal passion that could be counted upon to keep would-be miscreants in check. With *The Dunciad*, Pope showed himself squandering his talents—failing to set himself to the expected task of “clearing the Way of Fame” and rather unaccountably attacking some of his own “Admirers” in the process. He emerged

⁶⁴⁶ John Barnard, ed. *Alexander Pope: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 215.

⁶⁴⁷ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 130-31.

as the very incarnation of Addison's fame-loving "Fool," who allowed himself to be "lifted up by the discovery of those [Infirmities] which he observed in other Men" rather than being "humbled by the Sense of his own Infirmities," and who "Recommend[ed] himself to the Applause of those about him" rather than seeking quiet happiness in "his own Approbation."⁶⁴⁸ The English "Nation," although normally inclined to softer passions (namely "patien[t] suffer[ing]" in the face of "great Genius"), could hardly be expected to retain so firm a "Command of their Passion" that they would not retaliate in kind.

V: Satirical Portraiture and the Limitations of Libel Law

It is not altogether clear whether, or to what extent, the earliest critics of *The Dunciad* appreciated the long bet that Pope was making: in sacrificing his contemporary reputation, he was assuming (correctly, as it turned out) that his posthumous reputation would prosper. Nor is it clear that Pope's contemporary critics recognized, as Swift certainly did, that Pope's plan to "hale" lesser-known writers "out of Obscurity" involved the sacrifice of their posthumous reputations to his own.⁶⁴⁹ In contrast to modern analyses of the ethics of Pope's performance, which emphasize the question of which

⁶⁴⁸ Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, vol.1 (London, 1713), 416, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed July 3, 2010).

⁶⁴⁹ Vander Meulen, *History and Facsimile*, qtd. 10. Swift encouraged Pope "to hale those Scoundrels out of their Obscurity by telling their Names at length, their Works, their Adventures, sometimes their Lodgings, and their Lineage." He encouraged Pope to skewer his enemies "not with A——'s and B——'s according to the old Way, which would be unknown in a few Years," but with a newer, more suggestive system of abbreviation (previously employed to milder satirical ends by Young) that simultaneously invited the public identification of particular transgressors and helped to protect the satirist from charges of libel (qtd. 11). "Take care the bad poets do not outwit you," Swift wrote to Pope in their private correspondence, "as they have served the good ones in every Age, whom they have provoked to transmit their Names to posterity[.] Maevius is as well known as Virgil, and Gildon will be as well known as you if his name gets into your Verses; . . . the difference between good and bad Fame is a perfect Trifle" (qtd. 10). Again, note Swift's apparent lack of concern for the distinction between "good and bad Fame" upon which Young had insisted.

side in the paper wars deserved to triumph in the eyes of posterity, Pope's early readers tended to focus on the question of the contemporary harm that Pope had done, or was still in the process of doing. Indeed, as indicated by the comments quoted above, Pope's performance seemed to some readers to be nasty enough to augur the author's own precipitous decline in reputation, if not also in circulation.

One can see what was to be gained by a performance that called into question Young's central philosophical claim that the pursuit of reputation was a useful (if sinful) actuating passion in civilized society. This claim had been closely linked to Walpole's emergent system of preferment, in which "honors" were bestowed upon apparently deserving members of the commonwealth in the form of monetary rewards (bribes, some thought) and positions in government. The opposition decried this system as "corruption": it was perceived as creating imbalances in the proper separation of powers in the English constitution and degrading the condition of English virtue. As a supporter of the opposition (increasingly so, during the late 1720s and 1730s), Pope had a partisan interest in making Young look foolish on this count. But if *The Dunciad* can be seen as a kind of response to Young's project,⁶⁵⁰ it nevertheless demanded attention on its own terms.

What angered Pope's contemporary detractors about his treatment of "reputation" may seem so obvious that it requires little explication: Pope's satire cruelly and unfairly subjected any number of private individuals to public shame. "We have no Moral right on the Reputation of other Men," Dryden had asserted in his *Discourse Concerning the*

⁶⁵⁰ This would indeed be a difficult argument to make, for Pope claimed that it took him six years to write *The Dunciad*—a claim that, if accurate, would put the start of the composition in 1722 or 1723, therefore at least two years before *The Universal Passion* began appearing in print. It is possible, of course, that Pope was lying, but, even if he was, he appears not to have wished to be seen as designing his poem *merely* as a way of contesting Young's vision of Britain.

Origin and Progress of Satire (1693). Reputation was considered a key to social advancement in this period—a commonplace taken for granted in the design of *The Universal Passion*. Closely linked to the promise of professional competence (for men) and marriageability (for women), reputation was conceived in English culture and English law almost as a homologue to private property: a personal possession that others had no “right” to steal or to tarnish, as Dryden’s comment suggests. After all, in select circumstances, English law gave private individuals the right to sue for damages when their reputations were unjustly impugned.⁶⁵¹ Although it was not entirely clear that these circumstances applied to the case of *The Dunciad* (for reasons that I will subsequently elaborate), this legal system unquestionably informed the backlash against Pope.⁶⁵² When Pope’s contemporaries accused him of being actuated by “malice,” they were employing not only the language of Christian morality, but also the language of English libel law, which saw malicious intent as a defining feature of actionable libel.⁶⁵³ Although a few early readers focused their complaints on the scurrility of the images in the vast middle portion of the poem—images of pissing contests, faces smeared in feces, swan dives into local sewers, all of which seemed obscene, mean, and inappropriate for poetry—Pope’s readers tended to locate the larger civic transgression in his attacks on innocence: his perverse willingness not only to ridicule abstractions such as “Necessity” and “Poverty,” but also to cause suffering to private individuals associated with these

⁶⁵¹ C.R. Kropf, “Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8.2 (Winter 1974-75): 153-168.

⁶⁵² There were even a few early readers who called for legal prosecution, such as the early reader of *The Dunciad* who glossed its anonymous publication with the assertion that the author was “liable by the Laws of the Land to be punish’d when he shall be discovered” (qtd. Kropf 155). This statement was not entirely accurate, as I will explain below, and some early readers may have recognized the legal loophole(s) that Pope’s performance exploited.

⁶⁵³ Sir Matthew Hale’s 1670 ruling distinguished between slander (spoken defamation) and libel (written defamation) on these grounds: published writing had been actuated by a greater degree of “malice” than defamation “spoken once.” See Kropf, “Libel and Satire,” 162-63.

qualities. It was not an easy task to ridicule virtue and make that ridicule sound like defamation, and yet this is precisely what Pope had managed to accomplish. *The Dunciad* left its early readers with the distinct impression that Pope was sneering at earnestness. He was acting like a bully. As an especially powerful author, respected at least for his talent if not for his morals, Pope seemed to be picking on lesser writers for their good-natured ineptness.

The cutting efficacy of this rather odd rhetorical project came from Pope's distinctive approach to "characteristical" satire. Combining a realist mode of portraiture with a fantastical plot, Pope's assigned his principal characters fanciful "heroic" tasks that cast suspicion on their personal integrity or simply made them look silly. Pope literally put mud on the faces of contemporary English men and women, some of them well-known advocates of politeness and propriety, by imagining their lively participation in the urban games attending King Tibbald's coronation. If comedy erupted from the disjunction, the technique also served to puncture the carefully-cultivated local authority of the persons involved. The following celebrant, for instance, who is presumed to be John Dennis, is literally stripped bare as he prepares for an enthusiastic swan dive into the Fleet Ditch sewer at the ripe age of sixty:

In naked majesty great *D*—— stands,
 And, *Milo*-like, surveys his arms and hands:
 Then sighing, thus. 'And am I now *threescore*?
 Ah why, ye Gods! should two and two make four?'
 He said, and climb'd a stranded Lighter's height,
 Shot to the black abyss, and plung'd down-right.
 The senior's judgment all the crowd admire,
 Who but to sink the deeper, rose the higher.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵⁴ 1728 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, II.261-68.

The passage plays on the disjunction between the critic's high-minded attempts at loftiness and the character's "plung[e]" into the sewer. Even by comparison to Young's satirical portrait of Dennis in *The Universal Passion*, Pope's sketch strikes below the belt. Young had trained his satirical focus on Dennis's pomposity—the vanity involved in preaching the unities and criticizing others in the process. His critique of Dennis's high-minded folly had been softened by the guiding argument that vanity is common to all humankind and can sometimes lead men and women to accomplish great deeds. Pope's presentation offers no such consolation, depicting Dennis as it does in his "naked majesty." If there is a hint of pathos in the moment when the diver pauses to survey "his arms and hands," wondering in disbelief at his own mortality, the sting of the satire comes when the crowd is said to admire the "senior's judgment" in the swan dive. The exposition has already displayed, not only Dennis's refusal to believe that two and two make four, but also the recklessness with which he strips naked in front of the assembled crowd and dives into the Fleet Ditch. Dennis's mortal eagerness exceeds its context.

A complementary technique governs Pope's portrait of Lewis Theobald, which does not leave Tibbald with sewage on his face, but nevertheless exposes him to the undignified plot point of being crowned the King of Dulness. Here, too, Pope's satire stems in part from the hint of realism that pervades the portrait of his hero: the biographical references to Theobald's abandoned translations of Horace and his prior training as a lawyer; the characterization of Theobald as a classically-literate do-gooder, knowable in his flaws; the biographical commentary provided by the main action of the poem, which pokes fun at the bookish Theobald's awkward authorial transition from magisterial scholarly productions into pantomime. This is not simply a parody of civic

piety in the abstract. This is a portrait of a living man whose lifework came very close to embodying the actuating passion that Pope wished to mock.

In the Mandevillean perversity of his guiding satire of well-meaning ineptness, Pope may have had some practical, legal considerations in mind. His deftness at manipulating “innuendo”—a legal loophole according to rules of pleading—has been well established.⁶⁵⁵ But, in addition to this, the very substance of Pope’s satire tested legal definitions of libel as they then existed. Simply put, it was not defamatory to claim that a private individual was earnestly committed to the public weal. Nor was it necessarily “defamation,” in the technical legal sense of the term, to call a man or woman a bad writer, either explicitly or through insinuation, even if the writer suffered temporal damages from the insult, as at least one writer apparently did.⁶⁵⁶ Defamation of private individuals had long been understood to include four categories of actionable speech: “(1) Words which called into question the competence of an individual in his trade or profession; (2) Words which accused the individual of an act punishable according to criminal law; (3) Words which accused the individual of having a communicable disease (specifically, plague, leprosy, or syphilis); and, in London, where prostitution was punishable by carting, (4) Words which depicted a woman as a prostitute.⁶⁵⁷ The principal line of critique pursued in *The Dunciad* came very close to the legal definition of defamation according to the first category of actionable speech: calling into question the competence of a number of men and women in their “trade” or “profession.”

⁶⁵⁵ Kropf uses Pope’s satire as an example in several instances.

⁶⁵⁶ One such victim was James Ralph (quoted above), an up-and-coming poet from Philadelphia who had come to London with Benjamin Franklin in the mid 1720s in the hopes of finding his place in the London literary scene. Ralph “believed that Pope’s attacks [on him in *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729)] turned the publishers against him and that his literary career suffered. At all events his career as a poet was over.” See Laird Okie, “Ralph, James (*d.* 1762),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Sept 2004), accessed 28 April 2010.

⁶⁵⁷ Kropf, “Satire and Libel,” 161-62.

However, as Pope's presentation made abundantly clear, Theobald, not to mention many other writers depicted in the poem, did not actually make enough money from writing for it to be considered their trade or profession: a vocation that provided them and their families with their sole means of sustenance.⁶⁵⁸ After all, writing had long been considered a genteel avocation—a pastime for aristocrats and gentlemen (or, for that matter lawyers like Theobald or physicians like Blackmore) that reflected either their public spirit or their willingness to make available to public hands those products of their virtuous leisure pursuits that promised to provide instruction and entertainment. Pope capitalized on this commonplace.

In so doing, he flouted the spirit of English libel law as it then existed, all the while keeping his defamatory excesses carefully within its letter.⁶⁵⁹ Controlling his innuendos and references to particular people at the level of the line, Pope took measures to hide his authorship of the poem. No manuscript of these early versions of *The Dunciad* exists, probably because proof of authorship was necessary to bring a libel case against Pope.⁶⁶⁰ In the process, Pope's satire tested the limits of his satirical liberties in all of the four categories listed above. His portrait of Haywood, for instance, imagined her as sexually promiscuous—selling her (literary) wares by displaying her ample bosom on the frontispiece. His portrait of Defoe placed him in the pillory—that is, in the throes of being punished for a criminal offense. And his libel of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu for being “pox'd by her love”—an innuendo included in the *First Satire of the Second*

⁶⁵⁸ It is also not clear that the writers he ridiculed could have proved temporal damages, including Ralph, who was not yet established as a writer. If anything, *The Dunciad* brought many of his victims a larger audience. This point will have to be better researched.

⁶⁵⁹ I am again extending Kropf's argument beyond the technical discussion that he develops with reference to Pope.

⁶⁶⁰ Kropf, “Satire and Libel,” 165-67.

Book of Horace, Imitated (1733), which I will discuss below as an *apologia* that directly addressed this earlier phase of the *Dunciad* controversy—has been well established by modern scholars as an innuendo that flirts with the third category of defamation.⁶⁶¹

The fact that Pope “never found himself in court for libel” attests to the efficacy of Pope’s self-protective techniques in the composition and publication of *The Dunciad*. It also attests to the limitations of the theory and practice of English libel law.⁶⁶² Had Haywood tried to bring a case against Pope, for instance, the rules of pleading would have required that the innuendo be read *in mitiore sensue*: “all double entendres were to be read for legal purposes in their more innocuous sense unless the context explicitly pointed toward the more ribald or defamatory meaning.”⁶⁶³ In this particular case, Pope was simply describing the frontispiece portrait that appeared in some of Haywood’s published works. In Defoe’s case, it was questionable whether a court would have convicted a satirist for libeling a private individual who had committed a criminal offense for which he had already been punished; granting Pope further protection, Defoe was in fact deceased by the time Pope wrote the poem. And although Pope was perhaps trying his luck by insinuating that “Ear-less Defoe” had in fact been punished for sedition (which he had not), he could have fallen back on the “innuendo” defense that he was ridiculing Defoe for his bad *poetic* ear.

Pope must have known, too, that, thanks in part to the rules of proceeding, which discouraged private libel cases in courts overwhelmed with cases, the private individuals whom he mocked in the poem would have had difficulty succeeding at trial. “Compared

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., esp. 165; also Robert Halsband’s addendum, “Pope’s ‘Libel and Satire,’” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8.4 (Summer 1975): 473-74.

⁶⁶² Kropf, “Satire and Libel,” 166.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 164-65.

to the restrictions controlling libels on the government,” C.R. Kropf observes, “those protecting the private individual provided the satirist with a relatively free hand.”⁶⁶⁴

Libel against private persons was nearly always tried as a civil case, which increased the burden of proof for the plaintiff. In addition to the technicalities mentioned above, there were social incentives against bringing a case to court. Because truth was an absolute defense, the plaintiff had to prove that the allegedly libelous statement was false. Thus, “if the plaintiff lost his case, the supposed libel took on some appearance of truth.”⁶⁶⁵ It is not surprising that, compared with the number of cases involving such charges as trespassing and inheritance rights, civil libel cases were few and far between in the eighteenth century.⁶⁶⁶ Private individuals in England still enjoyed relatively little legal protection from defamation.

Thanks to his own training in the law, Lewis Theobald himself seems to have understood Pope’s boldness on this point as well as anyone did. In an open letter addressed to “*Mr. Mist, relating to Mr. Pope’s Usage of him in his Dunciad*” (June 22, 1728), Theobald singled out the passage quoted previously as an especially troubling piece of Pope’s satire. Interestingly, however, he did not do so to contest the central charge of imprudent civic-mindedness, but to verify that he had never actually entertained the thought of “sav[ing] the state by cackling to the Tories”:

As my *Adversary* (for so, I think, I may more properly stile him, than my *Antagonist*) has been pleas’d *invidiously* to list me in *your* service, I’ll take the Advantage of his Hint, and beg once more to list *you* in *mine*. TRUTH, I find, is to be dispens’d with, whenever a Man is dispos’d to be *angry* or *malicious*: And so he can but *hurt* by the Insinuation, he’ll not scruple to represent me *cackling to the Tories*; an Accusation you could acquit me of, were it to the Purpose, as far as your own Paper is concern’d. Whenever I have thrown a Letter into your *Journal*,

⁶⁶⁴ “Libel and Satire,” 161.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 163.

I have constantly endeavour'd to make the Subject of it *Learning*, or *Entertainment*. As I never had Inclinations to meddle in *political* Affairs, my Writings, as well as Studies, have all been of a different Nature: While my *Accuser*, or he is shrewdly abus'd, has made it his Custom to *cackle* to more than *one* Party in their own Sentiments.⁶⁶⁷

Theobald is not simply quibbling about a fine point. Indeed, the label of the “*political*” author does not seem to trouble him as much as the dubious characterization that accompanied it (the idea of “*cackling*”). And what concerns him above all is the principle behind the misstatement: Pope has lied about a detail of his biography. Theobald recognizes that Pope’s portrait of him very nearly meets the legal definition of “libel” as it was then known in civil cases: it is a false and defamatory statement (and maliciously so). Unlike criminal cases, in which the truth or falsity of an allegedly libelous statement was of no consequence,⁶⁶⁸ the plaintiff in a civil case had to prove that the allegedly libelous statement was false. Pope’s sneer at Theobald’s earnestness may have succeeded without this seemingly gratuitous detail, and yet, as Theobald recognizes, Pope apparently wanted to test the limits of his satirical liberty. Theobald’s reference to all that he had written for the journal for the twin Horatian purposes of “*Learning*” and “*Entertainment*” not only confirms the accuracy of Pope’s caricature of him as an earnest servant of the “public weal”; it also hints that he possesses written proof that contradicts Pope’s assertion of party inclination. A willful misrepresentation of “TRUTH,” Theobald asserts, can “*hurt*” a “Man” by the mere “*Insinuation.*”

⁶⁶⁷ In *Gulliveriana: or, a fourth volume of miscellanies. Being a Sequel of the Three Volumes, published by Pope and Swift. To which is added, Alexanderiana; or, A Comparison between the Ecclesiastical and Poetical Pope. And many Things, in Verse and Prose, relating to the latter...*, ed. Jonathan Smedley (London, 1728), 325, in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (accessed July 3, 2010).

⁶⁶⁸ This breadth was intended to protect against the fomenting of negative sentiment against the government.

Of course, as Theobald seems to have recognized, Pope's misstatement of the facts in this particular case was probably not actionable. Even if Pope's insinuation that Theobald was inclined to write partisan propaganda could be proved false, the content of the insinuation was not necessarily damaging enough to prove "defamation"; it was just inaccurate—and seemingly mean-spirited in its inaccuracy. In addition, Pope's subtle mode of representation rooted the claim evasively in an undocumentable nuance of private psychology, and this would have undermined any libel case that Theobald might have attempted to bring against Pope. "Tibbald" is not actually represented as "cackling to the Tories" within the poem; he is represented briefly entertaining the thought of doing so. Then he is represented as attempting to burn his books; accompanying the Goddess of Dulness to Grub Street; looking on as an outlandish coronation ceremony unfolds before him on the streets of London; and falling asleep on the lap of his tutelary goddess and dreaming of the "progress of dullness" through time and space. These actions all reflected poorly on Theobald's character, and they were all literally "false" in the sense that imaginative poetry so often is. However, these falsities were probably not actionable.⁶⁶⁹

Nor had Theobald mistaken the intended spirit of Pope's lampoon. Tellingly, rather than threatening legal prosecution, Theobald roots his critique of Pope's excesses in a snide claim that Pope has inadvertently neglected the rules of polite discourse—a tactic that both shows that he can take a joke and effectively reverses Pope's tactics back on him with respect to the question of his intended libel:

⁶⁶⁹ In pursuing this line of argument, I am extending Kropf's argument, which specifically treats Pope's use of "innuendo" (among other technicalities) but does not consider how *The Dunciad's* guiding structure—its ridicule of "Bad Writers"—is positioned at the outermost edge of protected speech.

Mr. *Pope* seems to have forgot a Sentence of *Publius Syrus*, which ought to live in every Gentleman's Memory, but which I have too much good Nature to suspect can live in *his* Practice.— *Falsum Maledictum malevolum Mendacium est.* [*The false insult is a malicious lie.*] The Extravagance of *wanton* Wit, perhaps, may transport People to an *involuntary* Neglect of Truth: And let *Inspiration* answer for it. I speak this merely from Conjecture; for I have no Fear of ever being so *unhappily* actuated. I shall rather be content with a little *sober Sense*, though *bright Genius's* should think fit to reckon it *Dullness*.⁶⁷⁰

Tibbald's careful language of "Conjecture" regarding the motives or humors that may have "actuated" Pope's own writing exhibits an ostentatious refusal to commit to a picture of authorial actuation as smug as Pope's had been. But the comment makes it clear that Theobald has not misunderstood the main lines of either Pope's critique of "*Dullness*" or the positive implication that Pope is proposing his "Extravagance of *wanton* Wit" as a superior poetic mode. And Theobald again intones his initial concern: whether voluntary or involuntary, Pope's satire is noteworthy for its "Neglect of Truth," a neglect that tends to suggest dubious authorial motives.

This drama of calculated impudence helps to explain why Pope's early readers were so angry at Pope's sneering, personal lampoons of well-meaning (if inept) local authors. His insinuations seemed haphazard, bereft of positive civic purpose, and potentially destructive. Dryden had designed his insinuations to unsettle Virgil's reputation as a supporter of absolute monarchy and therefore to convert him to the cause of England's limited monarchy; Pope's insinuations threatened to unsettle the reputations of private individuals with no apparent cause in mind beyond his own private satisfaction. Young's own satire of private individuals had negotiated this threat with comparative generosity. Whereas Young had invited Englanders to recognize themselves and their contemporaries in his declaredly "general" portraits, which mocked individuals for the

⁶⁷⁰ "Mr. Mist," 326.

commission of sins already widely known in high society, Pope, according to Theobald, had appended a false accusation to an otherwise accurate portrait—a strategy especially nefarious because it could, in principle, “hurt” a good reputation.

Pope had done so, crucially, because of the way he had rooted his insinuations of professional incompetence in representations of the “actuating” passions of less popular authors. While it was not illegal to criticize questionable writerly choices (Dennis’s own critiques of Blackmore were one shining example of methodic, above-the-belt discussions of the “rules” of poetry), Pope had ridiculed “Bad Writers” in a manner that unduly and misleadingly drew their biography and character into the critique. Theobald put it this way:

My Notion is, that a *Poetical War* should confine itself to *Demerits* in the Science of Poetry . . . But to draw into the Quarrel Parts of *private Character*, to fall on Persons independent even of the Fraternity of *Writers*, is intentionally to declare War against human Society. They, therefore, who oppose a Writer indulging himself in that *bad Strain*, employ their Pens in the common Cause of Mankind: And such a Writer should think it particular good Luck, if he is pursued as *Fair Game*, and not hunted down as one of a *Ferae Naturae*; a *Beast of Prey*, that ought to have a Price set on his Head.⁶⁷¹

As Theobald knew, legally speaking, Pope had done nothing more nefarious than flouting the rules of polite discourse. The early critic of *The Dunciad* who declared upon reading the 1728 version of the poem that the author was “liable by the Laws of the Land to be punish’d when he shall be discovered” reflected the *spirit*, but not the practice, of English libel law as it was then constituted.⁶⁷² The public’s only legal recourse was to retaliate in print.

Moreover, as Theobald predicted, these considerations did, indeed, make *The Dunciad* controversy seem to its earliest participants to be a “common” cause rather than

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 327.

⁶⁷² Kropf, “Satire and Libel,” qtd. 155.

a publicly-aired matter of personal revenge. Looking back on the initial phase of the *Dunciad* controversy in 1730, Leonard Welsted observed that not all of those who entered the fray were established writers incited to participate out of self-interest because Pope had already singled them out for ridicule. “I cannot indeed say much in Praise of some Performances, which appeared against him,” Welsted wrote, “and am sorry that Voluntiers enter’d into the War, whom I could wish to have been only Spectators: But the cause became so general, that some Gentlemen, who never aim’d at the Laurel, grew Poets merely upon their being angry.”⁶⁷³ If Young’s satire was a “shining *supplement* of publick *laws*,” encouraging its readers to utilize the pride in reputation that English law afforded them in order to bring about their spiritual reform, Pope’s satire provided a kind of test to the limits of public laws as they were then constituted, exploiting their technical and philosophical weaknesses while flouting the protective spirit that sustained them. To a greater degree than Dryden had before, Pope rendered himself a poet who seized his lawful poetic liberties.

V: The Question of Civic Intent

Maynard Mack was therefore not fully apprized of the intricacies of eighteenth-century libel law when he characterized Pope as “more sinned against than sinning” in the *Dunciad* controversy. It was true that many of the writers whom Pope had mocked in the poem had critiqued Pope or his friends in print in the years leading up to the publication of *The Dunciad*. But what disturbed early readers of *The Dunciad* was the *manner* in which Pope returned these alleged assaults. When *The Dunciad Variorum* came out in 1729 with the prefatory suggestion that the persons attacked in the poem had

⁶⁷³ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 191.

been “the first Aggressors” against Pope⁶⁷⁴—that is, that he had attacked them because they had critiqued him in print—Pope’s earliest readers were not readily convinced that this rather flimsy motive excused Pope’s excesses in *The Dunciad*. Pope’s irregular application of this stated principle within the poem was quickly ferreted out by Leonard Welsted,⁶⁷⁵ and Pope’s subsequent behavior served only to fan the controversy. In 1731, there was an uproar over Pope’s perceived assault on the character of the Duke of Chandos in the character of “Timon” in the *Epistle to Burlington*—an assault that was certainly unprovoked if it had indeed been aimed at Chandos, who had never maligned Pope in print, and who did not even do so after Pope’s alleged satire on his character.⁶⁷⁶

Pope seemed to many of his contemporaries to be bent on making mischief. If he was entitled by law to critique bad poetry, he had nevertheless chosen to do in an unduly mean-spirited manner that seemed out of keeping with the forms of critique that had allegedly prompted the composition of *The Dunciad* in the first place. Theobald, for instance, had published *Shakespeare Restor’d* (1726) as a legitimate, alternative edition of the English author—an aim evident in the full title: “*SHAKESPEARE* restored: / OR, A / SPECIMEN / OF THE / Many ERRORS, / AS WELL/ *Committed*, as *Unamended*, by Mr. *POPE* / In his Late / EDITION of this POET. / DESIGNED / Not only to correct the said EDITION, but to restore the True READING of *SHAKESPEARE* in all the *Editions* ever yet publish’d.”⁶⁷⁷ As Theobald had explained delicately in the authorial Preface to the edition,

⁶⁷⁴ 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, ed. Rumbold, 127.

⁶⁷⁵ This is a principal aim of the Preface to *One epistle to Mr. A. Pope, occasion'd by two epistles lately published* (London, 1730), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 22, 2009).

⁶⁷⁶ Chandos responded meekly and politely in a private letter to Pope.

⁶⁷⁷ *Shakespeare restored: or, a specimen of the many errors, as well committed, as unamended, by Mr. Pope in his late edition of this poet. Designed Not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the True*

IT was no small Satisfaction...to me, when I first heard Mr. *POPE* had taken upon him the Publication of *SHAKESPEARE*. I very reasonably expected, from his known Talents and Abilities, from his uncommon Sagacity and Discernment, and from his unwearied Diligence and Care of informing himself by an happy and extensive Conversation, we should have had our Author come out as perfect, as the want of *Manuscripts* and *original Copies* could give us a Possibility of hoping. I may dare to say, a great Number of *SHAKESPEARE*'s Admirers, and of Mr. *POPE*'s too, (both which I sincerely declare myself,) concurred in this Expectation: For there is a certain *curiosa felicitas*, as was said of an eminent *Roman* Poet [Horace], in that Gentleman's Way of working, which, we presum'd, would have laid itself out largely in such a Province; and that he would not have sate down contented with performing, as he calls it himself, the *dull Duty* of an EDITOR only. *SHAKESPEARE*'s *Works* have always appear'd to me like what he makes his *HAMLET* compare the World to, an *unweeded Garden grown to Seed*: And I am sorry there is still reason to complain, the *Weeds* in him are so very sparingly thin'd, that, not to speak out of compass, a thousand *rank* and *unsightly* ones are left to stare us in the Face, and clog the Delight of the expected Prospect.⁶⁷⁸

Theobald's deferential response to Pope's editorial efforts continues in this vein. He pauses for another full paragraph to aver a second time that "I HAVE so great an Esteem for Mr. POPE, and so high an Opinion of his Genius and Excellencies, that I beg to be excused from the least Intention of derogating his Merits."⁶⁷⁹ Then, quoting Pope's own editorial statements of intent, he announces that he is "assuming a Task here, which this learned *Editor* seems purposely ... to have declined": that is, to do what modern editors still very often attempt to do, which is to "give Light and restore Sense to" the original text, based on what available information there is about the author's original intentions, and "not to be arbitrary, fantastical, or wanton, in [their] Conjectures."⁶⁸⁰ Theobald, in other words, was critiquing Pope on the basis of his editorial "design" and was doing so in a comparatively law-abiding, polite manner. Pope had approached the editing of

Reading of Shakespeare in all the Editions ever yet publish'd. (London, 1726), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, ii.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, iii.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, iii-v. See Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare*.

Shakespeare in something of the way that Dryden had approached the translation of Virgil; Theobald had answered a perceived public need for an alternate version.

The comparison to Dryden is, indeed, useful here. Pope overtly took Dryden's controversial status as a precedent for his own controversial strategies for addressing the common weal,⁶⁸¹ and Dryden, as I argued in the second chapter, did not lack a defensible, civic-minded "design" in his controversial translation of Virgil. Thus, insofar as the *Dunciad* controversy replicates the main lines of that earlier phase of the Battle of the Books, it seems reasonable to wonder whether Pope had a civic motive after all in the composition of this strange poem—whether he was not merely flouting the spirit of the laws of the land just to see if he could get away with it, or whether he had some larger public purpose in view.

Pope was certainly as well acquainted as anyone of his day with the expectation that a poem should be organized according to a clear, authorial "design": a way of structuring a poem that promised to produce a predictable reaction (or set of reactions) in its readers, thereby affecting the passions, manners, or imagination in a manner consistent with the author's vision of civic reform. Pope used the term "design" in this sense throughout his career, often playfully. When he was still in his early twenties he could already be found appropriating Dryden's notion that the architectural makeup of an imitated or translated work could be subtly altered, reoriented, or colored strategically so as to effect a new civic end.⁶⁸² The Scriblerian composition *Peri Bathous* (1727) reads as

⁶⁸¹ Cf. "A PARALLEL OF THE CHARACTERS OF Mr. DRYDEN and Mr. POPE, As drawn by certain of their Cotemporaries" (Rumbold, 350-56), one of the appendices to *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729).

⁶⁸² My thesis here is that he eventually expanded this concept to include the transmission of his own works to posterity. For his application of Dryden's notion to literary translations/imitations, consider that by 1711 (at age 22), Pope was already experimenting with the compositional notion—perfected in *Dryden's Virgil*—that a poet might reorient the "design" of a translated work in accordance with the needs of a modern audience: he introduced *The Temple of Fame* with the announcement that although "[t]he hint of

a running commentary on the mode of analyzing a poet's means of accomplishing a proposed civic end that had been developed with applause in Le Bossu's treatise on the epic. And Pope can also be found employing the term "design" in relation to *The Dunciad* itself, albeit without disclosing a specific, beneficent civic project in the manner of Young's prefatory discussion of his satire's "unity of design."⁶⁸³ That Pope called *The Dunciad* his "chef d'oeuvre" and spent well over half his life composing, editing, and overseeing the publication of the poem only adds to the probable cause for pursuing such an inquiry.⁶⁸⁴

There was, however, an important difference between Dryden's performance and Pope's own performance on precisely this count. Whereas the design of *Dryden's Virgil* provoked an annoyed critique from at least one early reader (Luke Milbourne), it provoked admiration from a number of early readers, who appear to have appreciated the poet's judgment, his skill, and his public spirit. But a great many of *The Dunciad* early readers critiqued the poem for its lack of a coherent "design." James Ralph denounced the poem as a "strange[,] wild, Linsey-woolsey Composition" and a "Rhapsody, that one knows not where or how to find Head or Tail."⁶⁸⁵ John Dennis, too, referred to the poem sarcastically as a "wonderful Rhapsody" that amplified the silliness of earlier Popean

the following Piece was taken from Chaucer's *House of Fame*," the "Design is in a manner entirely alter'd" and "the descriptions and most of the particular Thoughts my own" (II.242, italics reversed). The status of Chaucer as an English poet of an earlier age rather than a poet from classical antiquity is, of course, essential in its own right; however, Pope borrowed this strategy, too, from Dryden, who had "translated" Chaucer in *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700).

⁶⁸³ During the compositional stages, Pope wrote to Swift that he would not reveal "what designs I have in my head... till I see you here, face to face" (qtd. Vander Meulen 10); he apparently told Spence that he had originally "designed for" a motto from *The Faerie Queene* to preface his poem with the idea of a "gentle shepherd" being molested by "[a] cloud of combrous gnattes" (9); and he even uses the word in the prefatory materials to *The Dunciad*, as in his assertion (issued again in the guise of the "Publisher") that "whoever will consider the unity of the whole design, will be sensible, that the *Poem was not made for these Authors, but these Authors for the Poem*" (Rumbold 15, italics reversed).

⁶⁸⁴ Vander Meulen, *History and Facsimile*, xi.

⁶⁸⁵ Ralph, *Sawney*, vi, ii.

compositions such as *The Rape of the Lock* (1712-14) and *Windsor Forest* (1713).⁶⁸⁶

Hugh Stanhope declared that Pope had betrayed the cause of poetry by entangling

“Witlings” in a cobweb of bizarre visions and misdirected “*Art*”:

... Fantastic Cabalistic Schemes,
Of waking Whimsies, or of Fev’rish Dreams,
New Cobweb Threads of *Poetry* were spun,
In gaudy Snares, like Flies, were Witlings won,
Their Brains entangled, and our *Art* undone.⁶⁸⁷

One can even find Pope’s friends chiming in with comments that suggest that they, too, saw the poem as an enigma. Swift playfully described the genesis of *The Dunciad* as a chaotic perversion of the expected use value of “Letters” in a poem that played on the idea of *The Dunciad* as a thoroughly improvisational, unplotted form of poetic creation.⁶⁸⁸ And Pope’s friend Jonathan Richardson, an early editor of the poem, referred to the lost manuscripts of *The Dunciad* as “broglios”⁶⁸⁹—an apt term for the documents at the source of one of the most complex textual histories in English poetry, and a term that tellingly echoes the complaints of Pope’s critics about the muddled “design” of the poem. From the Italian, “broglio” means “intrigue” or, in an older sense, “confusion”; the

⁶⁸⁶ *Remarks upon several passages in the preliminaries to the Dunciad, Both of the Quarto and the Duodecimo Edition. And upon several passages in Pope's preface to his translation of Homer's Iliad. In both which is shewn, The Author's Want of Judgment. With original letters from Sir Richard Steele, from the late Mr. Gildon, from Mr. Jacob, and from Mr. Pope himself, Which shew the Falshood of the latter, his Envy, and his Malice. By Mr. Dennis* (London, 1729), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed 20 Apr. 2010).

⁶⁸⁷ Hugh Stanhope, *The progress of dulness. By an eminent hand. Which will serve for an explanation of the Dunciad* (London, 1728), 1, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed July 4, 2010).

⁶⁸⁸ The relevant section reads as follows:

Now Backs of Letters, though design'd
For those who more will need 'em,
Are fill'd with Hints, and interlin'd,
Himself can hardly read 'em.

Each Atom by some other struck,
All Turns and Motion tries;
Till in a Lump together stuck,
Behold a *Poem* rise! (qtd. Vander Meulen 3)

⁶⁸⁹ Richardson recorded the contents of the now-missing First and Second Broglio on printed copies of the poem (1728 and 1736, respectively).

infinitive “(im)brogliare” means “to embroil, to confound or disorder, to entangle.”⁶⁹⁰ It was an apt description of the contents of the *Dunciad* narrative, which in all of its versions pitted major players of the British literary marketplace against one another in a confounding series of pissing contests and authorial competitions for prizes bestowed by the Goddess of Dulness. It is an apt term for the responses that the poem elicited. *The Dunciad* bewildered, perplexed, and entangled its early readers in the so-called “Paper Wars” that raged from 1727 to 1733 and beyond. Moreover, as I have suggested above, its contents changed between its earliest versions and its latest versions in ways that created new intrigues for Pope’s posthumous audiences.

My thesis here is therefore that *The Dunciad* was designed as a *broglio*: a poem that promised to puzzle its readers about the author’s intentions, but to do so in fairly predictable ways. The 1728 *Dunciad* reliably provoked its readers to respond in anger and puzzlement; to question the author’s motives and his sanity (a complaint itself connected to the poem’s lack of design⁶⁹¹); to call him malicious and troublesome; to call for retribution; and to enact revenge in the realm of letters, since legal action was not a feasible option. It was designed, in other words, to purge their passions. Whether this experiment should be seen as a self-amusing power trip or a public-spirited gesture of commitment to the British public weal remains an open question, thanks in part to the

⁶⁹⁰ Supplementary definitions come from “brogliare” (image 110), Ferdinando Altieri, *Dizionario Italiano ed Inglese. = A dictionary Italian and English containing all the words of the vocabulary della Crusca and several hundred more taken from the most approved authors; with Proverbs and Familiar Phrases. To which is prefix'd a table of the authors quoted in this work. By F. Altieri, Professor of the Italian Tongue in London*, vol. 1 (London, 1726-27), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Apr. 7, 2010).

⁶⁹¹ Cf. Thomas Cooke’s complaint, which moves logically from an assessment of the poem’s lack of design to a speculation about the author’s sanity: “The *Dunciad* is not only gross and scurrilous, but so monstrously foolish in the Conception and Execution of the whole, that we may immediately see it could not be the work of a reasonable Man. Almost every Reader knows that Libertys are allowable in Poetry which are not in Prose; but when we find, in any Piece, a confusion of Figures, and evident Contradictions to Sense, with a Profusion of Words which mean Nothing, or what they ought not to mean, direct Calumnys, Lewdness, and Prophaneness, and without Wit or Humour, we must conclude the Author not perfect in his Senses, and of an evil Disposition” (Guerinot 161).

obfuscations of authorial intent that sustained the performance. Although the latter possibility is counter-intuitive, there is some evidence that supports it; and this is the line of inquiry that I will now pursue, with all due caution, for the picture of Pope that emerges from it differs significantly from the picture that has often been portrayed in modern scholarship, thanks in part to the deathbed *Dunciad*: the picture of a conservative, elitist writer who held himself above mercantile “hacks” and thought little of his native land. I begin with an argument by negation based on the content of the 1728 *Dunciad*. I ask, first, why *The Dunciad* critiques earnest public spiritedness as an actuating motive for poetic composition and publication. Then I turn to the question of what Pope may have regarded as a more productive approach to poetic composition and publication.

VI: The Problem with Civic Piety

The problem with “Dulness,” as insinuated by the main action of the first *Dunciad*, is that this kind of civic piety is not “virtuous” in the Machiavellian sense of the term. It is not effective in the polity: it does not gather energy from the motivating impulses of human nature, it does not deal well with the exigencies of the literary marketplace (the material manifestations of these impulses), and it does not always heed the threats to private wellbeing that public exposure can impart to the self-martyring civic actor. The exposition of the 1728 *Dunciad*—its description of the age in which Tibbald succeeds Settle as King of the Dunces—renders England, in the persons of political and religious agents, a place of comfortable inactivity:

Now *May*'rs and *Shrieves* in pleasing slumbers lay,
 And eat in dreams the custard of the day:
 But pensive poets painful vigils keep;

Sleepless themselves, to give their readers sleep.⁶⁹²

Poetic production emerges in this presentation as a kind of asceticism, characterized by a potential waste of creative energy. Civic piety of this kind is foolish, Pope suggests, insofar as it seeks to enhance the calmness of a civilized existence. In the games staged in celebration of Tibbald's anointment as King of the Dunces, "All gaze with ardour" at the "Poet's Form" that the Goddess of Dulness sets before their eyes: "some, a Poet's name, / Others, a sword-knot and lac'd suit inflame"⁶⁹³—suggestions, in other words, that these would-be poets are animated in their labors by the airy desires and lackluster passions that Young had prized as the source of civic and moral progress (vanity, ambition, the desire for fame, the desire for social promotion). "Fear" holds the poets "mute" as the Goddess of Dulness proposes that they "contend" with the bookseller Bernard Lintot in what begins as a footrace—a game won "by vigor, not by vaunts"—and soon devolves into a pissing contest between Lintot's "dauntless" rival, Edmund Curll, and Rufus Chetwood, a bookseller whose "labor'd...curve" proves far inferior in its potency to Curll's "rapid waters."⁶⁹⁴

This memorable middle section of the poem has often been interpreted by modern readers as a depiction of Britain's cultural debasement, with its gritty images of defecation, urination, "fresh vomit run[ning] for ever green," and city sewers carrying their "large tribute of dead dogs to [the] *Thames*."⁶⁹⁵ But if such an interpretation is duly encouraged by the deathbed *Dunciad*, where the hero's debased character predicts the moral degeneration and squalidness of the action that follows, earlier versions of the

⁶⁹² 1728 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, I.79-82.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*, II.35-36.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 40-43; 154, 166. In the interim, of course, Lintot has an unlucky slip in the "filth" left by a female author outside a bookshop (59).

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, II.136, 250.

poem lend themselves to the apprehension of a different structuring idea: a defining divergence between Tibbald's cloistered, bookish reserve and the mud-slinging public arena into which he and various other high-minded writers of varied literary talent have flung themselves with reckless abandon. Tibbald's journey begins with the lighting of a votive pyre of his unsold books—a sacrificial gesture that reveals Tibbald as a lofty idealist who, for all his “zeal” for the “public weal,” actually remains conflicted about the prospect of making his books “public,” both in England and beyond:

Adieu my children! better thus expire
 Un-stall'd, unsold; thus glorious mount in fire
 Fair without spot; than greas'd by grocer's hands,
 Or shipp'd with *W[ard]* to ape and monkey lands,
 Or wafting ginger, round the streets to go,
 And visit alehouse where ye first did grow.⁶⁹⁶

The passing insinuation of hypocrisy—that is, that, for all his prim concerns about greasy “grocer's hands,” Tibbald's works originated in an “alehouse”—does not detract from the abiding characterization of Tibbald as an abundantly earnest writer, committed to an idea of writing as a communion with truth, virtue, and dignity rather than a communication undertaken with the needs and desires of his potential audiences in view. Indeed, the insinuation that Tibbald has had to resort to an artificial agent to lubricate his creative endeavors serves rather to complement the suggestion, intoned throughout the narrative, that Tibbald's compositions have lacked the vital spark that might have made them saleable, enjoyable, and useful. Cautious not to “err by wit's wild dancing light,” Tibbald prays to the Goddess of Dulness to stretch her “peaceful wand” over “Britain” and spread her “healing mist before the mind” while he contemplates the chosen poetic tasks of the sons of dullness: “Mak[ing] Horace flat,” restoring “Old puns,” seeking out “lost

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., I.187-92.

blunders,” spinning his poetic wares like “the silkworm...’till it clouds itself all o’er.”⁶⁹⁷

Dullness, in short, is politeness and polish in this version of *The Dunciad*: passion overly refined; learning applied without purpose; labored studiousness, burnished to flatness; naïve commitment to high ideals, holding itself aloof from the *hoi polloi*. Appropriately, the Goddess of Dulness descends to extinguish Tibbald’s flaming pyre of books before ushering him to the center of the literary marketplace, where he sits passively by as the games unfold before him.

The antics performed in celebration of Tibbald’s coronation bear out this sense of disconnection. The “fear” of the assembled writers at the prospect of “contend[ing]” with unscrupulous “stationers” (printers and booksellers) has already been mentioned.

Serving similarly to dramatize an uncomfortable union between writers and the “public” toward which they have flung themselves, the writerly competition that receives the most narrative attention is the previously-mentioned contest that has authors diving into the filthy Fleet Ditch sewer—an activity that serves simultaneously as a dramatization of high-minded authors’ ineptness at “mud”-flinging, which Pope’s presentation implies has been more capably accomplished by popular journals, and a parody of their commitments to the “profound” (in continuation of the concerns of *Peri Bathous*).⁶⁹⁸ Stripped naked, John Dennis, Laurence Eusden (clergyman and Poet Laureate), William Diaper (Horatian imitator), and Leonard Welsted (poet, translator, and one of Pope’s more articulate

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid., I.142-45, 150, 161-62.

⁶⁹⁸ Like many of the narrative details in *The Dunciad*, these details do not point to any one reading, and, indeed, the meaning of the lampoons shifted from one publication to the next, especially as Pope put in new authors and massaged the poem into a new shape. My argument here is that, in light of the early characterization of Tibbald as a figure distinguished by his overzealous civic piety and his fear of lower-class readers, the rest of the narrative reads as a satire that follows through the polarities of the Battle of the Books, which pitted unruly “wits” against “pedants,” “dunces,” and “duller” approaches to the question of poetic utility.

detractors), test the “dark dexterity of groping well” with varying degrees of success.⁶⁹⁹

The tenor of Pope’s lampoon in this episode, as understood by its earliest readers, is suggested by Curll’s identification of yet another contestant as Edward Young, who was said to be competing alongside Thomas Newcomb, author of *The Last Judgment of Men and Angels* (1723), in this ambiguous portrait⁷⁰⁰:

True to the bottom, ★★★ and ★★★ creep,
Long-winded both, as natives of the deep,
This only merit pleading for the prize,
Nor everlasting *Bl[ackmore]* this denies.⁷⁰¹

The passing reference to Sir Richard Blackmore hints at a critique of the attempt to combine “everlasting” gestures toward the eternal with the ephemera of published papers when that attempt relies on “[l]ong-winded” utterances that tire contemporary audiences.

This insinuation of authorial ineptness shapes the other contests as well. Authors compete with one another, first, to determine who can make the most noise and then to determine who can make the audience fall asleep.⁷⁰² “To move, to raise, to ravish ev’ry heart, / With *Shakespear*’s nature, or with *Johnson*’s art, / Let others aim,” the Goddess of Dulness proclaims, explaining the rules for the first of these contests. “Tis yours to shake the soul / With *Thunder* rumbling from the mustard-bowl... / Such happy arts attention can command, / When fancy flags, and sense is at a stand.”⁷⁰³ Exploring the

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., III.256. A contestant whose name begins with “H” was also included in this assembly—probably Aaron Hill, Walter Harte, or John Hughes, all of whom would fit the pattern of cultural critique that I am tracing here.

⁷⁰⁰ See Rumbold (n. 279) for details. Curll identifies this pair in his second *Key* to the poem. The use of stars rather than surname initials makes this identification especially difficult.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., II.279-82.

⁷⁰² Blackmore, known for his high-minded epic performances, wins both contests. He competes in the first instance against authors who were identified variously by contemporary readers as government propagandists and overzealous critics, known for their pomposity and longwindedness, and in the second instance against “grave[r] heads” (324): “*Cambridge Sophs*,” “*pert Templars*” (335), freethinkers, clergymen, and other controversialists in abstruse causes.

⁷⁰³ Ibid., II.205-12.

other side of the idea, the second competition is a test to determine who can “most conduce to sooth the soul in slumbers”⁷⁰⁴—a continuation, too, of the expository assertion that writers like Tibbald go “sleepless themselves” to give their readers sleep. Bad writers, as Pope depicts them here, are distinguished by their inability to engage “the soul” of contemporary audiences. Filling out the critique is a contest that stages avarice and the desire for preferment as actuating motives for writing: “Dedicators” with their “ready quills” try to “tickle” patrons into giving up money.⁷⁰⁵ While not directly extending the opening lampoon of Tibbald’s earnestness as a would-be servant of the public weal, this dramatization of contemporary practices of patronage suggests that admiration of aristocrats (or, rather, palm-tickling) cannot be a reliably productive actuating passion for English poets.⁷⁰⁶ We are a long way from John Ogilby’s obsequious self-subjection before godlike kings and peers.

VII: The Advantages of Wit

The implication of all of these lampoons, of course, is that Pope and his friends (namely Swift and Gay⁷⁰⁷) have managed to accomplish what the so-called “Dunces” have not been able to do: to navigate dealings with unscrupulous booksellers, keep the attention of audiences of diverse social classes and educational backgrounds, engage the “souls” of their readers with liveliness and “wit,” earn enough money for their compositions to sustain themselves, and keep themselves out of harm’s way in the

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., II.325.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., II.178-80.

⁷⁰⁶ “Say great *Patricians!* (since yourselves inspire / These wond’rous works; so *Jove* and fate require!) / Say from what cause, in vain decry’d and curst, / Still *Dunce the second reigns like dunce the first?*” (I.3-6).

⁷⁰⁷ John Gay has an especially prominent place in the poem as the ghost of a poet whom others chase. Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera* was a smash hit on the London stage when *The Dunciad* was first published.

bargain. If the deathbed *Dunciad* made Colley Cibber “the first who brings / The *Smithfield* muses to the ears of kings” in his corrupt combination of the Laureate role with his activities in the theater, the 1728 *Dunciad* made Pope that pioneer poet. The content of the poem located the origins of the poem aesthetically and geographically in Smithfield (or thereabouts); its early reception proved its ability to engage Englanders of all walks of life in controversy (especially given the number of piracies that the poem produced⁷⁰⁸); and the poem was literally bestowed upon the British king. Acting on Pope’s behalf, Walpole had presented King George II with a copy of *The Dunciad Variorum* in the weeks preceding its initial publication, presumably as part of Pope’s strategy to forestall a libel prosecution. Moreover, as far as we know, the strategy worked just as Pope had hoped. In a letter to Swift written shortly after this celebrated episode, Arbuthnot reported that the King had “‘perused’ the book and pronounced its author ‘a very honest man.’”⁷⁰⁹ Whether or not one credits the accuracy of the comment⁷¹⁰ (which could be hearsay or even a complete fabrication), the imprints of *The Dunciad Variorum* published from 1735 to 1742 began with prefatory assurances to this end: “We are willing to acquaint Posterity that this Poem (as it here stands) was presented to King George the Second and his Queen, by the hands of Sir R. Walpole, on the 12th of

⁷⁰⁸ David Foxon and James McLaverty, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), esp. 111-14.

⁷⁰⁹ Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life*, 501.

⁷¹⁰ The phrase itself may be significant. It has implications for the rules of pleading in libel torts cases (see Kropf, “Libel and Satire,” 165), and it has an interesting philosophical history. In French, the phrase “*honnête homme*” (literally translated “honest man”) designated “a complex and much-debated ideal of conduct and character that flourished in seventeenth-century France. Rejecting the older standards of the heroic ideal and the more austere forms of the Christian ethic, it usually stressed the art of pleasing and the cultivation of conversation and related social skills” and, in Rochefoucauld’s formulation, stressed the importance of sincerity, undisguised motives, and congenial interaction with “likeminded contemporaries,” esp. members of the upper classes. See Irwin Primer, “Introduction,” *Moral Maxims by the Duke de la Roche Foucault. Translated from the French. With Notes* (London: A. Millar, 1749), *A Dual Language Edition with an Introduction and Further Notes* (Newark: U of Delaware P / London: Associated University Presses, 2003), 16; also 20-21.

March 1728/9.”⁷¹¹ In a mockery of Young’s notion of seeking out the approval of righteous governmental officials in the pursuit of fame, place, and pensions, Pope had gotten away with a rather naughty trick: he had invited the King to approve a poem that was perceived by many early readers as a jest on his own lack of prudence and authority.⁷¹²

Moreover, as a way of announcing the engaging efficacy of *The Dunciad*, Pope apparently contributed to (or wrote) one of the earliest histories of the poem’s reception, which suggested that the hubbub surrounding the poem began even before the printed poem had been sufficiently disseminated among expectant London audiences. An author identified as Richard Savage (though identified by Samuel Johnson as Pope himself) offered this vivid account. “On the Day the book was first vended,” he wrote,

a Crowd of Authors besieg’d the Shop; Entreaties, Advices, Threats of Law, and Battery, nay Cries of Treason were all employed to hinder the coming out of the *Dunciad*: On the other Side the Booksellers and Hawkers made as great Efforts to procure it: What could a few poor Authors do against so great a Majority as the Publick? There was no stopping a Torrent with a Finger, so out it came.⁷¹³

Savage (or, rather, Pope) is surely exaggerating for effect: if it is hard to believe that expectant London crowds literally gathered about the “Shop” in the moments before *The Dunciad* first saw the light of day, it is even harder to imagine Sir Richard Blackmore or Lewis Theobald or Eliza Haywood literally “Batter[ing]” the shopkeepers in the hopes that the poem might be kept from the gaze of the London public. But there is a hint of

⁷¹¹ 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, ed. Rumbold, 174.

⁷¹² Indeed, George seems not to have read past the first two lines. In the invocation, he asks, “Say from what cause, in vain decry’d and curst / Still Duncce the second reigns like Duncce the first?” (Ibid., I.5-6).

⁷¹³ This material, together with the designation of Pope as the author, is quoted by Samuel Johnson in *An account of the life of Mr Richard Savage, son of the Earl Rivers* (London, 1744), 59, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. (accessed June 14, 2008). The original work in question would seem to be Savage’s 1732 *An Author to Let. A collection of pieces in verse and prose, which have been publish’d on occasion of the Dunciad. Dedicated to the Right Honourable the Earl of Middlesex, by Mr. Savage*; however, the text that I am quoting here does not actually appear in that volume, according to the version available on ECCO.

earnestness in the tidy suggestion that *The Dunciad*'s publication governed the passions in predictable, if not entirely orderly, ways. A perfect symmetry emerges between those eager to prevent the publication and those eager to be the first to benefit from it. Those who acted "to hinder the coming out" of the poem constituted a small but vociferous contingent: "a few poor Authors" who feared that their reputations would be injured by the scathing portraits offered in the poem. Their frantic gestures are described in an orderly sequence, from restrained and rational "Entreaties" to assertive "Advices" to aggressive "Threats of Law" to barbaric "Battery" to desperate, impassioned cries for capital retribution, as if this escalation obeys a principle of nature. "On the other Side," those most eager to get their hands on *The Dunciad* were those who were eager to profit materially from the event—to exploit the work's appeal to "so great a Majority as the Publick." These booksellers and hawkers, happily accepting that there was no damming the "Torrent," facilitated the purgation whose course "a few poor Authors" had hoped to thwart. They supplied a ready channel for the anticipated surge. In this account, then, the initial publication of *The Dunciad* stimulated the orderly exertion of at least two significant categories of selfishness. From beleaguered authors, it elicited impassioned self-defenses; from calculating booksellers and pirates, it elicited expressions of avarice and opportunism; and the "Majority" of "the Publick," fueling the English economy with their literary purchases, regarded these paper wars with interest and amusement.

It is not surprising that Pope would imagine *The Dunciad* governing contemporary interests and passions in this manner. Pope certainly knew Young's *Universal Passion*, whose opening call to action he quotes in the prefatory materials of *The Dunciad Variorum*. And in his work as an editor and translator, Pope had written of

beloved authors, ancient and modern, as governors of the passions. As I observed in the introduction to this case study, Pope had envisioned Homer as an author who governed the passions of his readers by distilling their taste for violence into a gentle mode of contemplation. In his edition of Shakespeare, too, Pope had praised the English dramatist's "*Power over our Passions*" and had stressed his relationship with a popular audience. Shakespeare "writ to the *People*," according to Pope: his "State-Poetry of all other, is more particularly levell'd to please the *Populace*, and its success more immediately depending upon the *Common Suffrage*."⁷¹⁴ In the guise of Richard Savage, Pope imagines *The Dunciad* exercising a similar power over "the Publick," albeit through the outlet of the bookshop rather than on the playhouse stage.

VIII: The Possibility of Public Benefit

Purgation, of course, was not necessarily seen as an inherently productive civic force, whether "levell'd to please the *Populace*" at large or designed for a more elite audience. The worries that *The Dunciad* itself was the product of a dangerous authorial purgation—a venting of malice and ill nature—have already been mentioned. In addition, as Pope surely recognized, *The Dunciad* was particularly associated with the stimulation and purgation of *violent* passions in its audiences: anger, indignation, retaliatory ill will. Thus, it was not a foregone conclusion that Pope had done a good thing by exciting the "Publick" in the way that he did, however tidily his audience's response may have accorded with his authorial plan. But it is still possible to point to several ways of understanding *The Dunciad* as a productive purgation of the body politic.

⁷¹⁴ Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare*, qtd. 42, 44, 43.

“Savage’s” famous account of the poem’s first appearance in print reflects one such understanding.

Another comes from the statement from “THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER” prefixed to the 1728 *Dunciad*, which is thought to have been written by Pope as well. Here, Pope hints at both his intimate knowledge of the established discourse surrounding the rules of epic composition (as described in the second chapter) and his hopes for the *The Dunciad*’s effects on the nation. The poem “is styled *Heroic*,” the “Publisher” announces, “as being *doubly* so; not only with respect to its nature, which according to the best Rules of the Ancients and strictest ideas of the Moderns, is critically such; but also with regard to the Heroical disposition and high courage of the Writer, who dar’d to stir up such a formidable, irritable, and implacable race of mortals.”⁷¹⁵ This idea of “stirring up” was essential to Pope’s project, as was the hint that Britons were already a “formidable, irritable, and implacable” race of mortals even before his poetic intervention. Unlike Young, who imagined Walpole as the capable pilot at the helm of the British ship of state, governing the passions tirelessly as he steered the nation through the waves, Pope makes no such appeal to a singular, external authority. Instead, he appeals to the capacity of the British “race” to rise to the occasion by asserting its “formidable, irritable, and implacable” character in the face of a literary provocation. To invert the central conceit of *The Dunciad*, if writers such as Theobald had been “Bad Writers” in part because they lacked a sufficient occasion that would unite their well-meaning civic impulses with a public good, the publication of *The Dunciad* supplied them with both an occasion and a righteous cause. It gave them a reason to rise up in defense of the common weal.

⁷¹⁵ 1728 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, 15, italics reversed.

Consider, again, Dryden's foundational commentary on satire as a genre, which provides a framework for envisioning Britons' "formidable, irritable, and implacable" response to Pope's transgressions as one animated by the assertion of virtue in the public sphere. Dryden had begun, as noted previously, by asserting that "We have no Moral right on the Reputation of other Men. 'Tis taking from them, that which we cannot restore to them." But he had gone on to offer two notable qualifications to this directive:

There are only two Reasons, for which we may be permitted to write Lampoons; and I will not promise that they can always justify us: The first is Revenge, when we have been affronted in the same Nature, or have been any ways notoriously abus'd, and can make our selves no other Reparation. ... [T]he second Reason, which may justify a Poet, when he writes against a particular Person; and that is, when he is become a Publick Nuisance. ... 'Tis an Action of Virtue to make Examples of vicious Men. They may and ought to be upbraided with their Crimes and Follies: Both for their own amendment, if they are not yet incorrigible; and for the Terrour of others, to hinder them from falling into those Enormities, which they see are so severely punish'd, in the Persons of others.⁷¹⁶

Thus, according to Dryden's foundational assessment, Pope's detractors in the *Dunciad* controversy fell into two categories of self-justification: those who rose in defense of themselves (a category only dubiously aligned with a desirable spirit of "Christian Charity," as Dryden points out⁷¹⁷), and those who rose in defense of others, a category associated decisively with the "Action of Virtue." Viewed from this perspective, Pope's attack on innocence was a key feature of his strategy of public awakening. It stimulated those like James Ralph to join in the "common" cause even if they had not themselves been maligned. In his lampoon of Pope as "Sawney," Ralph (among others) had undertaken an "Action of Virtue."⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁶ *Works*, IV.59.11-60.15.

⁷¹⁷ This was of course Pope's only declared motive for writing *The Dunciad*. As Dryden had observed long since, it was a specious motive.

⁷¹⁸ Samuel Johnson registers an understanding of this design in his description of *The Dunciad* as "one of [Pope's] greatest and most elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to sink into contempt all the

The Dunciad also provided a second test of Englanders' (and one native American colonist's) virtuosity—a test that, as Dryden predicted, spoke directly to the moral category of “Christian Charity.” It presented them with the dilemma of how—and whether—to act upon their desire for “Revenge” when they “can make [them]selves no other Reparation.” This dilemma is the subject of one of the most famous early responses to *The Dunciad*. It is a brief vignette entitled *A Popp Upon Pope* (1728), which depicts a violent encounter between Pope and two of his satirical victims near his private residence at Twickenham, southwest of London.⁷¹⁹ Thought to have been written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Pope's close acquaintance and sometime friend, the account is offered as recent news, assembled secondhand from undisclosed sources:

Last *Thursday*, being a pleasant Evening, Mr. *Sawney Pope*, a great Poet (as we are inform'd) was walking *Ham Walks*, meditating Verses for the publick Good, when two Gentlemen came up to him (whose Names we cannot certainly learn) and knowing him perfectly well, partly by his Back, and partly by his Face, walk'd a Turn or two with him; when entering into a Conversation (as we hear, on the *Dunciad*, a pretty Poem of the said Poet's writing) on a sudden, one of the Gentlemen hoisted poor Master *Pope* the Poet on his Back, whilst the other drew out from under his Coat, a long birchen Rod (as we are inform'd, made out of a Stable Broom) and with the said long Rod, did, with great Violence, and unmerciful Hand, strike Master *Pope* so hard on his naked Posteriors, that he voided large Quantities of Ichor, or Blood, which being Yellow, one Doctor *A[rbutno]t*, his Physician, has since affirm'd, had a great Proportion of Gall mix'd with it, which occasion'd the said Colour.⁷²⁰

writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves” (333). *The lives of the English poets: and a criticism on their works*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1780-81), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Mar. 26, 2010).

⁷¹⁹ These events are also suggested in the full title, *A POPP upon POPE; OR, A True and Faithful ACCOUNT Of a late Horrid and Barbarous WHIPPING, Committed on the BODY of SAWNEY POPE, a Poet, as he was innocently walking in Ham-Walks, near the River of Thames, meditating Verses for the Good of the Publick. Supposed to have been done by Two evil-dispos'd Persons, out of Spite and Revenge, for a harmless Lampon which the said Poet had writ upon them*, printed in *Gulliveriana: or, a fourth volume of miscellanies. Being a sequel of the three volumes, published by Pope and Swift. To which is added, Alexandriana ... With ... a critique on the third volume of miscellanies ...*, ed. Jonathan Smedley (London, 1728), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 23, 2009). According to Guerinot, this sketch appeared in the *London Evening Post* (June 1, 1728), the *St. James Evening Post* (July 2, 1728), and the *Monthly Chronicle* (August 12, 1728).

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, 322.

In its revelation of Pope's besetting humor is "Gall," a bodily substance associated with aggressiveness and bitterness of spirit, the tale humorously confirms what many of Pope's detractors in the *Dunciad* controversy had speculated about the purgative origins of the poem. The sketch therefore invited its early readers to take a certain pleasure in the "compensatory fantasy of Pope's humiliation," as Guerinot puts it⁷²¹: it enacted, through fiction, the very desire for revenge that comprised its narrative content. But the "fantasy" is framed a manner that displays the event as an exchange that, by its nature, tries the limits of civilized, Christian norms. The "Gentlemen" who attack Pope do so with a modified "Stable Broom"—a hint that they are well-heeled representatives of the English upper classes, accustomed to more refined leisure pursuits than the flogging of local authors.⁷²² Pope himself is said to have been walking tranquilly along the Thames on a "pleasant Evening," "meditating Verses for the publick Good," when the incident occurred—a detail not only playfully at odds with the complaints that had actually been elicited by his "pretty poem," but also abruptly subverted within the narrative by the image of Pope's "naked Posteriors" being beaten "with great Violence," in a clear departure from the polite society symbolized by various other well-placed details (the "Stable Broom," the protective "Coat" of the gentleman attacker, the manicured "Walks" where the incident is said to have taken place).

Moreover, the narrator of the tale explicitly denounces the reprisal as a departure from a Christian ideal of meekness, modesty, and forgiveness—of turning the other cheek and conducting oneself in the restrained, polite manner that befits a civilized

⁷²¹ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 115.

⁷²² The designation of the two attackers as "Protestant Gentlemen" also serves as a reminder that this early phase of the *Dunciad* controversy was envisioned by contemporary readers less as a class-conscious rebuke of hack writing or an assertion of a hegemonic norm than as a contest *between* the Anglican hegemony and an unruly outsider who happened to be one of England's most successful and beloved poets.

(“Protestant”) nation. The narrator dubs the attack on Pope an “inhuman Whipping” and a “*Barbarous Fact*,” and she introduces the sketch with an ostentatious appeal to

Anglican charity and benevolence:

THERE is nothing so lamentable as to behold the Excesses to which an unchristian Spirit of Revenge is but too apt to hurry Mankind, when they have not the mild Disposition of the Gospel before their Eyes. There we are taught to think, that all Christians are our Neighbours, and that we ought to love them as ourselves: Therefore, how much soever *Papishes* may be mistaken in their Opinions, we ought not to give them bodily Persecution, or ill Usage, but leave them to the Laws of the Land; for, althou’ mistaken, they are still some sorts of Christians.

O! that this pious Consideration could have with-held the Hands of two Protestant Gentlemen from offering opprobrious Violence to the Body of Mr. *P[op]e*, which, however, we hope, will be no Reflection on the Protestant Religion abroad.⁷²³

A good deal of humor stems from the dramatized inadequacy of these self-declaredly “pious” encouragements to the situation at hand. To leave Pope to “the Laws of the Land,” as has already been noted, was actually to let him go unpunished for his perceived transgressions. And the narrator’s sanctimoniousness reveals its own limitations at several different points. Note the politicized concern for the political stature of the “Protestant Religion abroad,” the strained advocacy of toleration for Catholics, and the hypocritical sophistry displayed in her ongoing advocacy of a pious and compassionate form of inaction that places faith in “Providence” alone to punish worldly misdeeds. “It is impossible,” she concludes, “for any charitable Christian not to compassionate the Case of this unfortunate Poet, altho’ he differs from us in Religion; but we cannot too much admire the Wisdom of Providence, which brings this Man to the Lash, whose wanton Wit has been lashing of others.”⁷²⁴ Pope had of course been brought “to the Lash,” not by “the Wisdom of Providence,” but by dozens of “Protestant Gentlemen”

⁷²³ *A Popp Upon Pope*, 322, 321-22.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, 323.

(and –women). *A Popp Upon Pope* offers no decisive resolution of this quandary. The story ends with the muted announcement—again, framed as a secondhand report—that Pope is still reeling from the encounter, although now within the more closely-guarded space of his private residence:

We hear that Master *Pope* has ever since been greatly disorder'd, occasion'd, as it is suppos'd, by the said Whipping, which has driven the Humours upward, and affected his Head in such a Manner, that the poor Man continually raves for Pen, Ink, and Paper; and altho' they have been allow'd him by his own Physician Dr. *A[rbutno]t*, who entirely mistook his Case, yet he is now strictly forbid the Use of them by the learn'd Dr. *H—le*, of *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, under whose Care he is at present, and who doubts not (God willing) but to restore the Man to his Senses.⁷²⁵

By rendering the motives of the “mistaken” Catholic inaccessible—suspended somewhere between “meditating Verses for the publick Good” and “continually rav[ing] for “Pen, Ink, and Paper”—the presentation foregrounds the calculated action of the “Protestant Gentlemen” as the zone of normative moral deliberation.

Perhaps more importantly, even as it takes a certain pleasure in the fantasy of Pope’s undignified reversal, *A Popp Upon Pope* presents the “unchristian Spirit of Revenge” as a sin, not only when it actuates “bodily Persecution” (as in the case of the two fictionalized “Gentlemen”), but also when it actuates “ill Usage” of any kind—thus, “ill Usage” comprised in vengeful, published attacks, whether Pope’s or those of his detractors.⁷²⁶ *The Dunciad*, in other words, presented its early readers with a moral dilemma. On the one hand, the author’s transgressions seemed so excessively in breach of the most basic codes of civil society as to require a firm, impassioned response that “return[ed] his own Usage,” as another pamphleteer had put it. On the other hand, the

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 323.

⁷²⁶ See Brinton (1992) on the prominence of this question in ethical sermons on the government of the passions.

spirit of retaliation understood to actuate such responses ran the risk of replicating—and therefore amplifying throughout the body politic—the very passions that it promised to controvert: malice, envy, vengefulness. This dilemma remained potent even in the resistance of the impulse to apply “bodily Persecution” to Pope.

IX: Purgation and the Prospect of Artful Retribution

To the extent that *The Dunciad* can be seen as an experiment in purging the passions of its readers, that purgation followed a different pattern of response from the pattern that Young had counted upon in his own purgative, satirical experiment. Young had imagined his satire capitalizing upon his readers’ passive obedience to the passions. His “unity of design” favored a notion of vanity thwarting more violent passions and working against itself in a kind of mechanical, perhaps unconscious movement designed by God as a source of general civic reform and individual, spiritual improvement. Young’s performance therefore sought to work *with* the natural movements of the passions, as he understood them; he imagined reason as an assistant to these natural movements, and he imagined any meditative responses to his satire occurring principally in the private perusal of his “characteristical” portraits, undertaken under the pressure of an inevitable reconciliation with the social body.

Pope’s *Dunciad*, as imagined in *A Popp Upon Pope*, provoked a more active and varied form of meditative response. His performance had stimulated passions that were not necessarily considered productive, especially in light of traditional Christian readings of “the Gospel.” To address the moral dilemma that *The Dunciad* posed was almost necessarily to mount some kind of meditated resistance to Pope’s performance: private

resistance to the temptation to give Pope the “popp” that he seemed to deserve, public resistance to Pope’s *de facto* civic authority (possibly in direct contravention of the teachings of “the Gospel”), or some course of action that seemed to combine desirable elements of both approaches. In the terms supplied by the narrator of *A Popp Upon Pope*, the properly “Christian” reader turned the other cheek, thereby thwarting or suppressing the “unchristian Spirit of Revenge” that Pope seemed bent on provoking. The indignant reader deflected the passion back on Pope—returned him to his own “Usage” by publishing contemptuous assaults on his character.

And in all cases, the passions expressed or thwarted as a result of the reading experience necessarily underwent a crucial transformation—a filtration or cleansing reminiscent of the Aristotelian notion of purgation that Pope had mapped out in the annotations to his *Iliad*. At one extreme was non-action, undertaken in a truly pious spirit: a thwarting or sublimation of any unchristian urges. At the other extreme, “bodily Persecution” would have combined the “unchristian Spirit of Revenge” with a component of calculation and premeditation. But the torrent of pamphlets published in the wake of *The Dunciad* took shape within the vast middle territory between these two poles, avoiding both the Scylla of physical violence and the Charybdis of non-response, and inevitably embodying a potentially productive venting of violent urges. Presumably at least some of these pamphlets were expressive of real, spontaneous feeling; however, they need not be viewed as merely reflex responses to Pope. In technical legal terms, they necessarily comprised an element of active meditation and intentionality. According to English law, “libel” (written defamation) differed from “slander” (spoken defamation) in both the degree of intentionality that had shaped the utterance and the degree of

culpability that could be assigned to it: words “being writ and published” were presumed to contain “more malice, than if they had been once spoken,” and were therefore actionable in ways that spontaneous slander was not.⁷²⁷ “Malice,” of course, was the passion most prominently at issue in *The Dunciad* controversy. And judging from both the “designs” of the pamphlets produced in response to *The Dunciad* and the tone(s) that they struck, Pope’s critics proved variously expressive of “malice” and therefore variously responsive to the moral dilemma that Pope was perceived as having presented to the “Christian” readers of his own age. Not only did Pope come very close to libeling his fellow Englishers; he also coaxed them into responding. This response necessarily tested their own moral codes in the public realm.

At one end of this spectrum were those commentators who sought to return Pope to “his Usage.” In keeping with the retributive spirit, numerous readers turned Pope’s tactics of ridicule back on him.⁷²⁸ Several reprised elements of Pope’s mock-epic structure, such as his notion of the “progress of dulness” and his idea of crowning a King of the Dunces.⁷²⁹ And pamphleteers frequently made reference to Pope’s private character with harsh, personal insults that mimicked Pope’s personal attacks. The Scriblerian collaboration *Peri Bathous* (1727), similarly aimed at “Bad Writers,” had belittled authors such as Richard Blackmore by categorizing their faults with animal

⁷²⁷ Kropf, “Libel and Satire,” qtd. 162-63. This distinction was still relatively new. Justice Matthew Hale had been the first to make this distinction in *King v. Lake* (1670).

⁷²⁸ Modern scholars have often assumed that Pope’s contemporaries were picking on him in unusually cruel ways. Even Guerinot, whose study of contemporary attacks on Pope has remained an essential reference point in subsequent studies of the *Dunciad* controversy, and who points out that the attacks on Pope’s physical deformity do not seem to be generally representative of eighteenth-century British *mores* (see xxx), contributes to this understanding in his categorization of the contemporary responses to Pope as “personal” insults. I am suggesting that these were not merely *expressions* of prejudice and resentment, but reprisals intended to return Pope his “Usage” by replicating the hurtful forms of insult that he had developed.

⁷²⁹ Cf. William Bond, *The Progress of Dulness* (1728); the anonymous *An Essay On the Dunciad[.] An Heroick Poem.* (1728); Edmund Curll, *The Popiad* (1728); also Dennis’s comments about “deposing” the king of dullness (Pope).

names.⁷³⁰ *The Dunciad*'s early readers were therefore well primed to respond to Pope's satirical excesses—and primed to respond in kind. Some devised creatures that represented Pope's mean mode of satire, some emphasized Pope's physical deformities (borrowing, too, from Pope's mode of portraiture in *The Dunciad*), and many did both at the same time, so as to associate his satire with unnatural, inhumane, monstrous meanness. Pope was envisioned metamorphosing into a "Stinging-Nettle" or a "Snarlerus" with a "Canine Appetite."⁷³¹ *Pope Alexander's Supremacy and Infallibility Examin'd* (1729) included a frontispiece that depicted Pope as a monkey—presumably a visual pun on Pope's initials, "A. P—E," in mockery of the system of naming that he himself had employed in *The Dunciad*. A fanciful fable made Pope the venomous, dwarfish child of toads: "A little scurvy, purblind-Elf; / Scarce like a Toad, much less himself. / Deform'd in Shape of Pigmy Stature: / A proud, conceited, peevish Creature."⁷³²

At the other end of the spectrum, Edward Young responded to *The Dunciad* with consummate politeness.⁷³³ In *Two Epistles to Mr. Pope* (1728), Young held himself above the fray, observing the outpouring of pamphlets and poems from on high rather than counting his own work as part of the angry torrent:

O *Pope!* I burst, nor can, nor will refrain,
I'll write, let Others in their Turn complain:
Truce, truce ye *Vandals!* my tormented Ear
Less dreads a Pillory, than Pamphleteer.⁷³⁴

⁷³⁰ Cf. Chap. VI.

⁷³¹ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, 142, 133.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 155.

⁷³³ Contemporary correspondence demonstrates that Young knew of the contents of the poem even before its publication (Vander Meulen 15)—an invitation that linked him to the wits without counting him a Scriblerian.

⁷³⁴ *Two Epistles to Mr. Pope, Concerning the Authors of the Age* (London, 1730), in *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (accessed July 8, 2010), 4.

In his customary, jovial way, Young mocks the very idea of “burst[ing]” with passion. He offers witty commentary, moral advice, instructions for publicly dignified bearing, and instructions for writing moral satire, all the while refusing either to impugn Pope overtly or to side with him wholeheartedly. He resists indulging “Malice” on either count. The poem opens with a gesture of deference toward the poet at the source of the controversy:

With *Fame* in just proportion *Envy* grows,
 The Man that makes a Character, makes Foes:
 Slight, peevish Insects round a Genius rise,
 As a bright Day awakes the World of Flies;
 With hearty Malice, but with feeble wing,
 (To shew they live) they flutter, and they sting:
 But as by depredations Wasps proclaim
 The fairest Fruit, so these the fairest Fame.⁷³⁵

It is not surprising that Young’s contemporaries did not know where to position him in the so-called “War of the Dunces.” A critique of Pope’s tactics runs through the passage only in the subtlest fashion: Pope’s talent, Young hints, has served more to stir up “*Envy*,” “*Malice*,” and peevishness than to serve the public good,⁷³⁶ and Young glances, too, at those who have chosen to respond to Pope by indulging such sinful passions. The second of the two epistles follows up the point in a similarly subtle fashion. Here, although the criticism seems generally directed at Pope’s respondents, Pope, as the formal addressee of the work, may himself be implicated in a number of the instructions:

Is Genius yours? be yours a glorious end,
 Be your *King’s*, *Country’s*, *Truth’s*, *Religion’s* friend;
 The publick Glory by your own beget;
 Run Nations, run Posterity in Debt.
 But since the Fam’d alone make others live,
 First *have* that Glory you presume to *give*.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷³⁶ If Pope’s “*Stile*” were like his own, Young acknowledges, “The Blood of Vipers had not stain’d thy File.”

If Satire charms, strike faults, but spare the man,
 'Tis Dull to be as Witty as you can.
 Satire recoils whenever charg'd too high,
 Round your own Fame the fatal splinters fly.⁷³⁷

This passage obliquely reiterates a number of the charges being hurled at Pope by other contemporary readers: his poem was insulting to both King and Country, it was irreligious, its satire was ineffectively personal rather than general, his strategy of rendering famous so many minor poets was detestable, and he had hurt his own reputation in the process. “No work e’er gain’d true fame, or ever can,” Young argues, “But what did honour to the name of Man”⁷³⁸—the implication being that Pope had betrayed his “true fame” (godly glory) in *The Dunciad* and that those who defamed him in print risked doing so as well.

X: Paper Wars and the Progress of Civilization

As it turned out, Pope’s enemies never actually “popped” him in the literal manner imagined in *A Popp Upon Pope*. Unlike Dryden, who had been brutally beaten in Rose Alley by “three thugs with cudgels” (probably hired agents sent to settle a “private grudge” involving an offensive satire),⁷³⁹ Pope was never corporally beaten for his perceived civic offenses in *The Dunciad*. This was a point of divergence that Pope

⁷³⁷ Ibid., 36-37.

⁷³⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁷³⁹ James Anderson Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987): 325-29. Contemporary reports claimed that Dryden had been “severely beaten for being the supposed author of a late abusive lampoon”—that is, *An Essay on Satire*, a collaboration with Mulgrave then circulating only in manuscript (qtd. 326). There were speculations that the Duchess of Portsmouth was behind the incident, but “[n]o legal action was ever taken, and the blame for the Rose Alley ambush remains uncertain” (327). Winn observes that Dryden’s ambiguous social status as a gentleman-on-the-rise may have been a factor. “In the violent world of seventeenth-century London, having someone cudged by hired bullies was not uncommon; it provided a way for powerful people to deal with their social inferiors, men not sufficiently ‘honorable’ to be challenged to a duel” (326).

apparently wished to stress.⁷⁴⁰ As his biographer notes, Pope “took the trouble to repudiate [the story] publicly on June 14 in *The Daily Post*.”⁷⁴¹ This detail, minor as it seems, may offer a clue to his civic intent.

For one thing, Pope’s repudiation buttresses an idea of the exchange as a two-sided battle of wits and insults waged in the republic of letters rather than in a side alley at the behest of an anonymous, vengeful aristocrat. Dryden’s *Essay on Satire*, which is thought to have prompted the Rose Alley attack, was still in manuscript at the time of the incident; the attack itself was handled out of the immediate eye of the public. The *Dunciad* controversy, by contrast, unfolded almost exclusively in the London presses, with gentlemen and -women taking the responsibility for retribution into their own hands rather than passing it off to mercenary thugs. And Pope seems to have taken pride in this difference. In private, he collected a great many of the published attacks that his writings had provoked, which he then bound together into a four-volume set that is now preserved for posterity in the British Library. Inscribed on the flyleaf is a Biblical allusion that reimagined the laureate wreath as the symbol and substance of the printed assaults that his writings had inspired: “Behold it is my desire, that mine Adversary had written a Book. Surely I would take it on my Shoulder, and bind it as a crown unto me.”⁷⁴² Thus, whereas Dryden had associated his laurel crown with the popular approval that he

⁷⁴⁰ The descriptive power of *A Popp Upon Pope* turned on his revelation. According to the classical Aristotelian formula, the narrative’s purgative potential rested in the audience’s awareness of its fictionality. Even today, the story retains its delightful sting precisely because we know that it did not actually happen: we can see that it satisfyingly expressed a public desire for revenge that was ultimately indulged only in print.

⁷⁴¹ Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life*, 490. Pope also assured his friends by letter that he had not been beaten. See Vander Meulen, *History and Facsimile*, 19.

⁷⁴² Job 31:35-6. See McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning*, qtd. 177. McLaverty also notes the immediate narrative context in which these verses appear: they “come from Job’s response to his comforters, developing the plea, ‘Let me bee weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integritie’ (31:6), a response that concludes, ‘So these three men ceased to answeere Job, because he was righteous in his owne eyes’ (32:1)” (177).

garnered, at first with the monarch's blessing and then at the monarch's expense, Pope imagined his laurel crown as the symbol of the popular dissent that he provoked in print. The *Dunciad* controversy emerged as a public debate that animated the body politic into a "formidable, irritable, and implacable" posture of active resistance against a would-be miscreant in its midst.

In addition, this so-called "Paper War"—a term applied to these exchanges almost from their inception⁷⁴³—was a civil conflict waged *only* in the republic of letters and not on a literal field of battle. Having translated both of Homer's epics, Pope was intimately acquainted with a set of literary documents that had often been taken as proof of the violent character of an earlier, more savage stage of civilization, in which "virtue" was tested and proved, not in the writing of an efficacious poem, but in the bravery with which military heroes entered into hand-to-hand combat with one another. Pope had certainly been drawn to the question of why Homer had narrated this violence so prominently and so passionately in his epics, particularly in the *Iliad*.⁷⁴⁴ Moreover, as a self-described disciple of Bolingbroke's philosophies of government, Pope had been equally drawn to the prospect of Britain's preeminence as a nation whose ability to transcend and contain the impulses toward violent civil war rested in the peculiar form of mixed government that had prevailed in the English Revolution: a "combination of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy" that "checked the characteristic vice of each [form of government] while combining their characteristic virtues," and that, by

⁷⁴³ The term "Paper Wars" did not originate with *The Dunciad*. Cf. Edward Ward, *The fourth part of Vulgus Britannicus: or, the British Hudibras. In Two cantos: On the Coffee-House Mob, or Debates Pro, and Con, on the Times. A Character of several Sorts of Whigs, and False Brethren, that are Enemies to the Church. On the Paper-War betwixt High and Low-Church. The Loyal Englishman's Prayer for the Queen and Church. Written by the Author of the London Spy* (London, 1710), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Apr. 18, 2010).

⁷⁴⁴ See case study introduction.

dispersing and containing the responsibility for governance in a balanced constitution, “curbed” the potential for “[t]yranny, faction, and violence.”⁷⁴⁵ The composition and publication of *The Dunciad*, as a carefully-gauged incitement to a merely *literary* retaliation, might be understood as an effort to stir up the British common weal in accordance with the ideal of the successful containment and dispersal of violent energies that had become closely associated with the Revolution. This unprecedented regime change—not to mention the largely *literary* contest over its meaning, as negotiated in the English press in the 1690s—had come to stand for a distinctively English form of government and culture that had managed to dethrone a sitting monarch and instate a new one in his place with a relative lack of bloodshed.

This is the idea of progress that emerges in a juxtaposition of Pope’s *Dunciad* with the classical epics. In their opening phrases, which declare the theme of the epic that follows, these three epics reveal a gradual, chronological progression away from physical violence toward more sublimated negotiations of human conflict and violent human passion:

ACHILLES’ Wrath, ... heav’nly Goddess sing!

ARMS, and the Man I sing ...

BOOKS and the man I sing ...

Note the very different forms of heroism developed in each epic. Achilles’ wrath manifests itself in violent conflict, becoming “to Greece the direful Spring / Of Woes

⁷⁴⁵ Isaak Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1992), 137. Kramnick points out that this idea of the English / British constitution is not unique to Bolingbroke, but “is found in virtually all Augustan writings on politics” (137). But Bolingbroke was arguably one of the more forceful and insistent advocates of the forms of self-assertive opposition that promised to sustain public spirit and sustain the constitutional balance that brought these civic energies productively into tension with one another.

unnumber'd."⁷⁴⁶ Aeneas's use of "ARMS," as I observed in Chapter Two, is attenuated by diplomacy: Aeneas uses arms as a coercive *threat* not necessarily acted upon in violence; he adheres to and exploits a reverence for "arms" in the sense of respecting patterns of aristocratic inheritance and questions of kinship; and he backs his "arms," when he does employ them, with the claim that he has been "forc'd by Fate" to bear his people to a new land. The form of heroism developed in *The Dunciad*—at least in its earliest versions—encouraged a sublimation of these energies even more diffuse in its orientation: the stirring up of passions *within* the British nation by means of "Books," and the act of bringing these public energies to the attention of local agents of government: a bearing forth of "*Smithfield* muses" to "the ears of kings." *The Dunciad*—at least in its earliest versions—imagines the nation's strength and identity coming from its battles of "Books." Human passions have not changed from age to age, but the civic structures developed to harness their animating energies have gradually increased the potential for pleasure, play, and public participation in the polity's defining mode of conflict resolution.

It is possible, then, to understand the 1728 *Dunciad* as a publication actuated by public spirit and undertaken with the confidence that the British public would retaliate with virtue and implacable vigor, in a manner enhancing the prosperity of modern civilization. But in the years immediately following the *Dunciad* controversy, Pope disseminated a divergent way of understanding the actuating passions that led to the composition of *The Dunciad*. It was an idea harmonious with the public-spirited alternative, but it nevertheless sustained the sense of self-committed, adversarial intractability that had animated his participation in the debates surrounding the 1728

⁷⁴⁶ *Poems*, vol. 7, I.1-2.

Dunciad, *The Dunciad Variorum*, and the *Epistle to Burlington*. In *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* (1733), the first of his formal Horatian Imitations, Pope developed a self-portrait that revealed him to be actuated in his writing by the pursuit of malicious pleasure; and in *An Essay on Man* (1733-34), he set forth a philosophical argument that situated “Self-love” at the center of God’s “design” for humankind. Both of these works, like *The Dunciad* itself, were composed in a manner that promised to sustain alternate interpretations, so as to pave the way for “posterity’s” approval. At the time of their initial publication, however, they served mainly to stoke the flames of controversy. The year 1733 “produced more pamphlets for or against Pope than any other.”⁷⁴⁷

XI: Pope’s Unapologetic *Apologia*

The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace may appear today as a dull academic exercise: a formal verse Imitation, in a tradition of free translation stretching back to Denham and Dryden, in which the modern author stays close enough to the letter of the parent poem to produce a complex intertextual dialogue with the earlier author, in which the poem’s meaning emerges in part from the way the poet’s modern equivalents resonate with (or depart from) the language and intent of the original poem. Pope’s Imitation of Horace certainly *is* that. It is legible as a poetic performance (not unlike *Dryden’s Virgil*) animated by the question of whether the modern author can really be seen as an incarnation of the ancient author. Indeed, for modern scholars, this has sometimes seemed to be the most obvious way into the poem. But in its immediate

⁷⁴⁷ Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks*, xxiv. According to John Butt, *Sat. II.i* was composed “in the latter part of January 1732-3” and “entered at Stationers’ Hall on February 14”—thus, at the beginning of the year, along with the first installments of *An Essay on Man*. See “Introduction,” Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, xiii.

context, Pope's *Satire II.i* also had a more immediate rhetorical payoff—low-hanging fruit, as it were, rendered equally available to classically-literate and -illiterate readers. The poem was structured as a formal *apologia pro vita sua*. More specifically, it was framed as a private conversation between “Pope” (who is made a character in the poem) and his lawyer and friend, “Learned Council,” whom the poet asks for free advice.⁷⁴⁸ By its very structure, the dialogue dramatized “Pope’s” determination of how to respond to the controversies that his published satire had provoked. It promised additionally to provide insight into the question of why Pope (or, rather, “Pope,” the character he creates of himself) wrote as he did.

Although modern scholars have not typically read this poem as a response to the civic concerns aired in the *Dunciad* controversy,⁷⁴⁹ that is surely how the poem was read at the time of its initial publication. By late 1732, Pope had still published no formal self-defense or explanation of his alleged transgressions in *The Dunciad*, with the possible exception of *The Dunciad Variorium* itself, whose elaborate editorial apparatus established as the author’s excuse the questionable, tit-for-tat policy of ridiculing mainly

⁷⁴⁸ He appeals to L.C. “like a Friend both sage and free, . . . / and (as you use) without a Fee” (9-10). The lawyer is designated as “Fortescue” (William Fortescue, Pope’s friend and Walpole’s attorney) in later editions, although personal correspondence from 1732-33 suggests that Pope had the identification in mind from the very start.

⁷⁴⁹ When read as an *apologia*, it has usually been read narrowly as a response to the controversies over the *Epistle to Burlington* (e.g. Butt, xiii-xiv and poem notes) or, more broadly, as a general statement of artistic principle (e.g. Maresca 1964). Pope’s own presentation of the contemporary controversy may have directed posterity’s impression in both respects: within the satire itself, “Learned Council” attributes public discontentment with Pope not to the particular satire of *The Dunciad*, but to the *general* satire of the *Epistles to Burlington and Bathurst*. (Consider “Learned Council’s” report that “A hundred smart in *Timon* and in *Balaam*; / The fewer still you name, you wound the more . . .” (42-43).) In the process, Pope leads posterity away from the nub of the matter, which was that *The Dunciad* was the most widely controversial of his recent works—the one that really needed an explanation—and the *Epistle to Burlington* had merely refreshed that controversy, insofar as it was perceived as utilizing the same kind of particularized satire that Pope had employed in *The Dunciad*. Most criticism on this topic strikes a balance between the two positions sketched out above by viewing the *Imitation* as a general statement of satirical principles that takes as its occasion the clamor raised over the *Epistles to Burlington and Bathurst*. Cf. Frank Stack (1985); Jacob Fuchs (1989); James McLaverty (2001). For variations, see Vincent Caretta’s focus on the *Epistle to Bathurst* (1983) and Dustin Griffin’s move toward considering Pope’s self-representation as a civic servant (1978).

those authors who had attacked Pope first.⁷⁵⁰ Moreover, by the early 1730s, Pope had offered only minimal public responses to the controversy over the identity of the character of “Timon” in the 1731 *Epistle to Burlington*.⁷⁵¹ In a continuation of the tactics of *The Dunciad*, Pope had ridiculed “bad taste” by lampooning a generous, innocent contemporary—a great supporter of poets, in fact—who was widely considered a good man. Thus, by late 1732, if contemporary interest in the *Dunciad* itself had begun to wane, it was only beginning to do so. It was apparently still fresh enough on Londoners’ minds for Richard Savage to publish *An Author to Let*, a collection of Dunciadiana whose title played on both the idea of blood-letting and the idea of leaving a person be or

⁷⁵⁰ See esp. the “Letter to the Publisher, Occasioned by the present Edition of the DUNCIAD,” which is signed “WILLIAM CLELAND” (ed. Rumbold 127-134). The editor, “Martinus Scriblerus,” details these supposed slights in prefatory matter, footnotes, and appendices.

⁷⁵¹ A one-page letter addressed from Pope to Burlington introduced the third edition of the *Epistle to Burlington* (1731). As an explanation of Pope’s guiding design in this work, the letter is ambiguous and not entirely conclusive; what it does accomplish is a firm defense of Chandos’s good character. For instance, Pope remarks of the recent controversy, “*I had no great Cause to wonder, that a Character belonging to twenty shou’d be applied to one; since by that means, nineteen would escape the Ridicule*”—a statement equivocal, at best, in its assurance that the poet did not actually intend his picture of Timon’s estate to remind the reader of Chandos’s estate at Cannons. Moreover, instead of professing his innocence and explaining his motives in a direct and systematic way, Pope suggests it indirectly by reporting Chandos’s noble response to the ordeal: “[*S*]ince Malice and Mistake are so long a dying, I take the opportunity of this third Edition to declare [the Duke’s] Belief, not only of My Innocence, but of Their Malignity, of the former of which my own Heart is as conscious, as I fear some of theirs must be of the latter.” For more on Pope’s behind-the-scenes efforts to smooth things over with Chandos in the wake of these accusations, and for a reprinting of Chandos’s supportive personal letter to Pope (the letter referenced above), see George Sherburn and H.S. John, “Timon’s Villa and Cannons” (*The Huntington Library Bulletin* 8 (1935): 131-52).

During this period, Pope also published a “Paraphrased” fragment of Horace’s *Satire I.iv* in the *London Evening Post* (1732), where he sketched the character of a back-biting “Fop” with the conclusion that “Tis not the sober Satyrist you should dread, / But such a babling Coxcomb in his stead” (Butt 1963 814-15). This poem imitates a section of Horace’s satire where Horace responds specifically to the accusation, “You like to give pain, . . . and you do so with spiteful intent.” Horace asks, in turn, “Where have you found this missile to hurl at me? Does anyone whatever with whom I have lived vouch for it?” (Fairclough 55). Pope leaves this part out of his imitation but takes up the text immediately thereafter. Because this poem makes a specific reference to the *Epistle to Burlington* controversy, it is readily understood as a specific response to the *Epistle*. But insofar as it represents a response to accusations of malice, there is also reason to see it as a response to the claims about Pope’s character that had been afloat in the press for some time. There is no reason not to see it anticipating the work of Pope’s *Sat. II.i*

“allowing [him] to pass”⁷⁵²—that is, leaving him to the laws of the land. Thus Pope’s “public” would surely have been curious to see what he had to say for himself.

And, with a playful tease, the picture that Pope paints of himself in *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace* largely confirms the nasty speculations about his private character that had been hurled at him by his detractors in the *Dunciad* controversy. The poem opens with “Pope’s” muted admission that his satire has been ill received:

P. THERE are (I scarce can think it, but am told)
There are to whom my Satire seems too bold.⁷⁵³

An understatement to be sure. In its immediate context, the humor in the exposition emerged from “Pope’s” blithe, intermittently inaccurate description of both the angry contemporary reception of his satire and the demeanor toward authority that had inspired it, as if the little news that he had heard has been distorted in the transmission, and as if he had little awareness of the public obligations that he had flouted.⁷⁵⁴ This feigned ingenuousness comes immediately into tension with the “Learned Council’s” curt replies, which suggest a more urgent sense of the danger to the poet’s person that his latest public embroilments have caused:

L.C. I’d write no more.
P. Not write? but then I *think*,
And for my Soul I cannot sleep a wink.
I nod in Company, I wake at Night,
Fools rush into my Head, and so I write.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² *OED* 1.

⁷⁵³ Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, ed. Butt, 1-2.

⁷⁵⁴ “Pope” speaks as if he has been criticized both for being “too rough” and too “weak”; immediately after skewering “Lord *Fanny*” (Lord Hervey), he claims that he is “Tim’rous by Nature, of the Rich in awe” (3-7). To modern readers, this section has often been read as a statement of Pope’s equipoise and moderation; to Pope’s early readers, it would have appeared as a willful distortion of all that had unfolded in the press in the previous five years.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 11-14, Pope’s emphasis.

One can hear an echo of all of those contemporary complaints that *The Dunciad* could not have been the work of a rational man. Rather than using writing to augment and convey to the public his already-orderly domestic habits (as Young had claimed of his own selfish approach to writing), “Pope” turns to writing to ease or even give vent to his domestic disorders.⁷⁵⁶

The ensuing dialogue is given shape by “Pope’s” passion for writing itself. One side of the discussion is “Pope’s” professed *need* to write: his compulsion to write, his compulsion to write the way he thinks best, and (although the point is not at first spelled out in plain terms) his drive to *publish* that writing—to give it an audience. Pushing from the other direction is the “Learned Council’s” advisement that “You could not do a worse thing for your Life” than continue to write as you do, the reasons for which are eventually divulged as the conversation proceeds.⁷⁵⁷ The conversation is propelled by the tension between these two stances.⁷⁵⁸ “Learned Council,” at first advising “Pope” to stop writing altogether, soon perceives that his counsel has fallen on deaf ears; he therefore urges “Pope” at least to divert his passion into avenues that will better ensure his personal comfort and his personal gain: getting a wife, seeking help for his medical ailments, writing for position and place.⁷⁵⁹ “Pope,” in turn, resists all of these practical

⁷⁵⁶ The claims that he writes so he will not have to “*think*,” because “Fools rush into [his] Head,” and because otherwise he will “nod in Company,” sleep-deprived, are significant amplifications of the Horatian original: “Peream male si non / Optimum erat: verum nequeo dormire” (as translated by Fairclough, Loeb. Cl. Lib., “Confound me if that would not be best! But I cannot sleep”).

⁷⁵⁷ Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, ed. Butt, 15.

⁷⁵⁸ Dustin Griffin has analyzed the formal effects of the “adversarius” and the “adversary” in Pope’s verse (1978 Ch. 6): both serve in different ways to “further a process of self-definition” (172). Also see Frank Stack’s observation that neither Pope nor his interlocutor really changes his stance during the course of the conversation—a technique consistent with the structure of the *Dunciad* controversy more generally, and one that mimics the Horatian model. Stack quotes and elaborates on the French critic Dacier’s description of this dialogic dynamic: “Dacier...sees that there is something ironic in this whole encounter because, as he points out, neither Horace nor Trebatius actually alters his position in the course of the conversation, and at the end Horace simply goes on writing satire” (1985 30).

⁷⁵⁹ Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, ed. Butt, 16; 17-20; 21-40.

suggestions, asserting himself in terms that portray his commitment to his craft as a personal necessity. In a glancing allusion to the critiques of dullness in *The Dunciad*, “Pope” rejects both the idea of pursuing a masculine royal laureate mode, which he characterizes as “rumbling, rough and fierce,” and a “softer,” more soporific, feminine royal laureate mode, which he characterizes as unlikely to “touch [the] nicer Ear” of Queen Caroline and Princess Amelia.⁷⁶⁰

In short, by pitting the poet’s passion for writing against his advisor-friend’s monitory suggestions, Pope’s first Imitation of Horace puts into dialogue two different forms of selfishness, neither of them bearing an obvious, constructive relation to the betterment of the common weal. The “Learned Council” asserts a concern for Pope’s self-interest. He appeals to the poet’s spirit of self-preservation and his willingness to effect a rational, even calculated alignment of his private needs with a public office; he urges the poet to maintain an agreeable public reputation and to avoid public censure. “Pope” gives vent to a more impulsive, less circumspect form of self-love, apparently without sufficiently heeding the negative consequences for his own “Life” that may result from that self-indulgence. The governing fiction throughout these exchanges is of course that “Pope’s” responses are spontaneous and unpremeditated, as if the public were made privy to a transcript of an actual, private meeting, held behind closed doors between the author and his friend. The “Learned Council” does not so much interrogate “Pope” as offer a series of observations and advices out of apparent concern for his friend’s wellbeing. “Pope’s” dialogue emerges in turn as a series of improvised excuses—excuses suggestive of a habitually embattled public stance but at the same time uttered by way of explanation for natural tendencies and chronic habits already in motion.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., 23; 29-33.

But the most telling revelations of the poet's character and his motives for writing (such as they are) come when the "Learned Council" puts pressure on the question of the public consequences of Pope's chosen mode of writing. One such turn follows the lawyer's insistence that "Pope" has "Abuse[d] the City's best good Men in Metre," which prompts from the poet, at first, a merely callous retort—

L. Ev'n those you touch not, hate you.
P. What should ail 'em?

—and then a defense rooted in what Swift had described as the "less Noble" of possible "Ends" for writing satire: the indulgence of private "Pleasure."⁷⁶¹

P. Each mortal has his Pleasure: None deny
Scarsdale his Bottle, *D[ar]ty* his Ham-Pye;
Ridotta sips and dances, till she see
The doubling Lustres dance as well as she;
F[ox] loves the *Senate*, *Hockley-Hole* his Brother
Like in all else, as one Egg to another...⁷⁶²

Part of the fun of the poem lies in the peculiarity of an imagined conversation in which it makes a kind of psychological sense that the poet would defend his poetic practice by citing as precedents a list of "Pleasure[s]" variously targeted in the early modern period for being public nuisances and minor vices, if not actually "Mortal" sins: drinking, gluttonous eating, boisterous dancing, bear-baiting, and—in another witty inclusion—attending parliamentary meetings. In this very enumeration, there is no pretense of innocence. Positioned as it is immediately after "Learned Council's" observation of the public injuries that "Pope's" published writing has done so far, this colorful reply sustains the implication that the poet may, indeed, get "Pleasure" from hurting others.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., 39; 40.

⁷⁶² Ibid., 45-50.

And Pope's presentation continually flirts with the possibility that his satire has indeed been actuated by sadistic pleasure—by “Malice,” as readers of this period would have described it. What he really “love[s],” “Pope” claims at first, is not so much hurting people, but expressing himself—and being “lov'd” for doing so. “I love to pour out all myself, as plain / As downright *Shippen*, or as old *Montagne*,” he avers, citing the reliability by which, “In them, as certain to be lov'd as seen, / The Soul stood forth, nor kept a Thought within.”⁷⁶³ If this formulation suggests a sociable basis for “Pope's” behavior, it also hints that he is motivated in part by vanity, by the desire to be loved. And yet there is no suggestion at all of the kind of pious self-correction embodied in Young's example—no hint of deference to external authority. Young, too, had envisioned the individual pursuit of pleasure as a boon to the common weal; however, he had very clearly distinguished the pleasurable pursuit of “*Things above*” from the pursuit of

Pleasures of Appetite and Sense, those winning Masters, under whose Dominion we spend the first of our Years for *want* of Reason, and (too often) the rest, in *spite* of it: Pleasures, that . . . get such a fatal Ascendant, that unless we are always on our Guard against them, our Love of *Things above* will either never spring, or (what is all one) never come to Maturity.⁷⁶⁴

“Pope” makes no claims to “Maturity” in Young's sense of the term. Instead, he imagines that his pursuit of “Pleasure”—in this case, the love of writing, and of being seen through his writing—has the potential to reconcile him to both the present and the

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, 51-54. Appealing to the precedents of Montaigne (a Catholic) and Shippen (an outspoken Jacobite) heighten the sense of civic transgression. See Erskine-Hill (1983 298) for a brief elaboration on Shippen's significance here.

⁷⁶⁴ *A Vindication of Providence: or, a True Estimate of Human Life. In which the Passions are consider'd in a New Light. Preach'd in St. George's Church near Hanover-Square, soon after the late King's Death*, 2nd ed: “Corrected” (London, 1728), 4-5, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed May 18, 2009).

future, both conceived here more in their temporal aspects than in any spiritual dimensions that they might retain⁷⁶⁵:

In me what Spots (for Spots I have) appear,
Will prove at least the Medium must be clear.
In this impartial Glass, my Muse intends
Fair to expose myself, my Foes, my Friends;
Publish the present Age, but where my Text
Is Vice too high, reserve it for the next:
My Foes shall wish my Life a longer date,
And ev'ry Friend the less lament my Fate.⁷⁶⁶

According to this elaborate bit of sophistry, the poet's published satire exerts a constructive civic influence by giving his friends a reason to wish him dead, giving his enemies a reason to keep him alive, and reserving the punishment of the highest "Vice" for subsequent generations.⁷⁶⁷ In "Pope's" conception, his satire provides little more than a mirror for the public, reflecting and amplifying what he and his age already are, "Spots" and all, with no intervening artistic manipulations intended to provide instruction in the ways of virtue and vice. "Pope's" excuses for continuing to write and publish—and for doing so in his accustomed, self-expressive manner—therefore emerge as a thinly-veiled reiteration of the same self-indulgent tendencies to which his dialogue has borne witness from the start.

Their formal presentation contributes further to the impression that what is being dramatized here is the unleashing of self-indulgent passion. Beginning with his initial assertion of his right to private "Pleasure," "Pope's" speech spills out in two

⁷⁶⁵ The diction lends itself to a spiritual reading—"Soul," "Spots," "Vice," and perhaps also the distinction between the "present Age" and "the next"—but, as I explain below, the twists and turns in "Pope's" reasoning suggest an investment in the temporal consequences of his writing, especially if read in light of the intertext with Young.

⁷⁶⁶ Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, ed. Butt, 55-62.

⁷⁶⁷ "Pope's" proposal for who is going to punish "Vice" in the end—humankind or God—is notably ambiguous, though the ambiguity speaks to Pope's comparatively temporal focus. One of his jokes is that what his own age saw as the highest "Vice"—Pope himself—would appear as virtue to posterity.

uninterrupted monologues totaling some 90 lines (together, about 3/5 of the whole poem), thereby contributing further to the impression of spontaneous, unhindered authorial purgation. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu memorably referred to this Imitation as a poem “strip’d with *English Rage*,” in reference to both the tone that was attributed at the time to the poet’s speech, and the material text, which printed the English Imitation on facing pages with the Latin version of Horace’s “*Roman Wit*.”⁷⁶⁸ One can see why she would have read the poem this way. As “Pope’s” monologue builds momentum, any initial pretense of reconciliation with the public has been subordinated to the speaker’s overweening pursuit of his private pleasure, asserted first with a hint of self-restraint,

Satire’s my Weapon, but I’m too discreet
To run a Muck, and tilt at all I meet;
I only wear it in a Land of Hectors...

then with a hint of aggressive self-righteousness,

Peace is my dear Delight—not *Fleury*’s more:
But touch me, and no Minister so sore.

then with a suggestion of vengefulness,

Who-e’er offends, and at some unlucky Time
Slides into Verse, and hitches in a Rhyme,
Sacred to Ridicule! his whole Life long,
And the sad Burthen of some merry Song.

and finally moving toward sadism,

Its proper Pow’r to hurt, each Creature feels,
Bulls aim their horns, and Asses lift their heels.

before he reaches the climactic insistence that his pursuit of private pleasure cannot be curbed by the forms of civic control that normally kept miscreants in their proper bounds:

Then learned Sir! (to cut the Matter short)

⁷⁶⁸ “Verses Addressed to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace” (1733). Lord Hervey may have collaborated with Montagu on the poem.

What-e'er my Fate, or well or ill at Court,
 Whether old Age, with faint, but cheerful Ray,
 Attends to gild the Evening of my Day,
 Or Death's black Wing already be display'd
 To wrap me in the Universal Shade;
 Whether the darken'd Room to muse invite,
 Or whiten'd Wall provoke the Skew'r to write,
 In Durance, exile, Bedlam, or the Mint,
 Like *Lee* or *B[udge]ll*, I will Rhyme and Print.⁷⁶⁹

Note how painstakingly Pope's language points to institutions and aspects of human nature that were seen during this period as reliable curbs on public misbehavior: the prospect of legal prosecution,⁷⁷⁰ the meekening effects of growing older, the fear of death, the desire for a good reputation (and perhaps also the fear of damnation), the fear of prison, the fear of exile, the fear of being placed in a madhouse, the fear of being thrown in debtor's prison. "Pope" resolves that his impulse to continue writing and publishing will not be restrained by any earthly or even heavenly means. At the "Learned Council's" admonition, "Alas young Man! your Days can n'er be long, / ...Plums, and Directors, *Shylock* and his Wife, / Will club their Testers, now, to take your Life," "Pope" retorts with this famous declaration of self-satisfaction in his adversarial relationship with the public:

TO VIRTUE ONLY and HER FRIENDS, A FRIEND,
 The World beside may murmur, or commend.
 Know, all the distant din that World can keep
 Rolls o'er my *Grotto*, and but sooths my Sleep.⁷⁷¹

James Ralph, who had devised a similar image for his *Sawney*, must have been chagrined to see "Pope" reclaiming it here.

⁷⁶⁹ Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, ed. Butt, 69-71; 75-76; 77-80; 85-86; 91-100.

⁷⁷⁰ "Court" is an ambiguous term here and in Pope's Imitation of *The Fourth Satire of Dr. John Donne* (1733). I take the jurisprudential sense to be more relevant than the idea of a royal abode where courtiers seek preferment.

⁷⁷¹ Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, ed. Butt, 121-24.

By the end of the poem, “Learned Council’s” advisory role has been reduced to a provisional consideration of whether Pope’s position can be reconciled to the laws of the land. The dialogue famously ends when the “Learned Council,” coming to terms with the intractability of his advisee, draws out the book of law and points to the *Scandalum Magnatum*, an ancient English statute intended to restrict defamatory speech against government officials. To the poet’s “Plea” that those “who unknown defame me, let them be / Scriblers or Peers, alike are *Mob* to me,” his harried friend-cum-attorney directs him to the page in question:

F. Your Plea is good. But still I say, beware!
Laws are explain’d by Men—so have a care.
It stands on record, that in *Richard’s* Times
A Man was hang’d for very honest Rhymes.
Consult the Statute: *quart.* I think it is,
Edwardi Sext. or *prim & quint. Eliz:*
See *Libels, Satires*—here you have it—read.⁷⁷²

The poet’s “Learned Council” is actually mistaken. The *Scandalum Magnatum* was not actually the feature of English law most relevant to any of Pope’s satirical performances. As noted previously, the more pressing question in the *Dunciad* controversy had been Pope’s treatment of private persons, and, more importantly, the *Scandalum Magnatum*, whose strict rules of pleading made it hard to get a conviction, was by the early eighteenth century used far less often than an alternative common law procedure: the filing of an information *ex officio*, an accusation issued by the Attorney General as a representative of the crown.⁷⁷³ The impish humor of the poem’s resolution comes from the tension between the “Learned Council’s” faulty interpretive advice, based on a

⁷⁷² Ibid., 139-40; 143-49.

⁷⁷³ I am again adapting Kropf’s analysis, “Satire and Libel,” esp. 155-57. He discusses this passage, and he discusses how rarely the *Scandalum Magnatum* was actually utilized, but he does not point out that the lawyer in Pope’s fictional scenario does not seem to understand the law as well as “Pope” does.

hesitant and cursory perusal of the statutory text, and the poet's reduction of what was actually a complex set of legal questions to the assertion of a personal relationship between poet and monarch (or, rather, poet and *de facto* ruler):

P. Libels and Satires! lawless Things indeed!
 But grave *Epistles*, bringing Vice to light,
 Such as a *King* might read, a *Bishop* write,
 Such as Sir *Robert* would approve—
F. Indeed?
 The Case is alter'd—you may then proceed.
 In such a Cause the Plaintiff will be hiss'd,
 My Lords the Judges laugh, and you're dismiss'd.⁷⁷⁴

With the concluding insinuation that “the Plaintiff” who tried to contradict Walpole’s approval—that is, the King himself—would “be hiss’d” and laughed at in court, Pope reveals that he knows the laws of the land after all. And although Pope’s detractors railed against the insinuation that the poet *could* get Walpole’s approval for his satire,⁷⁷⁵ he apparently already had. As *The Dunciad Variorum* announced publicly from 1735 forward, Walpole had presented the poem to George II on the author’s behalf. Pope had won himself great satirical liberty indeed.

XII: “Self-love” and the “Social”

Carole Fabricant has argued that Pope presents himself in his late satires as a poet “armed for combat”—a figure distinguished in works such as the *Epilogue to the Satires* by his “alternately tragic and comic megalomania.”⁷⁷⁶ She suggests that Pope’s exaltation of the self, although bereft of a convincing objective correlative in the moral

⁷⁷⁴ Pope, *Poems*, vol. 4, ed. Butt, 150-56.

⁷⁷⁵ Howard Weinbrot, “Such as Sir Robert Would Approve? Answers to Pope’s Answer from Horace” (*Modern Language Studies* 9.3 Autumn 1979): 5-14.

⁷⁷⁶ “Pope’s Moral, Political and Cultural Combat,” in *Pope*, ed. Hammond, 42.

and political causes of the day, gained purchase in its own day in the creation and definition of “culture.”⁷⁷⁷ I have done some work here both to confirm the main lines of Fabricant’s reading and to complicate the sense in which Pope might be said to have sought the exertion of “hegemonic control” over the tastes of his own day and the projected esteem of “posterity.”⁷⁷⁸ Pope presented himself to his own contemporaries, with all the requisite winks and nudges, as an embodiment of overweening self-love: a living, breathing, self-expressive impulse, implacably resistant to being tamed by British law, Christian morals, the desire to impress his fellow Englanders, or the codes of polite conduct governing discourse in public sphere. He was, for his own age, the opposite of a hegemon, despite his seeming omnipresence in the popular press. Far from presenting himself as a righteous arbiter between the desirable artifacts of high culture and the common refuse of low culture, he provoked retaliatory interest in his person and persona by attacking local representatives of cultural refinement (undeservingly, it was thought) and by playing to the public with performances calculated to appeal to what were then seen as baser human instincts: self-love, envy, prurient interest, the desire for revenge, and in the most rarified cases, righteous indignation.

This was, in any case, the picture of himself that he painted for his contemporaries. And it was accompanied by what must have seemed at the time to be a paradoxical and revolutionary idea of the usefulness of free expression to a vital body politic. His *Essay on Man* supplied the terms for the provocative experiment that his satire had attempted:

GOD loves from Whole to Parts: but human soul
Must rise from Individual to the Whole.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 54.

Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
 As the small pebble stirs the peaceful Lake;
 The Centre mov'd, a Circle strait succeeds,
 Another still, and still another spreads,
 Friend, Parent, Neighbour, first it will embrace,
 His Country next, and next all Human-race,
 Wide, and more wide, th'O'erflowings of the mind
 Take ev'ry Creature in, of ev'ry kind;
 Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
 And Heav'n beholds its Image in his Breast.⁷⁷⁹

The abiding question was whether Pope's "Self-love" had "serve[d] the virtuous mind to wake" in the sense that he himself was both self-loving and virtuous or in the sense that his self-love had simultaneously endeared and stirred to righteous retribution his friends, parents, neighbors, and "Country" in a kind of *concordia discors* of distorted reverberations.

To follow this logic, of course, Pope's supervision of his literary legacy can be seen as an outgrowth of the "Self-love" that he had figured so prominently in his own age. "I have two great Tasks on my hands," Pope wrote to Ralph Allen during this period. "I am trying to benefit myself, and to benefit Posterity."⁷⁸⁰ To his friend John Gay, Pope observed somewhat more inclusively, although still with the same selfish verve, "We who are Writers ought to love Posterity, that Posterity may love us."⁷⁸¹ In accordance with this motto, Pope made available in the 1743 "deathbed" *Dunciad*, a mottled, cynical picture of the author's civic outlook and motives for writing satire. Whereas the 1728 *Dunciad* ends with the airy dispersal of Tibbald's vision of the progress of dullness—

No more the Monarch could such raptures bear;

⁷⁷⁹ 1743 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, IV.361-72.

⁷⁸⁰ Fabricant, "Pope's Moral, Political and Cultural Combat," in *Pope*, ed. Hammond, qtd. 53.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, qtd. 53.

He wak'd, and all the Vision mix'd with air.⁷⁸²

—the 1743 “deathbed” *Dunciad* ends with a new fourth book, whose long concluding prophecy is presented as Pope’s own vision. Here, Dullness comes “*to destroy Order and Science*”; causes “*a total oblivion of all Obligations, divine, civil, moral, or rational*”; and then, in a final blow, “*all Orders of men*” are consumed in night and chaos. “*Wit* shoots in vain its momentary fires”; the stars go out, one by one; “*Truth*” flees to her “old Cavern”; philosophy shrivels; and all is lost:

In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
 And unawares *Morality* expires.
 Nor *public* Flame, nor *private*, dares to shine;
 Nor *human* Spark is left, nor Glimpse *divine!*
 Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
 Light dies before thy uncreating word:
 Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
 And Universal Darkness buries All.⁷⁸³

It is a bleak vision indeed—almost comic in its bleakness. One is left to wonder, however, whether Pope, the man, could possibly have seen fit to predict the chaotic demise of civilization as he knew it, or whether he was simply contemplating the extinguishment of his own mortal “Spark.”

⁷⁸² 1728 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, IV.285-86.

⁷⁸³ 1743 *Dunciad*, ed. Rumbold, IV.337; 338; 633; 641; 648-56.

Case Study III

The Mid-Eighteenth-Century Colonial Georgic

This case study examines two examples of a minor subgenre, the British-West-Indian georgic: Samuel Martin's *An Essay Upon Plantership* (Antigua, 1750 & foll.; London 1765 & foll.), a prose treatise on sugarcane cultivation built on the models of Virgil and Columella, and James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (London, 1764 & foll.), a four-book blank-verse long poem treating much of the same subject matter with a metropolitan audience in mind. I argue that both writers conceived the georgic as a genre that presented good principles of agricultural management in a manner that promised to inculcate an intricate understanding of the complex interrelations in a "rural oeconomy." But these writers developed divergent strategies for stimulating civic reform in the slave-based rural oeconomy that then dominated the British West Indies. Martin, a sugarcane planter himself, addressed his pamphlet to a local, West-Indian audience of "Gentlemen" planters. Employing didactic techniques that had been outlined by Joseph Addison and others, Martin sought to trick his fellow planters into feeding their enslaved workers better and improving the local "culture" in all senses of the term. Grainger, an Edinburgh-trained physician and friend of such literati as Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith, directed his georgic performance to the British metropole. He sought to coax the British "Public" into scrutinizing—and perhaps even developing a distaste for—the prospect of continuing to import sugar from the Caribbean, and yet he portrayed the

agricultural system that prevailed in the sugarcane isles as one in which he, like many other Britons, had become inextricably implicated.

In pursuing this line of argument, I am drawing attention to the compelling complexity of the effort by these eighteenth-century writers to consider how far the British common weal extended beyond the immediate geographical boundaries of the British Isles. This was a question central to the development of the British Empire at the mid-century. Although once considered outposts, where valuable resources could be obtained and brought back to the mother country, Britain's colonial settlements were becoming entrenched. At the same time, Britain's imperial holdings were increasing in number and extent around the globe—a development that significantly affected the crown's ability to exert authority in (and to extend its protection to) individual settlements. The period of imperial history leading up to and including the Seven Years War therefore constituted an especially rich and important moment. The crucial questions were whether the colonies should be treated as outposts, where the mother country secured its claims to resources unavailable on British soil, or whether they should be treated as nascent settlements with their own problems of community. By writing their discussions of West-Indian life *as georgics*, both Martin and Grainger were necessarily engaging these difficult questions about the colonial common weal. The georgic's central concern with agricultural management placed problems of local settlement and local government centrally on display. The georgic was a genre that dealt with “culture” in the full eighteenth-century sense of the term: practices of “planting, tilling, growing, ... directing,” and manuring that provided an organized basis for human settlement and

human “culture” as we use that term today (codes of politeness, artistic knowhow, rich leisure pastimes, a “realm of value and a resource of meaning”).⁷⁸⁴

In pursuing this line of inquiry, I wish to emphasize a point that has sometimes been lost in deconstructive modern analyses of the rhetorical performances of writers such as Martin and Grainger. That is, writers of the eighteenth century cultivated a diverse array of ideas on the question whether the emerging forms of colonial settlement were good for either the mother country or the colonists who made their lives, under the British banner, so far away. Even those Britons who were generally in favor of colonial settlement or who had personal associations with a particular subgroup of society (the planter class, for instance) did not necessarily display homogenous biases in their writing. Some were reformers; others were content with the status quo. And even those who shared a reformative verve did not necessarily develop identical strategies for addressing perceived needs. This diversity is in evidence, I suggest, in Martin and Grainger’s georgic compositions. Both men wished to reform the system of West-Indian agriculture as it then existed, but they focused in their writings on different aspects of the system, regarded the potential for change with divergent degrees of optimism, and sought divergent means of drawing their readers’ attention to the possibility of improvement.

To appreciate crucial points of divergence between Martin and Grainger’s perspectives on the question of what was best for the British West Indies—points of emphasis and omission, for instance—I have drawn upon Timothy Sweet’s examination of patterns of georgic thought in the North American colonies as a suggestive analytical

⁷⁸⁴ Michael Meranze, “Culture and Governance: Reflections on the Cultural History of Eighteenth-Century British America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 65.4 (Oct. 2008): 714. As Meranze observes, in the eighteenth century, “the connection between culture and governance was especially intimate.”

and historical framework.⁷⁸⁵ According to Sweet, the British colonial enterprise was shaped from the very start by the question of settlement. Ventures such as the Virginia company were advertised by early promoters of colonial expansion with the promise that trips to the colonies would secure resources for the mother country: at first, gold, especially in the case of the early Spanish ventures, but then natural resources such as cod, timber, and turpentine in later phases of the European colonial settlement. According to this understanding, the colonies were outposts intended principally to nourish the mother country. In practice, however, once the colonists arrived and set up camp, they immediately recognized the flaws in this conception. The Jamestown colony, for instance, was vexed by the problem of how to procure food and how to secure the safety of its inhabitants. And one of the most obvious solutions to this problem was to plant crops and build fortifications—that is, to make the colony a more or less *permanent* settlement in order to meet the needs of the local common weal. Yet this move toward permanent settlement was not necessarily the colonists' first inclination. As Robert Beverley wrote of the Virginia Company in 1705, “[T]he chief Design of all Parties concern'd was to fetch away the Treasure from Thence, aiming at more sudden Gain, than to form any regular Colony, or establish a Settlement in such a Manner, as to make it a lasting Happiness to the Country.”⁷⁸⁶

This tension persisted in settlement patterns. Tobacco became a major cash crop in Virginia—a development that worried local governors, who felt that the colonists would be healthier and more virtuous if they cultivated subsistence crops. And sugarcane cultivation in the West Indies, as both Martin and Grainger both recognized, had fallen

⁷⁸⁵ Timothy Sweet, *American Georgics: Economy and Environment in Early American Literature* (Philadelphia: U Penn P, 2002).

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, qtd. 78.

into a similar monocultural pattern—one that was even more rigid than the patterns of monocultural settlement in the northern colonies. By the mid eighteenth century, West-Indian sugarcane planters lived off the land only in the sense that they gained profit from the sale of their very lucrative sugarcane crops. The islands were certainly inhabited and “settled” in the technical sense of the term: primary documents of this period suggest that on well-established British-West-Indian islands such as St. Kitts, “[a]lmost every Inche” of arable land was dedicated to sugarcane cultivation, and Grainger observed similarly in his annotations to *The Sugar-Cane* that, on St. Kitts, at the time of the poem’s composition, the “Cane-plantations reach almost to [the] summits [of the chain of mountains running from south to north on the island], and extend all the way, down their easy declining sides, to the sea.”⁷⁸⁷ But if this form of settlement represented an efficient use of arable land, it was not, as Beverley might have observed, “Settlement in such a Manner, as to make it a lasting Happiness to the Country.” The vast majority of settlers were enslaved agricultural laborers, purchased continually from the African coast, as relatively few of the enslaved women on the islands were strong enough or healthy enough to bear children.

This was not a sustainable form of settlement, as eighteenth-century writers saw it. By the mid eighteenth century, as writers on both sides of the Atlantic were contemplating the prospect that the North American colonies would eventually assert their independence from the mother country,⁷⁸⁸ the West-Indian cane isles were still

⁷⁸⁷ The former is the 1754 assessment of Governor Thomas of the Leeward Islands (which include St. Kitts and Antigua). See Vincent K. Hubbard, *A History of St. Kitts: The Sweet Trade* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2002), qtd. 91. The latter is James Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane* (London, 1764), in *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger’s The Sugar-Cane*, ed. John Gilmore (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000), p. 169.

⁷⁸⁸ J.M. Bumsted, “‘Things in the Womb of Time’: Ideas of American Independence, 1633 to 1763,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 31.4 (Oct. 1974): 534-64.

(perhaps increasingly) colonial outposts, systematically dependent on the mother country and her colonies for some of their most basic needs—not only manufactured tools, but also such basic requirements as food, clothing, lumber, and fuel for the fires used in processing the harvested sugarcane. To the extent that West Indian slaves were fed, their food was often purchased from abroad. Tropical soil dedicated to sugarcane crops was so valuable, monetarily speaking, that it was much cheaper to import food rather than to grow it locally—a practice that certainly contributed to the high death rate among enslaved communities. Nor did the planter class constitute a significant, beneficently-invested portion of the local settlement—a crucial basis for a healthy settlement, as both Martin and Grainger conceived it. In a lengthy address to British absentee planters in *The Sugar-Cane*, Grainger observed politely that the “sons” of the sugarcane isles typically “spend [their] opulence in other climes”⁷⁸⁹; Martin, although writing two decades earlier, and from an administrative center with a substantial population of white settlers, appears to have had his eye on the same migratory pattern. During the course of the eighteenth century, wealthy plantation owners made their homes increasingly in England, the center of English “culture” in the modern sense of the term; and this pull toward the metropole had negative effects on the quality of British-West-Indian “culture” in the more ancient sense: manuring the soil so that it would yield up good crops, generation after generation. Rather than overseeing their cane plantings in person (a principle of management advocated consistently in ancient and modern georgics), and rather than investing their labor and capital in the land that they owned, British West-Indian plantation owners spent their money lavishly on secondary estates in England, fancy carriages, clothes, and other commodities. By the mid eighteenth century, when these

⁷⁸⁹ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, III.579.

two georgics were composed, the fertile tropical soil had begun to lose its fertility, having been taxed by overuse and neglect; yet sugarcane planters did not pursue the kinds of agricultural “improvements” that were typical of European farming during the period: plowing, manuring, and thrifty management of waste. As both Martin and Grainger saw it, this system could not persist happily or profitably in its present state, although they developed divergent visions of the ideal means of improvement and divergent strategies for lassoing the resources of poetry to that prospect.

By drawing attention to these broad civic questions, I wish to offer a means of understanding these two works as compositions engaged in a complex intertextual dialogue with one another with respect to the problems of sustaining and improving colonial “culture.” Although Martin’s *Essay* and Grainger’s poem have occasionally been discussed in tandem by modern scholars, and although Martin’s *Essay*, for its part, has been viewed by agricultural historians as a product of and a response to the history of settlement sketched above, the two works have not yet received sustained scholarly treatment as independent, divergent responses to more or less the same set of historical, governmental, and rhetorical dilemmas.⁷⁹⁰ As a seemingly plain, transparent, prose pamphlet of significant documentary importance to the history of sugarcane cultivation, Martin’s *Essay* has so far not appeared to contain much that would be of interest from a literary or rhetorical point of view, beyond its expressions of paternalistic ideologies.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁹⁰ There were a few important differences in historical context, as the individual chapters will make clear. Most crucially, Martin’s *Essay* was composed on the island Antigua, an administrative capital of the Leeward Islands, at a moment when it might have seemed possible to create a full community within the planter class; *The Sugar-Cane*, treating the island of St. Kitts more than two decades later, was composed and published in the immediate wake of the Seven Years War, which had vastly expanded Britain’s colonial holdings around the world. Nonetheless, the broad lines of the historical phenomenon that these performances addressed remained constant.

⁷⁹¹ Natalie A. Zacek examines the paternalistic ideologies evident in the pamphlet in “Cultivating Virtue: Samuel Martin and the Paternal Ideal in the Eighteenth-Century English West Indies,” *Wadabagei* 10.3

On the other hand, Grainger's *Sugar-Cane*, after more than a century of scholarly neglect, has seen a revival of critical interest in recent decades, thanks in part to what has been often been perceived as its pedestrian adherence to georgic convention—a quality that apparently makes it ripe for deconstruction and ideology critique, insofar as the peculiar performances of minor poets on ideologically-rich topics (in this case, transatlantic slavery) are understood to be particularly subject to the kinds of logical contradictions that such analyses seek to expose.⁷⁹² To the extent that the two performances have been examined alongside one another, either Martin's pamphlet has been viewed as a kind of source text for Grainger's poem—as indeed it probably was, even if it was not only that—or their authors have been understood to be doing similar kinds of political and rhetorical work: that is, supporting the West-Indian planter class and making plantation

(2007): 8-31. For the *Essay*'s documentary importance, see Richard B. Sheridan, "Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter of Antigua, 1750-1776," *Agricultural History* 34.3 (July 1960): 126-39; J. H. Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry: An Historical Geography from its Origins to 1914* (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge UP, 1989); Justin Roberts, "Working between the Lines: Labor and Agriculture on Two Barbadian Sugar Plantations, 1796-97," *William and Mary Quarterly* 62.3 (July 2006): 551-86.

⁷⁹² For early efforts to recuperate *The Sugar-Cane* as an item of "historical" rather than strictly "literary" interest, see O. H. K. Spate, "The Muse of Mercantilism: Jago, Grainger, and Dyer," in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century: Papers Presented at the David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra 1966*, ed. R. F. Brissenden (Toronto: U Toronto P, 1968), 119-31; also Keith Ellis, "Images of Sugar in English and Spanish Caribbean Poetry," *Ariel* 24.1 (1993): 149-59. One can date the postcolonial turn to the same period. Cf. Kamau Brathwaite, "Creative literature of the British West Indies during the Period of Slavery," *Roots* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993), esp. 127-42; Keith A. Sandiford, *The Cultural Politics of Sugar: Caribbean Slavery and Narratives of Colonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), esp. 67-87; Shaun Irlam, "'Wish You Were Here': Exporting England in James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*," *ELH* 68.2 (2001): 377-396; Jim Egan, "The 'Long'd-for Aera' of an 'Other Race': Climate, Identity, and James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*," *Early American Literature* 38.2 (2003): 189-212; Sada Niang, "Cane and Its Uses in Grainger's *The Sugar Cane*, Selvon's 'Cane is bitter,' Moutoussamy's *Aurore*, and Julia's *Les gens de Bonne-Espérance*," in *Sugar, Slavery, and Society: Perspectives on the Caribbean, India, the Mascarenes, and the United States*, ed. Bernard Moitt (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2004); Markman Ellis, "'Incessant Labour': Georgic Poetry and the Problem of Slavery," in *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition: Britain and Its Colonies, 1760-1838*, eds. Brychan Carey, Markman Ellis, and Sara Salih (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 45-62; and Steven W. Thomas, "Doctoring Ideology: James Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* and the Bodies of Empire," *Early American Studies* 4.1 (Spring 2006): 78-111. An exception to this trend is David Fairer, "A Caribbean Georgic: James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*," *Kunapipi: Journal of Post-Colonial Writing* 25.1 (2003): 21-8. The dissemination of interest in and ideas about *The Sugar-Cane* has been assisted by John Gilmore's critical edition, *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger's The Sugar Cane (1764)* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000) and by the poem's appearance in Thomas W. Krise's anthology, *Caribbeana: An Anthology of English Literature of the West Indies, 1657-1777* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999).

life look better than it actually was.⁷⁹³ Grainger, although he never actually owned land in the West Indies, married into a planter family, and so it has generally been assumed that his aim in writing *The Sugar-Cane* was ultimately to curry favor with the powerful West-India Interest back in England and to shed glory on the growing British Empire.⁷⁹⁴

To develop a more precise understanding of Grainger's rhetorical posture and his rhetorical aims, the present study focuses in part upon the content of these two authors' respective assessments of the health of the cane isles and their respective proposals for improvement—a mode of analysis that demonstrates significant differences between the two writers in their visions of the colonial common weal and their approaches to imperial reform. In addition, as in the previous case studies, I draw heavily upon the comments of generic theorists of the day—in this case, among other important texts, the seminal essay on the Virgilian georgic that Joseph Addison had produced for *Dryden's Virgil*—to ask how the georgic's didactic potential was conceived by eighteenth century writers. This piece of research has been essential to my conclusions about the didactic and rhetorical aims of the two georgic authors discussed here. Modern scholarship on the georgic has often envisioned the genre as one especially inclined to idealization and misrepresentation in its depictions of agricultural labor—a characteristic conceived, in turn, as an unconscious or even willful tendency among georgic writers to support the

⁷⁹³ That is, Grainger's performance has been so far conceived either as a versified handbook (cf. Spate, K. Ellis) or as an effort to support the West-Indian planter class (Irlam, M. Ellis, Krise, et al.)—two interpretations that imagine *The Sugar-Cane* doing cultural and didactic work similar to that of Martin's pamphlet. There has not been much modern scholarship to bring these two works together, despite the prominent hint in Grainger's Preface that he is "indebted" to Martin's performance, and despite the fact that the two works were anthologized together with Grainger's essay on West-Indian diseases in an 1802 Jamaican publication at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 205-07, reprints a portion of the *Essay* in his appendix; and Sandiford, *Cultural Politics of Sugar*, esp. 102, 114-15, and Zacek, "Cultivating Virtue," esp. 23-25, discuss Samuel Martin as a culturally-resonant figure and a potential model for Grainger's "good Montano."

⁷⁹⁴ See M. Ellis, "Incessant Labour," for an especially crisp articulation of this reading.

landowning class by disguising the means of labor. This approach, which has proved especially attractive to Marxist-inflected analyses of georgic, does not fully come to terms with the didactic theory undergirding the more self-conscious georgic performances of the period. Readers of georgics, as Addison conceived them in his influential essay, were especially active readers. They labored to discover the practical and philosophical truth of which the georgic author may have offered only a suggestion. I therefore attend centrally to this feature of eighteenth-century georgic “design” in both of my analyses, albeit without discounting the propagandist potential of the genre.⁷⁹⁵

Eighteenth-century rhetorical and didactic conceptions of the georgic as a genre, difficult as they are for us to uncover today, remained in flux even—or especially—for georgic readers and writers of the period, as Frans De Bruyn has observed.⁷⁹⁶ I have sought to take this flexibility into account.

The intertextual relationship between Martin’s *Essay* and Grainger’s *Sugar-Cane* is as close as any intertextual relationship studied in this project. Indeed, at times *The Sugar-Cane* reads as a metaphrast of Martin’s *Essay*—a versified recasting of the textual materials of his prose predecessor. And Grainger himself hints at the relationship in the Preface to his poem, quite possibly as a way of bringing the *Essay* to the attention of

⁷⁹⁵ The georgic certainly lent itself to the incorporation of a propagandist element, even before 1760, the date often given as a starting point for the flourishing of the prose georgic in Britain and America; however, reducing the rhetorical aims of these writers to propagandist impulses, it seems to me, does not do justice to either the arguments that they offer or the techniques that they rely upon to inculcate improvements. For a study focused on the later period that proceeds with similar attention to diversity within both practice and rhetoric, even among propagandists, see Pamela Horn, “The Contribution of the Propagandist to Eighteenth-Century Agricultural Improvement,” *Historical Journal* 25.2 (1982): 313-29.

⁷⁹⁶ See esp. “From Georgic Poetry to Statistics and Graphs: Eighteenth-Century Representations and the ‘State’ of British Society,” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 17.1 (2004): 108; also “From Virgilian Georgic to Agricultural Science: An Instance in the Transvaluation of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” in *Augustan Subjects: Essays in Honor of Martin C. Battestin*, ed. Albert J. Rivero (Newark, Del.: U of Delaware P / London and Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1997), 47-67.

some members of his London audience for the first time.⁷⁹⁷ “I have often been astonished,” Grainger muses,

that so little has been published on the cultivation of the Sugar-Cane, while the press has groaned under folios on every other branch of rural oeconomy. It were unjust to suppose planters were not solicitous for the improvement of their art, and injurious to assert they were incapable of obliging mankind with their improvements.

And yet, except some scattered hints in Pere Labat, and other French travelers in America; an Essay, by Colonel Martyn of Antigua, is the only piece on plantership I have seen deserving a perusal. That gentleman’s pamphlet is, indeed, an excellent performance; and to it I own myself indebted.⁷⁹⁸

Grainger was basically correct in his assessment of the relative scarcity of agricultural pamphlets on sugarcane agriculture. Sugarcane planters were notoriously conservative in their approach to agriculture, protective of their financial interests, and reluctant (or unable) to experiment with “improvements.” Martin was a rare exception. Indeed, his *Essay Upon Plantership* has remained a document of central importance to scholars of the history of agriculture because it was one of the few printed documents of the period to discuss sugarcane plantation practices from the perspective of an experienced practitioner. But Grainger does not let Martin off the hook entirely, I will suggest, even if he owns himself “indebted” to his georgic predecessor. Sometimes contesting the efficacy of Martin’s proposed improvements from his perspective as a physician, Grainger is also more skeptical of the prospect of qualitative “improvement” in the West Indies. He calls for a reversion to an earlier stage of colonial life.

By developing this juxtaposition, I also hope to cast some light on the vexed and very interesting relationship between the prose georgic and the verse georgic during this period. Despite the seeming strictness of the georgic as a genre, it accommodated a range

⁷⁹⁷ The first London publication of the *Essay* was in 1765, the year after the first publication of *The Sugar-Cane*.

⁷⁹⁸ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, 89.

of potential didactic functions, thanks in part to the cross-pollinations that one can find between the prose and the verse forms of georgic writing. The genre of the georgic, I would suggest, was always about agricultural management (rather than “labor” in the broad sense of the term, as has sometimes been argued of the georgic “mode”); and yet, the traditions of the georgic genre that developed in Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century were continually animated by the question of who was (or should be) responsible for agricultural management and agricultural labor (aristocrats? their paid managers? commoners?), and also the question of who the audience of the georgic performance was meant to be. I will be dealing centrally with questions of audience here. Although neither the questions of colonial settlement nor the problems of address that I deal with in this case study are wholly translatable to other georgic prose and poetic pieces, I have attempted to draw attention to several groups of questions, including questions of audience, that prove central to georgic discourse in the period: How do georgic writers organize, and inculcate an understanding of, agricultural oeconomies? For whom are these visions intended? And what do they hope to accomplish in the dissemination?

Chapter Five

Practical Philosophy and the Colonial Common Weal: Samuel Martin's *An Essay Upon Plantership* (1750 & foll.) as an Appeal for Local Improvement

The Scotswoman Janet Schaw knew Colonel Samuel Martin (c. 1694/5-1776) as “the loved and revered father of Antigua.”⁷⁹⁹ Born in Antigua to a planter of the same name, Martin spent a substantial part of his long life on the island, where he managed a large plantation with upwards of 300 enslaved workers; served in local government; fathered some 23 children; and acted as head of the local militia and a leader in local government for several decades.⁸⁰⁰ Martin’s reputation was enhanced by the popularity of *An Essay Upon Plantership* (1750 & foll.), a prose treatise of about 50 pages that discusses strategies for sugarcane plantation management in technical detail. Revised periodically to include updates regarding the author’s latest “Experiments,” the *Essay* went through seven editions in Antigua and London between 1750 and 1785 and was reissued at least twice after that, once in a publication that also included Grainger’s *Sugar-Cane*.⁸⁰¹ Thus in addition to being “a leader of some prominence” in his small

⁷⁹⁹ *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the Years 1774 to 1776*, eds. Evangeline Walker Andrews and Charles McLean Andrews (New Haven: Yale UP, 1921), 213, in <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/schaw/schaw.html#p78> (accessed Nov. 24, 2007).

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸⁰¹ This is Richard Sheridan’s count, confirmed by the ESTC and WorldCat (see esp. 138). See Richard B. Sheridan, “Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter of Antigua, 1750-1776,” *Agricultural History* 34.3 (July 1960): 138. The first edition appears to have been published in Antigua in 1750. Subsequent editions emerged as follows, incorporating additions and “enlargements” along the way: 1750 (Antigua), 1756 (Antigua), 1765 (London), 1773 (London), 1767 (Antigua), 1785 (Antigua). Arthur Young reprinted the

island community,⁸⁰² and something of a native son, Martin gained renown beyond Antigua, at least for his plantership essay if not also for his personal history. Some of the Colonel's sons would also make their names in England and on the mainland of America, among them a governor of North Carolina (Josiah) and a member of British parliament (Samuel, Jr.), whose portrait was painted by Hogarth, and who dueled with John Wilkes late in 1763, less than a year before the publication of *The Sugar-Cane*.⁸⁰³

Martin is also known to have practiced what he preached in *An Essay Upon Plantership*. Richard Sheridan has concluded from his research into Martin's affairs that Martin was an unusually successful planter, financially speaking, who "treated his slaves more humanely than most other planters of his generation" and traveled around Antigua to teach other planters how to implement his improvements on their own plantations.⁸⁰⁴ Natalie Zacek, more recently, has fleshed out Sheridan's assessment after an extensive review of Martin's personal correspondence.⁸⁰⁵ West-Indian islanders "were rarely praised by British visitors" by the mid eighteenth century, Zacek observes further, but Martin got high marks from one such critic, who proclaimed that "[s]o many polite and liberal endowments, so much publick spirit, and manly exertion of his talents; so much strictness in moral conduct, so much of a Virtuous and Christian behavior, are seldom

Essay in 1792 as part of the *Annals of Agriculture*. In 1802, a Jamaican printer named Alexander Aikman republished Martin's *Essay* along with two of Grainger's works (*The Sugar-Cane* and his prose *Essay on the more Common West-India Diseases*) in *Three Tracts on West-Indian Agriculture*.

⁸⁰² Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, 128.

⁸⁰³ Richard B. Sheridan, "The West Indian Antecedents of Josiah Martin, Last Royal Governor of North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 54.3 (July 1977): 253-70; and Peter D. G. Thomas, "Wilkes, John (1725–1797)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed online July 5, 2010.

⁸⁰⁴ Sheridan, "Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter," 129.

⁸⁰⁵ Natalie A. Zacek, "Cultivating Virtue: Samuel Martin and the Paternal Ideal in the Eighteenth-Century English West Indies," *Wadabagei* 10.3 (2007): 8-31.

united in one Man.”⁸⁰⁶ By the time Janet Schaw visited Martin in Antigua at the end of his life, he was one of relatively few planters of the time not dependent on the African slave trade: his enslaved workers were healthy enough to bear and raise children.⁸⁰⁷ “He told me,” Schaw recalled, that

he had not bought in a slave for upwards of twenty years, and that he had the morning of our arrival got the return of the state of his plantations, on which there then were no less than fifty two wenches who were pregnant. These slaves, born on the spot and used to the Climate, are by far the most valuable, and seldom take these disorders, by which such numbers are lost that many hundreds are forced yearly to be brought into the Island.⁸⁰⁸

Remembering Martin’s personal courtesy, good humor, and native patriotism, Shaw reported that many of the improvements discussed in the essay had actually been carried out on Martin’s plantation.

My argument here is that Martin’s *Essay Upon Plantership* responded to the prospect of colonial improvement by imagining Antigua (and the sugarcane isles more generally) as territory in which sugarcane cultivation could be made the basis of a civilized form of settlement, evocative of a Roman model of slave-based colonial authority but nevertheless heavily influenced by modern British “culture” in all senses of that term. Originally published in Antigua, and clearly intended for a local audience of planters and plantation managers who might implement some of his practical suggestions on-site, Martin’s treatise appeals to a well-developed, paternalistic concept of agricultural settlement as a form of living in which the planter’s “interest” can be aligned with his “duty” in a manner that contributes to the good of the entire community.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., qtd. 10.

⁸⁰⁷ Sheridan, “Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter,” 130.

⁸⁰⁸ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, 104.

To inculcate this vision of the local “oeconomy” in his readers, Martin utilizes the rhetorical resources of the georgic in a surprisingly sophisticated way. The *Essay* does not look sophisticated at first glance. It unfolds in plain, spare, seemingly transparent prose—a quality that has augmented its documentary importance to the history of agriculture.⁸⁰⁹ But there is a hint of rhetorical self-consciousness even in Martin’s introductory announcement of non-ornamentation. “[I]t is the hardest task imaginable,” Martin muses,

to write with applause upon so trite a subject. This, Gentlemen, you will see he has treated with the utmost plainness, aiming much more at perspicuity, than ornament. Brilliant metaphors and other glittering embellishments are proper decorations for works of Fancy, who never charms the modern critick so much as when dress’d like a fashionable lady, in all the splendor of wit, beauty, and other finery of ribbons, laces, bugles, fringes, flounces, and flowers.⁸¹⁰

In a treatise in which a promise of plainness is issued in the form of an elaborate allegory of Fancy, there is good reason to attend closely to questions of rhetorical strategy and didactic indirection, especially when the author’s ostentatious rejection of such “glittering embellishments” is so closely aligned with the project of extending an ancient form of literary-agricultural disquisition to the British West Indies, a zone that made its landowners so wealthy that they were, at this point in the century, known far more for their “fashionable” finery than for their technical expertise in the details of West-Indian

⁸⁰⁹ Zacek, “Cultivating Virtue,” incorporates some elements of rhetorical analysis in her discussion of the paternalistic philosophy evidenced in his *Essay* and his letters; otherwise, the vast majority of modern discussants of the essay have been historians of agriculture. For the latter category of scholarship, which has counted on Martin’s transparency, see Richard B. Sheridan, “Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter of Antigua, 1750-1776,” *Agricultural History* 34.3 (July 1960): 126-39; J. H. Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry: An Historical Geography from its Origins to 1914* (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge UP, 1989); and Justin Roberts, “Working between the Lines: Labor and Agriculture on Two Barbadian Sugar Plantations, 1796-97,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62.3 (July 2006): 551-86.

⁸¹⁰ On the theory that earlier editions of the *Essay* tell us more about Martin’s original polemical orientation than later editions, I quote here from the 1750 second edition, which was the earliest edition to which I had access. See *An Essay Upon Plantership, humbly inscrib'd to all the planters of the British sugar-colonies in America*, 2nd ed. “corrected and enlarged” (Antigua, 1750), ii, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed July 5, 2010).

husbandry. This is, again, the drift of Martin’s complementary allegory of the “venerable matron Agriculture”:

[S]uch gaiety [as is associated with works of Fancy] would ill-become the gravity of that venerable matron Agriculture, whom I have the honor of introducing to your favour. Her dress must be simple and unaffected, becoming those reverend grey hairs with which old age has adorned her head; ... old as she is, her aspect has more winning graces than dress and beauty can bestow.⁸¹¹

These are the earliest hints that the linguistic plainness that characterizes Martin’s *Essay* belies several crucial rhetorical slights of hand—nuances that were intended to be gleaned and appreciated by its earliest readers. And an additional hint along these lines emerges in Martin’s opening invocation of the Roman writers Virgil and Columella as the “great Genii of antiquity” whom he emulates in his modern treatment of sugarcane.⁸¹² This rather specific pairing of georgics not only demonstrates Martin’s knowledge of the classics, but also announces a project in classical imitation that combined Virgilian rhetorical finesse with Columellan practicality and expertise.⁸¹³ I argue that the rhetorical strategies that Martin borrows from these authors give him a means of addressing his discourse to local planters in a dignified and sometimes indirect manner that allowed him to encourage local improvements—both moral and practical—without either accusing his fellow planters of neglect in a direct fashion or failing to point to pecuniary incentives for positive moral action. In this politeness of disposition, as in many other features of the pamphlet, Martin imagined the West Indies hopefully as a systematically functional,

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, ii.

⁸¹² This twelve-book treatise on agriculture (almost wholly written in prose, but modeled on Virgil’s *Georgics*) remains one of modern scholars’ best sources of information about ancient agriculture.

⁸¹³ Virgil is well known; Columella was a first-century retired Roman general who composed a twelve-book treatise on agriculture (almost wholly in prose) that remains one of modern scholars’ best sources of information about ancient agriculture. Columella owned slaves, and he discusses slave ownership in detail in his treatise.

potentially dignified, potentially independent region of the globe that was nevertheless heavily influenced by British “culture.”

I: Civic Order and the “AGRICOLA ANTEGONIANUS”

In Markman Ellis’s words, the georgic “makes the physical work of agriculture visible and, in this visibility, finds the origin of the endeavour of civilization.”⁸¹⁴ Martin’s *Essay Upon Plantership* fits this description. The mere fact of its local publication suggests a commitment to a vision of the British West Indies as a settlement with a local populace invested in the “public good,” a phrase intoned several times during the pamphlet. In this respect, Martin was arguably challenging, with his own example, an alternative vision of the region. By stereotype, West-Indian plantation owners and managers were known for their selfish pursuit of profit and their ill-educated boorishness. Writing to his friend Thomas Percy in 1762, Grainger noted of the Kittian culture that “[r]eading...is the least part of a Creole’s consideration. It is even happy if they can read at all; spell few of them can; and when they take up a book, modern romance, magazine, or newspapers are the extent of their lucubrations.”⁸¹⁵ And if Grainger was exaggerating, he was nevertheless not incorrect to note that there was in the West Indies very little literary activity related to the betterment of the common weal. The agricultural revolution was well underway in contemporary Britain; however, sugarcane planters of

⁸¹⁴ Markman Ellis, “‘Incessant Labour’: Georgic Poetry and the Problem of Slavery,” in *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition: Britain and Its Colonies, 1760-1838*, eds. Brycchan Carey, Markman Ellis, and Sara Salih (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 50.

⁸¹⁵ John Gilmore, “Introduction,” *The Sugar-Cane* (London, 1764), in *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger’s The Sugar-Cane (1764)* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000), qtd. 45.

this period proved notoriously impervious to the discourses of agricultural improvement that were gaining steam in contemporary Europe.⁸¹⁶

To be sure, Antigua, as the administrative capital of the Leeward Islands, retained a somewhat larger population of on-site plantation owners and their families and perhaps a greater spirit of public service as well.⁸¹⁷ Moreover, Antigua, unlike some of the other sugarcane isles, had a printer. Martin embraced this potential for public discourse. His pamphlet not only discussed, in a classical form, a topic unknown to the ancient Romans and Greeks, thereby promising to extend the confines of modern knowledge⁸¹⁸; he also

⁸¹⁶ Sheridan, “Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter,” observes: “In comparison with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, little change was observed in the system of cultivation and processing prior to 1800. With slight modification, the system of English agriculture which was transplanted in the tropics during the seventeenth century persisted for nearly two centuries.... According to G. B. Masefield, ‘the islands were largely untouched by the British agricultural revolution of the eighteenth century which resulted in the practice of rotational farming and alternate husbandry....’ Similarly, little progress was made in the technology of sugar processing. Crude cane-crushing mills, powered by animals, wind, or water, remained the basic unit of heavy equipment on plantations” (126-7). Sheridan observes further that “the institution of slavery” was itself partly responsible for the scarcity of literature of “improvement” in sugar plantership: “Plantation economies that depended upon slave labor were notorious for their conservatism in matters of agricultural improvement.” For one thing, “[l]and and labor absorbed so much capital that it was difficult to introduce labor saving techniques on any large scale”; for another, the introduction of horse-drawn plows “would have unbalanced the labor force” by leaving some portions of the slave population idle during certain parts of the year, therefore threatening to endanger “public order” from the planters’ point of view (139).

⁸¹⁷ Even here, ties to local government were not always strong enough to keep local administrators from sending their children to school in England or from journeying back themselves when their tenures of office were over, often bringing their families with them, to enjoy their large incomes in London or in their country estates. Martin’s family had been no exception. Soon after his father’s death at the end of the seventeenth century, young Martin traveled to the British Isles where he received his education, met and married (twice), started his family, and returned to the West Indies only intermittently before the late 1740s, when he arrived home to find that his plantation had been grossly mismanaged and set about rebuilding it, then deciding to remain on the island for the next several decades until his death. His sons, too, received their education in England and found employment there and in the North American colonies.

⁸¹⁸ Native to the East Indies and not readily grown in the Mediterranean, sugarcane was not known to the ancient Greeks and Romans. The question of the historical origins of sugarcane—East Indian, American, or otherwise—is also examined in detail in *The Art of Making Sugar* (London, 1752 – image 2); in a footnote to *The Sugar-Cane* Grainger himself considers the rarity of references to “this most useful and beautiful plant” in ancient literature and observes further that “the plant itself was not known to Europe, till the Arabians introduced it into the southern parts of Spain, Sicily, and those provinces of France which border on the Pyrenean mountains” (165). If contributing to general knowledge was in fact one of Martin’s rhetorical aims, he does not articulate it explicitly. *The Art of Making Sugar*, by contrast, includes no prefatory statement of intent but details the anatomy and history of sugarcane in the manner of the natural historian. Also see I.P. Baker’s *An Essay on the Art of Making Moscovado Sugar Wherein a New Process is Proposed* (Kingston, 1775), whose preface begins with the purposeful observation that “Notwithstanding

produced the first—and, as it turned out, virtually the only—agricultural treatise of its kind: a treatise about eighteenth-century sugarcane cultivation written by a practitioner for the explicit purpose of educating other practitioners.⁸¹⁹

The structure of the pamphlet, too, promotes a vision of the sugarcane isles as a colonial settlement in which cultivated land serves as the basis for an organized form of civilized life. The ordination of any georgic performance, especially in a georgic presented as a handbook or manual, was perceived to be crucial to its capacity to inculcate a vision of a rural oeconomy as a well-ordered distribution of natural resources, shaped by methods of working the land tested by time and experience. In classical georgics such as Virgil's *Georgics* and Columella's *De Re Rustica*, section divisions

our Reverence for Antiquity, it must be admitted, that natural Knowledge was confined within very narrow Bounds, till the Beginning of the present Century” (image 4). As this statement implies, Baker's essay treats its subject with “chemical” precision.

⁸¹⁹ There are really no other works from this period that describe the processes and procedures of sugarcane planting, cultivation, harvesting, refinement, and distilling with so much prosaic detail and that do so, as Martin's *Essay* does, with the authority of an experienced practitioner. There are, as Grainger puts it, “some scattered hints” in the writings of travelers to the sugarcane isles (e.g. Father Labat's), in contemporary histories of the West Indies, in legal documents, and in unpublished personal letters (e.g. Martin's own). But there is no other treatise that discusses all aspects of sugarcane cultivation from the perspective of an experienced practitioner. Moreover, there were certainly no other tracts so resolutely dedicated to the project of proposing improvements at every stage of sugarcane plantership. J.H. Galloway cites Martin's pamphlet prominently among documents that offer useful evidence of local discussions of improvement in common practices of sugarcane plantership. See “Tradition and Innovation in the American Sugar Industry, c. 1500-1800: An Explanation,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 75.3 (Sept. 1985): 334-51. “No doubt much knowledge of innovations spread by demonstration and word-of-mouth,” Galloway writes, “but of this there is little documentary record except of the discussions that took place in the economic societies of several Spanish American cities (Shafer 1958). There is, however, abundant evidence in the literature of the time (Ligon 1657; Sloane 1707; Chélus 1719; Leslie 1740; Labat 1742; Beckford 1790; Edwards 1793-1801) of debates about the merits of particular innovations. Samuel Martin's *Essay on Plantership* passed through seven editions between 1750 and 1785, and the seventh edition was reprinted in 1792 and 1802 (Sheridan 1960, 138)” (335). The other works cited here are all travelers' accounts, natural histories, and/or political histories: Richard Ligon, *A true and exact history of the island of Barbados* (London, 1657); Sir Hans Sloane, *A voyage to the islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica* (London, 1707); De Chelus, *Histoire Naturelle du Cacao et du Sucre* (Paris 1719, Amsterdam 1720); Charles Leslie, *A new history of Jamaica* (London, 1740) and *A new and exact count of Jamaica* (Edinburgh, 1740); Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amerique* (Paris, 1722 and The Hague, 1724); William Beckford, *A descriptive account of the island of Jamaica* (London, 1790); Bryan Edwards, *The history, civil and commercial, of the British colonies in the West Indies* (London and Dublin, 1793). Martin's pamphlet, in other words, was distinctive not only in Britain, but also in Europe.

within the work divided plants from animals and lower orders from higher orders, and divisions within sections incorporated a sense of procedure (Appendix A). Georgic authors typically began with discussions of how best to cultivate the soil; then moved to the question of how best to cultivate crops; then turned to harvesting procedures; and so forth. Accordingly, the organization of a georgic had the potential to contribute to a vision of nature as a hierarchy sanctioned by God to make humans the custodians of plant and animal species and, in turn, to provide them with sustenance through well-distributed labor. Martin appeals to this sense of order. Consider his chapter and subject divisions in relation to Virgil and Columella (Appendices A & B). Like his classical predecessors, Martin distinguishes between animal and vegetable kingdoms. Like Virgil, he adheres to a four-book structure. His prefatory essays obey a hierarchical arrangement reminiscent of Virgil's *Georgics* in particular, albeit in a descending order of priority, from planter to working-class white inhabitants to enslaved workers to livestock—all by way of introduction to the controlling vegetable theme, where he follows the sugarcane through all the stages of its lifecycle through the processes of refinement and distillation that transform the sugarcane into muscovado (coarse-grained sugar) and rum.

Georgic discourse typically envisioned civilized life both emerging from and manifested in the responsible cultivation of the soil. Martin's *Essay* had a difficult case to make, for the reasons mentioned previously; however, he does much throughout the treatise to convey the impression that the planter both imposes a healthy order on the land and is made virtuous by his careful oversight. A scrupulous sense of order marks his patient categorization of soil types and manuring processes; his precise instructions for holing the cane (three feet for each cane-row, no more, and "two or three plants to an

hole,” with cane-rows planted in straight lines to allow for the horse-hoe-plow⁸²⁰); and also his vision of tidy cane rows lined by coconut trees. His balanced prose urges regularity, discipline, benevolent but hard-nosed masculine leadership, and an effort to consider minute details in relation to the big picture. Sobriety pervades even his discussions of rum-making and his account of the capacity of coconut milk to “cool the effervescence of the blood in this hot region.”⁸²¹ The subject of slave labor is handled directly but not exhaustively, and with emphasis on the importance of the planter’s embodiment of paternalistic virtue.⁸²² The planter must be “a pattern to be imitated by all his family.”⁸²³ Encouraging a mix of “diligence” with “content, good humour, and cheerfulness,” Martin insists on the planter’s moral character as a basis for his successful leadership. “Justice, temperance, patience, and fortitude, tho’ cardinal virtues of the highest quality, must be the planter’s constant familiars, ever ready to do *right* to those who suffer wrong.”⁸²⁴ He advocates feeding one’s slaves well and organizing their work humanely. “Negroes,” he writes, are “rational beings,” who “ought to be treated accordingly; that is, with humanity and benevolence as our fellow creatures, created by the same Almighty hand.”⁸²⁵ If the planter wishes to govern and win the obedience of “some hundreds of his dependents,” Martin argues, he must inspire them with gratitude and a sense of obligation, protecting them from harm, and exemplifying in his own person rationality, probity, and temperate authority.⁸²⁶ Joseph Addison described Virgil’s *Georgics* as a work in which the poet “delivers the meanest of his Precepts with a kind of

⁸²⁰ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 25-6.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸²² Again, see Zacek, “Cultivating Virtue,” esp. 11-15

⁸²³ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, viii.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, viii.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

Grandeur”: “he breaks the Clods and tosses the Dung about with an air of gracefulness.”⁸²⁷ This georgic ambition clearly defines Martin’s pamphlet, whose hierarchical structure reflects a considered civic vision in which “[t]he subordination of men to each other in society is essentially necessary to the good of the whole,”⁸²⁸ and whose prose style and abiding person convey an image of grandeur and dignity, if not (as we might see it today) an expression of moral righteousness.

Much of the work of setting out this civilized vision of the West Indies happens in the Preface itself, which is dedicated with warmth “TO ALL THE PLANTERS OF THE *British SUGAR-COLONIES*.”⁸²⁹ Here, Martin sketches the character of the ideal planter as a Renaissance man—in Martin’s words, a “practical philosopher”—who has at his fingertips book knowledge, practical knowledge of agriculture and other sundry things, military experience, legislative experience, and good leadership skills.⁸³⁰ The planter should enjoy an “intimate” familiarity with history (particularly the “famous Generals of antiquity”), an acquaintance with “the common forms of justice, and our statute laws,” and an adeptness at handling the many day-to-day activities of plantation life: account books, mechanics, rudimentary architecture, sugar planting and boiling, and “a little physical skill” to help him tend to “his sick negroes; at least enough to cure such acute diseases as are incident to the country he inhabits.”⁸³¹

This upright demeanor is conveyed partly by what Martin does not say—or does not say explicitly. Directives to provide proper nourishment and protection to enslaved workers are offered in positive terms, with their contrary stated only in the abstract. For

⁸²⁷ In John Dryden, *Works*, V.151.9-11.

⁸²⁸ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 10.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, i.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, iii-vii.

instance: “In case of sickness, the good planter will exercise in person his utmost care and tenderness in the administration of proper physick, and food, with an unsparing hand: for, to be parsimonious in such cases, is both weak and wicked.”⁸³² Acts of human cruelty are suggested by contrast (and even then, by contrast to non-Europeans), and then quickly dismissed as the acts of masters who do not know their self-interest: “[I]t is evident from experience,” Martin asserts confidently, “that he who feeds his negroes well, proportioneth their labour to their age, sex, and strength, and treats them with kindness and good-nature, will reap a much larger product, and with infinitely more ease and self-satisfaction, than the most cruel Egyptian task-master, who starves his negroes, or chastises them with undue severity.”⁸³³ Nowhere does Martin explicitly discuss corporal punishment of human workers as a common reality in the British West Indies. He does offer counsel on this issue, but he does so indirectly. Direct references to physical violence on the plantation emerge only in his advice to the planter not to whip his livestock and not to make his slaves do work that is better suited to livestock. To be sure, the position of that material in close adjacency to a discussion of how the planter should act to “preserve his negroes in health and strength” contributes to an ongoing elision among “negroes, cattle, mules, and horses” as “the *nerves* of a sugar plantation”—an elision that simultaneously diminishes the humanity of the cane workers insinuated in the comment and casts aspersions on the planter who fails to “protec[t]” his slaves “from the flying rope lashes of a cruel driver (who needs nothing more than a goad).”⁸³⁴

Complementing this image of authoritarian restraint, Martin rehabilitates a Roman ideal as the basis for his vision of British colonial propriety: an image of a Cincinnatus or

⁸³² Ibid., 12.

⁸³³ Ibid., 11.

⁸³⁴ Ibid., 11; 9; 18.

(perhaps more aptly) a Columella as a career politician or military man who turned to agriculture as a dignified second occupation after a retirement from public service.

Martin invokes “that venerable matron Agriculture” as a transhistorical allegory for the discourse and life experience in which he participates, and he lists British colonial planters among those who might be charmed by her aged “aspect,” which “has more winning graces than dress and beauty can bestow”⁸³⁵:

By these charms Agriculture captivated all the renowned legislators, patriots, soldiers, orators, and poets of antiquity, who gladly devoted their hours of retirement to this admirable Instructress, and her industrious sister Experience.

In those days when Rome was in its meridian of virtue and glory, it was common to see a dictator resigning with pleasure, all the pomp of a triumph to till his little farm; as if Agriculture was the only genuine parent of ease, innocence, temperance, health, wisdom and fortitude: certain it is however, that the best plowmen were the bravest generals, and the wisest politicians of the Roman commonwealth; as if the same qualifications were equally requisite to form those very different characters. This I confess seems a paradox at first view; but upon closer examination will appear not less true of a good planter, than it was formerly of a Roman husbandman.⁸³⁶

The reference was pointed and strategic. Slavery had been a widely-accepted practice in the Roman Empire, one alluded to by Virgil and prominently treated by Columella as an accepted fact of Roman agriculture in *De Re Rustica*. And British georgic traditions proved comparatively unwelcoming to the prominence of chattel slavery in the colonies.

The political bent of Dryden’s translation of Virgil’s *Georgics* has already been mentioned: in calling the *Georgics* the “best Poem of the best Poet,” Dryden had reoriented the royalist hierarchy associated with the Virgilian *rota* throughout the seventeenth century, thereby locating the *Georgics*’ preeminence as an English poem in the “Country” party’s resistance to the monarch—a gesture that associated the idealized husbandman with an ideal of English estate owners as self-assertive, independent

⁸³⁵ Ibid., ii.

⁸³⁶ Ibid., ii-iii.

citizens. John Philips' *Cyder* (1708) took the gesture one step further by imagining as the produce of the English landscape the fruit of "man's first disobedience" (the apple), processed into a sociable drink, and rendered in Miltonic free verse. From then on, the English/British verse georgic had maintained a close association with the assertion and description of English "liberty" and independence. Martin was therefore taking on an inherently difficult rhetorical project in representing and advocating a slave-based system of British agriculture in a Virgilian georgic form.⁸³⁷ To do so, he imagined the British sugar colonies as a reincarnation of a slave-based form of Roman agricultural civilization distinguished by the prominence of former generals and dictators as the paternalist heads of local farms. The signature of Martin's dedicatory address, "AGRICOLA ANTEGONIANUS" (Antiguan Farmer) completes the elision.⁸³⁸

II: The Question of Rhetorical Orientation

In light of the negative reputation of white West-Indian inhabitants at the mid-century,⁸³⁹ it is tempting to see *An Essay Upon Plantership* as a kind of propaganda, intended to present an attractive picture of West-Indian settlement to the world beyond the sugarcane isles. After all, the *Essay* was published not only in Antigua, but also, by

⁸³⁷ M. Ellis, "Incessant Labour," makes this case with respect to Grainger's *Sugar-Cane*: "despite itself, the poem's georgic form reveals to the reader the essential incongruity between the labour of slave and free workers and, in this way, the poem stands as a significant, albeit macabre, monument on the road to abolition" (46). Although I come to different conclusions in my own reading of Grainger's poem, the broader argument in Ellis's essay applies usefully to Martin's *Essay*. For British georgic writers attentive to the literary history sketched out above (especially Martin, Grainger, and those dealing with North American slavery), the prominence of chattel slavery was a central ideological and formal problem, even if there were Roman precedents advocating the practice.

⁸³⁸ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, viii.

⁸³⁹ Cf. Zacek, "Cultivating Virtue," 10.

1765, in London.⁸⁴⁰ Martin’s dedicatory assertion to the “PLANTERS” of the “*British SUGAR-COLONIES*” that “the Proposer will think his pains amply rewarded, by promoting your interest with that of the public” lends itself to an idea of promoting public “interest” as disseminating propaganda in a “public” outside the cane isles.⁸⁴¹ This inclination is further suggested by the fact that the treatise was accompanied in one of its late London editions by a pro-slavery tract.⁸⁴²

In addition, the genesis of the treatise has a curious place within Martin’s personal history—a history that draws attention to the question of motive. Martin presents himself as an “Old Planter” in the *Essay*—an agricultural writer with years of accumulated experience to offer, great eagerness to share his agricultural secrets with the local community, and little interest in refraining from doing so. But, even though Martin had been born in Antigua and had gained ownership of his plantation almost fifty years before, he had not spent all of his adult life in the West Indies. Indeed, locals remembered Martin for his boyhood connection to “the first slave rebellion in Antiguan history”—the incident by virtue of which Green Castle estate devolved to him.⁸⁴³ In 1701, Martin’s father had been killed in a Christmas-day uprising, apparently for having

⁸⁴⁰ In any case, this is one of several possible explanations for the rationale informing its initial London publication (1765) and/or for the effects of that publication: 1) it was intended for absentee planters living in London, 2) it served as pro-slavery propaganda (as noted previously), 3) its publication was brought about because the publication of Grainger’s poem, first published in 1764, drew attention to it, or 4) some combination of the above.

⁸⁴¹ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, i.

⁸⁴² “Preface upon the Slavery of Negroes, in the British Colonies, Shewing, that they are much happier than in their Native Country, much happier than the Subjects of Arbitrary Governments, and at least as happy as the Labourers of Britain,” in *An essay upon plantership, humbly inscribed to his excellency George Thomas, Esq; Chief Governor of all the Leeward Islands, as a monument to antient friendship....*, 5th ed. (London, 1773), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed July 5, 2010).

⁸⁴³ Zacek, “Cultivating Virtue,” 12. Zacek writes that the story of Martin’s murder “was told so frequently over generations that two American abolitionists who visited the island in 1837 identified Green Castle [the Martin estate] as ‘memorable as the scene of the murder of the present proprietor’s grandfather.’”

“refused to grant his slaves a holiday”⁸⁴⁴; the younger Martin, then just a boy, hid with his mother and siblings in a canefield while “the killers engaged in a round of ritualistic mutilation of the corpse.”⁸⁴⁵ They attempted to dismember the limbs of the corpse, decapitated it, and then “washed [the man’s head] with rum and triumphed over it.”⁸⁴⁶ Not long after, the young Martin left for England, where he enrolled in school, married, started his family, and remained off and on (more on than off, it seems) for much of his early adult life. He returned to his estate in 1750 to find that it had been grossly mismanaged by hired overseers. “He was later to write that his Negroes were reduced to a very small number, his stock of cattle decreased, his sugar works ‘all tumbling down,’ and his land ‘ten fold worse than it was naturally’”⁸⁴⁷—losses that prompted him to set about an aggressive rehabilitation program and compose the *Essay Upon Plantership*. Thus, the pamphlet was not so much the product of ongoing, accumulated experience in farming as it was the result of a kind of culture shock (or so it would seem from what evidence we have).

These misrepresentations notwithstanding, Martin’s principal aim in the pamphlet does appear to have been local education and community-building. He claims in his Dedication that he is an old planter who has “passed the ambition of acquiring reputation by authorship: for, if that had been his view, he could not have paid his court to Fame in this remote corner of the world, where she never can have the power of conferring

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid., 12. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, whose birth and death dates I have followed above, lists 1697 as the date of the uprising. But the point remains: the author of *An Essay Upon Plantership* was just a boy when his father died and the plantation reverted to him. See John Martin, “Martin, Samuel (1694/5–1776),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed online May 7, 2010.

⁸⁴⁵ Zacek, “Cultivating Virtue,” 12.

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid., qtd. 12.

⁸⁴⁷ Sheridan, “Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter,” 128.

dignity, or of sounding her golden trumpet.”⁸⁴⁸ His reputation for helping other planters implement his techniques has already been mentioned. And Zacek observes further that “an examination of his personal papers shows him to be less concerned with recuperating the planters’ image in the metropole than with encouraging them, through his example, to become better examples of English Christian paternalism in their island communities.”⁸⁴⁹ Thus, to the extent that he aimed to serve the interests of his fellow planters, he attempted—like Young—to do it from the inside out: to encourage and increase their merit from within, thereby reforming local practice in ways that might truly deserve foreign praise.

The text of the pamphlet conveys this impression, not only in its delineation of innumerable concrete suggestions (which, after all, might seem to be wasted on most audiences not located in the cane isles and able to implement them immediately), but also in his descriptions of the planter’s character, which retain a crucial, hortatory quality. Consider, for instance, his discussion of the planter’s “liberal education,” in which his language consistently straddles the line between asserting a moral mandate for an attentive audience and appearing to describe what planters already are:

A liberal education is undoubtedly the principal ingredient necessary to form a good planter, who ought at least to know the rudiments of all the sciences, if he attains not the mastery of them: but to be more precise, let us take a short view of the proper qualifications of a planter in his publick and private capacity. If he is born to a large estate, or has acquired it by industry, he must expect to be a member of the legislature, and of the military order also. In the former character he must understand the whole science of good policy, founded upon the nature and ends of government in general; and in particular upon the constitution of Britain his mother country.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴⁸ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, ii.

⁸⁴⁹ Zacek, “Cultivating Virtue,” 10.

⁸⁵⁰ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, iii, my emphasis.

The panegyric (especially the royal panegyric) had long exploited a strategy that envisioned the didactic experience as a process whereby the addressee would be flattered into improving his or her conduct: the poet's idealized picture of the addressee would stimulate him or her to reflect on prior and potential behavior and prompt him or her to become more like the image of greatness depicted in the speech.⁸⁵¹ Martin uses a similar technique here—one wholly consistent with traditions of georgic discourse, whose didactic techniques typically negotiated a rhetorical compromise between procedural descriptions of what a husbandman *does*, in general, and second-person addresses to the husbandman that proffer direct advice about what a husbandman *should do*, in ideal circumstances. By adopting language that takes for granted his readers' attainment of a "liberal education" and a sense of public duty, Martin's presentation promises to conscript them into service.

III: Making Interest and Duty Agree

Martin's most compelling technique for persuading his fellow planters to improve their system of plantation, however, is his effort throughout the treatise to highlight the financial rewards that the planter can enjoy by treating his cane workers humanely and overseeing all of the details of the plantation in person. For instance, the planter, Martin avers, "must...be an expert sugar boiler, and distiller, if he expects to make the most of his estate"⁸⁵²—expertise, his subsequent sections on boiling and distilling make clear (III-IV), that can only be gained by time-tested, firsthand "experience." Martin's rhetorical method is not calculated to win the approval of judgmental metropolitan readers who

⁸⁵¹ James D. Garrison, *Dryden and the Tradition of Panegyric* (Berkeley, LA, and London: U California P, 1975).

⁸⁵² Martin, 1750 *Essay*, vii.

might be inclined to envision planters as avaricious and cruel. Rather than encouraging his fellow planters to seek virtuous, moral behavior as its own reward, Martin seeks to trick them into moral improvement by encouraging them to consider how they can reap more financial rewards by implementing a number of minor improvements or procedural modifications.

This tactic is perhaps most obvious in Martin's suggestion that a single, concrete improvement might have several different benefits, some of them human (or animal), others more plainly utilitarian. Consider his advice about planting coconut trees along the roads between plantations:

Nothing surely of so much beauty is so little expence as planting coco-nut, or spreading timber –trees in avenues along the high ways, if each proprietor of the lands adjoining, hath any taste of elegance, or feeling for other men: but both those kinds of trees will yield also great profit to the proprietor by furnishing him with timber, when perhaps not otherwise to be had; or with delicious milk fitted by nature to cool the effervescence of the blood in this hot region; and also to improve our spirits made from sugar, to the delicacy and softness of arrack [a spirit made from sugar and rum]. Coco-nut trees are both very beautiful and shady, bearing round heads of great expansion, upon natural trunks, or pillars of elegant proportion, and of such an height as to furnish a large shade, with a free circulation of air, equally refreshing to man and beast.⁸⁵³

Pausing for a moment to answer the anticipated objections of a frugal planter who does not wish to lay out the capital for such a project, Martin continues:

Let ... a man consider, besides the benefits above suggested, he will beautify his estate to the resemblance of a most sumptuous garden. And if this whole island naturally diversified by numberless little hills and dales, were planted with avenues along all the high roads; and the summit of every barren hill crowned with clumps of trees, it would be the most magnificent garden the world could ever boast of since that of Eden: and probably that very beauty might not only render it more healthful to the inhabitants, by preserving them from fevers kindled by the burning sun-beams; but also much more fruitful, by seasonable weather: for, as by cutting down all its woods, an hot country becomes more subject to

⁸⁵³ Ibid., 16-17.

excessive droughts, so by replanting it in the manner above described, it would probably become more fruitful.⁸⁵⁴

This is the most obviously elective suggestion that Martin includes in the pamphlet. One notices how carefully he negotiates among aesthetic considerations (the prospect of a vista that resembles a “magnificent,” Edenic “garden”), practical considerations (timber), gustatory delights (arrack), questions of how to promote good health (shade and preservation from “fevers”), and questions of community relations (the cooperation among neighbors, the prospect of attenuating the effects of drought on the island as a whole). There are numerous reasons to consider such a beautification of one’s plantation, Martin avers, making room for the possibility that his readers will be more readily persuaded by the self-interested rationale than the rhetorical question that introduced the passage as an outgrowth of a meditation on good stewardship: “If the care of providing shade for brute creatures is so much the duty and interest of their owners, how much more is it agreeable to the laws of humanity to provide shade for every human creature traveling upon the high roads in this hot climate?”⁸⁵⁵

As is the case here, Martin often articulates a set of calculations that seek to bring “interest” and “duty” into agreement. We have encountered this before: Pope’s *Essay on Man*, by proposing that “Self-love” and “Social” could be “the same,” was developing a similar argument about the relationship between individual self-interest and the good of the polity. As Bolingbroke had explained the argument of the third epistle, it

shews how an universal cause ‘works to one end, but works by various laws,’ how Man, & Beast, & vegetable are linked in a mutual Dependency, parts necessary to each other & necessary to the whole, how human societys were formed, from

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid., 17-18.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., 16.

what spring true Religion and true Policy are derived, how God has made our greatest interest & our plainest Duty indivisibly the same...⁸⁵⁶

Martin does not always authorize his practical advice by arguing that such principles of plantership are a product of God's design for the world, but he occasionally does.

Moreover, he consistently invokes an idea of the plantation as an intricately-ordered piece of machinery whose operations must be timed carefully and whose constituent parts must be attended to in relationship with one another. As he puts it in his discussion of "negroes, cattle, mules, and horses" as "the *nerves* of a sugar plantation," "the success of the whole consists chiefly in this, as in a well constructed machine, upon the energy, and right disposition of the main springs, or primary parts."⁸⁵⁷

In this particular section, which is ambiguously titled "AN ESSAY on PLANTERSHIP," in repetition of the main title, and which develops a philosophy of stewardship that prioritizes the health of the human and animal populations on a plantation, Martin's counsel recalls a feudal idea of the landowner in his capacity as a local lord obliged to provide protection to those serfs and lands in his charge. A planter should feed one's enslaved workers well (a detail given formal and tonal priority in the section); tend them when they are sick; provide them with rest and sufficient shade; refrain from making them do work better fit for beasts of burden; and attend similarly to one's livestock, providing them with proper food, shelter, and respite from the hot tropical sun. This is the planter's duty. Here, as elsewhere in the treatise, Martin does not emphasize an idea of *mutual* obligation between lord and subject—for, again, the authoritarian strain looms large in the pamphlet—but, rather, he theorizes the

⁸⁵⁶ Bolingbroke to Swift, 2 Aug 1731. See Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (NY and London: Norton / New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1985), qtd. 512.

⁸⁵⁷ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 9.

management of a plantation as a form of leadership in which the *planter's* "interest" must be made to accord with his "duty," a formulation sometimes elided with the moral responsibilities of the overseer. "[A]s it is in the interest of every planter to preserve his negroes in health and strength," he observes at one point,

so, every act of cruelty is not less repugnant to the master's real profit, than it is contrary to the laws of humanity: and if a manager considers his own *case*, and his employer's interest (as he must do if an honest man) he will treat all negroes under his care with due benevolence, for good discipline is by no means inconsistent with humanity; on the contrary, it is evident from experience, that he who feeds his negroes well, proportioneth their labour to their age, sex, and strength, and treats them with kindness and good-nature, will reap a much larger product, and with infinitely more ease and self-satisfaction, than the most cruel Egyptian task-master, who starves his negroes, or chastises them with undue severity.⁸⁵⁸

Note, again, the attention to the proportion and disposition of parts. Martin's language of economic incentive is employed in a manner that promises to inculcate a bird's-eye perspective on the inner-workings of plantation life so that the good of the whole community—what the writers in the previous case study would have called the "publick weal"—is brought into accord with the needs of its individual members.

And if Martin places a significant emphasis on a consideration of the "interests" of the man at the top of the pyramid, he also locates significant responsibility in that role, and in this respect he compares favorably with Pope, who claimed that an author could trust his contemporary readers to make something virtuous out of a self-indulgent literary performance. This is especially evident in Martin's treatment of the topic of how best to time the harvests. The sugarcane plantation was an unusual form of agriculture from a European perspective, because the changes of the seasons did not dictate the patterns of labor and leisure, planting and harvest, to the same degree that the European changes of

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid., 11.

the seasons did. The tropical planter was therefore at greater liberty to determine how to distribute the various tasks of running a plantation throughout the year. Indeed, many plantation managers elected to plant the cane in portions, so the harvest would come in at multiple times of the year, thereby apportioning the labor at intervals through the annual cycle (such as it was) and lowering the risk of exposing all of the crop at once to the same environmental risks (fire, blight, drought). Thus Martin pauses, on one occasion, to explain why one should not schedule the harvest schedule so as to allow the grinding of the canes during the hurricane season—a formulation that, again, exploits the mechanical conceit to place the onus on the manager’s good judgment:

There is not . . . a greater error in the whole practice of plantership than to make sugar, or to plant canes at improper seasons of the year; for, by mismanagements of this kind every succeeding crop is put out of regular order, tho’ a plantation ought to be considered as a well constructed machine, compounded of various wheels, turning different ways, and yet all contributing to the great end proposed: but if any one part runs too fast or too slow in proportion to the rest, the main purpose is defeated.⁸⁵⁹

Here, as elsewhere, Martin’s concrete advice serves to limit the exposure of the cane workers to the dangerous weather, even as the implied “main purpose” is financial gain: by grinding later than the last day of June, “we hazard not only the destruction of our wind-mills by hurricanes, but make bad sugar, at infinite expence of time and labor, both of negroes and cattle, when the juice of canes becomes weak and waterish.”⁸⁶⁰

IV: Georgic Oeconomies

This continual appeal to the pecuniary concerns of his fellow planters, which sets in motion Martin’s prefatory suggestion that the planter should be a “real practical

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., 30.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid., 30.

philosopher,” is liberally employed throughout the treatise, consistently with reference to the humane treatment of enslaved cane workers. It reflects a sense of the georgic as a genre that helps a husbandman or landlord to systematize the local agricultural “oeconomy”: that is, all of the component parts of a self-sustaining system of agriculture (soil, plants, livestock, manure, humans) whose quantities and interrelationships require management and monitoring because of their close interrelationships. Plant crops fed livestock which, in turn, provided fertilizer to keep the soil in shape, and the human steward labors to maintain the health of the system, thereby receiving sustenance from it; and God’s creatures were thereby improved by “culture”—that is, the intervention of human art (“*manure*” in its etymological sense of a working with the hands, especially when the soil became tired from overuse).

The prose georgic developed substantially during the course of the eighteenth century in Britain and especially America, where “unsettled” land was more readily available for the taking. This discourse lent itself, in prose, to the development of charts and ledgers comparing and contrasting the costs of particular strategies for management (Appendices C & D).⁸⁶¹ The genre grew to incorporate various forms of focused experimentation on new techniques of farming (C) and, by the end of the century, demonstrated a high degree of ambition with respect to the categorization and systematization of the maintenance costs and benefits of various interrelated features of a farm (D). Economic discourse had long been rooted in the Greek sense of *oeconomicus* as the art or science of managing a household, a farm, or (more broadly) national produce or even international relations, conceived in metaphor as a household or set of

⁸⁶¹ Frans De Bruyn examines a complementary idea (especially with respect to conceptions of “the state”) in “From Georgic Poetry to Statistics and Graphs: Eighteenth-Century Representations and the ‘State’ of British Society,” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 17.1 (2004): 107-139.

households, in which the managers saw fit to protect the good of the group.⁸⁶² Georgic writers during the period appealed to this idea as well, poetry and prose writers alike, and they discussed the prospect of the husbandman's pursuit of financial gain with varying degrees of moral disapproval. But, at bottom, a principal aim of georgic discourse during the period was to inculcate a vision of the whole "oeconomy" in which the right disposition of labors, routines, procedures, and consumers promised to contribute to the appearance of the land, the good of the community that lived upon it, and the perpetuity of the settlement that emerged from the proper cultivation of the land.

Martin appeals to this idea of "oeconomy" throughout his pamphlet. As he puts it in the following definition of his central term (which was something of a neologism⁸⁶³):

By plantership I understand the art of managing a sugar plantation to the best advantage; so as to make the most of its produce, both in quantity and quality. To effect a design so comprehensive, it is necessary to understand every branch of the art precisely; to plan every scheme with mature premeditation; and to exercise all the arts of oeconomy in the execution: for, as a sugar plantation is the most expensive kind of estate; so the net produce of it will be more or less in proportion to the managers frugality. It is therefore the duty of a good planter to inspect every part of his plantation with his own eyes; to place the provisions, stores, and utensils in regular order, and in safe repositories; that by preserving them in perfection all kinds of waste may be prevented.⁸⁶⁴

The word "oeconomy" retains a double sense here as a rural *oeconomy* and "economy" in the adjectival sense: "frugality," as Martin puts it.

Here, as elsewhere, Martin presents the pursuit of financial gain as an incentive for the planter's on-site management of his plantation. Absenteeism was becoming increasingly common during the course of the eighteenth century, and Martin, having

⁸⁶² Keith Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

⁸⁶³ See *OED*, Draft Revision 2009. There is a 1603 entry, but Martin's *Essay* is the second entry. The *OED* defines "plantership" as "The office or position of planter; (later) *esp.* that of plantation owner or manager"; I understand it in Martin's usage not as an "office" but as an ongoing act of government: "the art of managing a ... plantation to the best advantage," with all the active oversight that that management involves.

⁸⁶⁴ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 9.

seen firsthand the harm that absenteeism could do to one's profits and one's capital, surely had an eye to reforming that problem, which also greatly affected the potential for sustaining the monocultural settlement as it was then constituted. With an eye to those deleterious effects, Martin counsels preventing against "all kinds of waste."

But this appeal to "frugality" did not merely reflect a moral principle of asceticism or even, in the strictest sense, an economic principle of frugality; it reflected a practical understanding of the importance of keeping a close watch on excesses of expenditure—a nod to the common stereotype of West-Indian plantation owners as tightfisted and miserly. West-Indian sugarcane "oeconomies" during this period, unlike their North American counterparts, required unusual thrift with respect to the stockpiling and distribution of certain scarcely-available resources, thanks in part to the small sizes of the islands and the prominence and extent of the monoculture, a form of settlement that had developed in response to "economic" considerations in the modern sense of the term. During the seventeenth century, the British West Indies had manifested a more diverse rural "oeconomy," incorporating such cash crops as tobacco, cotton, and indigo, as well as other subsistence crops. But as planters realized that more money could be made from sugarcane than from any other cash crop, they gradually turned over all arable lands to sugar, completing the process on a number of Caribbean islands by the first few decades of the eighteenth century. By 1754, Governor Thomas of the Leeward Islands (where Antigua is located) declared that "[a]most every Inche" of arable land was dedicated to sugarcane.⁸⁶⁵ This left scarce room for basic food crops. Many foodstuffs had to be imported from North America, the British Isles, and elsewhere. Thus "frugality," in

⁸⁶⁵ Vincent K. Hubbard, *A History of St. Kitts: The Sweet Trade* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2002), qtd. 91, ctg. F.W. Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies 1700-1763*.

Martin's employment of the term, means not simply monitoring the production and distribution of excess, but allocating what scarce resources were available for basic subsistence and shelter in a manner that benefited the whole. In this sense, "frugality" meant preventing "all kinds of waste" with the good of the community in mind. Some of these forms of distribution and waste management were well established in plantation routines. Because there were few groves of trees on the islands, for instance, the *bagasse*, or cane stalks left over from the crushing process, would typically be used as the principal fuel for boiling. Martin goes above and beyond these traditional routines in his consideration of the details of plantation management. He counsels foresight, for instance, in planting the hedges of the boundaries of one's plantation: the planter should "lay up a stock of brush-wood cut from the hedges of his boundary before the crop begins" to supplement the "mill-trash" as fuel.⁸⁶⁶

He also specifically counsels *against* the kinds of thriftiness that promise to endanger the wellbeing of the human communities living on the plantation. "The planters of Barbados," he writes,

(who are perhaps the most skilful of all others, and exact to a nicety, in calculations of profit and loss) are with respect to their cattle the most remiss of any in all the islands: as if the carriage of canes to the mill, and of plantation-produce to the market, was not as essential as any other branch of plantership. . . . Some planters are nevertheless so ingeniously thrifty as to carry their canes upon negroes heads; not only degrading human nature to the toil of brutes, but acting in that respect diametrically opposite to their own apparent interest, which cannot be promoted more effectually, than by saving the labor of human hands in all cases, where the labor of brutes can be substituted. To that end no means of preserving those creatures in health and strength ought to be neglected.⁸⁶⁷

The phenomenon that he describes—conveniently attributing it to a British colony distant from the Leeward Islands—was a response to the extremely restrictive rural "oeconomy"

⁸⁶⁶ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 34.

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

of monoculture built on slave labor. Planters ambitious to squeeze every available shilling out of their arable land were reluctant to turn over any of their lands to pastures for feeding and housing livestock. Crop rotation, which had become an essential feature of European farming methods during the agricultural revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, proved difficult to inculcate in the sugarcane isles, where the sole cash crop was a perennial crop that required an elaborate process of “holing” and “inhuming” the cane to plant new shoots. The only forms of crop rotation eventually practiced in the cane isles during this period were long-term rotations of forest-lands with cane fields—a much longer-term form of rotation, and not one calculated to create grazing land.⁸⁶⁸ Thus, as Martin recognizes, plantation owners and managers often substituted human labor for tasks that normally might have been allotted to beasts of burden—a form of thriftiness that he counsels against without qualification, even as the ordination of his treatise acknowledges it as common practice. That is, Martin’s prefatory section ambiguously titled “An Essay on Plantership” discusses human workers alongside livestock in a manner that invites a conflation of the two categories—a conflation similarly acknowledged in Martin’s subtle, intermittent deployment of the term “cattle” (as in the passage above) to refer not only to beasts of burden, but also to enslaved Africans.

V: The Problem of Human Sustenance

Paradoxically, one of the more humanitarian bits of advice offered in the treatise exploits this elision. It appears in Martin’s delineation of the planter’s “duty” to feed his workers well. West-Indian planters were famous for failing to do so. Nearly half of

⁸⁶⁸ Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry*, 100.

newly-immigrated slaves died within the first three years of “seasoning”—a product of the high rate of disease, grueling work conditions, and malnutrition.⁸⁶⁹ Martin therefore exhorts the planter not to stint this important item, which he argues is essential to the healthy and profitable operation of a British West-Indian plantation. He therefore offers concrete suggestions in a series that progresses from what the planter “should” do, in ideal circumstances, to fulfill his “duty”—indeed, what Martin himself apparently did on his own plantation—toward what economic motives he might take into account in accordance with his “interest.” “Some of [the planter’s] most fruitful land,” he begins

should be allotted to each negro in proportion to his family, and a sufficient portion of time allowed for the cultivation of it; but because such allotment cannot in long droughts produce enough for his comfortable support, it is the incumbent duty of a good planter to have always his stores well filled with Guinea corn, yams or eddas, besides potatoes growing in regular succession: for plenty begets cheerfulness of heart as well as strength of body, by which more work is effected in a day by the same hands, than in a week when enervated by want and severity.⁸⁷⁰

As always, Martin offers an economic rationale for fulfilling a moral duty—a strategy buttressed, in the present case, by the calculation that workers can do more in “a day” when well fed than they could in “a week” when insufficiently nourished. The passage sustains his initial argument about the importance of maintaining the “nerves” of a plantation—an argument that, as Martin’s presentation implies, follows an economic calculation *in bono*, in contradistinction to the selfish calculations of the Barbadian planters (who are, of course, made to stand in for selfishly-calculating planters in general).

⁸⁶⁹ Cf. Michael Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* (Kingston: Ian Randle / Oxford: James Currey / Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997), 152.

⁸⁷⁰ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 12.

But the argument proceeds further from here, taking on board the question whether the common practice of importing foodstuffs is sufficient to the task of maintaining a British West-Indian sugarcane plantation in its ideal form. Martin reflects:

Scanty meals of New-England corn may sustain life; but it is our own produce only which can impart athletick vigor; and yet if the labor of producing our own provisions was fairly computed, and compar'd to the expence of purchasing that of North America, I dare affirm the latter will be found more expensive, tho' much less wholesome and nutritious. It is therefore matter of just concern, to see the cultivation of provisions so generally neglected in our colonies, where there is not wanting in any plantation some kind of soil, adapted by nature, or improvable by art, to the production of some sort of provisions. This general neglect (if my opinion may be admitted) is one great cause of our general poverty: for, while the planter feeds his negroes scantily, or with unwholesome food, how can he expect much labor and plentiful crops? Such expectations are vain and fruitless! He therefore who will reap plentifully, must plant great abundance of provisions as well as sugar canes: and it is nature's œconomy so to fructify the soil by the growth of yams, plantains, and potatoes, as to yield better harvests of sugar by that very means, than can be produced by any other art of cultivation: so bountiful is the Creator to make that most for our interest, which is most our duty.⁸⁷¹

Notice the rather striking rise in tone, accompanied by both biblical echoes (he who will reap plentifully must sow plentifully) and the celebration of the happy union of duty and interest as the product of divine bounty, manifested in “nature’s œconomy”—a conceit distinct from the conceits that elsewhere imagine the sugarcane plantation as a machine with well-coordinated moving parts. Martin is suggesting that the planter will “reap” more plentiful sugarcane crops by planting yams, plantains, and potatoes, not because he means to advocate a full-scale system of crop rotation (which would not have been a feasible proposal, for the reasons mentioned above), but because he means to appeal to the frugal-minded planter who might otherwise be inclined to skimp on the planting of “provisions.” Invoking an idea of a bodily “œconomy” that participates in the natural processes of decay and renewal already in motion in the rest of the agricultural

⁸⁷¹ Ibid., 13-14.

oeconomy, Martin encourages the planter to feed his enslaved workers well—or, rather, to allow them to plant their own gardens and feed themselves, in the scarce hours outside the normal workday—so they will produce feces that can then be used to fertilize the soil.

Fulfilling his opening pronouncement that “by an higher culture, a *less* quantity of land will yield *much more* profit, than a very large tract ill cultivated,”⁸⁷² this interpretive possibility is worth exploring. Modern scholars studying the history of eighteenth-century sugarcane cultivation have relied centrally on *An Essay Upon Plantership* without recognizing either the substance of this central proposal or its implications for our understanding of any number of corollary topics of historical interest: the concrete strategies of waste management developed in the sugarcane isles during this period, the rampant proliferation of disease in the West Indies, the mundane realities of enslaved existence, and the relations among members of the planter class.⁸⁷³ As Richard Sheridan observes in his seminal study of Martin’s *Essay* and its relation to his plantation practices, one of Martin’s contemporaries praised the author of the *Essay* particularly for his treatment of the topic of “manure.” Arthur Young, the late eighteenth-century agriculturalist, “wrote that he reprinted the *Essay* in the *Annals of Agriculture* ‘to preserve a very valuable piece, from which hints of importance may be taken by British farmers, especially in the article of raising manure: there are other reasons for the insertion, which the intelligent reader will see.’”⁸⁷⁴

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*, v.

⁸⁷³ Again, see Richard B. Sheridan, “Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter of Antigua, 1750-1776,” *Agricultural History* 34.3 (July 1960): 126-39; J. H. Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry: An Historical Geography from its Origins to 1914* (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge UP, 1989); Justin Roberts, “Working between the Lines: Labor and Agriculture on Two Barbadian Sugar Plantations, 1796-97,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62.3 (July 2006): 551-86.

⁸⁷⁴ “Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter,” 138.

Sheridan also observes that Martin’s pamphlet addressed a looming soil crisis. By the mid-eighteenth century, taxed by overuse and made worse by negligence, the famously fertile soil of the sugarcane isles had begun to suffer from unsparing practices of cultivation that left no room for crop rotation or periods when fields might lie fallow. When sugarcane was first introduced into the West Indies, a single planting might yield regular harvests for upwards of fifteen years before the roots needed to be “grubbed up” and the cuttings replanted.⁸⁷⁵ By mid century, the canes did not yet have to be replanted every year, but an elaborate process of manuring was already necessary to keep the soil in shape. And this problem was inextricably linked to food scarcity. Slave populations on some of these islands tripled in the period from 1720 to 1774⁸⁷⁶ as the labors of cultivation (including the distribution of manure) increased. But locally-available staples for everyday existence did not increase in kind. Moreover, because the sugarcane isles were largely dependent on outside sources for food, planters willing to overlook this important item could shortchange the communities they managed by simple neglect—by failing to import enough food, or by failing to prepare in advance for times of scarcity (such as wartime stoppages of supply ships).

Martin had to turn no further than the second book of Columella’s *De Re Rustica* for the hint that human “manure” provides a suitable fertilizer. Columella lists “three principal sorts of dung; *that* produced by fowls, *that* by men, and *that* by cattle.”⁸⁷⁷ He ranks them in functionality; discusses subcategories of each type; explains in detail how

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid., 135.

⁸⁷⁶ This was certainly true in St. Kitts, where the population explosion was accompanied by a slight decrease in the number of white inhabitants. In 1720, there were 2740 whites, 7321 blacks; in 1729, 3677 whites and 14,663 blacks; in 1774, 1900 whites and 24,462 blacks. See Hubbard, *History of St. Kitts*, 75.

⁸⁷⁷ Columella, Lucius Junius Moderatus. *L. Junius Moderatus Columella of husbandry. In twelve books: and his book concerning trees. Translated into English, with several illustrations from Pliny, Cato, Varro, Palladius, and other antient and modern authors* (London, 1745), II.xv, p.90, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed 5 July 2010).

to treat each kind of dung to create a suitable manure (i.e., how to compost it and how long to let it cure before applying it; offers some comments about how the “digestion” of certain animals contributes to greater or lesser dung; and explains in detail for the kinds of manures that are best for certain crops. Human manure is ranked second in value, after pigeon dung and above cattle dung; swine dung is “reckoned the worst of all.”⁸⁷⁸ And Columella comments, too, on how best to capture and treat dung in environments in which the sources of excreta are especially scarce:

Nor am I ignorant, that there is a certain kind of land, and some places in the country, wherein neither cattle nor fowls can be kept; yet it is a sign of a slothful Husbandman, even in such a place as that, to be destitute of dung: for he may amass and put together any kind of leaves, and collections of any other things, out of thickets and highways; he may cut down ferns, without doing any injury to his neighbour; yea, he may even do him service by it, and mix them th[o]roughly with the dirt and sweepings of the court-yard...⁸⁷⁹

He then describes the trench that he directed to be made for the storage of manure in one such environment—an inclusion followed by a bit of moralizing:

I think, that those Husbandmen are not very diligent, with whom each of the lesser cattle, in thirty days, makes less than one load of dung (2)⁸⁸⁰, and their greater cattle also less than ten loads each, and each of the men as many, who may draw together and amass into one place, not only the filth which comes out of their own bodies, but all the dirt that the house and the court-yard daily produce. I consider those farmers lacking in industry who have from each of the smaller animals less than one load of manure in thirty days, and likewise ten loads from each of the larger ones; and the same amount from each person, for they can gather and heap together not only the waste matter from their own bodies, but also the dirt which the yard and the buildings produce every day.⁸⁸¹

Nor was Columella the only georgic writer to comment on such matters. The classification of dung was a central topic of georgic discourse: it was at the heart of the

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid., II.xv, p. 91.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid., II.xv, p. 91.

⁸⁸⁰ Footnoted in the eighteenth-century translation as follows: “(2) *Veves stercoris*. Their load of dung contained 80 *modii, lib.* xi.2. which amounts to about 20 bushels and almost 2 pecks.”

⁸⁸¹ Ibid., II.xv, p. 92.

ideas of “culture” associated with the georgic. Within these discussions, the suggestion of using human excreta was not uncommon. Many classical georgics recommended using human excreta as manure,⁸⁸² and one can find eighteenth-century continental and British writers discussing this option explicitly.⁸⁸³

Martin’s solution for the growing soil crisis, therefore, appears to have been to encourage his fellow planters, ideally, to turn over a portion of their lands to the cultivation of subsistence crops, and if they proved unwilling to do that, to encourage them to train their enslaved workers to utilize the “waste” areas of the plantations for this purpose—the technical term for areas of the plantation too rocky, sandy, or otherwise unfit for growing cane. His assertion that “there is not wanting in any plantation some kind of soil, adapted by nature, or improvable by art, to the production of some sort of provisions” seems calculated to appeal to this unduly frugal sort of planter.⁸⁸⁴ He also actively encourages his fellow planters to utilize the unplanted margins surrounding the cane fields for this purpose:

It is needless to suggest the expediency of planning the cane-pieces of a plantation in exact squares, so that the intervals may intersect at right angles; since such regularity is not only more beautiful; more safe in case of accidental fires; and a better disposition of the whole for dividing and planting *one third or fourth part* of a plantation every year; but also much easier guarded by a few watchmen: for, one of these walking in a line from east to west, and the other

⁸⁸² For earlier authorities see Cato 36; Varro, *RR* 1.38; for later authorities, Pliny, *N.H.* XVII.50-57 and Palladius 1.33. Also see G.E. Fussell, *The Classical Tradition in West European Farming*, who notes on the basis of the writings of Varro and Columella that “[t]here was always a shortage of manure, and all kinds of animal excreta, including human faeces, were used” (Rutherford, Madison, and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), 27.

⁸⁸³ For instance, John Mill, ed. and trans., John Mills, ed. and trans., Henri Louis Duhamel du Monceau, *A Practical Treatise of Husbandry: Wherein are contained, many useful and valuable experiments and observations in the new husbandry ... also the most approved practice of the best English farmers, in the old method of husbandry with copper-plates of several new and useful instruments* (London: For J. Whiston, etc., 1759). “Human dung is another great improver of all cold four lands, and especially if it be mixed with other earths or dungs to give it a fermentation. / But there is not any sort of manure equal to the cleansing of the streets of great cities, for all stubborn clayey soils, the parts of which will be better separated, and in a much less time, with this manure, than with any other compost whatever” (24).

⁸⁸⁴ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 12.

from north to south, look thro' every avenue where the most subtil thief cannot escape the watchful eye. And if the intervals surrounding the boundary of a regular plantation be made twenty-four feet wide, the proprietor will receive ample recompence for so much land, by the security of his canes from fires kindled in his neighborhood; and by planting all that land in plantain-trees, which may at once yield *shade* and *food* to the watchmen, who by that means can have no excuse for absence from their proper stations.⁸⁸⁵

Frugal as always in his consideration of the double (or triple) utility of any single oeconomic choice, Martin invites his fellow planters to consider that the planting of plantain trees will rid their workers of excuses for being idle or absent from “their proper stations.”

VI: Shame and the Constitution of the British-West-Indian Planter Class

Columella, in his dedicatory address to Publius Silvinus, had found occasion to complain about the laziness of his fellow husbandmen:

I frequently hear the principal men of our city blaming, sometimes the unfruitfulness of the ground, at other times the intemperateness of the weather, as hurtful to the fruits of the earth for many ages now past.

Rather than finding themselves at fault, Columella observed, these “principal men of our city”

(*civitatis nostrae principes*) cast blame on the earth itself:

[S]ome also I hear mitigating, in some measure, as it were, the foresaid complaints, because they are of opinion, that the ground, being, by its overmuch fruitfulness during the former part of its duration, become barren, and worn out of heart, is not now able, with its wonted bounty, to afford sustenance to mortals. Which causes, *Publius Silvinus*, I am fully persuaded, are very remote from the truth; because it is neither lawful to think, that the nature of the ground, which that original Former and Father of the universe endowed with perpetual fecundity, is affected with barrenness, as with a certain disease; nor does it become a wise man to believe, that the earth, which, having a divine and everlasting youth bestowed upon it, is called the *common parent* of all things, because it has always brought forth, and will henceforth bring forth, all things whatsoever, is grown old, like a woman.

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

Nor, after all, do I think, that these things befall us from the distemperature of the weather; but rather from our own fault, who commit our Husbandry to the very worst of our servants [servorum – potentially, “slaves”], as a criminal to a public executioner, which all the best of our ancestors were wont to treat with the greatest gentleness....⁸⁸⁶

Martin must have recognized in this comment a striking symmetry with his own situation.

His personal correspondence from the period reveals intermittent frustrations with the laziness and moral laxness of members of his local planter community: the mismanagement of overseers “who have no conscience nor any other but their own interest in view,” young men “seeking more to waste their time in dissipation, and riot, than to improve it in the society of the wise, and learned,” and those who would waste what valuable lands had fallen to them.⁸⁸⁷ As Martin declared to one younger planter near the end of his life, “the profits of a Plantation consist not so much in great works as in the fertility of soil, & strength of Negroes, Cattle, & Mules... supposing it ever so good, & well Stock’d, the profits of a Plantation cannot rise to anything considerable unless it be managed with great skill, attention, & industry.”⁸⁸⁸

But, interestingly, even as Martin borrows from both the content of Columella’s georgic and the work ethic suggested therein, Martin does not always imitate Columella’s directness of exposition, either in his discussion of the details of slave existence or in his so obviously disapproving disavowal of “leading men of our state.” While imitating the plainness of Columella’s prose style throughout the treatise, he borrows an important didactic strategy from Virgil’s poetic mode. Virgil’s mode of georgic writing, in Addison’s famous formulation, was distinctive for the grace and dignified indirection with which the author had dealt with his potentially low topic: breaking “Clods,” and

⁸⁸⁶ Columella, *Of Husbandry*, 1-2.

⁸⁸⁷ Zacek, “Cultivating Virtue,” 14, 25.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

tossing “Dung.” This technique, Addison suggested, rested partly in the way Virgil forced his readers to assert their hermeneutic liberty. Virgil, he wrote,

loves to suggest a Truth indirectly, and without giving us a full and open view of it: to let us see just so much as will naturally lead the Imagination into all the parts that lie conceal'd. This is wonderfully diverting to the Understanding, thus to receive a Precept, that enters as it were through a By-way, and to apprehend an Idea that draws a whole train after it: For here the Mind, which is always delighted with its own Discoveries, only takes the hint from the Poet, and seems to work out the rest by the strength of her own faculties.⁸⁸⁹

In his ongoing appeals to the logic of the “practical philosopher,” and particularly in his central insinuation of the pecuniary benefits of providing proper sustenance to one’s work force, Martin was adopting precisely this technique.

And he was doing so, I would suggest, to outline ideals for proper plantership in a manner that promised not to alienate the planter class that he addressed. This willed sociability, which provides a rhetorical basis for his civilized vision of the region, emerges with particular force in his own Dedication, which is prominently dedicated “TO ALL THE PLANTERS OF THE *British* SUGAR-COLONIES.”⁸⁹⁰ Presenting the pamphlet to “you, Gentlemen, as to the most proper patrons, without any expectation of other reward, than that of a candid perusal,” Martin invokes a discursive ideal of *concordia discors* associated particularly during this period with socialized, British argumentative vigor (as described in the previous case studies):

If the precepts here inculcated are consonant to plain reason, and confirmed by experience, the Proposer will think his pains amply rewarded, by promoting your interest with that of the public: if otherwise, let this be rejected, and a better scheme of plantership propounded for general practice. But even in that case, I shall have a right to claim the merit of being a whetstone to sharpen the ingenuity of other men, in the service of their country: or as a witty old poet expresses it much better than I can translate,

⁸⁸⁹ Joseph Addison, “An Essay on the Georgics,” in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 5, eds. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 147.35-148.7.

⁸⁹⁰ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, i.

—*Fungar vice cotis, acutum*
*Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi.*⁸⁹¹

Martin, then, seeks with his pamphlet to stimulate the local “oeconomy” and the local “culture” in both the archaic and the modern senses of those terms.

He does so, as I have sought to demonstrate, in a manner gauged to appeal to and excite the participation of plantation owners and managers coming to the pamphlet with a variety of pecuniary biases and plantation practices. The polite manner of Martin’s discourse seems crucial to his rhetorical project: the refusal to blame his fellow planters explicitly for the condition of the soil that they can be found complaining about; the wink and the nudge, tinged with pathos, with which he simultaneously acknowledges the common practice of treating humans like animals; the refusal either to abandon his plea for humaneness or to make explicit his proposal of collecting human manure; and the delicacy throughout the treatise with which he gestures toward the problem of systemic cruelty without addressing it overtly.

Indeed, one senses throughout the pamphlet that Martin has ranked the concrete improvements that are the most likely to be adopted, and he has modified his moral commentary to account for the gaps between “interest” and “duty” in the plantership system. It is “a most egregious error,” he writes, to hang stills outdoors, even though, “the cooler it passes, the better will be the spirit, and the more of it.”

But if there were really some little advantages of that sort, can it be a counter-balance to the inconvenience of exposing our negroes *unnecessarily* to all the extremities of heat, cold, rain, and wind? Is this moral rectitude? And is it not equally inconsistent with every man’s real interest to expose his people to all the

⁸⁹¹ Ibid., i. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, “I will serve instead [as] a whetstone, which tho’ not capable of itself to cut, yet can make steel sharp” (407-09). From *The works of Horace, translated literally into English prose; for the use of those who are desirous of acquiring or recovering a competent knowledge of the Latin language*. By C. Smart, vol. 2 (London, 1756), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Oct. 11, 2009).

inclemencies of the weather, subjecting them to the loss of health and life; his rum to waste in windy weather, and to thefts at all seasons?⁸⁹²

While never relinquishing the “dutiful” ideal in his own demeanor, he nevertheless acknowledges that financial “interest” alone will not necessarily lead planters to consider the interests of the human population of the local rural economy over the financial profits that might be made. Occasionally, Martin resorts to shame to fill this gap. Some errors receive especially stern warnings. He particularly scolds those who do not provide shades for their boiling houses:

For, besides wetting the fewel, we destroy the health of those negroes who make fire, by exposing them to all the extremities of a burning sun, and to every little rain from the dripping eaves of a boiling-house. These are absurdities that want a name; or have such as decency cannot use. But every passenger who observes a boiling-house without a shade, must certainly consider it as a monument of its owners folly, who either wants a good head, or a good heart, or both.⁸⁹³

Thus, as Martin envisions it, a knowledgeable planter community might come to supply a necessary curb to some of the grosser instances of mismanagement in the cane isles.

VII: The Prospect of Independence

J.M. Bumsted has observed that speculations about the eventual “independence” of the English (and, later British) colonies was closely linked to assessments of their progress toward civilization.⁸⁹⁴ Early speculations about the prospect of American independence often utilized metaphors of human maturation: the colonies were typically envisioned as “children” of the mother country who might eventually reach adolescence or adulthood. This way of thinking about the development of civilization contributed to

⁸⁹² Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 47-48.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁸⁹⁴ J. M. Bumstead, “‘Things in the Womb of Time’: Ideas of American Independence, 1633 to 1763.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 31.4 (Oct. 1974): 534-64.

the impression that “eventual separation” was inevitable: when a civilization became self-sustaining and advanced enough in its government, it might seek to become independent, not only from the political bonds that kept the colonies tied to the British Isles, but also from the mercantile system that had contributed to its genesis.

The history of Greek and Roman colonization had suggested to men of the seventeenth century that colonies could become independent of the metropolis, and the eighteenth century added concrete areas of concern. Economic thinkers committed to mercantilistic ideas worried that colonies that ceased to remain sources of primary materials and became manufacturing centers would break their ties with the mother country. Colonial governors and British statesmen, struggling continually against the pretensions of [North] American assemblies to legislative preeminence, feared that assemblies which were miniature Parliaments would cast off their ‘dependence’ upon the British Parliament, and some saw independence as the result. The growth of the colonies’ population increased their ability to fight their own battles, and the removal of the French threat in Canada [after 1763] was held by many to be fraught with danger to the imperial relationship.⁸⁹⁵

Bumstead then supplies evidence to suggest that the number and vehemence of speculations about the prospect of (North) American independence increased after 1750.

Prospects of West-Indian independence seemed comparatively slim. Absentee landlords were increasingly common; governmental presence was slight; disease was rampant; slave populations far exceeded European populations, and slave populations (for the reasons discussed above) were systematically undernourished, overtaxed by labor, and largely unable to reproduce themselves. And planters showed few signs of wishing to alter the monocultural pattern of settlement that had earned them so much money. Martin does seem to have been something of an exception—not a radical agitator for revolution, but a public-spirited planter committed to seeing his local community progress to what he understood to be a higher stage of civilized life. “He wishes to have his dear little Antigua independent,” wrote Janet Schaw, after visiting him in 1776, for

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid., 534-535.

“he regrets the many Articles she is forced to trust to foreign aid, and the patriot is even now setting an example, and by turning many of the plantations into grass, he allows them to rest and recover the strength they have lost, by too many crops of sugar, and by this means is able to rear cattle which he has done with great success.”⁸⁹⁶

One can already see the signs of this ambition in *An Essay Upon Plantership*. Martin’s proposal of increasing the available grounds for growing food has already been mentioned, as have his encouragement of on-site management and his efforts to stimulate other planters’ sense of obligation to do their service in the military and the local government. In addition to these, Martin’s Dedication proposes adopting in Antigua “the wise policy of Barbados with respect to *Settlers*”: that is, giving up some small pieces of land to poor white settlers (“servants” and “artificers”) at the end of their servitude to make them landholders of “three, four, or five acres,” thereby “making them *permanently interested* in the preservation of [the] Island.”⁸⁹⁷ This condition of landed “interest” is imagined, not only contributing to tax revenues, but also helping to “render [their] country populous” (of white settlers), to strengthen the military (thereby keeping invasion and slave rebellions at bay), and to contribute to the “good discipline of its inhabitants” (further warding off the possibility of internal rebellion).⁸⁹⁸

This vision is undergirded by a suggestion, implicit throughout the treatise, that the current system of plantership requires additional improvements to maintain its past state of productivity. Frans De Bruyn has traced in the early eighteenth-century reception of Virgil’s *Georgics* a conflict between honoring the text as a time-honored accumulation of generations of wisdom and experience and decrying Virgil’s failings in pursuit of new

⁸⁹⁶ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, 105-6.

⁸⁹⁷ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, iv.

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, v.

techniques of agricultural “improvement.” One detects in Martin’s pamphlet a balance between those two ideals: on the one hand, honoring established practice in the cane isles, and on the other, seeking new, more efficient, less cruel means of perpetuating the present system of farming—among which, crucially, were Tull’s own techniques.⁸⁹⁹ That Martin introduces the pamphlet as a “little tract, first written for the instruction of a young planter,” and “now presented to the public in hopes of doing more general good” contributes further to the impression that he envisions a paternal inheritance being bestowed and a torch passed, with an idea to the future improvement of the present form of settlement.⁹⁰⁰

And this is the vision of community improvement that shapes Martin’s ongoing comments about how he wishes the treatise to be received. At several different points in the *Essay*, he stresses that he has not attempted to be exhaustive in his discussion of all the fine points of sugarcane plantership because he expects others to help him continue that work. He has not treated his subject “minutely or systematically,” he writes,

for that is needless, since every young planter must learn what he sees every day in common practice, or the topic of conversation; but my principal intention is to reform vulgar and gross errors in capital points; and without dogmatizing, to advise some improvements in agriculture, taken from the practice of British husbandmen, who are now become the patterns of all Europe; submitting however each precept to the correction of my experienced brethren the planters, to whom this work is dedicated, and by whom it may be improved by such useful additions or emendations, as future experience shall justify: but as order or method contributes to perspicuity, I have chosen to divide the subsequent work into sections....⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁹ Frans De Bruyn, “Reading Virgil’s *Georgics* as a Scientific Text: The Eighteenth-Century Debate between Jethro Tull and Stephen Switzer” *ELH* (2004): 661-89.

⁹⁰⁰ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, i. Zacek comments additionally on this theme of father-son transmission and quotes from Martin’s correspondence to demonstrate his personal interest in the question: he thought there was no hope for the future of his plantation if one of his sons did not take it over (cf. 14, 17-18).

⁹⁰¹ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 19-20.

Thus, textual order contributes to community order. In the author's very refusal to imagine the text taking the place of "conversation" and daily experience, the georgic text retains the potential to contribute to broad, local reform.

True to his invocation of the British husbandman, Martin negotiates between his imperial British affiliation and his local Antiguan identity with notable finesse. One suspects that he designates his "country" as Antigua when he concludes his Dedication with the wish "[t]hat every planter in general, and my own countrymen in particular, may arrive at [the] honor and felicity" of "making their exit" from the world "with self-approbation, and universal applause"⁹⁰²: he signs the pamphlet "AGRICOLA ANTEGONIANUS," after all. And yet, the intermittent references to differences in law and culture on the other West-Indian islands attenuates any hint that this local affiliation might be understood as an affiliation assertive of "independence" from the mother country, just as the opening address to the "*British*" colonial planters confirms again the imperial affiliation. Moreover, among the specific improvements that he offers up for consideration, most are "taken from the practice of British husbandmen, ... the patterns of all Europe," especially as regards techniques of manuring. Martin advocates attempting to use the shovel and especially the wheeled plow instead of the hoe, in the manner of British farmers, for it will save much labor; he advocates the use of livestock whenever possible (for slave labor was too often made to substitute, due in part to scarce pastureland on the smaller islands); and he advocates a potentially labor-saving method of spreading dung. In the sugarcane isles, dung was traditionally dispersed from baskets, a labor-intensive method that necessitated the workers trampling the soil that had just been plowed or loosened. Martin encouraged his fellow planters to divide the fields so

⁹⁰² Ibid., viii.

that a cart or wheelbarrow might be driven around their edges and the dung spread from there—also a British-inspired technique.⁹⁰³ And in “train[ing] cattle to an even regular draught,” he also recommends the example of “the English husbandman,” who “harness[es] a horse before them, as a leader” and thereby teaches them to follow in a straight line.⁹⁰⁴ One might say that Martin wished to trace the image of the English husbandman into the West-Indian landscape, were it not for a subsequent qualification: acknowledging that this example may “be thought too expensive, by the addition of an horse or mule to every team,” he recommends the miniature Portuguese cattle of Madeira.⁹⁰⁵

And, interestingly, for all the *Essay*'s insinuations regarding the prospect of increased independence, its georgic organization prominently registers—and, for the most part, does not resist—a vision of the British West-Indian colonies as monocultural settlement. Had he wished to do so, Martin could presumably have included an appendix that discussed the technical niceties of growing crops other than sugarcane: subsistence crops and perhaps also crops that had been grown in earlier phases of colonization, such as tobacco, indigo, and cotton. Instead, the numbered, four-part body of his technical agricultural discussion focuses exclusively on technical topics related to the cultivation, harvesting, and processing of sugarcane. Nor did Martin elect to stray from this plan in subsequent editions. By the time the *Essay on Plantership* reached its seventh edition (1785), which included “all the Additions from the Authors Experiments to the Time of

⁹⁰³ Although it seems that Martin was able to spread some of his improvements around Antigua, it is hard to say how extensively they took hold (Sheridan 150), and his innovations apparently did not take hold in St. Kitts, where Schaw saw slaves distributing dung in baskets according to the traditional technique (Schaw 127-8).

⁹⁰⁴ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 18-19.

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

his Death,” as the title page announced, the only new technical section was in an appendix titled “Experimental Observations on the Blast,” a three-page discussion of what to do about “those pernicious insects” that “have multiplied exceedingly; and made great devastation among our Sugar Canes.”⁹⁰⁶

In the spare discussions of subsistence farming, Martin again buttresses his central emphasis on the sugarcane crop. These discussions appear in the aforementioned prefatory essay titled, “An Essay on Plantership,” which is positioned tellingly in a transitional section between the Dedication and the main body of the general agricultural discussion. Here Martin offers his boldest suggestions for changing the pattern of plantation that currently exists in the cane isles. In addition to strongly encouraging the plantating of local food crops for the cane workers (Guinea corn, yams, eddas, potatoes, plantains), rather than relying on imported provisions from North America, he suggests that the planter should supplement his livestock’s principal food source (cane tops) with Guinea corn and “a variety of grass, which every soil produces with a little care in moist weather.”⁹⁰⁷ Both discussions, however, imagine these crops encroaching only modestly, if at all, on the arable land that, in many plantations, was dedicated wholly to the cultivation of sugarcane. In his discussion of the unspecified “variety of grass” that might help to feed livestock, Martin does not insist on converting valuable fields into pastures, but hints that this grass will grow on “every soil”—that is, in the more barren “waste” areas of the plantation, where sugarcane could not be grown. His discussion of human foodstuffs, as noted above, follows a similar pattern. The initial injunction to allot

⁹⁰⁶ *An Essay on Plantership. Inscribed to Sir George Thomas, Bart. as a monument to ancient friendship. The seventh edition, with all the additions from the author's experiments to the time of his death. By Colonel Martin of Antigua* (Antigua, 1785), images 1, 40, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed July 5, 2010).

⁹⁰⁷ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, 15.

portions of one's best lands to enslaved families is curiously undercut by several suggestions that the allocation that he is imagining may not be sufficient to the needs of the plantation: first, the allowance that, because such an allotment "cannot in long droughts produce enough for [the individual worker] to produce enough for his comfortable support, it is the incumbent duty of the planter to have always his stores well filled"; then the consideration of importing food from North America; and, finally, the overt plea that West-Indian planters allow their enslaved workers to cultivate food for their families on less-fertile patches of soil that would not otherwise be planted with cane.

Moreover, the suggestion of planting coconut trees, as noted previously, is clearly presented as an elective flourish: the pursuit of useful beautification that will enhance one's own property and one's community. Even as this advice encourages a grade of stewardship and oversight not typical of West-Indian planters during the period, it serves again, paradoxically, to reinforce Martin's formal and philosophical focus on the sugarcane crop. The trees are imagined lining the borders of local plantations rather than being planted in groves, and Martin pauses, too, to consider the technical question of how to keep the roots of the trees from damaging the sugarcane crop underground: the planter should "dig a small trench between his canes and trees, which may intercept their roots and oblige them to seek for sustenance in the common road."⁹⁰⁸

It is hard to say what agricultural condition Martin himself might have wished for personally for his native Antigua. In the *Essay*, his vision of the West Indies as a monoculture that must be improved on its current foundations surely reflected the interests of his intended audience. Sugarcane crops far exceeded the export value of any other exported colonial item. Statistics generated by modern scholars demonstrate that

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid., 17.

the total value of exports from the West Indies was nearly triple that of the total value of exports of any other British colonial region; the value of exports per capita was nearly twice that of any other British colonial region (even more so by the late 1760s); and the total value of exports per free capita exponentially exceeded the total value of exports per free capita in any other region: 18.43 for the period from 1697-1705 (as compared to 2.55 for the Upper South of North America), and 86.9 for the period from 1768-1772 (as compared to 2.91 for the Upper South).⁹⁰⁹ Had Martin wished to propose a shift to a more diverse agricultural economy, he would surely have met with resistance from “ALL THE PLANTERS OF THE *British* SUGAR-COLONIES.”

Nor is there much evidence that his pamphlet met with the kind of active public engagement that he had encouraged among local planter-experimenters, dedicated in sociable rivalry to improving their patrimonies. The *Essay*'s multiple revisions do bear witness to his own continuing experimentation, possibly undertaken in collaboration with the other landowners to whom he served as a consultant. And one can find a smattering of pamphlets on sugarcane cultivation in the decades following the initial publication of the *Essay*.⁹¹⁰ But it appears that the principal, and best-known, respondent to Martin's West-Indian proposals for improvement was James Grainger himself.

⁹⁰⁹ Table 4.10, David W. Galenson, “The David W. Galenson, “The Settlement and Growth of the Colonies: Population, Labor, and Economic Development.” *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, vol. 1: *The Colonial Era*, eds. Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman (NY: Cambridge UP, 1996), p. 198.

⁹¹⁰ Cf. an anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Art of making Sugar* (London, 1752) and I.P. Baker, *An essay on the art of making Moscovado sugar wherein a new process is proposed* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1775).

Appendix A: Section Divisions in Roman Georgics

Virgil's *Georgics* (29 B.C.)*

- Dedication to Maecenas
- I. } agriculture:
 - II. } field crops, legumes, trees
 - III. cattle and other livestock
 - IV. beekeeping
(often considered a figure for human society)

Columella's *De Re Rustica* (c. 50-70 A.D.)*

- Preface, addressed to Publius Silvinus
- I. soils
 - II. viticulture
 - III. fruits
 - IV. olive trees
 - V. big animals: cattle, horses, and mules
 - VI. small animals: asses, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs
 - VII. fish and fowl: chickens, doves, thrushes, peacocks, Numidian chicken and guinea fowl, geese, ducks, fish ponds
 - VIII. wild animals: enclosures for wild animals, bee-keeping, production of honey and wax
 - IX. gardens
 - X. personnel management
 - XI. calendars
 - XII. managing the household

* Chapter summaries adapted from Wikipedia, "Georgics" and "Columella" respectively, accessed 4 Nov. 07.

Appendix B: Section Divisions in Martin's *An Essay Upon Plantership* (1750 & foll.)

Dedication, addressed to "Gentlemen Planters of the British Sugar-Colonies"

- the planter (his Roman counterparts; his character, education, civic roles)
- indentured servants, artisans (i.e. other potential landowners)

Essay On Plantership (prefatory comments on "the *nerves* of a sugar plantation" (9)):

- "negroes"
- cattle, mules, and horses

- I. *Of the Culture of various Soils*
- II. *Of the best Method of cultivating Sugar-canes*
- III. *Of the best Method of making Sugar*
- IV. *Of Distilling Rum*

Appendix C: Table from Henri Louis Duhamel du Monceau, Ed./Trans. John Mills, *A Practical Treatise of Husbandry* (London, 1759)

Chap. II. BY M. DE CHATEAU-VIEUX. 225

T A B L E
*Of the Extent, Sowing, and Crops of different Pieces of Land
in 1754.*

Extent.	Quantity of Seed in the old way.	Quantity of seed in the new way.	Crops.
Arpents.	Pounds	Pounds.	Pounds.
$1\frac{1}{2}$	336	168	1560
$1\frac{1}{2}$	356	180	1230
$3\frac{1}{2}$	882	392	2360
1	252	130	650
$3\frac{1}{2}$	882	346	2275
3	672	283	2080
8	2016	670	6110
4	1008	485	4680
$\frac{3}{4}$	190	95	1040
2	504	230	2520
$3\frac{1}{4}$	819	390	3120
$1\frac{1}{4}$	315	140	975
$2\frac{1}{4}$	694	300	2340
Total 36	8926	3809	30940

ARTICLE VII.

*General Reflections and Observations on the Experiments contained in
the foregoing Articles.*

AFTER all these experiments, I ask myself whether they are sufficient to give us a satisfactory demonstration that the new husbandry is more profitable than the old? I answer, without hesitation, that it certainly is more profitable, both to the public, and to each individual, whether the lands be cultivated in beds, or whether they are only sowed in equally distant rows, with the drill-plough.

Such will likewise be the answer to this question, if the result of these different experiments be considered. In the first place, we have those of each field in particular; in the next, we have those

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Chapter Six

Strained Enthusiasm and the Colonial Common Weal: James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (1764) as a Staged Failure of Georgic Celebration

James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (London, 1764) has been aptly described as a “quirky” poem.⁹¹¹ In loping blank verse, Grainger details procedures of sugarcane cultivation, enumerates practical uses of locally-available flora and fauna, offers counsel to “the planter” on both counts, and narrates the sublimely destructive effects of tropical weather patterns such as hurricanes and floods. Drawing on his experience as an Edinburgh-trained physician, he energetically addresses not only concrete problems of plantation management, such as how to develop a compost or how best to rid the sugarcane crop of locust infestations, but also matters of local health and wellbeing, such as why cane boilers are especially subject to “bloating dropsy” and “pulmonic ails,” how to treat “yaw’s infectious bane,” and which Caribbean species could be effectively utilized as emetics and vermifuges for ailing cane workers.⁹¹² This profusion of concrete detail was typical of the prose georgic, as it had developed in both the classical and modern traditions up to that point, and it was largely typical of the British verse georgic as well, as it had been developed by such authors as John Philips (*Cyder*, 1708), Christopher Smart (*The Hop-Garden*, 1752), and John Dyer (*The Fleece*, 1757). There were also georgic precedents for Grainger’s unmistakably ebullient affect—his enthusiastic manner

⁹¹¹ Shaun Irlam (377), “‘Wish You Were Here’: Exporting England in James Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane*, *ELH* 68.2 (2001): 377-396.

⁹¹² James Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane* (London, 1764), III.334, IV.265, in *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger’s The Sugar-Cane (1764)*, ed. John Gilmore (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000).

of address and his lively mimetic mode, which was peppered with bold anthropomorphisms, elaborate periphrasis, and a surplus of poetic diction. But no previous British georgic poet had sought to celebrate the agriculture of a region at such a vast geographical distance from the readers he courted. Grainger's "West-India georgic" was addressed to a London audience from the start⁹¹³—a disjunction that he acknowledged would pose difficulties for some of his readers at the level of basic comprehension.⁹¹⁴ This tension found a counterpart in Grainger's own compositional labors. Having set himself the difficult task of making interesting and perhaps even pleasurable the minute perusal of a foreign landscape, he ebulliently depicted, in painstaking detail, an agricultural system that he himself characterized as "heart-debasing."⁹¹⁵

It has been tempting to attribute this curious combination of rhetorical tensions to the clumsiness and naïveté of a minor poet in a bygone age—a poet perhaps overzealous in his attempt to dignify a "wild," Caribbean landscape with neoclassical treatment. There was a time when *The Sugar-Cane* was routinely held up as a stunning example of bad poetry.⁹¹⁶ Wyndham Lewis and Charles Lee featured the poem in *The Stuffed Owl*:

⁹¹³ The metropolitan orientation is registered throughout the text and paratext. See, for instance, Grainger's prefatory description of the "design" of *The Sugar-Cane*: he says that he was inspired to write the poem by reflecting on the fact "that, as the face of this country was wholly different from that of Europe, so whatever hand copied its appearances, however rude, could not fail to enrich poetry with many new and picturesque images" (89). For details on the early publication history of *The Sugar-Cane*, see John Gilmore, "Introduction," *The Poetics of Empire*, esp. 16-19, 45-46. Although *The Sugar-Cane* did have some Caribbean subscribers, Grainger judged that "few here can relish it" (46). As points of contrast, consider Martin's prose georgic (Antigua, 1750, 1756, 1767, 1785; London, 1765, 1773, 1792), which Grainger cites in his preface, and John Singleton's four-book *Description of the West Indies* (Barbados, 1767; London, 1776), which cites *The Sugar-Cane* and may have been partly modeled on it.

⁹¹⁴ In his authorial preface, for instance, he explained that he had provided prose annotations for "those who have never been in the West-Indies" and therefore had trouble understanding his technical vocabulary. "[A]n obscure poem," he mused, "affords both less pleasure and profit to the reader" (90).

⁹¹⁵ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, IV.236.

⁹¹⁶ This discussion draws from John Gilmore's reception history of the poem, "Introduction," *The Poetics of Empire*, esp. 49-65.

An Anthology of Bad Verse (1930). Ronald Knox, writing of Grainger as “A Neglected Poet” (1958), offered a sustained critique of *The Sugar-Cane*’s excesses of “local colour” and its characteristic sallies into bathos. “[W]hile the Mantuan [Virgil] reaps corn Grainger hoes yams,” Knox complained; “while the Mantuan treads grapes Grainger must peel bananas.... Even where his subject is such that it might have been securely treated by a less adventurous hand, a fatal rhetorical instinct betrays the poet to his fall; and he rises heroically from one ditch only to trip in another.”⁹¹⁷ For much of the twentieth century, *The Sugar-Cane* was probably less often *read* by eighteenth-century scholars than it was remembered for having provoked the amusement of a group of contemporary “wits” who had gathered at the house of Joseph Reynolds for a reading of the manuscript. As James Boswell tells the story in his *Life of Johnson*, “all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph” with the line, “Now, Muse, let’s sing of *rats*”⁹¹⁸—confirmation, it has sometimes seemed, that Grainger’s most discerning contemporary readers deemed him poetically incompetent as well.

But this was not actually the case, as we now know from John Gilmore’s indispensable critical edition of *The Sugar-Cane* (2000), which introduces the poem by quoting extensively from contemporary reviews. Far from mocking Grainger for his incompetence, these early readers took for granted his poetic talents. These reviews, like Boswell’s story, accommodate a certain lightness of tone even as they acknowledge that Grainger has taken on a “grave” subject⁹¹⁹; and they suggest, perhaps more clearly than

⁹¹⁷ Ibid., qtd. 52.

⁹¹⁸ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R.W. Chapman (New York: Oxford UP (World’s Classics), 1998), 698.

⁹¹⁹ Ibid., 699.

Boswell does, that what was amusing to these early readers was not so much Grainger's personal failure to live up to the title of "poetry" in *The Sugar-Cane*, but the passion and energy with which he showed himself pursuing poetic tasks that were almost necessarily doomed to fail.⁹²⁰ John Langhorne, the most critical of Grainger's early reviewers, reflects that "the learned and ingenious author of the Sugar Cane ... knew, surely, that the Ascrean simplicity was by no means characteristic of these days, and that to write more like Hesiod than like Virgil, would be to write in vain."⁹²¹ Reviewing the poem for the *Critical Review*, Samuel Johnson preferred to emphasize Grainger's rhetorical successes, though he did so, notably, with a sympathetic archness of tone and a suggestiveness of diction that registered his understanding that there was nothing prim about the didactic experience that *The Sugar-Cane* offered. He began his review with the suggestion that "[t]here are some works in which the exertion of a poet's genius may be very great, and yet his success but moderate"—a hint promptly undercut by the discomfiting assurance that "the reader must not be deterred by the title-page, since the most languid will here find his passions excited, and the imagination indulged to the highest pitch of luxury."⁹²² *The Sugar-Cane*, in other words, *tasted like sugar*: it was calculated to appeal to an audience of British inhabitants who enjoyed and paid dearly for this "luxury." Grainger's rhetorical acuity, Johnson hinted, emerged in his deft transformation of a "seemingly

⁹²⁰ One glimpses the same idea in Boswell's anecdote, too, insofar as the details of Boswell's account offer a picture of a poet straining to employ the resources of poetry to accommodate the inherently *unpoetic* subject matter that he refused to relinquish. "[W]hat increased the ridicule," Boswell observes, following up the famous mention of "*rats*," was "that one of the company, who slyly overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified." But "[t]his passage does not appear in the printed work," Boswell explains. "Dr. Grainger, or some of his friends, it should seem, having become sensible that introducing even *Rats* in a grave poem, might be liable to banter. He, however, could not bring himself to relinquish the idea; for they are thus, in a still more ludicrous manner, periphrastically exhibited in his poem as it now stands: 'Nor with less waste the whisker'd vermin race / A countless clan despoil the lowland cane'" (699).

⁹²¹ Gilmore, "Introduction," qtd. 39.

⁹²² *Ibid.*, qtd. 41.

barren” titular topic into a poetic performance that found dignity in low things, however little that performance (or the hermeneutic experiences that it elicited) could ultimately hope to accomplish for the common weal. Johnson singled out for attention Grainger’s “celebration of rum,” “which, it is probable, no other poet has dignified in verse before him; and tho’ this liquor, together with punch which is made from it, would, at first sight, seem more adapted to the comic muse, yet has he maintained his description without sinking, and the poet has elegantly described a liquor which yet he seems ashamed to name.”⁹²³

With Martin’s *Essay Upon Plantership* in view, perhaps it is newly obvious why we should take seriously the question of Grainger’s intentionality in this capstone performance. Grainger knew Martin’s *Essay* intimately, as he declared himself in the Preface to *The Sugar-Cane*, calling it an “excellent performance” to which he owed himself “indebted.” And part of that debt was surely conceptual: he saw fit to do his own version of the “West-India georgic,” albeit with several new twists, among them a remarkably complex tone and a zeal for anthropomorphism that marked his performance as poetry with a fanciful edge. This had been a tactic utilized repeatedly by British “wits” before him—imitation with a difference. Whereas Martin had stressed the need for plainness, dignity, and sobriety, Grainger gave his readers visual and verbal curly cues and an encomium to rum. Whereas Martin had dwelled on the technical details of good agricultural practice, Grainger incorporated lengthy discussions of local disease. And whereas Martin had appealed to local Antiguans, Grainger tailored his georgic address to a London audience.

Emphasizing these crucial, orienting elements of the performance, this chapter

⁹²³ Ibid., qtd. 42-43.

argues that Grainger's "West-India georgic" staged *as a problem* the prospect of advocating West-Indian "improvement" in the manner of Martin's *Essay Upon Plantership*. Martin had advocated various practical forms of local improvement, many of them borrowed from English agriculture, that promised to enhance and perpetuate the established system in its present form; Grainger's performance demonstrated to a London audience that to advocate and celebrate the West-Indian system of agriculture in its present form was to almost necessarily to descend into bathos—or, at least, to teeter on its brink. A poetics of incipient failure informed Grainger's performance on several levels. Grainger took up deliberately challenging subject matter—a "seemingly barren" titular theme—and confronted a London audience with a profusion of local, Caribbean detail. Moreover, the problems that he proffered for reflection during the course of this local meditation did not have many easy or pleasurable solutions. Borrowing elements of its structure from Martin's pamphlet, Grainger encouraged eighteenth-century readers to learn about, reflect on, recognize their complicity in, and perhaps also begin to take responsibility for the West-Indian colonial endeavor as it then existed—an endeavor that the poet shows himself celebrating and finding beauty in throughout his poetic performance, even as he acknowledges the system's insoluble failings and his own complicity therein.

I: The Problem of Grainger's Metropolitan Orientation

There had been a clear, utilitarian logic guiding Martin's composition of *An Essay Upon Plantership* for local Antiguan planters, some of whom were apparently instructed by his published advice and his personal coaching. The metropolitan orientation of *The*

Sugar-Cane, by contrast, is seemingly at odds with the georgic content and structure of the poem. In his authorial Preface, Grainger describes the “design” of the poem as a composition born of a plan of enriching the British metropole with a new poetic commodity gained amid his sojourn in the West-Indian colonies. “Soon after my arrival in the West-Indies,” he begins,

I conceived the design of writing a poem on the cultivation of the Sugar-Cane. My inducements to this arduous undertaking were, not only the importance and novelty of the subject, but more especially this consideration; that, as the face of this country was wholly different from that of Europe, so whatever hand copied its appearances, however rude, could not fail to enrich poetry with many new and picturesque images.⁹²⁴

Thus, *The Sugar-Cane* is imagined following the trade routes of sugar itself, albeit by carrying to British (or European) audiences, not an edible commodity, but a didactic experience. In the tradition of the British wits, Grainger does not make wholly clear what civic purpose that didactic experience is intended to serve, but leaves that purpose to be discovered by a perceptive reader. He has clearly chosen to write a georgic, as he declares subsequently, and as a reader well acquainted with georgic traditions can plainly tell.⁹²⁵; and he patently hopes that this georgic performance will serve the purpose of “instructing the Reader,” as he declares further on in the Preface.⁹²⁶ But he does not explain why he has set himself such a counterintuitive compositional task. It would be one thing to write a travelogue or a romance set in an exotic locale and to expect it to be entertaining and edifying for a London audience (something along the lines of Johnson’s *Rasselas*, for instance); it was quite another to make this appeal with a “West-India

⁹²⁴ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, 89.

⁹²⁵ Among other hints, he calls the poem a “West-India georgic” (90); he mentions “didactic” traditions associated with the formal verse georgic (89-90) and classical and British precedents (90); in the early verses of the poem itself, he charts his own poetic genealogy from classical georgic poets (Hesiod, Virgil) and British georgic poets (Dyer, Philips, Smart, Sommerville) (l. 7-17); and he structures his poem as a four-book formal verse Imitation of Virgil et al.

⁹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

georgic,⁹²⁷ a poem whose discourse is so firmly rooted in the concrete details of a foreign set of agricultural practices and a foreign “rural oeconomy” that Grainger himself recognized that some features of the poem might appear strange and difficult to his early readers. In the Preface, he finds reason to apologize for employing “terms of art,” which can “look awkward in poetry” but “cannot wholly [be] dispense[d] with” in “didactic compositions,” and he acknowledges, too, that his poem employs “[s]uch words as are not common in Europe,” as he puts it.⁹²⁸ This is certainly true: in the earliest lines of the poem, one encounters local plant names such as “sweet-smell’d cassia,” “vast ceiba,” “white acajou,” and “rich sabbaca”—terms so unfamiliar to many European readers that they might not have known, at first, whether these referred to flowers, fruits, or trees—and, as the poem proceeds, one comes across references to technical procedures and objects such as cane “junks,” cane “mills,” and the “boiling house” that one might expect would have seemed obscure and uninteresting to London readers.⁹²⁹ And yet, Grainger, clearly recognizing this potential disjunction between audience and subject matter, simply announces breezily in his Preface that, because “an obscure poem” may “affor[d] both less pleasure and profit to the reader,” he has included prose annotations, “which, it is presumed, will not be disagreeable to those who have never been in the West-Indies.”⁹³⁰

There are several different ways to account for this perplexing approach to the georgic tradition. One is to assume (as modern scholars often have) that Grainger simply did not know what he was doing. This was Ronald Knox’s approach in 1958, when he

⁹²⁷ Ibid., 90.

⁹²⁸ Ibid., 89-90.

⁹²⁹ Ibid., I.36-45; III.127, 165, 338.

⁹³⁰ Ibid., 90.

complained that Grainger had distastefully extended its detailed mimetic mode to a form of agriculture and a form of agricultural produce unworthy of the “Mantuan” master:

[T]he subject of his choice is a process incurably pedestrian, the result of which can be sugar or (at the best) rum: that ... while the Mantuan [Virgil] treads grapes Grainger must peel bananas; that local colour demands the superseding of the ash and the pine by the coconut; that machinery, which Grainger is far too conscientious to leave undescribed, does the greater part of the manufacture; that the human labour involved is not that of jolly Apulian swains but that of negroes looted from the Gold Coast, whose presence has begun to need some explanation, even to the easy conscience of the eighteenth century.⁹³¹

Another way of explaining these seeming misallocations of compositional energy has been to finesse the question of hermeneutic difficulty and metropolitan orientation and to situate *The Sugar-Cane* non-judgmentally within the moral-didactic tradition of the georgic—a tradition in which Grainger clearly understands himself to be working. This is the approach of David Fairer (2003), who uses *The Sugar-Cane* as a way of illustrating the didactic tradition(s) typical of the verse georgic more generally by pointing out that it models, in the poet’s adept and dignified handling of local detail, a moral and philosophical perspective that a reader might imitate (presumably even the London reader, though Fairer does not dwell on the question of audience).⁹³² Still another way of approaching the poem has been to see it as an attempt to rationalize slavery and shed “glory” upon the expanding British Empire, which had seen unprecedented gains in the Seven Years War (1756-1763). This has been the prevailing approach of the last decade. In a group of articles and book chapters that might be loosely grouped together as “postcolonial,” Grainger has been seen as an apologist for slavery, a spokesman for the

⁹³¹ Gilmore, “Introduction,” qtd. 52-53.

⁹³² “A Caribbean Georgic: James Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane*,” *Kunapipi: Journal of Post-Colonial Writing* 25.1 (2003): 21-28.

planter class, and a supporter of the “powerful West-India Interest”⁹³³—an argument that has sometimes capitalized on the perception that Grainger was a clumsy poet who did not recognize, or refused to acknowledge, the problems inherent in the system that he championed, and whose foray into the georgic genre appears to have been born of similar ignorance.

I wish to propose a fourth interpretive possibility: Grainger was capitalizing on a georgic tradition (as outlined in the previous chapter) of conceiving the addressees of a georgic piece of writing as the custodians and beneficiaries of the “rural oeconomy” whose inner workings it described. Vexed though it was in the case of the “West-India georgic,” this expectation of custodianship provided an excuse—indeed, an obligation—to educate the British public about the unseemly details of an agricultural system from which they drew sustenance, both as a national community and as individuals invested variously in the system as it presently existed. As the *London Chronicle* put it, “The subject which [Grainger] has chosen to illustrate, demands by its commercial value the attention of a mercantile, and by its physical curiosity, that of a philosophical nation. And it is reasonable to expect, that all to whom SUGAR contributes usefulness or pleasure, will be willing to know from what it is produced, and how it is prepared.”⁹³⁴ Johnson recognized that Grainger’s claim on the British common weal stemmed from a variation on the convention that the georgic was a discourse about agricultural management.

⁹³³ Cf. Brathwaite (1993), Sandiford (2000), Irlam (2001), Egan (2003), Ellis (2004), Niang (2004), Thomas (2006); also Krise’s anthology, *Caribbeana* (1999), whose headnote presents Grainger as a representative of the planter class. In their examinations of Grainger’s rhetorical performance, Markman Ellis and Jim Egan have come the closest to theorizing the rhetorical tension between metropolitan address and colonial subject matter that I am emphasizing here. Ellis recognizes that “although Grainger wrote in the West Indies, the cultural context of the poem was broadly metropolitan” (49); Egan describes a strategy whereby “Grainger figures the center of empire as powerful only insofar as it observes its satellites” (205).

⁹³⁴ Gilmore, “Introduction,” qtd. 37.

Grainger's own language suggests as much, especially in his Preface and in the introductory portions of his verse, which frame the rhetorical performance that follows. In his introductory invocation of the muse, he asks to take his place within a long line of georgic poets, classical and British, and declares his intention to learn "from their precepts" how to "deck" his "theme":

Spirit of Inspiration, that did'st lead
 Th'Ascrean Poet [Hesiod] to the sacred Mount,
 And taught'st him all the precepts of the swain;
 Descend from Heaven, and guide my trembling steps
 To Fame's eternal Dome, where Maro [Virgil] reigns;
 Where pastoral Dyer, where Pomona's Bard [Philips],
 And Smart and Sommerville in varying strains,
 Their sylvan lore convey: O may I join
 This choral band, and from their precepts learn
 To deck my theme, which though to song unknown,
 Is most momentous to my Country's weal.⁹³⁵

This final claim is animated by the same animating ambiguity of national affiliation evidenced in Martin's georgic performance: the question of *which* "Country's weal" the georgic writer intends to reference. Grainger predicts within the poem that he will die on St. Kitts (as he did in fact do), and he was himself a native Scot (a biographical detail mentioned in the poem). Thus both of these "Country" affiliations complicate the announcement.

But the most obvious referent for "my Country" is Britain, the nation that he addresses by virtue of the London publication of the poem, and the "public Ear" that he addresses with the planters listening in. This was a provocative possibility. It was one thing to proffer cider or beer or wool as the symbol and substance of British virtue; it was quite another to make that case for sugar. As a luxury item that could only be produced on soil outside the geographical territories traditionally conceived as "Britain," sugar

⁹³⁵ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, 1.7-17.

bears a dubious relation to the title, “most momentous to my Country’s weal,” whether conceived as an elative or superlative expression. Not only was sugar a luxury item of dubious moral and “physical” value as an agricultural product; the form of agriculture in which it originated was impossible to replicate in the geographical territories traditionally conceived as “Britain,” and the vast majority of those who labored in the sugarcane fields for British imperial consumers were enslaved Africans, rendered weak and unhealthy by grueling work. True, Martin had made the case in *An Essay Upon Plantership* (persuasively or not) that sugarcane plantership could be conducted with virtue, virtuosity, and vigor. But Grainger’s London audience included, at most, a smattering of West-Indian absentee landlords—hardly the image of virtuous plantership that Martin had delineated in his pamphlet.

And yet, it made good economic sense to claim that sugar was “most momentous” to Britain’s “weal.” By 1764, this was becoming increasingly clear. In the strategy sessions and negotiations that preceded the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Prime Minister William Pitt declared that Guadeloupe, one of the French sugar islands whose title was at issue in the Seven Years War, was worth more than the whole of Canada.⁹³⁶ The sugar islands were “most momentous” to Britain in the sense of the *wealth* that they displayed and generated for the mother country. P. J. Marshall notes that sugar was Britain’s “largest single import from the 1750s, when it overtook foreign linen, until the 1820s, when it was surpassed by raw cotton”⁹³⁷; by 1775 “sugar made up one-fifth of all British imports and

⁹³⁶ Frank McLynn, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), 92-93,

⁹³⁷ *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (NY: Oxford UP, 1999), 421.

was worth five times Britain's tobacco imports."⁹³⁸ The sugar trade therefore produced substantial tax revenues, not only in the form of local import duties, but also in the form of taxes paid by the wealthy West-Indian planters who made their homes in London and the English country, displaying their wealth with ostentation, and taxes on sugar collected in the colonies themselves. Indeed, since the recent war had driven up the national debt more than tenfold, the Sugar Act was passed in early April of 1764 to increase the efficiency of tax collection for sugar products in the North American colonies.

In addition, there was the fact of sugar consumption, both monetary and digestive, which affected the constitution of Grainger's "Country" in an additional sense of the term "weal": sugar consumption per head in Britain reached ten pounds in 1748 and twenty in 1800, as compared to "about two pounds" per head in France in the 1780s.⁹³⁹ This quirk of national taste and national manners could hardly have escaped the attention of an Edinburgh-trained physician such as Dr. Grainger. He was justified on several counts in assuming that, even in its minute procedural detail, the production, commercial sale, and consumption of sugarcane was "most momentous to my Country's weal," even when his "Country" was considered in the most geographically constrictive senses of that term.

Thus Grainger's georgic posture, not unlike Martin's, occupies a liminal geographical position between the cane isles and the mother country; however, it glances in the opposite direction. Martin had attempted to serve as a conduit for classical learning and British agricultural ideals within his local island community, hoping by that means to effect local reform in the cane isles. Grainger, in contrast, presents himself as a bearer of news about the agricultural practices that have developed in the cane isles—

⁹³⁸ McLynn, *1759*, 92.

⁹³⁹ Marshall, *Oxford History*, 421.

practices that necessarily bear a relation to the “Country’s weal.” Laying claim to a tradition that stretches back through Pope, Young, and Dryden, Grainger courts the British “Public” directly, imagining relevant governmental authorities merely listening in on the performance from their seats in Britain and abroad:

...So shall my numbers win the Public ear;
And not displease Aurelius; him to whom,
Imperial George, the monarch of the main,
Hath given to wield the scepter of those isles,
Where first the Muse beheld the spiry Cane,
Supreme of Plants, rich subject of my song.⁹⁴⁰

The metropolitan orientation of Grainger’s “song” is especially evident in this early passage: the distancing deictic, “those isles,” locates the poet, at least for a fleeting moment, on British soil, before the image of the passing of the “scepter”—signifying the government and management of the region—turns the visual focus toward the British West Indies, which is envisioned in this crucial introductory verse paragraph as a series of colonial outposts.

This visual orientation contributes to a destabilization of the georgic discourse as Martin had developed it. Martin, too, had sought a kind of dual audience: he had addressed himself principally to his fellow, on-site planters, hoping by that means to assist the moral and practical improvement from within, thereby winning them “self-approbation, and universal applause” of the broader “public,” beyond the cane isles.⁹⁴¹ Grainger’s performance reverses this formula. Rendering the planter his secondary audience, obliges himself only “not” to “displease Aurelius” as he attempts to “win the Public ear”—potentially a slimmer declaration of mutual obligation and commitment than the form of community that Martin had sought to foster with the planter class,

⁹⁴⁰ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, I.18-23.

⁹⁴¹ Martin, 1750 *Essay*, viii.

insofar as this relationship is diluted by Martin's appeal to the "Public." "Aurelius" has been identified credibly by Gilmore as George Thomas, Governor of the Leeward Islands from 1753 to 1766 (i.e. the deputized ruler of those sugarcane isles that Grainger treats most centrally in the poem).⁹⁴² "Aurelius" can therefore be understood to stand in for both the islands themselves, listening in on Grainger's performance from a distance, and the wealthy planter class from which Thomas issues, some of whom (like Martin) can be imagined listening in from the cane isles in their own person. And "Aurelius," in the latter sense, almost necessarily included any number of readers in Grainger's more immediate British audience. By the early 1760s, a majority of West-Indian planters were "absentees" living in London or elsewhere in England—especially planters from St. Kitts, the island on which he bases his poem.⁹⁴³ If this rhetorical context helps to makes

⁹⁴² The association of "Aurelius" with planters in general is hinted at not only by his station and position, but also by the pseudonym itself, which conveniently suggests the Latin root for "gold" (aurum) and is confirmed in character by Grainger's reference to sugarcane as the "rich subject of my song."

⁹⁴³ See Ragatz, Lowell Joseph, "Absentee Landlordism in the British Caribbean, 1750-1833," *Agricultural History* 5.1 (Jan. 1931): 7-24, which offers the most direct scholarly treatment of the issue that I have discovered and the treatment most reminiscent of eighteenth-century priorities for governmental management and formation of civilized society. British West-Indian planters, Ragatz notes, had not always been absentees. Ragatz not only charts the transition between a more diversified system of Caribbean plantership and the development of a monoculture by the early eighteenth century; he also discusses the causes for these transitions and the transitions within the monoculture system, among them the rising standard of living in England during the eighteenth century, which afforded them a ready market for sugar, and the "rise of the great estates" that preceded and followed along side this commercial success (8), the process by which financially-successful planters bought out smaller farmers, consolidating increasingly vast estates and depending increasingly on slave labor. The "general exodus" for England began in the 1750s with children of planters leaving the West Indies to undertake their formal education in England (9), and in the next phase, planters and their wives went as well. In 1770, the St. Kitts legislature informed English government that "[v]ery few of the Proprietors of Estates reside in this Island, but have retired with their Families to Europe" (qtd. 10). By about 1775, another shift was underway: planters' offspring were increasingly born (or at least reared) in England, "and the distant Caribbean properties which passed into their possession and of which they had little more than hazy recollections at best, were regarded merely from the income yielding point of view" (11). Even Thomas himself died in London in 1774, having returned in June of 1766 and resigned his governorship several months later. See Benjamin H. Newcomb, "Thomas, Sir George, baronet (c.1695-1774)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed Jan. 14, 2009.

Grainger hints at these transitions within *The Sugar-Cane*, largely through the narrative that emerges in his vignettes. The "good Montano," who is described at the end of the first book, is a diversified planter with many crops other than sugarcane (cotton, coffee, cacao, indigo)—therefore reminiscent of the seventeenth-century stage of West-Indian agriculture. "Junio," the male hero of the vignette at the end of

sense of Grainger's formal addresses to the "planter" throughout the poem, it also contributes an additional tension to Grainger's georgic performance. Classical and modern georgic writers alike had consistently stressed the importance of the physical presence of the master on his farm.⁹⁴⁴ In promising not to "displease" Aurelius, Grainger has already begun to push the moral limits of georgic discourse as it was then constituted. But rather than dwelling upon this distance, Grainger shows himself bridging it. In subsequent verses, Grainger will turn his poetic gaze toward the tropical soil, depicting himself moving through the Caribbean landscape and therefore bring his readers with him to into the tropics.

II: The Luscious Ebullience of Grainger's Diction

Indeed, in a rather unlikely discursive turn, Grainger stages his entry into the georgic discursive mode as a response to the European appetites that have given rise to (and perpetuated) the European colonial project in the Caribbean. Sugarcane had been transplanted into the area, as Grainger explains at length in his first annotation to the poem. It was probably first planted in St. Domingo in 1506 by the command of "[King] Ferdinand the Catholic" and was soon manufactured in Brazil with great success by the Portuguese, who were then paid by the English "at the rate of 4 *l. per C. wt.* for muscovado," a price that, "great as it may now appear, was probably much less than what the Sugar from the East-Indies had commonly been sold for."⁹⁴⁵ Spelled out in the

the second book, leaves the West Indies for Eton, although returning at the end of the story to join his love, "Theana." And Grainger's extended plea to present-day absentees, whom he still presumes are "natives" of the West Indies, comes at the end of the third book.

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. Joan Thirsk, "Making a Fresh Start: Sixteenth-Century Agriculture and the Classical Inspiration," in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, eds. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 15-34.

⁹⁴⁵ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, 166.

footnotes, this history of colonization is also registered poetically in the fourth verse paragraph of *The Sugar-Cane*,⁹⁴⁶ which elides the public's desire for sugar—past and ongoing—with the original decision to transplant sugarcane into the Caribbean and the deforestation that resulted from this agricultural form of European colonization:

Where'er the clouds relent in frequent rains,
 And the Sun fiercely darts his Tropic beam,
 The Cane will joint, ungenial tho' the soil.
 But would'st thou see huge casks, in order due,
 Roll'd numerous on the Bay, all fully fraught
 With strong-grain'd muscovado, silvery-grey,
 Joy of the planter; and if happy Fate
 Permit a choice: avoid the rocky slope,
 The clay-cold bottom, and the sandy beach.
 But let thy biting ax with ceaseless stroke
 The wild red cedar, the tough locust fell.⁹⁴⁷

The line, “The Cane will joint, ungenial tho' the soil” sits a little awkwardly in this passage: as Grainger subsequently explains, this tropical soil is unmatched for its fertility. Thus the seemingly misplaced adjective serves to unsettle the presumption that the transplantation has been born of a union that will benefit the local oeconomy. The progression of addresses that has led up to this point supplies an actuating motive for the “joining” (“joint” having been the technical term for planting cane in the soil by allowing two stalks to grow together). With “the Public ear” and “Aurelius” still lingering as the antecedents for the second-person address in the clause “would'st thou see huge casks, / Rolled numerous on the Bay,” the passage reads like a statement of collective intent,

⁹⁴⁶ The annotation cited above is keyed to “VER. 22”—that is, two lines before the passage quoted here. In the earliest London edition of *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), the annotations appeared at the bottom of the page rather than at the end, therefore encouraging a reader to begin reading this history of the sugarcane before he or she has even arrived at the verse paragraph that I have quoted here. (See Appendix A.) This is an especially confusing verse paragraph, thanks to its ambiguity of address, its collapsing of the history of colonization into a few lines, its complexity and unevenness of tone, and its grammar. Thus, the annotation would surely have helped to guide a reader toward the understanding that I am sketching out here: an understanding of Grainger's entry into the georgic mode as a direct response to the “Publick's” desire for sugar.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I.24-35.

whereby “thy biting ax” emerges as the proximate effect of the collective desire for sugar. Note, too, that, although “the planter” will subsequently become a formal addressee within the verse, he is rendered in this introductory passage, in the third person, as a kind of middleman, standing by with “Joy” as casks of muscovado, “strong-grain’d” and “silvery-grey” are “Roll’d numerous on the Bay”—a “Bay” that could as easily be a synecdoche for an English port town as it could be a representation of the coastline of the Caribbean cane isles where the sugar has been produced.

The poet offers a cautionary word here as well. As the passage continues, the poet counsels the eager addressee to halt the “biting ax” before too many local sources of nourishment and medication have disappeared:

Nor let his nectar, nor his silken pods,
 The sweet-smell’d cassia, or vast ceiba save.
 Yet spare the guava, yet the guaiac spare;
 A wholesome food the ripened guava yields,
 Boast of the housewife; while the guaiac grows
 A sovereign antidote, in wood, bark, gum,
 To cause the lame his useless crutch forego,
 And dry the sources of corrupted love.
 Nor let thy bright impatient flames destroy
 The golden shaddoc, the forbidden fruit,
 The white acajou, and rich sabacca:
 For where these trees their leafy banners raise
 Aloft in air, a grey deep earth abounds,
 Fat, light: yet, when it feels the wounding hoe,
 Rising in clods, which ripening suns and rain
 Resolve to crumbles, yet not pulverize:
 In this the soul of vegetation wakes,
 Pleas’d at the planter’s call, to burst on day.⁹⁴⁸

As Grainger’s annotations make clear, these are largely nutritious foods that he wishes to save from the “biting ax,” before turning gleefully to the prospect of the rising cane—naturally-available foods that have disappeared with the rise of the “imperial” cane.

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid., I.35-52.

Grainger also wishes to preserve the “guaiac,” by legend a remedy for syphilis that God had planted near the disease’s origins, which were taken to be in the New World. The details serve to extend the oeconomy of disjointedness, hinted at by the awkward suggestiveness of the hint that “[t]he Cane will joint, ungenial tho’ the soil”: overzealous deforestation comes to threaten both the “joints” of syphilitic victims and the *joining* of the human population on the island. The conjunction “yet,” whose grammatical function hovers between analytical distinction (“but”) and temporal continuity (“still”), is employed 90 times in a georgic whose thematic center is the “joining” of sugarcane cuttings in the earth and whose pharmaceutical concerns prominently include yaws, an imitator of syphilis in its debilitating effects on the skeleton and joints.⁹⁴⁹ “Yet” appears twice in this very passage, and the grammar wobbles notably at each iteration. Should we take Grainger’s verse to mean that the “Fat, light” earth is “resolve[d] to crumbles” at the arrival of the “ripening sun and rains”? Or is he suggesting that the “wounding hoe” itself might be subjected to such decay—asserting that the soil will enjoy a greater fecundity if left to its own devices, without being “pulverized” by human instruments that tax its resources through repetition and routine? Given the rapid turnover of the tropical West-Indian climate evoked in Grainger’s verse, the sense of even his most descriptive pronouncements might collapse under its own weight if pathos and sheer exuberance didn’t heave it forward. The logic of image and idea is almost lost—and the question of what the “Fat, light” earth “feels” all but forgotten—when, in a final dramatic burst, the “soul of vegetation” awakens, irrefutably “Pleas’d at the planter’s call.”

In this manner, Grainger stages the progression of the “Public” desire for sugar as

⁹⁴⁹ Keyword search, *Literature Online*, ProQuest Information and Learning Company, 1996-2005 (accessed 3 May 2005).

a forceful but uneven actuating passion in the local oeconomy. By contrast to Martin's picture of military discipline, Grainger's depictions of island life refuse to provide a picture of an unambiguously orderly, civilizing process in which humans exercise reliable dominion over nature. This unpredictability is registered even at the grammatical level, where it can be difficult to discern object from agent, pleasure from pain. Participles are gleefully left dangling; antecedents waver and retreat with little warning; subjects do double duty as objects and vice versa. Consider this perplexing introductory passage, in which a rich, sentient earth subjects itself unavoidably—and happily?—to cultivation and natural decay. Testing a reader's botanical familiarity with species such as “golden shaddoc,” “white acajou,” and “rich sabbaca,” “wild red cedar” and “tough locust,” and “sweet-smell'd cassia,” “vast ceiba,” “guava,” and “guaiac,” all of which present themselves as possible grammatical antecedents for “these trees,” the passage unfolds in a Latinate syntax as nimble and lively as the fecund West-Indian scene that it imagines, and the anthropomorphized diction only compounds the interpretive challenges.⁹⁵⁰ In short, what *is* the “soul of vegetation” for Grainger, and how is it best cultivated by “the planter's call”? Inquiring into the “spirit,” “soul” or “principles of vegetation” had been a central scientific preoccupation in georgic treatises from John Evelyn's *Terra* (1660) to Jethro Tull's *Horse-Hoeing Husbandry* (1731) to Francis Home's *Principles of Agriculture and Vegetation* (1759). Grainger develops an image that might sustain any one of the hypotheses supplied in these earlier treatises: Evelyn's saltpetre, Tull's pulverizing hoe, Home's “corruption,” “decay,” and “putrefaction.”⁹⁵¹ And when it comes to the all-important issue of where the “soul of vegetation” resides, Grainger

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid., I.44-45, 34, 36-37, 45.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid., I.82.

ultimately supplies only a breezy deictic with no single, clear antecedent: “In *this* the soul of vegetation wakes.”⁹⁵²

III: “Shall the Muse celebrate the dark deep mould...?”

These images of fecundity and movement, together with the unruly syntactical patterns that sustain them, contribute to a reading experience in which it seems at times (at least at first) that the local rural oeconomy goes relatively untended, remaining animated by such rapid processes of growth and decay that the cane seems to spring up on its own, without human hands to guide it, and without the same sense of dignified, sober, structured order that Martin had projected in his prose discussion. In the first book, Grainger spends relatively little time on the obligatory question of composting⁹⁵³—a matter that Martin had treated at length—as if to suggest that the landscape retains the capacity to bear fruit on its own, without labor. The assertion that “the Antillean Cane / Supremely loves” all of the varieties of soils of the cane isles emerges as a kind of refrain in the poem,⁹⁵⁴ as a counterpart to both the “opulence” and unmatched fertility that Grainger associates repeatedly with the soil the amorousness attributable to Grainger’s London readers: the sugarcane likes the soil and is drawn to it, just as Englanders are drawn to sugarcane.

But there is, of course, labor on this landscape, as becomes eminently clear as the poem proceeds. The second book describes the toils of scattering away the cane-stealing monkeys who come down from the hills to snack, setting out poison for the rats who skulk under the cane stalks, warding off the airborne insects who swarm the fields. Fires

⁹⁵² My emphasis.

⁹⁵³ Ibid., I.218-54.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid., I.138-39, 1.

are shown raging in the cane fields and frantically quelled by cane workers; hurricanes bathe the cattle in sweat. The third book depicts the laborious processes of harvesting the cane and cutting it into pieces and setting it to boil, subjecting the workers who oversee the steamy mixture to “bloating dropsy” and “pulmonic ails” from the harsh steam.⁹⁵⁵ Many of these details had gone wholly unmentioned in Martin’s account. If they have been unrepresentatively selected and rhetorically enhanced, then Grainger’s presentation of the conditions of local life is all the more striking as an account of the West-Indian rural oeconomy as an unpleasant place to live.

And this is a point worth stressing, for these concrete suggestions of what it might *feel* like to labor as a slave in the West Indies cut against not only the lively, ebullient, luxurious quality of the verse, but also the available impression—common to a number of modern readings of the poem—that Grainger is seeking to make the tropics look like a fun place to live, with images of laughing and dancing slaves (one such image comes at the end of the poem) and a laughing, anthropomorphized landscape that sustains the image. And yet, these hints about the physical unpleasantness of the place are unquestionably lodged in his abundant descriptions, if one takes the time to look. Grainger describes the remedy for locust infestation as an “Augæan toil” that “long time demands”:

Thy Blacks send forth,
A strong detachment! ere the encreasing pest
Have made too firm a lodgment; and, with care,
Wipe every tainted blade, and liberal lave
With sacred Neptune’s purifying stream.⁹⁵⁶

As a cure for “the blast” (a disease that threatens the health of the sugarcane), Grainger

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid., III.334.

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid., III.182-87.

counsels against the ineffective remedy of “load[ing] the favouring gale, / With pitch, and sulfur’s suffocating steam”—a remedy potentially “fatal” to humans—and recommends this solution instead:

Others again, and better their success,
 Command their slaves each tainted blade to pick
 With care, and burn them in vindictive flames.
 Labour immense!⁹⁵⁷

All the more grueling and “immense” as field labors, these tasks are presumably undertaken during the day, while “the Sun fiercely darts his Tropic beam.”⁹⁵⁸ But plantation work persists even after the sun is down. When the sugarcane crops catch on fire,

Rous’d by the deafning bells, the cries, the blaze;
 From every quarter, in tumultuous bands,
 The Negroes rush; and, ’mid the crackling flames,
 Plunge, dæmon-like! All, all, urge every nerve:
 This way, tear up those Canes; dash the fire out,
 Which sweeps, with serpent-error, o’er the ground.
 There, hew these down; their topmost branches burn:
 And here bid all thy watery engines play;
 For here the wind the burning deluge drives.
 In vain — ...⁹⁵⁹

Grainger’s narration of these frantic nocturnal labors proceeds still further from here, merging soon with descriptions of harvesting the sugarcane (“which many a day, / And many a night shall feed thy crackling mills / With richest offerings,” and then descriptions of actually feeding the cane mills (“but O beware; / Nor trust, between the steel-cas’d cylinders, / The hand incautious: off the member snapt...,” and then

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid., II.240-48.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid., I.25. Grainger implies that the locust infestations, at least, occur mainly in the dry season, for a good rainfall will get rid of the pests on its own: “[T]he rattling shower, / Pour’d down in constant streams, for days and nights, / Not only swells, with nectar sweet, thy Canes; / But, in the deluge, drowns thy plundering foe” (II.190-93).

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid., III.66-75.

descriptions of boiling the sugarcane to perfection with the constant supervision of expert “boilers” (“[D]efend thy boilers, (prime of slaves,) / For days, for nights, for weeks, for months, involv’d / In the warm vapour’s all-relaxing steam.”⁹⁶⁰

Martin’s *Essay*, although not incorporating precisely the same details that Grainger develops here, had facilitated a similarly labor-intensive reading experience—a means of observing the elements of the rural oeconomy in motion and considering their interrelation. One can see a parallel technique unfolding in Grainger’s verse. This incorporation of forms of indirection—a tendency to *show* a reader a local oeconomy in motion rather than describing it with an abstract principle—had long been associated with Virgil’s *Georgics*. In his famous treatise on the georgic, developing an analysis that was later echoed by Grainger’s publisher, Robert Dodsley, Joseph Addison had this to say about the subtle appeals to readerly curiosity and self-reliance that characterized Virgil’s didactic technique:

Virgil... loves to suggest a Truth indirectly, and without giving us a full and open view of it: To let us see just so much as will naturally lead the Imagination into all the parts that lie conceal’d. This is wonderfully diverting to the Understanding, thus to receive a Precept, that enters as it were through a By-way, and to apprehend an Idea that draws a whole train after it: For here the Mind, which is always delighted with its own Discoveries, only takes the hint from the Poet, and seems to work out the rest by the strength of her own faculties.⁹⁶¹

This is the technique that Grainger uses in his descriptions of local labor—a technique further enhanced by the lively, celebratory affect governing his prose, which a reader sometimes must resist to develop a full appraisal of Grainger’s rendering of West Indian life.

This technique is particularly pronounced in his descriptions of the physical

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid., III. 103-5, 166-68, 335-37.

⁹⁶¹ Addison, Joseph, “An Essay on the Georgics,” in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 5, eds. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 147-48.

demands of harvesting sugarcane, which include several precise details:

Some bending, of their sapless burden ease
The yellow jointed canes, (whose height exceeds
A mounted trooper, and whose clammy round
Measures two inches full;) and near the root
Lop the stem off, which quivers in their hand
With fond impatience

What of the Cane
Remains, and much the largest part remains,
Cut into junks a yard in length, and tied
In small light bundles; load the broad-wheel'd wane,
The mules crook-harnest, and the sturdier crew
With sweet abundance.⁹⁶²

The passing description of the cut stem that “quivers in their hand / With fond impatience” as it is being cut, like the later descriptions of the cane junks as “small light bundles,” contributes to the ebullience of the scene and perhaps also the impression that Grainger paints far too joyful a picture of canefield labor. But there are still enough references to scale and size to challenge the inference that this is actually “easy toil,” as Grainger says of some procedurally-related processes elsewhere in the passage.⁹⁶³ When “yellow jointed canes” are taller than a man’s height and “two inches full” (presumably two inches in diameter), the repeated action of bending to cut them at the root could not be “easy.” In addition, each of the cane junks is a yard long, so, once collected, the bundles are composed of any number of cane stalks one yard long and, again, “two inches full.” This is hardly what one would imagine as a “small light bundl[e],” although surely it is comparatively lighter and smaller than bunches of the ripe canes themselves, newly cut from the fields, their length “exceed[ing]” the height of a “mounted trooper.” Moreover, even if each of these bundles is fairly “light” on its own, neither loading bundle after bundle nor carrying multiple bundles at once could be particularly easy,

⁹⁶² Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, III.111-16, 125-30.

⁹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 123.

especially when these tasks are completed in the hot sun or the pouring rain. That some of the bundled junks are ultimately loaded onto wagons (“the broad-wheel’d wane”) and whatever pack animals are present provides an additional hint that those men filling out the deficiency—the “sturdier crew,” as Grainger puts it—carry significant weight indeed.

Thus, despite Grainger’s brightness of tone, his descriptions do not make the sugarcane isles look like a happy, civilized region. In fanciful passages he describes cockroaches and lizards crawling about, rats in the cane fields, killed by arsenic poisoning, locusts infesting the cane, violent downpours that keep unsuspecting travelers away from home and make them sick. Disease dominates the scene—precisely what one would expect of a poem composed by a physician. Grainger offers suggestions for locally available remedies throughout the annotations and within the verse. This pattern holds through the first half of the final book of the poem poem, which, in correspondence to the apiary section of Virgil’s *Georgics*, describes the workers that tend the precious, sweet substance considered the crowning prize of the local rural oeconomy. He discusses at length how to rid them of ailments imported from Africa and ailments caught locally. “Would’st though secure thine Ethiop from those ails, / Which change of climate, change of waters breed, / And food unusual?,” he begins.⁹⁶⁴

IV: “[W]illing to know from what it is produced, and how it is prepared”

To return, then, to the question of what didactic content *The Sugar-Cane* can be said to have offered its London readers in the way of education about the local rural oeconomy, one lesson, as anticipated by Samuel Johnson, was simply offering them an account of “from what [sugar] is produced, and how it is prepared.” And although that

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid., IV.119-21.

account might have seemed to go down like sugar at first, it was well-calculated to set the stage for an ethical contemplation of the unpleasant “rural oeconomy” that British consumer appetites kept alive.

But the content of that metropolitan reading experience, I would argue, could not merely have consisted of generous, detached, philosophical contemplations of the working conditions in the British West Indies. A second feature of Grainger’s account of “from what [sugar] is produced, and how it is prepared” related to the substance of the sugar itself. And here, again, Grainger exploits a traditional feature of the georgic to innovative modern ends: he appealed to his readers’ self-interest to imagine the sweetener that they placed in their tea as the product of a gustatorially displeasing rural oeconomy.

As was typical of georgic discourse (especially written by physicians), Grainger’s poem consistently keeps watch on the materials that go into and out of human bodies, animal bodies, and plant bodies. He keeps watch on the soil, attending to the animal and vegetative digestive processes that nourish it and pollute it and are nourished or polluted in turn, seeking a balance between wholesome foods and toxins, invasive foreign bodies and salutary remedies. He notes the body parts that remain in contact with the ground—bare, injured feet make a prominent appearance, thereby permitting the entry and exit of parasitic worms, which are frequently mentioned in the poem—and he notes the emetics by which the ground might be both contaminated and fertilized once more. He guards the soil with a physician’s eye, as if to suggest that toxins lurk there, promising to cure hunger but creating dangerous dependencies. There are wanted powers and unwanted alike there, human-borne and otherwise. “Rats, &c,” having come to the isles on

European ships, now “breed in the ground, under loose rocks and bushes,” he writes.⁹⁶⁵

The French bait them with “decoys” and then “pay their slaves / Some small reward for every captive foe”; the “Britons trust / In other wiles; and surer their success, “wiles” that still find “success” today:

With Misnian arsenic, deleterious bane,
Pound up the ripe cassada’s well-rasp’d root,
And form in pellets; these profusely spread
Round the Cane-groves, where skulk the vermin-breed:
They, greedy, and unweeting of the bait,
Crowd to the inviting cates, and swift devour
Their palatable Death; for soon they seek
The neighboring spring; and drink, and swell, and die.⁹⁶⁶

A convenient and swift method, to be sure, though it comes with risks:

But dare not thou, if life deserve thy care,
The infected rivulet taste; nor let thy herds
Graze its polluted brinks, till rolling time
Have fin’d the water, and destroyed the bane.
‘Tis safer then to mingle nightshade’s juice
With flour, and throw it liberal ‘mong thy Canes:
They touch not this; its deadly scent they fly,
And sudden colonize some distant vale.⁹⁶⁷

In Grainger’s presentation, the push to preserve the health of the sugarcane, the very landscape that nourishes the crop is poisoned, threatening, in tandem, the animals and humans who tend it, until, with time, it mixes itself into the soil, its toxic virulence diluted and dispersed in a kind of ripple effect in which remedial innovations are imported alongside new sources of affliction.

Girolamo Fracastoro, studying the means by which syphilis was spread, wrote of *semina* or *seminaria* as agents of contagion, “creatures with a life of their own, capable of generation. They could act either by direct contact, or through an intermediary such as a

⁹⁶⁵ Ibid., II.64.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid., II.79-90.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid., II.91-8.

piece of material, or at a distance borne by the air.”⁹⁶⁸ *The Sugar-Cane* depicts a range of creatures—insects, “germs,” plants, animals, humans. Not every creature in this landscape proves to be “capable of generation,” but all creatures are shown to have a “life of their own,” however tenuous and fragile:

Worms lurk in all; yet, pronest they to worms,
Who from Mundingo sail. When therefore such
Thou buy’st, for sturdy and laborious they,
Straight set some learned leach strong medicines give,
Till food and climate both familiar grow...⁹⁶⁹

Readers are shown substances moving through water—in ships, in alimentary canals, in mountain streams—as if to suggest that commerce is the basis of nature, bringing ailments in its resilient hosts. “The Blacks, who drink the Quanza’s lucid stream, / Fed by ten thousand springs, are prone to bloat,” we are told, “Whether at home or in these ocean isles.”⁹⁷⁰

Say, shall the muse the various ills recount,
Which Negroe-nations feel? Shall she describe
The worm that subtly winds into their flesh,
All as they bathe in their native streams?⁹⁷¹

In this manner, “insinuation” becomes the visual means by which *The Sugar-Cane* does its work—all these *semina* and *seminaria* invading the springs and the coveted earth of Liamuiga.

Jethro Tull, the improver to whom Martin had turned for his wheeled plow and his theories of fertilization, is the only English agricultural improver mentioned by name

⁹⁶⁸ Eatough, Geoffrey, “Introduction,” *Fracastoro’s Syphilis* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns / Redwood Burn, 1984), 16. Fracastoro was the author of *Syphilis* (1555, 1583), the Latin georgic that Grainger quoted as the epigraph to his M.D. dissertation. This poem was the first of three that treated the topic of syphilis. Most of the new science was contained in the fragmentary second work and the expanded prose work, *De Contagione*.

⁹⁶⁹ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, IV.103-6.

⁹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 113-5

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 244-7.

in the poem.⁹⁷² This is a significant inclusion. Tull's theory was that the husbandman had no need for manure to culture the soil—the aspect of his theory that had surely appealed to Martin. Tull thought that the plow and other instruments could break the soil into small pieces that could be more easily taken in by plants. One can see why Grainger might have cited him here: in the picture that Grainger paints of the local landscape, Tull's theory of soil fragmentation and plant nourishment lends itself to an understanding that West-Indian sugarcane routinely imbibes all kinds of local toxins and diseases. Thus, in *The Sugar-Cane*, Grainger develops an alternate didactic function for the “rural oeconomy” of georgic discourse: he attempts to disgust his readers into thinking twice about eating sugar. As St. Kitts's sugar is said to be mixed into the sugar from all the other cane islands to “improve” them before sending them back to the mother country, this possibility seems all the more threatening.

The only consolation is that the poet also shows the sugarcane being boiled as one of the entrenched local processes of refinement. Disease was one of the major causes of death in military campaigns (the campaign in the Seven Years War being no exception⁹⁷³), just as it was one of the major causes of death among West-Indian slaves, and contemporary military doctors were beginning to recognize the importance of sanitation of all kinds. John Pringle, whose 1752 *Observations on Diseases of the Army* predated the publication of Grainger's own work on Low Country fevers by a year,⁹⁷⁴ had been instrumental in demonstrating “that jail fever and hospital fever are one and the

⁹⁷² He is described within the verse as “Ceres' son” (l. 290) and named in Grainger's annotation as “Jethro Tull, Esq; the greatest improver in modern husbandry.”

⁹⁷³ By the end of the first month of the 1759 British campaign in the Caribbean, “1,500 men were on sick parade” (McLynn 110).

⁹⁷⁴ Gilmore quotes the “unfortunate tardiness (for Grainger) that led one contemporary review to comment: ‘indeed, it is possible, this performance may appear to a somewhat greater disadvantage by succeeding one that has been so deservedly well received’” (8).

same [later recognized as epidemic louseborne typhusfever]; did much for the better ventilation of shops, barracks, jails and mines; correlated the different forms of dysentery; and gave the name influenza to that dread disease.”⁹⁷⁵ The sanitary code proposed in Pringle’s *Observations* advocated “[c]leanliness, above all”; anticipating “most of the principles and recommended preventative medicine practices of the present,” it “comprehended the disposal of wastes of all kinds, the construction and care of latrines—“necessaries,” as they were called—the selection of campsites, the policing of camps, and the supervision and control of rations and drinking water.”⁹⁷⁶ Pringle’s *Observations*, “the source-book of all subsequent writers, was followed by Van Swieten’s book on camp diseases (1758), and Richard Brocklesby’s observations on military hospitals (1764).”⁹⁷⁷ Pringle instituted many changes on-site, in military campaigns in the Netherlands and, perhaps most notably, in the War of Austrian succession: one of his associates would issue the order that “The dragoons shall drink no water without it be first boyled.”⁹⁷⁸ Paving the way for the modern Red Cross, Pringle himself worked to secure neutrality for the hospitals near military barracks so that his sanitary codes might be sufficiently implemented. Although it took some time for his ideas to gain a widespread acceptance in the general population, they had some effect on military policy—an effect that can also be heard in pro-slavery appeals later in the century, which

⁹⁷⁵ Stanhope Bayne-Jones, M.D, “British and European Military Preventative Medicine,” *The Evolution of Preventative Medicine in the United States Army, 1607-1939*, 12, qtg. Garrison.

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/misc/evprev/ch2.htm>

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 12, qtg. Garrison.

⁹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, qtd. 12.

proclaimed that slave quarters and slave infirmaries were well-ventilated, clean, and uncrowded.⁹⁷⁹

V: *The Sugar-Cane* as a Strained Celebration of British Imperial Expansion

By addressing the metropole from one of Britain's most profitable West-Indian colonies (St. Kitts) soon after the conclusion of the Seven Years War, Grainger had placed himself in a prime position to celebrate British imperial expansion—an occasion that might help to explain the celebratory quality of the verse noted previously.⁹⁸⁰ After all, the georgic had made room for imperialist ambitions throughout its British history, as Karen O'Brien has shown,⁹⁸¹ and its development as a genre, from ancient times forward, had been nourished by the conviction that confident human settlement was manifested in the successful cultivation of the land.⁹⁸² By composing and publishing a georgic about sugar cultivation in the British-occupied Caribbean, Grainger was necessarily reflecting upon—and arguably also participating in—the ongoing extension of English settlement beyond the historical boundaries of the British Isles.

In keeping with this rhetorical expectation, *The Sugar-Cane* is marked by an unmistakable nationalist verve. A number of passages suggest specifically British loyalties, from laudatory comments about notable Britons⁹⁸³ to articulations of nostalgia

⁹⁷⁹ See Adair, James Makittrick, *Unanswerable arguments against the abolition of the slave trade. With a defence of the proprietors of the British sugar colonies, ...* (London, [1790?]), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed July 8, 2010).

⁹⁸⁰ On the particular profitability of St. Kitts, see Grainger's annotation on the subject, where he observes that the "Sugar [on Kittian plantations] sells for more than the Sugar of any other of his Majesty's islands; as their produce cannot be refined to the best advantage, without a mixture of St. Kitts' muscovado" (n. 1.60).

⁹⁸¹ "Imperial Georgic, 1660-1789," *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550-1850*, eds. Raymond Williams et al. (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999), 160-179.

⁹⁸² In Markman Ellis's words, the georgic "makes the physical work of agriculture visible and, in this visibility, finds the origin of the endeavour of civilization" (50).

⁹⁸³ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, I.7-17, 18-21; II.23-33; III.31-45, 289-307, 507-25; IV.25-37.

for Britain⁹⁸⁴ to a smattering of anti-French comments very much in keeping with the British nationalist sentiment of this period.⁹⁸⁵ In his Preface, he labels his poem a “West-India georgic” (a name honoring European land claims) rather than a “Caribbean georgic” (a name asserting an indigenous character). Within the verse itself, Grainger records his hope to own a modest plot of land in the sugarcane isles⁹⁸⁶—a detail that aligns his personal ambition with the colonizing impulse, albeit without confirming his ambitions to join the planter class in its present form, since he claims that it is not “wealth” he craves, but “independance.” Moreover, a series of well-placed, patriotic utterances contributes to a vision of Britain’s imperial capaciousness. In the opening lines of the poem, Grainger refers to King George III as “Imperial George, the monarch of the main.”⁹⁸⁷ In the fourth book, he explains the processes by which “white Albion, once a barbarous clime, / ... [now] holds the balance of the world, / Acknowledg’d now sole empress of the main.”⁹⁸⁸ He develops the claim by describing the specifically British triangle of trade that connects various Atlantic colonies⁹⁸⁹—an inclusion that, even if it simply honors British colonial policy,⁹⁹⁰ lends itself to a vision of Britain as an ascendant commercial power. The final lines of the poem echo and amplify the initial royal compliment with a capitalized statement that confirms the presiding image of Britain’s imperial expansiveness: “THE BRITISH GEORGE NOW REIGNS, THE PATRIOT KING! / BRITAIN SHALL EVER TRIUMPH O’ER THE MAIN.”⁹⁹¹ This

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, I.517-18; III.507-25.

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, II.174-77, 205-17, 490-96; III.307, 455-57.

⁹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, I.544-50.

⁹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, I.20.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, IV.353-56.

⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, IV.434-37, 618-19.

⁹⁹⁰ That is, for the purpose of levying taxes, British colonies were legally required to trade with the mother country and her other colonies.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, IV.682-83.

concluding chant has the feel of a heroic couplet—a hint of royalism in a poem otherwise committed to blank verse, and as such, an aural detail that augments the imperialist ring of its content.

But if one expects this “West-India georgic” to function straightforwardly as an imperial panegyric, it is difficult to account for the unpleasant truths that the poem makes available. Moreover, it is difficult to account for the way celebration itself is dramatized within the poem as a labor—a performance undertaken only with effort. Grainger opens his georgic with the image of “[a] Muse, that long hath wander’d in the groves / of myrtle-indolence,” as if to hint that his past career has been characterized by neither the outdoorsy vigor nor the robust rural toil typical of georgic performances.⁹⁹² He does not “sing”; he “attempts to sing.”⁹⁹³ And he refers to his poem repeatedly as a “strain”⁹⁹⁴—poetic diction, to be sure, but also diction that carries with it the idea that it *is* a strain to sing of sugar with rural robustness.

More importantly, this subtlety of phrasing is borne out in the voice and affect of Grainger’s poetic persona, which is carefully crafted to convey a picture of a man hard-pressed to sustain the enthusiastic spirit that his patriotic duties require. At a few key turns, one can almost hear him gasping for breath, as in this attempt to summon—both within himself and on his audience’s behalf—an appropriate feeling of patriotic zeal:

O could my weak song,
O could my song, like his, heaven-favored bard,
Who led desponding Sparta’s oft-beat hosts,
To victory, to glory; fire your souls
With English ardour!⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁹² Ibid., I.5-6.

⁹⁹³ Ibid., I.6.

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid., II.545; III.489-90, 544; IV.33.

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid., III.591-5.

By the time one reaches the end of the fourth book, the poet can be found heaving himself forward, rushing to finish, as if he has too little left in him to carry on the performance much longer:

But I'm in haste to furl my wind-worn sails,
And anchor my tir'd vessel on the shore.⁹⁹⁶

No ordinary ineffability *topos*, this series of authorial asides presents a picture of a poet who is either overtaxed by the rhetorical task that he has set himself or, he hints, physically ill, as Grainger actually *was* during this period,⁹⁹⁷ and as were many of the cane laborers whom he depicts in the poem. Adding narrative credence to the physical interpretation, the “muses” whom Grainger invokes at the start of the first book look more like human nurses than divine agents of inspiration. At first invoking the “Genius of Africk” as a prelude to an arduous discussion of St. Kitts’s enslaved cane workers, Grainger briefly demurs, calling for additional fortification. “[D]read Genius, come!” Grainger cries,

Yet vain thy presence, vain thy favouring nod;
Unless once more the muses; that erewhile
Upheld me fainting in my past career,
Through Caribbe’s cane-isles; kind condescend
To guide my footsteps...⁹⁹⁸

Thus, the image of the poet that introduces the final book in this double invocation is an image of a hobbling, ailing, eminently mortal being, supported by the reliable shoulders of “muses” who not only assist his forward progress, but also prevent him from fainting away entirely.

VI: A Progress of Strained Celebration

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid., IV.552-3.

⁹⁹⁷ Grainger died in 1766, apparently of a protracted illness, just two years after the poem was published.

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid., IV.17-22.

These are only hints, of course, but they take shape within a poem brimming with references to disease and death. And what is striking about this aspect of Grainger's presentation of West-Indian life is less his confirmation that disease and death are especially prominent facts of existence in the Caribbean territories where Britain has extended its imperial reach (although this irony is certainly crucial as well), but his narrative suggestion that even he—the physician who has so assiduously sought, and so assiduously champions, the “indigenous remedies” that these islands provide⁹⁹⁹—remains visibly, mortally subject to the distempers that he has so passionately been endeavoring to cure, ameliorate, and attend. In this insinuation, as in his celebration of the West-Indian “rural oeconomy” more generally, he portrays himself in the poem as a poet-physician who has embraced a project that is doomed to fall short of the hopeful progress toward physical and moral integrity that motivates the georgic utterance.

As in the passages quoted above, this tension is often registered at the level of tone—a technique and an aspect of georgic performance that Grainger may well have borrowed from Virgil. Virgil “combines a passionate sense of engagement with the deliberate risk of bathos,” as Juan Christian Pellicer puts it.¹⁰⁰⁰ “The sympathy Virgil habitually elicits on behalf of his subjects might not always require a moral choice or a taking of sides, but only an acknowledgement of the suffering at stake or the risk of failure involved in paradoxical or poignant situations.”¹⁰⁰¹ Virgil engages so passionately with his subject, in other words, that the *engagement itself* is what risks a descent into

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid., 90.

¹⁰⁰⁰ “Reception, Wit, and the Unity of Virgil’s *Georgics*,” *Symbolae Osloenses: Norwegian Journal of Greek and Latin Studies* 82 (2007): 95. Pellicer begins, interestingly, with a discussion of the way Boswell’s anecdote has structured the reception of the poem, but he does not actually suggest that his central insights—which focus on several British verse georgics’ mimicry of Virgil’s tonal complexity—might be extended to *The Sugar-Cane*.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibid., 100.

bathos, as in the case of singing about a discomfiting subject such as “rats” that nevertheless holds importance in West-Indian agriculture, or, more broadly, in the case of an engagement with a system of agriculture, visible in the combination of concrete details offered in the poem, that might prove deleterious to its own participants. This analysis can be usefully extended to Grainger’s celebratory mode. If Philips’s *Cyder* incorporates an “element of burlesque” to promote a vision of post-Revolution Britain in which “cheerful conviviality, as opposed to violence and civil strife” prevails—a project in which Philips “wittily misquote[s]” authors such as Milton, to make them speak in support of drinking¹⁰⁰²—then Grainger’s *Sugar-Cane* dramatizes an imperial anthem in which even the most passionate champion of the West-Indian rural economy cannot overcome the physical ills that prevail here, the sordid nature of the form of settlement that he celebrates, or the loneliness of a public-spirited endeavor to improve this agricultural system in its present form.

This gesture can be difficult to assess, in all its tonal complexity, in isolated passages. It emerges, rather, in the transitions from one verse paragraph to the next, and in the relationship between affect and topic within the arc of the poem as a whole. Tellingly, the *London Chronicle*, in selecting excerpts from the poem for quotation, found reason to explain that the passages isolated for perusal “are not selected as superior in excellence to many other passages in the poem, but as more easily separated from the rest, and more intelligible when the connection is broken.”¹⁰⁰³ The *Critical Review* similarly emphasized a sense of “progress” within *The Sugar-Cane* from the first book to the fourth. “It has been remarked of Virgil,” Johnson writes, “that he rises in every book:

¹⁰⁰² Ibid., 105-06.

¹⁰⁰³ Gilmore, “Introduction,” qtd. 37.

on the contrary Dyer, Phillips, and some others, who have pursued his plan, grow languid as they proceed, as if fatigued with their career. Our poet happily improves in his progress; and as the *tædium* of reading increases, he makes the interest increase proportionably.”¹⁰⁰⁴ The drama of this “progress”—the “interest,” as Johnson puts it—consists in the gradual revelation that celebration is almost necessarily labored or artificial in the West-Indian oeconomy that Grainger describes.

Consider the following passage from the third book. If viewed out of context, this passage may look like an unwitting digression into a pastoral mode—a moment when the poet finds himself straying from his appointed task of discussing West-Indian agricultural labor because he cannot keep himself from savoring the peculiar experiences that the Caribbean landscape makes available to the senses at the break of day:

What tho’ no bird of song, here charms the sense
 With her wild mistrelsy; far, far beyond,
 The unnatural quavers of Hesperian throats!
 Tho’ the chaste poet of the vernal woods,
 That shuns rude folly’s din, delight not here
 The listening ever; and tho’ no herald-lark
 Here leave his couch, high-towering to descry
 The approach of dawn, and hail her with his song;
 Yet not unmusical the tinkling lapse
 Of yon cool argent rill, which Phœbus gilds
 With his first orient rays; yet musical,
 Those buxom airs that through the plantanes play,
 And tear with wantonness their leafy scrolls;
 Yet not unmusical the waves hoarse sound,
 That dashes, sullen, on the distant shore;
 Yet musical those little insects hum,
 That hover round us, and to reason’s ear,
 Deep, moral truths convey; while every beam
 Flings on them transient tints, which vary when
 They wave their purple plumes; yet musical
 The love-lorn cooing of the mountain-dove,
 That woos to pleasing thoughtfulness the soul;
 But chief the breeze, that murmurs through yon canes,

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid., qtd. 42.

Enchants the ear with tunable delight.¹⁰⁰⁵

This passage is undeniably celebratory. The poet seeks to appreciate the exotic beauty of the West-Indian landscape on its own terms, and there is a sense throughout that Grainger's readers are meant to participate in that celebration. The "love-lorn cooing of the mountain dove" endows the picturesque scene with an appealing wistfulness. One can hardly resist pondering with wonder and interest "Those buxom airs that through the plantanes play / And tear with wantonness their leafy scrolls." And the final two lines of the verse paragraph offer a calm, aesthetic climax: the conviction that among the islands' natural virtues, "chief" is the sound of "the breeze, that murmurs through yon canes, / Enchant[ing] the ear with tunable delight."

Indeed, the appeals to the senses are so unabashedly central here and the descriptions so resolutely focused on purely aesthetic delights that it is easy to overlook the nostalgic impulse that gives it shape. The poet's description is syntactically arranged not as an absolute declaration of the island's undeniable beauty, but as a defensive argument born of an extended comparison: this West-Indian locale, even when juxtaposed with the poet's native isle, really isn't such a bad place to be. The emotional logic of the juxtaposition emerges through a series of oppositions. A series of dependent clauses, huddled at the start of the passage ("What tho' no bird of song, here charms the sense..."; "Tho' the chaste poet...delight not here...") paints a picture of a remembered scene (English or Scottish); the main clauses finish the thought by developing a picture of the West-Indian scene in the present tense—a task undertaken with the appearance of spontaneity. Syntactically, Grainger's description of the pleasures of the West-Indian scene emerges largely through negation: the local vision of beauty is supplied to fill a felt

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid., III.553-76.

absence. The component parts of the description emerge first only in understated litotic phrases (“Yet not unmusical the tinkling lapse...”; “Yet not unmusical the waves hoarse sound...”) that only gradually give way to more positive constructions (“Yet musical those little insects...”; “yet musical / The love-lorn cooing of the mountain-dove...”; “But chief the breeze...”). This strained progression contributes to the sense that the poet is attempting first and foremost to *convince himself* of the local beauty, whether because he has forgotten his audience for a moment or because he knows he must rise to the occasion. Anaphora gives the meditation the shape of a protracted, internal conflict, in which the object of nostalgic desire is gradually pushed into the background, forced to recede so that what available pleasures there are in the present can finally make themselves known.

And this meditation, in turn, sets up a protracted effort to encourage British absentee planters to return to “these blissful isles”¹⁰⁰⁶—a lively appeal of several verse paragraphs that begets, in turn, a rhapsodic reflection upon the poet’s own self-martyring zeal for public service. With georgic finesse, Grainger shows himself engaging with the plight of the absentees as sympathetically as he does with every other feature of the rural oeconomy; however, he does so, interestingly, by acknowledging the toll that his own decision to settle in the sugarcane isles has taken on his own prospects for future happiness. “O, if haply I may aught invent / Of use to mortal man, life to prolong, / To soften, or adorn,” the poet muses,

what genuine joy,
 What exultation of supreme delight,
 Will swell my raptured bosom. Then when death
 Shall call me hence, I’ll unrepining go
 Nor envy conquerors their storied tombs,

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid., III.577.

Tho' not a stone point out my humble grave. (III.647-54)

Grainger's tone is unmistakably ebullient—optimistic, even. Nonetheless, that familiar dependent clause formation—"Tho' not a stone point out my humble grave"—returns once more, quietly continuing the juxtaposition developed so many lines earlier with the suggestion that even death offers few comforts in this isolated West-Indian "clime." Dr. Grainger's readers become the witnesses of an attempt to convince himself that his own West-Indian sojourn has not been wasted: the mere thought of experiencing "supreme delight" and "genuine joy" propels him forward. The passage offers a poignant variation on Thomas Gray's contemporary notion that a "mute inglorious Milton" might be resting anonymously in a humble English country churchyard.¹⁰⁰⁷

Contributing additionally to the sense that the poet's celebratory affect is passionately summoned for the discursive occasion at hand rather than expressive of a spontaneous and "genuine joy," this whole progression of rhapsodies is framed by the insinuation that the poet's enthusiastic affect (at least at this point in the poem) can be credited to the assistance of an artificial agent. The morningtide reverie follows close on the heels of what may be the most enthusiastic, ebullient encomium in the poem: an encomium to the palliative virtues of "heart-recruiting rum." Grainger describes rum as the sugarcane isles' "best produce":

Thrice wholesome spirit! well-matur'd with age,
 Thrice grateful to the palate! when, with thirst,
 With heat, with labour, and wan care opprest,
 I quaff thy bowl, where fruit my hands have cull'd,
 Round, golden fruit; where water from the spring,
 Which dripping coolness spreads her umbrage round;
 With hardest, whitest sugar, thrice refin'd;
 Dilates my soul with genuine joy; low care

¹⁰⁰⁷ Suvir Kaul brought my attention to this connection.

I spurn indignant; toil a pleasure seems.¹⁰⁰⁸

Rum, then, becomes the animating serum in Grainger's solitary celebration of the island's beauty and civic promise. It offers a brief respite from the extremes of the harsh climate and the unending labors of the West-Indian physician, and it is shown to lubricate the solitary meditations that follow. "I quaff thy bowl," the poet declares, as if taking a swig in front of us. Only "'mid this blest ebriety" does the poet so openly show himself remembering what he misses about polite society back home.¹⁰⁰⁹ Grainger finally sheds "some tears, / For friends I left in Albion's distant isle."¹⁰¹⁰ He lists several by name ("For Johnson, Percy, White, escape mine eyes,"); and he imagines how their "converse, where mild wisdom tempers mirth" would "charm the lonely hour" and "polish my rude lays."¹⁰¹¹ The morningtide reverie follows from here, gradually gaining celebratory force and focus during the course of the next three verse paragraphs, in a subtle dramatization of the means by which the poet convinces himself that this is place is a congenial enough place to settle (and ultimately to die). We are now deep into the third book, having traversed all of the various British sugarcane islands and having made our way through all the major processes of sugarcane cultivation, harvesting, and boiling, daytime scenes and nocturnal scenes alike, and it makes a kind of narrative sense that the poet, at last allows himself a lengthy digression into the realm of fancy—a digression notable as such in a poem otherwise dedicated to an experience-based descriptions of the rural labors that West-Indian culture requires. Unfettered celebration and "genuine joy" are hard won in a rural oeconomy that leaves the poet-physician so oppressed "[w]ith heat, with labour, and

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid., III.491-500.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid., III.507.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid., III.507-08

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid., I.509, 516-19.

wan care” that he must turn for palliative assistance to what he calls, in this most remarkable of circumstances, a “Thrice wholesome spirit”—thrice “wholesome,” one may assume, not only because it is thrice refined, but because it makes his “toil” seem a “pleasure,” preserving the user from momentary despair.

VII: The Imperial Georgic, the Question of Sentiment, and the Problem of Settlement

Despite Johnson’s memorable comment about Grainger’s handling of the risk of descending into bathos in his “celebration of rum,” modern readers have been less inclined to consider this passage—or possibly even to notice it—as a telling feature of Grainger’s imperial celebration. Several recent studies have seen *The Sugar-Cane* as a poem that symbolically imposes British order on a West-Indian landscape and by that means celebrates the extension of British civilization beyond the historical bounds of the British Isles. In light of Grainger’s remarkable staging of that encomium to “heart-recruiting rum,” however, I would argue that *The Sugar-Cane* asserts that British civilization—at least as the poet once knew it—has by no means been replicated in the sugarcane isles. If Grainger is celebrating West-Indian labor as part of an imperial project that he supports (and his language is, indeed, colorful, lively, and enthusiastic throughout much of the poem, despite his gruesome subject matter), he is not doing so because he thinks that it replicates a familiar system of agriculture, a familiar system of government, or even a familiar system of administering medical care. He is doing so, he suggests, *despite* the fact that West-Indian settlement bears so little resemblance to a form of settlement to which he remains loyal, and despite the fact that there is both so much need for public service and so little here to “recruit” the “heart” to it. The kind of public

service that Dr. Grainger shows himself undertaking—the pursuit of various innovative means to “soften,” “adorn,” or “prolong” human life—is, in his own presentation, the kind of public service that offers few personal rewards and minimal opportunities for posthumous glory.

Grainger’s staging of a stolen moment of “blest ebriety” therefore serves to orient the poem’s celebratory function in two important ways. First, it brings into focus Grainger’s tactic of creating a character of himself within the poem. This tactic had been employed before to a variety of ends in the work of Pope and, more subtly, Young and Dryden, and the technique reemerges here to stage the imperial celebration as a performance summoned for a discrete occasion. Grainger’s nationalist utterance reveals its own limitations: it frames the poet as a mortal actor whose foray into the georgic tradition, like his efforts to tend the sick in the West Indies, can only do so much to improve a system of agriculture that he himself describes as “heart-debasing.”¹⁰¹² In georgics such as Philips’ *Cyder* and Smart’s *Hop-Garden*, alcohol had served the purpose of stimulating fellowship and conversation; in *The Sugar-Cane*, “heart-recruiting rum” takes the edge off a lonely West-Indian sojourn, allowing the poet-physician to stage his compassion for the both the place and its human inhabitants; and the story that explains this difference becomes the story of imperial expansion itself. Presumably Grainger is not proposing that Londoners drink rum, that they travel to the West-Indies only to fall sick with a mortal illness, or that they follow him in asking the “Genius of Africk” to “bind my sun-burnt brow with other bays, / Than ever deck’d the Sylvan bard before.”¹⁰¹³ But Grainger’s dramatization of his own liminality—his creation of this culturally

¹⁰¹² Ibid., IV.236.

¹⁰¹³ Ibid., IV.23-24.

adaptive persona, who both cries out in nostalgia for his native land and asks the “Genius of Africk” to help him go native—poses a problem for Londoners to ponder. The poem begins with the energetic assertion that Grainger’s “theme, . . . though to song unknown, / Is most momentous to my Country’s weal!”¹⁰¹⁴ With that ambiguous reference to his “Country”—a term that could apply to equally to mother country or colony, and, by the fourth book, to Africa itself—Grainger invites his London readers to consider where the civilization that constitutes “Britain” should be understood to end.

In the end, if one expects this “West-India georgic” simply to rejoice in the extension of English settlement beyond the historical borders of the British Isles, what is surprising is that Grainger’s presentation of West-Indian life, for all its vividness of diction, its ebullience of tone, and its enthusiasm about the prospect of Britain “TRIUMPH[ING] O’ER THE MAIN” in perpetuity, stops far short of making the West Indies look like a place hospitable to confident human settlement. If settlement is defined merely by the successful cultivation of what arable soil there is, then St. Kitts, as represented in *The Sugar-Cane*, “is now at the height of perfection.”¹⁰¹⁵ As Grainger describes the topography of the island, St. Kitts has “a chain of mountains, that run South and North almost from the one end of it to the other, formerly covered with wood, but now the Cane-plantations reach almost to their summits, and extend all the way, down their easy declining sides, to the sea.”¹⁰¹⁶ However, if settlement is defined as a condition of living on the land in a manner that promises to profit those who will live upon it in succeeding generations, then St. Kitts is shown to be a decidedly unsettled place.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid., I.16-17.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid., n.I.60.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid., n.I.60.

This picture emerges as much from what Grainger does not say as from what he does say. Grainger describes few architectural structures other than the shed used to house the boiling of sugarcane. He offers no ekphrastic descriptions of the houses of plantation owners. He makes few references to local towns, cities, or the business that goes on there: merchant ships are shown waiting in the bay for finished batches of muscovado,¹⁰¹⁷ and muscovado is shown waiting “on the Bay” for merchant ships,¹⁰¹⁸ but there are few, if any, reminders here that these exchanges may actually occur in established towns. There are few references to civil militias, despite historical accounts of ongoing warfare among European nations vying for control of the region and intermittent references to battles with native populations. The one character in the poem who is shown attending school (Junio) travels to England to do so. Grainger mentions no local hospitals or infirmaries at all (and, by virtue of his ongoing discussions of local remedies for disease, suggests that what treatments there are for illnesses and injuries are improvised on site by itinerant physicians like himself). In the historical and demographic surveys of various islands that he offers in his annotations, local populations are shown to be diminishing rather than increasing. Moreover, the landowners and the laborers at the visual and thematic center of the poem are shown to be impermanent inhabitants of the land in which they invest their capital or their labor. The protracted address to British absentee planters at the end of the third book, offering encouragement for them to return “to your native isles,” acknowledges that the planters’ attentions, at present, are not firmly focused on the local landscape, and their interests are not lodged firmly in the local soil: “Why will their sons, ungrateful, roam abroad? / Why

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid., e.g. III.92-93.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid., I.28.

spend their opulence in other climes?” the poet asks.¹⁰¹⁹ Nor does Grainger’s presentation assume that the cane laborers who do live on the land are permanent inhabitants with any conceivable interest in passing on their legacy to their progeny. The fourth book provides a lengthy discussion of the African nations from which caneland slaves are continually purchased—an implicit acknowledgment that life on the sugarcane isles is so inimical to human health that enslaved workers have simply not tended to survive long enough or remain well enough to produce offspring with any reliability.

In other words, *The Sugar-Cane* not only recounts, in the traditional manner of the georgic, the kinds of problems encountered by the husbandman during a routine day or a routine year; the poet ebulliently describes what he recognizes as a deeply flawed, deeply problematic civic and agricultural system. And these flaws are all the more evident as such because he has written his poem as a georgic. In classical georgics (as in the georgics of their British successors up to this point), the timing and nature of the farmer’s labors were determined by natural limitations of the soil’s fertility and the changes of the seasons. The farmer was not entirely at the mercy of the weather, and yet he was forced by necessity to work the land in regular rhythms, supply deficiencies, curb extravagance in times of plenty, and exercise prudent stewardship in coordinating the various features of his household oeconomy (e.g., clover feeds pack animals who help till the soil; their dung, in turn, fertilizes tired soil). Virgil’s *Georgics* saw in these cycles of life and these challenges of stewardship a divinely-supplied, civilizing purpose¹⁰²⁰—a

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid., 587, 578-79.

¹⁰²⁰ Qtd. from Virgil, *The works of Virgil translated into English prose, ... With the Latin text and order of construction on the same page; and ... a very great number of notes entirely new.* ..., vol. 1, 3rd ed. (London, 1754), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed Jan. 29, 2009), 60-61. This concept is implicit throughout his discussions of the seasons in particular, but see esp. I.121-46, which traces out the concept whereby Jove “willed the Ways of Tillage not to be easy, and first commanded to cultivate the

sentiment that reemerged in the English georgic tradition with a Christian valence.¹⁰²¹ As Virgil put it, Jove “willed the Ways of Tillage not to be easy, and first commanded to cultivate the Fields by Art, whetting the Minds of Mortals with care; nor suffered he his Reign to lie inactive in heavy Sloth.”

Grainger’s *Sugar-Cane* describes a rural oeconomy that retains few of these checks and balances. The sugarcane islands boast “a fertility, unknown of old, / To other climes denied”—a fertility associated from very early on in the poem with “opulence,” virtual inexhaustibility, and an unmatched “power / Of vegetation” that “the Cane / With partial fondness loves.”¹⁰²² Moreover, tropical weather patterns, in Grainger’s presentation, provide relatively few guidelines to structure the growing season and therefore the workload. In the West Indies, “Seasons” denotes “[l]ong-continued and violent rains,” as Grainger observes in his annotations,¹⁰²³ and although outdoor movements are shown to be dictated somewhat by the rain, Grainger’s presentation dedicates relatively little attention to the distinction between wet seasons and dry seasons. Thus, for instance,

It not imports beneath what sign thy hoes
The deep trough sink, and ridge alternate raise;
If this from washes guard thy gemmy tops;
And that arrest the moisture these require.¹⁰²⁴

In such an environment, the growing season lasts the entire year. Winter, in Virgil’s *Georgics*, had been the time for holiday fellowship by virtue of the fact that so little

Fields by Art, whetting the Minds of Mortals with care; nor suffered he his Reign to lie inactive in heavy Sloth” (60-61).

¹⁰²¹ Cf. Andrew McRae, “Husbandry Manuals and the Language of Agrarian Improvement,” *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*. Eds. Michael Leslie and Timothy Rayler (NY: St. Martin’s Press (for Leicester UP), 1992).

¹⁰²² *Ibid.*, I.75-76; I.89; I.87; I.84-85, 128-29.

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, n. I.482.

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid.*, I.258-61.

fieldwork was necessary during the coldest season.¹⁰²⁵ Grainger can only encourage the planter, “On festal days; or when their work is done; / Permit thy slaves to lead the choral dance.”¹⁰²⁶

That soil of unmatched fertility should produce a “heart-debasing” system of agricultural labor and civic life was presumably not a foregone conclusion. After all, such a resource would seem to predict a kind of Edenic, labor-free existence. Grainger’s georgic therefore dedicates significant space to the factors that have conspired to make this system what it has become. Much of this discussion occurs in his early annotations, ostensibly by way of introduction to his titular subject (whose history of cultivation he recounts in detail) and by way of introduction to the islands that his poem celebrates (whose history of settlement he recounts in detail). Here, Grainger sketches out a history of settlement in which those pioneering adventurers who were willing to brave the vast distance from European civilization, the extremes of an unfamiliar climate, the sometimes indomitable presence of tropical disease,¹⁰²⁷ and the oddities and uncertainties of a region literally off the existing map¹⁰²⁸ were compelled by motives out of the ordinary realm of sociable behavior: “persecution, virtue’s deadliest foe,”¹⁰²⁹ visionary

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid., I.300-02.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid., IV.581-82.

¹⁰²⁷ Cf. the annotation of “breezy Mountserrat”: “It is naturally strong, so that when the French made descents thereon, in K. William and Q. Anne’s time, they were always repulsed with considerable loss” (n. I.135).

¹⁰²⁸ Cf. the description of Columbus’s pioneering journey: “What storms, what monsters, what new forms of death / In a vast ocean, never cut by keel, / And where the magnet first its aid declin’d; / Alone, unterrified, didst thou not view?” (I.109-12).

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid., I.580. Said of the “good Montano” (I.579-81), who is driven “in exile” to the sugarcane isles presumably during an early wave of settlement in the seventeenth century, as suggested by both the reference to “exile” (for a number of royalists were driven into exile in the Caribbean when Cromwell seized power) and the crops he plants (which include indigo, cotton, coffee, and cacao). This pattern of plantation was no longer typical in the eighteenth century, when plantations were generally given over exclusively to sugarcane cultivation.

zeal,¹⁰³⁰ excesses of ambition and avarice in the desire to claim new resources for the mother country. And avarice, he suggests, was chief among the motives shaping the current West-Indian agricultural system. Observing the Dutch (those “industrious republicans”), who had “learned the art of making sugar” during the 21 years of their Brazilian conquest,

probably inspired the English with a desire of coming in for a share of the sugar-trade; accordingly they, renouncing their chimerical search after gold mines in Florida and Guiana, settled themselves soon after at the mouth of the river Surinam, where they cultivated the Cane with such success, that when the colony was ceded to the Dutch by the treaty of Breda, it maintained not less than 40,000 Whites, half that number of slaves, and employed one year with another 15,000 ton of shipping. This cession was a severe blow to the English-trade, which it did not recover for several years, though many of the Surinam Planters carried their art and Negroes to the Leeward Islands and Jamaica, which then began to be the object of political consideration in England.¹⁰³¹

Here, then, is the history of British West-Indian settlement in a nutshell, a history of borrowed “arts,” slave labor, and impermanence from the very start. And Grainger implies, too, that something of the original settlement—both the impulse of searching for gold and the reliance on “trade”—has persisted in the increasing tendency among West-Indian planters to cultivate Caribbean soil for purely commercial gain. That image of canefields stretching almost to the summits of the Kittian mountains drives home the point that the Kittian rural oeconomy—like the Caribbean oeconomy more generally—consists principally of a luxury crop, cultivated almost exclusively for export, rather than a collection of subsistence crops, cultivated first and foremost to feed the local population.

¹⁰³⁰ Cf. Grainger’s annotation of Columbus’s response to the declension of the magnet, which both encourages the reader to consider questions of motive and confirms Columbus’s motive as a peculiarly philosophical motive, distinct from the motives of some of his compatriots: “The declension of the needle was discovered, *A.D.* 1492, by Columbus, in his first voyage to America; and would have been highly alarming to any, but one of his undaunted and philosophical turn of mind” (n. I.111).

¹⁰³¹ *Ibid.*, n. I.22.

VII: *The Sugar-Cane* as a Response to the End of the Seven Years War

By 1764, Grainger's friend Oliver Goldsmith was already recording the history of the Seven Years War as a series of battles in which Britain decisively gained the upper hand in its ongoing struggle for power with France and secured territories on multiple continents. A sense of nationalist pride pervades the essay, which entertains an ongoing juxtaposition between the ancient world and the modern world in a manner comparable to the project of writing a "West-India georgic." The War, as Goldsmith discusses it, had the twofold effect of increasing Britain's power among the European powers and increasing its holdings throughout the globe:

[The Indian] conquest terminated the power of France in India; the whole trade of that vast peninsula, from the Indus to the Ganges, became our own. The Princes of the country knew the English force, and learned to fear it. Since that time nothing considerable has been done against us. Our East-India company have become the arbiters of empire. The Mogul himself has been defeated and taken prisoner. The British empire begins to vie even with that of ancient Rome; the extent of its dominions on land is as wide, and its force at sea is infinitely greater.¹⁰³²

The surrender of the city was the consequence of this victory, and, with it, the total cession of all Canada. . . . The French had now no force capable of making any resistance; they held out the war now, not with hopes of victory, but honourable capitulation; one place after another was invaded; Montreal, at last, surrendered; and, in a short time, a country, which their own writers have represented as being more extensive than the Roman Empire, fell totally under the power of his Britannic Majesty.¹⁰³³

Even in South America, Goldsmith proclaims, "the enemies of Great Britain were humbled on every side; the French left without trade or shipping; the source of Spanish opulence interrupted; nothing remained for them, but to ask for peace, upon such terms as

¹⁰³² *An history of England, in a series of letters from a nobleman to his son*, vol. 2 (London, 1764), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed July 8, 2010), II.234.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*, 241.

we were pleased to grant.”¹⁰³⁴ And when writing of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Goldsmith strikes a similar note:

In order to purchase peace the French gave up all Canada, their right to the neutral islands, the fort of Senegal, and their right of fishing on the coasts of Newfoundland and the gulph of St. Lawrence, but at a certain distance from shore. Spain also gave up, on her part, the extensive country of Florida; so that the English empire was thus greatly enlarged; and, if we compute its strength by the quantity of land included in its dominions, it can now boast more power than even the great Roman empire.¹⁰³⁵

As the highlighted passages demonstrate, the geographically disparate foci in the essay are bound together by a refrain that has a temporal dimension: the repeated assertion that the British Empire has finally surpassed the Roman Empire in the sheer “quantity of land included in its dominions.” The recognition of this difference, Goldsmith implies, necessarily enhances Britain’s claims to European (and, indeed, global) ascendancy.

But if Goldsmith’s history seems overzealous in its acquisitive accounting of all of the latest British spoils, his proclamations are nevertheless tempered by ongoing attention to the shortcomings of the imperial model for the perpetuation and expansion of civilization—a cautionary tactic comparable to Grainger’s approach to imperial celebration in *The Sugar-Cane*. For every proud assertion of Britain’s primacy over Rome’s example, Goldsmith offers a circumspect note of caution:

Happy if we know when to bound our successes; happy if we can distinguish between victory and advantages; if we can be convinced, that when a nation shines brightest with conquest, it may then, like a waiting taper, be only hastening to decay!

The splendour of victory should never dazzle the eye of reason.

Treaties have never been preserved longer than interest or compulsion bound them; political faith is a word without meaning.¹⁰³⁶

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid., 253.

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid., 254.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid., II.234, 241, 244.

There may be a perfunctory, axiomatic quality coloring this series of caveats, but the extent of the analyst's investment in the cautionary mode is made clear by the comment that concludes his description of the terms of the Treaty. Here Goldsmith fills out his analysis so fully and so specifically that there can be no mistaking his reservations about a premature celebration of Britain's imperial ascendancy:

[N]o country should build upon remote strength; true power must always subsist at home. When the branches of a large empire become more powerful than the original stem, instead of assisting it's growth, they only overload and exhaust it[s] nourishment. The discontents, therefore, which many have expressed at the conclusion of the late peace, that we did not insist upon harder terms, and increase our possessions, were ill founded, since it is probable we are already possessed, of more than government can manage. There is ever a certain extent of empire which politics are able to wield; beyond this her magnificence is but empty pomp, and her size but corpulence.¹⁰³⁷

Employing conceits that recall the image of "enrichment" from Grainger's Preface,¹⁰³⁸ Goldsmith considers the colonial common weal by appealing first to the interests of the British nation: colonies should "nourish" the mother country, he argues, and not the other way around. It is hard to say precisely which colonies he has in mind when he refers to "the branches of a large empire becom[ing] more powerful than the original stem,"¹⁰³⁹ but the gist of his analysis is clear enough. The Treaty of Paris has "probabl[y]" left the British in possession of "more than government can manage."

Grainger's perspective on British imperial expansion differs notably from

¹⁰³⁷ Ibid., 254.

¹⁰³⁸ "Soon after my arrival in the West-Indies, I conceived the design of writing a poem on the cultivation of the Sugar-Cane. My inducements to this arduous undertaking were, not only the importance and novelty of the subject, but more especially this consideration; that, as the face of this country was wholly different from that of Europe, so whatever hand copied its appearances, however rude, could not fail to enrich poetry with many new and picturesque images" (89).

¹⁰³⁹ Such a comment would more likely refer to the comparatively self-sustaining, better-armed Northern American colonies rather than the West Indian colonies for reasons that will be elaborated below; however, it is possible that Goldsmith recognizes—among other losses—the significant losses of British troops sustained in the West Indian campaign in the suggestion that colonies might "overload and exhaust it[s] nourishment."

Goldsmith's in that he addresses the metropole from the colonies rather than discussing questions of colonial management purely from a theoretical, Britain-based viewpoint; his perspective on the question of "nourishment" hints that the mother country is not always nourished by the materials that she receives from the colonies. But Grainger's discourse resembles Goldsmith's in its double-voiced approach to the celebration of empire, and it is worth dwelling on the ways that his presentation of West-Indian life speaks to the concerns that Goldsmith raises in his *History*.

And, perhaps most notably, Goldsmith's comment provides an intriguing gloss on the issue of management as it emerges in *The Sugar-Cane*, a georgic treatment of questions of management that acknowledges even within the verse that the islands' legal managers and the nominal addressees of the poem—the West-Indian absentee landlords—are actually living largely in England. Moreover, the details of Grainger's presentation insinuate a surprising *lack* of European management here. Attesting to the empire's increasing "corpulence," there is no naval presence depicted here (only commercial ships) and no military presence to speak of. The one prominent reference championing a civil militia compliments Romney for his agitation for a civil militia *within* England. The most prominent references to the Seven Years War are more obviously references to the Canadian campaign rather than the West-Indian campaign, and they appear as epic similes or other rhetorical ornamentation in the second book that enhances Grainger's discussion of how to get rid of the pests that infect the ripening cane. Thus, for instance, Grainger describes the monkeys who raid the sugarcane crop on St. Kitts as creatures that, chattering, fling their ill-got spoils away":

So when, of late, innumerable Gallic hosts
Fierce, wanton, cruel, did by stealth invade

The peaceable American's domains,
 While desolation mark'd their faithless rout;
 No sooner Albion's martial sons advanc'd,
 Than the gay dastards to their forests fled,
 And left their spoils and tomahawks behind.¹⁰⁴⁰

What registers at first as a baldly nationalistic, anti-French, anti-native-American statement, actually has a distancing effect when considered in the context of the Seven Years War: rather than suggesting that St. Kitts, as one of Britain's most lucrative colonies, wishes to lead the charge in celebrating this latest expansion of the empire, Grainger calls attention to the *distance* between disparate British colonies. This distancing effect emerges more prominently in this curious aside, which appears in a discussion of how to battle an invasion from locusts in "winged caravans":

But YE, base insects! no bright scarlet yield,
 To deck the British Wolf; who now, perhaps,
 (So Heaven and George ordain) in triumph mounts
 Some strong-built fortress, won from haughty Gaul!¹⁰⁴¹

While General Wolf is taking over new territory in Canada, in other words, West-Indian laborers are fighting their own local battles with monkeys, rats, and locusts, pests that "await the rip'ning Cane." They even hint—without confirming explicitly—that the georgic-writing physician, stationed as he is in the West-Indian territory, concerning himself with monkeys and rats and locusts, may not have even heard any news about the final outcome of the war. (Grainger had actually heard about the war, according to his correspondence, but the poem itself threatens to leave the reader with the impression that he has not.)

IX: The Cogent Insinuations of a Physician-Poet

¹⁰⁴⁰ Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, II.54-61.

¹⁰⁴¹ *Ibid.*, II.174-77.

Unlike Martin's pamphlet, which presents Antigua, the Leeward Islands, and the general public with the face of a benevolent and successful British planter, *The Sugar-Cane* presents its audiences with a flawed but imaginative physician, neither squeamish nor naïve, but empathetic attentive to detail in a manner that allows his readers to appreciate a fuller picture of plantation life than the one offered in Martin's *Essay*—fuller, too, because one can read Grainger's poem alongside the pamphlet and discover omissions as well as congruities. If one can call *The Sugar-Cane* West-Indian propaganda, it is propaganda of a very different kind from "that excellent performance" of Colonel Martin, whose *Essay* proceeds in a calm, stately prose worthy of a Roman general. Martin's prose is deceptively spare: its selections, its omissions, and its presiding confidence renders it ready to persuade, to garner support for a cause, and to bring new initiates decorously into the fold. Grainger irony entertains a politically-informed reader in a manner that approaches satire. It insinuates, implies, and suggests; it lays its subject so bare as to be almost unrecognizable; it provokes fanciful contemplation on things far away.

The tactics of indirection the Grainger developed here had of course been well honed through the ages of Dryden and Pope—well honed not only to issue critiques of private individuals, in a manner that nevertheless promised to contribute something to community, but also to critique government itself. And yet, these tactics of indirection proved increasingly unnecessary in the age of Thomas Paine. Hardly a decade after Grainger's poetic performance was published, agitations against the slave trade would begin in earnest; the sugar boycotts followed in time. With two armed revolutions taking

shape across the water, plain speech would win the day in eighteenth-century discourses on the common weal.

4 THE SUGAR-CANE. Book I.

Their sylvan lore convey : O may I join
 This choral band, and from their precepts learn 15
 To deck my thème, which though to song unknown,
 Is most momentous to my Country's weal!

So shall my numbers win the Public ear ;
 And not displease Aurelius ; him to whom,
 Imperial George, the monarch of the main, 20
 Hath given to wield the scepter of those isles,
 Where first the Muse beheld the spiry Cane,
 Supreme of plants, rich subject of my song.

WHERE'ER

VER. 22. *the spiry Cane,*] The botanical name of the Cane is *Saccharum*. The Greeks and Romans seem to have known very little of this most useful and beautiful plant. Lucan and Pliny are the only Authors among the former who mention it ; and, so far as I can find, Arrian is the only Greek. The first of these Writers, in enumerating Pompey's Eastern auxiliaries, describes a nation who made use of the Cane-juice as a drink :

Dulces bibebant ex arundine succos.

The industrious Naturalist says, *Saccharum et Arabia fert, sed laudatius India* ; and the Greek Historian, in his *περιπλους* of the Red-sea, tells us of a neighbouring nation who drank it also ; his words are, *μελι το καλαμινον το λεγομενον σακχαρι*. The Cane, however, as it was a native of the East, so has it been probably cultivated there time immemorial. The raw juice was doubtless first made use of ; they afterwards boiled it into a syrup ; and, in process of time, an inebriating spirit was prepared therefrom by fermentation. This conjecture is confirmed by the etymology, for the Arabic word *سكر* is evidently derived from the Hebrew *שכר*, which signifies an *intoxicating liquor*. When the Indians began to make the Cane-juice into sugar, I cannot discover ; probably, it soon found its way into Europe in that form, first by the Red-sea, and afterwards through Persia, by the Black-sea and Caspian ; but the plant itself was not known to Europe, till the Arabians introduced it into the southern parts of Spain, Sicily, and those provinces of France which border