

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GEORGIC AS DIDACTIC EPIC

by

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the eighteenth-century English georgic in the broader context of the didactic epic. Reading “georgics” through the schema of didactic epic, I provide an alternative trajectory for understanding developments in and experiments with genre during the long eighteenth century. More than swapping parallel terminology my use of didactic epic imports the scholarship of Classical and neo-Latin scholars to reinvigorate a genre hampered by defining the “georgic” as poems about farming, derived exclusively from Virgil’s *Georgics*. Within the framework of didactic epic, I reinterpret peripheral works such as John Gay’s *Trivia*, Eliza Haywood’s *Anti-Pamela*, and James Grainger’s *The Sugar Cane* claiming these queer, fascinating texts represent critical experimentation with literary form in the eighteenth century. I contend that the incorporation of didactic epic elements into these texts demonstrates the plasticity and persistence of the genre thereby making the study of these foundational English texts and their Classical and neo-Latin sources an integral part of English literary studies.

I argue the essays, poems, and novels of Joseph Addison, John Philips, John Gay, Eliza Haywood, and James Grainger dialogue with Classical and neo-Latin poems in addition to Virgil’s *Georgics* such as Manilius’s *Astronomica*, Fracastoro’s *Syphilis*, and more-canonical Classical didactic epics from the *Ars Poetica* of Horace to Lucretius’s *De*

*Rerum Natura*. Because the separation of didactic and narrative epic derived from reliance on “georgic” has promoted a too-easy separation between the natural world (georgic) and the human world (epic), scholarship has approached English didactic epics as poems that have little bearing on humans and culture. However, analyzing the formal modulations I describe how eighteenth-century texts showcase radical experimentation with narrative persona and polyphonic registers thereby magnifying the presence of human beings in the natural world as organizers and consumers of the landscape and useable land. In the experimentations evident in eighteenth-century English texts, I locate innovations and modulations of the didactic epic that demonstrate the authors variously dissecting and critiquing ideologies of labor and imperialism and offering new paradigms of gender and labor that anticipate modern approaches to literary forms and modern concerns with the interrelation of humans and nature.

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For Mathilda and Lucie.  
Yes, I am all done with my work now.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It is not an unfamiliar story to students of eighteenth-century English literature that, in 1697, a rising literary figure named Joseph Addison wrote a prefatory essay to a lauded translation into English of Virgil's *Georgics* by John Dryden. Scholars of the period are familiar with the essay in which Addison introduces the four poems that constitute Virgil's *Georgics* in glowing terms, asserting that the poems represent "all the perfection that can be expected in a Poem."<sup>1</sup> We even know that Addison's "An Essay on the *Georgics*" lays out the rules for and establishes a genre of poetry: the English georgic. Since 1697, critics, scholars, and poets have scrutinized georgics, read georgics, and written georgics. At times, scholars have pulled a poem off of the dusty shelves of literary history and affixed the georgic label in an effort to resuscitate the poem's merit. Others have peeled the label off such poems, preferring a more flexible term—perhaps renaming it a "loco-descriptive poem" or a "long poem." Many poems reside awkwardly within the definition of the "georgic" outlined in current scholarship. Still others remain neglected because of their unruly, quirky, at times fascinating, generic fluidity. Overall, however, scholarship has downplayed the influence and presence of non-Virgilian sources in the study of eighteenth-century didactic epics. Looking to diverse Classical influences and querying the definition of the genre, as this dissertation will argue, necessitates a critical reexamination of the rise of didactic epic in the early eighteenth century.

The georgic genre remains sacrosanct, persisting in the terms outlined by Addison in his "An Essay on the *Georgics*." From Addison's text, a body of scholarship and

critical theory has emerged discussing georgic poems and a georgic mode, from the eighteenth century to today. Since the essay's publication, the term "georgic" has referenced a limited and familiar canon of poems in English despite the enduring challenges of squeezing various poems into the parameters Addison describes. Instead of questioning Addison's rules, scholars of English literature have defended their sanctity, at the same time theorizing a "georgic mode" (Low), articulating the historical and ideological work of the georgic (Goodman), and reading various georgic poems within "frameworks" of history, politics, or empire (Harth).<sup>2</sup> Indeed, articles and books alike echo Addison's precisely worded phrases about the style, subject, and method of the genre, replicating his injunction to separate the georgic from the pastoral. Scholars have perpetuated a reading of Addison's essay that establishes an entire genre of poetry based on an interpretation of one poem entirely divorced from any meaningful context. One of the purposes of this project is a reappraisal of Addison's claim that suggests his argument has been oversimplified and has unnecessarily fractured the georgic from a critical body of literature and scholarship concerned with that literature. Addison's "An Essay on the *Georgics*" is most in need of reappraisal because his use of the term in the essay is largely taken for granted as a statement of genre theory when, in fact, a careful reassessment of his terminology reveals an entirely different project—one that I examine in Chapter II.

The notion that the georgic as a genre rose ahistorically with the publication of Addison's essay suggests a critical gap in our understanding of the poetry of the long eighteenth century in English. The rarity of the term, emerging as it does in 1697 and persisting since that date is troubling,<sup>3</sup> provoking questions as to why, in Addison's

formulation, Virgil's *Georgics* constitute an entire genre of poetry. Indeed, what is useful about segregating Virgil from his historical contemporaries, his predecessors and their adherents in Latin and in English from antiquity to Addison's day—and even to today? The tidiness of Addison's appraisal is justifiably troubling when adapted from a singular, critical appraisal of Virgil's *Georgics* to stand as a framework for a burgeoning body of poetic works. The veneration and isolation of Addison's essay over the years has led scholars away from its context and propagated an inadequate understanding of perhaps the most popular poetic genre of the long eighteenth century. In its proper context, Addison's essay becomes an exercise in genre theory and literary criticism engaging with a larger body of criticism.

This project emerges from these questions and the underlying aim they articulate regarding the need to regain a more complete understanding of the contexts of georgic poems in the eighteenth century. Before turning to local contexts that previous scholars prioritize—such as history, place, and politics—I aim to critique the ways in which Addison's theory of genre as articulated by scholars like Chalker and perpetuated by most scholars since then suppresses generic repertoires in a manner that “runs the risk of being internally self-consistent, without engaging in the main critical argument.”<sup>4</sup> The critical dialogue about the didactic epic genre is already robust and relevant; this project must simply enter it. Scholars of English literature have largely ignored the generic repertoire of eighteenth-century poems, focusing on imitation of Virgil and dismissing the influence of other Classical and neo-Latin poems. Meanwhile, scholars of Classical Latin literature and neo-Latin literature of the Renaissance and eighteenth century have developed a complex, critically engaged theory of the larger genre and its repertoire. As

companions to Addison's essay, Peter Toohey's comprehensive overview *Epic Lessons: An Introduction to Ancient Didactic Poetry* provides a broad framework, while the essays in Monica Gale's *Latin Epic and Didactic Poetry* include an array of approaches to the genre and its primary and secondary elements by scholars, among them Andrew Laird and Don Fowler.

Because the categorization of poems as georgic is a phenomenon unique to the eighteenth century in England, it is worth reconsidering the construction of the genre and its limitations before placing it within the larger conversation. The classification of poems as georgic is a particular construction by British poets and critics in the long eighteenth century and subsequent English literary criticism up to the present, and this classificatory term is ill-suited to many poems that ought to be considered part of the eighteenth-century repertoire. Just as closer scrutiny "might show many of our notions about ancient and modern poetic genres to be modern constructs,"<sup>5</sup> so too was the theory of the georgic constructed after the fact—with restrictive effects. Thus, we understand that in the decades after Addison's essay appeared, authors and publishers styled poems as georgics in keeping with the literary tastes of the public—tastes that reflected popular engagement with practical matters such as agriculture, colonial management, and saleable commodities. Thus, my intention is not to say that poems of this sort—that is, georgics—did not exist or only existed when explicitly labeled as such; rather, the verses classified as georgic during the long eighteenth century represent a local response to an established genre that Classics scholars refer to variously as didactic or didactic epic, with Virgil's *Georgics* representing four poems and one author among many. It should also be noted that the tradition of didactic verse in Latin and English flourished during the Renaissance

and persists—as scholars have recently posited—in prose forms into the present day. What Dryden’s publication did, then, is revive interest in Virgil’s *Georgics* as exemplars of the form. Together with Dryden’s translation, Addison’s essay suggests a substitute classificatory term, and strives to define the nature of that form.

Yet, we should not view the use of the term “georgic” by poets and critics in the eighteenth century and after as tacit acknowledgement of its suitability or a commonly held idea of its definition. Just as we must re-examine Addison’s essay and its effects both then and now in order to gain a fuller understanding of its implications, we must determine what frames of reference eighteenth-century poets connected to their works even as they affixed the label georgic. Studying these frameworks reveals that in the eighteenth century the term “georgic” was not consistently used as a fully theorized critical term for a genre. Because of their familiarity with the Classical authors, neither the critics’ nor the poets’ application of “georgic” precluded references to and resonances with a broad set of poems not derived exclusively from Virgil’s *Georgics*. One need look only to the nearest overview of the era in an anthology for a reminder that the authors imagined the eighteenth century as another Augustan age, with literary figures immersed in debates over the meaning, relevance, and superiority of Classical texts. Addison’s audience did not need an overview comparing “the Stile of the *Georgics* with that of *Lucretius*;<sup>6</sup>” neither did it need to be reminded that Virgil borrowed from Hesiod. Indeed, his readership was sufficiently familiar with the poetry of antiquity for casual references such as Addison’s list of “Theognis and Pythagoras . . . Aratus and Lucretius” to evoke a substantial repertoire—even as Addison examined only one exemplar (145-146). Poets and authors of the eighteenth century were engrossed by the original Augustan age, and



their efforts were informed by strong desires to imitate and surpass the Classical models. Therefore, attempts to understand individual poems through a single Classical lens—Virgil’s *Georgics*—effectively sever these works from their historical and literary environment. In my use of the term “didactic epic,” then, I insist that the Classical underpinnings of eighteenth-century poems are broad and that an accurate understanding of their repertoires must inform interpretations of them.

Because poets and critics in the eighteenth century understood georgic as a sub-topic within a larger genre of poetry that Addison defines and references as “the middle stile” between pastoral and heroic, the usefulness of the term to present scholars of eighteenth-century English poetry remains limited. Simply put, “georgic” lacks the elasticity necessary for discussing a poem that simultaneously references and imitates Virgil, Manilius, Fracastoro, Milton, and Philips. Instead, scholars of the long eighteenth century ought to import the already-theorized terminology from the study of Classical and neo-Latin poetry, replacing “georgic” with “didactic epic,” because poems typically classified as eighteenth-century English georgics contain multiple references to and imitations of a diverse array of poets and poems. In borrowing the terminology, one also draws upon the critical repertoire of terms and theories developed by scholars of the didactic epic.

The critical repertoire of scholarly work on the Classical and neo-Latin didactic epic then permits understanding of how frequent and complex allusions function within eighteenth-century didactic epics that reference, reinterpret, and imitate poets from Classical antiquity to neo-Latin innovators and contemporary English poets. The use of the didactic epic as a theorized genre thereby promotes access to both the familiar and

unfamiliar from the Latin, neo-Latin, and English repertoire. So we find Horace, Ovid, Lucretius and Manilius alongside Virgil, as well as neo-Latin and English poets from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century including Fracastoro and Landivar, Milton and Tate.<sup>7</sup> Thereby, instead of “allusiveness” in eighteenth-century English georgics, we find kinship and inflection of the didactic epic genre through imitation.

Further, theoretical approaches to the didactic epic within the long eighteenth century in Great Britain merit reappraisal because previous approaches that take the English georgic in isolation, that is as a pure descendent of Virgil’s *Georgics*, overlook the form’s affinity to a broad array of didactic epics. Further, looking only to critics and scholars of the long eighteenth century in England for interpretation and historical analysis of the genre precludes the fruitful incorporation of scholars working in adjacent fields, such as Renaissance Latin poetry, neo-Latin poetry of the eighteenth century, and modern scholarly criticism of these forms, as well as their ancient predecessors. Excluding these sources discounts a lively area of scholarship that has grown in recent decades as Classical scholarship includes significant works examining the didactic epic genre. These works have not only defined the genre but also articulated the significance and implication of many generic features within the development of the didactic epic form over time. Simultaneously, many Latin poems are receiving their first scholarly English translations since the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Even as genre theory has trained its lens on this variously named poetry, many scholars of English literature have neglected a critical possibility: the sub-topic of “husbandry,” as submitted by Addison, does not constitute a separate genre. I argue that the “georgic” is productively subsumed within the didactic epic. Alastair Fowler’s

monumental *Kinds of Literature* refers to these poems as a form that does not lend itself easily to rigorous discussions about genre; indeed, Fowler calls them the sort of poem impervious to “rigid prescriptive genre theories” to which a writer may always turn: “one of the many half-recognized semi-canonical genres, which in any manageable theory remain largely undescribed.”<sup>9</sup> In *The Georgic Revolution*, Low similarly sidesteps the troubling question of genre, focusing instead on the georgic mode as a transcendent concern of multiple genres from the Renaissance through the modern era. This is not to say that the eighteenth-century British georgic poem has not been approached generically; however, within English literature, critics persist in basing their analyses only on the incomplete framework Addison sets out in his essay.

Though the fields have remained discrete because of the dissociation of the generic terms, in recent years increased scholarship on the didactic epic has paralleled the interest in eighteenth-century English georgics. At this point, to continue using “georgic” would prove cumbersome to my argument; I will use “didactic epic” so that uses of “georgic” as an adjective or in reference to a georgic mode will not confuse my argument that the didactic epic genre encompasses the English georgic. The past decades have produced several detailed readings of the Classical Greek and Latin didactic epic as a genre, distinct from but related to the narrative epic. For example, Peter Toohey sets forth a thorough analysis of the features of the Classical didactic epic—a genre that he asserts is a “collateral form of narrative epic”<sup>10</sup>—within an outline of the evolving phases of the form through political and social eras in antiquity. What Toohey describes as didactic epic in fact fully encompasses the genre referred to by scholars as georgic, and Toohey’s

framework of the didactic epic offers the very “manageable theory” of the georgic that Alastair Fowler insists cannot be described for the georgic.

Toohy’s fundamental analysis makes possible—even requires—a reconsideration of the perceived homogeneity of the didactic epic during the long eighteenth century. For instance, Toohy situates Virgil’s *Georgics* alongside Ovid’s *Fasti* within the fourth phase of didactic epic’s development, a phase marked by a polyphony of narrative voice and linguistic play. Rather than rehearsing Addison’s simplistic assertion that Virgil represents an ideal of the form—indeed a presentation of the poet’s particular skill—Toohy describes the effects of the *Georgics* as reflections of their historical moment. For Toohy, beyond the primary and secondary characteristics of the form, perhaps the most significant feature of the didactic epic is its “remarkably elastic capacity to fit within other forms, or to absorb them within its own ambit” (6). In particular, building on the notion that the form develops dialogically with other genres, a reexamination of the English didactic epic must consider poems within the larger context of the literary, political, and social forces of the eighteenth century.

To this end, Toohy applies a historicist approach, organizing a schema of the six phases of didactic poetry and observing the adaptations and emphases typical of each phase.<sup>11</sup> However, the collapsing of chronological boundaries provoked by the deluge of ancient texts translated and reprinted at the outset of the eighteenth century saw a muddying of the clear historicist progression Toohy imagines, thereby complicating any attempt to match an eighteenth-century poem to a corresponding phase from Toohy’s schema. As such, eighteenth-century didactic epics are reflections not only of their own era, but also of the era of the poems they imitate—emulating features and adapting

characteristic elements in ways that do not conform to a neat historicist account. Instead, one notices the boundaries of the increasingly elastic genre becoming porous as experimentation with the didactic epic progressed during the long eighteenth century.

These same boundaries of the Classical and neo-Latin didactic epic are a central focus of the recent volume edited by Monica Gale, *Latin Epic and Didactic Poetry*, in which Laird, Don Fowler, and Gale argue that collapsing the boundary between didactic and narrative epic poetry for the purposes of criticism demonstrates the aim in both genres of instructing the reader, regardless of whether a poem is ancient or modern. For instance, reading Politian's Renaissance didactic verse *Ambra*, Laird asserts, "The prevalent ancient view that epic and didactic were the same was consistent and convergent with the belief that narrative epics were powerful vehicles of moral and philosophical instruction."<sup>12</sup> The premise that didactic poems are ideologically and formally similar to epics lends weight to the suitability and usefulness of "didactic epic" as a term rather than "georgic." In addition, the realignment of narrative and didactic epic enables examination of the fluidity of the boundary between eighteenth-century didactic epics and genres such as the novel, which is more commonly imagined as arising out of the epic tradition, as this project will itself do in Chapter IV.

To understand the flexibility of the didactic epic genre as it appeared during the long eighteenth century, I combine the genre theory of Alastair Fowler with specific approaches like those of Toohey and Gale. Among the available, often competing, theories of genre, Fowler's permits a historicist approach to individual poems and simultaneously provides a framework for understanding the interrelation of forms, the metaphors useful for describing relationships among forms, and the role of genre in

interpreting the meaning of a particular work. Fowler's notion that forms are neither static nor rigid aligns with Toohey's and Gale's approach to the didactic epic. Fowler describes forms as "continuously undergoing metamorphosis,"<sup>13</sup> or a "part, at any period in literary history, of a family of forms."<sup>14</sup> Each of these phrases illustrates what Fowler terms a "kinship" between forms and how modulations within a particular exemplar respond to a set of generic conventions to generate meaning.

Rather than examining genres within strict hereditary genealogies, Fowler's theory posits genres as dialogically related, with visible traits of resemblance, but often obscured lines of inheritance. The function of Fowler's kinship metaphor is to upend the tendency of genre theories that seek to describe individual genres as classes or species with inherited traits developing along a linear path. Fowler insists that "the language of family resemblance, with its terms like 'often' and 'sometimes' and 'typical,' seems less rigorous, less capable of demonstration. But to describe a genre in such terms is not to prepare for its definition as a class, but to treat it as a different sort of grouping, not reducible to a class."<sup>15</sup> In other words, the idealization of a form should not inhibit the usefulness of discussing kinds. Because individual poems may resist easy classification, it is difficult for a theory simultaneously to account for historical situation, interpretation, and scholarly interrogation of an individual work in its context. The kinship model offers a theory of genre suited to rigorous study of cumbersome forms like the didactic epic in that it allows for comparison of non-linear formal development as well as a persistence of didactic epic through dialogic partnerships with other genres such as the novel and the epic.

In these pages, I contend that the simultaneous engagement with didactic epic in the fields of Classics, neo-Latin literature, and English literatures occurs because of observable trends in external environments. These same trends then make the synergy of the fields useful. The form and content of didactic epics make them an “extraordinarily interesting, often riveting genre,” especially for our era.<sup>16</sup> The same cultural trends that spurred the creation of didactic epics in antiquity and reawakened curiosity and interest in the long eighteenth century, are those drawing scholars to these same texts now. As in the ancient world that sustained Virgil and Manilius, and the eighteenth century that fostered both Gay and Grainger, the early decades of the twenty-first century exhibit conditions that make didactic epic an appealing and relevant genre for study. Didactic epic engages with political and philosophical concerns, such as the spread of empire, while simultaneously reflecting on the local effects such as identity, xenophobia, importation of culture, and the rise of nationalism. Rapidly changing scientific and medical knowledge are also familiar concerns of didactic epic as it seeks to translate prose into poetry, thereby familiarizing a present moment suddenly divorced from the previous decade by the advent of new technologies and scientific breakthroughs. Last, it should come as no surprise that didactic epics treating agricultural subjects have been at the vanguard of scholarly interest given the grave condition of our climate, the recognition of the role of large-scale agricultural projects, and the increase of natural disasters such as hurricanes. Although ambitious in scope, didactic epics dislodge human heroism from its central role, instead displaying humans caught in these systems: bodies as cogs in the machines, diseases that threaten to wipe out populations, class and nationalist struggles, efforts to

maintain hierarchies of race, gender, and power in the face of natural disasters and global threats. These issues are the same as those of this morning's newspaper.

If didactic epic represented the most significant poetic form of the period, and poetry was arguably a primary platform of communication, then understanding the genre becomes essential to understanding the primary literary communication of the era.

Rigorous analysis of the genre—what Alastair Fowler terms its modulation, variation, and departure from Classical and Renaissance predecessors—makes possible an appreciation of the role and influence of the genre during the period. Better comprehension of the genre makes possible not only a more complex and comprehensive understanding of specific poems, but also absorption of primary features by genres emerging and adapting during the long eighteenth century. How does a theory of genre developed through analysis of the didactic epic in the eighteenth century explain the kinship of the genre with novels, natural histories, prose medical treatises, and other genres nascent and emergent during the long eighteenth century? Can we explain the disappearance of the didactic epic at the end of the eighteenth century by examining the persistence of its generic features in the newly established communication platforms that came to dominate the Romantic and Victorian era following the decline of the formal poem?

To answer these questions, scholars of both Classics and eighteenth-century English literature agree that the didactic epic (which the latter call “georgic”) as a genre is a type of poetry that seeks to instruct on a particular topic, relies on the construct of an authorial voice directed to an implied initiate, and formally alternates between technical (or scientific) instruction and digressions (scholars variously refer to these insertions as



insets or panels). Like epics, didactic epics unfold in long poems and often in multiple books. Last, following Don Fowler's suggestion, didactic epic poems share common plots, a narrow range of thematic emphases, and features, such as epic lists. If there were an ideal type, it would conform to all these features—yet most scholars acknowledge that the need to define an ideal of the genre does not preclude acknowledging the diversity of examples more or less adherent to that ideal. Finally, borrowing from Toohey's analysis of the phases of didactic epic in the Classical era, I posit that inflections and shifts observed in eighteenth-century didactic epic represent responses to the political, social, and literary trends of the long eighteenth century. The amplification of features in eighteenth-century didactic epic responds to both the deviations evident in their Classical repertoire and the influence of their own historical moment.

#### Outline of the Present Work

Broad examinations of the didactic epic under the heading “georgic,” such as John Chalker's 1969 study, *The English Georgic*, become obsolete when poems are examined within a larger generic context, because the limiting filter he applies to the genre excludes too many poems based on so-called oddities. Therefore, to gain a revised understanding of the English didactic epic as it was understood in the eighteenth century, we must turn to individual works in dialogue with the generic form. In the following chapters, I rely on several close readings of essays, poems, novels, and prose texts from the long eighteenth century and the near and far reaches of the British Empire to build a repertoire that explores the center and the liminal edges of the didactic epic. The span of works engages the formal variations, the fluidity of generic boundaries, the tension

between prose and poetry, and the limits of didactic epic within the framework of the British Empire.

In my second chapter, I examine the origin of the term “georgic” in Addison’s “An Essay on the *Georgics*” (1697) alongside John Philips’s *Cyder* (1709) in an effort to establish how Addison and his near contemporary understood the term “georgic.”

Although my larger project dismisses the term “georgic” from the lexicon of the didactic epic genre as a mere subject heading or qualifier, it still understands Addison’s essay as an essential theory of the genre, which significantly influenced poets striving to write poems in the manner outlined by Addison. I continue with a close reading of Philips’s *Cyder*, and I present Philips’s effort to tame the poem by limiting its generic repertoire to Virgil as an attempt to confine the didactic epic to a pastoral ideology. Because Philips wrote near the end of the quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns and during the unstable peace of the early eighteenth century, I view his interest in portraying a unified, asexual, and harmonious environment as representing a desire to inscribe England as a prelapsarian Eden. As such, the poem fails to invigorate the didactic epic form, yet it provides a view into the mechanism of the genre.

Chapter III examines John Gay’s *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716), as I highlight the ways that the term georgic has limited interpretation of this poem. When we read Gay’s *Trivia* as didactic epic, the depth of his engagement with the genre and its tradition, as well as his innovations in the use of polyphony in the form, suggest that the poem is more substantial than previous critics have allowed. Gay’s indebtedness to Horace as well as to Virgil at once demonstrates his grasp of the capacity of didactic epic to engage in burlesque and pushes the genre toward the narrative epic

tradition. In *Trivia*, Gay intricately weaves a tragic sense of the impermanence of humanity buffeted by a rapidly industrializing society alongside an inversion of the heroic nature of that project. For my part, I argue we must reassess *Trivia* as a foundational rather than a peripheral engagement with the didactic epic.

By turning to Eliza Haywood's parodic novel, *Anti-Pamela, Or Feigned Innocence Detected* (1741) in my fourth chapter, I turn from examination of the formal didactic epic to exploration of the ways that the genre permeated its own boundaries and influenced the emerging genre of the novel in the mid-eighteenth century. I suggest that Haywood's literary response to Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) should be understood as a formal experiment with the semi-epistolary novel that situates that genre in dialogue with the didactic epic. My argument examines the effects wrought by this exchange on the development of the novel at mid-century. In particular, the chapter demonstrates the kinship of didactic epic and the novel with regard to elements such as polyphonic narrative voice, moral and instructive digressions, burlesque inversions of the epic, and plots that showcase the flexibility of both genres to instruct and delight. Last, I suggest that Haywood's early experimentation should be read into the larger context of the rise of the novel, showcasing her centrality to that project in the same way that I understand Gay's experiment as placing him at the nexus of the didactic epic's development.

In my last chapter, I shift to the periphery on all fronts by reading James Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* (1764). Written at the geographic margins of Great Britain's empire, at the penultimate moment of sugar's ascendance, and at the height of enthusiasm for the didactic epic, *The Sugar Cane* was published with the explicit label "a West-

Indian Georgic.” I expand on recent readings of Grainger’s poem that derive meaning from his combined Scottish and Creole identity by locating him within a larger constellation of late Classical and Renaissance didactic epics, specifically Manilius’s *Astronomica* and Fracastoro’s *Syphilis* (1530). I examine both Grainger’s copious footnotes to *The Sugar Cane* and his complementary prose text, *An Essay on the more common West-India Diseases* (1741), which serves as a parallel work to a substantial portion of his fourth book on the care and management of slaves. By broadening the repertoire of *The Sugar Cane*, I designate Grainger’s “artistic boldness” as a more significant underpinning of his work than does John Gilmore’s acknowledgement of it as a Creolization of poetic diction.<sup>17</sup> In Grainger’s poem, I note the polyphonic effect of the complementary positions of poet and naturalist-scientist alongside a recurrent theme of hybridity and collaboration. I interpret these effects as features of Grainger’s precarious position made audible by the elastic capacity of the didactic epic to sustain multiple vantages.

The swift decline of the formal didactic epic following Grainger’s *The Sugar Cane* has been tentatively reimagined by some scholars as the “persistence of georgic” in other genres as literary tastes yielded to poetry of a different sort with the rise of Romanticism at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Yet, this decline and subsequent scholarly neglect parallel the publication pattern and critical praise of Grainger’s poem as well, and may also be explained through a reminder of the thematic connections of didactic epic that have provoked its return to scholarly attention in recent years. By arguing for the persistence of didactic epic, we also acknowledge a third Augustan age.

Our renewed attention to didactic epic as scholars, and as consumers of prose variations of the form (whether fiction or non-<sup>19</sup>) should focus on what the didactic epic reveals not only about the eighteenth century but also about the ways in which connecting these texts to their cultural realities can inform our thinking about our own reality. The separation of didactic and narrative epic sustained by reliance on the term “georgic” has promoted a too-easy separation between the natural world (georgic) and the human world (epic) such that we have approached and understood the former as dalliances in the natural world, indeed as compositions with little bearing on culture and humans. Future readings of didactic epic would do well to explore the resonances of the genre with emerging theoretical approaches such as ecocriticism that sometimes argue for the decentering of humans in the ecology of literature. In this way, poems might be read through an environmental lens as stances on subjects ranging from science and technology to urbanization and agriculture. The merging of narrative and didactic epic might then betray as arbitrary and insignificant the division between poems about man’s heroic pursuits and poems that examine notions of progress from the position of an implicated observer—the typical vantage of the didactic epic.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Addison, “Essay on the *Georgics*,” 153.

<sup>2</sup> Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (1985). Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism* (2008). Harth, *New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Literature* (1974).

<sup>3</sup> Though “georgic” exists as a noun prior to Addison’s essay, the earlier use refers only to any one of the four of Virgil’s poems. The distinct meaning some scholars understand him to give it as a genre of poetry has no precedent.

<sup>4</sup> Alastair Fowler. *Kinds of Literature*, 147.

<sup>5</sup> Depew and Obink, *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Addison, “An Essay on the *Georgics*,” 153.

<sup>7</sup> Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, Ovid’s *Arte Amatoria*.

<sup>8</sup> With the availability of unfamiliar early-modern and eighteenth-century English translations of didactic epics via Eighteenth-Century Collection Online (ECCO) and Early English Books Online (EEBO), the recent scholarly translations provide a point of collaboration and insight.

<sup>9</sup> Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Toohey’s six phases of didactic epic trace the development of the genre from its earliest iterations to late antiquity. In particular he notes the changes wrought by literacy, the political environment, and shifting intents/effects signaled by amplification of stylistic play, emphasis on leisure, and experimentation with voice.

<sup>12</sup> Laird, “Reading Politian’s *Ambra* and Reading Epic Didactically,” 28.

<sup>13</sup> Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Cohen, “On the Interrelations of Eighteenth-Century Literary Forms,” 76.

<sup>15</sup> Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 41-42.

<sup>16</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Gilmore, *The Poetics of Empire*.

<sup>18</sup> The annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in 2010 hosted a panel on the “Persistence of Georgic” in works as far-ranging as Michael Pollan’s *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* (2007).

<sup>19</sup> Recent decades have seen a sharp rise in the publication of numerous single-subject didactic prose texts such as Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel: the Fates of Human Societies* (1999), Kurlansky’s *Salt: a World History* (2003), and de Botton’s *The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work* (2010). Each of these imagines a seemingly mundane subject as an epic idea.

## CHAPTER II

### PHILIPS'S *CYDER* (1709) AND THE ADDISONIAN "GEORGIC"

The eighteenth century saw a sudden rise in poems based on Classical models. Dryden's 1697 translation and publication of *The Works of Virgil in English* including his *Georgics* represent a pivotal moment in English literature that is generally accepted as such, and acted as a catalyst for the increased engagement with Classical forms. *The Works of Virgil in English* exerts a substantial influence on a significant and far-reaching body of literature extending throughout the long eighteenth century. Situated at the core of Dryden's translation of Virgil's complete works, the *Georgics* inaugurated a new tradition in English literature. Though there were many other English translations of the *Georgics*, the immediate decades after Dryden's translation saw the first original poems imitating the Classical model in English.

A tradition of writing didactic epics in Latin had persisted through the Renaissance and well into the eighteenth century, yet Dryden's exemplary translation inaugurated the practice of writing book-length instructional poems in English. In 1700, the then-poet laureate of England, Nahum Tate, wrote *Panacea: A Poem Upon Tea*. Blending science, botany, and agriculture, Tate's didactic epic poem followed the Renaissance neo-Latin didactic epic *Syphilis* (1541) by Girolamo Fracastoro. In 1709, John Philips penned *Cyder*, a two-book, blank verse didactic epic in English situating the cider-making industry as a nationalist project in a poem heavily influenced by Virgil and Milton. Assessing the precise influence of Dryden's translation on the sudden rise of English didactic epics is difficult; however, Joseph Addison's brief, prefatory essay

commissioned to accompany Dryden's translation provides a valuable degree of insight into the catalyzing effect of a new, English Virgil.

As I explicate in detail throughout this chapter, Addison's essay and Dryden's translations stimulated the production of English poems as literary forays into the debate on whether the ancients or moderns were superior. Enflamed in England by Temple's initial essay in 1690 asserting the superiority of ancient learning, over several decades, the two camps debated Classical and modern superiority in history, science, literature, and philosophy. Along the way, various proponents of the ancients' camp often conceded that moderns had won in history and science while maintaining that Classical efforts in literature and philosophy remained superior. As Joseph Levine observes, perhaps the most debilitating problem the moderns faced was their lack of readiness to "formulate any new, nonclassical critical standards. They were thus unwilling to propose Dante or Milton . . . for the vacant modern throne."<sup>20</sup> But Dryden's translation and Addison's accompanying essay, "An Essay on the *Georgics*," offered the possibility of a modern translation into English of a "perfect" Latin poem that might thereby establish a modern standard of poetry. Though immersed in ancient literature, Michael Werth Gelber acknowledges, Dryden "remained fairly consistently a modern."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, even as the poem itself is squarely a translation of a Classical exemplar, Addison's essay presents the idea of a modern standard of criticism for didactic epics as well as a theory of the genre.

Poets and critics alike saw Classical forms as battlegrounds for critical discussions of the uses of genre, the merits of poetry and poetic aspiration, as well as sites on which to enact political and literary skirmishes. Because the didactic epic incorporated science and poetry into a seamless whole, the genre offered the possibility that modern



literature might surpass that of the ancients. Built on a model of progress, the modern argument in literature suggested that new endeavors were both novel and improvements on the ancient standards. In large part, the members of the modern camp drew on science (Newtonian physics) as well as philology (the scholarly, historical study of classical texts), and nascent archaeology to make their claims about modern knowledge. Swift was joined in his denigration of modern efforts by his fellow Scriblerians, including Pope and Gay, who insisted that the best literature of the Augustan Age was indebted to Classical literature and that any modern achievement was attained by standing on ancient foundations. Dryden's progressivist stance meanwhile turned on the same metaphor, conceding "the Ancients were the great originators," but insisting "insofar as the Moderns stand on their shoulders, the Moderns have the greater perspective and wisdom."<sup>22</sup> The ancients' camp was further entrenched in a conviction that the practice of intellectual maturity and literary achievement arises from immersion in and rumination on Classical works, not the excessively pedantic scholarship of philologists and archaeologists. Thus, in the didactic epic, the two camps encountered a common ground—a classical framework capable of containing modern scientific knowledge.

In his 1697 "An Essay on the *Georgics*," Addison outlines why the didactic epic offers a substantial field for the critic and—by extension—the poet. Addison's critical estimation and schematic of the genre suggests the availability of the genre for adaptation in English and for treating diverse modern topics. In the essay, Addison claims that Virgil introduced "three new kinds" of poetry to the Romans, then briefly traces the style and hierarchy of the pastoral, didactic epic, and narrative epic forms before turning to in-depth study of the didactic epic as modeled in Virgil's *Georgics*.<sup>23</sup> In the same way that

Addison advanced his career as a critic, the poets of the early decades of the eighteenth century treated the formal genres as vehicles for topical treatments, political arguments, and literary self-fashioning. By the first decades of the eighteenth century, poets including Tate, Philips, and Gay recognized that the didactic epic offered a capacious field for combining the heroic themes of the narrative epic with increasing cultural interest in topics like tea and cider that connected the nonfiction world of science and philosophy to the realm of ideas and human endeavors. Within two decades of Addison's essay, the English didactic epic was an established tradition and, by 1782, when the neo-Latin didactic epic the *Rusticatio Mexicana* was published, it was the Latin poem that seemed the oddity.<sup>24</sup>

Admittedly, the straightforward narrative I map out above is complicated by scholarship—from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first—on the eighteenth-century English “georgic” which established a narrative that severs the English didactic epic from a broad repertoire of Latin poems. While Addison's essay proposes a theory of Virgil's *Georgics* as a distinct poetic genre, my analysis of his proposal undermines conclusions drawn by later critics, that all “georgics” derive “from a single origin: Virgil's *Georgics*.”<sup>25</sup> Reading Addison's “An Essay on the *Georgics*,” I interpret his claim regarding the “georgic” as an articulation of the didactic epic genre through the exemplar of Virgil's poems. Addison understood Virgil's poems as paradigmatic of the “middle stile” of poetry (the then-unnamed genre situated between pastoral and narrative epic). Though Addison states, “*A Georgic therefore is some part of the Science of Husbandry put into a pleasing Dress, and set off with all the Beauties and Embellishments of*

*Poetry*,” in the context of his complete analysis, the elements he describes are common to all subjects of didactic epic poems.<sup>26</sup>

To understand the flaw of the earliest works of scholarship on the eighteenth-century “georgic,” one need look no further than Chalker’s assertion in his survey of the canon in which he simplistically asserts that the term “georgic” “means literally ‘a poem about farming’, and all examples of the genre derive from [Virgil’s] *Georgics*, written basically as a treatise on Italian agriculture.”<sup>27</sup> Building on Chalker’s claim, scholars of the long eighteenth century have increasingly looked to Virgil’s poems as the *only* model for understanding the genre, categorically accepting that “georgic derives, in effect, from a single origin: Virgil’s *Georgics*, a work historically situated between his more influential compositions, the *Eclogues* and the *Aeneid*.”<sup>28</sup> Heinzelman offers a received foundational claim as the basis for studying the progress of the georgic from the eighteenth century through its vanishing during the Romantic age; however, as I will argue in these pages, the poets and critics of the early eighteenth century would have dismissed his assertion of a single origin. Therefore, my reading of Addison’s essay, and my insistence on setting aside the term “georgic” in the context of these flawed premises, reframes English didactic epic poems within a broad Classical and neo-Latin repertoire—one already in the minds of eighteenth-century poets.

Though Addison derives a theory of the genre from Virgil’s *Georgics*, the kinship of the “georgic” to the didactic epic is too great to sustain theories of two distinct genres. Rather, the generic framework of the didactic epic subsumes the “georgic”—a subset distinct within the genre if only for its apparently unique concern with agriculture.<sup>29</sup> While Addison and several poets of the long eighteenth century used the term in

reference to specific poems, the definition sustained by the works of these early authors is a false cognate for the term “georgic” found in the latter scholarship. Returning to Addison’s essay, one observes that his use of the term “georgic” outlined a theory of genre that was *perfected* in Virgil’s *Georgics*, not *established* by it. We could continue to call poems georgics and simply revise our understanding of the genre’s scope, but this accommodation makes no more sense than calling a reticulated giraffe a camelopard while the other eight subspecies of giraffe are called giraffes, even as we might single out the “camelopard” as the ideal example of the giraffe. Reliance on a term that requires qualification is unnecessarily confusing. The Addisonian term “georgic” offers a definition derived from an exemplary poem from which the rules are established for a genre that overlaps so entirely with the didactic epic as to be subsumed by it.

Though it seems most indicative of his efforts to delineate a separate genre derived from Virgil, Addison’s insistence on the subject matter of the “georgic” does, in fact, apply to all didactic poems because he emphasizes the elevation of low subjects via poetry. Unlike later scholars who describe the georgic as arising directly from Virgil, Addison acknowledges Virgil’s repertoire, stating, “we are beholding to [Hesiod] for the first rough *sketch* of a *Georgic*.”<sup>30</sup> In addition, Addison mentions Theognis, Pythagoras, Aratus, and Lucretius suggesting that all should be included as writers working in the “middle Stile,” which falls “under that Class of Poetry” (e.g., didactic epic) regardless of subject matter: “whether they be Moral Duties; . . . or Philosophical Speculations; . . . or Rules of Practice” (145-146). Addison did not intend to divorce Virgil from other Classical poets writing in the same style, but he did set out to examine “how far Virgil has excell’d all who have written in *the same way* with him” (italics mine, 145). That is,

first acknowledging that Virgil writes in the didactic epic tradition, Addison then claims that the *Georgics* is a superior poem because the challenge offered by the low subject matter combined with the poet's skill offers the greatest opportunity to surpass other poets working in the same style. Further, Addison's insistence on the subject matter of the "georgic" does, in fact, apply to all didactic poems because he focuses on the elevation of the low subject through the mode of poetry. In this way, we also understand that poetic ornament sanitizes the subject matter of even philosophy or religion when translated from a prose handbook to a poem. Husbandry, which deals explicitly with soil, is cleansed both literally and metaphorically, but all the subjects undergo sanitizing as the lens of poetry eradicates the physical or mental work of the subject articulated in the prose texts.

Together with the recent scholarship on the didactic epic by scholars of Classical and neo-Latin poetry, Addison's delineation of the genre provides a framework for approaching poems in the English didactic epic tradition as it flourished during the long eighteenth century. Though characterized by "thematic catholicity" (6), in *Epic Lessons: An Introduction to Ancient Didactic Poetry*, Toohey nonetheless provides a precise definition of the remaining primary elements of the genre:

A didactic epic speaks with a single authorial voice and this is directed explicitly to an addressee, who may or may not be named. It is usually a serious literary form. Its subject matter is instructional. . . . It may be, and often is, quite technical and detailed. Included within the narrative are normally a number of illustrative panels. These are often based on mythological themes. The meter is that of narrative epic, the hexameter. Traditionally, such poems comprised one book of about 800 lines (but at least 400 lines), although this changed as the form developed (4).

Toohey addresses style, content, length, and form, but also the seriousness of the endeavor, and of the subject matter. Toohey draws his definition of the genre from a

book-length study of didactic epic that traces the amplifications and modifications of the form from its provenance in oral poetry through the late first century, accounting for variations and theorizing the forces (such as literacy, print, and politics) that distorted its form. Toohey admits to the transgression of attributing to didactic epic an ideal form in order to examine the progress of the genre. In contrast, Addison derives his theory of the didactic epic genre from a careful analysis of one poem that, he offers, is paradigmatic. Arriving from opposite poles, then, the two definitions collide in a common definition as each of Toohey's characteristics aligns with Addison's schema of the "Class of Poetry" that comprises the "middle stile" (figure 1).<sup>31</sup>

The complexity of the didactic epic as evidenced by Classical and neo-Latin iterations of the form suggests that the treatments of subjects over time reflect the political, social, and cultural views (or a critique of the same) for a particular historical moment and carefully imagined audiences. Thus, to suggest that poets writing didactic epics in the eighteenth century were unaware of the varied models of the didactic epic limits our understanding of the so-called English "georgic." Divorcing the *Georgics* from their classical repertoire imagines a critical vacuum that is not there, as evidenced in the wide-ranging repertoire—added to the list culled from Addison in figure 1—of the first English didactic epics published. For instance, Tate's *Panacea* (1700) acknowledges Fracastoro's Renaissance neo-Latin didactic epic, *Syphilis*, on its title page, and Philips's *Cyder* (1709), imitative of Virgil, signals his admiration for Milton. Gay's *Trivia* (1716) sets out Horace as an exemplar as well as numerous other poets including Ovid.<sup>32</sup> Certainly, the shape of the didactic epic genre as understood by Addison acknowledges

Virgil’s early-Classical predecessors and logically includes neo-Latin works of the Early Modern period.

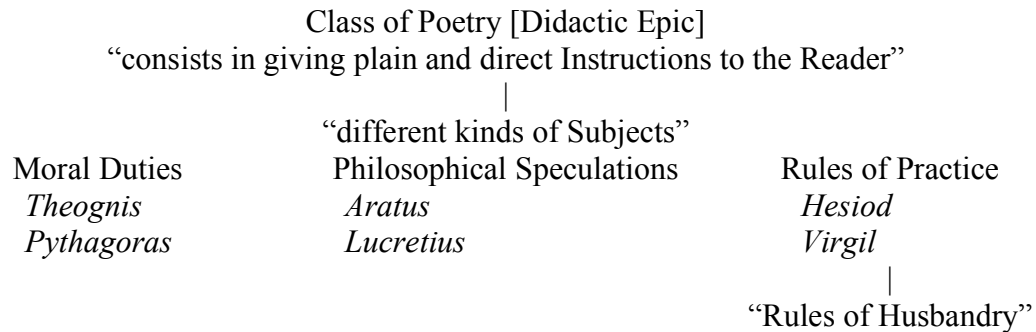


Figure 1. Addison’s schema of Didactic Epic as set forth in “An Essay on the Georgics”

When we examine Addison’s cited characteristics of didactic epic more closely, an underlying ideological framework emerges in his critical interpretation of Virgil’s *Georgics*. The shared, central characteristic of both Addison and Toohey—elevation of didactic matter via the poetic mode—is fundamentally the work of ideology. David Hawkes defines ideology (and argues for the continued relevance of the term) as the “powerful and determined modes of thought that seek to obscure the comprehension” of the logical contradiction inherent in the “dilemma of our epoch.”<sup>33</sup> Didactic epics employ the mechanism of ideology—obscuring contradictions in the language of ideas. Therefore, because didactic epic employs an ideological mechanism as a primary characteristic, the poems are particularly suited to exploring both the ideas and the mechanisms of the competing ideologies of the long eighteenth century. Addison’s statement that a “georgic” is “*some part of the Science of Husbandry put into a pleasing Dress*” also applies to the didactic epic because, in its emphasis on disguising the subject, the phrase circumscribes all the topics of Addison’s “Class of Poetry,” not just the poems on husbandry.<sup>34</sup> Poetry functions ideologically in the didactic epic as a “mode of thought

that seeks to obscure” comprehension of the conflict between subject matter and style.<sup>35</sup> Careful reading of many poems precludes the separation of topics such as moral duties from rules of practice such as husbandry. Further, Addison’s move to isolate the topics is an example of the prevalent ideology of his day that maintained agriculture was a scientific rather than moral endeavor. Though specific ideologies vary from poem to poem, the required translation of subjects from prose didactic text to poetry suggests that the didactic epic genre is ideally suited to creating the “systematically false consciousness” that allows an audience to consume a sanitized, commoditized treatment of a subject—whether agriculture, science, philosophy, or religion—through poetry.

Addison elevates the status of both the subject and the genre in his extended comparison of Hesiod and Virgil, concluding that the latter’s poem presents a masterful production in which the reader witnesses “a Rustick Majesty like that of a Roman Dictator at the Plough-Tail” (151). Thus, in *Georgic I*, Addison finds that Virgil has “rais’d the natural rudeness and simplicity of his subject” (151). Yet, admittedly all subjects available to didactic epic require elevation to heroic status in order to become poetry and not prose because of the shift in audience. This in turn obscures the connections between commerce and labor, agriculture or colonization and empire, consumerism and leisure. So, in Addison’s examination of the process in Virgil’s *Georgics*, we may discern an ideological perspective common to some didactic epics: the sanitizing distance from its thematic concerns created by the poetic medium.<sup>36</sup> As poets select precepts suitable for poetic ornament, they filter not only for style, but also for alignment with their political, social, and moral aims. Addison’s image of a Roman dictator at the plow can similarly serve as an indicator of a conventional ideology in the



didactic epic: the glorified figure obscures and displaces the real labor involved in plowing, thereby distancing the reader from the material subject at hand through the vehicle of poetry.

For Addison, the meaning of Virgil's *Georgics* must arise as a result of Virgil's attention to the elements of the genre: specifically, tone, style, and structure. The tone of didactic epic derives from the poetic speaker who is not always imagined as a practitioner (e.g., the poet is not a husbandman or an astrologer but one educated about the subject).. Addison's dictator at the plow embodies a figure Toohey characterizes as that of a dilettante who is expert in "language" but inexpert in the subject matter: his skill "is more a matter of technique than it is of knowledge" (84).<sup>37</sup> By imagining the narrator's persona as an oratorical dilettante, the didactic epic permits the reader to align himself with only suitably elevated figures in the poem, whether dictators plowing or—as Toohey describes Cicero's dilettante—a "literate translator, one more concerned with creating a poetic *tour de force* than in conveying" accuracy (84). The tone of the orator marries the style Addison identifies as "pleasing and agreeable," but also consists of a distinction between prose and poetry that emphasizes concealment and ideas that enter the reader's mind "through a By-Way . . . [via which] the Mind . . . seems to work out the rest by the strength of her own faculties."<sup>38</sup> Again, Addison's language emphasizes the false consciousness of an idea that the reader ought to perceive as arising from her own mind rather than from an external source.

Finally, Addison describes the structure of the didactic epic as a characteristic element which—because of its "elastic capacity to fit within other forms, or to absorb them within its own ambit" and its competing vocal registers—emerges as a feature of

didactic epic's characteristic tone.<sup>39</sup> The geometry of narrator, addressee, and audience—central to the instruction contributes to the polyphony of didactic epic. Because of the implicit hierarchy of instruction, the personas (master and novice, teacher and pupil, orator and initiate) of a didactic poem are also separated and often represent personas in conflict in prose or life but harmoniously aligned in the space of the poetry. Progressing through a didactic epic poem, the reader shifts between the positions of the personas, and thus, does not attempt to become the subject of the poem. Rather, she imagines herself moving along a continuum of experience to become the narrative speaker of the poem: the expert.

In fact, this practice of resolving real conflicts by absorbing the ideologies espoused by a poem encapsulates the central conflict of poets engaging with the didactic epic in the decades immediately following the publication of Addison's essay. One emergent school of poetic practice—exemplified by Philips's *Cyder* (1709)—adhered to Addison's "rules" while simultaneously espousing a pastoral ideology that sought to link temperance to an inherently English identity and tame the citizenry by imagining the landscape as a second Eden. However, because the characteristic polyphony of the didactic epic form—as well as the availability of a broad classical repertoire—signals an inherent instability of meaning in a compelling didactic epic, Philips's attempts to locate a single, unified message of political and cultural hegemony in a didactic epic fail to employ adequately the veiling mechanism of the genre. Because of its limited allusiveness and, at times, simplistic treatment of theme, *Cyder* offers a glimpse of the engine of didactic epic that reveals the relation between genre and ideology useful both to

a study of the development of the genre in the long eighteenth century and to understanding the literary value of didactic epic.

Critics have found ways to discuss the historical significance of *Cyder* to the rise of English poetic identity and political maneuvering, yet the poem lacks depth in its historical, classical, and poetic endeavors because of its reliance on a limited reading of Virgil. Thus, in its pastoral ideology, Philips's poem loses the polyphony of voice that populated classical models, positing a single, uncomplicated aim that is not just palatable but bland. Philips's imitation of Virgil sacrifices the ideological dissonance of the *Georgics*' public and private registers because of the juvenile enthusiasm he lends to his picture of a national project.<sup>40</sup>

#### Taming English Instincts: Philips's *Cyder*

Among the first English didactic epics, Philips's *Cyder* employs the didactic epic as a genre suited to responding to and mediating the political and social tensions of the era. Untangling the poem's layered references is critical to understanding the trajectory of the English didactic epic as Philips enunciates one ideological possibility relating to themes of imperialism, the environment, labor, and the laboring body. Thus, Philips seemed to have in mind a pastoral interpretation of Dryden's translation of Virgil's *Georgics*. His project relies on a reading of Virgil's *Georgics* that de-emphasizes complexity of voice in favor of the dominant voice that Addison describes as "a *Roman Dictator at the Plow-Tail*" in order to promote a culturally homogeneous English identity.<sup>41</sup> In this narrowing of tone, Philips offers a unified, contented vision of humanity. Because of this ideological obfuscation of labor and the complexity of empire, *Cyder* represents a model of the didactic epic severely limited by its narrow repertoire

and narrow theme. Philips crafts a didactic epic evocative of Addison's Roman dictator-turned-husbandman by using the imagery, form, and genre of *Cyder* to support an ideological project that harnesses industry and labor to cultivate national peace.

Collaborating with the ideological aims of "An Essay on the *Georgics*," *Cyder* positions the genre within a narrowly defined interpretation of the didactic epic by excluding non-Virgilian classical sources (while simultaneously emphasizing English predecessors such as Milton), and steering *Cyder* toward a pastoral worldview concerned with public welfare and cultural hegemony. Although the poem is of unexceptional literary merit, Philips's contribution to our understanding of the genre in the early eighteenth century is significant. Philips situates *Cyder* as a poem arising from a historical repertoire consisting of two exemplars: Virgil's *Georgics* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. By isolating *Cyder* from a broad generic repertoire—because of his overreliance on Addison's derivation of rules for the didactic epic—Philips fails to acknowledge the complexity of both the Latin poem and Dryden's translation.<sup>42</sup> *Cyder* also lacks reference to and reinterpretation of the didactic epic genre because it builds on a single interpretation of Virgil's *Georgics*—a poem scholars acknowledge contains multiple public and private registers that sustain a polyphonic "tension."<sup>43</sup> The productive tension of Virgil's *Georgics* disappears in Philips's imitation as he culls the ambiguities and complexities in favor of a single, pastoral interpretation.

The limitation of antecedents propels *Cyder* into a political agenda in line with Addison's interpretation of Virgil's *Georgics* as presented in the Dryden preface and further manipulated by the strained connection to the Miltonian English epic. Perhaps the most carefully wrought element of the poem, the political agenda of Philips's *Cyder*

reflects Philips's delicate position as a non-juror in the service of Tory patrons, including Harley, during a peaceful era that was not guaranteed to last. Juan Christian Pellicer explains the political maneuverings of the poem, identifying the dedications, patronage, and relevant bibliographic details of the poem's production.<sup>44</sup> Identifying the political and ideological stance of the poem itself, however, is more complicated than describing an alignment of the poet's politics with that of his patrons and party. Beyond the repeated endorsement of "Tory policies by topical allusion," beyond emphasis on Philips's own complicated stance within the patronage and political system as a staunch non-juror, *Cyder's* generic features advance a pacifist, pastoral worldview (185). Philips dilutes the political complexity of the *Georgics* in order to amplify the tone that hopes for peace and a return to an idealized Golden Age. But in aligning tone with theme, Philips misses the distinction between style and content that Addison emphasizes in "An Essay on the *Georgics*." While the political motivations of his patrons and dedicatees benefit from this worldview, *Cyder* foregoes complexity by promoting a pastoral rather than georgic, and pacifist rather than epic, worldview.

What matters in *Cyder* is the emphasis on national peace and striving toward a pastoral worldview that coincides with the political worldview of Philips's patrons. Rachel Crawford succinctly captures the ideological process involved in this transformation. She argues that the apple becomes a "representative fruit" for the nation as it inverts the "essential georgic theme elaborated by Virgil and Milton: painful labor [as] the consequence of expulsion from a garden—specifically a fruit garden—an ejection from a benign world in which labor is *sweet delight*."<sup>45</sup> In this manner, Crawford suggests, the poem's message reimagines England as a "garden and from thence into a

place of prelapsarian social harmony” (131). In the same way, Pellicer’s argument aligning Philips the non-juror with his Tory patrons suggests a subterranean logic that compels the poem toward promoting Queen Anne’s “Reign of Peace.”

With this outline in mind, let us return to considering the ways in which the form and vision of Philips’s *Cyder* contribute to a repositioning of the didactic epic along a path promoting pastoralism and pacifism following Queen Anne’s coronation and the era of peace that ensued. Convergent political aims are most evident in Philips’s treatment of laboring bodies—whether animals or farm laborers. Virgil’s third and fourth *Georgic* are heavily populated with animals who figure as central actors within the epic frame—both cattle and bees demonstrate heroic attributes and serve as models for human heroes. In contrast, *Cyder* depicts animals as either pests or beasts of burden, relegating them to minor moral actors in his mock-heroic vignettes. The animals—a grub, a goat and a retired plow horse—are at odds with the epic notion of labor. In general, these animals serve as behavioral models for agricultural laborers (not for the poem’s gentlemanly audience) because Philips uses the poem to minimize class conflict in order to depict harmonious collaboration in the service of national peace. Though reliant on the mock-heroic, Philips’s inversions serve a reactionary rather than a radical purpose: they locate, then displace tension through comic release. In this way, Philips sustains the binary of capital and labor that structures the English society he imagines in *Cyder*.

Following a list of orchard pests the gentleman-farmer routinely combats, Philips introduces the grub in a mock-heroic panel of sixteen lines. The grub’s method for invading “the vital Core” of a fruit is likened to construction of a primitive mine to destroy “the witless Swain.” Like “Embattled Troops [who] pass/ Thro’ flow’ry Meads

delighted, nor distrust/ The smiling Surface,” the swain bites into a grub-spoiled apple, unleashing “by sudden Blaze/ Bursts fatal, and involves the Hopes of War/ In fiery Whirls; full of victorious Thoughts,/ Torn and dismembered [sic], they aloft expire” (I.455-461). Given his location in the simile, the pastoral swain displays the same surprise as the embattled troops. Yet, likening biting into a spoiled apple to stepping on a primitive landmine freights the mock-heroic passage with a juxtaposition of the inane and the tragic and, notably, lacks a satiric target.<sup>46</sup> The image of dismembered bodies fails to resonate with a startled swain spitting chunks of apple from his mouth and, therefore, serves only a comic purpose, as if to say that grubs do not threaten peace in the same way that foreign enemies dismember English identity. Philips confines the epic tendency of the poetic form to the mock-heroic insets. In this way, the convention of didactic epic, which situates epic striving as the centerpiece of agricultural labor, subverts and forfeits heroism for a comic moment in order to promote peace by diminishing the imperial project. The incursion of war and epic into Philips’s poem is thereby limited to a distant memory of war in a pastoral landscape—able to be laughed at from the distance of the countryside in a time of peace.

Philips repeatedly describes laboring animals using decidedly unheroic, nonvirile images that turn away from epic traditions of nation-building, expansion, and cultural appropriation through war, and toward procreation toward a pastoral image of a nation isolated by geography and time. Philips’s selection of precepts that depict beasts—a precaution on shaving a goat’s beard (II.86-90) and selecting a suitable horse for powering the cider press (II.91-99)—marks his emphasis of the nation as a pastoral space because it is imagined during an era of peace following war. Alongside construction of

the mill, *Cyder* details the importance of trimming the goat's beard "least thou too late,/ In vain should'st seek a Strainer, to dispart/ The husky, terrene Dregs, from purer Must" (II. 88-90). The comic advice is found in an activity—building a mill—possible only when a nation is not using timber to increase its naval fleet. (And, indeed, the imagery recalls Addison's "Roman dictator" turned to the plow.) It is an image typical of a nation during a time of peace, transposing as it does epic striving with industry as a national ideal. Though Philips emphasizes pastoral imagery, he is careful to describe the countryside as a post-epic space that sustains industry to guarantee the persistence of national peace.

Immediately following this precept, Philips details the selection of an appropriate horse for turning the millstone. Philips's advice recalls the selection of breed stock in Virgil's *Georgics* III;<sup>47</sup> however, the advice in *Cyder* promotes an oppositional ideology. In a comparison of two horses, the retired warhorse and the aged plow horse, the poet warns:

Be cautious next a proper Steed to find  
Whose Prime is past; the vigorous Horse disdains  
Such servile Labours, or, if forc'd, forgets  
His past Atchievements [sic], and victorious Palms.  
Blind *Bayard* rather, worn with Work, and Years,  
Shall roll th'unweildy Stone, with sober Pace  
He'll tread the circling Path 'till dewy Eve,  
From early Day-spring, pleas'd to find his Age  
Declining, not unuseful [sic] to his Lord (II.91-99)

Unlike the epic designation of old age Dryden signifies in his Virgil, as a time of rest and ease as a reward for labor—in which the retired war horse should "enjoy his former Palms and Pains" and the human should "gratefully be kind to his Remains" (III.153-54)—Philips suggests that a once-vigorous horse would balk at servile labor while an



aged plow horse would choose to continue laboring.<sup>48</sup> Philips posits an alternative body, essential to the project of industry—the laboring poor symbolized by the aged plow horse. In Philips’s exchange, the fatigued body of the laboring, blind horse should be “pleas’d to find his Age . . . not unuseful [sic]” (II.98-99). Thus, while Virgil emphasizes the national importance of virility and fecundity, Philips’s poem values hard work and abstinence in an increasingly machine-driven agricultural environment.<sup>49</sup> This notion of utility over virility as a metaphor for agricultural labor underlines *Cyder*’s celebratory move toward the pastoral mode. In *Cyder*, nature—animal or human—is increasingly asexual, tame, and temperate. Furthermore, Philips aligns these values with the characteristic English temperament in order to promote cultural hegemony.

Interpreting Virgil’s *Georgics* through the lens of Addison’s reflection on the style suitable to a “georgic,” Philips misses the competing voices of Virgil’s public and private registers. Noting in Virgil a local concern with the effects of agriculture and labor in his treatment of the *Georgics*, Michael Putnam observes that Virgil is not at a distance from the laboring body and its environments, but rather is immersed in the social and political concerns of the farmer—disenfranchised, troubled, and at the mercy of imperial politics.<sup>50</sup> Putnam’s consideration of *Georgic* III interprets Virgil’s use of distance and elision as motifs working in opposition to the veiling style Addison praises and the translation of that same style into theme by Philips when he dislocates labor from its epic framework. In the same Virgilian passage on the stallion transformed in Philips’s *Cyder* into a refrain on the gratefulness of the blind horse laboring in old age (III.95-96), Putnam remarks on the elision of old age by Virgil:<sup>51</sup>

But worn with years, when dire Diseases come,  
Then hide his not Ignoble Age, at Home:

In Peace t' enjoy his former Palms and Pains;  
And gratefully be kind to his Remains. (Dryden, *Georgics* III.151-154)

In Putnam's estimation of this passage, "Invisibility preserves [the stallion's] reputation by upholding the fiction that he is unscathed by time's ravages."<sup>52</sup> According to Putnam, invisibility in Virgil is a veil of discretion designed to preserve the dignity of the subject. Whereas Philips supplants the aged stallion with a willing, blind nag content to be found useful in old age, Addison's essay suggests that the speaker's distance will render close scrutiny of the ravages wrought on bodies and the landscape by agricultural progress unnecessary. Philips offers a mode of thought that attempts to align individual desires with the national project in a natural and harmonious whole.

#### Asexual Beginnings: *Cyder's* English Eden

Because Philips strips the didactic epic of its typical epic themes such as breeding and nation-building, *Cyder* repeatedly relies on asexual means of reproduction to overcome the infertility and sterility of his images. Philips thereby imagines a prelapsarian environment, and his imagery—in particular, his invocation to Pomona, which I address below—attempts to elide the pains associated with the fall (labor and childbirth) to locate Eden in England. Thus, in the same way the depiction of animals as innately industrial rather than heroic pushes the poem toward the pastoral mode, the invocations and allusions to Classical deities serve Philips's ideological aims. Invoking the minor goddess of orchards, Pomona, Philips suggests an unconventional interpretation of the didactic epic. While perfectly suited to his topic and theme, Pomona is, nonetheless, a minor nymph. The goddess of tree fruit—even today little is known about Pomona's specific cult or poetic significance—does not impart to the poem a legacy of allusions or a framework for interpreting the ideological moves in the poem.

However, rather than functioning as burlesque, Philips's invocation of a minor goddess amplifies his theme: planting orchards is an effort undertaken in times of peace and stability. Pomona's presence signifies the absence of Olympian gods known for their conflicts. Orchards both signify an agricultural act of cultural permanence and recall Eden. However, Pomona's lack of established signifiers affords Philips the opportunity to strategically craft the symbolic implications of invoking Pomona. His depiction of her role likely derives from a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, from which we learn that:

The Nymph [Pomona] frequented not the flatt'ring Stream  
Nor Meads, the Subject of a Virgin's Dream;  
But to such Joys her Nurs'ry did prefer,  
. . . . . A Pruning-hook she carry'd in her Hand.<sup>53</sup>

The asexual image of a pruning hook sharply contrasts with the virile spear more typical of epic imagery. Whereas Virgil's *Georgic* III insists on the necessity of animal desire and sex to the fructification of the environment and even glorifies it as an heroic impulse,<sup>54</sup> Pomona asserts an asexual, perhaps antisexual, agricultural project derived from pruning and sequestering nature's natural abundance (a metaphor for abstinence): "Long had she labour'd to continue free/ From Chains of Love, and Nuptial Tyranny/ And in her Orchard's small Extent immur'd/ Her vow'd Virginitie she still secur'd."<sup>55</sup> Rather than reproduce as bees and humans naturally do, Pomona, as Philips invokes her, suggests a deliberate taming of an abundant, prelapsarian nature that requires neither sexual reproduction nor desire nor epic struggle against uncultivated nature.<sup>56</sup> *Cyder's* world is already civilized: nature has been tamed and epic struggle settled in the distant past to be replaced by antisexual technologies such as grafting and pruning.

To present war as an unnatural (un-English) influence, Philips constructs a narrative voice—built on Addison’s injunction to elevate the voice of the narrator—that will remain the model georgic narrator throughout the eighteenth century: the agricultural overseer.<sup>57</sup> This narrative persona secures the boundary between laboring bodies and the landed aristocracy by inscribing an image of those laboring bodies as natural. Specifically, Philips elides the sweat, poverty, ill health, and abuse of the laborer in favor of the pastoral mode, in which laborers are contented, simple, and sometimes at leisure.<sup>58</sup> Images of laboring bodies sanitized for the audience’s consumption supplant actual British laborers sustaining the national agricultural project of the British Empire. However, neither is their sweat heroic, nor their struggle epic; instead, their labor is easy and their pain, absent.

Once again, iteration distances Philips’s version of the didactic epic from a diverse Classical tradition capable of sustaining tension and ambivalence toward the true effects of labor. In sterilizing the scene, Philips highlights genteel society’s increasing discomfort with viewing physical labor and its effects. In the narrative world of *Cyder*, the swains and farmers do not turn to drink in a carnivalesque manner as consolation for the pains of labor; an evening of convivial cider drinking is a reward for industry, not a release of social tension through inversion of hierarchy. While Stallybrass and White suggest that carnival revelry is generally seen as “a form of social control of the low by the high and thereby serves the interests of that very official culture which it apparently opposes,” in Philips’s construction of the end-of-harvest celebration, the release of tension between those who wield social and economic power and those whose bodies labor and make possible the produce for commerce becomes unnecessary.<sup>59</sup> The

advantage of temporarily inverting power is invalidated by the willing, easy labor of a temperate population.

Philips extends the nonvirile, temperate imagery through his unconventional interpretation of the invocation to Bacchus in the second book. Deviating sharply from the mythology typically surrounding Bacchus, Philips presents not the disorderly revelry typical of Bacchus's patronage, but a restrained, orderly celebration. Philips's diction tames Bacchus, who must preside over the "solemn Rites" concluding the apple harvest. The careful diction marks the occasion as measured and calm—not unlike Pomona's ordered, walled orchard. The indulgence and merriment is "permitted" by the "toil," the "sweet reward" conveys "ease and content" to the laborers, and love is "undissembled." Altogether, Philips describes an ordered ceremony of passing a bowl in neat circles without excess or discontent—a ritual evening marked by "amicable Talk, and moderate Cups/ Sweetly' interchang'd" (II.337-8). Philips attributes the uncharacteristic restraint to the inherent quality of cider, thereby confirming the civilized and temperate English character.

Like the plow horse described earlier, the English laborer is idealized as industrious, peaceful, and steady. The description of the farmers' celebrations aligns this national temperament at every level of English society as Philips describes "rural Jests" interrupted by "Thoughts of Labor" that promote temperance:

Gladsome they quaff, yet not exceed the Bounds  
Of healthy Temp'rance, nor incroach [sic] on Night,  
Season of Rest, but well bedew'd repair  
Each to his Home, with un-supplanted Feet. (II.380-83)

Instead of indulging in drunkenness and excess—like the foreign wine drinkers traditionally linked to Bacchus—the farmers exercise moderation and self-restraint. The

illustrative panel begins with dusk, and by “rosie Dawn” we find the “honest friends” awake to “Domestic Cares...brisk they rise,/ Refresh’d and lively” (II.385-6). Such moderation and productivity radically contrast with Bacchanalian revelry, wherein drunkenness frequently reaches a state of forgetfulness and physical abandon is unlikely to afford a refreshed view of the next day’s sunrise. In addition, as the panel unfolds, the ability to exercise such restraint is framed as a direct result of the beverage being consumed: cider. Thus, cider exemplifies Englishness in contrast to the effects of foreign drinks—especially wine.

The narrative continues with a series of cautionary tales depicting the dangers of excessive drinking. Indeed, Philips equates such excesses with the epic tradition of war and blood-lust, concluding by presenting the “Bow’r” as an English Eden “remote/From the hoarse, brazen Sound of War” (II.404-482-84). Reiterating the ataractic qualities of cider and the climate and character of the British Isles, Philips remarks, “Heav’nly Powers/...such dire Events remove/ Far from *Albion*” (II.479-81). Thus, distance from war (both geographically and chronologically) breaks the natural, annual cycle, and death (the result of overimbibing) enters the narrative world of the poem not as part of an organic, agricultural calendar but as the result of intemperance. That is, elsewhere men do not die as a result of age, labor, and the natural decay of all organic matter, but “inflam’d with Lust, and Wine” (II.510). In the encomium cataloguing the natural progression toward a stable peace following a catalogue of Britain’s rulers, their vices and missteps (II.525-539), Philips urges the reader to resist entering into foreign wars (II.481-524). Over the course of several stanzas, Philips catalogues the lives lost in the decades of war leading up to Queen Anne’s coronation, marking that moment as one of “Liberty

restor'd" (II.524). He equates war with drunkenness, a logic in which—by extension—death becomes artificially detached from the agricultural calendar.

Like the blind, grateful plow horse and Pomona who shuns sex for pruning and grafting, the laborers acknowledge the end of the harvest in a polite, ceremonial display of temperance. Thus, Philips effectively neuters his pastoral figures. Gelded, they do not need an outlet, but seek fulfillment through usefulness to the project of pastoral retirement. Instead of the Virgilian model of sexual virility presented in *Georgics* III, *Cyder* describes the interaction of “sturdy Swains” and “Buxom Damsels” as innocuous, a form of presexual activity that ends in a chaste, stolen kiss—and goes no further. Like sexually immature animals (or Adam and Eve before the Fall), the couples frolic “hand in hand.” With verbs reminiscent of the barnyard antics of young animals, they:

frisk, and bound, and various Mazes weave,  
Shaking their brawny Limbs, with uncouth Mein,  
..... sometimes, an hasty Kiss  
Steal from unwary Lasses; they with Scorn,  
And Neck reclin'd, resent the ravish'd Bliss" (II.414-423).

While Virgil focuses on selective breeding by taking advantage of the predictable nature of lust, the need for mindfully choosing breeding stock, and the intertwining of reproduction and death in the georgic cycle, Philips asserts the inherent usefulness and interchangeability of all bodies—from children to youth to the elderly—deemphasizing sex and death in a calendar lacking the natural cycle of growth and aging. Philips thus presents a naïve, impotent plan for sustaining a nation that relies not on a stylistic veiling of labor but on erasure and myth.

In Dryden's translation of Virgil, the passage Philips imitates (*Georgics* II.738-794) concludes the second book and suggests that the “happy” former soldier and the

peasant are similarly situated: the first is “without concern” for “distant war” (II.709-710), and the latter is “innocent of these Ills” (II.738). However, where Philips’s poem concludes after two books, Virgil’s continues in *Georgics* 3 with a celebration of procreation and breeding as traits essential to sustaining a nation. As Putnam remarks of Virgil’s *Georgics*, “bodies do matter and breeding is essential.”<sup>60</sup> In *Georgics* III, Virgil dwells on traits that, when selected for, lead to powerful and fecund animals well-suited to the various needs of an empire (whether warhorse or commodity). Further, Virgil acknowledges the natural cycle, suggesting “’Tis Prudence to prevent th’ entire decay” through constant breeding:

Thus every Creature, and of every Kind,  
 The secret Joys of sweet Coition find:  
 Not only Man’s Imperial Race; but they  
 That wing the liquid Air; or swim the Sea,  
 Or haunt the Desart, rush into the flame:  
 For Love is Lord of all; and is in all the same. (III.375-380).

In contrast to *Cyder*’s chaste, sterile imagery, Dryden’s translation of Virgil insists on the universality and importance of sex. Philips’s asexual alternative reverses the Christian theme of salvation and sacrifice, offering a design that rejects Dryden’s redemptive declaration that “Love is Lord of all.” Thus, where Dryden relies on the New Testament message of salvation and God as love, Philips formulates a return to Eden *before* the fall necessitated the sacrifice.

Claiming instead that England, like Eden, is not part of the post-lapsarian world, Philips reverses the tragic consequences of labor as played out in Genesis 4:1-16 with the death of Abel (a shepherd) by his brother, Cain (a farmer). In *Cyder*, a brief passage instructs the farmer, “Thy little Sons/ Permit to range the Pastures; gladly they/ Will mow the *Cowslip*-Posies, faintly sweet” (II.217-18). From this peaceful propagandistic image



of children laboring in the fields as a form of play, Philips transitions to a brief catalogue of regions exponentially distant from—and foreign to—Britain, places where labor is anything but play. Notably, however, he preempts the catalogue, dismissively querying, “What need to treat of distant Climes, remov’d/ Far from the sloping [sic] Journey of the Year/ Beyond *Petsora*, and *Icelandic Coasts*?” (II.238-239).<sup>61</sup> Ranging through a series of regions including the Arctic (II.240-250), the Nile (II.251-264), “*Columbus’ World*” and the “*Carybbes*” (II.265-281), Philips catalogues the unique inability of each environment to achieve the Edenic possibilities wrought in England’s temperate climate. Philips finds one locale too cold, another too hot, and in the middle, an environment too abundant that breeds careless leisure “Intent on Laughter” (II.273). This last option recalls the ideal English character outlined in the exhortations to maintain the purity of one’s vintage and to adhere to a distinctly English morality valuing wisdom, frugality, absence of avarice and duty (II.137-188).

Considering the implications of Addison’s argument alongside his emphasis on tone and style as we see them in practice in Philips’s *Cyder* suggests a uniform presentation of the didactic epic genre at the outset of the eighteenth century. This supposed uniformity relies on an ideological position that situates the genre as promoting peace and a turning toward pastoral conceptions of labor and the environment in harmony with man’s use of the landscape. The unintended collaboration of the two authors’ arguments—Addison emphasizing style and tone, Philips bastardizing that injunction to mean theme and ideology—advances political propensities to look away from unsettling realities such as the increasing industrialization and abuse of the environment and labor that results from technological and scientific innovations, as well as a population shift

toward urban centers that further segregated the laborers physically and morally from the consumers consuming and profiting financially from that labor. However, it is essential to note that this situating and use of the didactic epic genre was neither the only approach nor the primary or even accepted poetic approach to the possibilities of the genre at this time.

#### Notes

<sup>20</sup> Levine, *The Battle of the Books*, 131.

<sup>21</sup> Gelber, "John Dryden and the Battle of the Books," 141.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>23</sup> Addison does not suggest Virgil invented the form, just that he introduces the poems to the Roman audience. Misreading this statement may be one of the reasons scholars have suggested Virgil established a new genre.

<sup>24</sup> Late in the eighteenth century the convention of writing didactic epics in English was so common that farcical poems such as *The Cocker* and *Fashion, or the Art of Breeches* were undertaken alongside more serious efforts such as *The Sugar Cane*, *The Fleece*, and *The Task*.

<sup>25</sup> Heinzelman, "Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age," 182. Heinzelman's claim builds on Chalker's insistence on "georgic" deriving solely from Virgil's *Georgics*.

<sup>26</sup> Addison, "Essay on the *Georgics*," 146.

<sup>27</sup> Chalker, *The English Georgic*, i.

<sup>28</sup> Heinzelman, "Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age," 182.

<sup>29</sup> I say "apparent" because even those poems most closely adherent to agricultural topics contain much broader thematic and topical concerns when one reads beyond the title page.

<sup>30</sup> Addison, "Essay on the *Georgics*," 150.

<sup>31</sup> With the exception that the classical meter: hexameter does not correlate with Dryden's couplets. One should note however that the selection by poets such as Philips of Miltonian blank verse amplifies the alliance with narrative epic.

<sup>32</sup> Dianne S. Ames "Gay's 'Trivia' and the Art of Allusion," 199-222. To Ames's overview of Classical poems alluded to in Gay, Toohey adds Empedocles, Nicander, and Cicero as well as a number of first-century poets including Manilius.

<sup>33</sup> Hawkes, *Ideology*, 35. Contextualized, Hawkes's definition derives in opposition to the Postmodern "disdain for the dialectic" that, in its global relativism, cannot account for or understand that "capital is objectified labour, that it stands in logical contradiction to human subjective activity" (14). However, whatever the postmodern dilemma, the eighteenth century was a historical moment dependent on ideologies that made palatable the work of empire, nationalism, religious struggle, and widespread cultural appropriation.

<sup>34</sup> Addison, "Essay on the *Georgics*," 146.

<sup>35</sup> Hawkes, *Ideology*, 14

<sup>36</sup> Ideological aims are fluid in the didactic epic because of the "elasticity" that Toohey describes as modulating the performance of the genre at any one time when he asserts, "the generic variety of didactic poetry is matched by a variety of levels of intent. . . . Didactic poetry, put simply, is as varied in its aims as is narrative epic" (7).

<sup>37</sup> Toohey locates this argument in a discussion of Cicero's *Aratea* and *De Oratore*.

<sup>38</sup> Addison, "Essay on the *Georgics*," 148.

<sup>39</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 6.

<sup>40</sup> The fact of Addison's and Philips's conflicting political viewpoints (Addison was a Whig and Philips a non-Juror funded by Tory patrons such as Harley) bears little weight in a discussion of Philips's poetic practice in a tradition begun with Addison's critical statement as Addison wrote his essay in 1697 before Philips's later position as a Tory and a non-juror would have made their literary allegiance unlikely. Further, Philips strives ideologically in the poem to promote peace as in the reign of Queen Anne—a move choreographed by his patrons and made necessary by his own precarious position.

<sup>41</sup> Addison, "Essay on the *Georgics*," 151.

<sup>42</sup> The excessive pruning of the poetic ancestral tree parallels the detrimental lopping off of the genre committed by scholars who recognize the georgic as a genre emerging from Virgil without regard to the larger classical body of literature of which Addison acknowledged Virgil to be a primary example but not the body entire.

<sup>43</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 119.

<sup>44</sup> Pellicer, "Harleian Georgic."

<sup>45</sup> Crawford, "Philip's *Cyder*," (italics mine), 115.

<sup>46</sup> For an overview of primitive landmines see Alfred Crosby's *Throwing Fire: Projectile Technology*, 2000.

<sup>47</sup> Dryden, *Georgics* III.83-380.

<sup>48</sup> It is worth observing that this same argument regarding natural proclivities of breeds was employed by advocates of slavery. This dissertation will look more closely at the scientific arguments of climate and acclimatization and notions of physical and moral superiority and suitability for tasks and regions in the third chapter on Grainger's didactic epic, *The Sugar Cane*.

<sup>49</sup> Putnam's analysis of the importance of the sexual act to agriculture further highlights the metaphoric correlation inherent in Virgil's georgic world: "When dealing with impregnation," Putnam indicates how "the literal georgic moment of threshing is transformed metaphorically into preparation of the land for plowing" (183-84).

<sup>50</sup> Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth*.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 179. "Hunc quoque, ubi aut morbo gravis aut iam segnior annis deficit, abde domo, nec turpi ignosce senectae." which Putnam translates: "Him also, when he fails, either weighted with disease or now sluggish with years, hide at home; do not pity his faulty old age."

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>53</sup> Ovid, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, 333. D. Melville's translation reads: "For in her heart she loved/ Not woods nor rivers, but a plot of ground/ And boughs of smiling apples all around./ She had no spear, only a pruning-knife" (*Metamorphosis xiv. 615-45*).

<sup>54</sup> A reading of Virgil's poem common enough in the eighteenth century to merit mention in Richardson's *Clarissa*.

<sup>55</sup> Ovid, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, 334. D. Melville's translation reads: "This was her love, her passion. Venus' charms/ Meant nothing; yet for fear of rustic force/ She walled her orchard in to keep away/ The sex she shunned" (*Metamorphosis xiv. 615-45*).

<sup>56</sup> It is easy to connect an invocation to Pomona to the apple as the French "pomme" is similarly derived from the Latin; as well, though historically inaccurate, Renaissance painting typically depicts the fruit in the Garden of Eden as an apple.

<sup>57</sup> Or, in poems on different topics, a persona situated between ranks and social stations.

<sup>58</sup> This claim resituates the argument about the sanitized view of laboring bodies Barrell makes in *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, putting it in the context of poetry. This shift in media further complicates the basic tenets of his argument due to the hierarchy of forms established by critics within poetry.

<sup>59</sup> Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 13.

<sup>60</sup> Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth*, 177.

<sup>61</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 271. Hume's annotation of verse 292 identifies Petsora as the "Most North-East province of Muscovy, towards the frozen ocean."

## CHAPTER III

### GAY'S *TRIVIA* (1716) AS DIDACTIC EPIC

In spite of the eventual emergence of a strong tradition of didactic epic poetry during the eighteenth century—with consistency of both themes and treatment—the earliest published poems reveal diverse perspectives and approaches that reflect the political and social upheaval of the literary era. A comprehensive examination of this first phase in the development of the eighteenth-century didactic epic allows a reconsideration of the uniqueness of Virgilian influence on the genre. Of these early examples, John Gay's *Trivia: Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716) was among the first multiple-book didactic epics. As an exemplar of the first phase of didactic epic in the eighteenth century, *Trivia* reveals the influence of non-Virgilian models, positing sources and reasons for divergences from Addison's example. Finally, *Trivia* is critical to understanding the development of the didactic epic, presenting as it does competing viewpoints on the ideological stance of the genre as it relates to themes of imperialism, the environment, labor, and the laboring body. In this chapter, I argue that Gay brings a mature poetic approach to the didactic epic, strategically resituating the genre amid a broad classical repertoire, and engaging not only the intellectual memory of his audience but also its conscience.

In stark opposition to Addison's and Philips's engagements with the didactic epic, centered as they are in carefully managed agricultural spaces, Gay's *Trivia* offers a densely populated poem—a peregrination through the streets of eighteenth-century London, teeming with people. The individuals on Gay's London streets range from the highest ranks to the lowest caste: mythical gods co-exist with bootblacks, those who

cannot afford coaches encounter apple-sellers staggering under the weight of their baskets; milkmaids recently arrived from the countryside travel along the same sidewalks as prostitutes, their painted cheeks stuffed with gauze to pad their sunken faces. Gay markedly dislocates the topography established in Addison and Philips by emphasizing not the site of agricultural production but the site of consumption—the intersections of the city and its marketplaces. Amid the chaos of street cries and crowds, a curious observer of London life strolls through the throngs: a walker, at once co-mingling with similarly spirited individuals in the streets and set apart by his studied observation of various scenes.

#### Gay's Legacy and Literary Project

To work seriously with *Trivia*, the first and most critical step is to recover the poem and its author from their positions as the comic stepchild of the Scriblerian power family, an overwriting that springs in part from Gay's later career but also from the management of his legacy and later scholarship. Early on, Gay himself was an aggressive cultivator of his own literary reputation: his first three major literary attempts were long poems, some classifiable as didactic epics that, as one notes in Addison's essay, represented forays toward the summit of poetic achievement in the eighteenth century. Regardless of what came after, at the time of *Trivia*'s publication, Gay was striving for a literary reputation—not merely financial success. Pope and Swift have rightly earned their positions in the eighteenth-century canon. From shortly after his death, Gay has been mischaracterized as the “Augustan Peter Pan” by critics for many reasons, including Pope and Swift's misguided attempts to safeguard his literary reputation.<sup>62</sup>

Because biographical treatments and shifting political views tend to diminish Gay's importance as a literary figure, critics generally insist that Gay was an apolitical figure; like others before him, Burgess takes Gay at his word, insisting that he "professed not to care 'one Farthing' for a man's politics," and concludes that his "apathy towards political matters is remarkable."<sup>63</sup> However, I am not alone among critics both during Gay's life and in recent decades when I assert that Gay was an intensely political figure. Nokes seems to perpetuate Gay's trivialization by emphasizing his biography, but as Dugaw observes Gay's politics and agenda were posthumously overwritten by the concerns of his biographers from Pope to Johnson. Indeed, Dugaw goes on to acknowledge the politically-insignificant liminal figures who "supply the pivotal categories that structure Gay's burlesques;" as well, she establishes a claim I build on: these same depictions "not only convey a new sympathy, but also articulate a subjectivity and identity available to both onlooker and looked-upon."<sup>64</sup> Like Dugaw, I understand Gay's concern with liminal figures to be central to his political and social agenda in *Trivia*. Gay's experimentation with the formal intersections of the didactic epic inverts the hierarchy of the preceptive and digressive passages of the poetic text to prioritize a sympathetic gaze and undermine the social, commercial, and poetic hierarchies that capitalize on the laboring poor.

Although literary history has largely dismissed *Trivia* as an anomalous variation on the "georgic"—concerned only with comic effects and critiques achieved through burlesque and mock-heroic features—a reexamination of Gay's early poetic career unsettles this position, refuting notions of *Trivia* as *merely* a mock-georgic. Whereas Copley and Haywood declaim the "evasive" nature of the poem evident in its "pattern of



contradictions and ironic deferments . . . as evidence of the poem's ideological confusion,"<sup>65</sup> Like Copley and Haywood, critics who argue *Trivia*'s "juxtaposition of different models and modes prevents us all along from assuming that we can interpret it securely" miss the poem's capacity as a didactic epic to formally sustain competing ideologies such that the satiric target is not an external text but one, or several, of the competing personas contained within the poem. I argue the contradictory voices of the poem emerge from the polyphony characteristic of the didactic epic and Gay's formal experiments instruct the audience in how to weight the voices of the poem in order to resolve or sustain the tensions at play.

In the context of Gay's earlier efforts, one may offer *Trivia* as a mature example of the capacious possibilities of the didactic epic, referent of multiple classical iterations, and strategically engaged with the possibilities of the genre. One year prior to Philips's publication of *Cyder* in 1709, Gay published his first book-length poem, *Wine*.<sup>66</sup> Though not strictly a didactic epic, *Wine* resonates within the tradition of didactic epic poetry and picks up multiple themes from Virgil, including georgic lists, invocations, and a reference to the springtime sexual rites of Virgil's *Georgics* II. I suggest considering *Wine* in a dialectical exchange with Philips's *Cyder*. Invoking Bacchus as his muse in *Wine*, Gay, like Philips, inserts himself into the lineage of Milton's epic, burlesquing a theme that Philips then picks up in *Cyder*. In 1713, Gay published *Rural Sports*, which he revised and republished in 1720 as *Rural Sports: A Georgic*. It is evident that well before commencing *Trivia*, Gay thoroughly immersed himself in the didactic epic, gaining familiarity with its features and capabilities, and exploring its ideological implications. Therefore, we should not view *Trivia* as a preliminary experiment, but rather as a

calculated innovation and mature entry into the debate on didactic epic poetry established in Addison's essay and Philips's efforts. By the first edition of *Trivia* in 1716, Gay had thus published three poems that engaged formally and thematically with the didactic epic. At the close of the eighteenth century, he remained the only author who had done so.

*Trivia* attracts critical attention and debate because in it Gay exploits the formal elements of the didactic epic as a way to explore the ideological implications of the genre and its themes. Although some critics have engaged in a lively debate around the incongruity of *Trivia*'s urban location—trying to squeeze it into the scope of Addison's permissible theme of "husbandry"—full consideration, including formal and ideological concerns alongside a reconsideration of the agrarian extensions of its urban theme, elucidates *Trivia*'s intervention into the rise of the didactic epic. Thematically, Gay examines the tragic effects of urbanization on humans of the lower social classes. Because it grapples with subjects and themes better categorized under the subject heading of "Moral Duties" or even "Philosophical Speculations" than "Husbandry," Gay's engagement with the didactic epic represents a sophisticated grasp of the genre's capabilities. The thematic territories of *Trivia* happen to be in conflict with the pastoralist tendencies of Philips's poem and Addison's essay, contravening notions of peace, nationalism, and pastoralism with the gritty reality of those same themes when viewed from below. Further, the two editions of the poem—appraised as an evolving contribution to the potential of the genre—demonstrate Gay's experimentation with the formal and ideological features conventional to the genre.

Because my argument in this chapter depends on preliminary critical moves, a brief outline of the entire argument will allow the successive steps to emerge smoothly. I

first establish the theoretical terms essential to my reading of the poem generically and thematically. To explicate the bizarre and fascinating content of *Trivia*, I rely on Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's examination of "domains of transgression" emerging from Mikhail Bakhtin's analytic of carnival.<sup>67</sup> I conceive of the marketplace and the intersection as "domains of transgression," in *Trivia*, then situate the poem at the overlap of two successive phases outlined by Toohey—the fourth phase typified by Virgil and the fifth by Horace. Establishing these terms allows me to expound upon how the hybrid formal emphasis Gay constructs amplifies the thematic content. A theoretical framework that also makes sense of the thematic content of *Trivia* explains and justifies the poem's innovations in genre. Ultimately, I argue that a focus on the discourse of transgression moves the debate beyond whether Gay's poem aligns with a burlesque sub-genre or whether the didactic epic formally contains burlesque, to reveal the genre's possibilities to engage the political and social issues of his day. Any sense of the poem as a whole must emerge from close study of the method by which Gay's innovations in form and theme evidence the destabilization of social hierarchies and a critique of the effects of empire. My argument then turns to careful explication of the bodies inhabiting the poem. Indeed, I read several bodies through the lens of transgression, suggesting that Gay's own project in the poem is to make visible the ideology that obscures labor and commerce and implicates those involved in amassing wealth and promoting industry.

#### The Intersection of Form and Theme

It is not a stretch to state that *Trivia* offers detailed instruction in how to navigate the streets of London as a pedestrian. Does it exhibit the other features typical of a didactic epic? It is a three-book poem with obvious imitations of Virgil, and a title that

immediately calls to mind Horace's *Ars Poetica*. There is a clear sense of the public addressee of the poem: the opening passage repeatedly advises a novice of the risks of navigating a London sidewalk. So, too, the explicitly didactic passages are interrupted by illustrative panels that moderate the utilitarian pace of the poem with pleasing myths and moral narratives. Gay invokes a muse, Trivia, to guide the progress of the poem, and the narrative follows a didactic plot—in this case, a reflection on the notion of progress from innocence to experience.

Returning to my foundational claim, I posit that Gay's approach to the didactic epic generically in *Trivia* represents a hybrid that conflates two phases, thereby amplifying the inherent ideological tension of the didactic epic. Whereas Toohey imagines a generational gap between the era of Virgil and Cicero and that of Horace and Ovid, in *Trivia*, Gay imbricates the two models, creating a transgressive interaction between their different emphases. Specifically, in Toohey's schema, the fourth phase of the didactic epic, typified by Virgil and Cicero, exhibits the playful modulation of authorial voice through the "polyphonic interplay" of narrative registers thematically focused on the business of empire. As Toohey acknowledges, both Virgil and Cicero show "a marked desire to move beyond the sphere of leisure and play, and to exhibit the seriousness natural to themes of the maintenance of state and empire," whereas Horace's focus in the *Ars Poetica* is "above all a leisure pursuit [that does not] . . . aim to confront the Lucretian theme of the place of humans within the universe."<sup>68</sup> Rather than creating a jarring disharmony between two approaches to the didactic epic, Gay's intersection amplifies the inherent, underlying tension of the didactic epic: the dialectical conflict

between work and play, empire and leisure, implicating himself in the production of poetry as a commodity for leisured consumption.

This intersection and overlap is an essential motif in my understanding of the genre of Gay's poem and its thematic content—and the sheer preponderance of intersections in *Trivia* underscores my claim. Intersections are evident in the poem's title, the various London street scenes, and the transitions between the preceptive and digressive passages of the poem—literal and metaphoric encounters permeate Gay's poem, signifying attentiveness to the logic of the intersection as a transgressive site. Positioning this intersection as a productive space, I build on Stallybrass and White's theory of domains of transgression as discursive sites in which “place, body, group identity and subjectivity interconnect.”<sup>69</sup> Indeed, for them, the marketplace is a *locus classicus* of such transgressive intersections. Opening their discussion of the flawed separation of “the festive and commercial” in Bakhtin's approach to the fair—a divorce they argue “is distinctive of capitalist rationality as it emerged in the Renaissance”—Stallybrass and White examine the “deep conceptual confusion” inherent in the conceptual separation of pleasure and commerce (30).

To Stallybrass and White, a productive conceptualization of the intersection emerges in an account of the marketplace as part of a preliminary discussion theorizing the hybrid space of the fair. Stallybrass and White find that the “phenomenological presence” of the marketplace is “the heart of the community, [it] is only ever an *intersection*, a crossing of ways. If it exists at all it is as a conjuncture of distribution entirely dependent upon remote processes of production and consumption, networks of communication, lines of economic force” (27). Thus, by mobilizing the intersection as his

poem's primary metaphor, Gay advances criticism of the ideological project that paradoxically attempts to separate the serious business of empire and economic pursuits found in Virgil from the leisure and play that same labor makes possible. To this end, Gay locates his poetic project at the juncture of the competing themes, thereby exposing both the project of obscuring the very labor that enables leisure for a privileged few, and the resonating motifs of politics and play at the heart of the didactic epic.

Gay thus imagines London as one boisterous, teeming marketplace in which the various roads of empire, commerce, identity, literature, and leisure intersect. Conceiving of London as a marketplace provides a model of a transgressive domain that serves understanding of *Trivia*'s digressive passages. So, too, does the marketplace become an idea that unifies the disparate parts of the poem. As Stallybrass and White suggest, "Thinking the marketplace is thus somewhat like thinking the body: adequate conception founders upon the problematic familiarity, the enfolding intimacy, of its domain" (30). Because the body inhabits a central place in the poem symbolically—the poet, the addressee, the multiple grotesque figures they encounter are nearly all on foot—the intimacy forged by the intersections compels the hierarchically and symbolically separate figures into a shared domain. As I posit in close readings of multiple such interactions in the poem, Gay's radical reimagining of identity reveals this brief intimacy as a moment that elevates the abject figures, suggesting his awareness and concern over the costs of industry, wealth, and fame.

In addition to offering such social commentary, *Trivia* represents a hybrid didactic epic employing burlesque as a feature within a sophisticated, artistically bold approach to the genre. Gay employs burlesque to briefly suspend the binary of self and abject other—

the mechanism by which identity forms—unveiling self when he describes moments of intersection and overlap occurring at the boundaries and peripheries of groups. In these moments he also catalyzes an alternative to the gaze of the disinterested observer that dominates earlier iterations of the eighteenth-century didactic epic.

For these reasons, one may consider *Trivia* a reinvigoration of the didactic epic that strives to counter the seamliness of the genre as described in the Addisonian georgic. Gay's poem presents a challenge to early eighteenth-century efforts to contain the genre in a pastoral space in service of uncomplicated, nationalist ideas of peace and agricultural production. Gay invigorates key generic features of didactic epic—such as the polyphonic narrative registers—to bring the genre into an era that is both celebrating empire and confronting conflicted reactions to the many effects of empire, such as urbanization. In doing so, Gay expands the classical repertoire, challenging the notion of progress toward a pastoral ideal. Gay intervenes in the project of taming the didactic epic to suggest that the projects implicated in the genre and its themes are inherently complex, morally messy, and ideologically fluid.

*Trivia* recognizes Gay's own complicity in the imperial project as he strives to amass fame and wealth, while the moves he makes in the poem to distance himself from this project are often self-aware and satiric. Where the tone of *Cyder* falls flat with sincerity and unwillingness to admit the moral perils of the project, Gay's tone in *Trivia* shifts dramatically and is modulated by earnest reflection, if not outright judgment. While Addison describes a poetic ideal in which the narrator voices the gentleman farmer as a concerned observer—one who overlooks the project without dirtying his hands in the work of agricultural labor—Gay offers an alternative narratorial structure: the polyphonic

narrative register characteristic of didactic epic in which the subjects and narrative personas of the poem represent competing voices. In addition, Gay's treatment of human subjects (the various bodies and figures) within the poem, to which this chapter will turn after examining the formal interventions, offers *Trivia*'s audience an alternative ideological stance for considering the human subjects within the British Empire and the emerging urban environment.

This composite narrative register may be considered a natural outgrowth of Gay's double indebtedness to both Virgil and Horace—one that walks the line between the fourth and fifth levels of didactic epic as Toohey articulates them in *Epic Lessons*. In the development of the didactic epic from Virgil to Horace, Toohey maintains the “playful adaptation of voice” as a feature but insists on the shift from Virgil's emphasis on *labor* to the concern of didactic epic as a “leisure pursuit [that] instructs on matters associated with leisure time.”<sup>70</sup> According to Toohey, in Horace we find a shift from “the seriousness natural to themes of the maintenance of state and empire” found in Virgil (110), to specialization in “the playful adaptation of voice (or the persona)” and “the poems' existence as artificial, literary constructs” (147). That is, Horace's innovation in didactic epic deviates from “serious” themes to contemplate literature as a byproduct of leisured society. Toohey suggests that the evident tension “between empire and leisure, politics and play,” makes double-speak and counter-speak essential due to Virgil's inability “to banish his melancholy sympathy for human suffering...his penchant for textual play” (11). His notion that the “misdirection” of Horace's *Ars Poetica* emphasizes “notions of learnt and reasoned behavior” (147) becomes increasingly important for understanding Gay's kinship to both poets in his innovative use of the didactic epic.<sup>71</sup>



Gay's modulation between Virgilian and Horatian didactic epic suggests an awareness of the thematic and critical friction that occurs when the *Georgics* and the *Ars Poetica* overlap. Virgil's *Georgics* emphasize labor and work, employing polyphony to create tension between public and private viewpoints. In describing the transition between the fourth and fifth phases of didactic epic, Toohey reminds us that this polyphony in the *Georgics* creates the tension necessary to sustaining "multiple exposures" and "gives rise to such disparate readings" of the poems (119). But, he asserts, the polyphonic registers of the *Georgics* do not create a layered, simultaneous voice; instead they are "intermittently audible" (119). However, in the *Ars Poetica*, emphasis on *ars* as "learnt and reasoned skill" calls attention to the literary construct of the poetic artifact. Toohey theorizes a "gap which forces us to contemplate not the message of the poem, but its existence as an artificial, literary construct" (152). In marrying the two approaches to the didactic epic, then, Gay imagines a serious, complex project—the business of acquiring wealth and industry—contained within an artifact—the didactic poem *Trivia*—designed to function as a form of industry. The "playful adaptation of voice (or persona)" that Toohey sees in Horace's instruction on poetry is in this sense a skill necessary to participation in the business of empire—a skill Gay displays with mastery in *Trivia*.

#### Populating the By-Ways and Intersections

Nowhere is this tension more evident than in Gay's use of polyphonic registers to situate his primary narrative voice amid a plurality of competing viewpoints, the collective effect of which reveals the moral complexity of Gay's subject matter for those who practice the art of walking the streets. The tone of the poem is by turns questioning,

ironic, self-implicating, or pointedly naïve. It opens with an overt claim to instruct the audience in “How to walk clean by Day and safe by Night” (I.2). Extended reading reveals the layered meaning of this aim: *Trivia* offers both straightforward advice on how to keep one’s clothing dirt-free, and moral advice on how to keep one’s conscience clean when engaging in the business of urban life. The end of the first stanza provides a self-implicating outline of the moral contortions necessary to achieving this last aim, as the poetic persona admits:

My youthful Bosom burns with Thirst of Fame,  
From the great Theme to build a glorious Name,  
To tread in Paths to ancient Bards unknown,  
And bind my Temples with a *Civic* Crown;  
But more, my Country’s Love demands the Lays,  
My Country’s be the Profit, mine the Praise. (I.16-22)

In declaring his intentions to surpass the ancient models by writing about unexplored realms, the poetic persona displaces the impetus for undertaking the project onto a personified nation-state that “demands” devotion. This external nationalist impulse permits the poet to pass the economic gain to a non-human entity (England), symbolically retaining only praise for personal gain. As the poem unfolds, relating the human cost of empire and industry over the course of four books, this dislocation of responsibility permits the poet to extricate himself from moral culpability. But the fact of Gay’s own economic striving remains readily apparent to anyone holding the lavishly engraved, printed book.

However, as we soon discover, this moral hand washing is unsustainable within the poem when the bard, accompanied by the goddess *Trivia*, repeatedly intersects with other walkers in the narrative of the poem. The instruction of the first book of *Trivia* is largely straightforward—with the implication that by carefully accomplishing the proper

selection of clothing and accessories, an attentive reader may in fact emerge unsullied from a walk through London. To achieve this feat, the bard insists that the addressee cultivate two key skills: Seeing and listening become the learned *ars* of the poem. The attentive walker will see the signs of the weather in the brightness of the coal fires (I.135), the “gayly dres’d” women walking the mall (I.145), and the “wanton fawns” frisking (I.147). So, too, he must listen for the signs of spring in the “chirping sparrows” (I.148), and the warning of impending floods when the “creaking Noise” of “Swinging Signs” offends his ears (I.157-158). These same skills of careful observation and attentive listening will undermine the poet’s claim that one can walk clean in the moral sense.

Gay complicates the position of the poetic persona by overtly introducing other narrative personas whose perspectives introduce moral ambiguity. Relying on several personas, Gay offers split—and sometimes competing—narrative registers within the poem: the poetic persona who encounters the city on foot also vacillates between a naïve iteration of this character and an “experienc’d [man] inur’d to city ways” (II.405); the muse, Trivia, who acts as a guide and storyteller anchoring the digressive panels; and the editorial narrator, who is a target of satire as he strives to organize the poem around overt but fatuous advice as he arranges or summarizes content using the textual apparatus (notably, the index).<sup>72</sup> Thus, for the typical, detached observer of Addisonian georgic, Gay substitutes a range of voices that shade the complexity of the theme.

The primary persona—the walking poet—inverts the traditional function of the overseer by emphasizing the importance of nearness to the laboring bodies of the poem rather than enforcing a mediating distance. He is imagined at eye-level with the business of industry and, like the various walkers he encounters, must dodge the smells, spattered

muck, and sweat of the teeming throng mingling on the bustling London sidewalk.

Paradoxically, the poet suggests drawing near to the disenfranchised women of the poem by looking and listening closely to them, even as he suggests that the addressee observe those men who have advanced through the didactic plot from innocence to experience—the “vicious walkers” (I.80) and “experienc’d men” (II.405)—*from a safe distance*, so as not to be contaminated by their filthy canes or their callous indifference.

Invoking the persona of his muse, Trivia, Gay inscribes an additional narrative register that directs the narrative via vocative interludes when he tires of relating advice. When Gay suggests “the bold Muse experienc’d dangers sings” (II.82), his syntactic ambiguity reveals a double perspective that questions the very notion of progress in the poem. It is possible to understand that the muse relates dangers that have been experienced by others by way of caution (such as the pickpocket at [II.87-90]), or one may understand “danger” as a modifier for “experience.” The grammatical ambiguity intensifies the moral ambiguity. Experience, then, is both the goal of the narrative—as the addressee rambles along gaining experience via the advice of the poet—and understood as a necessary evil: the cost of shedding one’s naïve viewpoint for an experienced vantage that will enable safe, if not morally clean, passage through the London streets. Experienced walkers encountered along the way represent the risks and concomitant moral losses inherent in prolonged, unexamined exposure to city life.

This complex narrative voice suggests that Gay’s poem is not strictly a burlesque that seeks to invert the status quo and highlight the inequities of a hierarchical society; rather, the view is complex, considering both the benefits and costs to a society, skewering all levels from the perspective of an outsider.<sup>73</sup> This subject position enables

*Trivia*'s complex classical repertoire and layered political stance. Gay writes expressly to unveil the discursive positioning that fashions and constitutes the hierarchical layering of society as well as the ranked binary of expert to novice implicated in the didactic epic genre.

As part of his effort, Gay employs the illustrative panel, a primary feature of the didactic epic's customary form, to create formal intersections that intensify the thematic concerns of the utilitarian advice. Before turning to a close reading of one of these illustrative panels and the intersection Gay sustains, I examine how Gay manipulates the importance of the digressions relative to the preceptive passages of the poem in a clever burlesque of Addison's reminder that the narrative passages are equally instructive. For his part, Addison notes that the instructive precept in an illustrative panel enters "*through a By-way . . . [drawing] a whole train after it: For here the Mind . . . [taking] only a hint from the Poet . . . [seems] to work out the rest by the strength of her own faculties.*"<sup>74</sup> In the second book, Gay satirizes this notion in a passage that his editorial persona denotes as "The Pleasure of Walking Through an Alley" (II.272-284). Yet, the satiric barb Gay directs at Addison also sustains serious reflection on the role of the self-aware poet in the project of the poem and of industry. Turning into an alley, the poetic persona seeks a moment of reflection, asking:

But sometimes let me leave the noisic Roads,  
And silent wander in the close Abodes  
Where Wheels ne'er shake the Ground; there pensive stray,  
In studious Thought, the long uncrouded Way.  
Here I remark each Walker's diff'rent Face,  
And in their Look their various Bus'ness trace.  
.....  
Careful Observers, studious of the Town,  
Shun the Misfortunes that disgrace the Clown. (II.271-276, 285-288)

The poet's search for quiet by-ways suggests weariness with the constant state of attentiveness necessary to navigating the city crowds. Further, the quality of the ruminations demonstrates a nuanced application of the "ars" the poem cultivates. Looking and listening, the poet is depicted in "studious thought" as a "Careful Observer" who turns the same skills learned to enable him to select a coat to studied inspection of the other walkers traversing the alley. The ability to apply skills of observation—specifically, those the editorial register of the poem claims are necessary for personal safety and navigation—to passers-by is itself a precept imparted at the intersection of one of Gay's digressions: the illustrative panel on the invention of pattens.<sup>75</sup>

Gay's use of the inset digressions demonstrates a skillful understanding of the fable form, with its accompanying moral. In *Trivia*, the entertaining digressions offer more than cloaked advice—they pinpoint a social critique of the emerging capitalist market economy in which "both nature and humans are going to be used, and to be used up."<sup>76</sup> Each of Gay's digressions depicts humans emblematic of industry, presenting a warning to the walker about his moral development and culpability in the progressivist project of industrialization. The structure and tone of didactic epic may resemble those in *Cyder*, sustaining an ideologically sanitizing distance between the bodies of the laboring poor and the walker; however, the form also allows this comfortable distance to suddenly collapse when Gay takes literally Addison's injunction to allow a precept to enter "through a by-way" by emerging from an alley onto a busy street, confronting the very subject described in the illustrative panel.

Whereas many eighteenth-century didactic epic poems exploit the potential of the genre to disguise low subjects in "all the Pomp of Numbers, and Dignity of words,"<sup>77</sup>

thereby masking the underlying labor, *Trivia* amplifies the form's critical potential. Because of Gay's ability to convey social criticism indirectly, he brings the abject, invisible body of the laborer to the center of social concern without ascribing direct blame for their condition to his readership. The comic effects of burlesque permit each reader to align himself with the morally developed walker, thereby creating space from the experienced walker and bringing the former into a position of sympathy with and proximity to the abject figures encountered on his peregrinations. This move critically evaluates and unsettles the concern of the didactic epic with the English imperial body. Instead of concealing labor in *Trivia*, Gay intensifies the social concerns underpinning the didactic epic by depicting a speaker attentive to the lower ranks of society—a narrator who overtly presents the conditions of the working poor. Gay's attention to marginalized bodies, his close observation and depiction of milkmaids, bootblacks, goddesses of the sewer, and his attention to the feminine, queer, and other disenfranchised figures subsisting at the bottom of the industrial hierarchy interrogates both the genre and the ideological underpinnings of the increasingly industrialized, imperial society that promotes and relies on the myths sustained by the georgic mode.

We see this convergence of labor and its perception by the consumer in Gay's mock-heroic panel on the milkmaid and the invention of pattens in which he skillfully shifts the milkmaid from stranger to neighbor, compelling the walker to look closely at her figure. In this passage (II.223-282), the god Vulcan spies the "ruddy beauty" Martha the milkmaid, called Patty by her father. Vulcan falls immediately in love with Patty's unique blend of beauty and innocence, and proceeds to woo her with gifts. Virtuous, she resists. But as the winter weather sets in, and Vulcan offers useful gifts such as "headless

Nails . . . [surrounding] her Shoes” (II.263), she “granted kisses but would grant no more” (II.266). As Patty’s exposure to the elements degrades her appearance and health, Vulcan is driven to invent “a New Machine Mechanick” (II.272): the patten to lift Patty from the mud. The passage concludes with a swift alignment of the mythological origin with the consumer of the product (the “frugal dame” on the London street) and a slippage construing Patty’s virtue as a commodity she exchanges for her health when she accepts the present. The panel digression on the invention of pattens in Book I exemplifies the operation of the digressions in the poem and works as the first self-constituting foray of the walker into Judith Butler’s domain of the abject: what she terms “those ‘unlivable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the ‘unlivable’ is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject.”<sup>78</sup>

In its diction, the editorial side note for the first digressive passage—“An Episode of the Invention of Pattens”—underscores a narrative that is both entertaining and instructive.<sup>79</sup> In the detour, Gay constructs a mock-heroic origin myth across seven stanzas that describes the Roman god Vulcan’s attempts to seduce “Patty,” the virtuous and hard-working milkmaid. Her virtue is tested by necessity as Winter’s physical hardships destroy her pastoral health:

Yet Winter chill’d her Feet, with Cold she pines,  
And on her Cheek the fading Rose declines;  
No more her humid Eyes their Lustre boast,  
And in hoarse Sounds her melting Voice is lost” (I. 267-270).

The myth constructs Patty’s ethical dilemma as an individual choice between health and virtue—as she chooses between resisting Vulcan’s advances, or accepting his life-saving gift then offering her virginity in thanks—even as it situates Patty’s own loss of virtue in



opposition to the social benefit and performed gender of “each frugal Dame” (I. 281). It is a foregone conclusion of conventional ideology that the socially low figure of the milkmaid accepts a “new Machine Mechanick” on behalf of the women of society, trading her virtue for an invention that protects her health (I. 272). The muse then posits the magical return of Patty’s pastoral beauty when “No more her Lungs are shook with drooping Rheums, / And on her Cheek reviving Beauty blooms” (I. 277-278). This characterization of milkmaids as healthful, lusty, ideal peasant-stock models of the sex is consistent with the popular beliefs of the era as evidenced by the popular ballads memorializing bawdy milkmaids in pastoral settings.<sup>80</sup>

Closer investigation of the digression’s moral concerns reveals that the invocation of Vulcan as Mulciber—rather than the more familiar Roman Hephaestus—insists on his triplepatronage as the god of both forges, summer heat, and fire that destroys agriculture. As with Gay’s pun on “Trivia,” the portrayal of Vulcan suggests a thorough familiarity with ancient mythology that is both pedantic and artful.<sup>81</sup> The vocative, “Ah, Mulciber! recall they nuptial Vows” insinuates his wife, the goddess of love, into the passage, inversely correlating the health of the milkmaid, Patty, with the health of a marriage between deities that came about as a result of deceit and cursed gifts—not love.<sup>82</sup> These layered associations elucidate the complexity of ideologies that strive to divorce the progress of technology (here imagined as a “new Machine Mechanick” to lift women above the mud) from the interrelated health of the countryside and those who inhabit it.

But the value exchange Gay depicts reveals a much larger problem: the success of an agribusiness project relies on innovative technologies such as the plow, pesticides, and factories that produce excess so that naturally limiting factors such as available labor and

lightning do not destroy economic gain.<sup>83</sup> Gay's interrogation of the ideological commodification of virtue and health in laboring bodies raises awareness of the unsustainable consumption encouraged by the georgic mode. More importantly, while many critics have focused on the depletion of nature within a georgic ethos, Gay focuses on the mythic construction of healthy human bodies as a nationalist move authorizing the behind-the-scenes destruction of the laboring poor. As such, Butler's summation that "The political terms that are meant to establish a sure or coherent identity are troubled by this failure of discursive performativity to finally and fully establish the identity to which it refers" is useful here.<sup>84</sup> With regard to the abject figure of the milkmaid and the subject of the frugal dame, the latter requires the destruction of the former's virtue and health in order to sustain her embodiment as a virtuous subject. The dame's virtue is symbolically elevated: as she is lifted on the pattens out of the dirt she becomes both morally and literally clean.

As the narrative digression ends, opening the second book of the poem, Gay depicts an intersection of myth and reality that exploits the momentary sympathy the milkmaid elicited from the reader. He directs the addressee's trained gaze to another milkmaid appearing only eleven lines into Book II; there, the poet and muse encounter the real milkmaid on the urban street of London. In the momentary collision of the mythological milkmaid and the real milkmaid, intersecting in the gaze of the addressee, the ideology of rural production and urban consumption suffers further shattering critique. The milkmaid on the London street contrasts sharply with the mythic Patty. When the poet spies "the sallow Milk-maid," he laments, "Ah! How unlike the Milk-maid of the Plains!" (I.5, 11).<sup>85</sup> The poet's sigh mourns the decline of the pastoral ideal

embodied by the country milkmaid when she arrives in the city. Yet, the interjection still rings false, as the proximity of this sighting to the extended catalogue of Patty's ill health reminds the reader that the pastoral ideal is but another myth constructed to ease culpability for those who invest in the system that speeds her decline; now in on the illusion, the reader knows there is no such figure as the pink-cheeked country milkmaid.

The formal intersection collapses the carefully manufactured moral distance, and the walker looks—*actually looks*—at the milkmaid on the street corner in a moment that may be further understood through the high-low symbolism of the “classical” and the “grotesque” body. As the reader turns from the abrupt ending of the illustrative panel that links the frugal dame to Patty the milkmaid, the second book opens with the walker encountering a sallow milkmaid on the London street, effectively retracing the commodification of the laboring body for the benefit of the city-dweller. Again, Stallybrass and White's interpretation of Bakhtin proves useful in connecting the triangulated figures of Patty, the frugal dame, and the sallow milkmaid, and is worth quoting at length. They suggest that Bakhtin's ambiguity around the terms “classical” and “grotesque” may be understood through the embodied iconography of classical statuary:

To begin with, the classical statue was always mounted on a plinth which meant that it was elevated, static and monumental. In the one simple fact of the plinth or pedestal the classical body signalled a whole different somatic conception from that of the grotesque body which was usually multiple . . . teeming, always already part of a throng. By contrast the classical statue is the radiant centre of a transcendent individualism, “put on a pedestal,” raised above the viewer and the commonality and anticipating passive admiration from below. We *gaze up* at the figure and wonder. We are placed by it as spectators to an instant—frozen yet apparently universal—of epic or tragic time.<sup>86</sup>

Applied to the triangulated women, this discursive identity construct shows Gay acknowledging the sacrifice of the rural milkmaid as she is incorporated into the

elevation of “each frugal dame,” as their security from mud and moral filth is purchased sexually “on the back” of the milkmaid. But the imposition of the third milkmaid, the grotesque body whose face emerges suddenly and briefly from the teeming throng of the sidewalk, suggests an intervention into the exploitive construction of gender and sex within the social order. As the instruction of the poem cultivates the art of seeing and listening in the addressee, the milkmaid observed on the street corner becomes just familiar enough to elicit the sympathy of the walker and, by extension, the reader. Gay thereby interrupts the uniformity of the grotesque figures in the sidewalk tableau, freezing them in the poet’s gaze in a moment of “epic or tragic time.”<sup>87</sup> That is, the reflection and working of the walker’s mind as he exits the alleyway may serve to inculcate the precept that unveils his own complicity in the ill-health of the poor as collateral to his own elevation in status.

The structure of the precepts introduced in the second book of the poem builds on this dramatic reversal of distance that brings the walker into immediate physical proximity to the sallow milkmaid in the city and continues by bringing successively unsettling images into the walker’s view. The recently arrived walker, his eyes now open to the apparatus of systematic exploitation that sustains social hierarchies, then develops along a moral trajectory distinctly different from the previous walker’s path, as portrayed by the “experienc’d men.” Each of the subjects introduced to the walker represents a gendered, abject figure whose commodification permits the identity formation of the prudent walker and, by extension, the reader. In subsequent interactions, the walker, poet, and muse encounter other laboring bodies whose subjectivity challenges the security of the walker’s subjectivity—as well as the poet’s and the audience’s. These figures include

a sewer goddess dressed in turnip tops and eels, her illegitimate demi-god son the bootblack, an aged apple-seller, and a worn-out whore. These juxtapositions expose how most walkers, according to Gay, adopt the role of unconcerned, privileged manager, inured to observing the pain of others.

First, Gay directs the walker's recently refocused gaze to a grotesque figure: the elderly and frail figure of the laboring poor embodied by the apple seller, Doll (II.381-398).<sup>88</sup> Preceding the passage, Gay employs natural sounds, setting an elegiac tone for the stanza: "Lulling, as falling Water's hollow noise" (II.379). The slow, mournful drip of melting water completes a simile and epic allusion "Indulging Grief, like *Philomela's* voice" (II.380). With the mournful tone set, the muse relates Doll's "doleful Fate" during the Great Frost of 1709–1710 beginning with an accurate depiction of the effects of prolonged physical labor on her body. "Ev'ry day," the muse remarks, she "had walk'd these treach'rous Roads;/ Her Neck grew warpt beneath autumnal loads/ Of various fruit" (II.381-3). Gay stresses the necessity of Doll's labor. Her neck bowed beneath a heavy basket, "Each Booth she frequent past, in quest of Gain" (II.385); she labors for mere subsistence at great personal cost to her health. Once the moral lesson is embedded into the walker's receptive attention, the event unfolds directly: "The cracking Crystal yields, she sinks, she dyes,/ Her Head, chopt off, from her lost Shoulders flies" (II.389-90). In a moment of burlesque, Doll slips through the thawing ice and her severed head flies through the air bouncing like an apple. The noise of her street cry echoes onomatopoeically in the sound of her severed head, "And Pip-Pip-Pip along the ice resounds" (II.392). Not just a burlesque, the shockwave of the apple seller's street cry reimagined as the sound of her decapitated head extends from the walker to the implied

reader who will hear apple sellers in London thereby creating Addison's "by-way"—an intersection of the poem and the reader's memory—a tragic, heroic image encouraging the reader to pause and look with a heroic emphasis at marginal figures on the street. The apparent comic release of "Pip-Pip-Pip" generates a refrain that resonates the poem through the London streets long after one finishes reading the stanza.

Again, the moral instruction for this new way of looking occurs in the muse's narrative digression just before the accidental beheading occurs. The muse reflects on the first of two lessons the walker and reader should acquire in the digression thus: "All Mortals must resign their Breath,/ And Industry it self submit to Death" (II.387-388). This moralizing presents one of *Trivia*'s most direct responses to the conventional ideological mechanism of the didactic epic: death is an integral part of the natural cycle, essential to industry, and a collateral of progress. As a burlesque response to Philips's *Cyder*, this passage arises not only from the direct thematic link of apple growing to apple selling, but also from the shared fate of Doll—an aged, stooped body, worn by years of exhausting manual labor—and the plow horse I argue Philips rescues from age and retirement and renders useful by industry long past the natural aging cycle of an animal bred to such a purpose. Gay's commentary on the cost of industrial progress in this scene responds to Philips's ideological claim that progress can occur without epic struggle or tragic loss; Doll's death insists that tragedy is structurally interwoven with progress and is the method of its forward momentum. Gay's immediate turn to an epic comparison in the mock-heroic retains an appropriate epic tone in that the comparison of Orpheus and Doll elevates death and age while simultaneously releasing tension in a comic refrain without diminishing the serious moral implications of the subject. As

Doll's cry lingers at the end of a line, the stanza unfolds an epic simile in which her situation unexpectedly parallels that of Orpheus, who like the previously mentioned Philomela was forced to wander the earth lamenting:

So when the *Thracian Furies Orpheus* tore,  
And left his bleeding Trunk deform'd with Gore,  
His sever'd Head floats down the silver Tide,  
His yet warm Tongue for his lost Consort cry'd;  
*Eurydice*, with quiv'ring Voice, he mourn'd,  
And *Heber's Banks Eurydice* return'd (II.393-98).

Though some critics interpret this scene as merely grotesque, I argue that the mock-heroic is not strained by the link between Orpheus and an apple seller, as the various digressions of the poem together have pulled the reader into proximity to the poor, conditioning their sympathetic response as morally appropriate. By this point, the reader has been equipped to recognize the tragic impulse in the grotesque body. Therefore, the parallel elevates Doll to a station worthy of regard based also on the muse's suggestion that she represents industry: a theme central to the didactic epic and of significant concern to the nation. Like the digression on the milkmaid before, the reader sees in Doll a singular representative of a mass of easily overlooked marginal figures whose bodies function as Atlases to the weight of industry. As a crowd, these figures are easy to ignore, but Gay rejects this moral exit by offering vivid descriptions that foreground them as humans, contracting the distance that affords overlooking them as the inevitable cost of industrial profit. The observant gaze of the poet elevates the abject figures, thereby establishing their individual subjectivity in a radical move.

Notable in this digression is the swift turn away from the tragic episode to the casual indifference of established city residents and a series of didactic precepts instructing the walker in how to recognize the days of the week by smells and street cries.

A too-brief stanza closes the frame as a “western Gale” brings in “warmer Winds,” the ice melts, the Thames floods, “and with dissolving Frost the Pavements flow” (II.404). Though this image responds to the introductory framing stanza suggesting that nature weeps for Doll’s death, the next stanzas seem, at first, to draw away from the moral implications of the digression, focusing instead on “Experience’d Men, inur’d to City Ways” (II.405). However, the refrain of the apple-seller’s cry—now freighted with the knowledge of her death as a consequence of industry—subverts the fatuousness of these precepts for a renewed critique of experienced walkers who no longer notice the waste and decimation of humans brought about by industry because of their callous indifference. Educated by the muse, the novice walker connects each new—and increasingly familiar—cry to a moral imperative to gaze upon and to cultivate empathy for the abject figures who populate the marginal spaces of the city, seeing them as heroic, tragic figures central to the progress of industry. In this way, Gay exploits the complexity of the didactic epic to critique the very ideologies it typically sustains, and the social outcomes it imposes on the bodies of the laboring poor.

Following this brief but morally unseating encounter, Gay directs the gaze of the walker toward another peripheral body exploited and impaired by industry: the prostitute (III.259-306). Whereas the laboring poor are a highly visible presence in urban space—engaging in daily commerce with the citizens of London and sustaining the progress of industry—the prostitute brings forth a bodily representation of the socially and morally invisible laboring poor. In the cautionary tale of a “Yeoman, who for thirst of Gain,/ To the great City drove” (III.285), the prostitute makes her profit and assumes her physical decline by feeding off the largesse made possible by the moral and fiscal excesses of



industrial growth. The yeoman is seduced by a prostitute who strips him of “his treasure” (III.294)—a treasure that is syntactically linked with his virtue and his profit. The yeoman’s greed leads him to moral decline and to contract syphilis. Again, the editorial persona seems unaware of the possibility of double meaning in his marginal indication that the passage—indicated by “How to Know a Whore—may be construed as both revealing how to recognize and how to engage a prostitute. Based on the didactic aims made explicit in the poem’s opening stanza, staying “clean” and “safe” requires that one read “how to know a whore” as, in fact, how to recognize and avoid one. Yet the polyphony created by the editorial Freudian slip resonates with my earlier argument that Gay strives to increase recognition of and sympathy for the lowest members of society.

This idea is furthered by a careful examination of the precepts detailed in the passage, which suggests that to know a whore, the walker must approach and regard her sympathetically in strong light. In this way, the passage undermines the moral simplicity of the editorial narrator, suggesting that even the lowest figures in society are closer to self than stranger when one bothers to recognize their common humanity. With these principles in mind, the educated walker knows how to avoid a whore, or how to recognize a healthy prostitute on closer examination. He must draw physically close to her to recognize the deception:

High-draggled Petticoats her Travels show,  
And hollow Cheeks with artful Blushes glow;  
With flatt’ring Sounds she soothes the cred’lous Ear,  
My noble Captain! Charmer! Love! My Dear!  
In Riding-hood, near Tavern-Door she plies  
Or muffled Pinner’s hide her livid Eyes.  
With empty Bandbox she delights to range,  
And feigns distant Errand from the *Change*;  
Nay, she will oft the Quaker’s Hood prophane,  
And trudge demure the Rounds of *Drury-Lane*. (III.271-280).

Although the passage telescopes out with the overtly moral cautionary tale of the yeoman, the bulk of the digression is taken up by close examination of the prostitute's physical condition. The digression opens with alluringly suggestive diction, "'Tis She who nightly strowls with saunt'ring Pace, / No stubborn Stays her yielding Shape embrace" (III.267-8). The repeated Miltonic "s" sounds softens the moral criticism but also convey a sinuous appeal, loading the couplet with desire. The whore is compelling mimicking the role of the serpent in Eden. The passage states that a whore is recognizable by "tawdry Ribbons" easily mistaken for finery if not scrutinized "Beneath the Lamp;" her worn, "High-draggled Petticoats" show travel and wear; the illusion of health is negated by her emaciated figure—the walker must see her in light strong enough to dissolve her various disguises and reveal her as other than a healthy, industrious woman on an errand. None of these markers that distinguish the disguises of a prostitute from a reputable woman may be detected at a distance;<sup>89</sup> the walker who wishes to recognize a whore must first move into such proximity that, as the narrator remarks to the novice walker, the prostitute "Twitches thy Sleeve, or with familiar Airs,/ Her Fan will pat thy Cheek" (III.282-3). To know a whore—whether to avoid or to fulfill desire—the walker must be in bodily contact with her: her hand on his sleeve, or her fan against his cheek. Though the precepts immediately delivered strive to unravel the desire invoked in the first couplet, they also obliquely perpetuate it by offering advice that may be used in opposite ways.

In this way, Gay calls into question the idea of a simple binary moral system, suggesting instead a complicated moral intersection in which choices arise that demonstrate that even the seemingly benign act of buying milk or an apple from a street

vendor carries the weight of urbanization and industry and brings one into physical contact with the wearied, worn, and wasted bodies that make the simple act of purchase possible. *Trivia* manages to disrupt the genre because of its attention to the lines—the boundary between the subject center and the constitutive outside space of the margins (both social and literal on the printed page). While most serious didactic epics operate to maintain a hierarchy of social ranks, Gay crafts a poly-voiced narrator whose position (both physically and socially) is characterized by instability and a desire for upward mobility—a poet dodging slop and jostling for the wall, struggling for patronage and position. These features situate *Trivia*'s narrator precariously within the standard narrative persona who, as Bridget Keegan observes, speaks “about rather than as” the laborer.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the typical speaking voice of the didactic epic is a mediating voice that cautiously negotiates the distance between the laboring population and the consuming, leisured population to the benefit of the latter.

In this way, a critical primary trope of the didactic epic is the concealment of the effects of labor even through the construction of moral and social distance. Concealment and distance, what Judith Butler terms an “exclusionary matrix,” mediate the unseemly negotiations of the expansion of empire by erasing their effects on the bodies (both human and environmental) of the disadvantaged. These generic conventions sustain the emergence of agribusiness by justifying the exhaustion of resources (both natural and human). Instead of sustaining the myths, *Trivia* eradicates the assuaging gap between the laboring poor and the leisured consumer, bringing both parties into a renegotiation of hierarchy in the space of England's commercial center: the London street. Further, Gay's indebtedness to several classical examples of the didactic epic restates the flexibility of

the form in its ideological aims, its compositional and formal features, and its content and topic.

#### Notes

<sup>62</sup> Nokes, *John Gay: A Profession of Friendship* tends to perpetuate this reputation whereas Dugaw's chapter, "Dangerous Sissy," in *Deep Play* recovers Gay's literary reputation reminding readers that at mid-century critics found "Gay unexcelled, and indeed superior to Pope, in the pastoral" (55). She goes on to examine how several decades of biographical overwriting and "preoccupations . . . for what we would call social class and gender" (58) led to an inaccurate characterization of and trivialization of Gay's works.

<sup>63</sup> Burgess, *The Letters of John Gay*, xvi.

<sup>64</sup> Dugaw, *Deep Play*, 74, 92.

<sup>65</sup> Copley and Haywood, "Luxury, Refuse, and Poetry: John Gay's *Trivia*" in Lewis and Wood, 67.

<sup>66</sup> Gay, *Wine a poem*.

<sup>67</sup> Stallybrass and White. *Politics and Poetics*, 17-19.

<sup>68</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 110, 147. Toohey suggests that the "most forceful manner by which the sense of play" emerges in the *Ars Poetica* is in the gap between intention and practice that "forces us to contemplate not the message of the poem, but its existence as an artificial, literary construct" (152). However, in Gay's sisterly rather than generational kinship of Virgil and Horace, the contemplation of the poem as a literary construct redirects us not only to the artifact of the poem but also to the message of that artifact in the literary marketplace.

<sup>69</sup> Stallybrass and White. *Politics and Poetics*, 25.

<sup>70</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 11.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, He partners Virgil's use of narrative voice in the fifth phase of didactic epic development with Ovid's similar use of narrator in his *Ars Amatoria*.

<sup>72</sup> The latter persona is comically undermined by the textual play between the margins, the index and the poetic text in an exercise that engages with the ongoing battle of the Ancients and Moderns but is less relevant to the specific claims of this chapter.

<sup>73</sup> Although anachronistic, it is worth mentioning that this outsider position marks Gay's post-*Trivia* work and comes to be a marker of his own queered authorial position as well as his diminished fiscal position following the loss of his wealth in the South Sea Bubble subsequent to his meteoric rise and *Trivia*'s and *The Beggar's Opera*'s financial success.

<sup>74</sup> Addison, “Essay on the *Georgics*,” italics mine, 148. The concept of the by-way resonates with the layered pun in Gay’s naming of *Trivia*. Various scholars have noted that *Trivia* has multiple meanings, including Tri-via, three roads one might find at a crossroad to an invocation to Diana, associated both with Hecate and Cynthia at various points in the classical tradition and *Trivia*. Further, the least common meaning during the eighteenth century was of things trivial (now the primary definition). On the title page this doubling and tripling of meaning serves as a signpost to the complexity of the poem’s positions.

<sup>75</sup> Pattens are an overshoe or elevated platform strapped under a shoe that protects the shoe from or lifts the wearer out of the mud. Gay describes metal pattens.

<sup>76</sup> Landry, “Georgic Ecology,” 253.

<sup>77</sup> Addison “Essay on The *Georgics*,” 149.

<sup>78</sup> Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 30.

<sup>79</sup> This is an instance of the editorial narrator being comically undermined by his lack of awareness of the moral content of the frame and the word play and double speak of the text.

<sup>80</sup> Ganev “Milkmaids, Ploughmen and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Britain.”

<sup>81</sup> W. Warde Fowler, *Introduction to the Study of Religions*. As Vulcan, the god is primarily associated with destructive fire that threatens crops during the heat of summer. As such, his festival typically coincides with the harvest. As Mulciber, the god is the patron of smelters and ironworkers and his labor can be associated with the rise of industrial occupations that harness destructive elements.

<sup>82</sup> When Hera casts Hephaestus from Olympus at birth, he crafts a cursed throne that binds her. Zeus then offers Aphrodite to one who can release Hera, Dionysus suggests to Hephaestus that the god could win Aphrodite himself by undoing the curse which Hephaestus then does gaining Aphrodite in marriage. The motif of cursed gifts to women continues when Hephaestus offers a cursed necklace to Aphrodite and Ares’s daughter as a wedding gift. [Theoi.com/Olympios/HephaistosLoves.html#Aphrodite](http://Theoi.com/Olympios/HephaistosLoves.html#Aphrodite).

<sup>83</sup> Smith and Secoy, “Organic Materials Used in European Crop Protection Before 1850.” Effective pesticides (as we know them) were introduced in the mid-nineteenth century; however, a number of methods from spreading sulfur, olive dregs, and ashes were in use to as insecticides and fungicides from the early modern era through the eighteenth century.

<sup>84</sup> Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 188.

<sup>85</sup> Wall luckily notes in *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* that Stow's post-fire *Survey* makes note of the "'Patten makers of S. Margaret Pattens lane'" who have since removed (qtd in, 100). This observation highlights Gay's move in making Patty the pet-name of the milkmaid, Martha—a move that underscores the familiarity of the audience with the street.

<sup>86</sup> Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 21.

<sup>87</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 21.

<sup>88</sup> It is possible to link this scene to a burlesque of Philips's *Cyder* as the apple seller imagery references Pomona and Philips's topic. My reading does not preclude that interpretation, but suggests that making the invisible figure heroic aligns with Gay's larger aims in *Trivia*. Thus, the burlesque of Philips functions to link Gay's critique to a local repertoire, but is not the only aim of the passage.

<sup>89</sup> Gay's anatomizing the prostitute's artifice is also surely an allusion to Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" a satire of the artifice involved in the dress of a respectable woman. However, as scholars have observed, the woman's body is wholly absent from Swift's poem.

<sup>90</sup> Keegan, "Georgic Transformations," 552.

## CHAPTER IV

### “TO CLOATH INSTRUCTION WITH DELIGHT” READING HAYWOOD’S *ANTI-PAMELA* (1741) AS AN EXPERIMENT WITH DIDACTIC EPIC

#### The Emerging Novel: Haywood as Innovator

Arriving at the middle of Haywood’s career and the moment when the emergent novel genre began to stabilize, *Anti-Pamela* offers a bridge between the most popular poetic genre of the early eighteenth century and the primary didactic model of later generations: the novel. *Anti-Pamela* negotiates this connection between high and low genres by demonstrating how adaptation of and experimentation with formal and secondary elements common to didactic epic have the potential to elevate the novel by providing layered narrative perspectives and audiences. Specifically, in Haywood’s hands, the epistolary novel in *Anti-Pamela* includes an unconventional narrative voice inflected by polyphonic registers, a didactic dinner set piece, and the inversion and burlesque of multiple standard didactic plots and characters. Combined, these sophisticated formal experiments mean that *Anti-Pamela* offers much more than a parody of a successful novel facilely seeking to capitalize on the success of another novelist. Rather, these innovations suggest that Haywood saw the opportunity to engage a much broader audience in a literary discussion about the elevation of the novel to the status of didactic epic (and its linked genre, epic) through an exploration of its formal capabilities—a transformation extended by the topical social, political, and commercial concerns raised over the course of the narrative.

Haywood’s *Anti-Pamela* borrows from multiple established and emerging genres in order to expand the possibilities of the novel both formally and ideologically. While

she mines popular genres such as the romance, fable, and cautionary tale, Haywood relies on primary and secondary elements of the didactic epic that comprise a noteworthy resistance to the emerging canonical function and form favored by Richardson. Haywood situates her venture into the novel genre against the now-canonical male writers from whom Ian Watt formulates his argument. Though Watt comes tantalizingly close to linking didactic epic to the novel in his chapter on the lineage of epic in the emergence of the novels of Defoe, Fielding, and Richardson, he ultimately dismisses the possibility with the remark, “Fielding’s distinction . . . is obviously a question of personal value judgment, and therefore very difficult to fit into any analytic scheme.”<sup>91</sup> The referenced “distinction”—Fielding’s assertion that French heroic romances did not descend from epics, as they “[contained] very little instruction or entertainment”—is a claim that Haywood’s *Anti-Pamela* counters: the novel is both highly entertaining and didactic in overt and subversive modes.<sup>92</sup> Haywood employs the fundamental element of didactic epic—instruction—as the central motif of her text, granting didactic epic primacy over the heroic epic and the romance in her novel. Yet, preceptive and moral instruction simultaneously criticizes society’s codes. While Haywood satirizes the codes expounded by texts like *Pamela*, she also offers—through polyphonic narrators and narratives of wives and mistresses—alternative paradigms for women to work as both virtuous and sexually experienced manipulators of their social position and marital situation.

When discussed at all, Haywood’s semi-epistolary novel, *Anti-Pamela, or Feigned Innocence Detected*, tends to be cast as “an antidote to *Pamela*’s representation of virtue, chastity, and sexual deferral,” or summarily dismissed as a story and examined merely as a “commercially opportunistic” text capitalizing on a brief niche-market



demand.<sup>93</sup> Such approaches limit the value of the novel. Although such critical evaluations may be a useful part of understanding Richardson's *Pamela*, Haywood's role as a female author in a capitalist literary market, and the taste for publicly mediated literary dispute, they overlook Haywood's central position as an author, her experimentation with form in the novel, and her contribution to the genre. The scholarly tendency to diminish the literary value of *Anti-Pamela* as a novel beyond the "Pamela phenomenon" echoes the view of Haywood as a derivative author who merely responds to and capitalizes on literary trends.

The central thesis of this chapter is that *Anti-Pamela* not only offers a rejoinder to the moral positions of *Pamela*, but also represents a substantial formal experiment that broadens the genre by adapting multiple elements common to high (and highly popular and commercially successful) literature such as didactic epic. Irrefutably, Haywood's use of the *Pamela* moment as an opportunity to stage her literary performance for the largest possible reading audience is a tribute to her commercial savvy; however, examining what she enacted in that performance is substantially more to her credit as an author intent on driving the progress of the novel at midcentury.

Recent scholarship concedes that "critics have essentially rebutted the once current argument that Haywood's hiatus from fiction stemmed from the biting satire that Pope directed at her in *The Dunciad*."<sup>94</sup> The acknowledged shift from Haywood's early works to her later works around the 1730s to 1740s nonetheless remains uncritically examined. Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* appears unattributed in 1741, at the moment of transition between Haywood's early and late works, offering a unique, overlooked middle point that may be key to explicating her novel-writing trajectory. What might be the

intentions of an unattributed publication by a prolific, popular author? The intentional omission of Haywood's name on the title page allows the unattributed novel to engage directly with other novels at a dramatic time in the literary marketplace. This anonymity affords Haywood the freedom to experiment wildly with genre without dutifully conforming to what scholars have deemed her two "modes" of moral writing. Further, her text evidences substantially controlled experiments—not just a slapdash commercial effort.<sup>95</sup>

In Haywood's experiment, the primary elements of the didactic epic persist and adapt to the novel as the genre emerges. However, despite the well-established "generic affiliation of the novel, the narrative epic, and didactic poetry" in the classical tradition, the study of the rise of the novel in eighteenth-century England offers up few explorations of the cross-genre dialogue between these types of poems and the emergent genre.<sup>96</sup> Drawing in part on Toohey's study of the "insinuation" of didactic epic elements into both the narrative epic and the novel during the Classical era, this chapter traces this same insinuation of the didactic epic into Haywood's satiric novel, *Anti-Pamela*. I argue that Haywood's formal experiments and their effects position the novel at the nexus of her own literary project and of the development of the novel in mid-eighteenth-century England.

Situating *Anti-Pamela* in Haywood's substantial literary project requires briefly examining trends in scholarship that establish her within her historical moment. Scholars have tended to divide Eliza Haywood's writing career in half, noting her early interest in amatory fiction and a later "reform," in which her novels support the moral positions made popular by Richardson and other later eighteenth-century writers. Only recently

have broader and more nuanced concerns about her writing emerged. Building on the work of scholars such as Ros Ballaster, recent scholars have challenged the received narrative of Haywood's career and questioned the projects of her novels and other literary works.<sup>97</sup>

At the nexus of more recent consideration of Haywood's works is Backscheider's thoughtful and comprehensive article "The Shadow of an Author: Eliza Haywood." Here, Backscheider outlines why Haywood has, until recently, remained outside the literary canon despite her prolific and critical place in the development of the novel. Shszae offers four primary arguments. First, because Haywood drew so heavily on continental romances and wrote in the same tradition, many scholars have argued against the seriousness of her literary project, suggesting she was simply a "female author" in pursuit of an income. Backscheider summarizes the recent recovery of Haywood's position as a central literary figure that "dominated the fiction of the 1720s and . . . was a major novelist of the 1740s and 1750s."<sup>98</sup> Second, as a female author, Haywood was denigrated by her male peers, most notably in Pope's *The Dunciad*.<sup>99</sup> Warner suggests that Richardson and Fielding also "set out rather consciously to disavow, absorb, yet erase and obliterate their female predecessors."<sup>100</sup> However, Haywood's insistence on the privacy of her biographical details presents a politic move to protect her literary reputation from tarnish by her gender. Until the recent publication of *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood*, scholarship on Haywood was sporadic, limited, and often plagued by biographical fixations. The collection of essays in *Passionate Fictions*, however, establishes new critical frameworks for approaching Haywood's texts individually and her body of work as a whole. Several of these approaches make points

essential to my own critical reading of Haywood's *Anti-Pamela*, and I wish to briefly examine them and similar critical gambits.

Typically, Haywood scholarship broadly glosses and summarizes her works in order to claim her importance as a central author; therefore, one need only review the arguments that seek to add her to the canon with brief notation of individual works. For instance, Kvande's contention that the "outsider narrator" in Haywood's early-career novels constitutes "a specific party-political attack on the corruption and vice of those in power" complements Bowers's assertion that "though [*Love in Excess*] does not use allegory . . . [it] nevertheless serves Tory agendas."<sup>101</sup> With the business of inserting Haywood in the canon accomplished, critics have begun to examine individual texts.

Turning from content to form, Backscheider's "The Story of Eliza Haywood's Novels" contends that the reluctance of earlier critics to value her individual works has contributed to the propensity to see "her texts as derivative and reactive."<sup>102</sup> Instead, Backscheider asserts, Haywood represents the "most active experimenter with fictional forms . . . [introducing] themes, plots, characters, settings, and topics into English fiction" (22). Collectively, these scholars have recuperated Haywood scholarship from murky biographical territory, building a critical repertoire of meaningful analysis of her career.

Because Haywood participated in a burgeoning literary marketplace dominated by men, the question of readership for her novels is central to understanding her unattributed publication of *Anti-Pamela*. Blouch's insightful and rigorous chapter "'What Ann Lang Read': Eliza Haywood and Her Readers" challenges the persistent myth of Haywood's readers as "'servants in the kitchen, . . . seamstresses, . . . basket women, . . . girls of this sort'" instigated by Edmund Gosse,<sup>103</sup> perpetuated by critics such as Richetti, Watt, and

Beasley.<sup>104</sup> The latter three critics, Blouch argues, draw their conclusions about Haywood's "frothy-minded" audience from "percipient" criticism. The conclusion that Haywood's readers are "girls of this sort" fails to engage her texts because it dismisses the works as written for others.<sup>105</sup> Notably, Blouch elucidates the class and gender anxiety inherent in dismissals of Haywood's audience as unsophisticated, female, and, often, too poor to purchase her expensive early novels.

This need to examine the breadth of Haywood's career draws attention to her nonfiction work, as with Ingrassia's examination of the periodical *The Tea-Table: or, A Conversation between some Polite Persons of Both Sexes at a Lady's Visiting Day* (1725). Ingrassia argues that the overlooked "miscellany-periodical" represents a pivotal "marker for Haywood's new model of professional authorship and female subjectivity," asserting that genre, female authorship, and female subjectivity are central to Haywood's literary concerns.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, Ingrassia suggests that the publication exerts influence—despite its short run and seeming commercial failure—because it "interrogates the binaries" of "traditional paradigms" that position public against private and authors against "scribblers" (288-290). Scholars agree that the novel was in a volatile state during the mid-eighteenth century, with authors seeking credibility, dominance, and social and political power through experimentation with emerging literary forms. Yet, of the many authors writing novels during this generically fluid period, Haywood's significant contributions to the genre have been largely overlooked.

To scrutinize Haywood's experiments and their effects, a thorough understanding of the form and plot of *Anti-Pamela* is helpful. The title, like Fielding's *Shamela*, suggests a straightforward parody of Richardson's epistolary novel *Pamela*, in which a

servant who scrupulously maintains her virtue in the face of her employer's increasingly lecherous advances is rewarded with his love, respect, and marriage. However, Haywood's plot—though borrowing and parodying individual scenes from *Pamela*—proves to be substantially more complex than Richardson's rather unimaginative and unconvincing narrative. Alternating between letters and narrative interludes, Haywood's story of a mercenary young woman unfolds in a series of illicit capers conveyed via letters between the young woman and her mother. From the outset, we learn that the mother, Mrs. Tricksy, has dedicated herself to educating Syrena in the art of seduction, or how to *act* like an innocent young woman in the hope of eventually gaining a lucrative place as the wife or mistress of a gentleman. Mrs. Tricksy and Syrena conspire to replicate the plot of Richardson's *Pamela* without reproducing its moral framework, by placing Syrena in contact with men of rank and wealth and detailing her attempt to seduce one of the men into making her his wife.

This upending of conventions is, of course, a double-edged art, and the play of language and learning is characteristic of the didactic epic. Haywood nods to the subtext modeled on a Classical didactic epic when the narrator concedes that Syrena is a “perfect Mistress . . . in the Art of Dissimulation” (155). Though the lack of regularized capitalization in eighteenth-century texts restricts claims to intentionality, the precise echoes of the conventional formula for titling didactic epics such as Horace's *Ars Poetica* resounds in Haywood's phrase “the Art of.” The narrator at least recognizes the subversive possibility of the text as a manual in the arts of dissimulation and erotic temptation; so, too, via burlesque of the novel of seduction, *Anti-Pamela* offers a

countertext to women who must manage their moral and economic value through manipulation of the flawed men in their lives.

Further, Mrs. Tricksy's ongoing tutelage of Syrena in the "Art of Dissimulation" mocks the precepts that are "taught" to women of both the aristocratic and middle stations in order to protect and preserve their virtue. In a spoof targeted at conduct manuals, Mrs. Tricksy's instructions betray the emptiness of advice for women that, as in Richardson's *Pamela*, suggests they can effectively ward off libertine advances through virtuous silence. This advice and its inverse, the precepts of seduction taught to Syrena, repeatedly align with the troubling mercantile aspect of bearing a daughter—a discussion of "what is intended to be done with Syrena" (54) and how to "dispose of" her (55), which mark Syrena's body as a site of commerce not only sexually but also in terms of a scathing attack on the market of marriage and financial independence for women. However, when Haywood dispatches Syrena at the end of *Anti-Pamela*, she offers an alternative paradigm for women burdened by ideals of beauty and virtue in a male-dominated society: a woman who operates with expert knowledge of the system that subjects women, and who capitalizes on wisdom, not beauty.

Briefly, *Anti-Pamela* follows the moral decline of Syrena, a beautiful woman who seduces a series of men by posing as a Pamela-like creature. *Pamela* relays a series of repetitive encounters between two static characters, a narrative of virtue resisting advances; in *Anti-Pamela*, Syrena's progress unfolds over seven phases and twelve distinctly varied lovers. While the narrative loops in a repeated plot, the narrative abides by a formula—beginning with seduction, continuing with fleecing, and ending with

accidental discoveries of Syrena's character and motive. *Anti-Pamela*'s departures from the formula are frequent and compelling.

### Haywood's "Every Thinking Person": Constructing Audience and Narrative Personas

Two of Haywood's foremost innovations in the midcentury epistolary novel are narrative persona and the imagined audience. We must examine the discursive project she employs in *Anti-Pamela* to construct these possibilities. The absence of Haywood's name on the title page indicates a preliminary effort to dissuade the reader from identifying the narrative persona with either Haywood or her earlier narrators. On examination, the title page (figure 2) directs the reader's response to the novel by beckoning a specifically male audience. In the opening narrative passages, the male audience opens up to a more complex, diverse audience that Haywood signals with the phrase "every thinking person." Along the way, these individuals are joined by an audience of "fair readers." *Anti-Pamela* thus offers a new paradigm of audience. Nonetheless, the title page evokes two significant ideas about Haywood's own estimation of her audience—an audience markedly broader than the audiences previously ascribed to her fiction, even by her most generous critics prior to Blouch. First, the title page includes not only a brief declaration as to the "Truth" of the "Narrative," but also a declaration of the publisher's aim: "Publish'd as a necessary Caution to All Young Gentlemen." Explicitly, the title page asserts a broad male audience. Second, though the narrative of *Anti-Pamela* is not a direct burlesque of *Pamela*, the title acknowledges a shared audience for both works—the sort of reference Fielding relied on in publishing his own satires of *Pamela*.<sup>107</sup>



*ANTI-PAMELA:*  
OR,  
Feign'd Innocence  
DETECTED;  
In a SERIES of  
*SYRENA's*  
ADVENTURES.

A NARRATIVE which has really its Foundation in Truth and Nature; and at the same time that it entertains, by a vast variety of surprizing Incidents, arms against a partial Credulity, by shewing the Mischiefs that frequently arise from a too sudden Admiration.

---

Publith'd as a necessary Caution to all Young Gentlemen.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for *J. Huggonson*, in *Sword-and-Buckler-Court*, over against the *Crown-Tavern* on *Ludgate-Hill*. M.DCC.XLI.

Figure 2. Title Page to Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* (1741).

Over the course of the text, the various addresses to the audience signal that Haywood expects to entertain a wide readership, different members of which would respond differently to the narrative of Syrena's adventures. Addressing multiple audiences is one of Haywood's most significant contributions to the genre, as it creates

polyphonic narrative registers—one of the characteristic elements of didactic epic with which Haywood experiments in her category-resistant fiction. The narrator elaborates that a broad audience, including “all of what Principles and Station whatever as well in the Closet as in the Street” (76), would naturally listen to the narrator’s advice.

The unfolding narrative suggests that women, too, are an anticipated and expected part of the audience. However, in addressing a female reader responsive to rational interpretations of characters such as Lord R---, Haywood connotes a particular type of thinking, intellectual woman—in direct opposition to the “frothy-minded” consumer of romance for titillation and transport. Haywood suggests a calculating, clever woman able to read between the lines of the text, interrogate the multiple threads of precept and advice, and extrapolate a position of advantage—morally and economically—from the events of the book as they happen to men fraternizing with women of Syrena’s sort. Thus, the book’s female audience is specifically an engaged audience looking for ways to rise above its limited social confines through wisdom, wit, and calculation. The female reader is drawn to pity or perhaps to sympathy for Syrena as an “unfortunate woman,” but is also meant to empathize with and see herself reflected in the fiancées, wives, and mistresses of Syrena’s assorted lovers—women of various degrees of virtue who control matters to the extent that their experience and wit allow them. Readers who identify with the cuckolded women gain a vicarious education as they journey along a trajectory from the forfeiture of romantic ideals to the careful management of men’s weakness in matters of sex, money, and marriage. The male audience is composed of a broad range of men from various social classes and educational backgrounds, who are cautioned about their own gullibility and admonished for their role in the lack of education for poorer

women—the same abortive future that ignites Syrena’s licentious enterprise in the first place.

The “warring discourses” create polyphonic tension, stymieing efforts to designate a unified moral position. Nestor observes that Haywood’s use of “interpolated tales” in later texts “often contain contradictory messages and thus serve to reflect upon each other and complicate the ideological message contained in the work as a whole.”<sup>108</sup> Central to this notion of the ideological function of digressive episodes is that the narrator cannot be fully trusted.

The novel’s multiplicity of narrative viewpoints creates a framework, requiring that the reader enter the moral space of the novel as an active participant. Similarly, the effect of multiple addressees confers a markedly modern sensibility on the novel, as the competing registers create both play (a dominant feature of didactic epic first evidenced in Cicero) and competing moral vantages that the reader must disentangle and authorize. Suggestively, this experiment is about linking multiple narrative registers to a broader audience than its critics afforded it in the eighteenth century. One of Haywood’s foremost innovations in *Anti-Pamela* is a series of experiments with the basic form of the epistolary novel. Specifically, *Anti-Pamela* repeatedly breaks from a strict epistolary form by including a third-person narrator. Further, Haywood interrupts the protagonist’s course through the narrative with digressions that follow secondary characters, and then repeats segments of the plot highlighting these digressions. In several of the phases, the narrative abandons Syrena’s antiheroic progress after the discovery of her deceit in order to follow the narrative of her victims.

To say that Haywood includes a third-person narrator belies the complexity of the narrative personas she builds over the course of the novel. The narrator of *Anti-Pamela* operates in multiple modes characterized by a polyphonic voice. Unlike Fielding, whose *Shamela* (1741), a straightforward epistolary novel, parodies *Pamela*, Haywood employs a complex series of narrative personas framing and interpolated through the epistolary passages of *Anti-Pamela*. Haywood's third-person narrator is more complex than a singular entity that simply relates plot or fills in gaps in the reader's knowledge. The third-person narrator may be described as two distinct personas, one reflective and guiding, the other enticing and titillating. The first mode is the cautioning advisor to the audience who would be armed "against a partial Credulity." This first mode is the most experimental in Haywood's burlesque of *Pamela*. The second mode—a breathless, romantic style—will be addressed in a subsequent passage. Together, these innovations showcase the flexibility of the novel and Haywood's masterly grasp of the nascent genre's capabilities. Each merits sustained analysis of its formal capabilities as well as its narrative effects.

The first persona is a wise, experienced voice that delivers commentary and insight about the events by navigating multiple relationships with discrete audience segments. Although this narrative persona conveys wisdom and knowledge about sexual intrigues, the tone resists an overt moral position as the narrator negotiates multiple perspectives through direct address to the audience. The narrator's interruptions do not all fit a particular pattern: by turns, he interjects moral glosses on the events, addresses the perceived concerns of various sets of readers, and summarizes and moves along the plot to either expedite the events or delay for purposes of suspense. In this manner, Haywood

imports a feature characteristic of the didactic epic into the novel—what Toohey terms a polyphonic voice.<sup>109</sup> Polyphony, sometimes described as “ambivalences” or “warring voices,” suggests space in a text for conflicting and unresolved—or unresolvable—tensions. Further, polyphony is a skilled narrative method that sometimes deflects overt moralizing, at others subverting conventional modes.

Implicit in Haywood’s introduction of a third-person narrator to break up the epistolary novel is the narrator’s superior integrity and moral vantage when speaking in the advisory mode. In *Anti-Pamela*, the narrator occupies a position (later picked up by Haywood in her *Female Spectator*) of a mature, experienced woman, perhaps a reformed woman of dubious experience. However, from the title page, it is evident that this narrative persona in *Anti-Pamela* serves as a male counterpart to the experienced, reformed woman of Haywood’s later novels, as one sees in the diction of the title page: “Publish’d as a necessary Caution to all Young Gentlemen.” That is, the narrator voices a mature spectator familiar with the experience of Syrena’s lovers and who repeatedly sympathizes and relates to Syrena’s victims. Nonetheless, the narrator’s moral authority derives from knowledge of the intimate details of a series of adventures; his ability to guide the reader through the didactic plots requires both knowledge and sagacity. A narrator who makes allowances for mistakes, issues pardon for errors, and continually suggests the value of experience—a narrator whose own virtue may not be spotless—offers the possibility of a different paradigm of goodness and value for “experienced” men and women. This paradigm is not available to Syrena who, ruined at the outset by her mother’s value system, journeys along the path of an inveterate rake with no possibility of redemption. However, Haywood offers a third possibility for women, in

counterpoint to Syrena and the narrator and for men naively taken in by women like Syrena.

Haywood's experimentation with narrative voice challenges any easy extraction of a single moral position attributable to the narrator. At the outset, the narrator proffers a formula that implicates the audience as a reasoning partner in the process of moral evaluation. Pausing in the prologue at a moment when "one cannot forebear reflecting" (56), he concludes the overt moral commentary by begging the "Reader's Pardon for the Digression," as the aside represents "an Observation that must occur to every thinking Person," thereby nudging these same readers to agree with the narrator's placement of blame on her mother "as the first Seducer of the Girl's Virtue" (57). The high estimation of the reader's ability to interpret also suggests a critique of Richardson's expectations for his readers in the implausible *Pamela*. Haywood's approach has the effect of establishing an insider relationship between the audience and the advisory narrator over the course of the narrative. However, the relationship between the wise narrative persona and the thinking audience does not rely on symmetrical thought, experience, or response from the audience.

At other times, the narrator acknowledges his female audience; however, this acknowledgement is generally bridged through conciliation to the "fair Readers'" concerns. When suspicions arise that female readers will protest the character or actions of a gentleman within the narrative, the narrator's direct address conditions a response of reasoned understanding of the motive or cause of the man's action. This occurs when Lord R---- fails to respond to Syrena's affected swoon and romantic attempts to deceive him. When he suggests in response to her artful machinations, "Airs won't pass on me"

and threatens to order his servants “to put your Head in a Pail of Water” (150), the narrator addresses the female audience:

I do not doubt but many of my fair Readers will be highly disobliged at this Nobleman’s Behaviour; they will say, he ought to have carry’d with more Complaisance, at least to a pretty young Creature, who had obliged him; and some perhaps may even tax him with Savageness and Brutality; therefore to vindicate his Character from all such Aspersions, I must inform them, that he had before met with Women of *Syrena*’s Stamp;--that he had for some few Years of his Life devoted himself so much to Gallantry, that he was perfectly acquainted with every little Art put to Practice by those, whose Business it was to ensnare; and had more than once been imposed upon by the Pretense of a violent Affection, which made him not only presently discern, but likewise abhor those studied and counterfeited Tendernesses; but as to the rest, no Man knew more how to value real Merit in the Sex, nor paid a greater Regard to it (150).

In this address to his “fair readers,” the narrator acknowledges multiple possible and valid female responses to the scene. Thus, “disobliged” female readers may fall into two categories identified by the narrator: “many” will see his behavior as unbecoming of a man of his rank, and “some” will label him a “savage” and a “brute,” thereby degrading his rank. The narrator suggests that these remarks emerge only from an incomplete knowledge of his character that, he asserts, is an outgrowth of his experience. In this way, the narrator establishes an ideal female response that one may characterize as primarily rational.

As in other passages, the narrator addresses the female readers as outsiders, using “They” and “Them” to signal to the male audience that he (the narrator) is digressing for the benefit of the “other” implied reader. This exchange reinforces an affinity between the advising narrator and his male audiences, creating an “Us” that the narrative reads as an insider discourse.<sup>110</sup> “I must inform Them” functions as an indication to the male readers who—one presumes—ought to implicitly comprehend Lord R----’s actions, that the book is accessible to other readers as well and will be read in multiple ways.

Returning to my earlier assertion that Haywood employs multiple narrative personas, I argue that the second persona operates in a “romantick style” (148) that burlesques and parodies the advisory mode by questioning the reality of an audience bent on didactic improvement via the scandal novel. The romantic persona resides in the salacious passages that unfold the plot between epistolary segments, and the second mode is characterized by the use of sighing punctuation such as the em-dash and exclamations that rhythmically emulate the titillation of the narrative scenes. The role that Haywood’s narrator occupies depends entirely on his ability to generate distance between the audience’s voyeuristic tendency and the potentially disastrous contamination of “experience” that occurs with a too-close proximity to immorality. Thus, like Cicero’s Aratus, the narrator must inhabit a linguistic sphere that “[places] the playful qualities of poetry on a par with those of instruction.”<sup>111</sup> In other words, the “romantick style” serves as a counterpoint to the advising mode by drawing the reader closer. As a whole, the narrative relies on the advising narrator’s ability to successfully extract the reader from intimate involvement in the voyeuristic act of reading these same scenes—thereby establishing the distance of the mediating narrator characteristic of the didactic epic. As I have observed in earlier sections, the typical speaker of a didactic epic is a mediating voice—a gentlemanly overseer or an orator hierarchically above the laboring bodies and below the interested vantage of the audience.<sup>112</sup> The distinction between practitioner and orator also applies to the contrast between Syrena’s epistolary voice and the narrator’s voice.

In the middle of developing events, Syrena’s first-person letters depict her as naïve even as the reader journeys to enlightenment under the narrator’s tutelage. Thus, a



portrait emerges of a narrator in the midst of the action, but unsullied, knowledgeable but inexperienced in the particulars of Syrena's experience. However, polyphony sustains the tension between the two narrative styles as they unfold over the course of the novel. From that tension, Haywood inscribes an alternate paradigm of morality: the reader's proximity to the action discursively engenders sympathy rather than revulsion. She posits an ideology that necessitates forgiveness (or, at minimum, tolerance) for people who have gained "experience" through salacious encounters. By wrapping Syrena's unsophisticated first-person letters in commentary, Haywood generates moral tension, amplifies ambiguity, and establishes access points for diverse sorts of audiences.<sup>113</sup>

Skeptical critics seeking to extend the myth of Haywood's uneducated female readership may interpret the title page's denotative claim as an attempt to garner a male audience for the text, not a recognition of the already-present male audiences—in short, a marketing ploy. However, Blouch also provides evidence that even Haywood's early novels appear in the library catalogues of men such as William Musgrave.<sup>114</sup> The novel itself suggests a complicated constitution of Haywood's audience, evidencing her seriousness as an author as well as her engagement in the literary marketplace. Further, one must note that the men for whom the revelation of Syrena's exploits will serve as "arms against a partial Credulity . . . [arising] from a too sudden admiration" must also be men who fit the category of lover Syrena pursues: that is, rich enough to keep a mistress. Thus, Haywood projects her audience to be male and of a certain economic status.

#### Fluid Terms: Questioning "Innocence" and "Experience"

The narrative turns rapidly away from a straightforward inversion of Richardson's basic plot as Syrena, unable to resist practicing her seductive arts, secures a lover,

extracts gifts from him, and is ruined and abandoned by him. Syrena's inexperience in some arenas contrasts with her expertise in seduction, calling into question the cultural values of experience and innocence. Additionally, the relationship between mother and daughter reveals fissures, as Syrena excels her mother in allurements, but lacks the experience that would enable her to exercise caution and restraint. From this first "adventure" with Vardine, Syrena encounters a series of men, each of whom she traps in marriage plots. As the adventures proceed, certain motifs repeat—such as Syrena's hubris about managing each affair and its ultimate unraveling through accident. It is also worth noting that after her first adventure, the rank and wealth of the men nearly always declines as Syrena's status degrades, and she increasingly relies on cunning and dissembling to maintain control over complicated assignments. In the end, Syrena is undone by a "Woman no less cunning, tho' more virtuous than herself" in a final, dramatic departure from Richardson's ideology of virtue rewarded (221).

In constructing the reading audience through the narrator, Haywood creates two access points to the narrative—one, an experienced reader, the other, an innocent. The pair recalls the binaries typical of didactic plots. Syrena meets the mercer, the sixth of her known lovers, and pursues a relationship with him solely for financial gain. Over three months, using the pretense of an unfortunate marriage as a ruse, she brings the mercer to financial ruin. In the course of their affair, she picks up "the young gallant," and hoodwinks the mercer into paying the gallant's debts. However, the mercer discovers Syrena's duplicity when he sees a ring he gave to Syrena on her lover's finger. After Syrena's relationship with the mercer disintegrates, the narrator interjects the characteristic remark that the mercer has received "a dreadful Confirmation of Syrena's

baseness” (160). Just as the mercer spies Syrena’s ring on the finger of a rival, the narrator interrupts the plot’s progress to guide the reader through the appropriate moral response: “Those of my Readers who have at some time or other in their Lives, found themselves in the Mercer’s Case, need not be told what ‘twas he felt,” he cautions, and “those who have never been so unhappy to experience such Deceptions, ought to be warn’d by the Despair...and not like him be beguil’d and ruin’d” (160). This interjection slows the pulse of a reader caught up in the plot and, more importantly, sorts the readers into complementary categories of those who know—empathetic voyeurs who see their own experience reflected in the fictional events—and those who may learn through the vicarious experiences of reading novels. The narrator’s presence serves to mediate the audience’s affiliation with Syrena.<sup>115</sup> These warnings impose a distance—the same sanitizing distance enforced in didactic epic—and moral barrier between the audience and the central character.

Further, the creation of the second position of the innocent reader frames the reflective response of the experienced reader; though they “need not be told,” they overhear alongside the innocents who share the audience position. The innocent reader has avoided the type of woman Syrena represents and lacks first-hand knowledge of sexual intrigues. The experienced reader has the requisite experience, but he or she still benefits from the didactic explanation and moral lesson that he or she ought to have learned as it is spelled out for the uninitiated.

In Syrena’s character, we see Haywood reincarnate the protagonist in multiple positions such as pupil, master, innocent, and experienced in a series of inversions that question, then diminish, the stability of the binaries. Syrena occupies both poles: she is

master and student, innocent and experienced at various points throughout the text. In Syrena's duality, Haywood suggests that these terms are fluid, that moral hierarchy is imposed externally by society, and that the ideological underpinnings of these ideas are questionable, unstable, and often detrimental to women.

Syrena's adventure with the mercer is crucial to her later relationships, as it provides a basic plot, characters, and morals that will continue to operate as motifs. The looping structure of Syrena's storytelling (Syrena recites the same story of early widowhood and financial loss to each new suitor) functions as a didactic plot within the novel as each telling builds on, comments on, and shifts the lesson of the earlier adventure. In this way, over the course of the novel, the initiate reader follows the typical didactic plot as described by Fowler as a journey from innocence to experience.<sup>116</sup> At the same time, the repetition, techniques of denouement, and variation in character afford Haywood an opportunity to create multiple moral perspectives from which to view characters whom the narrator would have the audience see as static. For instance, Syrena transforms and develops through multiple didactic positions, but so do her lovers. Structurally, these adventures unfold like illustrative panels in a didactic epic, side stories branching off the main narrative of Syrena's progress.

Returning to the mercer's fable from the perspective of his wife reveals a critique of the valorization of women who guard only their virtue—a creed wholly promoted by Richardson's *Pamela*. In the inset narrative, the mercer's cuckolded wife concludes that her husband—confessing and considering suicide—possesses a faithfulness derived from experience that will, in fact, benefit her. In Haywood's reformulation of the virtuous wife trope, it is not the wife's virtue or faithfulness that rescues her but her financial stability

and calculation of risks and benefits. Thus, while the mercer shifts from an innocent to experienced role, the wife occupies the character of a faithful, virtuous wife whom Fate rewards. Insisting that he take her fortune, the husband is consigned to a position of moral indebtedness to his virtuous wife who, in turn, forfeits her financial independence. In a plot twist typical of romances, Fate intervenes, a distant brother dies, leaves the husband a fortune, and “to make what reparation he could to his Wife, he settled upon her all that remained after paying his Debts” (163). However, what this formulaic happy ending reveals is less simple than a proverb on the reward due to women wronged by foolish men. As the novel proceeds toward Syrena’s final undoing, an alternative moral possibility emerges from the positions of three central figures: the Son of Mr W--- (aka Harriot Manly, Syrena’s “Last Gallant”), the wronged wife of Syrena’s last conquest, and the narrator.

#### Calculated Intrusions: Didactic Dinners and the Elevation of the Novel

Among the formal features Haywood adopts from the didactic epic, illustrative panels like the mercer’s side narrative suggest a radical, modern innovation to the novel. While heroic narratives such as the epic traditionally follow the exploits of the hero as the central and only protagonist, the didactic epic opens up alternative narratives through illustrative panels. Haywood’s use of narrative digressions is particularly inventive and experimental. Several times, Haywood turns from the protagonist’s narrative to track the fate of Syrena’s lovers, as with Mr. D--- when the narrative abandons Syrena’s jilting to pursue the unfolding of a mini-novel<sup>117</sup> that burlesques a virginal heroine whose purity calls to mind Richardson’s *Clarissa*. The illustration is twofold in that one, it examines the perspective of an inexperienced man who is entrapped and undone like the heroines

of traditional romance; and, two, it satirizes the romantic heroine who expires in a final, implausible sigh.

Following the denouement of Mr. D----'s tragic tale, in which his betrothed, Maria, dies after confronting his infidelity, the narrator constructs a source for Mr. D----'s embedded narrative: Mr. D----'s own account of the events with an express desire to have them published for the benefit of others. This injunction parallels the phrasing of the title page. Maria's dying words—relayed by the faithful narrator—suggest a double reading of his penitent posture: “answer'd she, you are now sorry for and asham'd of your Acquaintance with *Syrena*; but, perhaps it is more owing to the Discovery of her Baseness, than to your regard for me” (144). The narrator then assumes the position of a truly penitent Mr. D----, offering the following explication of events after Maria's melodramatic death:

The real Affliction Mr. D---- was in for this sad Accident, made *England* and the Sight of all his Friends hateful to him: He embark'd in a short time for foreign Parts; but before he went, wrote all the Particulars of this fatal Adventure, and desired it might be made publick, as a Warning to Gentlemen, how they inadvertently are drawn into acquaintance with Women of *Syrena*'s Character. (144)

In this formulation, several significant tropes emerge that situate the narrator in relation to the audience and the characters. Initially, the aside serves to foreclose on Maria's insistence on a second reading of Mr. D----'s motivation toward remorse, suggesting his “real Affliction” was not being duped, but rather losing Maria. Dismissing Maria's romantic interpretation, this reading closely aligns with the omniscient outsider's commentary, and meshes with the audience's knowledge that Maria has been informed by an untrustworthy, malicious source—Mrs. Tricksey—whose motives are mercenary and beknownst to the reader. However, the possibility of truth in her declaration

maintains a polyphonic tension—Mr D---- is likely both dismayed by Syrena’s character and aware of Maria’s value.

In a much more experimental mythological panel, Haywood aligns the narrative of her novel with the myth of Dido and Aeneas, overlapping the plots in such a way as to create an imitation that layers the two stories in the text. The simultaneity of the burlesque version and the familiar epic narrative produces a polyphonic intrusion that radically modernizes the novel. Haywood recreates a tableau of the didactic dinner in *Aeneid* 1 using Syrena and her lover, Vardine, as stand-ins for Dido and Aeneas. However, the imbrication becomes increasingly complicated as Haywood offers two interpretations of the scene’s unfolding: one from Vardine’s perspective, the other from Syrena’s, further complicating the function of the embedded myth as each character interprets in his or her favor by locating different moments from the *Aeneid*. Instead of a single narrative point of view, the overlap suggests that narrative registers of a novel can be simultaneous, multifaceted, and contentious in a manner that disrupts the limited gaze of the epistolary novel.

Decoding the simultaneous narratives requires the “thinking person” to recognize travesty allusions to *Aeneid*. The complex layering of three narratives—Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Vardine’s imitation of *Aeneid* 4, and Syrena’s interpretation of *Aeneid* 1—demonstrates Haywood’s desire to elevate the novel to epic by including the mock-epic set pieces typical of didactic epic. She claims for the novel a learned audience familiar enough with the *Aeneid* to identify and respond to her corruption of the didactic dinner set piece in Vardine’s seduction of Syrena. Further, Haywood establishes the capability of the novel to mix high and low forms as it instructs and entertains.

Though instructed by her mother to give sexual favors only for economic gain, Syrena undertakes a first liaison that undermines the simplicity of this precept in an encounter modeled on a test of the epic hero's hubris: Syrena's initial sexual encounter—an "assignation" with Vardine that turns into an "adventure" in a tavern. Having agreed to meet in the Birdcage Walk in St. James' Park, Syrena and Vardine seek shelter in a doorway when they are unable to secure a coach during a sudden flood. Vardine persuades her to enter the tavern rather than stand at the entrance of a disreputable place and be seen by people on the street. From their entrance, both plot and the force of literary allusion suggest the scene will unfold as a "didactic dinner."

In fact, the scene's structural framework adheres closely to conventions of a didactic dinner, a central element of the didactic epic imported into the novel. Toohey outlines the Classical basis for observing the "generic affiliation" of the didactic and narrative epic. His framework of the "nascent topos," adapted to the eighteenth-century literary sphere, needs little emendation. "First," Toohey asserts:

We need a wanderer, preferably one who has encountered much trouble on his travels. He ought to be welcomed into a court or a home and to be entertained. The banquet, this hero's welcome, and the stories or song which he hears there, prefigure a crisis or a turning-point. Eros, either as temptation at the meal, or as its background, is usually prominent and threatens the hero with psychic enfeeblement. Finally the song or tale which the hero will hear contains strong didactic elements. These elements are usually cosmogonical, although sometimes they may concern sexual matters. . . . Four are probably enough.<sup>118</sup>

When transferred to an eighteenth-century context, this straightforward framework is remarkably flexible without losing coherence because the parallels of the encounter outweigh the differences in era, culture, and location. As the scene progresses, Vardine orders wine "made hot with Spice and Sugar," suggesting their situation is better than



that of wanderers “strolling the Streets, as if no House would receive us” (74). With the status of the hero as wanderer and the condition of a meal met, Eros becomes the overt focus of Vardine’s intentions and Syrena’s temptation.

Adapted to the eighteenth-century context, the shifts in the cultural value of conventional heroes is such that the antagonist-wanderer—in this case, Syrena—may be seen as quasi-heroic or anti-heroic and still occupy the protagonist role. Similarly, her wandering may be physical or psychic—in Syrena’s specific case, it is both peregrination about the town and moral wandering. The meal may be understood as a straightforward meal, a dinner, or some other encounter that assumes the intimacy, length, and posture a meal would require.<sup>119</sup> The presence of Eros needs only minor shifting in an eighteenth-century context other than the need to clothe his mythical figure in signs legible to eighteenth-century audiences. Whether figured as lust or love, tension or sexual content in some form, the presence of love remains a substantial motif in didactic dinners. Love’s psychic relationship to the hero remains stable, too as love remains the heroic hubris that jeopardizes Tricksey’s venal plot. Lastly, the song or tale may be adapted via a variety of generic forms borrowed from Classical allegory and myth or from modern forms such as the epistle. Vardine’s emphasis on the sexual act over tale telling suggests that in the mid-eighteenth-century novel, the didactic, cosmogonical aspects of the didactic dinner perhaps more often “concern sexual matters” than not.

Thus, Haywood adapts the standard framework converting a song or tale told during the dinner into an exposition that parallels Dido’s seduction of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4. That is, as Vardine seduces Syrena with gifts, threats, multiple glasses of wine, and “Protestations of Love” (75), she yields and thereby acts out the very story that marks the

opening reference to her seduction. Having argued she is too scrupulous, Vardine remarks, “did not *Dido*, tho’ a great Queen run into a Cave with a wandring Soldier to avoid a Storm” (75). Her ruin complete, Vardine “made a Jest of her Complaints; why, my Dear, cry’d he, you desir’d to know the Story of *Dido* and *Aeneas*, and I have more than *told* it to you, for I have *acted* it to the Life” (76). While Vardine suggests a parodic rewriting of the allusion, Syrena later interprets the scene in her biography through a different allusion altogether. Thus, we find all the requisite components of a didactic dinner, the difference being that Syrena, as an antihero, succumbs to temptation despite being “train’d up in Precepts directly opposite, to giving Way to any tender Inclination, and taught that the only thing she had to avoid, was the bestowing any Favours but where Interest directed” (76). Of course, the discord becomes apparent to the reader familiar with the two encounters of Dido and Aeneas in *Aeneid* 1 and 4. While the innocent reader misses the slippage in the satire, the informed reader recognizes two possible readings and, as the narrative follows Syrena from the encounter, sees the divergent readings and the critique they afford. While Syrena is finally ineffective in rewriting the narrative Vardine establishes for her, the audience deduces that this failure arises because Syrena lacks the qualities of a hero: she is an anti-hero in opposition to the ideal woman the novel introduces at the end.

Syrena’s version of the narrative unfolds with herself in the place of Aeneas following the didactic dinner (*Aeneid* 1.494-756) in which Dido hosts Aeneas as a guest following strict conventions of hospitality, and entertaining him with a tale. In contrast, Vardine interprets the encounter in line with *Aeneid* 4.231-250, in which Aeneas and Dido are trapped in a cave by a thunderstorm and finally consummate their love. The

dueling narrative perspectives situate each respective teller in the role of Aeneas, and Syrena's rejection of Vardine's version of the story suggests that she also rejects the position of Dido in favor of Aeneas for a number of reasons.

The last element of the didactic dinner—the turning point in the narrative—highlights Haywood's subversive use of Iopas's song (*Aeneid* 1.740-6) and thereby establishes a vital synergy between three genres—the novel, the narrative epic, and the didactic epic—as the turning point of Syrena's progress in the novel. In this didactic dinner, the imbrication of narrative and didactic epic and the novel brings the full force of Classical allusion to bear on Haywood's masterful appropriation of the didactic dinner set piece. The twists and emendations Haywood works into the imported material are crucial to the ideological and subversive work she achieves in her parody of *Pamela*. Specifically, it is not a villainous anti-hero who ultimately counters the Pamela model, but the wise, experienced women who variously manage their husbands. These women not only survive but also manage the frailty of men. After parodying the death of the virtuous innocent in the first wronged woman, Maria, Haywood offers several alternatives to dying in a heap of righteous indignation.

Some time later, when Vardine abandons Syrena, and she turns up pregnant, it becomes clear that, unlike Aeneas, Syrena—as a woman—must simultaneously occupy the position of Dido. Vardine's assertion that he has “acted . . . to the Life” the story of Dido and Aeneas on her person crystallizes her dual position in the polar spheres of hero and woman in the didactic plot. The emphasis on physical rather than rational responses to sex makes apparent that the scene Vardine references is not the didactic dinner (*Aeneid* 1.494-756) but the parallel encounter between Dido and Aeneas in Book IV of Virgil's

*Aeneid*, in which Dido and Aeneas seek shelter during a thunderstorm and consummate their relationship. Vardine's reference hinges on the parallel features of the thunderstorm and the sexual encounter. In Dryden's translation (*Aeneid* 4.231-250), the tryst in the cave ends thus:

The Queen whom sense of Honour cou'd not move  
No longer made a Secret of her Love  
But call'd it Marriage, by that specious Name,  
To veil the Crime and sanctifie the Shame. (4.247-50)

Here, Syrena's actions following the encounter contradict Vardine's interpretation. Syrena feels no shame, but gains experience and power, construing her own interpolation into the epic as Aeneas, not Dido. Her waning condition when she leaves the apprenticeship is a physical ailment. She eliminates future risk through an abortion that makes her sterile; it is not a mental frailty. Syrena's insistence on her own power thus re-asserts her as the Aeneas figure in the didactic dinner encounter rather than as Dido in the cave tryst. This burlesque of conventional notions of innocence and experience works because, as an anti-hero, Syrena progresses along a didactic plot from innocence to experience with mercenary rather than romantic aims.

As identification with the hero shifts from Vardine's to Syrena's proclaimed reading of the myth, the target of the satire emerges. When men interpret women's frailty, it is an estimation of their physical virtue and worth; but women—even villainous women like Syrena—afford women both physical and mental capacities of virtue. As the narrative proceeds, the encounter with Vardine gains significance as a turning point in Syrena's progress from innocence to experience, as she initially ends up weakened by pregnancy, emerging later fortified against future temptations and inured to the physical risks of female sexuality. Further, her loss of virtue by succumbing to love girds Syrena

against the risks of love and strengthens her mercenary aims. Thus, the allusion directs the reader to see Syrena as the mock Aeneas figure who occupies the dual role of didactic pupil and wandering hero. Having lost her virtue, she continues her relationship with Vardine, carrying on “a Correspondence with him merely on a mercenary View” (83). Meanwhile, the narrator observes to the reader that the nature of her “heroic” temptation in the exchange does not leave her as “undone” as a virtuous woman would have been as Syrena is not “possest of that Softness and Tenderness which some are” (82). She does, in fact, emerge from the dinner further along her path toward financial and economic independence.

#### The Virtuous, Cunning Woman: A New Ideal

As the drama and titillation of the text’s romance-inflected, breathless narrative works to question the overtly moral tone of the wise, experienced narrator, the reader is drawn into the ambiguity and tension of the conflicting vantages. From this uncertainty, Haywood uses the final adventure of the novel to promote an alternative paradigm for women to the improbable virtue required by *Pamela*. The effect of the reader’s interpolated position upsets the conventional plots and applies stress to the delicately balanced binaries of character sets. In contrast to Richardson’s single-note virtuous maid, *Anti-Pamela*’s women (the wives or mistresses of Syrena’s successive victims) negotiate morally complex encounters with a corrupt woman where mere maintenance of virtue provides them no capital with which to negotiate for power. Haywood frequently borrows then dismantles the traditional didactic character—the initiate, the student, the mentor—to unveil and critique the literary and ideological structures constraining the moral education of women.

Like Mr. W----'s son, Syrena's lover who goes by Harriet Manley, the motif of the woman wronged as collateral in Syrena's adventures suggests a practical response to the inevitable cycle of temptation and pardon that *Anti-Pamela* establishes for men. Just as men are re-evaluated based on their ability to recover, learn from their experiences, and gain a true estimation of the value of a woman, so women are offered an alternative narrative that rewards them for careful management of men's frailty. The roots of this new framework for women's bodily and economic autonomy build progressively on the Romance convention—the accident that rewards the mercer's wife for her fidelity—eventually evolving into a refined structure in Syrena's final adventure and undoing by Mrs. E----.

Instead of spotlessly guarded virtue, Haywood proposes a woman reliant on her wits—a renewable and improvable resource—rather than her body. In the final adventure, Haywood offers a woman who anticipates her husband's frailty, heads off his sexual, financial, and social ruin, while aborting Syrena's trajectory in a calculated plot. The Wife of Mr. E---- employs "spies" to follow her husband, remaining vigilantly attentive to any potential threats he may pose to their marriage. Then, Mrs. E---- uses her information to trap Syrena by setting up the unfaithful husband of another woman rather than her own husband. Mrs. E---- thereby thwarts her own near-cuckold status and keeps her own marriage and reputation intact. She proves herself a conservative manager of her marital capital, assessing and avoiding risks with small investments laid out carefully in advance. Mrs. E---- then sets herself up in a disguise "resolving to be a Witness how her Plot succeeded" and watches the jealous wife of the known cheat exact her revenge on the unsuspecting Syrena (223). In each of these specifics, Haywood indicates the

subterfuge a woman must employ, and the real distance she must keep, to maintain her reputation in society and the delicate balance of power in a marriage.

Haywood's counter-paradigm to the virtuous virgin is neither simplistic nor naïve. Haywood's ideal woman voyeuristically enters and enjoys Syrena's adventures like those who consume novels as virtual adventurers thereby safeguarding their virtue. The effect strategically upsets the cultural hierarchies that systematically commoditize and expend women in order to perpetuate a sanitized image of them as capable of only one admirable trait—virtue. The woman who relies on her wits employs subversive tactics, engages in subterfuge, and is experienced enough to navigate the moral and economic dangers inherent to a society that idealizes immaculate virtue. Thus, in Haywood's formulation, the novel affords a site for entertainment and instruction in the skills that women employ to maintain the capital afforded them.

Precepts and explicit didacticism operate within *Anti-Pamela* as moments of burlesque, in which the precariousness of women's ability to resist amorous pursuits in conventional novels (*Pamela*, *Clarissa*) is held up to scrutiny and subverted. Haywood achieves subversion in a number of ways, first suggesting that men and women are equally frail. Haywood's emphasis through repetition on the successive "falls" of several virtuous men (Mr. D----, the mercer, Lord R----, Mr Ward Sr and son) does more than invert the gender hierarchy of novels like *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. It also dissolves the binary and thus underlines the unattainable virtue of the women in such novels, suggesting that even men of good character and social standing are susceptible to vice. Haywood neither contributes to the passive wife narrative, nor supplants it with a passive young man narrative. She instead suggests that young women and men must have a

degree of virtual exposure to vice—through the highly profitable novels she writes, one imagines—at a safe and mediated distance in order to achieve a rigorously guarded virtue through awareness and ongoing tutelage in the arts of seduction.

Haywood suggests that “all sorts” should and do read novels, but acknowledges varying responses to and readings of the same text. Thus, she undermines the patriarchal notion offered by her literary counterparts of a “right” and “instructive” way to read a novel. Haywood creates a plastic text thereby avoiding Richardson’s ongoing attempts with *Clarissa* to deter wrong readings and readers’ interpretations. The open-endedness of Haywood’s diverse audience responses suggests a radical inclusivity and moral relativism that undermines scholarly attempts to suggest she became a “moral writer” in her later career. Rather, she saw novels as fluid and open, thus capable of managing morals thorny enough to align with reality.

Importing several conventions of the didactic epic, Eliza Haywood critiques the veiling tendency of the novel (as practiced by Richardson, for instance), facilitates play with audience distance, and offers alternatives to the constraint and disposal of women by society. Her critique of the novel as exemplified by *Pamela* offers an alternative economy of morality not only for the sphere of the novel but also for the society it represents in that it frees women to engage in the marriage market as savvy investors and speculators, controlling men and their frail affections without risking their own capital.

#### Notes

<sup>91</sup> Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, 250.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, quoted in, 250.

<sup>93</sup> Ingrassia “Introduction,” 36, 34.



<sup>94</sup> Saxton, "Introduction," 7.

<sup>95</sup> J.K. Rowling's recent pseudonymous publication of a detective novel might offer an insightful parallel to Haywood's publication. Given Rowling's success with the Harry Potter novels, her ability to achieve critical success while circumventing her fans's expectations necessitated a blind publication that permitted her first detective novel to engage critics though it did not succeed financially until her name was leaked.

<sup>96</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 213.

<sup>97</sup> Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction*.

<sup>98</sup> Backscheider, "Shadow of an Author," 83.

<sup>99</sup> Saxton, "Introduction," (7). Saxton summarizes that in *The Dunciad* (1729), Haywood was offered as the prize for the winner of a pissing contest between publishers. Pope appended a footnote to the scene that further denigrated her works as "scribbling."

<sup>100</sup> Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*, 83.

<sup>101</sup> Kvande, "The Outsider Narrator," 625; Bowers, "Collusive Resistance," 49.

<sup>102</sup> Backscheider, "Story of Eliza Haywood's Novels," 20.

<sup>103</sup> Blouch, "What Ann Lang Read," 300.

<sup>104</sup> Richetti, *The English Novel in History*; Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*; Beasley, *Novels of the 1740s*.

<sup>105</sup> Day, *Told in Letters*. Day's estimation of Haywood's work suggests her novels are read by "traders' daughters and frothy minds" (73).

<sup>106</sup> Ingrassia, "Fashioning Female Authorship," 290.

<sup>107</sup> As Blouch notes, *Anti-Pamela* was not Haywood's only response to Pamela: "having succeeded with the satire, [she] published an imitation" in her 1742 novel, *The Virtuous Villager: or, Virgin's Victory* (306).

<sup>108</sup> Nestor, "Women's Discourse," 15.

<sup>109</sup> Toohey's chapters on polyphonic voice outline the public and private voices creating tension in Virgil's *Georgics*.

<sup>110</sup> Kvande, "The Outsider Narrator." Kvande observes Haywood's early novels note a similar construction of polyphonic narrator in *The Adventures of Eovaii* which employs both a translator, a cabal of commenters, and an original text. Notably, "The Translator" is male, the "son of a Mandarin" (639).

<sup>111</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 84.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Cicero innovated this role of the narrator in his *De Oratore*, remarking that an orator could just as well discuss a topic as a learned man rather than a practitioner, exposition and instruction being “more a matter of technique than it is of knowledge” (84).

<sup>113</sup> As we saw in Gay’s *Trivia* the complexity of the narrator’s role—in the interplay of mock-scholarly footnotes, a shifting narrative vantage, and the dual positioning of the narrator as both an experienced walker and an observer critical of those walkers who have grown used to conditions through prolonged exposure—destabilizes the notion of the didactic master as an authority and expert.

<sup>114</sup> Blouch, “What Ann Lang Read,” 303.

<sup>115</sup> Merrit, *Eliza Haywood’s Female Spectators*. Similarly, Juliette Merrit analyzes the trope of the “mature, sober, and reflective woman” whose “earlier experience serves as an argument for her role as writer and educator” (11) in Haywood’s later work, *The Female Spectator*

<sup>116</sup> Fowler, Don. “The Didactic Plot.” (2004).

<sup>117</sup> Rather than seeing the irregular terminology of narrative digressions as a drawback—they are referred to as narrative panels, mythological panels, calculated intrusions, insets, and digressions—I note that the variety of terms suggests the plurality of uses for these interpolated narratives.

<sup>118</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 215.

<sup>119</sup> Toohey hints at this refiguring of the meal topos, which I have expanded and specified, when he discusses *Leucippe and Clitophon* “Seated together discussing the problems that can [be] brought on by love. . . . While they were seated (not at a meal, but perhaps we should imagine them enjoying the *mezze*)” (221).

## CHAPTER V

### GRAINGER'S *THE SUGAR CANE* (1764): EXTRA-VIRGILIAN CONTEXTS AND INFLUENCE ON THE DIDACTIC EPIC

In previous chapters I argued that broadening the Classical references for eighteenth-century English poems was one of the outcomes of insisting on the didactic epic generic affiliation. In this chapter, I posit that Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* (1774) provides another compelling reason for situating so-called "georgics" within the genre of didactic epic: the extensive lineage of less-familiar, non-Classical poetic references, including neo-Latin poems of both the Venetian Renaissance and the eighteenth century. These referent poems, often built on Classical models, offer additional points of entry for understanding the ideological and formal work of eighteenth-century English didactic epics within their political and social era while flexing against established limits of the poetic form.

The title page of Grainger's poem proclaims *The Sugar Cane* a "West-Indian Georgic," offering a geographic qualifier that suggests the poet recognizes the too-narrow confines of a haphazardly spawned generic category. Recently, scholars such as McAuley and Fairer have lobbied for stretching the political and social framework for reading Grainger's poem by acknowledging his Scottish identity and the influence of his scientific and medical practice on his work.<sup>120</sup> However, no scholars of Grainger's work have sought to establish a framework other than Virgil's *Georgics* for interpreting Grainger's approach to genre or, indeed, to his subject matter. Yet one reason I find the narrow georgic appellation troubling is that critics who draw upon it often fail to acknowledge a comprehensive set of influences and allusions broader than Virgil's

*Georgics*, in so doing overlooking its meaningful resonance with poems in the broader context of Classical and neo-Latin didactic epic. For Grainger's *The Sugar Cane*, these oversights significantly obscure the layered tensions of the political and ideological projects at play in the poem's approach to subject and form.

The publication and early reception of the poem indicate a burgeoning reputation at odds with the relative obscurity and neglect of *The Sugar Cane*, from the early nineteenth century until John Gilmore's edition in 2000.<sup>121</sup> Grainger began *The Sugar Cane* in 1762, and it was first published in 1764 by Dodsley in London. Two subsequent editions of the poem (in London and Dublin) are imprints of the first, with no substantial revisions. Several years later, it was published in Jamaica alongside Grainger's prose text *Essay on the more common West-India Diseases* (1764). Following several complimentary reviews, regular reprinting of *The Sugar Cane* continued through the end of the century when, Gilmore acknowledges, "It seemed *The Sugar Cane* had achieved canonical status"(48). The subject matter alone cannot account for the diminished interest in the poem; rather, the distaste for the slave trade and slavery, coupled with the decline of Classical genres, the shifting importance of sugar to the British economy, and the geographic collapse of its empire, found the poem in a singularly unfashionable corner. Together, these concerns explain the lack of unified approach in scholarship on the poem in recent decades: few critical approaches simultaneously tackle the combination of subject, historicism, and genre.

The scholarship is scattershot, and rarely builds on earlier approaches, yet critics of Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* seem intent on locating an elusive unified voice with a stable set of accompanying views on political and literary ideas. The need for unification

arises from the simplicity of the georgic form derived from an oversimplification of Addison that must present a single theory on an agricultural idea in a pleasing and palatable style. However, an over-reliance on Addison's "An Essay on the *Georgics*" to understand a complex form (its complexity incongruously acknowledged in Virgil) has effectively amputated the didactic epic genre from its larger poetic body. Straying from this strict model, Grainger discusses not only agriculture, but also national identity and the tensions inherent in the project of colonialism in the West Indies. His writing similarly reflects the frictions between European, African, and Amerindian medicine, ways of knowing, and social ideals. These competing voices imbricate Grainger's poem in ways that stymie reading into it a single ideology or viewpoint. Moreover, Grainger's approach amplifies the polyphony that is an integral part of the didactic epic form, as I argued in my previous chapter.

Grainger's four-book didactic epic, *The Sugar Cane*, builds extensively on the form of Virgil's *Georgics* as it explores the complex project of managing a sugar plantation in the British West Indies. In over 2,500 lines of blank verse, Grainger enumerates colonial concerns from climate and pests to the proper selection and medical management of slave laborers, each book generally following Virgil's division of topics in his *Georgics*. Grainger's Book I covers soil and weather concerns alongside basic techniques of planting cane, aligning with Virgil's first book, which covers similar topics as well as the mythical origin of agriculture and "a supplication . . . [for the] Preservation of Rome."<sup>122</sup> At times, the two poems progress in parallel; at times diverging, as when Grainger's Book II enumerates threats to crops including vermin and natural disasters, while Virgil's second book covers the more banal issues of planting, soils, and a

“Panegyric on a Country Life” (181). Grainger’s Book III echoes Virgil in discussing the implements and techniques necessary for harvesting cane and making sugar, also echoing the latter’s meditation on cattle, breeding, and agricultural projects. Critics often cite the fourth book as a concentrated site of parallels between the two poets, looking to Virgil’s discussion of the industry of bees and Grainger’s treatment of African slaves and focusing on their industry and productivity within the context of the West-Indian plantation. In the fourth book, however, the deviations from a strictly Virgilian model are not only obvious but also productively explained by looking to non-Virgilian sources. Even in the most allusive passages of the poems, the adaptation of the Roman Empire to the project of the British colonial Empire creates fluidity in the symmetry of the two poems.

While at times uncomfortably a “georgic,” Grainger’s poem offers a model didactic epic in containing not only primary elements but also innovative approaches to secondary elements enabled by the complexity of its subject matter. Following Philips, Grainger writes in blank verse, which had become the traditional meter for English didactic epic. *The Sugar Cane* speaks with a single authorial voice in the poem proper—the learned, Creole physician—and directs the precepts to an explicit addressee—George Thomas, the governor of the leeward isles, but also planters both absentee and Creole. The subject matter is explicitly instructional in both the precepts transmitted via poetry and the largely scientific footnotes. The poem also contains the conventional illustrative panels that break up the straightforward instruction, and Grainger plays with the secondary element of polyphony in the narrative voice in his extensive footnotes. Last, as the parallel prose texts always attend didactic epics, it is notable that Grainger himself

composes the accompanying prose text on the management of slaves and imports substantial material from natural history into his footnotes.

In addition—as scholars such as Gilmore, McAuley, and Fairer have long observed—Grainger appends copious footnotes on political and natural history that expand and comment on the topics and themes the poem presents. This unique feature strains the alignment with Virgil as the content of the footnotes emphasizes themes more prominent in science than in politics. One dominant critical approach to Grainger’s abundant footnotes dismisses them as a separate body of scientific writing, asserting their usefulness to studies of the culture, natural history, and politics of Grainger’s time, yet dismissing the footnotes as mere curiosities of the poem proper. Others, such as Fairer, maintain that the footnotes betray the purity of the poem by dividing its attention between poetic intentions and Grainger’s prose aims as a physician. Lastly, critics such as McAuley mine the footnotes for insight into interpreting passages in the poem. At times, each of these approaches merits attention; yet, in a shift away from Virgil’s poetic project, the footnotes also betray Grainger’s multiple influences from neo-Latin and English didactic epic. Using the footnotes as a cypher, or dismissing them as the compulsive cataloguing of a physician and scientist, trivializes the formal innovation and fails to acknowledge them as a feature of Grainger’s engagement with the didactic epic as it flourished during two periods of scientific revelation.

Framing *The Sugar Cane* within the didactic epic genre regularizes and connects the various isolated points made about the poem by firmly attaching it to a broad poetic lineage and a meaning that accounts for Grainger’s notes and the tension within ideas they introduce. While all scholars have acknowledged Grainger’s debt to Virgil,

several—including one of Grainger’s earliest reviewers—have also noted the influence of Hesiod, Milton, and Philips in Grainger’s repertoire. In fact, alongside a declaration of his intention to follow Virgil’s plan, Grainger’s title page acknowledges a broader generic affiliation with an epigraph that quotes Manilius’s *Astronomica*, a late-Classical didactic epic on astrology. Similarly, despite Gilmore’s acknowledgement that Grainger was obviously familiar with Fracastoro’s *Syphilis*—noting in passing that Grainger quoted from the work “on the title-page of his MD dissertation”<sup>123</sup>—no one has explored the particular resonances of *Syphilis* and *The Sugar Cane*. Grainger consciously informs his own venture with influences from both poems.

While both *Astronomica* and *Syphilis* are relatively obscure texts for the scholar of eighteenth-century English poetry, neither didactic epic was unfamiliar to poets of the era. Manilius’s *Astronomica* was written during and in the years following Augustus’s reign (27 BCE to 37 CE) and has remained readily available in Latin. Prior to Goold’s modern translation, the only complete translation into English was that of Thomas Creech in 1697. Like his contemporary Dryden, Creech managed a translation that was both scholarly and interpretive—in keeping with the expectations of the era. Thus, as Goold remarks in his preface to the Loeb edition, the Creech translation in rhymed couplets “all too often [left] the Latin far behind,”<sup>124</sup> making Creech’s *Astronomica* less useful for Classics scholars. For the eighteenth-century literati familiar with Classical culture, the poem was familiar and available.

Fracastoro’s neo-Latin didactic epic *Syphilis* was similarly well known and lauded during the eighteenth century. Considered the “most famous Renaissance Latin poem,”<sup>125</sup> *Syphilis* was translated into English by Nahum Tate in 1686 for a collection of poems



edited by Dryden (reprinted in 1714). In addition, Pope included the original Latin *Syphilis* in his *Selecta Poemata Italorum* (1740). Thus, both of the poems were readily available in both Latin and English during Grainger's lifetime, and Grainger's audience was unquestionably aware of the poem. Grainger's facility with Latin and his skill at translation enabled him substantial access to both poems, and it is worth outlining their contents and aims briefly before turning to consider each at length.

#### Science and Poetry: The *Astronomica* of Manilius

At times excruciatingly dense, *Astronomica* sets out to explain astrology over the course of the didactic epic's five books. Blending myth and mathematics, Manilius explains astronomical phenomena—such as the origin of constellations—and renders numerous technical and mathematical aspects of astrology—including translating charts and tables—into the traditional hexameter of didactic epic. The first several books present a system of the universe, “sphaera,” and calculations for the movement of constellations. The most compelling resonances with *The Sugar Cane* emerge in Book Four, as the poem turns away from dense calculations to the astrological material, offering “a simple and non-technical account of the qualities and skills imparted to those born under each sign of the zodiac.”<sup>126</sup> Book V turns to paranatellonta (the nonzodiacal constellations) and the myth of Perseus's and Andromeda's catasterism (transformation into constellations by the gods). Because of the opacity of the mathematical tables and calculations Manilius outlines, much of the poem is difficult to follow without the accompanying charts. The later books that emphasize astrology and myth are more accessible and pleasing to modern readers—just as they were to Grainger's audience. Yet, the technical nature of the poem demonstrates the inherent capability of didactic epic

to contain both scientific data and myth in verse while sustaining and exploring the tensions in this convergence

Like Grainger, Fracastoro was a physician as well as a poet. Fracastoro's circle of correspondents and friends demonstrates his notable position as a literary and public figure. Geoffrey Eatough's introduction to his English translation of the poem provides a thorough account of Fracastoro's biography, literary orbit, and the political and social tensions he grapples with in the poem. In addition to Bembo and other notable associates of the Venetian Renaissance, Fracastoro corresponded with "Peter Martyr and Oviedo y Valdes . . . two of the four major sources of our knowledge of Columbus' discoveries."<sup>127</sup> Fracastoro began composing *Syphilis* around 1510, and in 1525 presented two books "in manuscript to Bembo" (21); a complete version was not published until 1530 in Venice. Organized in three books, *Syphilis* presents myths of the disease's origins, a didactic treatise on cures and treatments, and in Book III, an account of the curative power of the Guaiacum tree that "turns, however, into an epyllion of Columbus' voyage to the West Indies" (23).

Although the poem established his literary reputation, Fracastoro returned twice to the subject of syphilis over the course of his long career in the *Naugerius* and *De Contagione*. First, as "Syphilis was regarded as a loathsome disease, not obviously a fit subject for Virgilian verse. Fracastoro's *Naugerius* or Poetics offers us a theory not only for *Syphilis* but for all didactic poetry" (17). Eatough summarizes Fracastoro's theory of poetry, which grapples with the paired didactic aims of instruction and delight extending the definition to the inclusion of "beauty even in lowly topics" (19), a theme familiar to scholars of eighteenth-century "georgic" poetry. From one angle, Fracastoro returned to

the problem of treating medical and scientific work in the form of a didactic epic in his treatise on poetry, *Naugerius*, arguing both for the appropriateness of his subject matter and the abridgement of that subject in explanation and embellishment through myths. He then returned to the content of the poem—contagious disease—in his monumental scientific work, *De Contagione*, belatedly published after many years of revision. Fracastoro’s three-part treatise on contagion proffers a nascent scientific theory of contagion, analyzes contagious diseases, and catalogues remedies. Of this effort, Eatough remarks, “The syphilis chapters in *De Contagione* can be used as a commentary on the poem” (16). Though detached from the poem, the effect of the volumes is not unlike the compendious footnotes Grainger appended to *The Sugar Cane* and, more interestingly, his own prose *Essay on the more common West-India Diseases*. And, just as Grainger’s footnotes at times reveal tensions between competing ideas, Fracastoro’s poem contains “inconsistencies” and “clumsily avoided” conclusions, revealing that his own “mind was uneasy” about the origin of syphilis and leading him to return to the form and the subject in an effort to clarify his positions (16). Both poems convey an earnest tone that approaches their respective topics seriously, employing the mock-heroic strategically without engaging in burlesque. Grainger’s pragmatism toward the brutality of slavery contributes to the jarring effect of the poem to his audience’s ear—attuned as it is to a sanitized presentation of the theme.

Manilius’s *Astronomica* presents one of the starkest alliances of scientific material and myth available in Classical didactic epic, effectively upending Addison’s mandate that the “georgic” deal strictly with agriculture in a pleasing and aesthetically palatable manner. The epigraph from Manilius’s *Astronomica* situates Grainger’s didactic epic

effort within a body of Classical works outside the limited scope of agriculture that the “georgic” permits. Instead, the epigraph from *Astronomica* asserts a daring effort on Grainger’s part, one that, in his introduction to the poem, Gilmore dismisses, stating

Although Manilius had been given a comparatively recent edition (1739) by the illustrious English scholar Richard Bentley, he was never as widely read as more famous Latin authors such as Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. Nor, in fact, is there any need to suppose that even Grainger had read all of the *Astronomica*—the quotation comes from the very beginning of the poem.<sup>128</sup>

Gilmore’s cursory observation assumes that the epigraph’s whole *raison d’être* is to imagine the cane fields as a “sylva,” yet the botanical knowledge Grainger evidences in the poem does not align the cane with trees, as Gilmore suggests. Grainger’s imitation emphasizes the artistic effort of “novel offerings” laid on the poetic altar. Grainger’s epigraph from Manilius asserts the “artistic boldness” that Gilmore subsequently cites as an intentional feature of Grainger’s effort (32). “And to be the first to stir with these new strains the nodding leaf-capped woods of Helicon, as I bring novel offerings untold by any before me: this is my aim.”<sup>129</sup> That is, Grainger’s frequent preference for Caribbean vernacular over Latin or poetic periphrasis demonstrates a deliberate incursion into the English language rather than an inability to construct innovative ways of referring to unseemly colloquialisms. His effort is not merely linguistic but also formal as he strives to stretch the genre’s capacity to blend poetry and science. Further, the claim outlined in Grainger’s selection of epigraph is a startling one: despite following Classical models, Grainger primarily aims at usurping these same models with his “novel offering,” in an attempt to secure his position as a poet, commoditizing himself even as he imports colonial concerns.

In particular, I note Grainger's use of footnotes to construct a hybrid poetic and prose text as an innovation to the didactic epic form, building on Manilius's frustrated efforts to translate scientific material into poetry. In Chapter Two, I posited an external apparatus's ability to provide commentary on the poem in Gay's *Trivia* as an innovation made possible by emerging print technology. However, Grainger's use of footnotes to effectively hyperlink the prose commentary to his poetry suggests a hybrid form particularly suited to the epic inclinations of the genre's most scientific topics because it declares the importance of the topic as both an aesthetic commodity and a heroic project of empire building.

The hybrid mode is attuned to the conflicting voices of science and poetry for instruction and delight. Whereas strict adherence to Addison's framework winnows precepts so that only those of interest to the layperson or invested observer remain, this same winnowing often mutes the epic efforts found in Classical iterations of the genre because editing precepts can denude content of its most complex moments, thereby reducing the subject to a status no longer suited to epic. Meanwhile, Toohey reminds us that the Classical model frequently saw didactic as a form of epic, arguing that Manilius's didactic epic is a multibook tome on the subject of astronomy that strives to situate "Didactic poetry . . . [as] a collateral form of epic" (184). To that end, Manilius emphasizes the scientific aspect of astronomy, overloading his third book with a "remarkable number of mathematical calculations" (180) just as Grainger weighs down his poem's footnotes with natural history. Like Manilius's, Grainger's effort is a striving one that seeks to elevate the genre and its topic to epic status.

One crucial parallel between *The Sugar Cane* and *Astronomica* occurs in the opening cataloguing of traits indigenous to various groups of Africans in the first several hundred lines of Grainger's fourth book (IV.38-157). While Grainger ascribes the attributes, abilities, and character qualities of African tribes commonly bought as slaves to culture or climate, the manner of description and the rhythm of the passage mirrors Manilius's horoscopes. In addition to his fourth book tracing zodiacal influences on character and attributes, Manilius devotes a substantial portion of his fifth book to an inventory of the traits imbued in individuals "produced by the influence of constellations outside the zodiac (5.32-709)."<sup>130</sup> Both catalogues invoke the muse to explain human inclinations originating in a sphere inaccessible to influence and alteration—for Manilius, the cosmos, for Grainger, geography. Whereas Grainger summons the muse to sing how "In mind, and aptitude for useful toil / The negroes differ" (IV.38-39), Manilius commences: "Together with the other stars that glide at large throughout the heavens. I must tell of the powers peculiar to all these constellations, their influences both when rising and when they sink into the waves, and which degree of the zodiac brings each of them back above the horizon."<sup>131</sup> Thus, although Grainger concludes his catalogue with a precept, advising, "To easy labour first inure thy slaves" (IV.158), he stops short of admitting that the differences he observes among various African tribes are malleable—except to note that for all tribes the willingness to labor decreases with age. That is, to Grainger, *all* Congolese "ill bear the toilsome field; but boast a docile mind, / And happiness of features," and are therefore suited only to the "nice mechanic art" or "To household offices" (IV.49-50, 51, 52). Both Manilius and Grainger regard human difference as cosmically established "when the World was fram'd" and sustained by

either the force of constellations or the features of geography. For Grainger, geography functions as a modern scientific corollary to astrology. In similar fashion, for Manilius, “Take away the births of men situate beneath these constellations and you will take away the Trojan war and the fleet which both set sail and made landfall with bloodshed” (Goold 303-305).<sup>132</sup> Repeatedly, both Grainger and Manilius view the temperament and inclinations of various groups as fixed—not unlike the constellations or the geographical features of a region. Grainger’s fourth book opens with an invocation to the “Genius of Africk!” and then proceeds with a register of the traits and temperaments emblematic of various African tribes and nations outlining their suitability as slaves. While scholars have noted the parallels of this passage to Virgil’s catalogue of the traits of bees at *Georgics* IV. 220-244 (Dryden’s translation), the imitation of Manilius’s account of the “Zodiacal influences on the native” opening his fourth book is compelling as a parallel adaptation of Virgil. Grainger, following Manilius, expands substantially on Virgil’s brief delineation of the duties of each type of bee.

Grainger first follows Manilius in assigning traits to the groups of slaves based on the native origin of each. For Manilius, the Latin “nascentibus” refers to those “born under” the influence of a constellation, emphasizing the importance of one’s zodiacal nativity, whereas Grainger uses the analogous “native” to proclaim the importance of one’s cultural and geographical nativity. In his imitation, Grainger suggests a similarly fatalist outlook on the influence of one’s birth in determining one’s temperament and abilities. The notable absence of this notion in Virgil’s treatment of the bees (where the various types—such as drone—are catalogued only by their duties in the hive with no investigation of the source of the differentiations among the bees) supports my claim that

Grainger saw in Manilius a useful improvement on Virgil. As scientists, both Manilius and Grainger seek out scientific origins for observable features. Influenced by this training, Grainger is also pragmatic in his defense of slavery. Though he concedes poetically that Africans would benefit from freedom, his prose text—in which he defends his own involvement as a physician and profit-minded slave owner—suggests he is not as conflicted as his poetic persona implies.

Manilius's progress through the first five signs of the zodiac—from the Ram (Aries) through the Lion (Leo)—illuminates the parallel passage in Grainger, whose indebtedness to Manilius provides commentary on the imitation. Manilius commences with Aries at line 122 and proceeds through the constellations in an orderly fashion. The first four characterizations betray a strong correspondence between the influence of the signs and the ordering and characterizations Grainger provides for the slaves of various regions in his own catalogue.

Grainger's opening description of the Congolese slave is indebted to Manilius's horoscope for those born under the sign of the ram. The Congolese attributes of industry and independence seem culled from the Ram's docile nature and the fleece nationally commoditized in Great Britain.<sup>133</sup> In Manilius, one born under Aries's influence:

will yield his produce for the common benefit, the fleece which by a thousand crafts gives birth to different forms of gain . . . no nation could dispense with these, even without indulgence in luxury. . . . These are the callings and allied crafts that the Ram will decree for those born under his sign: in an anxious breast he will fashion a diffident heart that ever yearns to commend itself by its own praise.<sup>134</sup>

The work of the native of Aries includes carding, spinning, weaving, and making woolen “garments of every kind” (233). According to Manilius, the constellation's sway



cultivates industry, an inclination to national gain through commodification of abundant raw materials, and an easily led personality.

The resonances with Grainger's account of the Congolese slave are obvious. According to Grainger, the "Congo's wide extended plains, / Through which the long Zaire winds with chrystal stream" evince an environment that nurtures human temperaments ill-suited to field labor because of its abundant climate. The formula and terminology of the natural environment echo Manilius's "rich abundance of fleecy wool" that, when depleted, returns "with a fresh supply" (233). For Grainger, the suitability of Congolese slaves to "household offices" arises as a direct result of the fecundity of their native environment:

Where lavish Nature sends indulgent forth  
Fruits of high flavor, and spontaneous seeds  
Of bland nutritious quality, ill bear  
The toilsome field; but boast a docile mind,  
And happiness of features. These, with care,  
Be taught each nice mechanic art: or train'd  
To houshold offices: their ductile souls  
Will all thy care, and all thy gold repay" (IV.46-53).

The parallels with Manilius persist in Grainger's mention of "mechanic arts" akin to the catalogue of tasks related to converting fleece to commodities. Further, Grainger's diction indicates a final relationship between the two passages. In "docile" and "ductile," Grainger suggests a sheep-like temperament evident even without the Latin etymology of "ducere" (to lead) that Manilius uses in his description of the ram's desires.

Turning next to Manilius's Tauran horoscope and Grainger's depiction of "Papaws" and other slaves brought from the Gold Coast, one discerns a temperament suited to servitude and hard labor. In Manilius, the Tauran is amenable to hard labor not

because of physical kinship to the bull, but rather because of the native's willingness and natural tendency toward steady, laborious toil. Manilius observes:

It bows its neck amid the stars and of itself demands a yoke for its shoulders. When it carries the sun's orb on its horns, it bids battle with the soil begin and rouses the fallow land to its former cultivation, itself leading the work, for it neither pauses in the furrows nor relaxes its breast in the dust."<sup>135</sup>

In describing the cultivation of the land by cattle willingly yoked to a plow as a glorious pursuit restoring "the fallow land to its former cultivation,"<sup>136</sup> Manilius emphasizes the epic underpinnings of agriculture in the same way that he establishes wool and garment-making as a national pursuit in the horoscope for Aries. Manilius proceeds to establish Taurus as the sign of dictators such as Cincinattus, thereby augmenting the epic theme.

Initially, Grainger's interpretation of this passage regards "want alone" as the stimulus organizing the nature of slaves brought to the Caribbean from the Gold Coast, in particular "the Papaws."<sup>137</sup> However, closer examination of Grainger's formulation of necessity establishes that climate is, again, the underlying source of inclinations. If a plantation manager desires slaves suited to labor in the cane fields, Grainger urges,

Planter, chuse the slave:  
Who sails from barren climes; where want alone,  
Offspring of rude necessity, compells  
The sturdy native, or to plant the soil,  
Or stem vast rivers for his daily food. (IV.58-61)

According to Grainger, the Papaws and numerous other tribes from the barren Gold Coast "from rapid Volta to the distant Rey" (IV.65) habituates them to the grueling labor of the cane fields. One notes as well how Grainger's diction "the sturdy native" to describe the physical features of the slave echoes Manilius's sketch of the Bull that Goold translates: "their hearts and bodies derive strength from a massiveness that is slow to move."<sup>138</sup> That

is, the aspirations of these parallel groups are tied to productivity and the steady, diligent plodding necessary to entice “the fruits of the earth”(233) or “the ambrosial cane” to “shade many an acre” (*The Sugar Cane* IV.55-56). Grainger’s concern, like Manilius’s, is not individual agricultural effort, but the collective work of a nation harnessed to cultivate greatness through large-scale agriculture. In transporting Papaws to the West Indies, Grainger imagines a productive channeling of their native inclinations in the service of the empire. Later, he emphasizes, the exchange has even improved their condition.

Turning to the next item in the catalogue, Grainger’s passage (IV.81-102) blends the treatment of two African nations, the Cormantee and the “Moco-nation.”<sup>139</sup> However, this conflation still signifies direct borrowings from Manilius’s sequential horoscopes for the Twins (Gemini), the Crab (Cancer), and the Lion (Leo). First, Grainger generates a twinning effect in the description of the Cormantee by dividing the characteristics of the tribe by gender. Where Manilius suggests Geminis accustomed to leisure and an easy life—“theirs is a life of ease and unfading youth spent in the arms of love” (235), Grainger adapts this horoscope for the Cormantee division of labor by which women primarily labor and men enjoy a life of ease. In casting this gender-differentiated response to environment—in a parallel to Manilius’s horoscope for Gemini—Grainger redoubles the twinning effect of the sign, with Cormantee men exhibiting the attributes of Manilius’s Gemini:

At home, the men, in many a sylvan realm,  
Their rank tobacco, charm of sauntering minds,  
From clayey tubes inhale: or, vacant, beat  
For prey the forest; or, in war’s dread ranks,  
Their country’s foes affront; while, in the field,  
Their wives plant rice, or yams, or lofty maize,

Fell hunger to repel. Be these thy choice:  
They, hardy, with the labours of the Cane  
Soon grow familiar; while unusual toil,  
And new severities their husbands kill. (IV.89-98)

The reappearance of twin imagery emerges along gender lines in which the male-female pair displays complementary attributes in their geography of origin. Only the Cormantee women are adaptable to labor as slaves, which is imagined as a battle against hunger. Grainger's prose essay, which I examine below, further illuminates the rebellious tendencies of Cormantee women in an omission that suggests an intentional parallel to Manilius's material.

In diction that subtly calls to mind the Cancer horoscope found in Manilius (IV.162-175), Grainger casts a tendency to revolt against slavery through violent rebellion and suicide as a natural consequence of the cultural origins of both the Cormantee and "Moco-nation." Before Grainger remarks on the inherent suitability of Cormantee women (a claim he undermines in his prose text), he suggests that the Cormantees who are "born to freedom in their native land / Chuse death before dishonourable bonds" (IV.84-85). Liberty as an ideal parallels Manilius's Crab (Cancer) that "is of a grasping spirit and unwilling to give itself in service."<sup>140</sup> Manilius remarks that the Crab's industry is private: though the industrious and capable "Crab distributes many kinds of gain, and skill in making profits. . . . His is a shrewd nature, and he is ready to fight for his profits."<sup>141</sup> As Grainger imagines cane cultivation as a public project, the notion of private gain is antithetical to the system. Several lines later, the threat of death among "the Moco-nation," threatens the planter's financial investment as Grainger cautions that "they themselves destroy" by suicide (IV.101-102). The opening

address of this passage, however, reveals a much more sinister, personal risk for the naïve planter who purchases a Cormantee slave.

While Grainger aligns the male Cormantee with the depiction of the Gemini horoscope in their own nation, he remarks that, in slavery, the altered geographic and social conditions lead to a different outcome—a characterization of the Cormantee aligned with Manilius’s Leo horoscope (4.276-188). Introducing the passage on Cormantees, Grainger cautions that some choose not their own death but rather that of the Creole planter and his children:

Yet, if thine own, thy children’s life, be dear;  
Buy not a Cormantee, tho’ healthy, young.  
Of breed too generous for the servile field;  
.....  
Or, fir’d with vengeance, at the midnight hour,  
Sudden they seize thine unsuspecting watch,  
And thine own poniard bury in thy breast. (IV.81-88)

A resident of the West Indies, Grainger was no stranger to slave rebellion, and the image is a startling one. Echoed in the brutality Grainger details is the character of Manilius’s “monstrous” Lion (Leo). Amplified in Grainger’s context by the underlying fear of slave revolt, the characterization of the lion warrants quoting at length:

Who can doubt the nature of the monstrous Lion, and the pursuits he prescribes for those born under his sign? The lion ever devises fresh fights and fresh warfare on animals, and lives on spoil and pillaging of flocks. The sons of the lion are filled with the urge to adorn their proud portals with pelts and to hang upon their walls the captured prey, to bring the peace of terror to the woods, and to live upon plunder. . . . They swagger about . . . display mangled limbs . . . slaughter to meet the demands of luxury, and count it gain to kill. Their temper is equally prone to fitful wrath.<sup>142</sup>

The cumulative effect of the brutal imagery injects a chilling subtext into Grainger’s simple advice to those who hold their own lives “dear.” Awareness that Cormantees were

regularly associated with slave revolts intensifies Grainger's warning without the need for protracted imagery. The context provided by Manilius's catalogue of Leonine traits suggests that the lion's ferocity targets productive and industrious endeavors with an aim to instill "terror" and disrupt the machine of slavery through pillaging and plundering—precisely the effect of slaves who rose up against their owners—rather than committing suicide or fleeing to the hills and living as fugitives. Thus, Grainger concedes that some Africans will unsettle the operation of the colonial project, and suggests that management orchestrate a heroic collaboration between nations. The underlying ideology Grainger proposes unfolds in his careful alignment of science with the dominant ideology of the previous eras.

If one acknowledges that Grainger builds on Manilius's cataloguing of traits, the undertaking suggests a meaningful alteration and adaptation to Grainger's situation and era: the influence of climatology rather than astrology. Notwithstanding the occasionally confused geography of Africa in Grainger's summaries, as Gilmore remarks in his explanatory notes to the passage, "The belief in differing national characteristics among slaves was widespread among the planters."<sup>143</sup> Yet Grainger's index bolsters common classifications through specific rationales for the various traits and characteristics—a feature lacking in Virgil but evident in Manilius. Grainger's emphasis on a type of scientific observation akin to his methods as a physician and research into natural history bespeaks a desire to explain the origin of these folkloric classifications rather than just to report on them. In shifting attention from the sum to the equation, Grainger recognizes the ability of the didactic epic genre to sustain dense material. Following Manilius, Grainger sets out to demonstrate the flexibility and suitability of the genre for scientific

matters, simultaneously demonstrating skill in manipulating the form. Borrowing Manilius's horoscope, Grainger argues for the inevitability of racial hierarchy and natural collaboration between disparate cultures in successful (e.g., profitable) plantation economies. Thus, Grainger links economics to both labor and the management of that labor. His ideology recognizes and fumbles to accommodate what Hawkes (writing in the twenty-first century) describes as the dilemma of postmodernism: "Capital is objectified labour . . . it stands in logical contradiction to human subjective activity, to life itself."<sup>144</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that Grainger abruptly transitions from an imitation of Manilius's horoscope in the middle of an incomplete catalogue to the treatment of diseases among slaves—the subject of his own parallel prose text: *Essay on the more common West-India Diseases*.

Colonial Contexts: Fracastoro's *Syphilis* and Grainger's *Essay on  
the More Common West-India Diseases*

In "Art Transforms the Savage Face of Things," McAuley carefully attends to the "undermining" voice that emerges in Grainger's footnotes, bringing to light new and nuanced readings of Grainger's verse that sustain tensions and create the polyphony characteristic of the didactic epic genre, such as destabilizing the primary emphasis on nationalism. McAuley furthers observations by carefully situating Grainger as a subaltern figure, "a Scotsman propagandizing British imperialist ideology," permitting the most nuanced critical reading of the poem I have come across.<sup>145</sup> That said, the limitations of lineage and form imposed by the convention of categorizing *The Sugar Cane* as a "West Indian Georgic," as McAuley and others before him do, disregards the discourse that takes place by situating *The Sugar Cane* within the didactic epic tradition.

Where nearly all critics since Boswell have been compelled to restate Samuel Johnson's public ridicule of Grainger's diction in describing the threat of rodents to a cane crop, only McAuley interrogates the passage, seriously acknowledging "it is evident an infestation of rats on St. Christopher could seriously upset Britain's economic stability" (98).<sup>146</sup> McAuley then dives deeper into the ideological tension of the passage, exploring the "political significance of the footnotes as 'subtext'" (98) through which Grainger details the destructive capacity of successive colonization by the "Spanish, French, *and* English to behave as 'whiskered vermin' in this colonial context."<sup>147</sup> In observing how even the English are not spared by Grainger's footnotes—McAuley points out that Grainger includes the English as "plunderers," thus aligning them with their predecessors as a "similarly invasive species"—McAuley unravels the underlying metaphor that makes Grainger's elevation of vermin to high poetic matter such an unsettling burlesque for British literary consumption.<sup>148</sup> Though he acknowledges an improvement for English occupation, Grainger suggests that Creole governance presents the ideal system because native.

Even in this revelatory disentangling of an overlooked and dismissed passage, McAuley's insight can be substantially furthered by examining Grainger's poem within the lineage of the didactic epic genre because this broad lineage immediately connects *The Sugar Cane* to an ideologically and formally resonant precedent in Fracastaro's *Syphilis* (1530). Reading Fracastaro's *Syphilis* as a source for Grainger's poem unveils a genealogy excluded from strict Virgilian "georgic" classifications of the poem and delivers a set of references not only available, but also familiar, to Grainger's audience. Acknowledging Fracastoro's *Syphilis*—"Perhaps the most famous Renaissance Latin



poem”<sup>149</sup>—as a significant influence on Grainger’s *The Sugar Cane* (1764) both anchors earlier arguments and opens new avenues for interpreting Grainger’s treatment of the genre and of his subject. Reading *The Sugar Cane* alongside *Syphilis* allows one to map a parallel between Columbus’s encounters in the West Indies and Grainger’s era, and then to recognize Grainger’s formal innovations (whether footnotes or the more complex overlay of multiple themes) as well as his amplification of the ideology of didactic epic.

Likewise, claims such as that made by Fairer about the “divided responsibility of Grainger’s task as a poet and a doctor” would benefit from acknowledging Grainger’s borrowing from antecedents such as the Renaissance neo-Latin poem *Syphilis* and English didactic epics such as Tate’s *Panacea*, each of which successively struggles to balance high art and copious scientific matter in the genre. It is also worth noting that Tate translated *Syphilis* into English just a few years before publishing *Tea*. Rather than assigning a “divided” emphasis, a fuller view of the genre admits Grainger’s equal concern with history, geography, natural history and medicine—all themes commonly cohabiting in didactic epic. Despite Grainger’s declared imitation of Virgil’s *Georgics*, his references to other didactic epics, specifically *Astronomica* and *Syphilis*, demonstrate an expanded view of the genre that manages the conflict between the poetic and scientific in Grainger’s theme and subject.

Because didactic epic has always lived alongside prose texts on the same subject (Toohey), Grainger’s approach to the genre presents unique opportunities for study of the substantial innovations and professionalization of natural history and medicine during the eighteenth century. Further, Grainger exploits the capabilities of modern printing technology by using extensive footnotes to sustain the tension of poetry and science’s

competing voices. Unlike Fracastoro, whose massive prose text *De Contagione* was written decades later as a response to his frustration at the limitations of “the poem that had not allowed him enough scope, so that he had been forced to omit details,”<sup>150</sup> Grainger uses the marginal space of his printed poem to amplify the layered voices of his poem. Grainger’s early draft of the poem, which survives in manuscript form, has “comparatively little in the way of annotation which is so prominent a feature of the published poem.”<sup>151</sup> One wonders if Grainger’s choice to circulate the poem without footnotes but publish it with annotation was a conscious one based on the limitations of poetry or the possibilities of print. Notably, the only substantial section of his poem that lacks footnotes is the beginning of Book IV, on the care and management of slaves. Grainger’s own prose work *Essay on the more common West-India Diseases* externally amplifies the thematic content of this section.

Grainger’s own prose text illuminates the fourth book of *The Sugar Cane* through expansive medical and cultural commentary in the same way that his footnotes proffer a prose foray into natural history alongside the didactic epic. Whereas Grainger’s intended audience of his footnotes for *The Sugar Cane* is the same audience that will read the poem, the audience for his essay published the same year bears a more complicated relationship to the shared subject matter. Grainger published his *Essay on the more common West-India Diseases* the same year he published his didactic epic, in which the fourth book parallels the structure and content of his essay, suggesting that, for some at least, the two would serve as fraternal texts. Thus, for those reading both—or for critical interpretation of the poem—the plain, direct language of the essay betrays Grainger’s

biases and perspective on slavery, providing commentary on his treatment of the colonial project.

Just as successive critics have failed to puzzle out Grainger's seeming ambivalence toward the care of slaves and conflicting themes of abolition and amelioration, one is unlikely to locate a unified stance in the poem. Grainger's prose text no more clearly elaborates the same positions; yet, notably, Grainger does not seem at all concerned with harmonizing conflicting views into a cohesive response to slavery. Rather, both the essay and the poem employ the position convenient to the immediate precept without a controlling position. In this way, a polyphonic voice emerges in reflections that celebrate dual purposes such as the hope that a "more scientific manner" in the treatment of enslaved Africans will "save many valuable lives; a circumstance not less profitable to the owner, than pleasing to humanity."<sup>152</sup> That Grainger thematizes duality in the prose text without seeking to resolve it suggests the uneasy comfort of those involved in slavery. To the modern reader, the advice to treat new slaves with "the utmost humanity" in order to ease them into an inhumane bondage appears ironic; yet, for Grainger's audience, both in Britain and the colonies, the tension was palpable and familiar.

The voice of the essay emerges as frank, unapologetic, and direct—or, as Grainger acknowledges, "It is, therefore, wholly divested of the parade of learning, being purposely written with as much shortness as was consistent with perspicuity. The more effectually to attain these ends" (i-ii). In other words, the aim to instruct trumps pleasing the audience in matters of style. Unlike the majority of the footnotes in *The Sugar Cane*, which serve to amplify "the parade of learning" and delight the reader with novel

information in the form of compelling discoveries and histories, the matter of the prose text explicitly instructs its multiple audiences.

Grainger's essay makes his audience unambiguous through instructions on how to use the text, recommendations, and marketing material appended by the publisher. Numerous times, Grainger urges the reader not to substitute the treatise's guidance for appropriately trained medical providers but rather to consult it in the interim, so he "will not . . . be so much at a loss . . . till proper advice can be called in" (v-vi). Thus, the first intended audience is a local—often Creole—manager. In the final pages, Grainger suggests, "Every owner of an estate ought to have the following medicines sent him annually from England" (74). Hence, the projected readership is a local one, present on the plantation, whether Creole or British. The subsequent Jamaica imprint of the essay underscores the local emphasis. Directed at those whose finances hinged on the machine of slavery, Grainger's premise proclaims the importance of conservative financial management by maintaining the health of one's slaves: "At a time when the demand for Negroes, on account of our new acquisitions in America, must become annually greater" (iii). Lastly, the advertisement aligns the estate owners with others whose financial ventures depend on the colonies, advertising to "Merchants trading to North America" a volume on hemp and a two-volume account of the colonies in Louisiana, Virginia, and Carolina. This secondary emphasis suggests that the material Grainger disseminates will also be consumed by parties in Britain concerned with larger economic and political issues the empire was facing.

The alignment of prose and poetry texts manifests from the outset with Grainger's prefatory allusion to Terence's play *Heauton Timorumenos*. The Latin epigraph from

Terence opens Grainger's *Essay on the more common West-India Diseases* as the final sentence of the preface. A standard translation of the epigraph as it appears in the essay is, "I am a human, and I consider nothing that is human alien to me."<sup>153</sup> Meanwhile, Grainger's own subtly altered translation of the epigraph occurs near the beginning of Book IV of *The Sugar Cane*. Concluding the invocation in the poem, Grainger writes, "a man thou art / Who deem'st naught foreign that belongs to man" (IV.36-37). The shift from first person to second person establishes the distance between Grainger's prose voice and poetic voice. In the prose text, he asserts his own humanity using an untranslated Latin epigraph (accessible only to a similarly learned audience). The implied argument is an elevation of his subject matter due to its importance to empire and to men like himself; that is, those financially invested in colonial ventures. In contrast, the third-person "a man *thou* art" of the poem seeks to uplift his audience through contemplation and learned observation of the same subject matter: the care and maintenance of slaves.

Further, Grainger's choice of "foreign" to translate the Latin "alienum" in his allusion suggests a particular emphasis on the importation of Caribbean culture and its concerns in Book IV of *The Sugar Cane*. The Latin root "alienus" may be translated as "of another, belonging to another, not one's own, foreign, alien, strange," with "foreign" carrying the dual meaning of proceeding from another and irrelevant to the matter at hand, both of which were prevalent uses in the mid-eighteenth century. Grainger's decision, then, to open his discussion of the selection of black bodies at a slave market with the reminder that the humans he will examine under the scientific microscope are both different in the sense of unfamiliar and relevant to the whole of Grainger's project is a substantial directive to his audience. Grainger intimates that the human-ness of his

readers emerges over the course of the following passage as they deign to observe the foreign humans, thereby making them familiar.

However, the footnotes in the fourth book of *The Sugar Cane* interrupt the steady progress of erudition displayed in the first books, indicating a shift in the subject and its relation to Grainger's intended audience as he turns to the matter of slavery. The first footnote in Book IV occurs at line 137, as Grainger turns to the treatment of common diseases—well after concluding his treatise on the merits and suitability of various Africans tribes. Though the fourth book's primary subject matter is the selection, management, medical care, and general concern for slaves, beginning with the first footnote on cherries, only four subsequent footnotes contribute additional material on that primary subject matter; those four provide anecdotes of a treatment for chiggers, alternative use of a plant for food, the invention of the "banshaw," and a brief injunction to keep the "negro-conjurers, or Obia-men . . . in proper subordination" to prevent mischief.<sup>154</sup> Further, the insistence on natural history, medical discoveries, and British political events calls attention to the absence of evidence for Grainger's recommendations on the treatment of slaves—a surprising fact considering the entire focus of Grainger's prose companion provides Grainger's recommendations on the treatment of slaves. Investigating this elision, one discerns the trajectory of Grainger's poem and the fourth book's complicated relationship to genre.

Considering what Grainger permits the reader to see and what Grainger obscures from view opens the possibility for understanding Grainger's work because the very elisions signify what practices of slavery Grainger finds too unseemly for commoditization. The structure of the *Essay* and the structure of Book Four present

striking parallels, so that disruptions to that symmetry elucidate the workings of *The Sugar Cane*. Though the passages unfold correspondingly, the abbreviation, combination, and omission of certain material indicate Grainger's acknowledgment of the limitations and suitability of the didactic epic genre for his theme. In abbreviations and overwriting, Grainger often works with available material to best fit the dense subject to the poetic form. In sum, these iterations simplify or combine similar material to illustrate a single precept—a practice in line with Addison's suggestion that a poet select only those practices that are "useful, and at the same time most capable of Ornament."<sup>155</sup> In most cases, Grainger culls and rearranges innocuous information to fit the imitation of Manilius, as previously discussed in the arrangement of character traits to echo the horoscope

Grainger overwrites material, subsuming information he deems too thorny—such as the Ibbo women's fertility—into a more accessible heading. This type of overwriting appears with the Africans from Ibbo territory, which Grainger (in the prose essay) describes as a culture whose work is divided along gender lines. Grainger does not mention Ibbo people in *The Sugar Cane*, and the gender-divided culture of work is ascribed to the more difficult, rebellious Cormantee (IV.89-98). Yet, in the essay, Grainger explicitly cautions against purchasing the hard-working women of this region, though they are preferable to the "men of the same country at a negroe sale."<sup>156</sup> As the passage continues, Grainger expounds on the pseudo-medical rationale for avoiding the women who "from their scantiness of cloathing in their own country, not to mention other reasons, often labour under incurable obstructions of the menses, whence proceed barrenness, and many disorders" (8). This passage bespeaks both distaste for the customs

of a foreign culture and ascription of observed medical outcomes to foreign cultures thereby distancing his own.

Grainger ignores the possibility that the Ibbo women are rebelling against slavery by inducing abortions; indeed, the “many disorders” he observes in his essay are intended to disrupt the system of slavery in concert with more traditional revolts characteristic of Cormantee men. Maria Sibylla Merian reported on the use of plant-derived abortifacients (such as *flos pavonis* [caesalpinia pulcherrima]) by slaves and Amerindians as a direct political response to their subjugation in her *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* in the early eighteenth century.<sup>157</sup> It seems surprising, then, when in Book I, Grainger mentions the same plant described as a “carnation fair” (1.520), he only briefly glosses the medical use of the plant’s leaves and flowers as an “emmenagogue”<sup>158</sup>—a plant-based substance for stimulating menstruation—the very medical condition leading to barrenness that Grainger observes in the Ibbo women in his prose essay. It becomes evident that Grainger’s project is not a mere exercise in poetic diction but a calculation of the palatability and importance of the material to his subject.

This same effect occurs when Grainger wholly excludes material in the poem that is central in the *Essay on more common West-India Diseases*, such as the extensive passage on the care of slave infants, which would naturally parallel the importance of reproduction to maintaining a profitable slave population. It is likely that these elisions signify where Grainger is most aware of the sensitivity of his poetic audience around what precepts may be made palatable through poetry, as he acknowledges his audience will find the subject matter “foreign,” but does not strive to introduce them to foreign practices that may not be naturalized. Unlike natural history, in which the collection and



cultivation of specimens was a learned and cultivated pursuit for the elite, and merchants and the conservatories were a cultural attraction, the practice of slavery was familiar only to those deeply involved in it. Further, Grainger's voice in the *Essay* is substantially less concerned with making the management and care of slaves poetic. Rather, he repeatedly observes the necessity of following his precepts to mitigate "the number of those who must otherwise be sacrificed to the pursuit of riches" (12). He does not deny that some humans will be "sacrificed," instead focusing on improving mortality outcomes as a fiscal imperative given the narrow profit margins of the sugar economy. Attempts to palliate the necessity of slavery, then, appear at odds with his practice and suggest awareness of the complexity of voice the genre permits—despite its limits on advocating a brutal theme. Though Grainger was known to bemoan absenteeism, his efforts in *The Sugar Cane* to sanitize the daily violence of slavery by focusing on the acclimatization of individuals and the geographically specific diseases, while relegating the physical abuses to a parallel text, support that he was aware of the potential of his material to repulse his audience and was working to elevate and thereby commoditize ideas about slavery.

Grainger's idealization of hybridity emerges in the second book of his essay, where he documents the importance and method of caring for pregnant slaves and their infants as an integral part of building up a gang of "Creole Negroes . . . as they are more healthy, and better for all the purposes of a plantation," though more costly to their owners.<sup>159</sup> It is no surprise that Grainger bypasses the material presented in the essay when drafting his poem on the subject, as the opening argument indirectly suggests an unsettling image of the African woman in slavery. He begins:

Black women are not so prolific as the white inhabitants, because they are less chaste, and more liable to incurable obstructions of the monthly

discharge; their children too more frequently perish, within tend days or a fortnight after their birth, than those born to white people. (14-15).

The reality that likely informs these observations is now widely understood. Enslaved women were frequently raped—their chastity was not theirs to preserve. As mentioned earlier, the use of plants such as the *Caesalpinia pulcherrimia* as a prophylactic to induce abortion was widespread. Infanticide may also have been a factor as well as harsh and unsanitary living conditions. Grainger's recommendation of mild herbal remedies and exclusive breastfeeding are in line with modern approaches, yet his focus on venal profitability returns with the reminder that "long nursing diminishes fecundity" (17).

In part, Grainger's relationship to the didactic epic genre emerges in his close adherence to Fracastoro's intervention into the genre two centuries earlier. Both *Syphilis* and *The Sugar Cane* propose a near alignment with their accompanying parallel prose texts, both work against the formalism of high diction to introduce new world terms, both treat the theme of empire at a distant remove from its geographic center in the Americas and the Caribbean. As Eatough remarks, Fracastoro "too was venturing with complete self-awareness to go beyond the scope of classical knowledge."<sup>160</sup> Leaning on Fracastoro, Grainger continues the charge of importing new knowledge as a counter to the limitations of old knowledge. Taking his charge from Fracastoro, who chose to use New World terms in challenge to Latin, Grainger upsets poetic diction in order to expand its boundaries. Gilmore acknowledges this practice, but his estimation of the intent is limited to Grainger's effort to mark the poem as local—as a West-Indian "georgic." Taking a different tack, I posit that Grainger's effort is an attempt to stretch the boundaries of the genre—a reminder that his Latin predecessors have already mapped out much wider territory for the genre than the narrow confines of the "georgic." In making it "local,"

Grainger thereby advocates re-imagining the center of empire at its margins, shifting the “seat” to the edge and the site of production to its hub.

Similarly, the thematic parallels with Fracastoro’s concern with contagion, colonization, and the origin of syphilis offer new insights for explicating the ideological tensions (competing voices) of *The Sugar Cane*. Both authors contaminate the established lexicon for didactic epic by borrowing indigenous terms, often colloquial, and low terms in a method that deliberately upset Addison’s concern that “nothing which is a Phrase or Saying in common talk shou’d be admitted to a serious poem.”<sup>161</sup> Eatough observes that Fracastoro sets a precedent of introducing indigenous terms for native flora such as the “Guaiacum” (III.35) repeatedly in his poem. Grainger explicitly builds on Fracastoro’s practice by importing numerous West-Indian and Amerindian terms for plants, relegating the Latin names to footnotes. In Book I Grainger echoes Fracastoro’s term noting, “yet the guaiac spare” (I.37). A clue to Grainger’s appropriation emerges in his footnote, in which he mentions “the virtues of every part of this truly medical tree are too well known to be enumerated here.”<sup>162</sup> The *lignum vitae*, colloquially guaiac, was widely familiar to European audiences, in large part because of Fracastoro’s work, which catalogued and lead to numerous uses for the tree in treating syphilis. In privileging Fracastoro’s term, Grainger builds on Fracastoro’s content and his poetic method.

Grainger’s own effort is a significant expansion on Fracastoro’s commandeering of indigenous terms, as the encyclopedic material of the footnotes sustains and suspends multiple voices in concert throughout the text. Though Gilmore acknowledges Grainger’s “artistic boldness,” he sees in it only Grainger’s insistence on crafting a local endeavor. He asserts, “When we find Grainger introducing yams, okras and bonavist into his

georgic, there is more than ‘novelty’ to it, there is an artistic boldness which should not be underestimated” (32). Because Grainger frequently and adeptly achieves the periphrasis typical of the genre, his departures should be viewed as a deliberate style. However, the addition of alternate terms in the footnotes amplifies the polyphony of Grainger’s poem. In favoring local terms, Grainger does not elide alternatives. This move co-locates a plurality of voices in the Caribbean sphere thereby widening the genre’s mouthpiece.

Two previously mentioned examples illustrate the function of this polyphonic tension. In the footnote for the guaiac, Grainger provides multiple names for the tree, granting colloquial names the same position as scientific terminology. Using the Amerindian term, guaiac, as Fracastoro did for the line of poetry, Grainger then provides the Latin name, *lignum vitae*, and the colonial term, pockwood tree, in the footnote. Moreover, he elaborates on the importance of the hardwood both to colonial construction and for export to Great Britain, thereby balancing the dual interests of his audience. He mentions the timber’s suitability for “posts for houses against hurricanes, and [that] it is no less usefully employed in building wind-mills and cattle-mills” (168). He then asserts the tree’s use in both Caribbean and British locales.

This same layered register exists in Grainger’s poetic reference to the *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*. In addition to the term used in the poem proper, “carnation fair” (l.520), Grainger’s footnote calls out five additional terms for the flowering shrub, including a Latinate term, an honorific of the French governor Depoinci, and two colloquial terms: “Doodle-doo” and the Barbadian proper term, “*Flower Fence*” (figure 3). A straightforward reading of these imbricated terms suggests that Grainger felt compelled

to append encyclopedic knowledge for posterity and science. Yet, Gilmore's observation that "doodle-doo," the colloquial term, was for the first draft and only later relegated to the footnote with the substitution of "carnation fair" suggests a different possibility: Grainger's sensitivity to the polyphonic tension inherent in colonial projects and the suitability of the didactic epic to sustaining that polyphony.

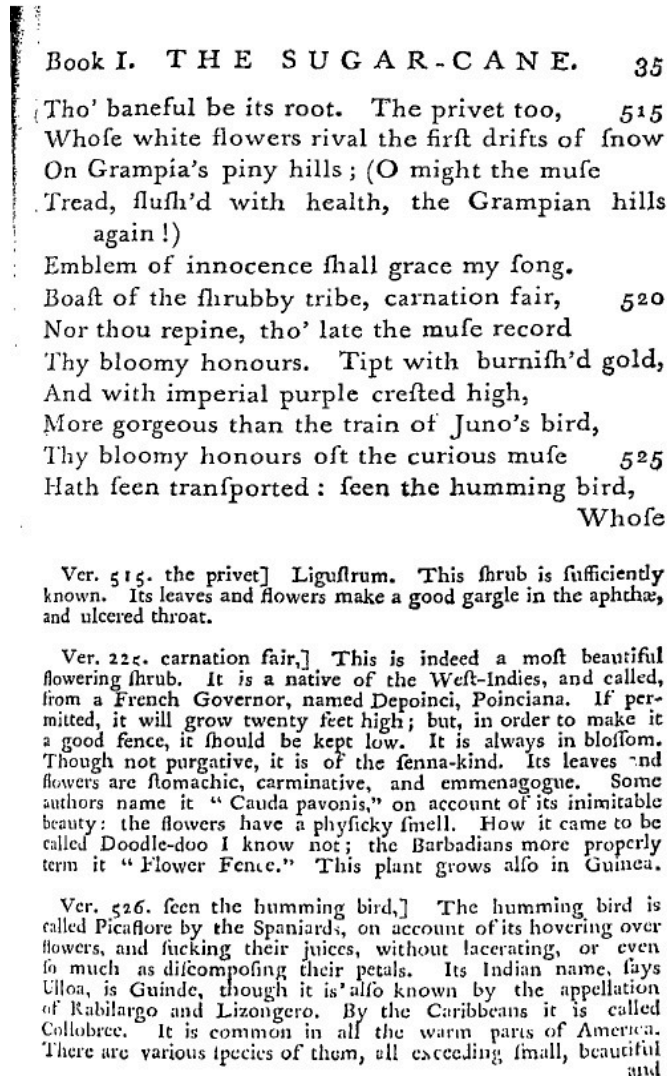


Figure 3. *The Sugar Cane* (1766) showing the footnote for "carnation fair" (I.520).

Fracastoro's *Syphilis* furnishes the framework for the polyphony that Grainger picks up in *The Sugar Cane*. Specifically, Fracastoro establishes a structure that balances the competing spheres of knowledge and reference in the West-Indian landscape, simultaneously critiquing the colonial view and elevating the colonized voice through deliberate inclusion. Cautious of overtly or conclusively applauding an Amerindian view, Fracastoro manages to uphold the tension, "recognising the mission of Columbus to urbanise America, [while] . . . on the side of the Indians and the natural man."<sup>163</sup> One notes the fine-tuning of Fracastoro's critique in his scrutiny of the European abuse of knowledge rather than an outright critique of the colonial mission. As Eatough observes, the excessive use of guns by the Spaniards that disrupts the Edenic landscape and the peace of the Amerindian culture conjures a prolonged, mythical curse on the Spanish. One of the parrots breaks from the flock's terrorized retreat and sings "a dreadful prophecy" that punishes the Spanish colonizers for their unnecessary brutality:

But it will not be granted you to place in subjection new lands and a people which has enjoyed long liberty and peace, to construct cities and change rites and sacred customs, until, having suffered to the bitter end unspeakable trials by land and sea . . . when, your bodies filthy with an unknown disease, you will in your wretchedness demand help of this forest until you repent of your crimes.<sup>164</sup>

In Fracastoro's myth-making, the parrot embodies a symbolic vocalization of the land itself, speaking out against colonization. The choice of "construct" and "change" in the incantation's phrasing resists the very process of colonization that seeks to imprint a "superior" culture. Lastly, the indigenous forest holds the antidote needed to restore the balance at some future time when the colonizers repent—a medical cure for syphilis that only becomes available when the knowledge of the indigenous population is recognized

as superior. Fracastoro advocates cultural collaboration and values information and scientific inquiry.

Grainger picks up this strain and expands on the theme of cultural collaboration at length as he advocates cross-cultural projects, amelioration rather than abolition, and hybrid ways of knowing. Although one would expect him to insist on European superiority, as an M.D., that Grainger maintains multiple (often competing) forms of knowledge—often supplanting European knowledge with other sources—suggests that he writes against the tradition of European superiority, as when he praises the “Genius of Africk!” (IV.1). In this manner, Grainger uses polyphony to propose hybridity as a superior form of knowledge. This creolized knowledge offers an alternative to European preeminence in branches of knowledge like natural history and medicine, but it is also evident in the colonial project as Grainger imagines it. Although I have already mentioned this polyphony in relation to Grainger’s inclusion and elevation of indigenous and “low” terms for various plants, the iteration of this same polyphony in Grainger’s description of slave management bears out a more complicated interdependence between multiple cultures, as evidenced in my earlier discussion of Ibbo women’s fertility management.

In describing the methods for “seasoning” “Salt Water Negroes” in both Book IV of *The Sugar Cane* and his prose *Essay on the more common West-India Diseases*, Grainger cultivates hybrid practices aligned with his linguistic inclusiveness. The bulk of his recommendations for acclimating first-generation slaves are medical treatments for various common ailments, but his essay suggests a promotion of African and Caribbean cultural practices that complement and support Grainger’s British medical training.

Eliding the practical details involved, Grainger suggests in the poem, “To easy labour first inure thy slaves . . . Let them fit grassy provender collect / For thy keen-stomach’d herds,” and at the end of year “they may / All to the Cane-ground, with thy gang, repair” (IV.158-161, 163-164). By emphasizing the medical interventions necessary to adapting Africans to the climate of the West Indies and glossing how to inure humans to the conditions of slavery in a few brief lines of poetry, Grainger mythologizes a natural hybridity emerging from instinctive collaboration between cultures. His essay, however, more fully describes the management methods that construct his creolized practice.

The repeated imagery of mixing and hybridization that Grainger emphasizes in Book IV upholds the organic ideal that Grainger imagines will spring forth from a combination of laws and wisdom. In this formula, Grainger aligns wisdom with the same various scientifically sound and humane precepts for caring for and managing slaves. Throughout Book IV, Grainger imagines the island plantations as garden spaces with hybrid, companion plantings that protect and preserve the natural fecundity of the landscape and its inhabitants. He suggests providing a cultivated, non-local diet to the slaves:

. . . . every week dispense  
Or English beans, or Carolinian rice;  
Ierne’s beef, or Pensilvanian flour;  
Newfoundland cod, or herrings from the main  
That howls round the Scotian isles! (IV.433-437)

He proceeds to suggest garden tracts hedged in by dual plantings of citrus and cotton “join’d/ In comely neighborhood” (IV.468-469). In an echo that recalls the unraveling of Fracastoro’s curse on the Spanish colonizers, Grainger explains what the absence of violence and oppression will bring about:



Then laws, Oppression's scourge, fair Virtue's prop,  
Offspring of Wisdom! Should impartial reign,  
To knit the whole in well-accorded strife:  
Servants, not slaves; of choice, and not compell'd;  
The Blacks should cultivate the Cane-land isles. (IV.239-243)

The imagery of collaboration between disparate groups for a common cause is a repetition of the hybrid imagery found in Grainger's horticultural design: complementary attributes creating a pleasing and useful whole from strange bedfellows. Instead of praising English management of the colonies, Grainger proposes the superiority of Creole administration, describing the ideal of three cultures voluntarily supporting the colonial project. And he mentions "Perhaps, of Indian gardens I could sing" in a tempting reminder that a third culture intermingles with the colonial project despite its near decimation by Grainger's era. In each of these gardens, Grainger populates the imagery with plants and produce in unconventional pairings, making claims about their natural, health-inducing compatibility. The result of this fusion is not just profitable sugar production and a decrease in slave illness and death but also, according to Grainger, voluntary cooperation in the project of empire.

Grainger expands this imagery at length later in the poem, describing how personified commerce, toil, and industry thwart nature's efforts to separate realms and peoples. Together, these forces strip nature of her well-hidden treasures, "To pour them plenteous on the laughing world" (IV.344). Grainger suggests that natural divisions between geographic regions, climates, and kinds are "foreign" in an empire-driven world:

In vain hath nature pour'd vast seas between  
Far-distant kingdoms; endless storms in vain  
With double night brood o'er them; thou dost throw  
O'er far-divided nature's realms, a chain  
To bind in sweet society mankind. (IV.348-352)

In his extended digression, Grainger likens the partnership of commerce, toil, and industry to a chain linking those engaged in a mutual project.<sup>165</sup> However, Grainger stops short of describing the participants as equals, insisting instead on a hierarchical collaboration for the production of national wealth. In this formulation, he ascribes a paternal role to commerce, “Parent of wealth!” and a filial role to the “swarms of useful citizens” who “spring up / Hatch’d by thy fostering wing” (IV.337, IV.331-332). In each image of these alliances, Grainger establishes hierarchic pairings, whether for plant or person.

Grainger imagines the British as the sole possessors of the traits he deems essential to cultivating the success of a partnership between Europeans, Africans, and Amerindians. He declaims, “white Albion” are famed “for wisdom, and for laws; / By thee she holds the balance of the world” (IV.354-355). Grainger then explains how a combination of wisdom and laws must be used by managers of slaves to successfully work with the Obia when a slave “thinks himself bewitch’d” (IV.369), a circumstance in which medical arts must cede to less scientific methods in a partnership governed by wisdom. In this way, Grainger proposes a hybrid ideological perspective by combining the ancient ideology of “lordship” with the emerging dominant ideology of democratic republicanism.<sup>166</sup> Here again, Grainger advocates accommodation of cultural practices rather than assimilation. His footnote remarks on the usefulness of Obia-men to maintaining order among the slaves, suggesting, “as the negro magicians can do mischief, so they can also do good on a plantation, provided they are kept by the white people in proper subordination.”<sup>167</sup> Collaboration—more likely collusion—remains the central image of Grainger’s “wisdom.” Indeed, Grainger’s formulation of European superiority is

paternalistic and founded on the notion of advanced cultural development and environmental influences.

However, Grainger's prose text at times goes beyond subordination and forced collaboration, advising a systematic adoption of indigenous practices he deems superior or culturally equivalent to European practices. For example, in Grainger's section on the "seasoning" of "salt-water Negroes," he again praises a hybrid approach reliant on the expertise of representatives from multiple cultures. While he initially recommends that the medical doctor intervene in a number of ways: bleeding, purgatives, the careful selection of healthy Africans at the market, he goes on to suggest that the first year should be spent under a set of conditions counter to European intervention. In addition to placing newly arrived slaves under the care of "some sober elderly person, if possible, from their own country," "anointing and bathing" with oils are considered a superior practice as it both "prevailed among the Romans" and prevents profuse sweating.<sup>168</sup> In this way, Grainger promotes cultural continuity such that even their food "should be as little different from what they eat at home as may be; and this must be learnt from their country folks" (8). Grainger's approach relies on material information acquired directly from Africans as well as on his close observation and attention to health as a physician. Much of what Grainger terms "humanity" falls into categories of basic sanitation and habitat, but the method Grainger advocates is a hybridization of culture. Grainger advocates European technology allied with indigenous and African practical knowledge in service to the project of empire.

Altogether, Grainger's aims to form alliances between British, African, and Amerindian cultures and people in order to achieve the highest profitable sugar

production envisage the Creole Caribbean state as undoing the curse proclaimed by the parrot in Fracastoro's *Syphilis*. In the British colonization of St. Christopher after the decampment of the French following the Treaty of Utrecht, Grainger paints a picture of a colonial economy at "the height of perfection."<sup>169</sup> Building on the argument McAuley sets out in his article, I see Fracastoro's myth informs Grainger's denigration of the Spanish as "whiskered vermin" making the image more than a nationalist position. In Grainger's footnote to "green St Christopher" (I.60), he reveals his indebtedness to Fracastoro's origin myth of the island's colonization and, more essentially, implies a fulfillment of the prophecy Fracastoro relates (III.174-184). Grainger shows the Spaniards thwarted in the colonization efforts by French and British settlements because they fail to match "their industry . . . to their opportunity" (171). Grainger elucidates this outcome as cosmic retribution for their moral flaws, adding, "Though the Spaniards, who could not bear to be spectators of their thriving condition, did repossess themselves of the island, yet they were soon obliged to retire, and the colony succeeded better than ever" (170). Repeatedly, the Spaniards' inability to thrive in the colonies is figured as a moral failure, and Grainger offers the superior moral management of the British as the reason for the success of the colonies under British rule.

However, Grainger locates the success of the British Empire outside the boundaries of English—or even British—identity. Instead, Grainger argues that the empire's success must be attributed to the collaboration between several groups. He then strives to augment and direct this collaboration through his precepts. Thus, Grainger not only imagines the didactic epic as a form suited to his theme, but also emphasizes its capacity for hybridity. As such, his themes depict the hybridity of plants, cultures, and

medical practice. His use of the didactic epic imagines a hybrid text blending poetry and science. So, too, do Grainger's imitations of Virgil, Manilius, and Fracastoro build on multiple references and a broad repertoire to create layered meaning, further grafting various poetic and scientific branches onto a single tree. Finally, all of these elements work together in Grainger's *The Sugar Cane*, as he attempts to combine an ancient ideology of universal domination with the emerging ideal of democratic collaboration. That the colonial project ultimately founders—as does the poem's popularity—is due in part to the flawed premise of racial hierarchies that Grainger proposes are, in the end, no more accurate than horoscopes.

Grainger stretches the capacity of the didactic epic through experiments creating a hybrid text that is both poetry and natural history, but, like Philips before him, Grainger's project is straightforward and closely aligned with a tenuous political moment thereby making it difficult to sustain its theme beyond its era. Though we return to these texts to understand the workings of the didactic epic during the long eighteenth century, the complexity of their workings often holds our interest only insofar as it affords us a view into the historical moment and the author's attempts to stabilize and reconcile his rapidly altering environment. In Philips's *Cyder* the earnest striving to marshal the didactic epic towards a unified, pastoral worldview suggests this sort of sincerity is ill-suited to the complexity of a genre that best represents moments of tension and irreconcilable vantages. Similarly, Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* offers an accomplished formal experiment in the genre building on a repertoire that emphasize the hybrid possibilities of the didactic epic to contain rich scientific matter in poetic form. Like the *Astronomica* and *Syphilis*, Grainger's poem prioritizes the scientific emphasis in ways that minimize

the poem's accessibility and permanence. Encounters with these texts, whether as student or scholar, require a substantial engagement with Classical and neo-Latin literature, with the aims of poetry in the eighteenth century, and with the spectrum of British cultural and political views.

However, in Gay's *Trivia* and Haywood's *Anti-Pamela*, a different paradigm for the didactic epic emerges because both texts amplify the characteristic polyphonic "warring voices" to create a self-contained world unto the poem that persists beyond their historical moments. In *Trivia*, the inverted hierarchy of narrative personas that privileges the individuation of the laborer, satirizes the "position of the commentator,"<sup>170</sup> and sustains the simultaneous complicity and critique of participation in the economy offers a robust view of its era that is both accessible and relevant to the twenty-first century scholar. In *Trivia* one encounters a London ecosystem teeming with poetic and human life that suggests the didactic epic is substantially more than a staid Classical exercise in poetry on the topic of farming. So too, in *Anti-Pamela*, the formal experiments with the epistolary novel and the incursion of didactic epic structures—from polyphony to didactic dinners and polyphonic narrative registers—creates an opening into the biosphere of the English novel at mid-century. In *Anti-Pamela*, more is at stake than a parody of *Pamela*. Instead, Haywood's semi-epistolary novel, like *Trivia*, contains the target of its satire within its own text as a tertiary narrative persona located in the Trickseys' letters. *Anti-Pamela* thereby permits the reader and the critic to encounter and modulate the moral concerns of the text through external lenses and interrogate the possibilities of the novel as a genre in dialogue with earlier and contemporaneous forms.

In both *Trivia* and *Anti-Pamela* the text confronts the limits of modernity through the didactic epic genre. In each, the lack of unified moral position emerges as a marker of the genre but also as evidence of the claim that each author stakes regarding the ability of his or her readers to navigate moral ambiguities. It does not matter in the end whether the moral complexities are resolved in the reader's mind, only that she entertain them in the process of her dialogue with the texts. The entrance of these moral dilemmas through the alleyways of the reader's own mind suggests the ability of literature, especially the didactic epic, to create echoes that shape the way the reader encounters other humans. Further, regarding Haywood and Gay as authors initiating the experiments that came to shape their respective genres as the long eighteenth century unfolded reorients the study of the development of English literature towards the margins of the existing canon. If Gay's and Haywood's texts offer us an alternative entrance to the eighteenth-century literary culture, they also offer us a vantage to our own moral development as consumers of literature.

#### Notes

<sup>120</sup> McAuley, "Art Transforms"; Fairer, "A Caribbean Georgic."

<sup>121</sup> Gilmore, *The Poetics of Empire*.

<sup>122</sup> Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden*, 155.

<sup>123</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 21.

<sup>124</sup> Goold. *Astronomica*, vii.

<sup>125</sup> Eatough, *Fracastoro's Syphilis*, 1.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxxv.

<sup>127</sup> Eatough, *Fracastoro's Syphilis*. 7.

<sup>128</sup> Gilmore, *The Sugar Cane*, 25.

<sup>129</sup> Goold, *Astronomica*, 4.  
agredior primusque novis Heliconam movere  
cantibus, et viridi nutante vertice sylvas;  
hospita sacra ferens, nulli memorata priorum. (1. 4-6)

<sup>130</sup> Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 181.

<sup>131</sup> Goold, *Astronomica*, 303.  
quae mihi per proprias vires sung cuncta canenda,  
quid valeant ortu, quic cum merguntur in undas,  
et quota de bis sex astris pars quaeque reducat

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 303-305.  
tolle sitos ortus hominum sub sidere tali,  
sustuleris bellum Troiae classemque solutam  
sanguine et appulsam terris . . . (5.46-48).

<sup>133</sup> As evidenced some years later in Dyer's *The Fleece* (1757).

<sup>134</sup> Goold, *Astronomica*, 232-233.  
divis fecundis Aries in vellera lanis  
exutusque novis rursum spem semper habebit,  
naufragiumque inter subitum censusque beatos  
crescendo cadet et votis in damna feretur,  
in vulgumque dabit fructus et mille per artes  
vellera diversos ex se parientia quaestus:  
. . . . .  
quis sine non poterant eullae subsistere gentes  
vel sine luxuria. . . .  
. . . . .  
haed studia et similis dicet nascentibus artes,  
et dubia in trepido praecordia pectore finget  
seque sua semper supientia vendere laude. (4.124-137)

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 233  
. . . . . summittit in astris  
colla iugumque suis poscit cervicibus ipse.  
ille suis phoebe portat cum cornibus orbem  
militiam indicit terries et segnia rura  
in veteres revocat cultus, dux ipse laboris,  
nec iacet in sulcis solvitque in pulvere pectus. (4.140-147)

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* indicit terris et segnia rura in veteres revocat cultus. (4.145-146)



<sup>137</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*. According to Gilmore: “‘Papaws’ was the name given to slaves shipped from the port of Whydah in Dahomaney (the modern Ouidah in the republic of Benin” (288).

<sup>138</sup> Goold, *Astronomica*, 235.

<sup>139</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*. The Cormantee “was a name given to a slave shipped from what is now Kromanti in Ghana, or a descendent of these slaves” (289). The “Moconation” is a more doubtful grouping and Gilmore footnotes two possibilities. One a “doubtful identity” the other “an origin in what is now south-eastern Nigeria” (289).

<sup>140</sup> Goold, *Astronomica*, 235.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

ille tenax animi nullosque effuses in usus  
attribuit varios quaestus artemque lucrorum.

.....  
ingenium sollers suaque in compendia pugnax. (4.165-166, 175).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 237.

Quis dubitet, vasti quae sit natura Leonis  
quasque suo dictet signo nascentibus artes?  
ille novas semper pugnans, nova bella ferarum  
apparat, et spolio vivit pecorumque rapinis;  
hos habet hoc stadium, postes ornare superbos  
pellibus et captas comibus praefigere praedas  
et pacare metu silvas et vivere rapto.  
sunt quorum similis animos nec moenia frenent,  
sed pecudum mandris media grassentur in urbe  
laceros artus suspendant fronte tabernae  
luxuriaeque parent caedem mortesque lucrentur.  
ingenium ad subitas iras facilisque recessus  
aequale et puro sentential pectore simplex. (4.176-188).

<sup>143</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 288.

<sup>144</sup> Hawkes, *Ideology*, 14.

<sup>145</sup> McAuley, “Art Transforms,” 96.

<sup>146</sup> Gilmore treats the passage only inasmuch to dismiss the ridicule as the dominating interpretation offering the alternative that Grainger was serious and intentional without exploring what Grainger’s intent may have been.

<sup>147</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 99.

<sup>148</sup> McAuley, “Art Transforms,” 99.

- <sup>149</sup> Eatough, *Fracastoro's Syphilis*, 1.
- <sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.
- <sup>151</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 16.
- <sup>152</sup> Grainger, "Essay on the more common," i-ii.
- <sup>153</sup> Eatough, *Fracastoro's Syphilis*. Homo sum & humani nihil a me alienum puto.
- <sup>154</sup> Grainger, *The Sugar Cane*, 194.
- <sup>155</sup> Addison, "Essay on the *Georgics*," 146.
- <sup>156</sup> Grainger, "Essay on the more common," 8.
- <sup>157</sup> Scheibinger, "Art of Medecine," 718-719.
- <sup>158</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 177.
- <sup>159</sup> Grainger, "Essay on the more common," 14.
- <sup>160</sup> Eatough, *Fracastoro's Syphilis*, 10.
- <sup>161</sup> Addison, "Essay on the *Georgics*," 149.
- <sup>162</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 168.
- <sup>163</sup> Eatough, *Fracastoro's Syphilis*, 23.
- <sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.  
 Horrendum una cannit (dictum mirabile) et aures  
 Terrificis implet dictis, ac talibus infit.  
 . . . . .  
 Sed non ante novas dabitur summittere terras,  
 Et long populous in lebertate quietos,  
 Molirique urbes, ritusque ac sacra novare,  
 Quam vos infandos pelagi terraeque labors  
 Perpessi, diversa hominum post praelia, multi  
 Mortua in externa tumuletis corpora terra.  
 [...] nec sera manet vos  
 Illa dies, foedi ignoto quum corpora morbo  
 Auxilium sylva miseri poscetis ab ista,  
 Donec poeniteat scelerum.' (III.172-192).

<sup>165</sup> The image created in Grainger's imagined partnership became an iconic one by the early nineteenth century when it was depicted by Blake in an engraving accompanying John Stedman's travel narrative of his voyage to Surinam.

<sup>166</sup> Pagden, *Lords of All the World*. According to Pagden, the "presumed right of lordship over the entire world" was an outdated idea drawn from earlier models of universalism, and that "democratic republicanism—was to become the dominant ideology of the modern world" (8, 1).

<sup>167</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 194.

<sup>168</sup> Grainger, "Essay on the more common," 8.

<sup>169</sup> Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 171.

<sup>170</sup> Copley and Haywood, "Luxury, Refuse and Poetry," 71.

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