

VIRGILIAN FORMS AND THE IDEAL OF CIVILIZATION IN ENGLISH POETRY

1700 - 1720

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Faculty of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a reading of a number of texts by Pope, Gay, Swift and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the light of the Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid.

It argues that the central concern of Virgil's poetry, revealed in the symbolic structure of each work, is the ideal civilized community, based on the conquest of furor and on a balance between the forces of civitas (political and imperial power, law, civic order etc.) and cultus (the agrarian, artistic and religious life of the nation). The work examines the redefinition of cultus and civitas in the early eighteenth-century pastoral, georgic and epic poetry inspired by Virgil. It explores ways in which the contrast between Virgil's ideal civilization and the realities of contemporary life are exploited for ironic or satiric effect and traces the emergence of the belle as a symbol of the mercantile cultus of the age. The texts considered are: Pastorals, Windsor Forest and The Rape of the Lock by Pope; The Shepherd's Week, Rural Sports and Trivia by Gay; "A Description of the Morning" and "A Description of a City Shower" by Swift and Town Eclogues by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis
has been submitted in support of an application
for another degree or qualification of this or any
other university or other institute of learning.

Signature :

Date : 13th October, 1989

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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CANDIDATE

Patricia Richardson graduated from the University of Manchester in 1957 with First Class Honours in English Language and Literature.

She has spent the past twenty-five years lecturing in English at affiliated colleges of the University, first at Sedgley Park and then at De la Salle College, Hopwood Hall.

In 1979 she was awarded the degree of M.A. for a thesis on the Golden Age myth in eighteenth-century poetry.

INTRODUCTION

Glaucou: But the City whose foundation we have been describing has its being only in words; there is no spot on earth where it exists.

Socrates: No, but it is laid up in heaven as a pattern for him who wills to see, and seeing, to found that City in himself. Whether it exists anywhere, or ever will exist, is no matter.

Plato. The Republic Book IX

INTRODUCTION

Discussion of the influence of classical poetic forms on English Augustan poetry has tended to focus on two aspects: content and style. This is equally true of contemporary criticism, such as Addison's essay on the Georgics and Pope's "Discourse on Pastoral Poetry", and of recent works such as John Chalker's study of eighteenth-century georgic verse, The English Georgic. A consequence of this emphasis has been a concentration on the distinctive nature of the various genres, the differences between them and the subject matter and stylistic "register" appropriate to each.

What I have attempted in this thesis is to analyse the Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid as symbolic structures and to point to similar structures in pastoral, georgic and epic poems by Pope, Gay, Swift and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Each of Virgil's works, I argue, contains a vision of the civilized community, represented by a hero or a group of heroes and a landscape which is partly "real", partly imaginary. Each work is, then, a self-contained imaginative world which reflects both the actualities and the potentialities of the external, historical world. I have designated the elements which make up Virgil's poetic world "civitas" and "cultus", and argue that civilization, in Virgil's terms, depends upon a balance between these elements. I relate this recurrent pattern in Virgil's poetry to the political and cultural circumstances of his age, the turbulent years of the late republic and the rise of Augustus.

The English imitations or adaptations of Virgil which I discuss also reflect the preoccupations of the age in which they were written, the period between the death of Dryden and the South Sea Bubble, a period, I suggest, when English cultus and civitas were being redefined in terms of mercantile enterprise and expanding international trade.

My first chapter defines the terms, cultus and civitas, and demonstrates their significance in Virgil's poetry. In the next three chapters, which are devoted to pastoral, georgic and epic, I consider the development of the formal eclogue through Pope's Pastorals, The Shepherd's Week and Town Eclogues, examine various responses to the Georgics in Windsor Forest, Rural Sports and Trivia and offer a reading of The Rape of the Lock as an "heroicomic" reworking of the Aeneid. Chapter V explores how Virgil's idea of the civilized community is exploited for ironic and satirical purposes by Swift and by the other poets under consideration and in the concluding chapter I consider formal adaptation of the kind practised by Pope, Gay et. al. as a kind of creative criticism.

The Latin texts and prose translations used throughout are taken from the Loeb editions. As a non-classical scholar, I acknowledge my debt to Paul Alpers and Michael Putnam for their textual analyses of the Eclogues and the Georgics and to Robert Cruttwell for his exhaustive survey of the mythological background to the Aeneid. From Robert Dudley and Warde Fowler I have gained much invaluable information about Roman religion and society, and from Brooks Otis an insight into Virgil's distinctive contribution to the pastoral, didactic and epic traditions.

My greatest debt, however, is to the poets themselves, for revealing the durability and vitality of Virgil's ideal of civilization.

CHAPTER I

MERCHANTS, NOT PYRATES

CHAPTER IMERCHANTS, NOT PYRATES

"A mutual commerce makes Poetry flourish, but then Poets like Merchants, shou'd repay with something of their own what they take from others; not like Pyrates, make prize of all they meet." ¹

Pope's pronouncement on the theme of Tradition and the Individual Talent, made in a letter to Walsh in the summer of 1706, is worthy of consideration on a number of counts. Firstly, it shows the eighteen-year-old poet, whose juvenile talent for pastiche, displayed in lively imitations of Chaucer, Spenser et al, might have presaged a career as a sort of literary Autolycus, as already aware of his true vocation and of his

"relation to the poetry of the European past and to the mind of Europe." ²

The future translator of Homer and imitator of Horace is already learning

"how to make use of the resources of other poets and other poetic modes and yet remain himself and the same," ³

no parasite, but a collaborator with the great masters of the past.

Like T S Eliot, he clearly sees his own poetry as part of

"a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written" ⁴

and believes that

"what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it." ⁵

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1. The Correspondence of Alexander Pope Sherburn (ed) 5 Vols. Oxford 1956 I. 20.
 2. R A Brower Alexander Pope : The Poetry of Allusion Oxford 1959 p.2
 3. *ibid* p.2
 4. "Tradition and the Individual Talent" Selected Essays London 1932 p.17
 5. *ibid* p.15

The quotation also shows the future author of An Essay on Criticism applying himself to questions of perennial interest to literary critics : the sources of inspiration and the workings of the creative imagination, the importance or, indeed, the possibility of "originality" and the nature of that vast penumbra surrounding every work of art into which critics and scholars peer so earnestly in search of "sources", "borrowings", "influences", "derivations" and (occasionally) downright plagiarism. Pope's image of the poet as a merchant is a peculiarly resonant one. For his age, "commerce" meant something more than mere exchange of goods. Addison's almost rhapsodic essay on the Royal Exchange in the sixty-ninth number of the Spectator, just five years after Pope's letter to Walsh, depicts trade as a providentially-ordained means of distributing the rich diversity of Nature's gifts. Moreover, to his contemporaries, Pope's idea of a "mutual commerce" existing between poets of different ages and different cultures was a natural extension of orthodox contemporary literary theory grounded, as it was, in such philosophical concepts as the universality of human experience, the notion of a constant, unvarying Nature, fundamentally uninfluenced by time, place and custom and hence the existence of unchanging human values.

These values, according to neo-classical criticism, had been embodied in the two Homeric epics and in the literature of Augustan Rome. Thus, the trader-poet in search of rich merchandise would naturally resort to the great authors of classical antiquity. For the writer as well as the critic, there was but one way to "trace the muses upward to their spring":⁶

"Be Homer's works your study and delight
 Read them by day, and meditate by night;

 Still with itself compar'd, his text peruse;
 And let your comment be the Mantuan muse.
 When first young Maro in his boundless mind
 A work t'outlast immortal Rome design'd,
 Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,
 And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw.
 But when t'examine ev'ry part he came,
 Nature and Homer were, he found, the same." 7

Here we have an example of literary commerce in action. What Virgil takes from Homer is "Nature", but he repays his debt with the Aeneid which serves as a "comment" on the Iliad and the Odyssey and thus helps future generations of readers and writers to appreciate them more fully. Furthermore, Virgil's "copying" of Homer is not a matter of slavish imitation but an adaptation and re-creation of the epic form. If a poetic tradition is to survive, growth and development are necessary. Virgil extends the possibilities of epic and thus prepares the way for Dante, Spenser and Milton - and, incidentally, for The Rape of the Lock.

Though Homer was regarded as the founding father of European poetry, it was to Virgil that the poets of the English Augustan age principally turned in their quest for literary merchandise. Elizabeth Nichie's Bibliography to her Vergil and the English Poets⁸ lists thirty-six translations of his work published between 1660 and 1720 and this figure excludes imitations, adaptations and other works inspired by Virgil. As David B Morris has observed, Pope was no exception to this trend:

7. An Essay on Criticism 124-135

8. New York 1919

"A study of the poetical development of Alexander Pope yields one sure generalization : although Homer and Horace were the masters of his late and middle years, Virgil was the poet of his youth. With the exception of An Essay on Criticism, all of his major works written before 1715 - the Pastorals, Messiah, Windsor Forest, and The Rape of the Lock - reveal a style and vision dominated by Pope's familiarity with Virgil." ⁹

Morris' account of Pope's debt to Virgil is reminiscent of Pope's description of the relationship between Virgil and Homer:

"For the young Pope, Virgil was as much a sage as a poet, and what Pope learned from Virgil, above all else, involves a whole outlook on the nature of civilized man." ¹⁰

Windsor Forest, according to Morris is particularly imbued with "Virgilian attitudes". ¹¹ The same work affords a striking illustration of Pope's theory of "mutual commerce" between poets. Whilst continuing and extending the tradition of the Georgics, Pope also refers freely to other works by Virgil, notably the fourth Eclogue and the sixth book of the Aeneid. The poet, Eliot claims, must be aware of the past

"in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show." ¹²

Pope is aware of the Georgics in a different and, in some ways, more complete way than its author, since he sees the poem in relation to the Aeneid as well as to the Eclogues and can recognise how, in Putnam's words, it

"evolves from one work and anticipates the other." ¹³

This consciousness of Virgil's individual masterpieces as parts of a single great work is the "something of (his) own" with which Pope repays his debt to "the Mantuan Muse".

9. "Virgilian Attitudes in Pope's Windsor Forest" in M Mack & J A Winn (ed) Pope : Recent Essays by Several Hands Brighton, 1980 p.131

10. *ibid* p.158

11. *ibid* p.158

12. T S Eliot *op. cit* p.16

13. Michael C J Putnam Virgil's Poem of the Earth : Studies in the Georgics Princeton, 1979 p.4

A similar "commerce" with the works of Virgil is found in the poetry of Pope's friends, Swift, Gay and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, all of whom wrote in the poetic forms used by Virgil and, in their various ways, developed and extended the possibilities of pastoral, georgic and epic verse. Pope, Swift and Gay are all members of the group of eighteenth-century writers whom Paul Fussell has designated "Augustan humanists", exponents of an orthodox ethical and literary tradition based on

"a veneration, which often approaches the elegiac, for the past, a feeling accompanied by a deep instinct for the tested and proven in the history of human experience (and) a veneration for the practice of literature, for in literature as in no other human experience the mind is exercised - to the humanist, 'ennobled' - by a constant oscillation between things and symbols, between actualities and metaphors of actualities".¹⁴

Since these are the very qualities which predominate in Virgil, it is not surprising that he plays such a significant part in the "mutual commerce" of Augustan humanist poetry.

— Virgil himself is, of course, the merchant poet par excellence.

Working within a tradition of "creative imitation",¹⁵ he took the pastoral from Theocritus, the didactic poem on agriculture from Hesiod and the epic from Homer and brought to each his own unique vision. In his Tusculan disputations, Cicero expressed his countrymen's desire to challenge the supremacy of the Greek, not only in philosophy but in other branches of literature; according to D A Russell

"Virgil was among the first to take up his challenge,"¹⁶

14. The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism. Oxford 1965 pp 6-7

15. See David West & Tony Woodman (ed) Creative Imitation and Latin Literature Cambridge 1979

16. Ian M Le-M Du Quesnay "From Polyphemus to Corydon." West and Woodman p. 36

and, as Brooks Otis has argued, achieved in all three poetic forms a true originality arising out of "the essential Augustan themes" ¹⁷ : a "sense of the novus ordo inaugurated by his princeps" ¹⁸ and of "the eternally Roman struggle of pietas and humanitas against savage and barbaric violence". ¹⁹

Living, as he did, in an age of political decline and social unrest, marked by the Cataline conspiracy, Julius Caesar's fateful crossing of the Rubicon, his assassination and the subsequent proscriptions under the Triumvirate - the death-throes of Republican Rome - Virgil must have seen all too clearly the need for a novus ordo . He must also have appreciated the cost of inaugurating such a regime, especially if, as tradition maintains, his own father's farm was among the properties confiscated to reward Octavian's veterans and was restored to the poet only by favour of his future Emperor. As T R Glover suggests, despite his friendship with Pollio and Maecenas, he cannot have been altogether at ease with the

"new men, partisans and agents of Octavian ... men who were enriched by civil wars, by blood and confiscation ... Even Augustus must at times have shocked him." ²⁰

The aim of the novus ordo was the establishment or restoration of civilization. In Virgil's poetry, this is seen as dependent upon a number of personal and social qualities which may be classified under the headings, civitas and cultus. Civitas is defined as

17. Brooks Otis. Virgil : A Study in Civilized Poetry. Oxford 1964 p.39

18. Ibid p.35

19. Ibid p.35

20. T R Glover Studies in Virgil London 1904 p.29

- "1. the condition, privileges or rights of a Roman citizen; citizenship, the franchise; the citizens (as forming a community), the body of citizens, the state.
2. a city, state, commonwealth, nation. 3. the city (i.e. Rome)."

It connotes everything which contributes to the public, corporate life of the city or the state. Cultus is a more complex concept:

- "1. a cultivation, tillage, farming; a tending, care, attention to, treatment; training, education, culture.
2. mode of life, style of living, culture, civilization, refinement, elegance; 3. self-indulgence, luxury;
4. style of dress, outward bearing; attire, apparel.
5. rich dress, ornaments of dress, splendour, decoration.
6. respect paid, reverential care, honour, worship, court, attention (of the gods)."

The three main areas of meaning here are those associated with tilling the soil, with refinement and elegance and with veneration of the gods; hereafter I shall refer to these as the primary, secondary and religious senses of the word. Statesmen, administrators, magistrates, architects and generals are all concerned with civitas; the farmer, the poet and the priest represent cultus in the primary, secondary and religious senses respectively. As J H Plumb points out, the ideal Roman was expected to combine both cultus and civitas qualities:

"The simple old Roman farmer, austere, patriotic, dedicated to republican virtues, came to represent the ideal man and citizen. No matter how sophisticated, decadent or rich the Roman patrician class became, they were always haunted by the spectre of old Cato - the dedicated, frugal Roman who combined private and public virtue, who married integrity of the family with integrity of the state."²¹

It is surely significant in this context that Cato, the stern and upright pattern of public service, was the author of a standard textbook on farming.

How deep this combination of civitas and cultus ran in the consciousness

21. Introduction to Donald R Dudley Roman Society Harmondsworth 1975. p. xxiii

of the Roman people is indicated by two aspects of Roman culture - religion and language - where traces of their origins as an agricultural community were preserved into the Augustan era and beyond. The great civic festivals recorded in the Calendar of Numa corresponded to the stages of the agricultural year and the anniversary of the founding of Rome was celebrated on the same day, April 21st, as the feast of Pales, god of flocks and herds. Moreover, a number of common Latin words have their origins in peasant life: 'laetare', for instance originally meant to manure (laetamen - dung); 'pauper' was applied to land or animals giving a poor yield, whilst 'probus' and 'luxuria' were used of crops and vegetation, 'egregius' and 'eximius' of prize stock, long before they acquired a wider significance. Even military terms were derived from farming: 'agmen' meant a flock of driven animals before it came to mean a marching column; a 'cohors' was originally a pen or part of a farmyard, then part of military camp and then, by association, the unit of soldiers stationed there. What better image could there be of the union of civitas and cultus than this semantic fusion of the barracks with the barnyard?

Evidently, Virgil's ideal of civilization was in tune with the history and the deepest instincts of the Roman people at large. It must not be forgotten, however, that when Octavius came to power, this harmony of civitas and cultus was merely an ideal, not an achieved reality. The latter years of the Republic had seen an unprecedented decline in public morality, marked by a cynical disregard for human rights and the virtual abandonment of the rule of law. During the two decades preceding the Principate of Augustus, the Roman state was rent three times by civil war, with the attendant horrors of proscription, confiscation of property, assassination and judicial murder. Not

surprisingly, as well as peace and empire, the new regime proclaimed a policy of rededication to the values and virtues of the remote, idealised past. The questionable validity of Octavian's claim that he merely intended to restore the Republic need not concern us here. It is evident that, for whatever motive, he recognised the need to heal the breach between cultus and civitas which had opened during the long years of civil unrest. His choice of titles bears witness to this. Avoiding such dangerously emotive words as Rex or Dictator, he adopted the comparatively neutral Princeps to define his position in the state, whilst electing to be known as Augustus, the name conferred on him by the Senate in 27 BC on a motion introduced by Munatius Plancus. Suetonius relates how some senators wanted him to be called Romulus (the second founder of Rome) but Plancus argued that Augustus was both more original and more honourable, as sanctuaries and consecrated places were known as august. Thus the senate's final choice stressed the Princeps' role as a cultus figure, rather than as a mere civil ruler. The name was particularly apt since, by association with growth and fertility (augere, auctor etc) it suggested the close links between religion and agriculture which Augustus himself was at such pains to emphasise. And, as Donald Dudley points out it had "civitas" overtones as well:

"Its connection with Romulus who had founded Rome augusto augurio, placed Augustus in the revered tradition of the Founder." ²²

As Princeps (a title whose powers embraced those of consul, tribune and military imperator) and as Augustus, Octavian united civitas and cultus in his own person and proclaimed this union as the basis of the new Rome.

This ideal, however, remained a hope for the future, as far as Virgil was concerned. The Eclogues were written in the late 40's BC, a decade which witnessed the war between Caesar and Pompey, the violent death of both leaders and a fresh outbreak of civil conflict after Caesar's assassination in 44. The traditional date of the Georgics, 29 BC, places it at the end of the bitter power-struggle between Antony and Octavian, concluding with the Battle of Actium in 31. Only the Aeneid was composed during a period of comparative stability when, in Jasper Griffin's words,

"the victorious Octavian determined to show himself a benevolent and rational ruler" ²³

and to put behind him his

"violent past, stained by acts of bloodshed, proscriptions and expropriations." ²⁴

Literature, as Fussell asserts, creates

"a constant oscillation between ... actualities and metaphors." ²⁵

Virgil experienced the actuality of war with all its horror; in his poetry he found "metaphors" of extraordinary poignancy and beauty, to convey his vision of a better world. Chief among these metaphors is a rural landscape peopled by a variety of hero-figures all of whom are, in some way, responsible for creating and maintaining it. Virgil's love of the countryside is felt in all his poetry, not only in the pastorals and the Georgics. The Aeneid is pre-eminently an epic of the city; its theme is the search for a site on which the greatest Imperial capital in the history of the world is to be established; Aeneas' quest begins in the ruins of Troy and receives its greatest setback within the rising walls of Carthage. And yet

23. Virgil Oxford, New York. 1986 p.17

24. ibid p.18

25. Fussell op.cit p.6

the climax of the poem, the point when the hero's much-tried fidelity is finally rewarded, takes place in a rustic settlement in the woods where, among herds of grazing cattle, he stands at last on the site of the Forum. Here, for Virgil's original readers, the real world of contemporary Rome fuses with the heroic world of epic and the idealised world of pastoral in a landscape which expresses both a moral ideal and an historical truth. Virgil's account of the history of Latium contains elements of both "hard" and "soft" primitivism. The original inhabitants were a "gen^{us} indocile" ²⁶ (an unruly race) possessing "neque mos neque cultus" ²⁷ (nor rule nor art of life) until Saturn subdued them and gave them laws. Then followed the golden age, during which Saturn ruled the nations in perfect peace until

"deterior ... paulatim ac decolor aetas
et belli rabies at amor successit habendi", ²⁸

(Little by little there crept in a race of worse
sort and duller hue, the frenzy of war and the
passion for gain)

This passage constitutes a miniature allegory of the potentialities and the perils of Augustan imperialism. The present and the future are seen in the bright, clear light of the imagined past. Similarly, Evander's humble dwelling, situated by Virgil, as Warde Fowler has persuasively argued, in

"the very heart of the Rome that was to be and just
where Augustus had taken up his abode in Virgil's own
time," ²⁹

becomes both a symbol and a test of timeless moral excellence:

26. Aeneid VIII 321

27. ibid VIII 316

28. ibid VIII 326 - 327

29. W Warde Fowler Aeneas at the Site of Rome : Observations on the Eighth Book of the Aeneid Oxford. 1917 p.72

"haec," inquit, 'limina victor
Alcides subiit, haec illum regia cepit,
aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum
finge deo, rebusque veni non asper egenis.'" 30

('These portals,' he cries, 'victorious Alcides stooped
to enter; this mansion welcomed him. Dare, my guest,
to scorn riches; fashion thyself also to be worthy of
deity, and come not disdainful of our poverty.')

In order to pass through Evander's lowly portals, the hero - Hercules, Aeneas or Octavius - must bow to the values that they represent and must reject modern wealth and luxury for the simplicity and frugality of former days. In Virgil's Latium truth and legend, myth and history, reality and ideal, past and present, co-exist in a numinous landscape whose magical quality is epitomised in his image of the Capitol,

"aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis" 31

(golden now, once bristling with woodland thickets.)

The contrast implied by the words, "aurea" and "horrida" introduces once again the opposition of "hard" and "soft" primitivism, of imperial splendour and pastoral simplicity. "Horrida" can mean "rude", "uncouth" and "rough in manner" as well as "bristling". Yet, though Evander's settlement is rude, his manners are courteous, even courtly, and his Arcadian realm is probably closer to the traditional idea of the golden age than Augustan Rome, for all its architectural magnificence. As T R Glover has suggested,

"the Capitol was for (Virgil) as much the seat of Juppiter Capitolinus in the days of bush and forest as in the new
and golden splendours of his own day." 32

Yet Evander's kingdom is threatened by war; Rome, under Augustus, has

30. Aeneid VIII 362 - 365

31. ibid VIII 348

32. Studies in Virgil. London 1904 p.132

emerged at last from a long period of violence and conflict into what promises to be a lasting peace. The tension, as elsewhere in Virgil's poetry is unresolved. Gain implies loss; loss leads to gain.

In Steele Commager's words,

"Historically, we may grant that the development from the hut of Evander to the marble buildings of the Forum marked a triumph of civilization over primitive simplicity, and the eighth Book dwells upon the contrast between the two. Yet we feel not so much a sense of progress as one of loss; we are constant witnesses to the violation of the land." 33

Civilization, however, or at least the idea of civitas, is an essential feature of the Virgilian landscape. The golden promise of the Rome that is to be shines through the leafy bowers of Latium. In the Georgics, city life is contrasted unfavourably with the countryman's lot, yet Book IV is dominated by the image of the city-state, the beehive. Even in the pastoral world of the Eclogues, the herdsmen are mindful of Rome, supreme among cities,

"quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi" 34

(as cypresses ... among the bending osiers)

The opposite extreme to Virgil's rural ideal is not the city but the wilderness. Above all, he is the poet of the cultivated landscape - the water-meadows, vineyards and olive-groves; the hillsides dotted with browsing sheep and goats, the frugal smallholder's immaculately tended kitchen garden; what Gilbert Highet has described as

"the order and thrift of the (Italian) countryside." 35

It is a landscape created and sustained by that unique combination

33. Virgil : A Collection of Critical Essays Steele Commager (ed)
New Jersey 1966 Introduction p 10

34. Eclogues I 25

35. Poets in a Landscape Harmondsworth 1964 .

of labour and love summed up in the word, "cultus". As we have seen, in the Aeneid cultus was the gift of Saturn and the necessary precondition for the establishment of the golden age. Meliboeus, the evicted herdsman in Eclogue I, laments the loss of his beloved fields to some uncouth veteran:

"impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit" 36

("Is a godless soldier to hold these well-tilled fallows?")

And the Georgics is, above all, a celebration of cultus, a tribute to the work of the Italian farmer in tilling the soil, stock-breeding and beekeeping:

"Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram
vertere, Maecenas, ulmisque addungere vites
conveniat, quae cura boum, qui cultus habendo
sit pecori, apibus quanta experientia parcis,
hinc canere incipiam." 37

(What makes the crops joyous, beneath what star,
Maecenas, it is well to turn the soil, and wed vines
to elms, what tending the kine need, what care the
herd in breeding, what skill the thrifty bees -
hence shall I begin my song.)

The natural world, as it responds to human care, becomes itself humanised, so that fields rejoice in their fruitfulness, vines are married to elms and bees are admired for the very qualities - skill and thrift - they share with their master.

These happy results are not achieved without effort, however. Cattle may be stricken with plague; swarming bees may be lost. Above all, the cultivation of the soil requires knowledge, patience and a kind of grim optimism which perseveres in the teeth of all adversity. Birds eat the newly-sown seeds; weeds choke the sprouting crops;

even excessive growth threatens the harvest and must be curbed. Armed with bird-rattle, hoe and pruning-hook, the farmer wages unremitting war on the hostile forces of nature, and, through his truly heroic exertions, literally creates a better world. The Georgics salutes the farmer as conqueror and civilizer of nature, though, as Michael Putnam argues in Virgil's Poem of the Earth, even in the georgic world, the progress of "Civilization" is not accomplished without a price. The agriculturalist, like Octavius Caesar, must impose order on a savage world by conquest and maintain it by rigorous discipline. The comparison, implicit throughout the Georgics, is made explicit in the epilogue:

"Haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebam
et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis
per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo." 38

(Thus I sang of the care of fields, of cattle, and
of trees, while great Caesar thundered in war by
deep Euphrates and gave a victor's laws unto
willing nations, and essayed the path to Heaven.)

Despite Virgil's mock-modest tone, can any reader of the preceding four books fail to recognise the seriousness of the parallel drawn between the farmer's vocation and that of his princeps?

These lines also draw together the activity of the conqueror and lawgiver, bringing order and harmony in the political sphere, and that of the poet, creating an ordered and harmonious artefact, the Georgics itself. Thus, in this concluding passage, *civitas* is juxtaposed with *cultus* in both the primary and secondary senses. In the thirty-eighth chapter of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,

Gibbon identifies three necessary elements in the progress towards a civilized society:

"The poet or philosopher illustrates his age and country by the efforts of a single mind, but these superior powers of reason or fancy are rare and spontaneous productions The benefits of law and policy, of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences, are more solid and permanent But this general order is the effect of skill and labour; and the complex machinery may be delayed by time, or injured by violence. Fortunately for mankind, the more useful, or, at least, more necessary arts, can be performed without superior talents or national subordination: without the powers of one, or the union of many. . . . Private genius and public industry may be extirpated; but these hardy plants survive the tempest, and strike an everlasting root into the most unfavourable soil." 39

Here, in brief, is the theme of the Georgics : the painful achievement and precarious survival of civilization, the importance of civitas and cultus in the development of human society and the conviction that, when all else fails, cultus - in the primary sense, at least - will survive. One is reminded of the lines, towards the end of Book I, in which Virgil imagines some farmer of the future peaceably tilling his fields and coming upon the tragic relics of the battle of Philippi:

" tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro
exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,
aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis,
grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris." 40

(A time shall come when in those lands, as the farmer toils at the soil with crooked plough, he shall find javelins eaten up with rusty mould, or with his heavy hoes shall strike on empty helmets, and marvel at the giant bones in the upturned graves.)

39. The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire D M Low (ed)
Harmondsworth 1966 p.530

40. Georgics I 493-497

The two hero-figures of the Georgics, the ruler and the husbandman, correspond to the two essential elements of the Virgilian landscape, *civitas* and *cultus*. Octavius, though not Emperor in name, embodies the values and aspirations of Imperial Rome. His mission is that proposed to Aeneas by Anchises in the sixth book of the Aeneid,

" ... regere ... populos
 ... pacique imponere morem,
 parcere subiectis et debellare superbos." 41

(to rule the nations, to crown Peace with Law,
 to spare the humbled, and to tame in war the proud.)

The farmer's task, though less spectacular, is no less honourable; to provide the food on which present and future generations depend for survival, to preserve the domestic virtues and to maintain the precarious balance between man and nature, no less "civilizing" forces than peace, public order and the rule of law:

"agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro:
 hinc anni labor, hinc patriam parvosque nepotes
 sustinet, hinc armenta boum meritosque iuvenco

 Interea dulces pendent circum oscula nati,
 casta pudicitiam servat domus, ubera vaccae
 lactea demittunt, pinguesque in gramine laeto
 inter se adversis luctantur cornibus haedi." 42

(Meanwhile the husbandman has been cleaving the soil with crooked plough; hence comes his year's work, hence comes sustenance for his country and his little grandsons, hence for his herds of kine and faithful bullocks. ... Meanwhile his dear children hang upon his kisses; his unstained home guards its purity; the kine droop milk-laden udders, and ^{on} the glad sward, horn to horn, their fat kids wrestle.)

The farmer and the princeps may be described as the cultus hero and

41. Aeneid VI 851-853

42. Georgics II 513-526

the civitas hero of the Georgics. Similar hero-figures may be found in Virgil's other works, inhabiting and sustaining an ideal landscape composed of civitas and cultus elements. The rustics of the Eclogues are small holders as well as herdsmen. Menalcas refers to the celebrations at harvest time and the annual purification of the fields; 43 Daphnis can look forward to leaving his farmstead to his descendents; 44 Meliboeus laments the loss of his tiny cornfield, vineyard and orchard. 45 Moreover, they are all devoted to cultus in the secondary sense of the word : these shepherds and goatherds are not only artists - poets and musicians - but connoisseurs and even patrons of the arts. The singing-match in Eclogue III charmingly illustrates the blend of culture and agriculture in these poems : Menalcas and Damoetas improvise amoeban verses with a spirit and verbal dexterity that bears comparison with the sets of wit played between Shakespeare's courtly lovers, yet their contest remains firmly rooted in the tradition of a genuine 'folk' art, whilst Palaemon, having agreed to act as judge with all the zest and confidence of a true aficionado, once he has declared the result to be a draw turns with equal alacrity to more mundane matters:

"claudite iam rivos, pueri; sat prata biberunt." 46

(Shut off the rills now, my lads; the meadows have drunk enough)

The stakes proposed by the two contestants - a heifer in milk and a pair of exquisitely carved cups - strike a similar balance between rustic simplicity and sophisticated art.

43. Eclogues V 74-80

44. ibid IX 50

45. ibid I 71-73

46. ibid III 111

If the Eclogues may be said to have a single hero it is Daphnis, who appears in six of the poems in a variety of roles. In II, III and IV he is a conventional pastoral figure, swain and lover, but elsewhere he is seen as the embodiment of cultus. In IX, he is a farmer; in VII, he presides at a singing-match. In V he appears as a rural deity worshipped, like Bacchus and Ceres, by his fellow shepherds, with offerings of milk and oil. Daphnis is thus a cultus hero in the primary, secondary and religious senses. And if the many scholars (Brooks Otis and Friedrich Klingner among them) who identify the deified Daphnis with Julius Caesar are right, he is a qivitas hero also. This interpretation presents some problems; it is inconsistent with the treatment of Daphnis in other eclogues, particularly in IX where, as E V Rieu points out,

"Daphnis, alive, is told ... to watch his own departing soul in its ascent to Olympus." 47

There are, moreover, many discrepancies between the circumstances of the shepherd youth's life and death and the biography of Caesar. Nevertheless, Michael Putnam suggests that

"though questions of fact ... seem to stand in the way of a direct equation between Daphnis and Julius Caesar ... one cannot but presume that a contemporary of Virgil would have tended at first to form such an opinion." 48

The interpretation put forward by Paul Alpers seems closest to Virgil's intention,

"that Virgil deflected specific correlations between Daphnis and Julius Caesar, and that the association or the two figures supports the general intention of the poem, to give new (Roman) meaning to the mythical shepherd-hero who appears in Theocritus." 49

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47. Virgil : The Pastoral Poems Harmondsworth 1949 p.147
 48. Michael C J Putnam. Virgil's Pastoral Art. Princeton 1970 p.189
 49. The Singer of the Eclogues : A Study of Virgilian Pastoral
 Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1979 p.179

This "Roman" dimension, the "something of his own" which Virgil brought to Theocritean pastoral consists, I suggest, in the fusion of cultus and civitas elements in his version of Arcadia. The civitas heroes in the Eclogues tend to exist slightly apart from the Arcadian world, though they exert a powerful, if ambiguous, influence upon it. Daphnis/Caesar and the wonderful Child of Eclogue IV are dead or as yet unborn; Pollio and Varus, to whom IV and VI respectively are addressed, stand outside the world of the poems, though their very names evoke memories of the Peace of Brundisium and (if the Varus of VI is the land-commissioner, Publius Alferius, mentioned in IX) the distribution of land to Octavian's veterans - reminders that the novus ordo is, as yet, established on an uncertain alliance between Antony and Octavius and has, for some, been heralded by eviction and exile. Octavius himself, the benevolent 'god' of Eclogue I, is seen as a truly heroic figure, maintaining the Arcadian world in peace and security for the fortunate ones, such as Tityrus and Daphnis, who are allowed to retain their paternal lands, but the plight of Meliboeus and Menalcas is a melancholy reminder that, even in Arcadia, perfect equity does not always prevail. It is only in the hoped-for Golden Age that Astraea, the virgin goddess of justice, will return to earth and all men will share in the unstinted bounty of nature:

"molli paulatim flavescet campus arista,
incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva
et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella.

... ..

... omnis feret omnia tellus.

non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem;
robustus quoque iam tauris iuga solvet arator." 50

(... slowly shall the plain yellow with the waving corn, on wild brambles shall hang the purple grape, and the stubborn oak shall distil dewy honey. ... every land shall bear all fruits. The earth shall not feel the harrow, nor the vine the pruning-hook; the sturdy ploughman, too, shall now loose his oxen from the yoke.)

Bruno Snell claims that in this Eclogue Virgil is

"hoping for a miracle (and that) as a matter of principle, he pays no attention to the fact that politics is grounded in reality, and that it must of necessity resort to force in order to realize its objectives." 51

However, Eclogue IV must be read in the context of I and IX, where the harsh realities of history are not shirked. Moreover, the allusion to the Golden-Age myth here clearly shows that Virgil is presenting a vision of a perfect world rather than a realisable hope for the foreseeable future. A world populated by gods and heroes, where sheep grow multicoloured fleeces, will have no need for political action or for agricultural labour. But we must not confuse mythology with history. As Snell himself points out, Virgil and his contemporaries regarded the Greek myths as pure fictions, to be manipulated for their own literary ends:

"The Greek motifs lose their ancient contact with reality ... Each image acquires a metaphorical meaning, and in this land of literary hopes everything, as in Arcadia, must be taken with a grain of salt. Myth and reality intrude upon each other, concrete existence gives way before significance. The heritage of the Greeks is turned into allegory, and literature is transformed into a kingdom of symbols." 52

If Arcadia, like the landscape of the Georgics and Evander's Latium, represents Virgil's vision of a better world, the Golden Age described in Eclogue IV carries that vision to the uttermost limits of

51. Bruno Snell The Discovery of the Mind : The Greek Origins of European Thought (trans T G Rosenmeyer) Cambridge, Mass. 1953 p.306
 52. Snell op. cit. p.306

imagination, to the point where cultus and civitas are no longer relevant. Meanwhile, however, in the real world, they serve as necessary defences against the wilderness in nature and the wildness in man.

The taming of this wildness, the god-given task of the Roman people, is a central theme in the Aeneid, symbolised by the death of Turnus and the conquest of Latium. Aeneas is both civitas and cultus hero. As Father of Rome he is the embodiment of civitas, whose destiny is foretold by Jupiter in Book I:

"Bellum ingens geret Italia Populosque feroces
contundet moresque viris et moenia ponet." 53

((he) shall wage a great war in Italy, shall crush
proud nations, and for his people shall set up laws
and city walls.)

"Moenia" and "mores" go together : for Rome is not merely a city but a civilization, a way of life based on reverence for tradition, concern for moral values and respect for the law, qualities exemplified in the character and conduct of Aeneas, the quintessential Roman. This is what distinguishes the Aeneid from Greek epic : the hero is not primarily an individual confronting his motus but the embodiment of a nation, and of a national ideal. In Brooks Otis's words,

" ... Virgil ... is concerned with Rome and its future
and only because of Rome with Troy and Aeneas
The heroic moment is historical because it is social;
it is the moment of a people symbolized by a man."

Some readers find Aeneas uninteresting or even unattractive, compared with his Homeric counterparts; they are uneasy at his treatment of Dido and Turnus, both of whom as "characters", have an

53. Aeneid I 263-264

54. Brooks Otis The Originality of the Aeneid London 1969 p.56

emotional warmth and vitality which Aeneas appears to lack. Yet, for all their human attractiveness, they represent a destructive force that Aeneas, and Rome, must conquer, in themselves as well as in others, if they are to fulfil their destiny : the force which Virgil calls "furor" and which is terrifyingly symbolised by the gorgon, Allecto. Rage, unbridled sexual passion, thirst for vengeance, even the desire for glory if carried to excess, can drive a man or woman, or a nation, to madness and self-destruction. Against this force Virgil opposes "pietas", that steadfast fidelity to the gods, to family and to duty which links Aeneas to the farmer-hero of the *Georgics* rather than to Achilles or Ulysses. Furor, more than any human adversary, is the real enemy throughout the *Aeneid* and it remains the enemy of Rome until Virgil's own time. Thus Jupiter concludes his prophecy, not with the establishment of the city but with the closing of the Temple of Janus in 293C, signifying the inauguration of peace after two centuries of conflict:

"aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis;
cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus
iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus
saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctus aenis
post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento." 55

(Then shall wars cease and the rough ages soften;
hoary Faith and Vesta, Quirinus with his brother
Remus, shall give laws. The gates of war, grim
with iron and close-fitting bars, shall be closed;
within, impious Rage, sitting on savage arms, his
hands fast bound behind with a hundred brazen knots,
shall roar in the ghastliness of blood-stained lips.)

This, then, is Virgil's vision of the ideal Rome - a city restored to its prelapsarian innocence, before the fatal conflict between Romulus and Remus, the first of many bitter fratricidal struggles;

a city, too, based on cultus, on the ancient devotion to Vesta and Fides, deified symbols of the twin pillars on which Roman civilization was established, love of family and loyalty to the state. As Warde Fowler points out, Roman religious cults, especially the more ancient ones, were rooted in the cultivation of the land. Commenting on Caesar's revision of the Calendar of Numa, he writes:

"it exactly reflects a transition from the life of a rural population engaged in agriculture, to the highly organised political and military life of a City-state ... whose economic basis was agriculture ..." 56

Thus Vesta was the sister of Ceres and every year corn ground by the Vestal Virgins was baked into cakes on the sacred hearth to symbolise the sustenance of the state. And just as in every Roman household the family store-cupboard behind the Vestal hearth was guarded by the familial Penates, so in a shrine adjoining the Temple of Vesta were housed the Penates Publici - the Di Penates of the city, rescued by Aeneas from the flames of Troy and the furor of Pyrrhus.

As guardian of the Penates, Aeneas is associated with the principal domestic cult of every Roman household. In this respect, too, he is the ideal Roman, the embodiment of the domestic virtues, of tradition and religion, of the simple pieties of Rome's legendary past. But, as Brooks Otis points out, he also symbolises a hope for the future:

"Aeneas ... stands for a new idea in history, the idea that violentia and superbia can be controlled, that a just imperium can be established, that universal peace can be a fact as well as an ideal. ... This was something new - not perhaps new as an abstract idea but new as a practical ethic, a pattern for warfare and government." 57

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56. The Religious Experience of the Roman People From the Earliest Times to the Age of Augustus London 1911 p.26
 57. Virgil, A Study in Civilized Poetry Oxford 1963 p.382

"Violentia" and "superbia" are, of course manifestations of furor and, the Aeneid is, above all, the epic of furor conquered by pietas, the quality which, according to Jackson Knight, was for Virgil

"the central salvation" 58

- a salvation not confined to Aeneas or even to Rome but for all mankind:

"Virgil expressed the conviction which others already felt that the advance of Rome was good for the world, and a moral enterprise." 59

The cost of this advance in terms of human suffering is all too apparent to Virgil; the fate of Dido and Turnus casts a shadow over the two climactic books of the Aeneid VI, in which Aeneas is granted a vision of Rome's future glory, and XII, in which he gains the victory which will establish his line in Latium. And this cost is not exacted only from Rome's enemies; the Romans themselves must make sacrifices. The task of ruling the world is all-consuming and leaves little energy for artistic or intellectual pursuits:

"exudent alii spirantia mollius aera,
(credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore voltus;
orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus
describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent" 60

(Others, I doubt not, shall beat out the breathing bronze with softer lines; shall from marble draw forth the features of life; shall plead their causes better; with the rod shall trace the paths of heaven and tell the rising of the stars)

Anchises' prophecy of Rome's destiny is a stern and solemn injunction rather than a glorious promise:

"tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos" 61

58. Roman Vergil Harmondsworth 1944 p.355

59. Ibid p.388

60. Aeneid VI 847-850

61. Ibid 851-853

(Remember then O Roman, to rule the nations with
they sway - these shall be thine arts - to crown
Peace with Law, to spare the humbled, and to tame
in war the proud!)

That peremptory vocative, "Romane", is addressed, not to Aeneas alone, but through him to Augustus and to every provincial governor and army officer, every clerk and legionary upon whose shoulders falls the heavy responsibility of bringing Romanitas to a savage and often hostile world, a world where there is "neque mos neque cultus".⁶² Virgil is clearly aware that much will be demanded of these men - that, in Brooks Otis' words,

"civilization has to be won and if necessary re-won."⁶³

Aeneas' own experience shows that furor is an ever-present danger, not least the furor latent within himself. Like him, his descendents must learn to subdue their wilder instincts and to strive always for peace. Like him, too, they must be founders of cities where civitas is based on cultus. This is surely the meaning of the persistent custom, whenever a new colonia was established, of defining the city boundaries, by a rectangular furrow ploughed by a white ox and a white cow yoked together.⁶⁴ The same harmony of civitas and cultus is implicit in the poignant episode in Book III of the Aeneid when the Trojans eagerly set about the settlement of Pergamum, under the mistaken impression that this is the city they have been commanded to found:

"... avidus muros optatae molior urbis
Pergameamque voco, et laetam cognomine gentem
hortor amare focos arcemque attollere tectis.
iamque fere sicco subductae litore puppes;
conubiis arvisque novis operata iuventus;
iura domosque dabam : ..."⁶⁵

62. Aeneid VIII 316

63. Otis "The Originality of the Aeneid" in Studies in Latin Literature and its Influence : Virgil. T A Dorey and D R Dudley (ed)
London 1969 p.65

64. Dudley The Civilization of Rome plate 18

65. Aeneid III 132-137

(Eagerly ... I work on the walls of my chosen city, call it Pergamum, and urge my people, who rejoice at the old name, to love their hearths and build a citadel with lofty roof. And now the ships were drawn up on the dry beach; our youth were busy with marriages and new tillage, and I was giving laws and homes.)

The vocabulary of these lines suggests a perfect balance between *civitas* and *cultus* : "muros", "urbis", "arcem" and "iura" highlight the military, administrative and legal aspects of the Roman ideal; the profound and tenacious love of home and the land and reverence for the gods which are no less characteristic of Roman civilization are implied by "focos", "conubiis", "arvis" and "domus".

Here, as in Evander's settlement, the Rome that is to be is glimpsed behind and beyond the present reality - or rather, perhaps, what we catch sight of in this passage is that ideal City of which even Augustan Rome was but an imperfect image, a city which incorporates truly civilized values and the benevolent exercise of Imperial power. It is this visionary city that shines through Pope's hopeful prospect of London - significantly re-named Augusta - in the golden days to be anticipated in the aftermath of the Peace of Utrecht:

Behold! Augusta's glitt'ring spires increase,
And Temples rise, the beauteous works of Peace.
I see, I see, where two fair cities bend
Their ample bow, a new Whitehall ascend!
There mighty nations shall inquire their doom,
The world's great Oracle in times to come;
There Kings shall sue, and suppliant states be seen
Once more to bend before a British Queen.
Thy trees, fair Windsor! now shall leave their woods,
And half thy forests rush into thy floods,
Bear Britain's thunder, and her Cross display,
To the bright regions of the rising day;
Tempt icy seas, where scarce the waters roll,
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen Pole:
Or under southern skies exalt their sails,
Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales! 66

Set in a landscape whose rich cultivation proclaims the virtues of good government, Augusta extends to the world at large her civilized and civilizing influence - civic splendour, religious faith (hinted at in her "glitt'ring spires" and the "cross" blazoned on the national flag) and, above all, dedication to peace, justice and freedom.

The benevolent exercise of political power - civitas - to promote peace and prosperity creates cultus, a well-tended landscape where

"Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains," 67

whilst cultus, symbolised by the Windsor oaks from which England's new merchant fleet is to be built, is the means of extending the benefits of civitas:

"The time shall come, when free as seas or wind
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
And seas but join the nations they divide." 68

Comparing Windsor Forest with the Georgics, David Morris suggests that

"like agriculture for Virgil, commerce provides
Pope with an image of man's artful harmony with
dynamic nature." 69

In other words, commerce is a form of cultus. But, since trade can flourish only in a state of political stability and international harmony, it serves as a perfect symbol of the interaction between civitas and cultus which, I have argued, is enshrined for Virgil in the myth of Rome's Imperial destiny. As Addison's Spectator No. 69 illustrates, maritime trade could inspire in Pope's contemporaries

"a delectable vision of England's greatness and glory" 70

as the centre of the world-wide system of exchange, tending to the

67. Windsor Forest 41

68. ibid 397-400

69. Morris op. cit. p.152

70. Louis A Landa "Pope's Belinda, the General Emporia of the World, and the Wondrous Worm". Recent Essays p.184

material and moral welfare of the participants. On the other hand, as Bernard Mandeville suggested in The Fable of the Bees, it could encourage a Hobbesian acquisitiveness, not to mention such anti-social tendencies as pride, luxury and that

"darling Folly, Fickleness
In Diet, Furniture and Dress". 71

Both Roman imperium and English commercial supremacy represented the progress of "civilization"; both involved loss as well as gain.

In Virgil, I suggest, and particularly in his attitude towards civitas and cultus, the Augustan humanist poets of the early eighteenth

century found a reflection of their feeling about the contemporary world and in "mutual commerce" with Virgil's works each contributed "something of their own" to the pastoral, georgic and epic forms.

The nature of these contributions forms the subject of the next three chapters.

71. "The Grumbling Hive or, Knaves Turn'd Honest" 85-86
The Fable of the Bees Philip Harth (ed) Harmondsworth 1970

CHAPTER II

PASTORAL : A COMMUNITY OF SONG

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PASTORAL : A COMMUNITY OF SONG

William Empson sees traditional pastoral as an image of ideal social harmony, created by the pleasing juxtaposition of simplicity and sophistication and sustained by an imaginative collaboration between writer and reader, both of whom recognise and observe the conventions of the mode:

"The essential trick of the old pastoral, which was felt to imply a beautiful relation between rich and poor, was to make simple people express strong feelings (felt as the most universal subject, something fundamentally true about everybody) in learned and fashionable language (so that you wrote about the best subject in the best way). From seeing the two sorts of people combined like this you thought of both; the best parts of both were used. The effect was in some degree to combine in the reader or author the merits of the two sorts; he was made to mirror in himself more completely the effective elements of the society he lived in. This was not a process that you could explain in the course of writing pastoral; it was already shown by the clash between style and theme, and to make the clash work in the right way (not become funny) the writer must keep up a firm pretence that he was unconscious of it. Indeed, the usual process for putting further meanings into the pastoral situation was to insist that the shepherds were rulers of sheep, and so compare them to politicians; ... this piled the heroic convention onto the pastoral one, since the hero was another symbol of the whole society." ¹

In the Eclogues this balance between rural simplicity and linguistic elegance, between the pastoral and the heroic is beautifully achieved. Virgil's swains have a threefold identity, as shepherds, poets and statesmen, and the landscape they inhabit is both a timeless Arcadia

1. Some Versions of Pastoral London 1935 p.11

and contemporary Italy, slowly recovering from the ravages of civil war. Cultus, in these poems, embraces the activities of both herdsman and artist - indeed, there is no distinction between the two, as the shepherds are all artists too, not only poets but singers and musicians, and their world is itself an artefact, created from the subtle rhythms and cadences of Latin verse.

J S Phillimore ² believes that the Eclogues are essentially coterie poems and that each refers to a lost work by some other member of Virgil's literary circle. The Shepherds themselves appear to form a sort of bucolic coterie, constantly referring to mutual acquaintances, lovers and rival poets. Some of these characters - or, at least, their names - recur in different eclogues, sometimes with rather confusing results. Thus Galatea, the former mistress of Tityrus (I) appears in III as the flirtatious girl who teases Damoetas by throwing an apple at him whilst in VII and IX she is the subject of love songs, though these may refer to the legendary nymph beloved by the Cyclops Polyphemus. Similarly Tityrus, the shepherd-musician of I and VIII, appears as a goatherd in III and IX, while in VI he seems to be a persona assumed by Virgil himself. Even more complex, as we have seen, is the case of Daphnis. In II he is referred to as a model of masculine beauty; in III we hear that Menalcas has broken his bow and arrows; he is the subject of Amaryllis' spell in VIII and Lycidas' song in IX and in VII he makes a brief appearance to invite Meliboeus to attend the singing match between Corydon and Thyrsis. In the elegiac Eclogue V, however, this fairly marginal, if attractive,

2. Pastoral & Allegory cited in Rieu op.cit. p.12

character has undergone a transfiguration : firstly into a shepherd-poet-hero whose death is the cause of universal lamentation and secondly into a kind of nature-deity, invoked along with Bacchus and Ceres, in lustral and harvest rites and venerated with libations of wine and milk and oil:

"Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.
ergo alacris silvas et cetera rura voluptas
Panaque pastoresque tenet Dryadasque puellas.
nec lupus insidias pecori nec retia cervis
ulla dolum meditantur; amat bonus otia Daphnis.
ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera iactant
intonsi montes; ipsae iam carmina rupes,
ipsa sonant arbusta: 'deus, deus ille, Menalca!'" ³

(Daphnis, in radiant beauty, marvels at Heaven's unfamiliar threshold, and beneath his feet beholds the clouds and the stars. Therefore frolic glee seizes the woods and all the countryside, and Pan, and the shepherds, and the Dryad maids. The wolf plans no ambush for the flock, and nets no snare for the stag; kindly Daphnis loves peace. The very mountains, with woods unshorn, joyously fling their voices starward; the very rocks, the very groves ring out the song: 'A god is he, a god, Menalcas!')

This extraordinarily rich poem becomes even more complex if we accept the identification, made by many scholars and critics from the time of Servius to the present day, of the deified Daphnis with Julius Caesar and his flock with the Roman people. Brooks Otis, for example, claims that Eclogue V

"expresses the moral and political agency that transforms death and sterile disorder into new life and peaceful innocence : this agency is the Julian house that had at last promised peace to Italy and the empire and was actually performing the essential work of resurrection and renewal." ⁴

Certainly Virgil does refer to real, historical characters in the

3. Eclogues V 56-64

4. Virgil : A Study in Civilized Poetry Oxford 1964 p.142

Eclogues; for example in IX (line 35) he mentions Gaius Helvius Cinna, the epic poet and friend of Catullus who was killed by mistake instead of his namesake, one of the conspirators against Caesar; in the same Eclogue, indeed, in the same line, we meet Varius, another distinguished writer and the friend of Horace and Maecenas who became Virgil's literary executor. This practice of mingling real and fictional characters gives the Eclogues a satisfying density and depth allied to an elusive, enigmatic quality which teases the mind with unanswerable questions. (Is the Varus addressed in VI and mentioned in IX Virgil's fellow-student in Naples and the land-commissioner responsible for the resettlement of veterans in Northern Italy? "The identification" says E V Rieu "is doubtful." ⁵ But how tempting.) The Eclogues evoke a strong sense of community; the fictional community of the shepherds mirrors and encloses the community of poets and readers, united in their faith in the value and power of poetry. Paul Alpers defines the tenets of this faith in the introduction to his study of Virgilian pastoral:

"The self-conscious diffidence of pastoral holds out the promise that there are stable modes, of both attitude and expression, with which we can acknowledge the pains of life and the dilemmas of language and art. By a just sense of one's strength relative to the world, it claims, song can continue to express feelings and attitudes, and, by shared pleasures and recognitions, to bring people together in the communities constituted by literary audiences and literary traditions." ⁶

The community of song celebrated in the Eclogues embraces not only writers and readers but also public figures, soldiers and statesmen such as Pollio, Gallus and Octavian, the god-like young man who gives Tityrus his liberty in I. Gaius Cornelius Gallus, the love-sick

5. Rieu op. cit. p.192

6. The Singer of the Eclogues Berkeley & Los Angeles 1979 p.8

shepherd in Eclogue X was both a poet and a public man who served with distinction in Octavius' Egyptian campaign, taking part in the Battle of Actium and capturing Paraetionium; after the war he was appointed one of the commissioners for the redistribution of land in Italy.

Gallus' political career was to end in disgrace, when his ambition incurred the Imperial displeasure. In the Eclogues, however, he represents the balance between cultus and civitas which pervades the whole work. Of the ten pastorals, six have a political dimension. The first describes the suffering of Meliboeus, driven into exile by Octavius' land policy, and the happiness of Tityrus who has benefitted from Octavius' favour. In the ninth, Virgil returns to this theme : Moeris has been evicted and tells Lycidas that their friend Menelcas has suffered a similar fate. Eclogue X is in honour of Gallus and V (possibly) of Julius Caesar. Silenus' song in VI, describing the creation of order out of chaos may be seen as an image of just and peaceful government - Pope uses a similar figure in Windsor Forest ⁷ - but the clearest statement of this theme is Eclogue IV with its inspiring vision of a world transformed. The Wonderful Child, like Daphnis and Octavian, represents the heroic element in the Eclogues : the triumph of civilization when political power is used for

"the essential work of resurrection and renewal". ⁸

This is not the place to discuss the political content of the Eclogues

7. Windsor Forest 11-14

8. Otis op. cit. p.142

in detail. Paul Alpers has already covered the subject very fully.⁹
 The essential point to be made here is that Virgil's community of
 song includes soldiers and statesmen as well as shepherds and poets.
 It also includes the immortals : Apollo advises Tityrus/Virgil to

"sing a lay fine-spun" (VI 5)

and in the same poem the satyr, Silenus, sings

"all the songs that of old Phoebus rehearsed" (VI 82)

The whole world of nature is responsive:

"Fauns and fierce beasts sport in measured
 time ... stiff oaks nod their tops" (VI 27-28)

The hallmark of Virgil's pastorals is harmony between all sorts and
 conditions of men and between men and nature - a harmony which is
 literal as well as metaphorical. The world of the Eclogues resounds
 with music, human and non-human : Corydon's complaint is accompanied
 by

"the shrill cicala's (sic) voice"; (II 13)

in VI, the groves and tamarisks sing of Varus (10-11); moreover,
 the non-human world provides an audience for man's music : during the
 contest between Damon and Aphisiboeus

"the heifer marvelled and forgot to graze ...
 lynxes stood spell-bound, and rivers were changed
 and stayed their course" (VIII 1-4)

Well may the poet claim in X 8:

"We sing to no deaf ears; the woods echo every note."

Nowhere is this music more beautifully captured than in Meliboeus'
 wistful vision of the happy times that Tityrus will enjoy when he
 himself has gone into exile; this is Arcadia at its most tuneful:

9. Alpers Op. cit. Chapter 3

fortunate senex, hic inter flumina nota
 et fontis sacros frigus captabis opacum.
 hinc tibi, quae semper, vicino ab limite saepes
 Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti
 saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro;
 hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras:
 nec tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes,
 nec gemere aeria cessabit turtur ab ulmo. (I 51-58)

(Happy old man! Here, amid familiar streams and sacred springs, you shall court the cooling shade. On this side, as aforetime, on your neighbour's border, the hedge whose willow blossoms are sipped by Hybla's bees shall often with its gentle hum soothe you to slumber; on that, under the towering rock, the woodman's song shall fill the air; while still the cooing wood-pigeons, your pets, and the turtle-dove shall cease not their moaning from the skyey elm.)

The keynote of this passage is the interaction between man and nature and between the animal and vegetable worlds. Thus it is the hedge itself which seems to "hum" soothingly and the woodman's song blends with that of the bees and birds. The wood-pigeons are Tityrus' pets, lovingly tended; the willows provide food for the bees which in turn soothe the shepherd as he rests in the shade. It is a landscape at peace - "familiar", "cooling", "gentle", "cooing" - filled with languorous sounds more tranquillizing than silence. The rather clumping Loeb translation fails to capture the musical effects of Virgil's language and metre, suggested more successfully in Dryden's much freer but more mellifluous version:

"Behold! yon^h bord'ring fence of sallow-trees
 Is fraught with flow'rs; the flow'rs are fraught with bees;
 The busy bees, with a soft murm'ring strain,
 Invite to gentle sleep the lab'ring swain
 While, from the neighb'ring rock, with rural songs,
 The pruner's voice the pleasing dream prolongs,
 Stock-doves and turtles tell their am'rous pain,
 And from the lofty elms, of love complain." 10

It is at such moments in the Eclogues that we sense, in E V Rieu's words

"the spirit that pulsates in everything that is,
and makes a harmony of man, tree, beast and rock." 11

However, as Friedrich Klingner argues,

"What Virgil is concerned with in these landscapes
is not merely a presentation of pleasant things,
which together form an alluring resting place, but
a condition of the world." 12

Meliboeus may imagine Tityrus indulging in a "pleasing dream",
lulled by the sights and sounds of nature at her loveliest, but the
poem itself is no such dream. It acknowledges injustice and oppression,
the vicissitudes of fortune and the bitterness of exile.

Arcadia is not a golden never-never-land, a symbol of the "virtues"
of the countryside as opposed to the "vices" of the city. It is an
artefact, existing in "song" as the landscapes of Claude Lorraine
exist in paint, and by its existence it testifies to the triumph of
art over the shapeless flux of experience. Like the Song of Silenus,
the Eclogues celebrate the creative power which brings order out of
chaos. Faced with the harsh realities of dispossession, the herdsmen
in Eclogue IX recognise that

" carmina tantum
nostra valent ... tela inter Martia, quantum
Chaonias dicunt aquila vemente columbas." (IX 11-13)

(... .. amid the weapons of war ...
(their) songs avail as much as, they say, the
doves of Chaonia when the eagle comes).

11. Rieu op. cit. p.14

12. Friedrich Klingner Virgil Zurich 1967 p.65

Still, the poem as a whole is a testament to the durability of song in a world of chance and change. Menalcas may be absent, having barely escaped, it seems, with life or liberty, but his works survive, though in a fragmentary and half-remembered form, on the lips of the two swains. Moreover, Virgil's poem is a reworking of Theocritus' Idyll 7, and two of the songs quoted by Moeris and Lycidas refer to other idylls. The community of song endures from age to age; the pastoral tradition continues. And it is a living tradition. Unlike his singing herdsmen Virgil is not content merely to repeat the songs he has learned. Instead, he transforms what Alpers describes as

"Theocritus' richest bucolic ... a witness to human freedom" ¹³

into a wry commentary on the uncertainty of all human affairs and the fragility of human happiness. Whilst the shepherds in Idyll 7 are celebrating their harvest festival, Virgil's countrymen have nothing to celebrate and little to enjoy. In both works, however, the value of friendship and the exchange of songs are major themes.

The second pair of songs in Eclogue IX are not derived from Theocritus. Both refer to recent political events, the first to the problems of Mantua caused by Octavian's policy of allotting land as a reward for military service, the second to the comet that appeared at the time of Julius Caesar's assassination, here interpreted as an auspicious omen. The former is a mere fragment, a desperate plea addressed to Octavian's district commissioner; the latter strikes a note of wondering hope in an otherwise melancholy poem:

13. Alpers op. cit. p 136

"Daphni, quid antiquos signorum suspicis ortus?
 ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum,
 astrum, quo segetes gauderent frugibus et quo
 duceret apricis in collibus uva colorem.
 insere, Daphni, puros; carpent tua poma nepotes." 14

(Daphnis, why art thou gazing at the old constellations rising? See! the star of Caesar, seed of Dione, has gone forth - the star to make the fields glad with corn, and the grape deepen its hue on the sunny hills. Graft thy pears, Daphnis; thy children's children shall gather fruits of thine.)

In their recognition of the interdependence of cultus and civitas these lines both epitomise the community of song and anticipate the theme of Georgics. The happy countryman at work amid "laetas segetes" 15 is sustained by the benevolent influence of the gens Julia, represented symbolically by Caesar's comet but historically by his adopted heir. And both are contained and immortalised in the verses of Menalcas/Virgil. The passage perfectly encapsulates that "beautiful relation between rich and poor", the "mirror (of) the effective elements of society" described by Empson. However, it is no facile exercise in wishful thinking. The threat to Mantua, the sufferings of Cremona are also caused by Caesar's successor. The only civitas hero whom Virgil praises unreservedly in the Eclogues is the Babe of Eclogue IV, whose power is yet untried. However, Gaius Asinius Pollio, to whom this Eclogue is dedicated, though mentioned in III as a reader (84) and writer (86) of poetry and addressed as poet and friend in VIII (6-10) was a distinguished soldier and statesman. The reference to the victor's laurel-wreath (VIII 13) is an oblique allusion to his successful military career, but his appearance as dedicatee of a poem hailing a new age of

14. Eclogue IX 44-50

15. see Georgics I 1

universal peace may be attributed to his role in negotiating the Peace of Brundisium between Octavius and Antony. The identity of the unborn progenitor of the "gens aurea" is unknown. To be more specific would make Virgil guilty of the charge made by Harry Levin of

"transforming the pastoral into an official eulogy." 16

Instead, he creates a landscape in which civitas and cultus combine and nature is transformed by art:

"at simul heroum laudes et facta parentis
iam legere et quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus.
molli paulatim flavescet campus arista,
incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva
et durae quereus sudabunt roscida mella." 17

(But soon as thou canst read of the glories of
heroes and thy father's deeds, and canst know
what valour is, slowly shall the plain yellow
with the waving corn, on wild brambles shall
hang the purple grape, and the stubborn oak
shall distil dewy honey.)

The child here, whoever he may be, is surely a symbol of the Roman people, remembering their glorious past - it is probably significant that Pollio was an historian - and moving into an even more splendid future, devoted to the arts of peace, the arts, that is, of the countryman and the poet. (The farmer can make the plains yellow with corn, but only the poet can create a world where grapes grow on brambles and oaks yield honey : "Nature's world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden")

It was this idea of the golden age which inspired Pope's Pastorals, re-creations in Martin C Battestin's words, of

"a lost ideal through the magical efficacy of
artifice and the harmony of his numbers." 18

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- 16. The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance New York 1972 p.17
 - 17. Eclogue IV (26 - 30)
 - 18. The Providence of Wit : Aspects of Form in Augustan Literature and the Arts London 1974 p.58

In the debate between the Theocritan (or Spenserian), i.e. "realistic", and the Virgilian, i.e. "ideal", view of pastoral, Pope was unequivocally on the side of Virgil. Like his mentor, he saw poetry as a means of ordering and shaping experience. In the opening lines of Windsor Forest, the first version of which has much in common with the Pastorals and was possibly written about the same time,¹⁹ he presents the reader with a landscape in the true Virgilian mode:

"The Groves of Eden, vanish'd now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song;
These, were my breast inspir'd with equal flame,
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water seem to strive again:
Not Chaos-like together crush'd and bruis'd
But, as the world, harmoniously confus'd.
Where order in variety we see,
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree." 20

The allusion to Paradise Lost asserts the vitality and force of a living poetic tradition, in which the Groves of Eden are ever "green". Literary creation is compared to the great Life Force that brought order out of original chaos and established the concordia discors which, in terms of Augustan aesthetics, was the underlying principle of nature and of the arts. "Order in variety" is the hallmark of Pope's poetic technique: it is the basis of rhyme; it informs the shape of each heroic couplet, the placing of the cesura, the poise of every antithesis. It also dictates the form of Pope's Pastorals.

In comparing Virgil and Theocritus,²¹ Pope judges Virgil to be

19. For a discussion of the date of this work, see John M Aden Pope's Once and Future Kings: Satire and Politics in the Early Career Tennessee 1978 p.63

20. Windsor Forest 7-16

21. 'A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry' reprinted in The Pastoral Mode: A Casebook Bryan Loughrey (ed) London 1984 p.52

superior in two respects: "in regularity and brevity" 22 (i.e. order) and in "a wonderful variety ... which the Greek was a stranger to." 23 Pope emulates these qualities in his own pastorals in his choice of subject (in which he limits himself to strictly bucolic themes) and in the use of the seasons as a framework:

"Of the following Eclogues I shall only say, that these four comprehend all the subjects which the Criticks upon Theocritus and Virgil will allow to be fit for pastoral: That they have as much variety of description, in respect of the several seasons, as Spenser's: That in order to add to this variety, the several times of the day are observ'd, the rural employments in each season or time of day, and the rural scenes or places proper to such employments, not without some regard to the several ages of man, and the different passions proper to each age." 24

Windsor Forest not only makes explicit this idea of Order in Variety: it also provides a further clue to Pope's intentions in the pastorals. The epigraph, from Eclogue VI, invokes that sense of

"shared pleasures and recognitions (which) bring people together in the communities constituted by literary audiences and literary traditions"

observed by Paul Alpers and demonstrates that Pope, no less than Virgil saw the community of song as the source and end and test of pastoral. The whole passage in Virgil from which Pope's quotation is taken reads as follows:

"non iniussa cano. si quis tamen haec quoque, si quis captus amore leget, te nostrae, Vare, myricae, te nemus omne canet; nec Phoebus gratior ulla est, quam sibi quae Vari praescripsit pagina nomen." 25

(Unbidden strains I sing not; still if there be to read even these my lays - any whom love of the theme has won, 'tis of thee, Varus, our tamarisks shall sing, of thee all our groves. To Phoebus no page is more welcome than that which bears on its front the name of Varus)

22. "A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry" Loughrey p.52

23. *ibid* p.52

24. *ibid* p.53

25. Eclogues VI 9-12

The poet is not a lonely voice crying in the wilderness. He sings, by invitation, to honour his friend, for whose sake, if not for the poet's, others will read his work, and his songs will win the favour of Apollo, divine patron of art and artists, as they resound throughout the realm of nature. If Varus was, indeed, Virgil's fellow-student under Siro the Epicurean, he would surely recognise an echo in these lines of Epicurus' dictum:

"the whole world dances with friendship".

Pope, however, shortens the quotation from Virgil in order to focus on the relationship between the poet and the dedicatee. This is appropriate, since the epigraph is inserted immediately after his own dedication of Windsor Forest "to the Right Honourable George, Lord Landsdown".

Dedication is also of particular importance in the Pastorals. Pope does not follow Virgil's example by peopling his Arcadian world with actual friends and contemporaries (except, that is, for a thinly-veiled self-portrait as "Alexis" in "Summer"). Instead, his shepherds are elegant fictions and the community of song is represented by the distinguished group of public men (all themselves poets) to whom the verses are addressed. The qualities these men had in common are suggested by Bonamy Dobree's description of Walsh, the true dedicatee of "Winter", since it was he who suggested to Pope that this, his favourite pastoral, should be inscribed to the memory of the aptly-named Mrs. Tempest. Walsh was, Dobree writes,

"a well-known Member of Parliament ..., one of those brilliant amateurs of letters who expend themselves chiefly in talk. His poems seem to us boring trifles 'flimsy and frigid', but he was immensely knowledgeable about poetry; and after all Dryden had called him 'without flattery ... the best critic of our nation.'" 26

A politician who both wrote and appreciated poetry, a good talker who was willing to include a young, unknown poet among his circle of friends, Walsh epitomises the characteristics which, in different degrees, Pope found in the men - all middle-aged or elderly - to whom he dedicated his earliest published works.

Sir William Trumbull, the former Secretary of State to William III, was the most notable public figure among the group. The admiration almost amounting to awe Pope felt for this retired statesman and diplomat over forty years his senior is expressed in a letter dated 12 March 1713/14:

"One looks upon you as some Superior Being, that has been once among Men, and now sits above, at distance, not only to observe their actions, and weigh them with Truth and justice, but sometimes charitably to influence and direct them." 27

However, in the opening lines of "Spring", Pope's complimentary addresses are paid with a technical assurance that belies the modesty of their tenor:

"You, that too wise for pride, too good for pow'r,
Enjoy the glory to be great no more,
And carrying with you all the world can boast,
To all the world illustriously are lost!
O let my Muse her slender reed inspire,
Till in your native shades you tune the lyre:
So when the Nightingale to rest removes,
The Thrush may chant to the forsaken groves,
But, charm'd to silence, listens while she sings,
And all th'aerial audience clap their wings." 28

The confident antithesis, "wise/good", "pride/pow'r"; the emphasis by alliteration, "glory .. great" and repetition, "world"; the contrast neatly pointed by rhyme, "boast/lost" or verbal echo,

27. J A Winn. A Window in the Bosom : The Letters of Alexander Pope
Hamden Connecticut 1977 p.75

28. "Spring" 7-16

"illustriously ... lost"; the delicate pun on "clap" which enhances the metaphorical force of "aerial audience" - all these suggest the coloratura brilliance of the nightingale rather than the tentative trilling of the thrush. There is an air of confidence, too, in the way Pope proclaims himself the successor of Virgil by allusion to Eclogue VI:

"agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam." (8)

(now will I woo the rustic Muse on slender reed.)

The dedication of "Summer" to Sir Samuel Garth contains a further reference to the Eclogues:

"Accept, O Garth, the Muse's early lays,
That adds this wreath of Ivy to thy Bays;
Hear what from Love Unpractis'd hearts endure,
From Love, the sole disease thou canst not cure." 29

The first couplet here echoes the address to ⁰Pallio in Eclogue VIII:

" accipe iussis
carmina coepta tuis atque hanc sine tempora circum
inter victrices hederam tibi serpere laurus." 30

(Accept the songs assayed at thy bidding, and grant
that about thy brows this ivy may creep among the
victor's laurels.)

Samuel Garth, physician to William III is chiefly remembered now as the author of a satirical mock-epic called the Dispensary. In his lifetime, however, he would have been even better known for his part in the events which the poem commemorates: the controversy which arose between physicians and apothecaries over the proposal to set up a public dispensary for the treatment of the poor.

29. "Summer" 9-12

30. Eclogues VIII 11-13

It is, then, as a philanthropist and public benefactor, as well as a poet that Garth earns his place in Pope's community of song.

Many years later, in the Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot, Pope remembered his old friend affectionately as "well-natur'd Garth" ³¹ and it was, perhaps, Dr Garth's genial temper that inspired the relaxed, slightly teasing tone of Pope's dedication. The claim that love is the only ailment for which the good doctor has no cure is no less extravagant than the implied comparison between the court physician and the victorious consul, a slightly tongue-in-cheek reference, perhaps, to Garth's militant persona as Machaon, the doctor-hero of the Dispensary.

A less benevolent personality, but by far the most distinguished writer of the group, was William Wycherley, dedicatee of "Autumn". Like Garth, he acquired a nickname from the central character in one of his works : after the staging of The Plain Dealer in 1676, Wycherley became widely known as "Manley", after the play's eponymous hero, a character whose bitter cynicism is as unattractive as his honesty and plain-speaking are admirable. Unlike Trumbull and Garth, who were both Whigs - though, in Trumbull's case, of very moderate views, - Wycherley was closely associated with the House of Stuart. Charles II appointed him tutor to his illegitimate son, the Duke of Richmond (the arrangement was cancelled upon Wycherley's imprudent marriage to the widowed Countess of Drogheda) and James II paid his debts and awarded him a pension of £200 a year (that, too, was cancelled when James abdicated in favour of William of Orange). His religious

31. Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot 137

affiliations were equally fluctuating; converted to Catholicism in France in 1656, he returned to the Church of England in 1660 and was reconverted to the Roman faith in 1687. Wycherley had given up writing for the stage before Pope was born, owing to the illness, probably encephalitis, which struck him down in 1678, and by the time they were acquainted he was already suffering from the impairment of memory - and possibly of temper - which afflicted his later years. However, at the height of his powers, he was a man whom Dryden said he was proud to call his friend.

As the friend of Wycherley and the admirer of Walsh, Dryden forms a link between the dedicatees of the Pastorals. (Trumbull also knew Dryden and suggested to him that he should translate the works of Virgil.) Another link is association with the court, whether Stuart or Williamite. Behind Pope's community of song stand two heroic figures, corresponding to Daphnis, Julius and Octavius Caesar and the Wonderful Child of the Eclogues. The first is Dryden, the poetic giant of the previous age whom Pope, as a child, had once seen, enthroned in state at Will's Coffee House. The second is more difficult to define : a monarch, certainly, but which one? The eulogy of the House of Stuart in Windsor Forest, coupled with Pope's Catholicism would suggest a Stuart monarch - probably King James. However, in a letter to Bishop Atterbury written shortly after his father's death in 1717 Pope claims to be indifferent to party loyalties. Refusing the Bishop's well-meant invitation to join the Church of England, he goes on:

"I hope all churches and all governments are so far off God, as they are rightly understood, and rightly administred (sic): and where they are, or may be

wrong, I leave it to God alone to mend or reform them. ... (what) I have always wished to see (is) not a King of Whigs, or a King of Tories, but a King of England. Which God in his mercy grant his present Majesty may be, and all future Majesties!" 32

The dedication of these early poems to Whig and Tory, Catholic and Protestant alike confirms the sincerity of these words. However, the riddles inserted into "Spring" in imitation of Virgil's Eclogue III (104-107) seem, as Aden says,

"something like a declaration of Stuart loyalty"; 33

the first refers to Charles II and the Royal Oak, the second to the Order of the Thistle, founded by James II and revived by Anne. Moreover, the pro-Stuart, anti-Williamite tendency of Windsor Forest, where

"the case against William the Conqueror ... is clearly intended to pass for that against William III" 34

suggests Pope's intense satisfaction in the reign of a monarch de jure as well as de facto.

If the "cultus" hero of the Pastorals is Dryden (a man whose own religious and political loyalties were divided), the civitas hero is perhaps best defined as Legitimate Monarchy (however embodied). Certainly, the dedication of these poems to men of letters who are also - or have been - influential public figures seems to emphasise Pope's conviction of the need for a balance between cultus and civitas - the body politic and the inner life of the mind and the imagination - in the life of a community. The landscape of the Pastorals reinforces this idea:

32. Quoted in Aden op. cit. p.25

33. Aden op. cit. p.63

34. ibid pp 63-64

"First in these fields I try the sylvan strains,
 Nor blush to sport on Windsor's blissful plains:
 Fair Thames flow gently from thy sacred spring,
 While on the banks Sicilian Muses sing;
 Let vernal airs thro' trembling osiers play,
 And Albion's cliffs resound the rural lay." 35

In these lines Pope recapitulates the pastoral tradition from Theocritus and Virgil to Spenser and Milton and boldly claims his place in it: "First in these fields". As Pope would expect his readers to recognise, this opening is a variation on the beginning of Eclogue VI:

"Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere versu
 nostra nec erubuit silvas habitare Thalia." (1-2)

(My Muse first deigned to sport in Sicilian strains
 and blushed not to dwell in the woods.)

Virgil transplanted Theocritus' Sicilian Muse to Arcadia, not, as Bruno Snell points out, the district of that name in the Peloponnese but "the land of poetry and love" which, he asserts, "was discovered in the year 42 or 41 BC" ³⁶ Its discoverer, of course, was Virgil. Pope claims to have rediscovered Arcadia on the banks of the Thames. The opening phrase of the Pastorals is consciously ambiguous: it can refer to his innovative approach to Pastoral, "First in these fields" (i.e. "Windsor's blissful plains") or to his initiation as a poet, "First in these fields I try ...". But there is surely a third possible implication, suggested by the similar phrase, "first in the field", a kind of tentative boast, modestly reinforced by "nor blush" in the succeeding line. Pope does not actually assert that he surpasses all previous writers of pastoral but he does claim due credit for his contribution to what is a living tradition - its vitality illustrated by an allusion to Virgil's acknowledgement of

35. "Spring" (1-6)

36. (trans T G Rosenmeyer) "The Discovery of a Spiritual Landscape"
 Reprinted in Loughrey op. cit. p.181

his debt to Theocritus. No mere imitator or tuneful echo of other poets' work, he is, in terms of his own metaphor, a "merchant", not a "pyrate".

At first, however, it might seem that the landscape in the Pastorals bears very little resemblance to "Windsor groves".³⁷ Compared with the topographical details in Windsor Forest, the generalised references to mountains and trees, "fair fields"³⁸ and "winding vales"³⁹ are disappointingly vague. But Pope's Windsor Forest, like Virgil's Arcadia, is a landscape of the mind. Snell contrasts what he calls the "humdrum Arcadia"⁴⁰ in the Peloponnese with "the land of poetry and love" discovered by Virgil. In Windsor Forest Pope describes a real (though hardly "humdrum") location; in the Pastorals he explores an inner world which he calls Windsor Forest because that is where Pope is:

"See what delights in sylvan scenes appear!
Descending Gods have found Elysium here.
In woods bright Venus with Adonis stray'd,
And chaste Diana haunts the forest shade.
Come, lovely nymph, and bless the silent hours,
When swains from shearing seek their nightly bow'rs
When weary reapers quit the sultry field,
And crown'd with corn their thanks to Ceres yield.
This harmless grove no lurking viper hides,
But in my breast the serpent Love abides." 41

These lines constitute a sort of pastoral "theme with variations".

The topic is proposed in the first line : the pleasures of woodlands. What follows is an excursion through the literature, ancient and modern, and the classical and Biblical mythology inspired by that idea. Here is Ovid's Golden Age, when gods dwelt amongst men, Eden without

37. "Autumn" 55
38. "Summer" 25
39. *ibid* 26
40. Snell *op. cit.* p.181
41. "Summer" 59-68

the serpent, inhabited not only by classical Immortals but by Shakespeare's

"sunburnt sicklemen, of August weary." 42

This ideal world is contrasted to Virgil's Arcadia, where Pope's persona here, Alexis, is himself the object of unrequited love (Eclogue II) and where, amid flowers and wild strawberries

"latet anguis in herba". (III 93)

The scene is a recapitulation of European culture. It is also a self-portrait, reflecting the influence of that culture on an acute and fertile imagination. And, since it depends for its effect upon the reader's recognising and responding to the allusions, it is a means of communicating with other minds educated in the same tradition. The text defines both the author and the reader.

However, as Pope is at pains to insist from the beginning, these are not European pastorals but Windsor pastorals. The significance of this is suggested in the address to Sir William Trumbull in "Spring", 43 in which Windsor Forest provides an alternative to "the world" ("pride", "power" and "glory") where the retired statesman can "tune the lyre" at his leisure. The pastoral theme - the community of song - is here combined with the Horatian ideal of virtuous retirement so often invoked by the Country House poets of the previous century. Windsor, like Penshurst, Saxham and Appleton House, is seen as a civilized and beneficent retreat from a corrupt society. For a Catholic, however, the forest was a retreat of another kind, since it fell outside the limit of the Ten Mile Act, re-enforced under William, which effectively prohibited Catholics

42. The Tempest IV i 134

43. "Spring" 7-12

from living in or near the capital. Pope's family had moved to Binfield for this reason and thus entered the circle of Recusant forest-dwellers who were to engage the young poet's early affections. The Catholic families in the neighbourhood of Binfield were a close-knit group, focussing on Whiteknights, the seat of Anthony Englefield and Mapledurham, the home of his grand-daughters, the Blount sisters, to whom the nineteen-year-old Pope wrote,

"I love no meat but Ortolans and no women but you.
Though indeed that's no proper comparison but for
fatt Dutchesses. For to love you, is as if one
should wish to eat Angels, or drink Cherubim-Broath." 44

The relationship between Pope and Teresa Blount's godfather, John Caryll, who lived at nearby Ladyholt, is described by James Anderson Winn as "almost familial", 45 especially after the death of the poet's father. In Windsor Forest, then, as well as his acquaintance with such literary luminaries as Garth, Walsh and Wycherley, Pope found a community of kindred souls, and in, celebrating "Windsor groves", the Pastorals are also celebrations of friendship based on religious loyalties and a common experience of discrimination and exclusion from the main stream of English society.

"Pastoral is an image of what they call the Golden Age",
Pope wrote in his Discourse on Pastoral Poetry,

"so that we are not to describe our shepherds
as shepherds at this day really are, but as
they may be conceiv'd then to have been when a
notion of quality was annex'd to that name,
and the best of men follow'd the employment." 46

The shepherds in Pope's pastorals are too two-dimensional to merit

44. Winn op. cit. p.106

45. ibid p.89

46. Loughrey op. cit. pp 50-51

such a title. But the poems themselves, in their dedications and in their setting, celebrate "the best of men" among his acquaintance and represent that perfection of art which is the nearest approach to the Golden Age that a fallen world can afford. The Discourse and the satirical Guardian essay of April, 1713, declare Pope's allegiance to the 'idealist', or Virgilian, school of pastoral and his opposition to the 'realistic' pastoral mode adopted by Ambrose Philips, allegedly in imitation of Theocritus. In his ironic Proem to The Shepherd's Week Gay declares for

"the true ancient guise of Theocritus"

and mounts a mock attack on Pope as one of

"certain young men of insipid delicacy (and their) critical gallimawfry ... concerning, I wist not what, Golden Age, and other outrageous Conceits, to which they would confine Pastoral. Whereof, I avow, I account nought at all, knowing no Age so justly to be instilled Golden, as this of our Sovereign Lady Queen Anne." 47

The faux-naïf tone, the clumsy syntax and antiquated diction all point to Gay's burlesque intention. There is more to this prefatory essay, however, than simple ridicule of Philips. Gay - or rather his persona - goes on to address the "gentle reader" in these terms:

"It is my purpose ... to set before thee, as it were, a picture, or rather lively landscape of thy own country, just as thou mightest see it, didst thou take a walk in the fields at the proper season." 48

In fact, it takes more than a casual survey to recognise the art with which Gay has transposed Arcadia into the English countryside. In "Wednesday; or, The Dumps", for instance, he sets the scene for Sparabella's lament in these lines:

47. John Gay : Poetry & Prose (2 vols) Vinton A Dearing & Charles E Beckwith (ed) Oxford 1974 Vol. I p.90

48. *ibid* p.91

"Now the Sun drove adown the western Road
 And Oxen laid at rest forget the Goad,
 The Clown fatig'd trudg'd homeward with his spade,
 Across the Meadows stretch'd the lengthen'd Shade;
 When Sparabella pensive and forlorn,
 Alike with yearning Love and Labour worn,
 Lean'd on her Rake, and strait with doleful Guise
 Did this sad Plaint in moanful Notes devise." 49

The "trick" - in Empson's term - of Gay's pastoral is indicated by his use of the word, "landscape" in the proeme. A landscape can be defined either as "a portion of land that the eye can comprehend in a single view" or "a picture exhibiting some real or imaginary scene". By placing the word between "picture" and "fields", Gay emphasises this ambiguity and draws attention to the relationship between art and nature which, according to Frank Kermode is "philosophically the basis of pastoral literature".⁵⁰ The oxen, the weary Clown and the lovesick girl leaning on her rake, even the atmosphere of crepuscular melancholy created by the lengthening shadows and the girl's sad song could be "comprehended in a single view", in the realm of nature, by any reasonably acute observer. But the scene also derives from the realm of art, more precisely, from Virgil's eighth eclogue:

"Frigida vix caelo noctis decesserat umbra,
 cum ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba,
 incumbens tereti Damon sic coepit olivae." 51

(Scarce had night's shade left the sky, what
 time the dew on the tender grass is sweetest
 to the flock, when, leaning on his shapely
 olive-staff, Damon thus began.)

The contrast between the two scenes, between dawn and sunset, the graceful Arcadian and the homely country lass and the consequent tension between humour and pathos are reinforced by a linguistic

49. "Wednesday" 19-26

50. "English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell"
 Introduction. Loughrey op.cit. p.93

51. Eclogues VIII 14-16

tension, within the passage itself between prosaic monosyllables - "goad", "clown", "trudg'd", "spade", "rake" - and plaintive disyllables - "pensive", "forlorn", "yearning", "doleful", "moanful" - to create a concordia discors of extraordinary subtlety which surely transcends the "naive charm ... delightful but absurd" ⁵² which Hoyt Trowbridge finds in Gay's rustics. Here, as throughout The Shepherd's Week, Gay is using Virgilian pastoral as a kind of Claude glass through which he views the English countryside and its rustic inhabitants. This device, much used by eighteenth-century painters, was a curved tinted mirror, in which the various features of the landscape were framed, composed and bathed in the soft, golden light so characteristic of the art of Claude Lorraine. The sense of formal arrangement and depth of focus produced by the perspective glass is also found in Gay's pastoral world.

If the classical Arcadia and the contemporary countryside provide two dimensions of this world, the third is afforded by the Pastorals of Ambrose Philips. Trowbridge ⁵³ has identified six kinds of parody of Philips in The Shepherd's Week: obsolete language, rustic names, violations of decorum, platitude, pseudo-simplicity and inane repetition. Moreover, he demonstrates that each of these is paralleled in Pope's Guardian essay in which Philips is pilloried with mock-praise. Thus it is legitimate to read The Shepherd's Week as a declaration of support for Pope in the Battle of the Pastorals. The references to fellow-Scriblerians, Harley and Arbuthnot, in the Prologue to the work confirm this impression. Addressed "To the Right Honourable

52. "Pope, Gay and The Shepherd's Week" Loughrey op. cit. p.222

53. *ibid* p.223

the *Ld. Viscount Bolingbroke*", these dedicatory verses are strongly Tory in tone and remind us that, as Trowbridge points out,

"as both a Whig and a Dunce ... Philips was Gay's natural foe." 54

Whilst attacking Buttonian Dulness, however, Gay's pastorals, no less than those of Pope or Virgil, are celebrations of friendship, affirmations of those

"feelings and attitudes ... shared pleasures and recognitions" 55

of the community of song. Nowhere is the freedom and intimacy between members of that community more charmingly illustrated than in the account of the meeting at court between the poet - in his persona of simple countryman - and Bolingbroke, then at the highest point in his mercurial political career:

"There saw I St John, sweet of Mien,
Full stedfast both to Church and Queen,
With whose fair Name I'll deck my strain,
St John, right courteous to the Swain;
For thus he told me on a Day,
Trim are thy Sonnets, gentle Gay,
And certes, Mirth it were to see
Thy joyous Madrigals twice three,
With Preface meet, and Notes profound,
Imprinted fair and well y-bound.
All suddenly then Home I sped,
And did ev'n as my Lord had said." 56

The shared joke between the "courteous" Tory hero and the "gentle" poet, of adding an elaborate mock-critical apparatus to the mock-Eclogues, epitomises the easy intimacy of men who, however different their social backgrounds and public careers, are brought together

54. Trowbridge op. cit. p.222

55. Alpers op. cit. p.8.

56. The Shepherd's Week Prologue 75-86

"in the communities constituted by literary audiences and literary traditions". 57 :

St John represents Gay's ideal audience, a responsive and sympathetic reader who is also a collaborator - a kind of honorary member of the Scriblerus Club. Indeed, though Bolingbroke was not a Scriblerian he was

"throughout his life ... at the centre of a literary coterie and ... delighted in the company of Swift, Pope (and) Gay." 58

Moreover, his own Brothers' Club had the impeccably Scriblerian aims of

"the improvement of friendship and the encouragement of letters". 59

"Steadfast ... to Church and Queen" and "right courteous to the swain", Bolingbroke exemplifies both public virtue and literary taste, and thus, with Pollio, Varro, Trumbull and Walsh, proclaims the importance of civitas and cultus in the pastoral tradition.

Establishing the precise nature of that tradition is, as we have seen, one of the main motives of The Shepherd's Week which, for all Gay's ironic claims to have

"hit on the right simple Eclogue after true ancient guise of Theocritus", 60

is firmly based on Virgilian principles. But tradition, as Pope's letter to Spence points out, is a two-way process : trade, not piracy. How this process operates in practice may perhaps be best illustrated by examining a single locus in Virgil's Eclogues and the various transformations it has undergone in subsequent versions.

57. Alpers op. cit. p.8

58. H T Dickinson Bolingbroke London 1970 p.9

59. Letter to Lord Orrery. Corr i 246-7 quoted Dickinson op. cit. p.9

60. The Shepherd's Week : Proeme Poetry & Prose Vol. I p.90

The passage in question occurs in Eclogue III :

"Damoetas : Malo me Galatea petit, lasciva puella,
et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.

Menalcas : At mihi sese offert ultro, meus ignis, Amyntas,
notior ut iam sit canibus non Delia nostris." ⁶¹

(Damoetas : Galatea, saucy girl, pelts me with an apple,
then runs off to the willows - and hopes to
be seen first.

Menalcas : But my flame Amyntas comes to me unsought, so
that now Delia is not better known to my dogs.")

The exchange is part of an amoebaeon contest, an activity midway
between art and game, governed by strict rules and calling for quick
wits and a talent for improvisation. The procedure is described by
E V Rieu, who notes that it is

"still practised and held in high esteem" ⁶²

in Cyprus:

"One of the singers leads off with a short song of
a few lines on a theme of his own choice, and is
immediately followed by his rival with an utterance
of equal length on the same or a contrasted theme,
designed to cap, refute, or in some way improve upon
the lines it answers. The first singer then proceeds
either to open another aspect of the theme, or broach
a new topic, which his opponent must deal with as
before." ⁶³

In amoebaeon song, form is as important as content. So two lines
about a coquettish girl are capped by an equal number of lines about
a compliant boy. Virgil's singing match is based on Idyll V but,
as Alpers remarks is

"decidedly loftier and more elegant." ⁶⁴

Pope's version of the incident is even more polite; the participants
are rival poets rather than contending shepherds and their inamoratae

61. Eclogues III 64-67

62. Rieu op. cit. p.133

63. ibid pp 132-133

64. Alpers op. cit. p.205

(both female, in this case) are equally refined:

"Strephon : Me gentle Delia beckons from the plain,
Then hid in shades, eludes her eager swain;
But feigns a laugh, to see me search around,
And by that laugh the willing fair is found.

Daphnis : The sprightly Sylvia trips along the green,
She runs, but hopes she does not run unseen;
While a kind glance at her pursuer flies,
How much at variance are her feet and eyes!" 65

The apple-throwing Galatea and the amorous Amyntas have been replaced by two virtually indistinguishable young ladies whose coy ^umaneuvers are recorded in symmetrically constructed verse which retains the formal structure, if not the brisk vitality of amoebaeon song. Each shepherd speaks two couplets; in each speech repetition is used to stress the ambiguity of the girl's behaviour - "laugh/laugh", "runs/run" - the first lines of each are syntactically almost identical. The speakers both refer to themselves in the third person - "eager swain", "pursuer" - suggesting that their words are part of a calculated performance rather than expressions of personal commitment. When they use personal pronouns, Daphnis refers to the girl, Strephon to himself. The adjectives applied to the shepherdesses, "gentle Delia" and "sprightly Sylvia" imply a contrast, though their conduct is practically identical. Even the initial letters of the lovers' names pair them off symmetrically, S with D and D with S. Amoebaeon verse here is smoothly adapted to suit the aesthetic principle of concordia discors which underlies the Pastorals as a whole.

Pope's characters are ciphers and are presumably^y meant to be no more. Their words and actions, even their names are dictated by the demands of

the antiphonal verse form. In The Shepherd's Week, the topos is given a more strongly narrative turn:

"Lobbin Clout : As Blouzelinda in a gamesome Mood
Behind a Haycock loudly laughing stood,
I slily ran, and snatch'd a hasty kiss,
She wip'd her Lips, nor took it much amiss.
Believe me, Cuddy, while I'm bold to say,
Her Breath was sweeter than the ripen'd Hay.

Cuddy : As my Buxoma in a Morning air,
With gentle Finger stroak'd her milky Care,
I quaintly stole a Kiss; at first, 'tis true
She frown'd, yet after granted one or two.
Lobbin, I swear, believe who will my vows,
Her Breath by far excell'd the breathing cows." 66

The homely world of haystacks and cowsheds is a fit setting for these wholly convincing rustics and the first impression created by these lines is one of earthy realism. Yet a formal balance is maintained between the two anecdotes, of equal length, each commemorating a stolen kiss and praising a girl's sweet breath. The immediate model is Pope, rather than Virgil, though there is nothing "feigned" about Blouzelinda's hearty laughter. The passage has another point of origin, however, in two scenes from Philips' Pastorals quoted by Tickell in his commendatory Guardian reviews. As David Nokes comments:

"There is something rather curious about the actual passages chosen to illustrate the natural innocence and simplicity of Philips' swains:

'As I to cool me bath'd one sultry day,
Fond Lydia lurking in the sedges lay.
The wanton laughed, and seemed in haste to fly,
Yet often stopped, and often turned her eye.'

Or again:

'Once Delia slept, on easie moss reclin'd,
Her lovely limbs half-bare, and rude the wind:
I smooth'd her coats, and stole a silent kiss;
Condemn me shepherds, if I did amiss.'

In both extracts what we have, surely, is a kind of coy erotic hunting; not real innocence at all, but ... a bucolic bo-peep ... a world of eyeing and spying." 67

Gay combines the laughter and the stolen kiss, whilst eschewing Philips' prurient suggestiveness. Moreover, by a brilliant feat of poetic alchemy, he transforms the substance of the second extract into the following lively scene:

"Lobbin Clout : On two near Elms, the slacken'd Cord I hung,
Now high, now low my Blouzelinda swung.
With the rude Wind her rumpled Garment rose,
And show'd her taper Leg, and scarlet Hose.
Cuddy : Across the fallen Oak the Plank I laid,
And myself pois'd against the tott'ring Maid,
High leapt the Plank; adown Buxoma fell;
I spy'd - but faithful Sweethearts never tell." 68

Here is genuine simplicity - and genuine innocence. The girls' enjoyment of the swing and the seesaw has a childlike abandon, whilst hinting at a mature sexual energy which contrasts delightfully with Delia's recumbent passivity. Indeed, these high-spirited wenches have more in common with Virgil's rather hoydenish Galatea than either Pope's sophisticated shepherdesses or Philips' coyly provocative poseuses.

In transmission from Virgil to Gay, the topos has remained essentially the same, though it has undergone a number of changes. Among these is a gradual process of expansion. In Eclogue III, the Galatea episode is half of a four-line exchange between the rival shepherds. The corresponding passage in "Spring" takes up eight lines (four to each speaker) and in "Monday" twelve. Moreover, at each stage, the significance of the episode changes. Galatea and Amyntas are merely

67. Raillery and Rage : A Study of Eighteenth Century Satire Brighton 1987 pp 125-126

68. "Monday" 103-110

the means whereby the contending singers show their skill, they appear in three brisk, tit-for-tat exchanges and then are discarded; it is as amoebae poets rather than as lovers that Damoetas and Menalcas are in competition. Pope's shepherds, however, are

"two swains whom Love kept wakeful, and the Muse", 69
and their formally symmetrical verses are all dedicated to the praise of their respective mistresses. In The Shepherd's Week, the contest is amorous rather than poetic, and the respective charms of Buxoma and Blouzelinda are the point at issue as each lover does his best to
"praise his Sweetheart in alternate Verse". 70

When the topos reappears in Town Eclogues, it has undergone yet another transformation. Like Gay's peasants, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's* metropolitan swains are primarily concerned with erotic, rather than poetic, conquest. But whereas Cuddy and Lobbin each sing the praises of a single sweetheart, Patch and Silliander contend over the number and status of their lovers, eagerly displaying their trophies and capping each other's claims of favours granted by ladies of ever-more exalted rank and title. The derivation from the third Eclogue is apparent, even to the concluding exchange of riddles - here replaced by sniggering speculations about female undergarments. However, the amoebae formalities are not observed throughout, though some speeches are symmetrically arranged. One such pair are clearly based on the swing and seesaw episode in The Shepherd's Week:

69. "Spring" 18
70. "Monday" 32

* Town Eclogues were written in collaboration with Gay and (possibly) Pope.

"Silliander : Last night as I stood ogling of her Grace,
 Drinking Delicious Poison from her Face,
 The soft Enchantress did that face decline
 Nor ever rais'd her Eyes to meet with mine,
 With sudden art some secret did pretend,
 Lean'd cross two chairs to whisper to a Friend
 While the stiff whalebone with the motion rose
 And thousand Beauties to my sight expose.

Patch : Early this morn (but I was ask'd to come)
 I drunk Bohea in Caelia's dressing room,
 Warm from her Bed, to me alone within,
 Her Nightgown fasten'd with a single Pin,
 Her Nightcloaths tumbled with resistless Grace
 And her bright hair play'd careless round her Face.
 Reaching the kettle, made her gown unpin,
 She wore no waistcoat, and her Shift was thin." 71

Despite all the differences of class and background, Gay's romping shepherdesses and these modish fine ladies are clearly sisters under the skin.

The "trick" of Lady Mary's urban inversion of the pastoral mode is to juxtapose the beau monde with Arcadia, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the "real" countryside portrayed by Gay, thereby exposing its moral and aesthetic bankruptcy, lacking both the timeless beauty of the former and the innocent simplicity of the latter.

The beaux' language reveals their shoddy sense of values: "grace" and "beauty", words which in Virgil's world have real meaning, are here applied either to mere social rank or to the over-exposed "charms" of calculating coquettes. "Poison", "enchantress" and "art" are similarly devalued and friendship -- that keynote of pastoral song -- exploited for the purpose of sexual provocation. Virgil's swains are artists -- poets and singers; Pope's are graceful artefacts, like figures in an ideal landscape by Poussin or Claude; Gay's are artless

countryfolk. But the characters in Town Eclogues are creatures of artifice, the artful inhabitants of an artificial world.

Paradoxically, it is also - or would be, for its original audience - the "real" world. Whereas traditional pastoral involves a measure of "distancing" between the sophisticated, urban reader and the rustic life it portrays, here the "distance" is provided by the pastoral context and the life portrayed is the familiar world of the boudoir and the drawing room, the toilet and the card-table. Indeed, the authors of Town Eclogues could well claim, adapting Addison's boast of the Spectator ⁷² that they have

"brought Pastoral out of Fields and Woods, Groves
and Mountains, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies,
at Tea-Tables and in Coffee-Houses".

The dramatis personae are as familiar as the setting, for this is an oeuvre a clef, a witty exposee of the scandals and squabbles of fashionable society through thinly-disguised portraits of well-known figures from the overweight Duchess of Roxburgh (Roxana) in "Monday" to Lady Mary herself (Flavia) bemoaning the ravages of smallpox in "Saturday". The lovers in "Wednesday" are now unidentifiable, though, of course, this does not mean that they would not have been recognisable to contemporary readers; the situation, however, is so commonplace and the characters so typical that they may well be intended as representations of fashionable adultery rather than specific adulterers.

According to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's biographer, the idea for

72. The Spectator G Gregory Smith (ed) 4 vols London 1945 I 10

these eclogues

"in which shepherds and shepherdesses are transformed into London beaux and belles" 73

was mooted by Gay; certainly the work fulfils the programme outlined in his Prologue to The Shepherd's Week where in the guise of a country visitor to court, he vows:

"No more I'll sing Buxoma brown,
Like Goldfinch in her Sunday gown; ...
But Lansdown fresh as Flow'r of May,
And Berkely Lady blithe and gay,
And Anglesey whose Speech exceeds
The Voice of Pipe, or oaten Reeds;
And blooming Hyde, with Eyes so rare,
And Montague beyond compare." 74

The eyes through which the court beauties are viewed in Town Eclogues are not so easily dazzled as those of Gay's "loving countryman"; 75 sharply alert to the Countess of Bristol's passion for cards and the vain efforts of the Lord Chamberlain's wife to halt time's winged chariot with paint and flattery, they perceive the folly of a Cardelia or a Lydia beneath the thin veneer of rank and fashion. Some sympathy is evoked for poor Flavia, disfigured, like her creator, by the smallpox, but if Smilinda in "Thursday" is rightly identified by Horace Walpole 76 as another persona of Lady Mary it is no very flattering self-portrait,* since she is as self-centred, self-absorbed and self-indulgent as the rest.

The world of Town Eclogues is a society of scandal, not a community of song. The "shepherds" gossip, soliloquise, exchange recriminations, boasts and complaints in verse, but there is no suggestion that they

73. Robert Halsband The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu New York 1960 p.49

74. The Shepherd's Week Prologue

75. *ibid* Proeme. p.92

76. see Halsband *op. cit.* p.49

* According to the 1768 editor, "Thursday" was "the (production) of Mr Pope". See The Poetical Works of the Right Honourable Lady M - y W - y M - e London 1768

think of themselves as poets. In the dedicatory opening to "Tuesday", addressed to Charles Howarth, Lady Mary refers to her "lays"; 77 elsewhere, apart from a reference to "romantic strains" 78 by Cardelia - not necessarily referring to poetry or song - the heroic couplets seem to be no more than a convention adopted by the writer rather than a mode of expression consciously chosen by the speakers. The swains of Pope and Virgil are poetic to their elegant fingertips. Even Gay's hob-nailed rustics acknowledge the power of verse: Marian laments the loss of Colin "in plaining song"; 79 even the drunkards "Flights" call for "sonorous lays" 80 and Bumkinet and Grubbinol find expression for their joy or pain in poetry:

"Bumkinet : Hang Sorrow! Let's to yonder Hutt repair,
And with trim Sonnets cast away our Care. ...
of Patient Grissel I devise to sing,
And Catches quaint shall make the Vallies ring ...

Grubbinol : Yes, blithesome Lad, a Tale I mean to sing,
But with my Woe shall distant Vallies ring,
The Tale shall make our Kidlings droop their Head,
For Woe is me! - our Blouzelind is dead." 81

"Trim sonnets" and "catches quaint" are the natural medium of expression for these bucolic lovers. They too, like Virgil's Corydon and Pope's Alexis, belong to the community of song. The only disjunction between Gay and his shepherds is that between sophistication and simplicity. But in Town Eclogues there is no such harmony between poet-as-shepherd and shepherd-poets.

In Virgil's Eclogues, as we have seen, harmony is a quality of the landscape, which resonates with music, both human and non-human.

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77. "Tuesday" 3
78. "Thursday" 9
79. The Shepherd's Week "Tuesday" 24
80. Ibid "Saturday" 4
81. ibid "Friday" 15-26

The characteristic sounds of this urban Arcady, however, are loud, harsh and distinctly unmelodious : the "thundering Knockers",⁸² the groans of Roxana's overburdened chairmen, St James's bell and the chambermaid's urgent "rapping"⁸³ to announce her master's untimely return. The landscape of Town Eclogues is neither the realm of nature nor the realm of art : it is the world of fashion, centred on the court and comprising all the haunts of the beau monde. Banished forever for her loss of beauty, the unfortunate Flavia mournfully recalls the delights of this Elysium:

"There was a Time, (Oh that I could forget!)
When Opera Tickets pour'd before my Feet,
And at the Ring where brightest Beauties shine,
The earliest Cherrys of the Park were mine.
Witness oh Lilly! and thou Motteux tell!
How much Japan these Eyes have made you sell,
With what contempt you saw me oft despise
the humble Offer of the raffled Prize:
For at each raffle still the Prize I bore,
With Scorn rejected, or with Triumph wore:
Now Beautie's Fled, and Presents are no more." ⁸⁴

The theatre and the park, the toyshop and the perfumery are the natural habitat of the beau and the belle - a world of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. Combining as it does the elements of gambling, competition and triviality, the raffle is a fit symbol of this society, where the prizes of wealth, rank and social success are distributed without any regard to personal merit. As Lydia and Flavia learn only too well, the old and the ugly are excluded from its pleasures, and Roxana bitterly complains that "never failing duty"⁸⁵ goes unrewarded, whilst insinuating "Artifice prevails".⁸⁶

82. Town Eclogues "Friday" 5

83. ibid "Wednesday" 86

84. ibid "Saturday" 17-27

85. ibid "Monday" 32

86. ibid "Monday" 39

"The first rule of pastoral"

according to Pope, is that

"its idea should be taken from the manners of
the golden age", 87

manners defined by A E Dyson in these terms:

"Unhindered by the divisive influence of ambition,
greed, aggression, or jealousy, men and women
lived together in a fellowship based on leisure
and love." 88

In Town Eclogues, love is reduced to the level of sneaking adultery
or vainglorious scalp-hunting and leisure is mere time-wasting:

"Dukes at Marrow bone bowl time away". 89

Virgil's Arcadia is a virtually timeless world. His shepherds pass
their days in a perpetual spring, varied only by the diurnal passage
of the sun from dawn to dusk. Pope introduces the motif of seasonal
change, whilst observing

"the several times of the day and ...
the several ages of man". 90

Gay repeats this cyclical pattern on a smaller scale, suggesting,
in his Shepherd's Week, the reassuring sameness of the countryman's
life. All these sets of pastorals observe, in some degree, the
principle of concordia discors, "order in variety". 91 Lady Mary
follows the precedent set by Gay, but there is more order than
variety in the lives of her swains, as they pursue their prescribed
social round from drawing room to coffee-house, from coffee-house to
boudoir, from boudoir to card-table, from card-table to dressing-
room, in a cycle which seems to reflect their creator's own life,
as recorded in a letter to Pope, written in June, 1717:

87. The Guardian No. 40. Loughrey op. cit. p.57

88. Dyson op. cit. p.9

89. Town Eclogues "Thursday" 100

90. A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry Loughrey op. cit. p.53

91. Windsor Forest 15

"She settled down to a busy social routine : on Mondays the Drawing-Room, Wednesdays, the opera, and Thursdays the play-house. On other evenings of the week she visited ladies, and was served tea, cards, and gossip. In general it was 'a perpetual round of hearing the same scandal, and seeing the same follies acted over and over.'" 92

For Virgil, the temporal cycle can be broken by the inauguration of a new age:

"Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo". 93

(Now is come the last age of the song of Cumae;
the great line of the centuries begins anew.)

Civitas , properly exercised, can fulfil the promise of prophetic song and make the legendary golden age

"a present possibility and a future reality". 94

But the Town Eclogues offer no prospect of change or renewal.

Civitas is represented, not by the god-like Octavius or Pollio the peacemaker, but by a "lewd" 95 court where

"large lovely Bribes are the great Statesman's aim" 96
and where the victorious generals, Varus and Gallus, have dwindled into Silliander and Patch (alias the Duke of Argyll and the Earl of Hertford). These strutting coxcombs are, we are told,

"Renown'd alike for Gallantry and Truth", 97

but "gallantry", in this context, seems to imply sexual rather than military conquest and their extravagant boasting casts grave doubts on their veracity. This pair are proof of how the community of song has turned into a hotbed of discord; both their originals had been involved in celebrated disputes : Argyll, having served with

92. Halsband op. cit. p.45

93. Eclogues IV 4-5

94. Alpers op. cit. p.165

95. Town Eclogues "Monday" 54

96. ibid "Monday" 59

97. ibid "Tuesday" 6

distinction at Malplaquet, fell out with his Commander in Chief, the Duke of Marlborough, while Hertford was at the centre of a furious quarrel between Marlborough and Queen Anne over the colonelcy of the Oxford regiment. "Monday" records the scandal over the appointment of the flighty Duchess of Shrewsbury as Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wales, instead of the more sober Duchess of Roxburgh, while "Tuesday", "Wednesday" and "Thursday" are all devoted to conflicts of one sort or another. The quarrel in Eclogue III quickly turns into a singing contest, amicably resolved by the courteous Palaemon; Betty Loveit, called upon to adjudicate in the argument between Cardelia and Smilinda

" who suffers most,
By Cards' ill usage, or by Lovers lost", 98

interrupts their tales of woe with the snappish injunction,

"Cease your Contention, which has been too long,
I grow Impatient, and the Tea too strong." 99

The healing power of art has no place in this world.

This power, which Martin Battestin calls "the magical efficacy of artifice" ¹⁰⁰ is represented in the Eclogues by the carved beechwood cups staked by Menalcas and in Pope's Pastorals by the bowl of Daphnis, the world of nature transmuted into the realm of art:

"lenta quibus torno facili superaddita vitis
diffusos hedera vestit pallente corymbos.
in medio duo signa, conon et - quis fuit alter,
descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
tempora quae messor, quae curvus arator haberet?" 101

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98. Town Eclogues "Thursday" 25-26
 99. ibid "Thursday" 107-108
 100. The Providence of Wit : Aspects of Form in Augustan Literature and the Arts Oxford 1974 p.58
 101. Eclogues III 38-42

(On these a pliant vine, laid on by the graver's skill, is entwined with spreading clusters of pale ivy. In the midst are two figures, Conon and - who was the other, who marked out with his rod the whole heavens for man, what seasons the reaper should claim, what the stooping ploughman?)

The cups are symbols of 'cultus', bringing together, through the carver's art, the activities of the reaper and the ploughman and the mysterious order of the heavens. Pope's version omits the labouring peasants but retains the wreath of vine and ivy - the farmer's harvest and the poet's garland - and the references to cosmic order and the cycle of the seasons. In The Shepherds Week an oaken staff replaces the carved bowl, a ruder product of the woodcarver's craft, as befits its owner but, like honest Cuddy himself, simple and unpretentious. Lady Mary's adaptation of this classic topos, however, reveals the decline of cultus in the fashionable world :

"Cardelia : Behold this Equipage by Mathers wrought,
With fifty Guineas (a great pen'north) bought.
See, on the Tooth pick Mars and Cupid strive,
And both the struggling Figures seem alive.
Upon the bottom, see the Queen's bright Face,
A Myrtle Foliage round the Thimble Case.
Jove, Jove himself does on the Scissars shine;
The Metal, and the Workmanship Divine!" 102

Unlike the bowl and the staff, Cardelia's equipage is neither beautiful nor useful. It is an elaborate trifle, a product of Charles Mathers' fashionable toy-shop, and, as such, a fitting symbol of the belle's world. The concluding line of the passage is an allusion to Theocritus, "The Workman and the Workmanship Divine" 103; Lady Mary's pointed alteration - the "divine" metal is, presumably,

102. Town Eclogues "Thursday" 29-36

103. Idylls XV

gold - like the rhyming of "wrought" with "bought" and the supremely vulgar parenthesis, "a great pen'north", suggest that the trinket is prized for its monetary value, rather than its artistic merit. Indeed, there seems little enough of that to admire. The decoration is incongruous and inappropriate, part mythological mish-mash, part 'Royal' souvenir. It is the price alone, "fifty guineas", which commends it.

For true art in Town Eclogues, we must turn to the belles themselves. Like their celebrated namesakes, Titiana and Tintoretta ¹⁰⁴ are expert painters; artist and artefact combined, they perfectly personify "cultus a la mode". One of the subsidiary meanings of cultus is self-adornment : fine clothes. In this respect, the characters in Town Eclogues are true cultus figures. The poems are full of references to manteaus and fans, jewels, ribbons, buckles, stays - all the panoply of haute couture. At times it seems almost impossible to distinguish between the costume and the wearer; the evidence of Sharper's passion, for instance, is when

"With eager Beats, his Mechlin Cravat moves". ¹⁰⁵

In this urban pastoral, cultus is redefined in terms of contemporary values and the

"mirror (of) the effective elements"¹⁰⁶

in that society is no longer the shepherd but the beau - or, more frequently, the belle. In Addison's Spectator No. 69, the belle achieves an almost mythological status as a triumphant synthesis of

104. Town Eclogues "Tuesday" 48 & 52

105. ibid "Thursday" 91

106. Empson op. cit. Dyson p.85

nature and art - a kind of living pastoral:

"The single Dress of a Woman of Quality is often the Product of an Hundred Climates. The Muff and the Fan come together from the different Ends of the Earth. The Scarf is sent from the torrid Zone, and the Tippet from beneath the Pole. The Brocade Petticoat rises out of the Mines of Peru, and the Diamond Necklace out of the Bowels of Indostan." 107

Here is the true equivalent of Virgil's cups and Daphnis' carved bowl, a sartorial concordia discors. Viewed in this light, the belle becomes, in Landa's words, "the embodiment of luxury" 108 who, if not quite transformed into an "economic symbol" 109 nevertheless "takes some coloration from her economic milieu". 110 If Robinson Crusoe represents homo economicus, here is femina economica, the quintessential consumer for whose adornment the entire world must be converted into a vast commercial enterprise.

Charles Jervas' portrait of Lady Mary Pierrepont (later Wortley Montagu) is a study of the belle as shepherdess. Dressed in elegant silks, with immaculate coiffure and modish décolletage, she gazes rather soulfully into the middle distance, avoiding the eyes both of the viewer and of the perfectly groomed lamb which stares up at her from the left of the picture. At first glance, the lamb's regard seems totally adoring; does he, one wonders, represent the lady's many admirers? On closer inspection, however, one may detect a rather quizzical expression in the creature's eye. As we have seen, in Empson's analysis of pastoral both shepherd and hero are symbolic

107. Addison op. cit. I 69

108. Louis A Landa "The General Emporie of the World, and the Wondrous Worm" in M Mack and J A W Winn (ed) Pope: Recent Essays by Several Hands Brighton 1980 p.198

109. ibid p.186

110. ibid p.178

figures representing society as a whole. From belle as shepherdess to belle as hero, then, is but a small step. The next two chapters will chart that progress, via the intermediate stage of the belle as consumer, yet another "symbol of (the) whole society". 111

CHAPTER III

GEORGIC : THE HARVEST OF EVERY CLIMATE

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The international fashion-plate who makes such a spectacular appearance in Addison's Spectator No. 69 is seen there as a symbol of trade as a kind of concordia discors, a means of ordering the almost limitless variety of the gifts which a beneficent Providence has bestowed upon the world, and establishing harmonious relations among people of every race and nationality:

"Nature seems to have taken a particular Care to disseminate her Blessings among the different Regions of the World, with an Eye to this mutual Intercourse and Traffic among Mankind, that the Natives of the several Parts of the Globe might have a kind of dependence upon one another, and be united together by their common Interest. Almost every Degree produces something peculiar to it. The Food often grows in one Country, and the Sauce in another. The Fruits of Portugal are corrected by the Products of Barbadoes; the Infusion of a China Plant sweetened with the Pith of an Indian Cane ... Our ships are laden with the Harvest of every Climate. Our Tables are stored with spices, and Oils, and Wines : our Rooms are filled with Pyramids of China, and adorned with the Workmanship of Japan : Our Morning's Draught comes to us from the remotest Corners of the Earth. We repair our Bodies by the Drugs of America, and repose our selves under Indian Canopies. My friend Sir Andrew calls the Vineyards of France our Gardens; the Spice Islands our Hot-beds; the Persians our Silk-Weavers, and the Chinese our Potters." ¹

Addison's tone, for all its urbane grace and antithetical poise, is jubilant, even triumphant. Words such as "laden", "stored" and "filled" suggest a rich abundance of good things; the names of far-away places reverberate through his elegant periods with an

1. Addison op. cit. I 69

almost incantatory impressiveness, and the use of periphrasis - "Infusion of a China Plant", "Pith of an Indian Cane" - emphasises the truly exotic origins of such everyday comestibles as tea and sugar. Moreover, though Addison describes the benefits of "Traffick" in terms of material goods, the passage transcends mere materialism. The oriental porcelain and japanned furniture, the Indian embroidery and Persian fabrics are beautiful as well as luxurious. They testify to refinement of taste as well as increased prosperity.

The epigraph to Spectator 69 is a quotation from the Georgics which also praises the diversity of Nature's gifts:

"hic segetes, illic veniunt felicius uvae,
arborei fetus alibi, atque iniussa virescunt
gramina. nonne vides, croceos ut Tmolus odores,
India mittit ebur, molles sua tura Sabaei,
at Chalybes nudi ferrum, virosaque Pontus
castorea, Eliadum palmas Epiros equarum?
continuo has leges aeternaque foedera certis
imposuit natura locis ... " 2

(Here corn, there grapes spring more luxuriantly;
elsewhere young trees shoot up, and grasses unbidden.
See you not, how Tmolus sends us saffron fragrance,
India her ivory, the soft Sabaeans their frankincense;
but the naked Chalybes give us iron, Pontus the
strong-smelling beaver's oil, and Epirus the Olympian
victories of her mares? From the first, Nature
laid these laws and eternal covenants on certain
lands ...)

Whereas, however, the tone of Addison's Royal Exchange essay is optimistic, exultant even, taken in their context, these lines from Virgil produce an altogether more complex and sober effect. They occur in a passage about ploughing which makes it quite clear that nature's gifts are gained at the price of hard and unremitting labour for man and beast. Moreover, the instinctive benevolence

and co-operative spirit of human nature, which Addison seems to take for granted, is not to be relied upon. It is significant that he leaves the final sentence of the quotation unfinished, since its concluding words would strike a discordant note in his philanthropic musings on the universal benefits of commerce. The completed sentence reads,

" ... quo tempore primum
Deucalion vacuum lapides iactavit in orbem,
unde homines nati, durum genes".³

(even from the day when Deucalion threw stones
into the empty world, whence sprang men, a
stony race.)

Even if we reject the Loeb translator's rendering of "durum" as "stony", the alternatives - "hard", "tough", even "hardy" - are almost equally harsh, compared with the effusions of Mr Spectator, who confesses, with pride, that the sight of "a prosperous and happy Multitude"⁴ moves him to tears. Like the 69th Spectator, the Georgics is concerned with harmony between man and nature and between man and man. As we have seen, this^{is} also the theme of the Eclogues. In the latter, the symbol of this harmony is the Community of Song; in the Georgics it is the work of the farmer, work which, in its ceaseless demands and uncertain rewards, acts as a reminder that civilization is won with effort and maintained with difficulty. Two powerful images from Book I underline this idea. In the first, the farmer is compared to a man rowing a boat against the stream; if he once relaxes his efforts, he will be borne backwards by the current:

3. Georgics I 61-63

4. Addison op. cit. I 69

" ... sic omnia fati
in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri,
non aliter, quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit,
atquillum in praeceps pronò rapit alveus amni." 5

(Thus, by law of fate all things speed towards the worst, and slipping away fall back; even as if one, whose oars can scarce force his skiff against the stream, should by chance slacken his arms, and lo! headlong down the current the channel sweeps it away.)

The second, which concludes Book I, is a vivid image of a chariot race where the driver desperately struggles to control his horses as they gallop furiously around the course. The context here is one of political conflict, of civitas in disorder, and the reference to Caesar in the previous sentence discreetly indicates the identity of the charioteer, though Virgil prudently refrains from drawing an explicit comparison:

"quippe ubi fas verum atque nefas : tot bella per orbem
tam multae, scelerum facies; non ullus aratro
dignus honos, squalent abductis arva colonis
et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.
hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;
vicinae ruptis inter se elgibus urbes
arma ferunt; saevit toto Mars impius orbe :
ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas." 6

(For here are right and wrong inverted; so many wars overrun the world, so many are the shapes of sin; the plough meets not its honour due; our lands, robbed of the tillers, lie waste, and the crooked pruning-hooks are forged into stiff swords. Here Euphrates, there Germany, awakes war; neighbour cities break the leagues that bound them and draw the sword; throughout the world rages the god of unholy strife; even as when from the barriers the chariots stream forth, round after round they speed, and the driver, tugging vainly at the reins is borne along, and the car heeds not the curb!)

5. Georgics I 199-203

6. ibid 505-514

The first book of the Georgics closes on a horrifying picture of an uncivilized world, where furor rages unchecked, where cultus is neglected and civitas corrupted into a bitter power-struggle. It is a world turned upside-down; the norms of social and political life are violated, treaties broken, the land devastated, moral standards inverted, as forces of terrifying power and wickedness threaten to drag mankind into barbarism. Caesar, striving to rein in these forces and restore the world to sanity and order, and the farmer, rowing his fragile craft against the current of fate and the degenerative tendencies of nature, embody the positive values, civitas and cultus, whereby mankind opposes the negative elements in his world and in his own psyche. The landscape of the Georgics is the battleground on which these heroes fight their different but complementary campaigns. It extends beyond the Italian countryside, beyond the geographical boundaries of the Roman world and into the depths of the human heart. Michael Putnam defines the nature of this landscape in Virgil's Poem of the Earth:

"Man's inner nature has a kinship with the external landscape into which he has been placed by circumstances. Each has an element of wildness to it that must ultimately suffer control or disintegrate into a primitivism of mien or behavior".⁷

Like Virgil's Arcadia, the world of the Georgics is primarily a landscape of the mind. Once again, he has transformed his Greek model; the practical didacticism of Words and Days has become

"a handbook bent on showing us ourselves."⁸

The Georgics, I would argue is not essentially a "poem of the earth", much less, as L P Wilkinson claims, "the great poem of united Italy".

7. Princeton 1979 p.13

8. *ibid* p.15

9. The Georgics Translated into English Verse Harmandsworth 1982 p.21

Its subject is the Lucretian theme "of the nature of the universe", encompassing

"terrasque, tractusque maris coelumque profundum",¹⁰

(earth and sea's expanse and heaven's depth)

and of man's place in creation, sharing on the one hand the same sexual and aggressive drives as the lower animals and yet able, by virtue of his mental and spiritual powers, to comprehend the farthest reaches of the universe, to commune with the gods and even, in the person of an Octavius, to gain entry into their number. Caesar and the Italian peasant farmer, the civitas and cultus heroes of the Georgics, together represent the predicament of Everyman,

"Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state ,..
Created half to rise, and half to fall,
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all,"¹¹

striving to control and contain the negative forces in nature, in society and in his own divided personality.

The structure of the Georgics perfectly corresponds to its theme. The ambiguous, equivocal nature of the human condition is explored by means of a complex yet symmetrical system of contrasting elements: description, instruction, philosophical reflection and, above all, memorable and moving images through which Virgil orchestrates the emotional content of the work. Wilkinson has defined the basic framework of the poem as follows:

"The work falls into two pairs of Books, concerning vegetable and animal husbandry respectively. Each pair has an extensive 'external' proem, relating the poem to the great world, whereas Books 2 and 4 have only a short 'internal' proem. The proem to Book 1 introduces the whole poem, and Book 4 concludes

10. Georgics IV 222

11. Pope Essay on Man II 3-16

with an epilogue to the whole poem. In 1 and 3 the tone tends to be sombre; toil is emphasised, and each culminates in a dramatic description of catastrophe. 2 and 4 are more cheerful (the Aristaeus episode apart), and the tone is lighter." 12

This analysis points out the fundamental symmetry of the Georgics and Virgil's manipulation of contrasts in mood and tone. However, as Wilkinson himself acknowledges,

"the architecture of the poem is much more subtly integrated than any exposure of the bare framework can suggest". 13

Just how subtle this "architecture" is may be illustrated by examining the series of parallels and contrasts into which the image of the charioteer in Book I, which I have already discussed, is "integrated". We have seen how it brings the first book to a close with an impression of the threatened breakdown of civitas under the stresses of human aggression and destructiveness. A comparison with the concluding passages of the other three books reveals a clear pattern. Book II ends with the celebration of cultus, exemplified by an idealised Italian smallholding, as the means of retaining or recapturing the blessings of the unfallen world:

"necdum etiam audierant inflari classica, necdum impositos duris crepitare incudibus ensis." 14

(such was the life golden Saturn lived on earth, while yet none had heard the clarion blare, none the sword-blades ring, as they were laid on the stubborn anvil.)

The description of the cattle plague which concludes Book III portrays the decline of cultus in the face of natural disaster, with men reduced to the status of beasts in their desperate struggle for survival;

12. Wilkinson op. cit. p.33

13. ibid p.33

14. Georgics II 538-540

"ergo aegre rastris terram rimantur, et ipsis
unguibus infodiunt fruges, montisque per altos
contenta cervice trahunt stridentia plaustra." 15

(Therefore men painfully scratch the earth with
harrows, with their own nails bury the seed, and
over the high hills with straining necks drag
the creaking wains.)

Finally, the symmetrical pattern is completed with the conclusion
of Book IV and its vision of the triumph of civitas in the person
of Octavius, no longer the struggling charioteer of Book I but a
victorious law-giver, bringing the benefits of civilization and
Romanitas to the conquered nations of the East.

As the finale of Book I, then, the passage in question is integrated,
in Wilkinson's terms, with similar passages in the remaining books
of the Georgics; as an image of a chariot-race, however, it forms
part of another system of parallels and contrasts, equally relevant
to the fundamental concerns of the poem. In the section of Book III
which deals with horse-breeding, Virgil gives a vivid description
of such a race as the supreme test of a horse's stamina and will to
win:

" ergo animos aevumque notabis
praecipue; hinc alias artis prolemque parentum,
et quis cuique dolor victo, quae gloria palmae.
nonne vides, cum praecipiti certamine campum
corripuere, ruuntque effusi carcere currus,
cum spes arrectae iuvenum, exsultantiaque haurit
corda pavor pulsans? illi instant verbere torto
et prona dant lora, volat vi fervidus axis;
iamque humiles, iamque elati sublime videntur
aera per vacuum ferri atque adsurgere in auras;
nec mora nec requies; at fulvae nimbus harenae
tollitur, umescunt spumis flatuque sequentum:
tantus amor laudum, tantae est victoria curae." 16

15. Georgics III 534-536

16. Ibid 100-112

(Therefore note above all their spirit and years; then, other merits and the stock of their sires, the grief each shows at defeat or the pride in victory. See you not, when in headlong contest the chariots have seized upon the plain, and stream in a torrent from the barrier, when the young drivers' hopes are high, and throbbing fear drains each bounding heart? On they press with circling lash, bending forward to slacken rein; fiercely flies the glowing wheel. Now sinking low, now raised aloft, they seem to be borne through empty air and to soar skyward. No rest, no stay is there; but a cloud of yellow sand mounts aloft, and they are wet with the foam and the breath of those in pursuit: so strong is their love of renown, so dear is triumph.)

The most striking feature of this passage is the way in which human and animal behaviour is equated. The horses are credited with a capacity for human emotions, grief and pride, whilst the feelings experienced by the drivers, hope and fear, are arguably of a lower order, more closely related to instinctive survival-mechanisms than to ideas of achievement and failure. The emphasis shifts from the feelings of the animals to the actions of the charioteers until, in the last sentence, it is not clear which is the subject of "umescent", and "amor laudum" and "victoria curae" are equally applicable to both human and animal contestants.

All this is highly appropriate in the context of Book III which is mainly concerned with those areas of life - sexual passion, age and mortality - which affect men and animals alike. However, in the proem to this book, Virgil introduces a very different chariot race, which illustrates the activities - poetry, religion and civic order - by means of which man transcends his animal nature. The lines in question are part of an elaborate metaphor in which the poet promises to build a temple to the deified Caesar on the banks of the Mincius, and to preside over civic games held in his honour:

"in medio mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit.
 illi victor ego et Tyrio conspectus in ostro
 centum quadrijugos agitabo ad flumina currus.
 cuncta mihi, Alpheum linquens lucosque Molorchii,
 cursibus et crudo decernet Graecia caestu.
 ipse caput tonsae foliis ornatus olivae
 dona feram." 17

(In the midst I will have Caesar, and he shall possess the shrine. In his honour I, a victor resplendent in Tyrian purple, will drive a hundred four-horse chariots beside the stream. For me, all Greece, leaving Alpheus and the groves of Molorchus, shall vie in races and with raw-hide gloves, and I, with brows decked with shorn olive-leaves, will bring gifts.)

Virgil, in his role of victorious charioteer, links Octavius, wrestling with his runaway "chariot" in Book I, with Octavius, conqueror of the East, in Book IV. However, although these lines, like the visionary "temple" they describe, purport to enshrine the spirit of Caesar, they actually celebrate the art of the poet and his function in society: the pronouns, "mihi", "ego", "mihi", "ipse", insistently establish Virgil in the forefront of the triumphal spectacle he puts before us. Robed in the victor's purple, leading the procession of chariots, he enacts the role of poet as patriot, the public voice of civitas; wreathed with sacred olive and bearing sacrificial offerings, he represents the poet as priest, dedicated to cultus in the religious sense, the intermediary between the material world and the realm of the spirit.

The Georgics is one of the world's great religious poems. Its theme encompasses not only man's place in the universe but also man's relationship with the gods. The central trope around which the entire work is constructed is itself a religious symbol; as Fowler points out,

"the first real fact that meets us in the religious experience of the Romans is the attitude towards the supernatural ... of the family as settled down upon the land." 18

The Roman calendar was filled with festivals associated with sowing and planting, cultivation and harvest; the Fordicidia (April 15th) when pregnant cows were sacrificed to the earth goddess, the Cerelia and Vinalia (April 19th and 23rd), the harvest festivals of Consualia and Opiconsiva (August 21st and 25th); even the Saturnalia (December 17th) was associated with the sown seed. And behind these official, civic observances were numerous small country celebrations such as the one described in Book I of the Georgics:

"cuncta tibi Cererem pubes agrestis adoret;
cui tu lacte favos et miti dilue Baccho,
terque novas circum felix eat hostia fruges,
omnis quam chorus et socii comitentur ovantes,
et Cererem clamore vocent in tecta; neque ante
falces maturis quisquam supponat aristis
quam Cereri torta redimitus tempora quercu
det motus incompositos et carmina dicat." 19

(Then let all your country folk worship Ceres;
for her wash the honeycomb with milk and soft
wine, and three times let the luck-bringing
victim pass round the young crops, while the
whole choir of your comrades follow exulting,
and loudly call Ceres into their homes; nor
let any put his sickle to the ripe corn, ere
for Ceres he crown his brows with oaken wreath,
dance, artless measures, and chant her hymns.)

Characteristically, Virgil sets this cheerful scene of rustic merrymaking between two passages describing the devastation caused to crops by storms, rain, excessive heat and cold. In the face of such natural hazards, the propitiation of Ceres appears prudent as well as pious.

The mythology of the Georgics is a vital element in the structure

18. W Warde Fowler The Religious Experience of the Roman People p.68
19. Georgics I 343-350

of the poem as a whole, and one which appears to have received surprisingly little attention from critics. Apart from the introductory roll-call of rustic deities which opens the entire work, the proem to each book invokes a minor agricultural god or goddess, specifically related to the subject of the book in question, Ceres in Book I, Bacchus in Book II and Pales, patron of flocks and herds, in Book III. (Book IV, for reasons which I shall examine later, is an exception,) The central mythological figures in the Georgics, however, are not these homely gods of the countryside, but the austere Olympians, Jove and Apollo. The influence of these two is felt in every book and subtly underlines Virgil's central theme: the place of man in an imperfect world and his painful, heroic struggle to subdue the harshness of nature and the wildness in his own heart.

Jove, in Book I, is the instigator of 'labor'; his will is the law of nature - not the innocent, unfallen nature of the Golden Age, but nature as we experience it day by day, rugged, recalcitrant and rebarbative:

"pater ipse colendi
 haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
 movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda,
 nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.
 ante Iovem nulli subigebant arva coloni;
 ne signare quidem aut partiri limite campum
 fas erat : in medium quaerebant, ipsaque tellus
 omnia liberius, nullo poscente, ferebat.
 ille malum virus serpentibus addidit atris,
 praedarique lupos iussit pontumque moveri,
 mellaque decussit foliis, ignemque removit,
 et passim rivis currentia vina repressit,
 ut varias usus meditando extunderet artis
 paulatim et sulcis frumenti quaereret herbam,
 et silicis venis abstrusum excuderet ignem." 20

(The great Father himself has willed that the path of husbandry should not be smooth, and he first made art awake the fields, sharpening men's withs by care, nor letting his realm slumber in heavy lethargy. Before Jove's day no tillers subdued the land. Even to mark the field or divide it with bounds was unlawful. Men made gain for the common store, and Earth yielded all, of herself, more freely, when none begged for her gifts. 'Twas he that in black serpents put their deadly venom, bade the wolves plunder and the ocean swell; shook honey from the leaves, hid fire from view, and stopped the wine that ran everywhere in streams, so that practice, by taking thought, might little by little hammer out divers arts, might seek the corn-blade in furrows, and strike forth from veins of flint the hidden fire.)

These lines point the sharp contrast between the Saturnalian age "ante Iovem" a time of perfect ease and happiness, when not only external nature but human nature was kind and generous, and the harsh realities of the fallen world. However, Jove's influence is not perceived as wholly harmful; by making life harder for men he has inspired them to exercise their minds and bodies to improve their lot. The vocabulary of the passage - "arts", "care", "taking thought", "seek", "subdued" is inspiring in its suggestion of activity and resourcefulness and the human capacity for survival against the odds.

In Book II, Jove is again seen as the supplanter of Saturn, but he also appears as the sky-father, descending in the form of rain to impregnate the earth mother:

"tum pater omnipotens fecundis imbris Aether
coniugis in gremium laetae descendit et omnis
magnus alit magno commixtus corpore fetus." 21

(Then Heaven, the Father almighty, comes down in fruitful showers into the lap of his joyous spouse, and his might, with her mighty frame commingling, nurtures all growths.)

Here again, though, his influence is ambiguous, and the farmer is warned to beware Jove's rains, which may ruin the grape-harvest.

In the third book, Jove and Apollo are linked together as joint ancestors of the Trojan - and hence the Roman - people. In the fourth, he appears as Iuppiter, whose temple on the Capitoline hill was the centre of the state religion of Rome and, in this guise, he is seen as the originator of the bees' civitas. He is also presumably, the unnamed God who, as the source and end of all life, pervades the whole of creation:

"deum namque ire per omnia,
 terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum;
 hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus, omne ferarum,
 quemque sibi tenuis nascentem arcessere vitas;
 scilicet huc reddi deinde ac resoluta referri
 omnia, nec morti esse locum, sed viva volare
 sideris in numerum atque alto succedere caelo." 22

(for God, they say, pervades all things, earth and sea's expanse and heaven's depth; from Him the flocks and herds, men and beasts of every sort draw, each at birth, the slender stream of life; yea, unto Him all beings thereafter return, and, when unmade, are restored; no place is there for death, but, still quick, they fly unto the ranks of the stars, and mount to the heavens aloft.)

The dominant mythological figure in Book IV, however, is Apollo, to whom it is dedicated. As the father of Aristaeus, he may be regarded as the divine patron of beekeepers, and, as god of the arts, he is associated with Orpheus, whose story forms the climax of the book. Just as the influence of Jove is felt most strongly in the early books of the Georgics, so Apollo's emerges towards

the end of the work. Thus, in Book I, he is not mentioned by name, though references to the sun recall his manifestation as Phoebus, god of light. Book II where his laurel is associated ^{with} Jove's "oracular oak" ²⁴ reminds us that he is also god of prophecy and he is invoked with Pales, in the proem to Book III, in his function as divine herdsman. In the relationship between Jove and Apollo, divine progenitors of the Romans, Virgil has incorporated the central theme of the Georgics. Jove is responsible for the condition of man in a post-Saturnian world and has endowed him with the instinct for survival and the capacity for destruction, both of which he shares, in some measure, with the rest of the animal creation. As Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, however, he is the special patron and guardian of the Roman civitas. Apollo, as protector of flocks and herds, companion of the Muses and god of prophecy, represents cultus in the primary, secondary and religious senses; as the principal of light, not only the sun but also intellectual and spiritual enlightenment, he symbolises the aspirations and potentialities which raise men above the merely animal level. By tracing the Romans' descent from these two divinities, Virgil is defining the necessity for, and the nature of, Roman civilization.

Dryden's translation of the Georgics, published in 1697 with a prefatory essay by Addison, though a rather free rendering of the text into heroic couplets, reveals a keen responsiveness to Virgil's intentions. Paradoxically, this is particularly noticeable in

23. Georgics I 231-232 463-468

24. Georgics II 16

Dryden's additions and embellishments. For instance, his version of the conclusion to Book IV explicitly contrasts the realms of cultus and civitas and includes a reference to the golden age myth - not in the original - thus acknowledging the importance of the mythological dimension to Virgil's vision of Romanitas, as exemplified by farmer, poet and princeps alike. In Latin, the lines are a concise summary of the poem as a whole:

"Haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebam
et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis
per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympos" 25

Dryden's more expansive rendering, by juxtaposing "the conqu'ring arts" with the "arts of peace" highlights the major structural mechanism of the *Georgics*:

"Thus have I sung of fields, and flocks and trees,
And of the waxen work of lab'ring bees;
While mighty Caesar, thund'ring from afar,
Seeks on Euphrates' banks the spoils of war;
With conqu'ring arts asserts his country's cause,
With arts of peace the willing people draws,
On the glad earth the golden age renews
And his great father's path to heaven pursues." 26

The second, fifth, seventh and eighth lines of this passage have no precise equivalent in the original but all are thematically relevant to the *Georgics* as a whole. The "lab'ring bees" recall the emphasis on labor as a necessary feature of the human condition; Caesar's devotion to "his country's cause" stresses his role as civitas hero, and the reference to "great father" in the last line links Julius Caesar, Octavian's adoptive father, with Jove, "pater ipse" who, as both ruler of nature and protector of Rome, unites the cultus and civitas elements in the poem.

25. *Georgics* IV 559-562

26. Dryden *Georgics* IV 807-814

Addison's Essay on the Georgics, which was published with Dryden's translation, laid down the "rules" for this kind of poetry, distinguishing between georgic and pastoral and between the techniques of Virgil and Hesiod. Presentation, according to Addison, is all important. The poet must aim at a pleasing variety, through the skilful use of transitions, contrast and digression, and at a dignified and elevated style. In both these respects, Virgil is judged to be superior to Hesiod. As John Chalker points out in The English Georgic, the question of style could be a particularly difficult one for Virgil's eighteenth-century imitators:

"The problem here is that the 'lowness' of his subject matter may debase the poet's style and 'betray him into a meanness of expression'. Addison's discussion of this question shows a preoccupation with levels of experience and language that was to become increasingly important in the eighteenth century, especially under the influence of associationist psychology. Associations derived from 'sordid offices' debase the higher kinds of poetry and lead to a ludicrous and unavoidable descent from the elevated to the commonplace. (Addison) suggests that in order to maintain 'the pomp of numbers and the dignity of words' the poet must banish all conversational words and phrases from his work Similarly the 'low phrases and terms of art that are adapted to husbandry' must be banished and more elevated circumlocutions sought out." ²⁷

In what Chalker describes as the first attempt at a formal English georgic, ²⁸ John Philips demonstrates the difficulty of following Addison's precepts when the medium (in this case, Miltonic blank verse) and the message (the principles of muck-spreading) seem hopelessly irreconcilable:

"There are who fondly studious of increase
Rich foreign mould on their ill natur'd land
Induce laborious and with fattening muck
Besmear the roots in vain. The nurstling grove
Seems fair a while, cherish'd with softer earth,
But when the alien compost is exhaust
Its native poverty again prevails" ²⁹

27. The English Georgic London 1969 pp 19-20

28. ibid p.45

29. Cyder I 119-26

John Chalker claims that

"an essential ingredient in one's response (to these lines) is awareness of the author's own sense of achievement, a mutual and slightly conspiratorial delight in having overcome an intransigent problem." 30

Maybe so. But surely even the most admiring reader must feel driven to exclaim, 'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas Vergile!'" However, the adroit manipulation of cultus and civitas themes in Cyder testifies to Philips' lively response to the essential structure of the Georgics and enables him to explore the wider implications of his apparently mundane subject. Thus, celebration of the English national beverage and its superiority to the wines of France and other continental nations strikes a patriotic note which modulates easily into a more general praise of England and thence to the peace and security enjoyed by his countrymen under "mighty Anna's care." 31 Philips also exploits the mythological associations of the apple, in much the same way as Virgil uses the acorn in Book I, as a symbol of the fallen state of man and a reminder of a vanished, ideal world:

"Let ev'ry tree in every garden own
The redstreak as supreme, whose pulpos fruit,
With gold irradiate and vermilion shines
Tempting, not fatal, as the birth of that
Primeval, interdicted plant that won
Fond Eve in hapless hour to taste and die" 32

Here, the Miltonic resonances of the verse are entirely appropriate; "paradise lost" is, as we have seen, a central theme of the Georgics and the effect produced by these lines is wholly Virgilian. The remote and solemn is juxtaposed with the immediate and familiar and the tension between the two is just sufficient to produce a

30. Chalker op. cit. p.41

31. Cyder II 525

32. Cyder I 512-17

pleasing sense of relief at its resolution in the word, "tempting".

The red streak is contrasted with the "fatal" fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, evoking thoughts of Milton's Eden, but the phrase, "with gold irradiate" recalls the gardens of the Hesperides, and their golden apples guarded by the dragon and thus two mythical worlds fuse and mingle in the homely setting of an English orchard.

The same mythologising process is at work throughout Pope's Windsor Forest, where familiar landmarks - the forest itself, Windsor Castle, the Thames, the twin cities of London and Westminster - are composed into a visionary landscape, representing the blessings of good government and the prospect of national prosperity and international harmony consequent upon the Peace of Utrecht. In this paysage moralisé, classical deities and allegorical figures wander among the pastures and cornfields of the Thames Valley and dispose themselves in suitably instructive tableaux:

"See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crown'd,
Here blushing Flora paints th'enamelled ground,
Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains
And Peace and Plenty tell, a STUART reigns" 33

Pat Rogers has perceptively commented on these lines,

"statements ostensibly about place (here the look of the countryside) turn out to be really statements about time (the providential occurrence of Stuart rule)". 34

Moreover, statements ostensibly about cultus (agrarian prosperity and productiveness) turn out to be really statements about civitas

33. Windsor Forest 37-42

34. "Time and Space in Windsor Forest" in The Art of Alexander Pope
H Erskine-Hill and Anne Smith (ed) London 1979 p.46

(the blessings of legitimate succession). The effect is rather like one of the elaborate masques favoured by Queen Anne's grandfather, Charles I. Stylistically, however, the passage is unmistakably of its age; the measured antitheses ("flocks"/"fruits", "Pan"/"Pomona", "here ..."/"here ...") and the tightly organised couplets are characteristically English-Augustan. What we see here is precisely that "commerce" between poets which Pope advocates in his letter to Walsh. The echoes of Virgil serve to elevate and dignify Pope's theme. However, since Anne is no Octavius Caesar (even in the eyes of the most devout Tory) any suggestion of excessive hyperbole is neatly dispelled by resort to a convention - that of the Renaissance masque - in which extravagant compliment is the norm. Thus, the eighteenth-century poet avails himself of the range of reference offered by Augustan solemnity and Renaissance flamboyance without committing himself wholeheartedly to either and without departing from his own personal style.

Throughout Windsor Forest landscape is endowed with moral meaning, culminating in the appearance of Father Thames himself, a venerable figure in green cloak and horned golden crown, prophesying the "blessings of a peaceful reign"³⁵ : security and prosperity at home, the flowering of arts and culture, the extension of trade and the dawn of a golden age of world-wide harmony, liberty and justice. His urn, on which the Thames and its tributaries are carved, transmutes the "real" world into an artefact; similarly, Windsor Forest transforms the Thames valley into a portrait of the age of

Queen Anne and a map of the hoped-for future:

"O stretch thy reign, fair Peace! from shore to shore
Till conquest cease, and slavery be no more;
Till the freed Indians in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves,
Peru once more a race of kings behold
And other Mexicos be roof'd with gold.
Exil'd by thee from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds shall barbarous Discord dwell;
Gigantic Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,
And mad Ambition, shall attend her there:
There purple Vengeance bath'd in gore retires,
Her weapons blunted and extinct her fires:
There hateful Envy her own snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken wheel:
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her chain,
And gasping Furies thirst for blood in vain." 36

The transition here from the contemplation of primitive innocence and exotic splendour to a vision of hell as a torture-chamber of destructive passions echoes the central message of the Georgics, that true peace can be achieved only by the extirpation of furor in all its forms and that public evils (persecution, faction, rebellion) spring from the same source as private sins (pride, envy, vengeance) - the darkness of man's heart. The word, "barbarous", in this context, challenges comfortable assumptions about savagery and civilization in the light of the Indians' almost paradisiacal existence and the vanished glories of the Incas and Aztecs. Such thoughts are never allowed to subvert Father Thames' optimistic vision of the future, however. Pope's technique tames the furies even as he invokes them. Contained within the masque-like pattern established in the opening paragraphs of Windsor Forest,³⁷ they display their appropriate allegorical characteristics or attributes (pallor, chain, snakes etc), group themselves into an edifying tableau and dutifully retire before the poet's sweeping

36. Windsor Forest 407-422

37. ibid 33-42

imperative, which itself echoes "great Anna's" ³⁸ magisterial fiat, "Let Discord cease". ³⁹ Compared with the runaway chariot of Georgics I the forces of Discord in Windsor Forest seem static and controllable, capable of being resolved into a cosmic concordia ("as the world, harmoniously confus'd") ⁴⁰ or simply banished "from earth to deepest hell" ⁴¹ by royal or poetic command.

If the disturbing energy of furor is absent from Windsor Forest, so is the farmer's relentless daily struggle against the entropic forces inherent in his environment, the "labor improbus" ⁴² imposed on all men by Jove himself, who has decreed that

"redit agricolis labor actus in orbem,
atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus". ⁴³

(The farmer's toil returns, moving in a circle,
as the year rolls back upon itself over its own
footsteps.)

Work, in the Georgics, is a treadmill; in Windsor Forest,

"Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains". ⁴⁴

Once again, Pope has replaced Virgil's forceful metaphors with a sedate personification - literally "sedate", since Industry is imagined as seated, at rest, presiding over flocks, fruits and flowers, waving corn and happy harvesters, in an idealised landscape eloquent of the blessings of Stuart rule. His (her?) attitude of complacent repose seems passive to the point of inertia compared with the vital energy that makes Virgil's cornfields rejoice, and her (his?) smile is but a pale reflection of their gladness. Moreover, as we have seen, "laetare", as applied to farmland, is

38. Windsor Forest 327

39. ibid 327

40. ibid 14

41. ibid 413

42. Georgics I 145-146

43. Georgics II 401-402

44. Windsor Forest 41

not entirely figurative; its associations with "laetamen" (dung) strikes a note of earthy actuality that is entirely appropriate in the Georgics but quite inconceivable in the rarefied atmosphere of Windsor Forest. To adapt Bruno Snell's analysis of how Virgil uses Greek mythology in the Eclogues,

"the heritage of (Virgil) is turned into allegory and literature is transformed into a world of symbols."⁴⁵

Symbolism and transformation are the hallmarks of Windsor Forest.

Here as in Pope's Pastorals, we see the "magical efficacy of artifice" ⁴⁶ at work.

Frederick M Keener has observed how

"Windsor Forest burgeons with metamorphosis".⁴⁷

I would describe the effect produced by the poem as a sense of scenic transformations. I have already suggested that Windsor Forest resembles a seventeenth-century court masque. C V Wedgwood's account of the last such performance, given at Whitehall in January, 1640, in which King Charles appeared as "Philogenes, the lover of his people",⁴⁸ will serve as a comparison. The words for the masque were written by William Davenant; the designer was Inigo Jones. The front curtain displayed an allegorical scene:

"On one side two female figures, representing Reason and Intellectual Appetite, were clasping hands. Opposite them 'a grave old man representing Counsel' kept company with an armed woman for Resolution. On the cornice.... were Fame and Safety, Riches Forgetfulness of Injuries, Commerce, Felicity, 'Affection for the country holding a grasshopper', Prosperity and Innocence." (The curtain rose to reveal a shipwreck. A Fury entered to announce her

45. Snell op. cit. p.306

46. Battestin op. cit. p.58

47. An Essay on Pope Columbia, New York and London 1974 p.32

48. "The Last Masque" History and Hope : The Collected Essays of C V Wedgwood London 1987 p.102

intention of destroying the peace of England. She and three attendant Furies performed a menacing dance, after which) "the first of the scene changes followed. The shutters forming the wings slid back along grooves out of sight, revealing another series of shutters behind them. Before the eyes of the Spectators the stormy sea and lowering sky gave place to a landscape of smiling summer." (A silver chariot descended, in which were seated Concord and the Good Genius of Great Britain. After a number of divertissements, a chorus of the 'Beloved People of England' assembled.) "The last of the obstructing shutters slid out of the way and the King's Majesty and the rest of the masquers were discovered sitting in the throne of Honour, his Majesty highest in a seat of gold, and the rest of the Lords about him. Instantly, the Beloved People broke into laudatory song." 49

The allegorical figures, the malevolent but not-too-threatening furies, the smooth transitions from scene to scene are all found in Windsor Forest, where "Great Anna's" appearance, amounting to a virtual apotheosis, surpasses even that devised by Jones and Davenant for her unhappy grandfather, whose fate is seen as the origin of England's sorrow, now, happily at an end:

"Make sacred Charles's tomb for ever known
(Obscure the place, and uninscrib'd the stone),
Oh fact accurst! what tears has albion shed,
Heav'ns, what new wounds! and how her old have bled;
She saw her sons with purple deaths expire,
Her sacred domes involv'd in rolling fire,
A dreadful series of intestine wars,
In glorious triumphs and dishonest scars.
At length, great Anna said, 'Let Discord cease!'
She said! the world obey'd, and all was Peace!" 50

As vindicator of the Stuart cause and vehicle of the Divine Logos, Queen Anne represents the triumph of cultus and civitas. Martin Battestin has observed how

"when Pope wishes to celebrate the institution of order his language returns us to that moment when God's word brought Light out of Darkness, Order out of Chaos". 51

49. Wedgewood op. cit pp 105-110

50. Windsor Forest 319-326

51. Battestin op. cit. p.59

Here the two ideas of light and order are combined: Anne's fiat recalls the first words of creation, "Let there be light" and, by banishing Discord, invokes order and harmony. This is the central transformation of the poem, the moment when England turns away from "tears", "wounds" and "deaths", "fire" and "intestine wars", from destruction and dishonour and the sacrilegious guilt of regicide, and enters into a Golden Age of peace.

Comparing Pope and Virgil, David Morris points to

"the deep affinity between their ways of viewing experience". 52

Both, according to Morris, associate a condition of general harmony with enlightened government. 53 "Great Anna", invoking concord and light by her civilizing fiat, recalls Virgil's presentation of Octavius Caesar in the Georgics, particularly in the epilogue where, as Wilkinson asserts,

"for the first time we hear proclaimed the Augustan ideal of empire, 'paci imponere morem'": 54

"Caesar dum magnus ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis
per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo" 55

(Great Caesar thundered in war by deep Euphrates
and gave victor's laws unto willing nations and
essayed the path to Heaven.)

Both "Great Anna" and "Great Caesar" may be said to "impose" the ways of peace upon a grateful world, the former by quasi-Divine ordinance, the latter by force of arms. Great-nephew and adopted heir of the deified Julius, Octavian is seen as both "divi filius"

52. Morris op. cit. p.134

53. ibid p.143

54. Wilkinson The Georgics of Virgil Cambridge 1969 p.173

55. Georgics IV 559-561

and as himself a potential candidate for divinity; Anne, granddaughter of Charles the Martyr, and already established as the rival of Diana

("As bright a Goddess, and as chaste a Queen") 56

speaks with god-like authority. The tone of both passages is unequivocally heroic. The description of Octavius here anticipates Anchises' injunction to Aeneas in Aeneid Book VI, whilst the locution, "She spoke", at the close of Queen Anne's speech, is a typical epic formula - compare the conclusion of Belinda's lament in The Rape of the Lock,

"She said: the pitying audience melt in tears". 57

However, not even the most loyal of Anne's subjects could seriously equate the last of the Stuart monarchs, middle-aged, gouty and childless, with the victor of Philippi, Actium and Alexandria, conqueror of the East and saviour of the Roman state. Thus while Virgil can conclude the Georgics at this point, with the prospect of a novus ordo based on a balance between civitas and cultus, princeps and peasant-farmer, embodied in the heroic figure of Caesar Triumphant, Pope has to deflect attention from the Queen herself to his vision of a world purged of Discord,

"Where order in variety we see,
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree". 58

Here again the masque convention serves him well, as the vatic figure of Father Thames comes forward with the promise of world-wide concord and lasting peace, where

"seas but join the regions they divide". 59

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- 56. Windsor Forest 162
 - 57. The Rape of the Lock V i
 - 58. Windsor Forest 15-16
 - 59. ibid 400

Peace, in Windsor Forest, can mean a number of things: cessation of hostilities (the Peace of Utrecht); the rooting out of furor; virtuous (and poetic) retirement to the "silent wood"⁶⁰ and that perfect harmony which, in the Christian humanist tradition, informed the whole of Nature and was "the source, and end, and test of Art".⁶¹ An image of this harmony, in social terms is Thames' vision of "Augusta", the ideal London of the future which, as the name suggests, is also a memory of Augustan Rome, or rather of the idea which Rome represented for Pope and the other Augustan Humanists, a "dream", in Max Byrd's words, of "an ordered community gathered into a beautiful city".⁶² Through Father Thames' prophecy, Pope places this city at the centre of a harmonising, civilizing power that extends throughout the world. In one of the boldest metamorphoses in the poem, the forest itself, its trees transformed into ships, moves out from that centre to discover new worlds, as rich as they are strange, and to bear back from them "the harvest of every climate":

"The trees, fair Windsor! now shall leave their woods,
And half thy forests rush into thy floods,
Bear Britain's thunder, and her Cross display,
To the bright regions of the rising day;
Tempt icy seas, where scarce the waters roll,
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen Pole:
Or under southern skies exalt their sails,
Led by new stars, and born by spicy gales!
For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
And Phoebus warm the ripening ore to gold." ⁶³

A consideration of the structural importance of this passage reveals how closely Pope has followed Virgil's method of construction in the Georgics. Like the image of the charioteer at the end of Book I,

60. Windsor Forest 249

61. An Essay on Criticism 73

62. London Transformed : Images of the City in the Eighteenth Century
New Haven & London 1978 p.3

63. Windsor Forest 385-396

these lines resonate with other key passages throughout the poem. The references to "balm" and "amber" echo the opening section of the work where international trade is related to the idea of concordia discors:

"Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber of the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne ..." 64

Here, as in Father Thames' speech, the ships are referred to as trees and, as such, linked to the "absent trees that tremble in the floods" 65 in the Lodona episode and the "future navies" 66 they represent. Like Lodona, they rush into the flood; like her, they enter a topsyturvy, looking-glass world of "headlong mountains" or glacial seas. Thus Thames' vision draws together the opening and closing sections of Windsor Forest and the metamorphosis of Lodona in a celebration of commerce as an image of universal concord and as a means of enriching not merely the material but the aesthetic and imaginative life of the nation.

The lines reverberate with Virgilian echoes. There are allusions to the Georgics - like the cornfields in Book I, the ore "ripens into gold"; Britain "thunders", like Octavius in Book IV - and to the vision of Rome's imperial destiny in Book VI of the Aeneid. Most of all, however, the sylvan setting, the venerable figure of Father Thames and the prospect of "Augusta's glittering spires ... and Temples" 67 evoke memories of Aeneid VIII, the prophecy of Tiberinus and the moving episode, discussed in Chapter I, in which Aeneas is led by King Evander to the grove, deep in the leafy shades of Latium, which will one day become the Capitol:

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- 64. Windsor Forest 29-31
 - 65. ibid 214
 - 66. ibid 222
 - 67. ibid 377-378

"aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis." 68

(golden now, once bristling with woodland thickets)

Past and present in Virgil, present and future in Pope are wonderfully interfused in a moment of timeless vision. The Father Thames passage confirms David Morris' assertion that Windsor Forest

"expresses a general outlook upon life - certain 'attitudes' - characteristic of (Virgil)." 69

Among these 'attitudes' is an awareness of the cost of civilization.

Before Aeneas can establish his city in Latium, many heroes - Pallas and Turnus among them - must be killed. Pope's juxtaposition of

"bleeding" balm and "lucent" pearl corresponds to Virgil's use of

"horridus" to describe both the thorny thickets of Latium and Furor's bloodstained mouth. 70 The "golden" Capitol will be founded on

conquest and sacrifice; the wealth of the new world will be carried in ships bearing thundering cannon as well as the cross of Christ.

However, Pope's response to commercial imperialism is not entirely

Virgilian. There are echoes of Ovid in Windsor Forest, not merely

in the metamorphosis of Lodona but also in the sentiments expressed

by Father Thames. In his irreverent mock-georgic, Artis Amatoriae,

the Roman poet contemplates, with evident satisfaction, the manifold blessings of "progress":

"Simplicitas rudis ante fuit : nunc aurea Roma est,
Et domiti magnas possidet orbis opes.
Aspice quae nunc sunt Capitolia, quaeque fuerunt :
Alterius dices illa fuisse Iovis.
Curia, concilio quae nunc dignissima tanto,
De stipula Tatio regna tenente fuit.
Quae nunc sub Phoebō ducibusque Palatia fulgent,
Quid nisi araturis pascua bubus erant?"

68. Aeneid VIII 348

69. Morris op. cit. p.134

70. Aeneid I 296

Prisca iuvent alios : ego me nunc denique natum
 Gratulor : haec aetas moribus apta meis.
 Non quia nunc terrae lentum subducitur aurum,
 Lectaque diverso litore concha venit :
 Nec quia decrescunt effosso marmore montes,
 Nec quia caeruleae mole fugantur aquae :
 Sed quia cultus adest, nec nostros mansit in annos
 Rusticitas, priscis illa superstes avis." 72

(There was rude simplicity of old, but now golden Rome possesses the vast wealth of the conquered world. See what the Capitol is now, and what it was : you would say they belonged to different Jupiters. The senate-house, which now is most worthy of so august a gathering, was, when Tatius held sway, made of wattles. The Palatine, whereon now Phoebus and our chieftains are set in splendour, what was it save the pasture of oxen destined to the plough? Let ancient times delight other folk : I congratulate myself that I was not born till now; this age fits my nature well. Not because now stubborn gold is drawn from the earth, and shells come gathered from divers shores, nor because mountains diminish as the marble is dug from them, nor because masonry puts to flight the dark-blue waters; but because culture is with us, and rusticity, which survived until our grandsires, has not lasted to our days.)

For Ovid, as for Virgil, civilization is grounded in cultus. However he explicitly repudiates cultus in the primary sense - the dominant sense in the Georgics - and subtly redefines its secondary meaning in terms of elegance and good taste, and whilst carefully distinguishing between true refinement of life and mere material luxury, he appears to suggest that the two inevitably go together. Moreover, the context of the passage, advice to women on the art of "self-cultivation", invokes the subsidiary connotations of the word: "style of dress", "rich dress", "ornaments of dress", "decoration". Like Virgil's farmer, Ovid's female readers are urged to repair the deficiencies of nature by "labor":

"Ordior a cultu; cultis bene Liber ab uvis
 Provenit, et culto stat seges alta solo.
 Forma dei munus: forma quota quaeque superbit?
 Pars vestrum tali munere magna caret.
 Cura dabit faciem; facies neglecta peribit,
 Idaliae similis sit licet illa deae.
 Corpora si veteres non sic coluere puellae
 Nec veteres cultos sic habuere viros." 73

(I begin with the body's care: from grapes well
 cared for Liber gives good vintage, on well-cared-for
 soil the crops stand high. Beauty is heaven's gift:
 how few can boast of beauty! A great part of you
 lack a gift so precious. Care will give good looks:
 looks neglected go to waste though they resemble the
 Italian goddess. If women of old did not so
 cultivate their bodies, the women of old had not
 lovers so cultivated.)

This is mock-georgic in the sense that Town Eclogues is mock-pastoral;
 in both cases the witty application of an apparently incongruous
 literary convention to some aspect of contemporary life shows it up
 in a totally new light, so that the reader recognises, with surprise
 and delight, that boastful fops exchanging tales of their amorous
 conquests really are like rustics engaged in amoebic song, and
 the Roman beauty really does exercise the same labor and cura on
 her toilet as the Italian farmer does on his plot of land.
 Ovid's juxtaposition of agricultural and personal "cultivation" and
 of (mentally) cultivated men and (physically) cultivated women calls
 into question such orthodox Augustan values as respect for the past,
 love of the countryside and praise of the simple life; it also
 'places' the preoccupations of fashionable Augustan society where,
 as Ovid is only too aware, refinement and elegance can so easily
 degenerate into ostentation and tasteless extravagance - hence his

advice to his female readers:

"Vos quoque nec caris aures onerate lapillis,
Quos legit in viridi decolor Indus aqua,
Nec prodite graves insuto vestibus auro,
Per quas nos petitis, saepe fugatis, opes.
Munditiis capimur;" 74

(You too burden not your ears with precious stones,
which the discoloured Indian gathers from the green
water, and come not forth weighed down with the
gold sewn upon your garments; the wealth wherewith
you seek us often repels. 'Tis with elegance we
are caught.)

Like the belle in Addison's *Spectator* 69, Ovid's self-cultivated lady illustrates the benefits of national prosperity and international trade; "deck'd with all that land and sea afford",⁷⁵ each, in Empson's words, is "a symbol of (her) whole society",⁷⁶ representing both its aspirations towards greater elegance and refinement and the dangers of a relapse into vanity, frivolity and an excessive preoccupation with external show.

For all their ironic humour, Ovid's lines make a serious point; indeed, Peter Green has described them as "a kind of personal credo",⁷⁷ which he also expressed in an earlier work, Medicamina Faciei Feminae:

"Culta placent. auro sublimia tecta linuntur,
Nigra sub imposito marmore terra latet:
Vellera saepe eadem Tyrio medicantur aëno:
Sectile deliciis India Praebet ebur.
Forsitan antiquae Tatio sub rege Sabinae
Maluerint, quam se, rura paterna coli:
Cum matrona, premens altum rubicunda sediel,
Assiduum duro pollice nebat opus,
Ipsaque claudebat quos filia paverat agnos,
Ipsa dabat virgas caesaque ligna foco.
At vestrae matres teneras peperere puellas.

74. Artis Amatoriae 129-133

75. Pope : The Rape of the Lock V 11

76. Empson op. cit. Dyson p.85

77. Ovid : The Erotic Poems Harmondsworth 1982 p.386

Vultis inaurata corpora veste tegi,
 Vultis odoratos positu variare capillos,
 Conspicuum gemmis vultis habere manum:
 Induitis collo lapides oriente petitos,
 Et quantos onus est aure tulisse duos.
 Nec tamen indignum: sit vobis cura placendi,
 Cum comptos habeant saecula nostra viros.
 Feminea vestri poliuntur lege mariti,
 Et vix ad cultus nupta, quod addat, habet." 78

(What is cultivated gives pleasure. Lofty halls are plated with gold, the black earth lies hid under marble buildings. The same fleeces are many times steeped in cauldrons of Tyrian dye: India gives its ivory to be carved into choice figures. The Sabine dames of old under King Tatius would perchance have wished to cultivate their paternal acres rather than themselves: when the matron, sitting rubicund in her high seat, span assiduously with hardened thumb, and herself set the twigs and cleft logs upon the hearth. But your mothers have borne delicate girls. You wish your bodies to be covered with gold-embroidered gowns, you wish to have hands that shine with gems: you adorn your necks with stones sought from the East, and so large that the ear finds two a burden to bear. Nor is that a fault: you must be anxious to please, for men love elegance in these times of ours. In feminine wise are your husbands made trim, and the bride has scarce aught to add to her smartness.)

In Artis Amatoriae, as we have seen, the cultivated man, unlike his female counterpart, is distinguished by intellectual refinement.

When men begin to cultivate their appearance instead of their minds, however, they are perceived as effeminate and hence ridiculous.

(Like many later social critics - Addison and Steele among them -

Ovid is ironically indulgent towards the belle's little vanities,

but cruelly critical of the fop.) If modern life has its absurdities,

however, nostalgia for the "good old days" of Sabine simplicity is

even more laughable. Artis Amatoriae explicitly repudiates the view,

expressed in the Georgics, that identifies the life of Rome's rustic

forbears with the Saturnian Golden Age. Nevertheless, while

asserting,

"aurea sunt vere nunc saecula" 79

(now truly is the age of gold),

he adds the cynical rider;

"plurimus auro
Venit honos: auro conciliatur amor." 80

(for gold is sold many an honour, by gold is
affection gained.)

Artis Amatoriae is not only mock-georgic: it is also anti-georgic, in so far as it challenges Virgil's view of the good life as the triumph of labour, and recommends instead the pursuit of pleasure. With characteristic insouciance, Ovid views this pursuit as an urban version of field sports:

"Scit bene venator, cervis ubi retia tendat,
Scit bene, qua frendens valle moretur aper;
Aucupibus noti frutices; qui sustinet hamos,
Novit quae multo pisce natentur aquae:
Tu quoque, materiam longo qui quaeris amori,
Ante frequens quo sit disce puella loco." 81

(Well knows the hunter where to spread his nets for the stag, well knows he in what glen the boar with gnashing teeth abides; familiar are the copses to fowlers, and he who holds the hook is aware in what waters many fish are swimming; you too, who seek the object of a lasting passion, learn first what places the maidens haunt.)

Rural Sports, though concerned with more conventional forms of the chase, also inverts the norms of georgic poetry, as Gay, like Ovid, defines cultus in terms of leisure. The landscape of which he writes is not Virgil's countryside, the scene of the farmer's heroic struggle with fallen nature; it is a holiday landscape, a pleasant retreat.

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| 79. | <u>Artis Amatoriae</u> | II | 277 |
| 80. | ibid | II | 277-278 |
| 81. | ibid | I | 45-50 |

from the "ungrateful hurry" ⁸² of the "noisie town", ⁸³ where the cultivated man can find recreation and refreshment for mind and body. Paradoxically, "in a work ostensibly devoted to sport, it is the intellectual, aesthetic and philosophical appeal of rural life which predominates. Work, in this context, is observed, not endured, an agreeable foil to the poet's idleness:

"Soon as the morning sun salutes the day
Through dewy fields I take my frequent way,
Where I behold the farmer's early care,
In the revolving labours of the year." ⁸⁴

The impression created by these lines is one of sheer delight in the freshness of the early morning; "care" and "labour" - key words in Virgil's Georgics - are softened and neutralised by the context.

The farmer's "revolving labours", which Virgil saw as a never-ceasing treadmill, are here simply part of the matutinal scene, along with the lark's song and the dewdrops on the grass. Even hay-making, one of the most back-breaking of agricultural pursuits for the participants, is transformed into a picturesque spectacle, an animated landscape with figures, that anticipates the country scenes of Gainsborough and Stubbs:

"When the fresh spring in all her state is crown'd,^d
And high luxuriant grass o'erspreads the ground,
The lab'rer with the bending scythe is seen,
Shaving the surface of the waving green,
Of all her native pride disrobes the land,
And meads lays waste before his sweeping hand:
While with the mounting sun the meadow glows,
The fading herbage round he loosely throws;
But if some sign portend a lasting show'r,
Th' experienc'd swain foresees the coming hour,
His sun-burnt hands the scatt'ring fork forsake,
And ruddy damsels ply the sawing rake;
In rising hills the fragrant harvest grows,
And spreads along the field in equal rows." ⁸⁵

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| 82. | <u>Rural Sports</u> | I | 2 |
| 83. | ibid | I | 11 |
| 84. | ibid | I | 35-38 |
| 85. | ibid | I | 39-52 |

This is the countryside viewed through the eyes of an artist, responsive to colour ("green", "sun-burnt", "ruddy"), the effects of light ("glows", "fading") and composition ("in rising hills", "in equal rows") and of a poet revelling in the search for apt and witty metaphors for the mower's task ("shaving", "disrobes", "lays waste"). Sensuous pleasure in the beauty of the scene is enhanced by the intellectual challenge of depicting it in words. Added to both are the joys of philosophical and moral reflection as the mower assumes his familiar emblematic role as Father Time, the universal despoiler, and the meadow, stripped of its "robe" of "luxuriant" grass, exemplifies the fate of worldly pride and vanity. In this setting, the labourer is not an individual, much less a cultus hero; no more - and no less - "real" than the personified spring, he is an integral part of a complex poetic pattern centred on the word, "bending", which applies to the haymaker and the "waving" grass as well as to his scythe. Man, nature and technology are perceived as parts of the same harmonious system. It is this insight, rather than the weather-lore it contains, that gives this passage its Virgilian flavour. Gay - or his poetic persona - has indeed learned "the labours of Italian swains"⁸⁶ from the Georgics and cultus (secondary sense) has informed his view of cultus (primary sense).

Reclining in the shade, the very antithesis of labor, he enjoys the prospect of literary landscapes as delightful as the actual scene before him and hardly less substantial:

86. Rural Sports I 68

"This waving field is gilded o'er with corn,
That spreading trees with blushing fruit adorn:
Here I survey the purple vintage grow,
Climb round the poles, and rise in graceful row." 87

Rows of vines or rows of new-mown hay, both are equally present to the poet, though the latter belong to the "real" world and the former to the world of imagination. Yet both are equally distanced -

"seen" and "surveyed" rather than experienced, admired for their aesthetic qualities, ("graceful", "equal") not valued for their use.

Gay maintains a similar distance between his poetic persona and the field sports which are his nominal subject. If Rural Sports has a hero, it is clearly not the sportsman. Indeed, Gay's sympathies seem to be with the quarry, with the "unwary" 88 or "ill-fated" 89 partridge or the "trembling hare" 90 run down by the greyhound:

"She turns, he winds, and soon regains the way,
Then tears with goary mouth the screaming prey." 91

It cannot, surely, be mere anachronistic squeamishness that finds Gay's comment on this spectacle heavily ironic,

"What various sport does rural life afford!" 92

The protagonist, if not the hero, of the poem is Gay himself, whose personality pervades the whole work as Virgil's does the Georgics. No hunting squire, but a "pensive" 93 contemplative observer of the predial scene, he surveys the activities of huntsman and haymaker alike with serene detachment, the nature of which is neatly epitomised in the final words of the poem:

"Farewel amusing thoughts and peaceful hours". 94

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| 87. | <u>Rural Sports</u> | I | 73-76 |
| 88. | ibid | II | 305 |
| 89. | ibid | II | 321 |
| 90. | ibid | II | 382 |
| 91. | ibid | II | 297-298 |
| 92. | ibid | II | 299 |
| 93. | ibid | I | 105 |
| 94. | ibid | II | 443 |

"Amusing" precisely sums up Gay's attitude throughout Rural Sports, suggesting, as it does, agreeable diversion, humour and, by association with "musing" and "the Muse", philosophical and aesthetic enjoyment. For all his easy geniality, the Gay of Rural Sports is a complex and many-sided figure, capable, in his more serious moments, of authentically Virgilian reflections on the nature of the universe:

"Now night in silent state begins to rise,
And twinkling orbs bestrow th'uncloudy skies;
Her borrow'd lustre growing Cynthia lends,
And on the main a glitt'ring path extends;
Millions of worlds hang in the spacious air,
Which round their suns their annual circles steer.
Sweet contemplation elevates my sense,
While I survey the works of providence.
O could the muse in loftier strains rehearse,
The glorious author of the universe,
Who reins the winds, gives the vast ocean bounds,
And circumscribes the floating worlds their rounds,
My soul should overflow in songs of praise,
And my Creator's name inspire my lays." 95

Like Virgil, Gay sets his immediate subject in a cosmic context, as part of the vast and wonderful design devised by "providence" ("pater ipse"). The opening lines of the passage trace the shift from observation to "contemplation", from the stars as they appear when viewed from the earth on a clear night, via the nearest and most familiar of the planets, to the huge immensity of space and the mysterious motions of the heavenly bodies. In the last two couplets, however, Gay contrasts God's infinite power to "circumscribe" and define his creation with the finite (hence "overflowing") capacity of the human "author". Behind Gay's musings here lies the most profound theme explored in the Georgics, man's place in the universe. More specifically, they refer to Virgil's prayer in Book II :

"Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae,
 quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore,
 accipiant caelique vias et sidera monstrent,
 defectus solis varios lunaeque labores ..." 96

(But as for me - first above all, may the sweet
 Muses whose holy emblems, under the spell of a
 mighty love, I bear, take me to themselves, and
 show me heaven's pathways, the stars, the sun's
 many lapses, the moon's many labours)

Rural Sports is a kind of extended self-portrait, not so much an
 accurate likeness as a portrait in role, rather like Jerv⁹'s study
 of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as an Arcadian shepherdess, or
 Kneller's impressive representation of Dryden,⁹⁷ in flowing robes
 with loosely-knotted cravat and frizzled wig, a garb neither quite
 contemporary nor quite antique, suggesting at once the timeless
 classicism of the poet and the acute topicality of the satirist.
 In Rural Sports, Gay wraps himself in the mantle of Virgil, whilst
 retaining the Augustan gentleman's curled peruke.

The poem contains two further portraits, both, significantly, female.
 It concludes with a long section in praise of country life,
 exemplified by the happy "rural maid" ⁹⁸ - the equivalent of Virgil's
 "fortunatus agricola" ⁹⁹ - whose cheerful serenity is contrasted
 with the manifold afflictions suffered by the "courtly dame" :

"She never feels the spleen's imagin'd pains,
 Nor melancholy stagnates in her veins;
 She never loses life in thoughtless ease,
 Nor on the velvet couch invites disease;
 Her homespun dress in simple neatness lies,
 And for no glaring equipage she sighs: ...
 No midnight masquerade her beauty wears,
 And health, not paint, the fading bloom repairs." 100

96. Georgics II 475-478

97. Reproduced in Leon Garfield: The House of Hanover : England in
 the 18th Century London 1976 p.30

98. Rural Sports II 410

99. See Georgics II 458-459

100. Rural Sports II 416-425

The lady of quality, neurotic, vain and indolent, preoccupied with the trappings of wealth and luxury, her essential inanity barely concealed by make-up or the masquer's vizard, is the Jungian shadow of Addison's Royal Exchange belle, the unacceptable face of "cultus", in the Ovidian sense of the word. Addison's fine lady and Gay's "courtly dame" can both stand as "a symbol of the whole society" of Augustan England. Thanks to international trade, "the harvest of every climate" is at their disposal; they enjoy all the refinements of "cultivated" life. Separately, they may serve to demonstrate the difference between Whig and Tory attitudes to commercial expansion. Together, they form an edifying diptych, illustrating the close affinity between opulence and materialism, refinement and decadence.

The belle fulfils a similar role in Trivia, where she is held responsible for the supplanting of honest pedestrians by "coaches and chariots",¹⁰¹ symbols - or symptoms - of the "Pride and Luxury" of the age. Gay begins by comparing London with Venice, where

"No Carts, no Coaches shake the floating Town" ¹⁰²

and goes on to identify modern forms of transport with private vice and public degeneracy:

"Thus was of old Britannia's City bless'd,
E'er Pride and Luxury her Sons possess'd:
Coaches and Chariots yet unfashion'd lay,
Nor late invented Chairs perplex'd the way:
Then the proud Lady trip'd along the Town,
And tuck'd up Petticoats secur'd her Gown,
Her rosie Cheek with distant Visits glow'd,
And Exercise unartful Charms bestow'd;
But since in braided Gold her Foot is bound,
And a long trailing Manteau sweeps the Ground,
Her Shoe disdains the street; the lazy Fair,
With narrow step affects a limping Air.

101. Trivia I 103

102. ibid I 103

Now gaudy Pride corrupts the lavish Age,
 And the streets flame with glaring Equipage:
 The tricking Gamester insolently rides
 With Loves and Graces on his Chariot's Sides;
 In sawcy state the griping Broker sits,
 And laughs at Honesty, and trudging Wits." 103

In these lines, the woman of fashion is explicitly identified with society at large; it is her "gaudy Pride" which "corrupts the lavish age". By dressing herself in extravagantly unsuitable clothes, she has made herself incapable of walking and thus is held directly responsible for the introduction of such newfangled luxuries as coaches and sedan-chairs - an extraordinary instance of couture (cultus - style of dress) affecting culture (cultus - manner of life) and changing it for the worse. Viewed in this way, the belle becomes a powerful, even dangerous, figure, especially when, as in this case, self-cultivation comes alarmingly close to self-mutilation. Her feet are "bound" so that she "affects a limping air"; she is enfeebled and etiolated by lack of exercise, a sickly shadow of the brisk, pink-cheeked beauty of bygone days, and - worst of all - "Britannia's ... sons" are infected with the same malaise. Two of these "sons" appear in the passage; the gamester and the broker, gamblers both, represent the flawed economy, based on speculation and sharp-practice, which fuels the flames of conspicuous consumption.

So deeply has the belle's insatiable vanity eaten into the fabric of society that both cultus and civitas have been undermined. Vehicular traffic, in Trivia, is the curse of city life, encouraging

"Laziness and Pride" ¹⁰⁴ and giving rise to furious, and often violent, conflict:

"Now Oaths grow loud, with Coaches Coaches jar,
And the smart blow provokes the sturdy war." ¹⁰⁵

Moreover, it is used by the most corrupt and contemptible members of society:

"See, yon' bright Chariot on its Braces swing,
With Flanders Mares, and on an arched Spring,
That Wretch, to gain an Equipage and Place,
Betray'd his Sister to a lew'd Embrace.
This Coach, that with the blazon'd 'Scutcheon glows,
Vain of his unknown Race, the Coxcomb shows.
Here the brib'd Lawyer, sunk in Velvet, sleeps;
The starving Orphan, as he passes, weeps;
There flames a Fool, begirt with tinselled Slaves,
Who wastes the Wealth of a whole Race of Knaves.
That other, with a clustring Train behind,
Owes his new Honours to a sordid Mind.
This next in Court Fidelity excells,
The Publick rifles, and his country sells." ¹⁰⁶

In its way, this passage can stand, as a picture of civil disintegration, alongside Virgil's conclusion to Book I of the Georgics.¹⁰⁷ Here, too,

"are right and wrong inverted; ...so many
are the shapes of sin".

Concepts such as honour and fidelity have become as meaningless as the coat of arms displayed by the foppish parvenu. The many references to light - "bright", "flames", "tinselled" and (by association with "blaze") "blazon'd" - suggest not genuine illumination but the fitful flickering of an ignis-fatuus or the sickly phosphorescence of decay. And here, as in the Georgics, the symbol of this moral disorder is the chariot. Significantly, in this depraved world, a man will prostitute his sister to gain "an Equipage, and Place" - in that order. "Betrayed" is a key word in the passage as

104. Trivia II 262

105. ibid III 35-36

106. ibid II 573-586

107. Georgics I 505 ff

treachery is endemic in the society it portrays where, at every level, self-seeking recreants are prepared to abandon family ties, professional ethics, the responsibilities of inherited wealth or public office in the pursuit of worldly success, measured by the size and splendour of their equipages. In the concluding lines of Book II, Gay, in his persona as pedestrian-poet, expressly repudiates this base morality and the vehicles with which it is associated:

"May the proud Chariot never be my Fate,
If purchas'd at so mean, so dear a Rate;
O rather give me sweet Content on Foot,
Wrapt in my Vertue, and a good Surtout." 108

Rather than the trappings of wealth and rank, Gay prefers a less substantial, but more glorious, prize:

"To tread in Paths to ancient Bards unknown,
And bind my Temples with a Civic Crown". 109

The "ancient bard" in whose footsteps Gay treads in Trivia is, of course, Virgil, and a "civic crown" is an apt reward for the inventor of the urban georgic. (True, Ovid used an urban setting in Artis Amatoriae, but his subject was erotic, not civic, whereas Trivia is, in every sense, a poem of the city.) Just as in Rural Sports Gay re-examined the meaning of cultus, so, in Trivia, he explores the significance of civitas for Augustan London, where, as coaches, chairs and chariots jostle and clatter through the streets, disturbing the peace and disrupting public order, good citizenship is identified with pedestrianism. The main impression created by Gay's London is one of crowds, diversity and bustle; all sorts of people - tradesmen, hawkers, apprentices, the broker, the boot-black, the sempstress and the beau - swirl through the town, clustering in groups or hurrying

108. Trivia II 587-590

109. ibid I 19-20

along, intent on their own affairs. Whether this kaleidoscopic panorama is an invigorating spectacle or an agoraphobic nightmare depends on how the individuals who make up the crowd behave towards one another. In the close-quarters of the city, civility is all-important:

"Let due Civilities be strictly paid.
The Wall surrender to the hooded Maid;
Nor let thy sturdy Elbow's hasty Rage
Jostle the feeble steps of trembling Age;
And when the Porter bends beneath his Load,
And pants for Breath; clear thou the crowded Road,
But above all, the groaping Blind direct,
And from the pressing Throng the Lane protect." 110

Gay's precepts define the nature of the modern civitas hero. He must show consideration to the weak, the burdened and disabled and relieve the beggar from his "lib'ral purse",¹¹¹ whilst defying the bully's "strutting Pride"¹¹² and evading the "Frauds"¹¹³ and "Snares"¹¹⁴ of sharpers and whores. In Trivia, Gay celebrates the centripetal power of a great city and what Max Byrd has described as

"the struggle of human beings to control the
energies that bring them together, to civilize
themselves".¹¹⁵

In this respect, he is a true successor of Virgil and Trivia is a genuine - as opposed to a "mock" - georgic.

Like Virgil's Georgics, it is set in the postlapsarian world, where nature, both human and inanimate, is deeply flawed. The traffic-jam that turns into a brawl, the barbarism of the pillory and the bear-pit, the casual brutality of upper-class hooligans, even "the Furies

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110. Trivia II 45-52
111. ibid II 454
112. ibid II 61
113. ibid III 247
114. ibid III 283
115. Byrd op. cit. p.7

of the Foot-ball War" ¹¹⁶ testify to the omnipresence of furor, and assorted card-sharps, thimblerriggers, pickpockets, whores and suborned courtiers form a comprehensive catalogue of speculation and fraud. Entropy, the natural principle which, unless resisted by unremitting effort, determines that "all things speed towards the worst"¹¹⁷ is represented in Trivia by the dirt which abounds everywhere in London. Again and again the unwary pedestrian is warned to avoid the "muddy Kennel",¹¹⁸ "spatt'ring Dirt",¹¹⁹ "muddy Blots"¹²⁰ and "slabby Mire"; ¹²¹ even the pampered rider is not exempt : his chariot may collide with a dung-cart and then -

"down falls the shrieking Beau;
The slabby Pavement crystal Fragments strow,
Black Floods of Mire th'embroider'd Coat disgrace,
And Mud enwraps the Honours of his Face". ¹²²

In this hazardous environment, the virtue necessary for survival is "Prudence" ¹²³ which fulfils the function ascribed to labor in the Georgics.

An emblematic representation of Prudence is reproduced in Martin C Battestin's The Providence of Wit.¹²⁴ Taken from Iconologia by Caesar Ripa which, though dating from 1593, was, according to Battestin,

"the standard work well into the eighteenth century" ¹²⁵ , it depicts a figure with two faces, one young and female, one old and male, holding a looking-glass in which the younger face is reflected.

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- 116. Trivia II 348
 - 117. Georgics I 199-200
 - 118. Trivia II 62
 - 119. ibid II 94
 - 120. ibid II 294
 - 121. ibid II 320
 - 122. ibid II 531-534
 - 123. ibid I 3
 - 124. Battestin op. cit. Plate 17
 - 125. ibid p.189

The significance of the emblem seems to be that prudence demands the clear-sightedness of youth and the wisdom of age, "masculine" rationality and "feminine" intuition, that it looks backwards, profiting from past experience, and forward, anticipating future events, and reflects upon what it sees. There is no way of knowing for certain whether Gay was familiar with this icon, but a reference to Prudence's "glass" in the Dunciad ¹²⁶ indicates that Pope, at least, knew of it, or something like it.

Certainly, it would be highly appropriate to invoke this triple-faced figure in a work so consistently devoted to the principle of triality as Trivia. Even the title can be interpreted in three ways:

Trivia was, of course, the Roman goddess of the crossways, but the word also came to mean the streets themselves and then the common talk of the streets; Trivia is a poem about walking the streets, dedicated to the goddess of the streets, which describes the everyday sights and sounds and events that make up the common discourse of the streets. Thus Gay's disclaimer,

"Let me not descend to Trivial Song" ¹²⁷

is a sly pun: the whole poem is a "Trivial Song", though not in the sense intended here. Furthermore, Trivia herself was a threefold deity, often represented with three bodies or three heads, ¹²⁸ identified with Diana, Lucina and Hecate and thus with the three archetypal aspects of woman as virgin, mother and witch. The structure of Trivia repeats this triple pattern; in each of the

126. Dunciad I 49

127. Trivia II 301

128. see The Oxford Classical Dictionary M Cary et al. (ed)
Oxford 1949 p.926

three books a female figure, corresponding to one of these archetypes, plays a significant part. Patty, in Book I, the

"bloomy Maiden
with Innocence and Beauty in her eyes", 129

inspires Vulcan's "Mechanic Fancy" 130; in Book II Cloacina - the title (purifier) under which Venus was worshipped in the Roman Forum - represents the power of both sexual and maternal love; in the third book these mythological (or quasi-mythological) characters are replaced by the figure of the whore, using her

"Wiles and Subtle Arts" 131

to ensnare her all-too-trusting dupe and

"lead the willing Victim to his Doom" 132

- the embodiment of sexuality as witchcraft.

The mythological structure of the Georgics, as we have seen, contrasts the influence on human affairs exercised by Jove, author of entropic, postlapsarian nature, and Apollo, patron of those arts by which man redeems, or at least ameliorates, his fallen state. In this context, the influence of Patty and Cloacina can be seen as Apolline; patters and shoe-blacks enable us to rise above or wipe away the dirt which, in Trivia represents the retrograde forces in nature. The whore, however is entirely baleful, bringing disease and disfigurement where the others bring health and cleanliness. A feminist reading would probably attach a great deal of significance to the fact that whereas Patty and Cloacina are not independent agents of change - Patty is

129. Trivia I 241-242

130. ibid I 272

131. ibid III 263

132. ibid III 291

entirely passive and Cloacina turns to her fellow-immortals for help - the whore is completely autonomous. However, what concerns me here is the fact that each of the three corresponds to a type already encountered in Gay's poetry. Patty is another version of the happy country girl of Rural Sports; a figure of almost Sabine simplicity and virtue; Cloacina, with her tiara of turnip-hops and scaly girdle, is a murky, subaqueous counterpart to the fine lady in the same work who

"Borrows the pride of land and sea and air" 133

to furnish her toilette, whilst the whore, a horrid parody of her modish sister, in "tawdry Ribbons" 134 and "new-scowe'd Manteau", 135 with "hollow cheeks" 136 and "livid eyes" 137 recalls the sickly limping belle whose love of finery in Trivia Book I, is seen as the symptom of a national malaise.

By the prominence given in Book III of Trivia to the prostitutes that haunt Drury Lane and its environs, no less than by his recounting of the Oedipus story - that most terrible instance of tragedy encountered at the crossroads - Gay accentuates the recalcitrance of fallen human nature. Indeed, there is a curious parallel between the fate of Oedipus and that of the Devonshire farmer, drawn to the capital by "thirst for gain" 138 and robbed by a "fraudful nymph", 139 lost and befuddled, he draws his sword on the Watch, spends the rest of the night in gaol and subsequently discovers he has been infected with venereal disease and is threatened with hideous disfigurement.

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- 133. Rural Sports I 188
 - 134. Trivia III 269
 - 135. ibid III 270
 - 136. ibid III 272
 - 137. ibid III 276
 - 138. ibid III 285
 - 139. ibid III 289

Here, as in the case of Oedipus, are violence, perverted sexuality and rashness repented too late, with horrifying physical consequences, whilst from both Theban King and Devon Yeoman springs a "fatal plague" ¹⁴⁰ which destroys their happiness and that of their dependents. It is such frail and flawed human beings who must learn, in Max Byrd's phrase, to

"control the energies that bring them together", ¹⁴¹ if civilization is to survive. Trivia is Gay's means of teaching urban man how to exercise that control with prudence and civility.

Cultus, civitas and labor all have their equivalents in the georgics of John Gay. There is, however, no hero comparable with Octavius Caesar, legislator, statesman and warrior, the god-like embodiment of civitas. Instead, the poet's own persona (pensive student of Virgil, honest pedestrian) is modestly advanced as the vehicle for the moral values of the work. In both Rural Sports and Trivia, however, Gay has created what might be described as an anti-hero, the belle who, with her sinister shadow, the whore, symbolises the threat to civilization posed by a debased or trivialised cultus. For Addison, the belle may represent "the harvest of every climate", the elegance and refinement made possible by an expansion of international trade celebrated not only by the Spectator essayist but also by Pope in Windsor Forest; for Gay, she is no more than a delusive artefact, as bright - and as fatal - as the angler's fly:

140. Trivia III 221

141. Byrd op. cit. p.7

"To frame the little animal, provide
 All the gay hues that wait on female pride,
 Let nature guide thee; sometimes golden wire
 the shining bellies of the fly require;
 The peacock's plumes thy tackle must not fail,
 Nor the dear purchase of the sable's tail.
 Each gaudy bird some slender tribute brings,
 And lends the growing insect proper wings:
 Silks of all colours must their aid impart,
 And ev'ry fur promote the fisher's art.
 So the gay lady, with expensive care,
 Borrows the pride of land, of sea, and air;
 Furs, pearls and plumes, the glittering thing displays;
 Dazles our eyes, and easie hearts betrays." 142

In Book III of the Georgics, Virgil shows how men and animals share a common nature. Not so the "gay lady"; she is less natural even than an artificial insect. She has become a mere "thing".

CHAPTER IV

EPIC : PIETAS AND PETTICOATS

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In the eighty-first number of the Tatler, the hooped petticoat is put on trial. What James Laver has described as "distended skirts" ¹ came into fashion about 1710 and, according to the same authority, were

"the most striking change in women's dress at this period".

Certainly, they attracted a good deal of comment from periodical essayists and poets alike throughout the succeeding decade. They were worn underneath an outer petticoat of silk or brocade, over which the manteau, a kind of open gown with a train, was looped back and pinned up (or "plaited") in festoons. Laver describes the construction of the under-petticoat as follows:

"They were known as hooped skirts, the hoops being of whalebone or osier-rods held together by ribbons. The structure bore some relation to a basket, and the French word for basket, panier, was applied to this method of distending the skirt. ... It could sometimes be as wide as eighteen feet." ²

In the Tatler essay, the argument in favour of the petticoat is economic: such lavish use of materials, has caused a "prodigious improvement" ³ in the woollen, cordage and "Greenland" (or whalebone) trades; the case against, however, is presented chiefly in moral - or more specifically, sexual-terms; whilst its "weight and unwieldiness" ⁴ might serve as a useful defence against amorous advances, its

1. James Laver Costume London 1963 p.69

2. ibid p.69

3. Joseph Addison in The Tatler Lewis Gibbs (ed) London 1953 81

4. ibid 81

effectiveness in concealing the effects of pregnancy might, it is claimed, prove a temptation to sexual indiscretion.

Having given judgement against the petticoat, "Mr Bickerstaff" (alias Addison) concludes,

"I consider woman as a beautiful romantic animal, that may be adorned with furs and feathers, pearls and diamonds, ores and silks. The lynx shall cast its skin at her feet to make her a tippet; the peacock, parrot, and swan shall pay contributions to her muff; the sea shall be searched for shells, and the rocks for gems; and every part of nature furnish out its share towards the embellishment of a creature that is the most consummate work of it. All this I shall indulge them in; but as for the petticoat I have been speaking of, I neither can nor will allow it." ⁵

There are obvious similarities between this passage and Gay's portrait of the belle as fishing-fly in Rural Sports. ⁶ Both describe women of fashion, adorned with

"the pride of land, of sea, and air
Furs, pearls and plumes," ⁷

but whereas Gay's belle is seen simply as a delusive snare to catch the unwary male, the Tatler portrait is more complex: the furs and feathers in which she is attired cleverly suggest the ambiguous nature of this "beautiful, romantic animal": exquisite as a swan but vain as a peacock, colourful - and clamorous - as a parrot, with the lynx's predatory instincts as well as its feline grace. The petticoat belle's toilette, like that of the Royal Exchange belle in Spectator 69, is culled from the harvest of every climate, though

5. Addison op.cit. p.81

6. Rural Sports I 187 ff

7. ibid I 188-189

the terms of reference here are geological and zoological rather than geographical. A similar instance of the belle as conspicuous consumer of the world's treasures occurs in Gay's amusing epyllion,

The Fan:

"Neptune on her bestows his choicest Stores,
For her the Chambers of the Deep explores;
The gaping Shell its pearly Charge resigns,
And round her Neck the lucid Bracelet twines;
Plutus for her bids Earth its wealth unfold,
Where the warm Oar (sic) is ripen'd into Gold;
Or where the Ruby reddens in the Soil,
Where the green Emerald pays the Searcher's Toil.
Does not the Di'mond sparkle in her Ear,
Glow on her Hand, and tremble in her Hair?
From the gay Nymph the glancing Lustre flies,
And imitates the Lightning of her Eyes." 8

The vocabulary here, with its emphasis on exploration and discovery ("explores", "bids ... unfold", "searcher's toil") echoes the sentiments expressed in the Tatler:

"the sea shall be searched for shells, and the rocks for gems", 9

whilst the gods of classical mythology appear as celestial Sir Andrew Freeports, dispatching the fruits of these labours

"from the different Ends of the Earth" 10

to embellish Nature's

"most consummate work." 11

Despite individual differences of emphasis, the consistency in these portraits suggest that the fashionable beauty was seen by writers and readers alike as a significant social phenomenon, associated with the increasing mercantile wealth of the nation. In the character of

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- 8. The Fan II 67-80
 - 9. Addison The Tatler 81
 - 10. Addison Spectator 69
 - 11. Addison The Tatler 81

Pope's Belinda, the type attains truly heroic status: seated before her looking-glass, performing her daily ritual of self-adornment, she epitomises both the aspirations and the shortcomings of her age:

"And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd,
 Each silver Vase in mystic order laid.
 First, rob'd in white, the Nymph intent adores,
 With head uncover'd, the Cosmetic pow'rs.
 A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
 To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
 Th'inferior Priestess, at her altar's side,
 Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
 Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
 The various off'rings of the world appear;
 From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
 And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
 This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
 And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
 The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
 Transform'd to combs, the speckled and the white.
 Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
 Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
 Now awful Beauty puts on all its arms;
 The fair each moment rises in her charms,
 Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
 And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
 Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
 And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes." 12

The familiar features are all present: the combination of dazzling opulence and "curious toil"; the celebration of female beauty, moderated by a tone of indulgent irony; the perception of the belle as the focus of a world-wide system of commercial exchange. There is, however, one significant difference. In the Tatler and the Spectator, "the various off'rings of the world" are seen as gifts of nature - in the former case a sort of pagan "Natura Naturans", in the latter, a wise and benevolent Providence; in The Fan, they are bestowed by the gods who, in this context, may also be identified with

natural forces. Here, however, they are spoils of war presented as sacred oblations. The combination of religious and martial imagery in this passage is, of course, a critical commonplace. What concerns me here is the characterisation of Belinda as an heroic figure endowed with both cultus and civitas qualities. She is a cultus figure, metaphorically, in the religious sense, but she is literally devoted to cultus in the Ovidian sense and, arguably, in the secondary sense also, whilst, as "awful beauty", arming for the fray she figuratively assumes the role of that quintessential civitas hero, the epic warrior.

As embodiment of both civitas and cultus, Belinda calls to mind Virgil's "pius Aeneas", whose dual role is emphasised in the opening lines of the Aeneid:

"Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
 Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit
 litora - multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
 vi superum, saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram,
 multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem
 inferretque deos Latio; genus unde Latinum
 Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae." 13

(Arms I sing and the man who first from the coasts
 of Troy, exiled by fate, came to Italy and Lavinian
 shores; much buffeted on sea and land by violence
 from above, through cruel Juno's unforgiving wrath,
 and much enduring in war also, till he should
 build a city and bring his gods to Latium; whence
 came the Latin race, the lords of Alba, and the
 walls of lofty Rome.)

Aeneas' mission is not merely to found the city of Rome but to find a new home for the household gods of Ilium and one of the most moving

images in the whole poem is that of the sad group of refugees making their way through the ruins of Troy, Aeneas with Anchises on his shoulders, carefully carrying the "sacra ... patriosque Penates", little Iulus trotting by his side, trying to keep up with his father's long strides, the doomed Creusa following behind.¹⁴ In Book VIII Virgil recalls this scene, in his description of Octavian's victory at Actium, engraved on Aeneas' shield by his mother's consort, the fire-god, Vulcan:

"hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar
cum patribus populoque, Penatibus et magnis dis,
stans celsa in puppi, geminas cui tempora flammās
laeta vomunt patriumque aperitur vertice sidus." 15

(Here Augustus Caesar, leading Italians to strife,
with peers and people, and the great gods of the
Penates, stands on the lofty stem; his joyous
brows pour forth a double flame, and on his head
dawns his father's star.)

As in Book II Aeneas takes on his shoulders the burden of his Trojan past, represented by Anchises, so here he takes up the future of Rome, depicted in a series of scenes from Roman history, from the childhood of Romulus and Remus to Augustus' triple triumph in 29BC. Jasper Griffin's commentary on this episode brings out its intense pathos:

"He is allowed to see the glories of the history which will be, depicted in cold and glittering metal; since that history has not yet happened, even with divine aid the hero cannot really understand it. He finds some pleasure in contemplating its half-comprehended image, but he must feel its full weight when he carries on his shoulder the brilliant burden of destiny." 16

With the benefit of hindsight, however, the reader can fully appreciate

14. See *Aeneid* II 717-725

15. *ibid* VIII 678-681

16. Jasper Griffin *Virgil* Oxford New York 1986 pp 67-68

the significance of the shield and its pictures. The representation of Augustus at Actium is particularly rich in symbolism. The double flame springing from his brow recalls the fire that arose from the infant Iulus' head before the flight from Troy, whilst the star is an allusion to the comet which marked the death of Julius Caesar, ¹⁷ directly descended, so Romans believe, from that same Iulus and adoptive father of Augustus. Of the little family that escaped from Troy only two, Aeneas and his son, are still alive by Book VIII. But the image on the shield reminds us that sacrifice has not been in vain;

"the great gods of the Penates"

are still honoured in Rome.

As their name suggests, the di Penates were the gods of the penus or foodstore; the word was first applied to the food itself, then came to mean the cupboard or larder in which it was kept. According to Warde Fowler, they are

"always conceived and expressed in the plural ...
and their plurality is perhaps due to the variety
and frequent change of the material of the store." ¹⁸

Only the ritually pure were allowed to touch the penus, so this duty was usually assigned to the children of the family. Aeneas could not carry his family Penates out of Troy, because his hands were defiled with blood. The penus was situated close to the family hearth and was thus intimately linked with the cult of Vesta; Robert W Gruttwell, in his ingenious analysis of the mythological background to the Aeneid ¹⁹ points out that the Penates were the offspring of

17. See Eclogues IX 47-49

18. Warde Fowler op. cit. p.74

19. Virgil's Mind at Work Oxford 1964 p 46

Ceres, who was Vesta's sister. The importance of the hearth in every Roman home is illustrated by the subsequent etymology of the word, 'focus'. It was, in Warde Fowler's words,

"the centre of the family worship" 20

as well as of domestic life:

"In front of it was the table at which the family took their meals, and on this was placed the salt-cellar (salinum) and the sacred salt-cake, baked even in historical times in primitive fashion by the daughters of the family After the first and chief course of the mid-day meal, silence was enjoined, and an offering of a part of the cake was thrown on to the fire from a small sacrificial plate or dish (patella). This alone is enough to prove that Vesta, the spirit of the fire, was the central point of the whole worship, the spiritual embodiment of the physical welfare of the family." 21

Thus, Warde Fowler argues,

"Vesta and the Penates represent the spiritual side of the material needs of the household." 22

In the wider community of the civitas, Vesta was duly honoured in the Aedes Vestae, not a temple but a

"round structure with a dome-shaped roof such as ... archaeologists aptly term a 'beehive hut.'" 23

Here

"the Penates, who in every private home were the gods of its larder, in Vesta's public home ... guarded those 'gifts of Ceres' ... which were the ears of corn to be crushed by Vesta's virgins and cooked by them into cakes upon Vesta's hearth-fire as symbolising the sustenance of the state". 24

A similar task, as we have seen, was allotted to the daughters of each Roman family. Thus, the Vestal virgins may be thought of as

20. Warde Fowler op. cit. p.73

21. ibid p.73

22. ibid p.74

23. Cruttwell op. cit. p.15

24. W Warde Fowler : The Roman Festivals London 1899 pp 149-150

'honorary daughters' of the state. They wore white garments and had a distinctive way of dressing their hair, with three curls hanging down on each side of the face, a style otherwise worn only by brides. In historical times they were six in number and collectively they were responsible for tending the Vestal flame and the Penates publici. Warde Fowler draws attention ^{to} the continuity between the domestic and the civic worship of these household gods:

"We have already noticed Vesta as the religious centre of the house Through all stages of development from house to city this religious centre must have been preserved, and in the Rome of historical times Vesta was still there, inherent in her sacred hearth-fire, which was tended by her six virgin priestesses, and renewed on the Roman New Year's day (March 1) by the primitive method of friction. The Vestals beyond doubt represented the unmarried daughters of the primitive Latin family, and the penus Vestae, a kind of Holy of Holies of the Roman State, recalled the penus or store-closet of the agricultural home; this penus was cleansed on June 15 for the reception of the first fruits of the harvest, and then closed until June 7 of the following year Far more than any other cult, that of Vesta represents the reality and continuity of Roman religious feeling." 25

Legend identified the perpetual flame in the Aedes Vestae with the fire brought out of Troy by Aeneas. The story goes that his son Iulus carried the sacred fire to Alba Longa where it was later tended by Rhea Silvia, the Vestal virgin who was violated by Mars and gave birth to Romulus and Remus. Virgil appears to have this tradition in mind when he calls the twins' mother "Ilia", the Trojan maid, ²⁶ and when he makes the ghost of Hector entrust Aeneas specifically with the Vestal fire along with the other "saera" of Troy.

25. Warde Fowler op. cit. pp 136-137

26. Aeneid I 274, VI 778

Aeneas dreams that Hector comes before him, bloodstained and dust-smeared, and enjoins him, with tears, to flee from the city. While he lived, Hector was Troy's strongest defence; now he is dead, Ilium will inevitably fall: the only hope is for Aeneas to establish a new city where the Trojan gods will continue to be honoured:

"heu! fuge, nate dea, teque his,' ait, 'eripe flammis.
hostis habet muros; ruit alto a culmine Troia.
sat patriae Priamoque datum: si Pergama dextra
defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.
sacra suosque tibi commendat Troia Penatis:
hos cape fatorum comites, his moenia quaere,
magna pererrato statues quae denique ponto.'
sic ait, et manibus vittas Vestamque potentem
aeternumque adytis effert penetralibus ignem." 27

('Ah, flee, goddess-born,' he cries, 'and snatch thyself from these flames. The foe holds our walls; Troy falls from her lofty height. All claims are paid to king and country; if Troy's towers could be saved by strength of hand, by mine, too, had they been saved. Troy commits to thee her holy things and household gods; take them to share thy fortunes: seek for them the city - the mighty city which, when thou has wandered over the deep thou shalt at last establish!' So he speaks and in his hands brings forth from the inner shrine the fillets, great Vesta and the undying fire.')

Cruttwell describes two early pictorial representations of the flight from Troy, an Etruscan scarab of the early fifth century B.C. and the tabula Italica, five centuries later, found at Bovillae; in both, Anchises is shown carrying a small domed receptacle, rather like a miniature Aedes Vestae, which, Cruttwell argues, contained the sacred flame. 28

When Pyrrhus hacks Priam to death before the palace altar, the King's blood pollutes the Vestal fire. However, according to Cruttwell,

27. Aeneid II 289-297

28. Cruttwell op. cit. p.113

"Troy's state cult of Vesta has already been passed to Anchises' house, whose hitherto private sacra ... have now become, as Hector himself implied ... the henceforth public sacra of Troy itself." 29

And, in due time, they will become the public sacra of Rome.

Thus Aeneas is associated with the most venerable of all Roman cults and with the religious experience of all Romans, both in their homes and in the public life of the civitas, an inspiring example of that

"sense of obligation and duty, pietas, as they called it," 30 which, according to Warde Fowler, was a national characteristic of the Roman people. By his undaunted perseverance in carrying out his mission, despite storm, shipwreck and armed opposition, not to mention the temptation represented by Dido, and Juno's implacable hostility, he also exemplifies virtus, that combination of strength, determination and courage, both moral and physical, which was so valued in Roman society that the word became synonymous with all moral excellence. If pietas is the virtue associated with cultus (in the religious sense) then virtus is the virtue of good citizenship, of civitas. Warde Fowler believes that

"there is no better way of getting to understand the spirit of the Roman religion than by a continual study of the Aeneid, where the hero is the ideal Roman, pius in the best and widest sense. What makes the Aeneid so helpful ... is the poet's intimate knowledge of the religious ideas of the Italians ... and his conviction that the great work of Rome in the world had been achieved not only by virtus but by pietas. What has been won by virtus must be preserved by pietas, by the sense of duty in family and state - that is the moral of the Aeneid." 31

Aeneas represents the highest aspirations of the Roman people and

29. Cruttwell op. cit.

30. Warde Fowler op. cit. p.254

31. *ibid* p.254

what they conceived to be their role in history. Jupiter's prophecy in Book I anticipates the fulfilment of that role in the Pax Augusta, when the work begun by Aeneas will be brought to fruition:

"bellum ingens geret Italia populosque feroces
contundet moresque viris et moenia ponet
nascetur pulchra Troianus origine Caesar,
imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris,
Iulius, a magno demissum nomen Iulo.
hunc tu* olim caelo, spoliis Orientis onustum
accipies secura; vocabitur hic quoque votis.
aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis;
cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus
iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae." 32

((Aeneas) shall wage a great war in Italy, shall crush proud nations, and for his people shall set up laws and city walls From this noble line shall be born the Trojan Caesar, who shall limit his empire with ocean, his glory with the stars, a Julius, name descended from great Iulus! Him, in days to come, shalt thou, anxious no more, welcome to heaven, laden with Eastern spoils; he, too, shall be invoked in vows. Then shall wars cease, and the rough ages soften; hoary Faith and Vesta, Quirinus with his brother Remus, shall give laws. The gates of war, grim with iron and close-fitting bars, shall be closed.)

The nature of the "mores" that Aeneas is destined to establish for his descendents is indicated by the three gods - Quirinus, the ancient Sabine war-god, here identified with Romulus, Vesta, guardian of the home, and Fides, the personification of good faith and honour - upon whose cults the law of Rome will be based. Courage, discipline, love of home and family, fidelity, loyalty and integrity; these are the moral values on which Roman civilization should rest and which Augustus, as the successor of Aeneas, must promote.

* the speech is addressed to Venus.

Virgil returns to this theme in Book VI when Anchises foretells Rome's future glory and contrasts its influence in the world with that of Greece:

"excurrent alii spirantia mollius aera,
(credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore vultus;
orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus
describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:
tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos." 33

(Others, I doubt not, shall beat out the breathing bronze with softer lines; shall from the marble draw forth the features of life; shall plead their causes better; with the rod shall trace the paths of heaven and tell the rising of the stars: remember thou, O Roman, to rule the nations with thy sway - these shall be thin/arts - to crown Peace with Law, to spare the humbled, and to tame in war the proud.)

Donald R Dudley sees these lines as

"a superb prophecy of the future history of Rome, and of the Roman mission to rule the world." 34

However, they must not, I feel, be regarded in isolation as

Virgil's definitive statement on the subject. Anchises is defining the nature of Roman civitas. But Virgil is always at pains to point^{out} that civitas alone is not enough. The Eclogues, with their celebration of the community of song, testify to his belief in the importance of the arts in a civilized society, just as the Georgics and the rest of the Aeneid stress the necessity for cultus in the primary and religious senses of the word. Anchises' speech is indeed a turning point in the Aeneid; henceforward, as Dudley rightly comments,

"Aeneas has shaken off the Trojan past to face the Roman future". 35

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- 33. Aeneid VI 847-853
 - 34. The Civilization of Rome p.147
 - 35. Dudley op. cit. p.147

His father's words act as a spur and an inspiration. But for the reader - and perhaps for Augustus, who commissioned the work - they may serve as a timely warning that the single-minded pursuit of civitas, however conscientious and well-intentioned, without the development of cultus, can lead to a rigid, unimaginative imperialism, ruthlessly imposing its will on 'lesser breeds without the law' and bringing desolation in the name of peace. It is surely significant that Saint Augustine cited this passage in The City of God as evidence of the impious arrogance of the Roman Empire.

Just as in the Eclogues the consequences of war and injustice are felt even in Arcadia and in the Georgics both farmer and princeps must fight a constant battle against the negative forces inherent in fallen nature, so the Aeneid recounts the cost, as well as the splendour, of Rome's imperial destiny. For Aeneas the cost is heavy indeed; one by one, the things he holds dear are taken from him: his home; his wife, Creusa, that

"sad, ineffectual creature, shouldered aside by
destiny", 36

in C S Lewis' poignant phrase; his father; his chance of happiness with Dido. But he is not the only one to suffer. Before Aeneas can fulfil his destiny, not only the tragic Queen of Carthage but Pallas, Camilla and Turnus must meet cruel and untimely deaths. Despite his virtues - indeed, precisely because of them - Aeneas causes a great deal of harm to a great many people. Moreover, his

eventual triumph cannot be seen simply as the victory of good over evil. Apart from the Greeks, the forces that oppose or hinder Aeneas are not seen as malevolent. Dido, though a Carthaginian, is a most sympathetic character and few readers can feel that her refusal to speak to Aeneas, when they meet in Hades, is unjustified. Turnus' resentment at the news that his betrothed is to be married to an alien interloper is also understandable, and his courage and ardour are truly heroic. In so far as they stand in the way of Aeneas' destiny, however, they oppose the will of Jove and must be sacrificed.

The Aeneid is the great epic of duty. However, I have also heard it described, very persuasively, as the epic of guilt.³⁷ Its hero, the embodiment of Roman values, the pioneer of Roman civilization, is nevertheless an ambiguous figure, both an inspiration and a warning to the men of Augustus' novus ordo. Aeneas succeeds in his mission; he establishes the household gods of Ilium in their Latin home. Yet he leaves Troy unable to carry the sacred objects himself, because his hands are tainted with blood, and his final act, at the end of Book XII is another act of bloodshed. Brooks Otis justifies the killing of Turnus as a triumph of pietas, springing not from cruelty or vengeance but out of Aeneas' obligations to Evander and his son:

"Here, indeed, Aeneas shows no mercy to the enemy but his motivation is the very antipodes of that of Turnus. What moves him is both pietas towards Evander and affection towards Pallas: ... In one sense Aeneas' fighting at this juncture seems quite devoid of his usual humanitas; in another it is the very symbol of it - a completely human reaction

37. by Frank Beetham, in a lecture delivered at the Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon. May, 1989

to the violentia that breaks treaties, despises
filial piety, and wreaks its fury on the dead." 38

However, this interpretation seems to overlook - or too easily
excuse - Aeneas' own furor at this climactic moment when he seems
almost maddened-

"furiis accensus et ira terribilis" 39

by the sight of Pallas' belt. Jackson Knight's comment on this
episode shrewdly suggests that Aeneas' rage at Turnus might stem,
in part, from a sense of guilt:

"He let the memory of the friend whom he himself had
failed to protect expel every other thought. We
are led to wonder whether, if he had not spoilt his
victory by this wanton cruelty, the subsequent
history of Italy might have been less bloodstained
and bitter." 40

The conclusion of the Aeneid, as Kenneth Quinn points out, is
profoundly disturbing, because Aeneas is not just

"any hero in the traditional heroic mould"

but "the man who is always straining after a higher
ideal, a more civilized standard of conduct than
the rest." 41

Thus, his apparent abandonment to furor at this point seems to imply
that, even in his moment of triumph, when the Trojan's victory is
assured and the will of Jove fulfilled, he has failed to realise
his own high destiny. Perhaps this is the last, and highest, price
that Aeneas has to pay for establishing the city, the people and
the empire of Rome, a price which may be exacted again and again
throughout succeeding ages. Quinn's speculation on the meaning of
this passage for Virgil's contemporaries seems to support this view.

38. Brooks Otis op. cit. p.357

39. Aeneid XII 946-947

40. Virgil: The Aeneid Harmondsworth 1956. Introduction pp 14-15

41. Texts and Contexts - The Roman Writers and their Audience
London 1979 p.67

"For them, one likes to think, it meant a new ordering of their own experience, a more complete understanding of what had happened in the great Civil War, now twelve years and more over and beginning to take up its place in history as something that could be thought and talked about more honestly and more compassionately than in the hour of final victory. For in that struggle, too, victory came only at the cost of lives destroyed; things were done in the heat of battle, or in the angry pursuit of revenge, that one could now wish undone." 42

Homer's heroes, Greek and Trojan alike, subscribe to the same social and ethical ideal, summarised in Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus in Iliad XII : the great warlord enjoys the good things of this life and retains the respect of his followers only as long as he is prepared to fight for them. It is a philosophy which Turnus would recognise and acknowledge. But Aeneas is a specifically - indeed, an archetypically - Roman hero, motivated not by desire for personal glory but by the patriotic virtues of pietas and virtus. As guardian of the Penates he represents Roman cultus; as founding-father of Rome, he embodies Roman civitas. And, in so far as his mission is accomplished only through suffering, sacrifice and bloodshed, he foreshadows the subsequent history of Rome. Thus, more than Achilles or Hector, Aeneas corresponds to William Kinsley's definition of an epic hero as someone who

"embodies in a preeminent way the values of his civilization and who engages in an action which enables him to reveal those values and on the outcome of which the fate of his civilization depends." 43

42. Quinn op. cit. p.68

43. The Rape of the Lock (Contexts 2) Hamden, Connecticut
1979 p.2

So, too, as I hope to prove, does Belinda, the heroi-comical embodiment of cultus and civitas in The Rape of the Lock. First of all, like the Royal Exchange Belle and the Petticoat Belle, she represents the commercial cultus of Augustan England. Seated before her lavishly-appointed toilet, she "culls" the harvest of every climate with a "toil" more refined but no less assiduous than that of Virgil's industrious husbandman, and her final appearance, en grande tenue, bears witness to the "labours" not only of Betty and the sylphs but of an international nexus of gem-cutters, perfume-blenders, whalers and ivory-hunters, together with the merchants, seamen, stock jobbers and investors, great and small, whose skills, cash and enterprise sustain the world-wide mercantile system which she so elegantly personifies.

Louis A Landau has discussed the relationship between Belinda and her "economic milieu" ⁴⁴ and her equivocal status as both an inspiration to mercantile enterprise and a purchaser of "foreign trumpery" ⁴⁵ whose taste for imported luxuries threatens that favourable balance of trade which was "perhaps the most cogent doctrine" ⁴⁶ of mercantile philosophy. As an embodiment of her society's moral and social ethos Belinda's position is equally ambiguous. "Culta placent", ⁴⁷ as Ovid observes and the belle's diligent cultivation of her appearance can be viewed as an instance of those "Assistances of Art" ⁴⁸ which, according to Addison are

44. Landau op. cit. 1980 p.179

45. ibid p.189

46. ibid p.189

47. Medicamina Faciei 7

48. Spectator 69

among those "Benefits and Advantages of Commerce"⁴⁹ which have "improved the whole Face of Nature".⁵⁰ Indeed Belinda's improvement of her own face, with the aid of cosmetics, may be seen as an instance of cultus in the secondary sense, "call(ing) forth" its latent beauties as the artist, according to neo-Platonic aesthetic theory, reveals the inherent order and harmony of nature in poetry or music or architecture. Like Titiana and Tintoretta in Town Eclogues, Belinda may represent the belle as artist - and as work of art.

However, as J C Flügel points out, the use of cosmetics can be psychologically hazardous:

"Its danger lies in the tendency to cultivate an artificial ideal. As long as it is only used to imitate Nature at her best, the standard aimed at is still that of reality ... but when lips become red with an intensity that Nature never gave even to her healthiest and loveliest daughters, there is a small but definite step backwards towards the barbarism that finds beauty in the constricted waist, the contorted foot, and the lopped finger-joint." ⁵¹

Belinda's face-painting, then, may represent the artist's aspiration to a higher form of beauty than the merely mortal ("purer" blushes and "keener" glances) or the self-mutilation of the savage. The poem as a whole embraces both possibilities. The description of the eponymous lock, for instance, suggests the formal perfection of a perfect work of art:

49. Spectator 69

50. ibid 69

51. The Psychology of Clothes London 1971 p.188

"This Nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck." 52

However, Thalestris' revelations in Canto IV concerning the means by which this triumph of art over nature was achieved give new meaning to the old proverb, "Il faut souffrir pour être belle":

"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound,
For this with tort'ring irons wreath'd around?
For this with fillets strain'd your tender head,
and bravely bore the double loads of lead." 53

Is such single minded dedication to the cause of beauty a sign of heroism (as Thalestris appears to suggest) or of derangement? Is it really so far from this systematic excruciation to the contorted foot and the lopped finger joint?

Thalestris' outburst is shocking, both to her audience within the poem and to the reader. By exposing the secrets of the boudoir she has violated the mores of polite society, shattering the illusion of artless perfection which Belinda has so artfully created and contributing in no small measure to her "friend's" mortification. For the reader, who has already been granted an insight into the mysteries of Belinda's toilet in Canto I, the lines are no less disturbing. In the earlier passage the dressing-room was a temple, the "mystic order" of the toilet-set reflecting that ideal Beauty to whose service the belle is dedicated. Thalestris has turned the shrine into a torture-chamber and the "Cosmetic Pow'rs" into an insatiable Moloch. Metaphorically, Belinda clearly represents cultus

52. The Rape of the Lock II 19-22
53. ibid IV 97-102

in the religious sense, but the precise nature of her "religion" is ambiguous. Warburton notices the ambiguity, but misses the point of it. Commenting on the dressing-table episode, he observes:

"There is a small inaccuracy in these lines.
He first makes his heroine the chief priestess,
and then the goddess herself." 54

In fact, the object of Belinda's homage is her own "heav'nly image" - the image which is first desecrated by the Baron's rude assault and finally destroyed by Thalestris' mock-sympathy. "Image" is a word resonant with meaning, which can signify (among other things) an idea or concept, or external appearance as opposed to reality. Thus Belinda's worship can be seen as a selfless devotion to some Platonic ideal of beauty or as the manufacturing of an alternative self - a public identity conforming to conventional standards of looks, dress and conduct and divorced from all personal feelings and impulses. In either case, the blush produced by rouge or eyes sparkling from the application of belladonna drops may be perceived as "purer" and "keener" than the transitory changes of colour and expression induced by genuine - hence uncontrollable - emotion.

However, as William Kinsley points out, the

"rites of the dressing table are assigned to Pride" 55

and can lead to a dangerous form of idolatry:

"Belinda's image is in part the work of her own hands and those of her maid; as she worships it she runs the risk of losing her substance and becoming more and more of an image. Or as Simone de Beauvoir might put it, she is collaborating in the objectification and depersonalization of herself that her society forces her into." 56

54. Ward (ed) The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope London 1961 p.74n

55. Kinsley op. cit. p.6

56. ibid p.6

Frederick M Keener has also noticed the tendency in The Rape of the Lock to treat people as things and vice-versa:

"On the surface, a lapdog and a husband or a snuffbox and a beau may seem very much alike, objects: a bible as such belongs with puffs and patches Those accounted sane in such a world see people as objects: the insane, objects as people: living teapots and the like". 57

But, things in Belinda's world, have another significance: as we have seen, the combs, jewels and perfumes which make up her ensemble, the brocaded petticoat with its whalebone hoops, symbolise the economic basis of her society. More, they represent the fulfilment of Father Thames' prophecy in Windsor Forest:

"For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
And Pheobus warm the ripening ore to gold." 58

The Indian gems and Arabian perfumes on Belinda's dressing table, like the other imported luxuries which make up her world (coffee, 'Japan' furniture, amber snuffboxes and 'clouded' canes) constitute the stored harvests of mercantile endeavour, the secular penus of English Augustan society, and Belinda, like Aeneas, is the guardian of the di penates. She appears in this role twice, firstly in the toilet scene and then in the coffee-drinking episode in Canto III.

"And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid." 59

The first line of this couplet is rather puzzling. In what sense can the toilet be described as either veiled or unveiled?

Edward J Joy tells us that

"the original meaning of the word 'toilet' was

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57. An Essay on Pope Colombia, New York 1974 p.42
 58. Windsor Forest 393-396
 59. The Rape of the Lock I 121-122

the cloth or cover on the table used for dressing accessories (which) in the later Stuart period was being transferred from the cover to the accessories themselves." 60

and describes a late seventeenth-century toilet set in the Victoria and Albert Museum which seems to correspond to the symmetrically-ordered silver "vases" and "files of pins" referred to in the poem:

"... the mirror frame is elaborately embossed with flowers, foliage, amorini and acanthus. Its crest bears a medallion decorated in low relief with human figures and surrounded by swirls of foliage. The set includes a pair of salvers on feet, a pair of oblong caskets, two pairs of round boxes, a pair of two-handled covered bowls, a pair of small covered vases and a pin cushion" 61

However, this does not solve the puzzle presented by the word, "unveil'd", since the cloth was presumably spread under, not over, the looking-glass and its accessories. Another exhibit in the Victoria and Albert collection may provide the solution:

"Dressing glass, japanned red and gold. The sloping front of the base is hinged and opens to disclose an arrangement of small drawers and pigeon holes, with central cupboard. Height 3f 3in." 62

Joy confirms that this type of toilet glass appeared in the early eighteenth century 63 and also points out that the knee-hole type of dressing table, popular at about the same time, sometimes had a hinged top which was raised to reveal a looking-glass and compartments for toilet articles. 64

We may thus imagine Belinda, "rob'd in white" - the colour of "purity and innocence" 65 - ceremonially opening the store-house of her

60. Getting Dressed (The Arts of Living series) London 1981 p.12

61. ibid p.12

62. Illustration in The Connoisseur: Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods: Stuart 1603-1714

63. Joy op. cit. p.25

64. ibid p.15

65. Alison Lurie The Language of Clothes New York 1981 p.185

toilet-table and pausing to venerate the di penates, the "Cosmetic pow'rs" who preside over its varied and exotic contents.

At Hampton Court, the coffee-drinking ritual is similarly transformed into a quasi-religious rite:

"For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining Altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits bláze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide." 66

The scene vividly recalls Addison's eulogy on the benefits of international trade in Spectator 69:

"Our Rooms are filled with Pyramids of China, and
adorned with the Workmanship of Japan : Our Morning's
Draught comes to us from the remotest Corners of the
Earth." 67

Here, in splendid abundance, is the harvest of every climate: fine porcelain from China, coffee from the Levant and exquisite furniture from the Orient. But the focal point of the scene is the Vestal flame of the spirit lamp on the "shining altar" where Belinda, having duly honoured her own household gods, tends the penates publici of Queen Anne's England.

For, although Hampton Court is a royal palace, it is Belinda, not the queen, who holds court there, even usurping the quasi-divine fiat which, in Windsor Forest was the royal prerogative:

"great Anna said, 'Let Discord cease!'
She said! the world obey'd, and all was Peace." 68

66. The Rape of the Lock III 105-110

67. Addison op. cit.

68. Windsor Forest 327-328

Here Belinda ordains,

"Let spades be trumps!" 69

- and so they are. Moreover, as the opening of Canto III reveals, the belle's values, not the monarch's, determine the nature of Augustan civitas:

"Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign Tyrants and of Nymphs at home;
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometime counsel take - and sometimes Tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court;
In various talk th'instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last,
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from th'Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the Toilet cease." 70

In Windsor Forest "Great Anna" was the all-powerful peacemaker, at whose word the nations of the world laid down their arms. Here, the single monosyllable, "tea", reduces her to the level of cosy domesticity at which sovereign and subjects unite in the common enjoyment of

"The Infusion of a China Plant sweetened with
the Pith of an Indian Cane." 71

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69. The Rape of the Lock III 46
70. ibid III 1-24
71. Addison Spectator 69

In The Rape of the Lock, we see the monarch as consumer, outshone in her own palace by the super-consumer, Belinda, and equated, as a topic of conversation, with a piece of imported drawing-room furniture. The Thames has undergone a similar transformation. No longer the august prophet of Windsor Forest, the river is now female and, indeed, bears a curious resemblance to Belinda herself.

Thames "surveys ... with pride" the towers of Hampton Court reflected in her mirror-like surface, just as Belinda surveyed her image in the toilet-glass as she performed "the sacred rites of Pride" in Canto I. The resemblance seems even closer if we consider that the fashionable name for the "head" or topknot, which the sylphs were at such pains to "set" for their protegee, was a "tower". Palace and river, symbols in the earlier poem of Justice and Peace (as manifested in Stuart government and international trade) are here incorporated into Belinda's value-system and become mere extensions of the boudoir and the drawing-room. Similarly, whereas the landscape around Windsor is conceived of as a creative, harmonious tension between opposing elements, here there is a sense of unnatural stasis. The meadows are "forever crown'd with flow'rs", apparently unaffected by the changing seasons, as the belle's painted blush remains constant whatever her state of health or mind.

At Windsor, the gods are present "in their blessings", ⁷² fruits, flocks and flowers; at Hampton Court, members of the beau monde are transformed into "nymphs" and "heroes", minor deities and supermen, neither quite divine nor totally human, operating in a world of plots and politics, games and gossip, sex and scandal, a world whose

ethical confusion recalls the chaotic state of Belinda's dressing-table:

"Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux". 73

The nature of this confusion is expressed in a series of bizarre equations - foreign affairs with "affairs of the heart", the head of state with an Indian screen, taking counsel and taking tea - which imposes a belle's-eye-view of the world on the public life of the nation. Its extent is indicated by the implied comparison between the "labours of the Toilet" and those of the merchant in a couplet that links "the town" and "the city" in the same perspective, from which the efforts which go to provide silks, jewels, perfumes and powders from the farthest regions of the world are equated with the use of those goods to create the perfect toilette. Finally, the most striking lines in the passage,

"The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine",

do not, I believe, take us beyond Belinda's world to

"the Hobbesian state of nature raging outside"; 74

rather they show, with shocking clarity, how Belinda's values have permeated even the courts of justice and the condemned hold itself, so that the kind of refined self-indulgence which "gratifies" its senses with coffee and "taste(s) ... the pleasures of a Court" determine matters of life or death for the less privileged members of the civitas.

73. The Rape of the Lock I 138

74. Earl R Wasserman "The Limits of Allusion in The Rape of the Lock"
Recent Essays p.227

Belinda, then, no less than Aeneas, fulfils the first of Kinsley's requirements for an epic hero: She embodies the values of her society. Kinsley's second requirement is that the hero must display these values in action. In the Aeneid, as Brooks Otis observes,

"the primary plot or narrative is psychological and subjective, not what the hero does or encounters ... but how he deals with his own emotions and with other people's emotions, and how, in so dealing, he achieves the victory over the unheroical element in himself". 75

The unheroic elements that Aeneas has to contend with are furor and amor, represented in the dramatis personae of the Aeneid by Juno and Venus (the former implacably hostile to the hero, the latter well-disposed but sometimes misguided) and in its imagery by fire. The flames which consume Priam's citadel, Dido's funeral pyre, the fire-brand planted in Turnus' breast by Allecto, the ships, set alight by the Trojan women, "weary ... of bearing the ocean toil" 76 all symbolise irrational frenzy, born of love or rage. Unlike the Vestal flame, which represents stability, tradition and domestic harmony, these fires are destructive and uncontrollable, like the passions they signify.

Whether Aeneas truly succeeds in defeating furor is, as we have seen, open to question. Belinda, too, is tested by love and rage and her response to the test is likewise equivocal. At first she seems totally devoid of such feelings, enclosed in a cocoon of passionless complacency spun by the sylphs:

75. Virgil, A Study in Civilized Poetry. Oxford 1964 pp 90-91
 76. Aeneid V 617

"Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
 Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
 Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
 And, like the sun, they shine on all alike." 77

The identical metrical patterns in the first three lines, the use of repetition (bright as the sun/like the sun) and antithesis (favours/smiles; non/all; oft/never once; rejects/offends) both suggest the belle's perfect social poise and just hint at that automatic charm which is apt to sit attentive to its own applause. All too soon, of course, emotion breaks in as, in Frederick M Keener's witty summary,

"Belinda loses her heart, her lock, and her temper,
 in that order". 78

Post hoc, in this sequence, equals propter hoc. She loses her temper because she loses the lock, and she loses the lock because the sylphs, perceiving

"An earthly Lover lurking at her heart", 79
 abandon her to her fate. Thus the central event of the poem is not the eponymous "rape" but Belinda's falling in love: all the rest flows from that. As in the Aeneid,

"the primary plot or narrative is psychological
 and subjective".

But how are we to interpret this "primary plot"? Pope gives us little overt guidance. He does not even positively identify Belinda's "lurking" lover. The consequences of the event - Belinda's embarrassment and the resultant furore in polite society - are developed at length. But the event itself, Belinda's change of heart, is conveyed obliquely, almost cryptically.

77. The Rape of the Lock II 11-14

78. Keener op. cit.

79. The Rape of the Lock III 144

The key to this "psychological and subjective" action lies in Pope's use of imagery. Apart from the allusion to the coffee-table as a Vestal hearth, there are thirty references to fire in The Rape of the Lock, seventeen of them metaphors connoting feelings of love or rage; fire, in The Rape of the Lock as in the Aeneid is associated with furor. Thus Belinda, shorn of her curl, "burns with more than mortal ire" ⁸⁰ and Thalestris flies "swift as lightning" ⁸¹ to the battle of beaux and belles. This association between lightning and anger is, as I hope to show, a key image in this work. The conventional comparison between fire and love is ironically exploited in Pope's presentation of the Baron, who longs - with more zeal than originality - to "burn in Cupid's flames" ⁸² and whose amatory hecatomb is the perfect objective correlative of his ersatz eroticism, founded on fiction and fuelled by vanity: his altar to Love is constructed

"Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender Billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire." ⁸³

The Baron's "altar" like Belinda's toilet-glass, reflects his image of himself, an image enhanced by the "trophies" of his amorous career as Belinda's is by the "glitt'ring spoil" ⁸⁴ of jewels, combs and pins. The first fire/love metaphor applied to Belinda herself introduces another cluster of images:

"A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau,
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)". ⁸⁵

Blushing cheeks, or the reverse, as indices of emotional or

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|-----|-----------------------------|----|-------|
| 80. | <u>The Rape of the Lock</u> | IV | 93 |
| 81. | ibid | V | 38 |
| 82. | ibid | V | 102 |
| 83. | ibid | II | 38-42 |
| 84. | ibid | I | 132 |
| 85. | ibid | I | 23-24 |

psychological excitation figure prominently in The Rape of the Lock.

The "glow", here, is clearly a sexual response and, as such, is contrasted with the "purer", painted blush which constitutes part of the belle's social "armour". The "bidden blush" ⁸⁶ of the infant coquette may be either precociously sexual or "purely" cosmetic; in either case, it is inappropriate, like the preternaturally youthful flush on Affectation's cheek in Canto III. Umbriel's plea to Spleen in the same canto is significant in this context:

.... "if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like Citron-waters matrons cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds ...
Hear me ..." ⁸⁷

Clearly, "inflamed" cheeks are seen as sexually incriminating evidence, equivalent to "rumpled petticoats" and "tumbled beds" and hence constitute a loss of "grace". Equally suspicious, it seems, is a change of colour "at a losing game", a particularly pregnant phrase in view of Belinda's conduct during the game of Ombre.

As she sits down at the card table, she is apparently the same accomplished coquette we saw in Canto II, mistress of herself and of the situation, exercising a quasi-judicial authority over her opponents and contemplating future triumphs:

"Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous Knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come." ⁸⁸

The language even here, however, incorporates both heroic and erotic

86. The Rape of the Lock I 89
87. ibid IV 67-77
88. ibid III 25-28

overtones: "conquests" and "encounter" could imply either or both and "burns" implies a degree of excitement inconsistent with Belinda's customary sang froid. Moreover, as W K Wimsatt's analysis of the game demonstrates, it rapidly becomes a contest between Belinda and the Baron, with "Sir Anonym" taking little significant part:

"In order to win the hand Belinda has to take more tricks than her stronger opponent - 5 against 4, or 4 against 3 and 2. Four tricks unroll smoothly for Belinda as she leads in succession Spadillio, Manillio, Basto, and the King of Spades - pulling smaller spades from her opponents - except that on the third and fourth tricks the third player, the anonymous one, fails to come through." 89

The Baron takes the next four tricks. Thus all depends upon the ninth and final trick, at which critical juncture,

"The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts,
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th'approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille." 90

In the context of The Rape of the Lock there is only one "Queen of Hearts", Belinda herself. And the Baron has some claim to the title, Knave of Diamonds: his knavery is confirmed by his subsequent conduct, and Thalestris predicts that he intends to wear the stolen lock set in a diamond ring. If, as W K Wimsatt claims, The Rape of the Lock displays

"the gladiatorial aspect of sex and courtship", 91
this must represent the moment of Belinda's submission. In this crisis rouge is unavailing; her dramatic change of complexion at an (apparently) losing game betrays genuine agitation. Yet she goes

89. "Belinda Ludens : Strife and Play in The Rape of the Lock" : Recent Essays p.211

90. The Rape of the Lock III 89-92

91. Wimsatt op. cit. p.218

on to win the trick and the game, and her exultant shout of triumph shows how different she has become from the passionless, painted puppet of Cantos I and II.

Clearly, the loss of her heart is not a defeat for Belinda. After all, as Clarissa points out,

"she who scorns a man, must die a maid". 92

Belinda has already confronted this possibility in her dream, in which the "glitt'ring" youth foretold the fate in store for dedicated coquettes:

"whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embraced.
What guards the purity of melting Maids
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?" 93

This all sounds very fine, but beauty does not last forever, and though the sylphs promise security it is bought at the price of all the vitality and tenderness implied by "spark", "kind", "warm", "softens" and "fires". Chastity, in Ariel's terms, seems to be equated with cold-hearted flightiness and caprice:

"With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
They shift the moving Toyshops of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive." 94

Another revelation from the same source strikes an even more ominous note, in view of Belinda's matutinal devotions before the looking-glass.

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92. The Rape of the Lock V 28
93. ibid I 67-76
94. ibid I 99-102

"Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestin'd to the gnomes embrace -
These swell their prospect and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdained and love denied." 95

Flügel, discussing the psychology of face-painting, warns that

"it leads to Narcissism rather than to love of others
or interest in the outer world in fact, a
withdrawal from the outer world that is hostile to
the higher forms alike of work and love and sociality." 96

Of such is the Cave of Spleen.

To lose one's heart, then, might not be regarded as a misfortune;
to lose one's temper looks like churlishness. According to Brooks
Otis, the central theme of the Aeneid is

"how (Aeneas) deals with his own emotions and with
other people's emotions, and how, in so dealing, he
achieves the victory over the unheroic element in
himself". 97

Belinda faces a similar test of heroism. Having entered the world
of feeling during the card-game, she is called upon almost immediately
to "deal with" the Baron's clumsy gallantry and her own anger at
his insensitivity. The armour of the coquette - the affected
modesty and hauteur represented by rouged cheeks and belladonna -
brightened eyes - is of no use to her now. She is shaken with a
genuine sense of outrage and turns on her assailant

"with more than usual lightning in her eyes". 98

As we have seen, Aeneas' attempt to conquer his unheroic self is not
entirely successful and the poem ends, as Jasper Griffin comments,

"with an unresolved discord". 99

95. The Rape of the Lock I 79-82

96. Flügel op. cit. p.188

97. Otis op. cit. pp 90-91

98. The Rape of the Lock V 76

99. Virgil : The Aeneid C Day Lewis (trans.) Oxford 1986
Introduction p xxiii

Virgil advocates pietas and virtus as the means of overcoming furor but acknowledges how difficult it is, in practice, to check the corrosive effects of passion in others and in oneself. Griffin analyses the "disquieting and difficult scene" ¹⁰⁰ which concludes the Aeneid in these terms:

"Turnus is himself a killer, and he has caused enormous slaughter by his obstinacy and pride; but in any case fighting cannot be simply pursued in a cool and rational spirit. His death, which is from some points of view clearly justified, is none the less a dreadful thing, the death of an Italian prince with some fine and attractive qualities. Aeneas is forced into it by the logic of his god-given destiny of imperialism; and he finds he cannot do it without the passionate destructiveness which it seems that he was singled out to avoid." ¹⁰¹

If Aeneas, the model of pietas, the embodiment of virtus, can give way to furor, what hope is there for Belinda? A tyro in the world of passion, she is not unnaturally swept away by her feelings and falls prey to hysteria and "chagrin".¹⁰² However Pope, like Virgil, prescribes the cure for such destructive emotions in Clarissa's speech commending "good sense" ¹⁰³ and "good humour". ¹⁰⁴

Pope clearly endorses these virtues. In "Epistle II, To a Lady", he defines the best gifts the gods can bestow on a woman as "Sense, Good-humour, and a Poet". Clarissa's speech, added in the 1717 version to "open more clearly the moral of the poem" is a means of passing judgement on Belinda and her world. However, Clarissa is not a vatic figure speaking ex cathedra in the poet's own voice, like Father Thames in Windsor Forest; she is not even an impartial

100. Griffin op. cit. introduction p.xxiii

101. ibid p.xxiv

102. The Rape of the Lock IV 77

103. ibid V 16

104. ibid V 30

105. Moral Essays II 292

commentator, but an active participant whose earlier contribution to the action casts some doubt on her suitability for the role of moral expositor:

"But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill?
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:
So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his finger's ends;"106

The first couplet here is interesting. Its obvious reference is to the Baron, who, having determined to obtain the lock, now finds the means - Clarissa's scissors - to hand. However, the general statement could also be applied to Clarissa herself; bent on causing "mischief", she finds the Baron a "fit instrument" to carry out her purposes. This interpretation, which makes Clarissa the prime mover, rather than a mere accessory to the deed, seems to be confirmed by the word "tempting" in the next line. In conjunction with "mischief" and "ill", this presents her as the instigator of a malicious conspiracy against Belinda. It is fitting, in view of her subsequent conduct, that the "weapon" she produces should be described as "double-edged"; there is surely something decidedly duplicitous about this young lady, who can use the Baron to bring about Belinda's public humiliation and then read her a public lecture on good behaviour. The next four lines suggest a possible motive for this course of action. Like the card game, the "rape" is described in terms of combat - "spear", "arm", "fight", "engine" - but whereas the former was seen as an epic battle and Belinda as a victorious warrior, the imagery here is suggestive of a mediaeval

tournament with Clarissa in the more traditional female role of spectator, offering inspiration and encouragement to her chosen champion. This raises an intriguing question: in what sense is the Baron "her" knight? Does she regard Belinda as a rival? Setting such speculations aside, the impression created by these lines remains that of a devious and manipulative personality, content to assume a passive, subordinate role in order to exploit the Baron's weakness for her own mischievous ends. Belinda's two female companions - the word "friends" is hardly appropriate - seem to represent opposite extremes of feminine behaviour. Thalestris is described as a "virago"¹⁰⁷ (literally, a man-like woman); Clarissa seems to be a precursor of that awesome figure, beloved of (male) Victorian moralists, the "womanly woman", the gentle power behind every domestic throne, past mistress of passive resistance and emotional blackmail.

She is nevertheless perfectly at home in the toyshop world of Hampton Court, the world of wigs and sword-knots, paint and patches, brocade petticoats and clouded canes. The fatal scissors are produced from a dainty "equipage", like the one staked by Cardelia in "The Basset Table",¹⁰⁸ and her method of calling the company to order is a flourish of the fine lady's indispensable vade mecum, her fan. The gesture is described as "graceful", recalling the "tempting grace" with which she took out her scissors and reminding us that in Clarissa's world "grace", like "rev'rence", is drained of any theological significance and refers only to deportment.

107. The Rape of the Lock V 36

108. Town Eclogues "Thursday" 29-36

What Earl R Wasserman says of Belinda is equally true of Clarissa:

"Her world is made up of the beau monde's conventional signs, decorative and playful, that substitute for flesh-and-blood reality - one in which a rouged cheek surpasses a real blush, sword-knots duel instead of swords, wigs contend instead of beaux, a card game takes the place of the contest of the sexes, China jars stand for virginity, and a mirror reflection transcends the viewer." 109

As she well knows, the interpretation, or misinterpretation, of such "conventional gestures" - "motions, looks, and eyes" 110 - can have disastrous results:

"At ev'ry word a repuration dies". 111

She and her co-conspirator perform the ritual gestures of proffering and accepting a "gift" whilst planning what amounts to the murder of Belinda's good name.

Clarissa's speech in Canto V is a poetic tour de force whereby Pope introduces positive moral and social values (good sense and good humour) against which the conventions of polite society may be weighed, whilst exposing the essential triviality of that society through the words of one of its own members. He achieves this effect by making Clarissa advocate the right qualities for the wrong reasons. She is as determined as any coquette to exercise "power"; 112 she merely believes that she has found a more effective and enduring means of doing so. Thus, she rejects

"airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding" 113

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109. Wasserman op. cit. p.230
 110. The Rape of the Lock III 15
 111. ibid III 16
 112. ibid V 29
 113. ibid V 32

because they do not "prevail" so well as "good humour".¹¹⁴ Whilst acknowledging that "housewife's cares"¹¹⁵ are contemptible, she acknowledges their necessity since beauty is transient and

"she who scorns a man must die a maid."¹¹⁶

Good sense, in Clarissa's terms, is no more than worldly pragmatism and good humour a calculated stratagem for getting one's own way.

Even "virtue"¹¹⁷ is a quality to be flaunted in the "front box"¹¹⁸ at the theatre for the approval of admiring beaux. The language of morality is vitiated by the invincible vulgarity of Clarissa's mind. Her peroration is particularly revealing:

"What then remains but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humour still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."¹¹⁹

Apart from the naked appeal to expediency, the most obvious feature of this passage is its tone of complacent self-righteousness, culminating in the smug double antithesis of the concluding line. Clarissa's unflattering account of Belinda's "rage, resentment and despair"¹²⁰ contrasted by implication, with her own "grave"¹²¹ demeanour, calls to mind the not dissimilar technique employed by Cherry and Merry Pecksniff:

"What a pleasant sight was that ... to behold each damsel, in her very admiration of her sister, setting up in business for herself on an entirely different principle, and announcing no connexion with over-the-way, and if the quality of goods at that establishment don't please you, you are respectfully invited to favour ME with a call!"¹²²

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| 114. | <u>The Rape of the Lock</u> | V | 31 |
| 115. | ibid | V | 21 |
| 116. | ibid | V | 28 |
| 117. | ibid | V | 8 |
| 118. | ibid | V | 17 |
| 119. | ibid | V | 29-34 |
| 120. | ibid | IV | 9 |
| 121. | ibid | V | 7 |
| 122. | Dickens <u>Martin Chuzzlewit</u> | R N Furbank (ed) | Harmondsworth |
| | 1968 | p.62 | |

I cannot agree with Keener's view that using power well in this context simply means that "a girl should assert her autonomy".¹²³ We have already seen how Clarissa exercised her power over the Baron. What she desires is not autonomy but control; she wants to "win the soul", to possess her victim utterly and to this end is prepared to make any sacrifice. "Keep good-humour still whate'er we lose" is her advice. If the "assault" on Belinda had been a genuine rape, surely "good-humour" would hardly have been an adequate response. Instead of arguing, sensibly, that losing a curl is not as serious as losing one's virginity, Clarissa seems to be suggesting that losing one's virginity is no more serious than losing a curl. She is thus seen to share the bizarre value-system of the beau monde, which equates Queen Anne with an Indian screen, of Ariel, who regards losing one's heart and losing one's necklace as equally catastrophic, and of Belinda herself, who wishes the Baron had

"been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these".¹²⁴

Clarissa's words patently fail to convey "good sense", nor are they expressive of "good humour". Indeed, they throb with barely-suppressed hostility. The phrase, "trust me, dear" is particularly ominous. Since Clarissa has been proved to be about as trustworthy as adders fanged, we are not surprised to find that what follows is a series of egregious insults and crass distortions of the truth. The narrative account of Belinda's affliction combines the pathetic -

"Then see, the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drown'd in tears"¹²⁵ -

123. Keener op. cit. p.45

124. The Rape of the Lock IV 176

125. ibid IV 143-144

with the heroic -

"Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th'affrighted skies". 126

Clarissa reduces this attractive, if ironic, picture of Beauty in distress to a catalogue of "airs", "flights", "screams", "scoldings" and wildly rolling eyeballs. There could hardly be stronger evidence of spite and rancour. Yet here, as in the "arming" of the Baron, malice is concealed beneath a veneer of decorum.

Belinda not unnaturally rejects Clarissa's advice to suppress or dissimulate her feelings and instead obeys Thalestris' call to arms. Soon the entire company of beaux and belles, including Clarissa^a, are in conflict, during which Belinda avenges herself on the Baron:

"Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose." 127

Twice before have the echoes of Hampton Court been awakened, when Belinda shouted in triumph after winning the game of ombre - her first spontaneous, uncalculated action - and again by Thalestris' cry of "wretched maid",¹²⁸ the prelude to a gloomy prediction of the social ostracism awaiting her friend as a consequence of the "rape". The reference to echoes here thus emphasises the fact that the Baron's discomfiture is as public as Belinda's. Moreover, the choice of snuff as the medium of her revenge could hardly be more appropriate. The snuffbox was to the gentleman of fashion

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126. The Rape of the Lock III 155-156
127. ibid V 81-84
128. ibid IV 95-96

what the fan was to the belle and the graceful performance of the complicated social ritual involved in taking snuff was a test of poise and good breeding:

"Snuffing had become a little ballet of the hands. It began with a flourish as the box was produced. Then fingers were tapped on the exquisite little lid as though to gain admittance. This knocked the tobacco away from the box opening. Then there was the taking of a pinch of powder with finger and thumb and the carrying of it to the nostrils, the delicate sniff itself, and finally there was a pirouette with the handkerchief to wipe away any offending grains." 129

The whole operation would, of course, be ruined by anything as spontaneous and uncontrolled as a sneeze. Just as the Baron had used one elegant "toy", Clarissa's equipage, to attack Belinda, she reciprocates with a similar weapon, the snuffbox and the result - the reduction of the modish would-be Lothario to a weeping, snuffling, snorting lump of common humanity - is equally devastating. Belinda's triumph, however, like Aeneas' victory over Turnus, is not unalloyed. The lock is gone forever, and the Baron, having recovered his breath, returns to the affected language of the conventional gallant, a mixture of veiled indelicacy and sub-poetic cliché inconsistent with real feeling:

"Boast not my fall" (he cry'd) "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low,
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames - but burn alive." 130

The "psychological and subjective" action of The Rape of the Lock can be summarised as follows: in the first two cantos, Belinda deals

129. Kenneth Blakemore Snuff Boxes London 1976 p.24

130. The Rape of the Lock V 97-102

with emotion by the coquette's methods, substitution and evasion, replacing spontaneous expressions of real feeling with the artificial blushes and "lightnings" produced by cosmetics and fixing her attention on symbolic objects - wigs, sword-knots, coaches - rather than on flesh and blood reality. During the game of ombre in Canto III, however, she loses her heart to the Baron. As a consequence, she is unable to control her jubilation at the moment of victory or her chagrin when she realises that he regards her simply as one more "trophy" to add to his collection. Rightly rejecting Clarissa's advice to repress her feelings, she nevertheless fails to attain true good sense or good humour and gives vent to her rage, causing general disruption in society, and, though she does enjoy a brief moment of triumph over the Baron she does not succeed in winning his genuine love. Belinda does achieve a kind of freedom in the course of the poem by breaking out of the rigid conventions of the coquette's code and avoiding the equally pernicious constraints of repression and prevarication. But the price of this freedom is vulnerability and, as Pope's graceful coda to the work suggests, recognition of mortality.

Like Aeneas, Belinda represents pietas tested by furor. At the beginning of The Rape of the Lock she is the perfect embodiment of English Augustan cultus and civitas; secular Vestal, guardian of the penates publici, she performs the arcane rituals of fashionable society with grace and devotion. Her progress down the Thames towards Hampton Court illustrates the charm and fragility of civilized life:

"But now secure the painted vessel glides,
 The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides:
 While melting music steals upon the sky,
 And soften'd sounds along the waters die;
 Smooth flow the waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
 Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay".¹³¹

When Virgil wanted to create an impression of civilization under threat he used the image of a runaway chariot.¹³² Pope chooses a more sedate form of conveyance to suggest the same idea. However, whereas Virgil is concerned with the difficulty of restraining furor, Pope's theme is the danger of ignoring it. On the surface, all is decorous and serene: the barge "glides" smoothly to the accompaniment of "melting music" and gentle breezes; the sunlight sparkles on the water and Belinda's smile inspires universal happiness. Yet the language of the passage suggests that beneath the brilliant surface, all is not well. A note of menace is introduced by the words, "trembling", "steals" and "die". The "painted vessel" seems a frail and vulnerable craft to entrust to the "waves" and "tides" of the Thames. Even the word "secure" is double-edged; as Hecate reminds the Weird Sisters in Macbeth

"security
 Is mortal's chiefest enemy".¹³³

Even in the drawing-rooms of Hampton Court danger lurks in a society where

"At ev'ry word a reputation dies"¹³⁴

and where social extinction is kept at bay by a strict adherence to the rules of polite conversation and discreet flirtation:

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131. The Rape of the Lock II 47-52
 132. Georgics I 513-514
 133. Macbeth III v. 32-33
 134. The Rape of the Lock III 16

"Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling and all that". 135

In Civilization and its Discontents, Freud argues that

"For civilization to exist, we have to surrender most of our instinctual drive for sexual and personal freedom. The claims of the individual and the claims of the community will always be in conflict. ... Guilt, particularly communal guilt would be one way of enforcing this renunciation. The easiest way to make it effective would be to displace the aggression from the ego to the super ego, and then to introject the super-ego not simply into each individual but into the community. ... His final conclusion is that the price of culture and civilization is ... the renunciation of instinctual drives towards individual satisfaction (and) that the neurosis of culture may itself derive from the punitive nature of a collective super-ego". 136

In the world of Hampton Court, this process seems to have taken place.

However, the element of sexual display and social competitiveness implied in all this fluttering of fans and flourishing of snuffboxes hints that instinctual drives have been displaced, rather than discarded. The beau monde has not renounced sexuality and aggression; rather, as Pope's mock-ingenuous address to the Muse suggests, it chooses to pretend that it is immune to such urges:

"Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t'assault a gentle Belle?
Oh say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?" 137

The motive, of course, is not in the least "strange", but the pretended amazement, the juxtaposition of "gentle" and "well-bred" with "compel" and "assault" beautifully set up the tensions between

135. The Rape of the Lock III 17-18

136. David Stafford-Clark. What Freud Really Said. Harmondsworth 1967 pp 186-187

137. The Rape of the Lock I 7-10

bienseance and biology which operates throughout the whole poem.

The belle's whole existence, indeed, depends upon exploiting this tension. Hence, her preoccupation with clothes, which, as Flügel says

"are essentially in the nature of a compromise ... an ingenious device for the establishment of some degree of harmony between conflicting interests:" 138

"The essential opposition between the two motives of decoration and modesty is ... the most fundamental fact in the whole psychology of clothing. It implies that our attitude towards clothes is ab initio 'ambivalent', to use the invaluable term that has been introduced into psychology by the psychoanalysts; we are trying to satisfy two contradictory tendencies by means of our clothes, and we therefore tend to regard clothes from two incompatible points of view - on the one hand, as a means of displaying our attractions, on the other hand, as a means of hiding our shame. ... In this respect the discovery, or at any rate the use, of clothes, seems, in its psychological aspects, to resemble the process whereby a neurotic symptom is developed. Neurotic symptoms, as it is the great merit of psychoanalysis to have shown, are also something of a compromise, due to the underplay of conflicting and largely unconscious impulses." 139

The nature of Augustan society's collective neurosis is made visible in the Cave of Spleen, that dark shadowland of the psyche where the consequences of repressed sexuality and suppressed rage are made manifest in all their freakish variety. Significantly, the spleen is seen as a specifically female affliction, and the conflict between instinct and decorum imposed by social convention is felt most acutely by women and by none more than the belle, who is

138. Flügel op. cit. p.20

139. *ibid* pp 20-21

expected to arouse universal sexual admiration and desire whilst herself remaining unaroused and unattainable. The symbol of their predicament is that very hooped petticoat which gives rise to so much satirical comment in the Tatler and Spectator. Gleaming with brocaded silk, adorned with embroidery and gilded threadwork, the "distended" petticoat draws conspicuous attention to what it is meant to conceal, combining, as we saw in Town Eclogues, the maximum provocation with maximum prohibition. According to Karen Horney, one of the classic defence-mechanisms adopted by neurotic personalities is the creation of an "idealized image" ¹⁴⁰ of the self. In Canto I, we see Belinda engaged in manufacturing such an image with the aid of cosmetics. However, this kind of behaviour is not confined to the female characters in The Rape of The Lock: the beau monde as a whole has cultivated an image of itself as a company of "nymphs" ¹⁴¹ and "heroes" ¹⁴² inhabiting an Arcadian world of painted pleasure-boats and gilded drawing-rooms, "majestic" ¹⁴³ palaces and ever-flowering "meads".¹⁴⁴ Just as Belinda's image is created with rouge and belladonna, the di penates of the dressing-table, so this collective image is sustained by a host of material objects - playing cards and coffee-cups, fans and sword-knots, periwigs and petticoats - which identify their users as persons of good taste and good breeding. A typical member of this society is the vacuous Sir Plume,

"of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane". ¹⁴⁵

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140. J A C Brown Freud and the Post Freudians Harmondsworth
1961 p.145
141. The Rape of the Lock III 9
142. ibid III 9
143. ibid III 3
144. ibid III 1
145. ibid IV 123-124

"Nice conduct", in this world, is strictly prescribed. The most trivial actions, such as taking coffee or snuff, are converted into elaborate rituals; the rules of social conduct are more complex than the rules of ombre, and more rigidly enforced. So long as everyone conforms to these rules, the "idealized image" ¹⁴⁶ is maintained and the toyshop world is "secure". ¹⁴⁷ But it cannot survive the disruptive effect of genuine human feeling. It is Belinda herself, not her painted avatar, who turns pale at the prospect of "ruin" ¹⁴⁸ and celebrates victory with "shouts" ¹⁴⁹ of triumph. At once, the fragile structure of social convention begins to crumble. The Baron, incited by Clarissa, steals the lock and decorum is thrown to the winds in the subsequent *melee*, as modish fripperies become weapons of warfare:

"Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack", ¹⁵⁰
As furor breaks out, Sir Plume's blustering protest -
 "'fore Gad, you must be civil" ¹⁵¹ -
falls on deaf ears.

We have seen how, in Rural Sports and Trivia, cultus and civitas were redefined as cultivation and civility. Here, however, cultivation without good sense has declined into côûture and civility without good humour has ossified as mere etiquette. The "pious maid", ¹⁵² Belinda, guardian of the cosmetic penates, Vestal of the

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| 146. | Horney op. cit. | p.145 | |
| 147. | <u>The Rape of the Lock</u> | II | 47 |
| 148. | ibid | III | 92 |
| 149. | ibid | III | 99 |
| 150. | ibid | V | 40 |
| 151. | ibid | IV | 128 |
| 152. | ibid | I | 112 |

coffee-table, is as appropriate a hero for this society as Aeneas is for Augustan Rome. It can hardly be claimed, however, that

"the fate of (Belinda's) civilization depends" 153

on her actions. Having released the forces of furor into polite society, she is unable to control or contain them, and her last words in the poem are a cry of impotent rage, whilst the beaux and belles return to their neurotic evasions of violence and sexuality:

"A Beau and Witling perish'd in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear"
Cry'd Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
"Those eyes are made so killing" - was his last." 154

It remains for the poet, standing apart from the vanities and absurdities of the beau monde, to transform them into the ideal order and harmony of art:

"This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name." 155

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153. Kinsley op. cit. p.2
154. The Rape of the Lock V 59-64
155. ibid V 149-150

CHAPTER V

THE CIVILIZED COMMUNITY

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THE CIVILIZED COMMUNITY

Ten years after Virgil's death, the Ara Pacis Augustae was formally dedicated in Rome. This altar, enclosed with a precinct wall, had been decreed by the Senate in 13 B.C. to celebrate the safe return of the princeps from Spain and Gaul, and to give thanks for the peace which his rule had brought to the Roman World. It was surrounded by a series of sculptured panels portraying historical, mythological and symbolic subjects. On the shorter east and west sides there were originally two pairs of sculptures, one depicting scenes from Rome's legendary past - the sacrifice of Aeneas and the wolf with the twins, Romulus and Remus - and the other, two august female figures, representing Dea Roma and Italia or Terra Mater. The image of Roma has not survived but the companion piece is beautifully described by Donald Dudley in terms which vividly recall the second Georgic:

"The emphasis is on fruitfulness and peace:
the serene young matron and her two babes,
the cattle and sheep and birds, the flowers
and fruits and the kindly breezes which
sustain the richness of the land." ¹

The longer panels on the north and south sides of the altar portray the procession of the senate and people of Rome, led by Augustus attended by the Vestal Virgins and the flamens of the state cults, going to offer sacrifice in thanksgiving for his homecoming. Once again, Dudley captures the spirit of the scene:

1. Roman Society p.150

"It is the high noon of the Principate: Augustus is there with his friends Agrippa and Maecenas, the younger members of the imperial family and their children. The procession moves with an easy dignity, serious but not solemn. Augustus is not put in any central position, nor is the cynosure of the public gaze. He walks at the head of the procession among the priests and their attendants - the First Citizen, certainly, but not set apart from the Senate and People." ²

The faces of the group are sharply individualised. Members of Augustus' family are readily identifiable; no doubt, the figures of the senators and magistrates are also faithful portraits. The children are depicted realistically, with great charm and humour.

However realistic the execution, what the ara pacis represents is an ideal, and an ideal, moreover, which is as much Virgilian as Augustan; the ideal of civitas founded on cultus, of virtus rooted in pietas, of a community of diverse individuals united by a common history and inspired by a common vision. The procession is a religious occasion celebrating a political triumph. Augustus, in the dual office of princeps and pontifex maximus, appears in both civitas and cultus roles. Yet he remains one among the many civic and religious dignitaries who together represent the entire Roman nation, *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, acting as a corporate unit. The presence of the children calls to mind the importance of the family in Roman society and religion, and emphasises the continuity of the state. The real, contemporary children in the procession also recall the legendary infants fostered by a she-wolf and the symbolic children of Italia who appear on opposite sides of the altar, just as Aeneas' sacrifice of thanksgiving anticipates that

of his descendents, the gens Julia and the entire citizenry of "Dea Roma". It is very much in the spirit of Virgil that Augustus' heroic ancestor should be depicted, not as a victorious warrior, but in a quasi-priestly role, performing an act of simple pietas.

The scene vividly illustrates the lines from Aeneid Book VIII:

"Ecce autem subitum atque oculis mirabile monstrum,
candida per silvam cum fetu concolor albo
procubuit viridique in litore conspicitur sus.
quam pius Aeneas tibi enim, tibi, maxima Iuno,
mactat sacra ferens et cum grege sistit ad aram." 3

(But lo! a portent, sudden and wondrous to see.
Gleaming white amid the wood, of one colour with
her milk-white brood, lay outstretched on the
green bank before their eyes - a sow: her good Aeneas
offers in sacrifice to thee, even thee, most mighty
Juno, and sets (her) with her young before thine
altar.)

The sow, here, is the long-awaited sign that at last, after all the dangers and difficulties of the journey, Aeneas and his companions have reached the Promised Land. The scene thus represents a kind of homecoming and is therefore an appropriate feature of a shrine commemorating Caesar's happy return from the provinces. The carvings of Romulus and Remus and Terra Mater are equally apt, in view of Octavius' restoration of the temple of Magna Mater and of the Lupercal, the cave on the Palatine where, according to tradition, she she-wolf suckled the twins. Finally, the presence of Agrippa and Maecenas, the great soldier and administrator and the great patron of the arts, in the group surrounding Augustus points to those forces in his personality and in his circle of friends which allowed civitas and cultus to flourish under his rule.

The ara pacis thus expresses the guiding ideas of the Augustan principate. These have been defined by Dudley as

"peace after war, the destiny of Rome and Italy, the grandeur of the past, and the moral regeneration of the present through a return to its virtues". 4

Dudley claims that this set of sculptures is

"the most perfect expression in art of the ideals of the Augustan age." 5

As far as the visual arts are concerned, this may well be true.

If, however, we include the art of poetry, the works of Virgil are surely pre-eminent. What the ara pacis depicts is a civilized community, proud of its past and hopeful for the future, a society of free citizens with a deep love of the countryside, a secular power sustained by religious sentiment, a civitas rooted in cultus. Such a community is at the heart of Virgil's poetry: the shepherds' "community of song" in the Eclogues, the social microcosm of farmer, family, slaves and animals in the Georgics, the band of exiled Trojans in the Aeneid. In each work the emphasis is different but the central idea is the same. The Eclogues contrast the ideal world of pastoral with the real world of history, where the Golden Age can return only through the painful and fallible exertions of statesmen and administrators, soldiers and diplomats, such as Octavius, Varus, Gallus and Pollio. In the Georgics Virgil celebrates the work of the Italian farmer as he strives to recreate the age of Saturn in Jove's fallen world, and draws a parallel between his labours and Octavian's struggle against the forces of furor. The hero of the Aeneid flees from a civilization in ruins

4. Donald R Dudley. The Civilization of Rome p.143

5. ibid p.154

to find a new home in Latium and is granted a vision of Rome's imperial destiny:

"hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
proferet imperium (iacet extra sidera tellus,
extra anni solisque vias, ubi caelifer Atlas
axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum):" 6

(This, this is he, whom thou so oft hearest promised
to thee, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who shall
again set up the Golden Age amid the fields where
Saturn once reigned, and shall spread his empire
past Garamant and India, to a land that lies beyond
the stars, beyond the paths of the year and the sun,
where heaven-bearing Atlas turns on his shoulders
the sphere, inset with gleaming stars.)

The strongest impression left by Virgil's poetry is of a yearning for a better world, governed by an ideal ruler who will establish a new era of peace and concord. It is hardly surprising that he should have felt this longing so intensely; as Jasper Griffin reminds us, Virgil grew up during one of the most turbulent periods in his nation's history:

"Of the poet's fifty-one years, twenty-nine were years of war, including sixteen of civil war. In the proscriptions of 42 and 41, it was estimated that at least 150 senators and 2,000 members of the next social class, the equestrians, lost their lives; great areas of Italy were devastated by fighting, by famine, and by forcible expropriation of land, in which Mantua was heavily punished. Our limited sources inform us of the names of more than fifty suicides in this terrible period." 7

For Virgil civilization, the harmonious partnership between civitas and cultus, is the only defence against the ravages of unrestrained

6. Aeneid VI 791-797

7. Virgil Oxford & New York 1986 p.2

furor. What Brooks Otis calls "the essential Augustan themes" are present throughout his work:

"History had, as it were, burst into the inner recesses of the bucolic world : neither poet nor shepherd nor farmer could live, could have peace, let alone sing or work, except by coming to terms with a political and historical actuality ... (Eclogue I) poses the plight of the poet in a world of violence and draws the moral that he can be saved only by identifying himself with the historical source of safety, the man who can restore peace and security (haec otia) to a society that has lost both." 8

In other words, cultus cannot flourish without the security provided by a stable and benevolent civitas.

Clearly Virgil has "come to terms" with the Augustan regime, in which the stern realities of conquest and resettlement, of legislation and constitutional reform are infused with the ideal of just government and social harmony. But Virgil never forgets, and never allows his readers to forget, that civitas cannot survive without the sustaining power of cultus, and he well knows that the better world for which he longs is attainable, if at all, only at a price, the price paid by Moeris and Menalcas, threatened and dispossessed, in Eclogue IX, by the Italian farmer, pursuing his diurnal round of unremitting labour, and by Dido, Turnus and Aeneas, caught up in the divinely-wrought web of Rome's imperial destiny. Jasper Griffin has perfectly expressed this sense of profound ambiguity in Virgil's treatment of "the essential Augustan themes":

"In mathematics the combination of a plus and a minus is a simple self-cancelling, leaving nothing, but an artist, if he is skilful enough, can find another, more mystical mathematics, in which that is not true. It is Virgil's achievement to have done that".⁹

Nowhere is this sense of ambiguity more evident than in the eighth book of the Aeneid, in which the hero, having heard the prophecy uttered by Father Tiber and sacrificed the white sow to Juno, visits what Griffin has described as

"the most venerable and emotional sites in Rome" ¹⁰

- the Lupercal, the Janiculum, the Capitol, the Forum and the deadly Tarpaeian Rock - and hears from Evander the story of the Latin people and of the Golden Age established by Saturn, himself an exile and a fugitive, who made a single nation of the lawless dwellers in the woods until

"deterior ... paulatim ac decolor aetas
et belli rabies et amor successit habendi". ¹¹

(little by little there crept in a race of
worse sort and duller hue, the frenzy of war,
and the passion for gain.)

The juxtaposition of pre-civilized savagery and post-civilized barbarism with the ideal harmony of Saturn's peaceable kingdom produces an effect of melancholy irony which is characteristic of Virgil and which makes him, in M R Ridley's words,

"beyond all others the poet of the pathos of
two things, the inevitable and the unattainable". ¹²

An awareness of Rome's ineluctable destiny is very strong throughout

9. Virgil p.105

10. The Aeneid (trans C Day Lewis) p.435n

11. Aeneid VIII 326-327

12. Studies in Three Literatures London 1962 p.67

Book VIII, but so is the sense of something irretrievably lost: the serene perfection of the Golden Age and the innocent simplicity of Evander's rustic domain.

It is the contrast between Rome's present glory and its unpretentious origins which stirs Virgil's imagination here. A similar impression was made on his English Augustan successors by the contemplation of the city's subsequent dilapidation. Fussell describes a sepia drawing of the ruins of Rome made by Pope, probably as a frontispiece for the Essay on Man:

"The shattered Colosseum exhibits the ironic legend 'Roma Aeterna'; a statue commemorating a 'Viro Immortalia' - apparently a writer, to judge from the scroll in his hand - has been broken at the waist, and in falling to the ground has lost its head; a tomb, as if its point were not sufficiently enforced already, advertises 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi'; and a broken column babbles on its base of the 'capitoli immobile saxum' - the immovable stones of the Capitoline Hill - and thus both recalls Virgil and foretells Burke". 13

This sketch, in another version of which Pope includes a figure in contemporary dress, possibly an idealised self-portrait, seems to confirm Maynard Mack's view that in Pope's poetry there is a recurrent vision of "the civilized community" as something

"lost, or lost and recovered, or lost and recovered and lost again". 14

In Windsor Forest, for example, the devastation wrought by "the haughty Norman" becomes a universal image of civilization in decay:

13. Fussell op. cit. p 294

14. The Garden and the City: Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope 1731-1743 Toronto and London 1969 p.5

"The fields are ravish'd from th'industrious swains,
 From men their cities, and from Gods their fanes:
 The levell'd towns with weeds lie cover'd o'er;
 The hollow winds thro' naked temples roar:
 Round broken columns clasping ivy twin'd;
 O'er heaps of ruin stalk'd the stately hind;
 The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,
 And savage howlings fill the sacred quires." 15

Both civitas (cities, towns, columns) and cultus (fields, fanes, temples, quires) are destroyed, as the works of man gradually submit to the forces of nature and the depredations of time. This loss is balanced, however, at the end of the poem, by the hopeful prospect invoked by Father Thames:

"Safe on my shore each unmolested swain
 Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;
 The shady empire shall retain no trace
 Of war or blood, but in the sylvan chase;
 The trumpet sleep, while cheerful horns are blown,
 And arms employ'd on birds and beasts alone.
 Behold! th'ascending Villas on my side
 Project long shadows o'er the crystal tide.
 Behold! Augusta's glitt'ring spires increase,
 And Temples rise, the beautiful works of Peace." 16

With civitas and cultus restored, so is the proper relationship between man and nature. The hind and fox, no longer usurping the place of human citizens among the "levell'd towns" and "gaping tombs", resume their normal role as quarry in the chase, and religion, in the literal sense of the bond which unites mankind not only to God but also to the natural world, is re-established. "Augusta", here, is the secular equivalent of "imperial Salem", the Heavenly City of Messiah :

"Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem, rise!
 Exalt thy tow'ry head, and lift thy eyes!
 See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
 See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
 In crowding ranks on ev'ry side arise,
 Demanding life, impatient for the skies!

15. Windsor Forest 65-72

16. ibid 369-378

See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
 Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
 See thy bright altars throng'd with prostrate kings,
 And heap'd with products of Sabaeen springs!
 For thee Idume's spicy forests blow
 And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow." 17

The New Jerusalem's "tow'ry head ... crown'd with light" anticipates the "glitt'ring spires" of Augusta. In the former, "prostrate Kings" and "barb'rous nations ... bend" before the divine throne; in the latter,

"Kings shall sue, and suppliant states ...
 ... bend before a BRITISH QUEEN". 18

And the concluding couplet in the passage from Messiah is echoed by Father Thames' prediction of the exotic gifts that international trade will bring to his shores:

"For me the balm shall bleed, the amber flow,
 The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
 The pearly shell its lucid globe infold
 And Phoebus warm the ripening ore to gold". 19

Messiah, with its unique blend of pastoral and prophetic elements, is a vision of perfected cultus and perfected civitas, freed from the material and temporal constraints of a fallen world. Just as Christ, the Divine Logos, transcends the creative, transforming power of the community of song, so the New Jerusalem, the one abiding city, transcends the civilized community, as each individual, cured of all physical, psychological and spiritual ills, achieves perfect wholeness and autonomy whilst sharing in the same Beatific Vision:

"The Saviour comes! by ancient bards foretold:
 Hear him, ye deaf, and all ye blind, behold!
 He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
 And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day:

17. Messiah 85-96

18.. Windsor Forest 383-384

19. ibid 393-396

'Tis he th'obstructed paths of sound shall clear,
 And bid new music charm th'unfolding ear:
 The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forgo,
 And leap exulting like the bounding roe. ...

... the light himself shall shine
 Reveal'd, and God's eternal day be thine". 20

If the subject of Messiah is eschatology, Windsor Forest is concerned with history, and with what David Morris has called

"the unideal state of fallen humanity". 21

Pope's prevision of "Albion's golden days" 22 is rooted in memories of violence and injustice; his hopes for the blessings of good government under Great Anna's benevolent sway are intensified by keen awareness of the evils of tyranny. The pleasant landscape, eloquent of peace and plenty, is seen as one phase in England's history and, as such, is capable of reversion to the wilderness from which it has evolved:

"Not thus the land appear'd in ages past,
 A dreary desert, and a gloomy waste,
 To savage beasts and savage laws a prey,
 And kings more furious and severe than they;
 Who claimed the skies, dispeopled air and floods,
 The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods:
 Cities laid waste, they storm'd the dens and caves,
 (For wiser brutes were backward to be slaves:)
 What could be free, when lawless beasts obey'd,
 And ev'n the elements a tyrant sway'd?
 In vain kind seasons swell'd the teaming grain,
 Soft show'rs distill'd, and suns grew warm in vain;
 The swain with tears his frustrate labour yields,
 And famish'd dies amidst his ripen'd fields". 23

These lines recall the conclusion to Georgic I, with its horrifying vision of a world turned upside-down, where

"fas versum atque nefas". 24

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- 20. Messiah 37-104
 - 21. Morris op. cit. p.143
 - 22. Windsor Forest 424
 - 23. ibid 43-56
 - 24. Georgics I 505

The monstrous irrationality of a "despotic reign" ²⁵ is summed up in a series of paradoxes: "lawless beasts" obey "savage laws"; peasants die "famish'd" amidst fruitful harvests; brutes are "wise" and rulers "furious". The implications of this passage are even more pessimistic, however, since in the Georgics the farmer and his princeps, Octavius, are seen as heroic antagonists of furor, painfully and courageously bringing order out of chaos, whereas here the ruler is the source of chaos and the farmer its helpless victim. In Williamite England, civitas is corrupted and cultus balked by the abuse of power.

The counterpoise to the civitas villain and the cultus victim is provided by Pope's version of Virgil's happy countryman:

"Happy the man whom this bright court approves,
His Sov'reign favours, and his country loves:
Happy next him, who to these shades retires,
Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires:
Whom humbler joys of home-felt quiet please,
Successive study, exercise and ease". ²⁶

One source for these lines is the celebrated passage from Georgic II:

"felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari.
fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestis
Panaque Silvanumque senem Nymphasque sorores." ²⁷

(Blessed is he who has been able to win knowledge of the causes of things, and has cast beneath his feet all fear and unyielding Fate, and the howls of hungry Acheron! Happy, too, is he who knows the woodland gods, Pan and Silvanus and the sister Nymphs.)

Putnam points out that Virgil's vocabulary indicates a marked difference in quality between the happiness of the philosopher and that of the

25. Windsor Forest 58

26. ibid 235-240

27. Georgics II 490-494

pious countryman:

"Virgil poses (the former) as a man of power, knowing thoroughly (cognoscere) the reasons behind the enormous gestures of nature ... , conquering fate and death's shrieking, and implicitly gaining thereby the glory forfeited by pursuit of lesser themes. He is blessed (felix), born under a happy star, fitting epithet for the conqueror of ordinarily heedless destiny. (The latter) is a humbler soul. He remains fortunatus, honoured by and yet subject to Fortuna, a being whose fickle presence is felt at every turn in the georgic life. He merely 'knows' (novit) the subjects of his concern." 28

Nevertheless, the conjunction "et" seems to suggest that the countryman's happiness is equal in degree to that of the Lucretian sage. Moreover, though he is subject to all the changes and chances of agricultural life, the risk of adverse weather, pests and disease, he is immune to the graver hazards which beset the political opportunist or the greedy go-getter, bent on gaining wealth and power at the cost of his humanity.

"hic petit excidiis urbem miserosque penatis,
ut gemma bibat et Sarrano dormiat ostro;
condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro;
hic stupet attonitus rostris; hunc plausus hiantem
per cuneos geminatus enim plebisque patrumque
corripuit; gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum,
exsilioque domos et dulcia limina mutant
atque alio patriam quaerunt sub sole iacentem." 29

(One wreaks ruin on a city and its hapless homes,
that he may drink from a jewelled cup and sleep on
Tyrian purple; another hoards up wealth and broods
over buried gold; one is dazed and astounded by
the Rostra; another, open-mouthed, is carried away
by the plaudits of princes and of people, rolling
again and again along the benches. Gleefully
they steep themselves in their brothers blood; for
exile they change their sweet homes and hearths,
and seek a country that lies beneath an alien sun.)

The distinction Virgil is drawing here is not between cultus and

28. Putnam Virgil's Poem of the Earth p.150

29. Georgics II 505-512

civitas or between the countryside and the city. Civitas is not necessarily corrupt, or what would be the use of Octavius' mission? And the farmer himself is a good citizen whose labours sustain the state (patria) ³⁰ as well as his immediate family. The contrast which Virgil highlights here is between sanity and pietas on the one hand and on the other impious madness - what David Morris calls

"the irrational power of furor as constantly threatening to destroy the precarious balance of civilized values both within the individual and within the state". ³¹

Here, as in the Aeneid, Virgil reveals his profound awareness of

"man's potential dignity tempered by an understanding of his possible baseness". ³²

The farmer's simple, unpretentious life, like Evander's sylvan kingdom, is a recreation in this fallen world of Saturn's golden age:

"hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini,
hanc Remus et frater, sic fortis Etruria crevit
scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma,
septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces.
ante etiam sceptrum Dictaei regis et ante
impia quam caesis gens est epulata iuvenis,
aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat;
necdum etiam audierant inflari classica, necdum
impositos duris crepitare incudibus ensis." ³³

(Such a life the old Sabines once lived, such Remus and his brother. Thus, surely, Etruria waxed strong, thus Rome became of all things the fairest, and with a single city wall enclosed her seven hills. Nay, before the Cretan king held sceptre, and before a godless race banqueted on slaughtered bullocks, such was the life golden Saturn lived on earth, whilst yet none had heard the clarion blare, none the sword-blades ring, as they were laid on the stubborn anvil.)

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- 30. Georgics II 514
 - 31. Morris op. cit. p.138
 - 32. ibid p.141
 - 33. Georgics II 532-540

Rome here is personified - the Dea Roma of the ara pacis, perhaps. Fondly enfolding her seven citadels within the protection of her rampart, she is "pulcherrima", not because she contains magnificent buildings or great works of art, but because she encloses a community of virtuous men and women, living a life of simplicity and innocence, at peace with their neighbours and in harmony with the natural world. Thus, Virgil's happy husbandman, cheerfully toiling in his fields for the good of the fatherland, is identified with the ideal of the civilized community.

Pope's treatment of this theme is subtly different. Firstly, he distinguishes between the life of civitas & that of the patriot-courtier - and the life of cultus, represented by an idealised figure who combines the studious nature of Virgil's Lucretian philosopher with the practical countryman's knowledge of herbal lore. Also he seems to suggest (by the phrase, 'happy next him') that the former is to be preferred, whilst lavishing his most extensive praise on the life of sylvan retirement:

"He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,
And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields:
With chymic art exalts the min'ral pow'rs
And draws the aromatic souls of flow'rs;
Now marks the course of rolling orbs on high:
O'er figur'd worlds now travels with his eye;
Of ancient writ unlocks the learned store,
Consults the dead, and lives past ages o'er:
Or wand'ring thoughtful in the silent wood,
Attends the duties of the wise and good,
T'observe a mean, he to himself a friend,
To follow nature, and regard his end;
Or looks on heav'n with more than mortal eyes,
Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,
Survey the region, and confess her home." 34

This paragon - part hermit, part amateur naturalist, part magus - is essentially a solitary figure. Whereas Virgil's farmer is portrayed presiding over a rustic festival in which his entire household, wife, children, friends ("socii") and farmhands all participate, Pope's arboraceous anchorite finds his companions in plants, in "kindred" stars and the mighty dead. Unlike the happy countryman of the Georgics, he does not represent the ideal civic community; instead, he constitutes a civilized community of one - "to himself a friend" - in isolation from the world of politics and commerce which is represented elsewhere in Windsor Forest by Augusta. Moreover, the poet himself emulates this withdrawal into rural retirement and concludes the whole poem with a reference to his own tranquil forest retreat. This is not simply an imitation of the ending of the Georgics in which Virgil alludes to the opening lines of Eclogue I. Here again, Pope has slightly altered his source. Where Virgil sets his composition of 'carmina pastorum' ³⁵ in the past, Pope represents himself as still enjoying his

"careless days ... in the silent shade". ³⁶

Thus Windsor Forest, a poem in celebration of the civilized community inaugurated by the Peace of Utrecht and sustained by international trade, closes with an image of the pastoral community of song, the poet singing to "the list'ning swains". ³⁷

This inconsistency may arise as Root believes, from the circumstances of the poem's composition, related by Pope in a footnote in the collected edition of 1743:

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35. Georgics IV 565
 36. Windsor Forest 431-432
 37. ibid 433

"This Poem was written at two different times : the first part of it which relates to the country, in the year 1704, at the same time with the Pastorals: the latter part was not added till the year 1710, in which it was published." 38

However, the disjunction between the "pastoral" Windsor Forest and the "georgic" Windsor Forest may betray Pope's lack of any real conviction that the civilized community can be rediscovered or renewed in a city which is fast becoming, in Addison's phrase,

"a kind of Emporium of the whole Earth". 39

World trade may, indeed, promote international harmony, but it could also effect a radical change in social mores at home. In Pope's Augusta, as in Virgil's Rome, civitas will be based on cultus; however, whereas in the Georgics cultus denotes agriculture, in Windsor Forest it has been redefined to signify the elegance, refinement and luxury made available by mercantile enterprise, and the consequences of this redefinition are as yet unknown.

It is, perhaps, significant that Augusta is always viewed from a distance and located in the future: it is, in both senses of the word, a "prospect". This is a prudent stratagem on Pope's part since, on closer inspection in The Rape of the Lock, the inhabitants of this glittering metropolis are exposed as a clique of trivial-minded poseurs, preoccupied with flirtation, gossip, scandal "and all that",⁴⁰ a confederacy rather than a community, obsessed with the punctilios of etiquette and the fopperies of fashion, a society in which high culture is virtually identified with haute couture.

38. quoted in Robert Kilburn Root The Poetical Career of Alexander Pope Princeton 1962 p.62

39. Addison op. cit. 69

40. The Rape of the Lock III 18

Even in Windsor Forest itself, there are hints that the commercial supremacy of London might involve loss as well as gain. Father Thames' prophecy of England's mercantile destiny is clearly an allusion to Tiberinus' speech in the Aeneid in which he foretells the foundation of Rome. This episode takes place early in Book VIII which, as we have seen, is concerned with the disparity between Rome's unpretentious origins and its present (and future) glory. The contrast between sophistication and simplicity is nowhere more poignantly expressed than in Virgil's description of the Capitoline Hill,

"golden now, once bristling with woodland thickets", ⁴¹
 a line in which pride in Rome's magnificence is mingled with nostalgia for a simple, more innocent world. Pope invokes the resonance of this image when, in Windsor Forest, he describes the carvings on Thames' urn, where

"The figur'd streams in waves of silver roll'd,
 And on their banks Augusta rose in gold". ⁴²

and perhaps, through the Virgilian echoes, we catch a faint reverberation of Ovid's sardonic comment on the way in which modern cultus (in the sense of love of ornament) has infiltrated modern civitas:

"Simplicitas rudis ante fuit: nunc aurea Roma est,
 Et domiti magnas possidet orbis opes.
 Aspice quae nunc sunt Capitolia, quaeque fuerunt:
 Alterius dices illa fuisse Iovis.
 Curia, concilio quae nunc dignissima tanto,
 De stipula Tatio regna tenente fuit." ⁴³

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41. Aeneid VIII 348
 42. Windsor Forest 336
 43. Artis Amatoriae III 113-118

(There was rude simplicity of old, but now golden Rome possesses the vast wealth of the conquered world. See what the Capitol is now, and what it was: you would say they belonged to different Jupiters. The senate-house, which now is most worthy of so august a gathering, was, when Tatius held sway, made of wattles.)

Ovid may add that he is at home in the modern world ("haec aetas moribus apta meis")⁴⁴ but he is writing in the persona of an avowed hedonist. Moreover, as the Loeb editor points out in a note on this passage,

"It is not luxury or the rage for building, both highly characteristic of the time, that Ovid admires, but 'culture', i.e. refinement, manners, cultivated society".⁴⁵

These, then, are the antecedents of Thames' "golden" Augusta.

The very name, Augusta, invites retrospection, since it recalls the Roman name for London, Augusta Trinobantia. The name was given to many post-Republican settlements in honour of Octavius Caesar:

thus, Turin, Aosta and Augsburg were originally known as Augusta Taurinorum, Augusta Praetoria and Augusta Vindelicorum respectively.

However, "augustus" is not simply a name or title; it is also an adjective, signifying imposing, stately or majestic and, as such, could be seen as a description of the town itself, as well as a reference to its royal patron. By referring to London as "Augusta", then, the eighteenth-century writer can draw attention to its stately and imposing appearance and/or, implicitly, recall its humbler past as a Roman colonia. However, his primary purpose in using the term is more likely to be the invocation of what David Nokes has called the "Augustan myth".⁴⁶ As he points out, the

44. Artis Amatoriae III 122

45. G P Goold (ed) Ovid The Art of Love and Other Poems Harvard 1985 pp 126-127

46. Raillery and Rage : A Study of Eighteenth-Century Satire Brighton 1987 p.32

word provided

"a universally recognisable system of analogues, a thesaurus of precedents, to be used as yardsticks for measuring the achievements of contemporary society ... a kind of literary code or sub-text, providing instant parallels with, and commentaries upon, the state of English politics, literature and society." 47

Although, as Howard Weinbrot has shown, 48 the personality of Augustus himself was not universally admired by writers of the so-called English Augustan age, nevertheless the era of Virgil and Horace was acknowledged as a high point in European culture never since surpassed - and perhaps never to be surpassed. Moreover, as Nokes points out, the Augustan age provided a number of social and political analogues with post-Restoration England, which writers as diverse as Pope and Defoe (in his significantly-titled pamphlet, Augusta Triumphans) were quick to exploit:

"By asserting the Augustan parallel, writers ... were implying a view of society and an interpretation of the relationship between ruler and ruled. The age of Augustus was portrayed as an era of order and stability at home, expansion and enrichment abroad, replacing a period when republican liberties had degenerated into anarchy and civil war. Under the beneficent rule of Augustus, and through the enlightened support of such patrons as Maecenas, the arts of Virgil and Horace were fostered to spread Roman civilization throughout the world. Roman institutions, Roman law, Roman literature and architecture consolidated the best achievements of the classical tradition, enshrining them at the centre of an empire which brought enlightenment to the regions it conquered. The Augustan model offered an heroic ideal for later ages to imitate." 49

47. Nokes op.cit. p.32

48. Howard Weinbrot Augustus Caesar in 'Augustan' England Princeton 1978

49. Nokes op. cit. p.33

Viewed in this way, Augustan Rome provides a paradigm of the civilized community, a society in which civitas provides the conditions for cultus to flourish and cultus makes civitas a means of disseminating refinement and good taste through the medium of art. However, in so far as it represents an "heroic ideal", it can also be used to criticise contemporary society when it falls short - as it inevitably must - of this consummate exemplar.

On the whole, in Windsor Forest Pope uses the "Augustan myth" in a positive way, suggesting parallels between Queen Anne's England as it emerges from the horrors of a long war (and of Williamite rule) and the pax Augusta, the restoration of order and unity to a cruelly divided empire. As we have seen, however, by allusion to the Augustan poets, Virgil and Ovid, he is able to introduce an equivocal note which restrains patriotic optimism from degenerating into chauvinism and complacency, so that, as David Morris perceptively comments,

"The reader moves towards affirmation, but only through the troubling experience of ambiguity". 50

Gay's eulogy of London in Trivia is more overtly ironic:

"Happy Augusta! Law-defended Town!
Here no dark Lanthorns shade the Villain's Frown;
No Spanish Jealousies the Lanes infest,
Nor Roman Vengeance stabs th'unwary Breast;
Here Tyranny ne'er lifts her purple Hand,
But Liberty and Justice guard the Land." 51

The sentiments expressed in these lines are "placed" by the context, a catalogue of the depredations practised on unwary walkers by

50. Morris op. cit. p.143

51. Trivia III 145-150

pickpockets, muggers, sneak-thieves, cheats, prostitutes and other unsavoury characters, including the class of well-born ruffians known as Mohocks who preyed upon their victims not for gain but for pleasure. Moreover, the "law" which defends Augusta's citizens is portrayed as the kind of rough mob-justice that half drowns fugitive thieves under the pump or rolls them in the mud until they almost suffocate - a happier fate, none the less, than the one they would suffer were they handed over to the official agents of law-enforcement: incarceration in the living hell of Newgate, followed by transportation (at best) or (at worst) the hangman's rope. Clearly the law-abiding haven of security described here is not to be identified literally with contemporary London. Trivia, like its eponymous patron deity, is located at a place where three ways meet: one leads to the world of the Georgics, one to the "real" city of London and the third to the ideal civilized community. And "Augusta" is the name on the signpost pointing to each destination. Firstly, by recalling London's earlier existence as a Roman settlement, inaugurated, as all such settlements were, by ploughing a circumambient furrow, it takes us into the homely, agrarian world of the Georgics; the literal sense of the word (imposing, stately) points to the fine buildings and well-laid-out streets of the modern town; and finally, by invoking the "Augustan myth", it brings before our minds the idea of civic virtue and high culture associated with the image of Augustan Rome. Gay's apostrophe to Augusta, then, does not merely compare London with other contemporary cities. Like Book VIII of the Aeneid, it creates a kind of montage of the past (imagined as an age of primitive virtue), the present (an era of prosperity and material progress) and the hoped-for future, the dawn

of a truly civilized epoch when the cultus and civitas of England will rebuild, metaphorically speaking, the ruins of Augustan Rome, - or perhaps it would be truer to say Virgilian Rome, since it is in the poet's inspired vision, rather than in the achievements of his princeps, that this ideal city is to be found. The lines, with their historical and literary associations, are rather like an echo-chamber where, amidst the reverberations of Virgil's voice, one hears the sound of Gay's ironic laughter.

A similar effect can be produced without resource to the "Augustan myth". As I have suggested, the poetic forms used by Virgil can in themselves provide a comparable "sub-text", especially when they are adapted in unexpected, anomalous or subversive ways. Lady Mary's urban swains draw attention to the difference between Arcadian innocence and modish corruption, but also force us to consider what Town Eclogues has in common with its Virgilian model: a concern with the relationship between art and nature and between the political world and the realm of human relationships. Similarly, by casting a young lady of fashion in the role of latter-day Aeneas, Pope makes us reassess the "pieties" of the beau monde and the degree to which it has succeeded in containing and controlling furor. In both cases, the Virgilian parallels contribute to the poets' critical assessment of contemporary society and its pretensions. Compared with Arcadia's community of song and Aeneas' heroic devotion, the modern world dwindles into a poor and petty simulacrum of civilization.

In these instances there is an almost total inversion of the Virgilian original: the conventions of pastoral are transposed into an urban

setting and an upper-class milieu; epic is miniaturised, modernised, feminised and generally stood on its head. In Swift's georgic fragments, "A Description of the Morning" and "A Description of a City Shower", the form is not so much inverted as extended to include a typical London street-scene. Superficially, the formal link between these lively delineations of city life and Virgil's great "poem of the earth" ⁵² seems tenuous. True, there is a didactic element in "A City Shower" but, in the absence of the religious and patriotic sentiment, the grand scale and polyphonic structure of the original, these brief sketches seem to resemble the Georgics only in descriptive power. Closer reading, however, reveals the presence of several important georgic themes. "A Description of the Morning", for example, shows the town rousing itself to embark on 'another day's work. This is clearly Jove's fallen world, where "labor improbus" ⁵³ is a necessary condition of life. Domestic servants, 'prentice-boys, crossing-sweepers and chimney-sweeps begin the task of clearing away the previous day's deposit of dust and grime while the audible, if as yet unseen, presence of the "Small coal Man" and "Brickdust Moll" prognosticates fresh deposits of soot and grit. In "A City Shower", too, dirt is seen as one of the primary inconveniences of city life:

"Not yet, the Dust had shun'd th' unequal strife,
But aided by the Wind, fought still for Life;
And wafted with its Foe by violent Gusts,
'Twas doubtful which was rain and which was Dust.
Ah! where must needy Poet seek for Aid,
When Dust and Rain at once his Coat invade;
Sole Coat, where Dust cemented by the Rain,
Erects the Nap, and leaves a cloudy Stain." ⁵⁴

52. See Putnam op. cit.

53. Georgics I 145-146

54. "A Description of a City Shower" 23-30

Here the pervasive dust of the city streets combines with that common enemy of post-Saturnian man, the weather, to plague the hapless poet. The language of these lines ("strife", "fought", "violent", "invade") is strongly reminiscent of the Georgics, where the farmer is seen as waging a continual warfare against the hostile forces at work in fallen nature and even the earth itself must be subjected to a kind of military discipline:

"Multum adeo, rastris glaebas qui frangit inertis
vimineasque trahit crates, iuvat arva neque illum
flava Ceres alto nequiquam spectat Olympo;
et qui, proscisso quae suscit aequore terga,
rursus in obliquum verso perrumpit aratro,
exercetque frequens tellurem atque imperat arvis." 55

(Yea, and much service does he do the land who
with the mattock breaks up the sluggish clods,
and drags over it wicker hurdles; nor is it for
naught that golden Ceres views him from high
Olympus. Much service, too, does he who turns
his plough and again breaks crosswise through
the ridges which he raised when first he cut the
plain, ever at his post to discipline the ground,
and give his orders to the fields.)

Whereas here, however, the husbandman's diligent and persistent efforts to control his environment are rewarded with fruitful harvests, in "A City Shower" attempts to resist the onslaught of the elements are worse than useless. The housewife's well-meaning exertions with the mop merely serve to sprinkle the hapless passer-by with filthy water, and the only effective response to the inclement weather is to take evasive action by seeking whatever shelter one can find. According to Michael Putnam, man in the Georgics

"serves as a mediator between sky and earth, taming the latter and bearing with the former as best he can. ... The georgic worker must ... grow used to ... conflict between his necessarily continuous effortful forwardness and (Nature's) continual backsliding. ... He must also deal with problems of his own making in the process. ... For the inner nature of man ... is as much a challenge to be mastered as the decadent ruggedness of external nature's inborn primitivism." 56

The recalcitrance of man's inner nature is equally apparent in Swift's georgic world; the illicit amours of Betty and her employer, the insolvent nobleman, the truant thieves and their corrupt gaoler and the violence offered to sedan chairmen by their welching clients all bear testimony to an innate corruption paralleled in the external world by dust, mud, soot and stinking drains, evils as universal and as unavoidable as toothache and shooting corns. The Georgics celebrates man's heroic response to the "challenge" of the Jovian world by "labor" and "artes"; Swift sees man's fallen condition as absurd and finds his attempts to rise above it ridiculous rather than heroic:

"Careful Observers may foretel the Hour
(By sure Prognosticks) when to dread a show'r:
While Rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er
Her Frolicks, and pursues her Tail no more.
Returning home at Night, you'll find the sink
Strike your offended sense with double Stink." 57

The prudent, georgic virtues connoted by "Careful Observers", "foretel", "sure Prognosticks" are equated with the cat's instinctive reaction to changes in the weather. Latinate words such as "pensive" and "depends" illustrate mankind's pretensions to learning and refinement, which are cruelly deflated by the vulgar colloquialisms, "sink"/"stink". It is man's sense of dignity as well as his sense

56. Putnam op. cit. pp 7-8

57. "A Description of a City Shower" 1-6

of smell which is "offended" by the overflowing drains in which human ordure mingles with

"Drown'd Puppies, stinking Sprats ...
and Turnip-Tops." 58

The natural world is subjected to a similar process of demystification; a raincloud which in one couplet is flung "athwart the welkin" 59 in the next is compared to a vomiting or urinating drunkard. Again, reference to the less dignified bodily functions shatters the "poetic" mood induced by extravagantly elevated language. A comparable and even more incongruous effect is produced by the comparison between a nervous beau listening to the rain drumming on the roof of his sedan chair and the Greek heroes lurking in the Wooden Horse, awaiting the signal to emerge and fall upon the unsuspecting Trojans.

What are, perhaps, Swift's most telling comic effects however, are brought off by less baroque means. The poems were originally published in the Tatler ("A Description of the Morning" in Number 9, April 28th-30th 1709, "A City Shower" in Number 238, October 14th-17th, 1710) and they have the virtues of first-rate journalism, a keen observation of people and places and a gift for the mot juste, which conveys what has been observed in the most precise and economical way. Again, pretension is his principal target: the lady of fashion and the smart lawyer making a show of shopping or calling a coach in order to shelter from the rain are exposed by the poet's sharp and

58. "A Description of a City Shower" 62-63

59. *ibid* 14

undeceived eye. The very adjectives used to describe these characters ("dagled"⁶⁰ and "spruce")⁶¹ contrive to suggest that they ^{have} ~~have~~ been not merely seen but seen through; the vulnerability of the one and the vanity of the other are mercilessly revealed, despite their careful camouflage of modish dress and professional briskness. Even more suggestive is the phrase, "tuck't-up"⁶² applied to the seamstress; the epithet, neatly transferred from the lady's skirts to herself, evokes a kind of cosy complacency (probably by association with "tucked up in bed") entirely appropriate to the one person in the poem who is prudently equipped with an umbrella.

The most striking adjective in "A City Shower" is the one applied to London itself, which is described as "this Devoted town".⁶³ Devoted, one asks, to what? The answer seems to be, devoted to self-interest, as each individual is portrayed as earnestly preoccupied with his or her own affairs: the lady is anxious for her "dagled" finery, the templar pursues his face-saving stratagem, the seamstress hurries busily to her next engagement. The "town", though apparently a single entity, is revealed as a mere random agglomeration of individuals. The rain effects at least a partial and temporary change in this state of affairs; indeed, the phrase "Threat'ning with Deluge",⁶⁴ with its Biblical associations, implies that this is an act of Divine intervention, devised to bring these selfish isolates into some kind of community:

60. "A City Shower" 33

61. *ibid* 35

62. *ibid* 37

63. *ibid* 32

64. *ibid* 32

"Here various Kinds by various Fortunes led,
Commence Acquaintance underneath a shed.
Triumphant Tories and desponding Whigs,
Forget their Fewds, and join to save their Wigs." 65

However, the repetition of "various" connotes a gathering as heterogenous (and possibly as unsavoury) as the refuse which is likewise accumulated by the downpour:

"Sweepings from Butchers Stalls, Dung, Guts and Blood,
Drown'd Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench'd in Mud,
Dead Cats and Turnip-Tops come tumbling down the Flood." 66

The rain does create a sort of concordia discors, as members of opposing political parties find themselves in the same predicament. However, hostilities are suspended rather than concluded - the Tories remain "Triumphant" and the Whigs "desponding" - and the overriding concern which causes them temporarily to forget their "feuds" is the welfare, not of the nation, but of their periwigs - surely the most spectacular monument to vanity and pretension ever devised by man. This absurd form of headgear, designed, it would seem as an act of tonsorial hybris whereby a man, in defiance of Holy Writ, could add a cubit to his stature, or as a surrogate lion's mane, intended to bestow a spurious air of nobility on the most sheepish of faces, had, in the first decade of the eighteenth century, attained its most extravagant proportions:

"It was still worn in two high peaks above the forehead on either side of the parting, and descended in a mass of formalised curls and ringlets over each shoulder and down the back to cover the shoulder-blades, and sometimes to reach nearly to the waist. The two front masses became exceptionally tall about 1700-1710." 67

65. "A City Shower" 39-42

66. *ibid* 63-65

67. Doreen Yarwood English Costume London 1952 p.168

It is a curious fact that, despite the numerous criticisms of the hooped petticoat which appeared in the periodical essays of the period, the periwig escaped unscathed. The answer to this puzzle is to be found in the National Portrait Gallery where the editors of the Tatler and the Spectator appear, "Kit-Kat size", both wearing handsome full-bottomed wigs, Steele's dark and flowing, Addison's light and crisply curled.

Swift, however, is clearly aware of the symbolic implications of the peruke. The jingling rhyme, "Whigs"/"wigs", like the mock-heroic treatment of the beau in the sedan chair, is profoundly subversive. In a society where the false curls worn on the head are more important than the opinions held in the head, the ultimate disgrace is a bedraggled periwig. (One is reminded of Gay's warning in Trivia against the dreadful fate of suddenly finding oneself relieved of one's wig by a thievish boy hidden in a porter's basket - a kind of comic decapitation.) Devotion to the trappings of vanity nevertheless does break down the barriers between London's citizens, who "commence acquaintance" and "join" together in a kind of community, though it is a community based on self interest and self preservation - the preservation, that is, of the self-image which, in "this Devoted town", is all-important.

The word, "devoted", brings into focus all the varied elements in Swift's representation of London in the rain, and calls into question the values which motivate his diverse - and diverting - cast of characters. A similar function is performed in "A Description of the Morning" by a surprising metaphor near the end of the poem:

"The Turnkey now his Flock returning sees,
Duly let out a Nights to Steal for Fees." 68

The pastoral image, coming as it does at the conclusion of an unrelievedly urban scene, is arresting in its incongruity. Yet the equation of the gaoler with a shepherd and his prisoners with a flock of sheep has a kind of perverse appropriateness. After all, he is providing for their welfare (as well as assuring his own profit) by allowing them to steal money to pay for such comforts as the gaol can afford, and they, in their turn, are as docile as sheep, meekly returning to their confinement each morning, instead of making good their escape, during the hours of darkness. Indeed, this flagrant instance of corruption is given a deceptive air of respectability by the use of the word, "fees", which, in conjunction with "duly", seems to legitimise the entire arrangement by presenting it as a straightforward professional transaction.

"Flock", however, like "devoted", has strong religious connotations; images of the Good Shepherd and the Lamb of God, of the bishop or priest as pastor and of David, shepherd-king of Israel cluster around the word. By using religious terms in a non-religious - or even irreligious - context, Swift quietly indicates the spiritual poverty of London life. Whereas in the Georgics cultus, in the primary and religious senses, is seen as the foundation of civilization, here the Turnkey (the representative of civic law and order) is a parody cultus-figure, a mock herdsman unscrupulously "fleecing" his human flock, whilst in "A City Shower" the sheltering politicians, like the "dagled" belle and even the poet himself seem preoccupied

with their clothes (cultus in the Ovidian sense) to the exclusion of everything else. Civitas is subordinated to a debased and trivialised form of cultus. As for cultus in the secondary sense, Swift's burlesque of 'poetic' language - "athwart the welkin" 69 - and Homeric epic - "bully Greeks" 70 - seems to pour scorn on any aspiration towards refinement or artistic and intellectual cultivation. Man, he insists, is an animal, exposed - no less than cats and dogs - to the vagaries of the weather and to all the other afflictions of this imperfect, postlapsarian world.

As we have seen, this is an important theme in the Georgics also. Book III, in particular, explores the experience of disease, age and death in terms which made no distinction between animals and human beings. Sexuality, to, is seen as a universal passion, uniting men with cattle, horses and even birds and fishes:

"Omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque,
et genus aequoreum, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
in furias ignemque ruunt: amor omnibus idem." 71

(Yea, every single race on earth, man and beast,
the tribes of the sea, cattle and birds brilliant
of hue, rush into fires of passion: all feed the same
Love.)

But for Virgil, furor, even the furor of love, must be controlled by pietas and the Jovian world redeemed by the civilizing power of cultus and civitas. If Jove has decreed that man must live in a harsh and often inhospitable world, Apollo has endowed him with the vision, the knowledge and the practical skills to rise above the

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69. "A City Shower" 14
70. *ibid* 49
71. Georgics III 242-244

limitations imposed by his environment and his own baser nature. Painfully, laboriously, with many failures and backslidings, man overcomes the negative forces that threaten him without and within, cultivating the earth, raising stock, keeping bees and, at the same time, establishing order, justice and social harmony. None of this appears in Swift; whereas the Georgics, a sober and at times sombre work, is fundamentally optimistic, "A Description of the Morning" and "A Description of a City Shower" are very funny poems, which are, nevertheless, deeply pessimistic. David Ward's commentary on "A City Shower" conveys the sense of hilarious despair induced by these exposés of city life:

"Swift makes the reader distance himself from the city, encouraging him to see it as a whole; not as a grand rhetorical unity, but as a fortuitous collection of accidental facts: cats and coffee-houses; mops and shops; sedan chairs and sempstresses; anarchically diverse details which at last are overwhelmed in the final torrential image of urban chaos." 72

In the Georgics. as Putnam says,

"control and chaos are locked in a struggle for victory over man and his world." 73

In "A City Shower" we see the triumph of chaos. Trivia, on the other hand, reflects man's capacity for order and control. Making his cautious way through the manifold hazards of the London streets, the prudent pedestrian, rejecting the vitiating indolence of coach-passengers on one side and the lawless violence of the mob on the other, emerges as a civitas hero, upholding the ethical ideal

72. Jonathan Swift : An Introductory Essay London 1973 p.188

73. Putnam op. cit. p.15

of moderation, courtesy and restraint - in a word, civility - which, above all else, can transform the urban jungle of London with its predators and gulls, its potentiality for violence and its unutterable squalor, into a truly civilized community. Moreover, through the poem itself, Gay is effecting another kind of transformation. By the shaping, ordering power of art the everyday sights and sounds of London are transfigured into objects of wonder, as the Thames was transfigured by the Great Frost,

"When hoary Thames, with frosted Oziers crown'd,
Was three long moons in icy Fetters bound.
The Waterman, forlorn along the Shore,
Pensive reclines upon his useless Oar". 74

Reading Trivia, one experiences the same sense of astonishment that the flux of common life can be so magically arrested and touched with charm. London at first hand is noisy, dirty, dangerous and chaotic; viewed through the perspective-glass of Gay's poetic technique, it becomes an elegant artefact, a thing of beauty and a source of endless delight. The poem is a demonstration of the power of man's mind to rise above the limitations imposed by his fallen state, the power which, in the Georgics, is represented by Apollo.

The tension between the Apolline power of art and the depredations of time and neglect (manifestations of the "congenital backsliding"⁷⁵ which threatens all human endeavours) is captured in Gay's lines on the great houses which once lined the Strand:

"Behold that narrow Street, which steep descends,
Whose Building to the slimy shore extends;
Here Arundell's fam'd Structure rear'd its Frame,
The Street alone retains an empty Name:

74. Trivia II 359-362

75. Putnam op. cit. p.8

Where Titian's glowing Paint the Canvas warm'd,
 And Raphael's fair Design, with Judgement, charm'd,
 Now hangs the Bell-man's Song, and pasted here,
 The colour'd Prints of Overton appear.
 Where Statues breath'd, the Work of Phidias' Hands,
 a wooden Pump, or lonely Watch-house stands." 76

This passage, like Pope's sketch of the ruins of Rome, bears witness to the fragility of civilization. Art and culture are swept away and what remains is a kind of bleak utilitarianism, represented by the Bell-man, the pump and the Watchman's cabin.

Burlington House survives, however, an enclave of beauty and harmony where wealth and power are united to benevolence and good taste:

"Yet Burlington's fair Palace still remains;
 Beauty within, without Proportion reigns.
 Beneath his Eye declining Art revives,
 The Wall with animated Picture lives;
 There Hendel (sic) strikes the Strings, the melting Strain
 Transports the Soul, and thrills through ev'ry Vein;
 There oft I enter (but with cleaner Shoes)
 For Burlington's belov'd by ev'ry Muse." 77

The lines convey, not merely the excellence of Burlington's taste ("fair", "beauty", "proportion") but also the life-enhancing power of art ("revives", "animated", "lives"). The final couplet, however, is a rueful reminder that this Parnassian haven, where "declining" arts are regenerated, is surrounded by the bleak Jovian world, with its muddy streets, miry puddles and overflowing kennels. And the pedestrian-poet must accommodate himself to both.

Dirt, for Gay as for Swift, is a ubiquitous symptom of urban man's fallen state. In Trivia, as in "A Description of the Morning" the dust and grime of the city are equated with moral corruption.

76. Trivia II 481-490

77. ibid II 493-500

However, for Bernard Mandeville, dirt has quite another significance.

In the Preface to The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits he views the insanitary state of London's streets from an economic angle:

"There are, I believe few People in London, of those that are any time forc'd to go a foot, but what could wish the Streets of it much cleaner than generally they are; whilst they regard nothing but their own Cloaths and private Conveniency; but when once they come to consider, that what offends them is the result of the Plenty, great Traffick and Opulency of that mighty City, if they have any Concern in its Welfare, they will hardly ever wish to see the Streets of it less dirty. For if we mind the Materials of all sorts that must supply such an infinite number of Trades and Handicrafts, as are always going forward; the vast quantity of Victuals, Drink and Fewel that are daily consum'd in it, and the Waste and Superfluities that must be produc'd from them; the multitudes of Horses and other Cattle that are always dawbing the Streets, the Carts, Coaches and more heavy Carriages that are perpetually wearing and breaking the Pavement of them, and above all the numberless swarms of People that are continually harrassing and trampling though every part of them. If, I say, we mind all these, we shall find that every moment must produce new Filth and ... it is impossible London should be more cleanly before it is less flourishing." 78

This analysis of the relationship between prosperity and squalor is an extension of Mandeville's theory, summed up in the sub-title of his work, that "private vices" lead to "public benefits". If London were cleaner, it would be less "flourishing" and vice-versa; if society were less addicted to vanity and luxury the consequences would be economic recession and widespread poverty. Mandeville's acerbic little parable, which was published in the same year as The Rape of the Lock, questions the basis of the mercantile enterprise that sustained Belinda's world in its glittering elegance.

78. Mandeville The Fable of the Bees Philip Harth (ed)
Harmondsworth 1970 p.57

"The Grumbling Hive or Knaves Turn'd Honest" offers an uncompromising challenge to those who (like Addison) attempt to reconcile commercial success with religion and morality:

"The main design of the Fable (Mandeville explains) is to shew the Impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant Comforts of Life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy and powerful Nation, and at the same time be bless'd with all the Virtue and Innocence that can be wish'd for in a Golden Age; from thence to expose the Unreasonableness and Folly of those, that desirous of being an opulent and flourishing People ... are yet always murmuring at and exclaiming against those Vices and Inconveniences, that from the beginning of the World to this present Day, have been inseparable from all Kingdoms and States that ever were fam'd for Strength, Riches and Politeness at the same time." 79

Civilization, then, in Mandeville's view, is incompatible with virtue since civitas ("Strength") and cultus ("Politeness") are "inseparable" from such "vices and inconveniences" as pride, vanity and dirt.

Mandeville, of course, is writing as what we would call a social scientist, not as a poet; "The Grumbling Hive" is no more than competent doggerel. However, as we have seen, the poets also are forced to ponder the question whether the civilized community can be rediscovered in "Augustan" England or whether, as Pope's drawing of the ruins of Rome seems to suggest, it has been lost forever.

Even in the works of Virgil, it must be noted, the ideal city is never described at first hand. It is always at a distance, in space or time. In the Eclogues it is a far-away place of almost unimaginable splendour from which Tityrus returns, wide-eyed with wonder:

"Urbem, quam dicunt Romam, Meliboeae, putavi
stultus ego huic nostrae similem, quo saepe solemus
pastores ovium teneros depellere fetus.

... ..
verum haec tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes,
quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi." 80

(The city which they call Rome, Meliboeus, I foolish
one! thought was like this of ours, whither we
shepherds are wont to drive the tender younglings
of our flocks. ... But this one has reared her head
as high among all other cities as cypresses oft do
among the bending osiers.)

The city of Rome does not figure at all in the rural world of
the Georgics, except for an indirect account of the evils of urban
life in Book II. And in the Aeneid, though Rome is the subject
of the whole work, it appears only in the prophecies of Jupiter and
Tiberinus, in the troop of unborn Romans awaiting their release from
the underworld in Book VI, in the leafy groves of Evander's Latian
kingdom and, above all, in Aeneas' troubled but undaunted spirit.
For the hero of the Aeneid, the quest for Rome, the imperial city,
the civilized community, the happy union of civitas and cultus, is
an act of faith. The same is true of his creator.

Jasper Griffin emphasises just how much faith was needed to see in the
principate of Augustus the dawn of a novus ordo and the foundation
of the ideal city:

"The chaotic and shameful period of civil wars was
giving place to the enlightened supremacy of one man,
divinely chosen, who would restore peace and order
to Rome and the world. That, at least, was the
optimistic view ... It was possible to view Augustus,
and consequently the future, in a much darker light:
the uncontrolled domination of a man whose whole career
was illegal, whose first act had been to raise an army
and march on Rome, who had signed the lists which

proscribed innocent citizens, committed unforgotten crimes in the civil wars, and climbed to tyranny over the bodies of his enemies and the ruin of the constitution. Virgil must have felt hopes, which were not absurd: after all, Augustus did prove on the whole benign ... He must also have felt apprehensions " 81

Nevertheless, as the ara pacis shows, in Augustan Rome, theoretically at least, cultus and civitas were united in a view of society which made no distinction between princeps and pontifex maximus, farmer and flamen. The dubious legitimacy of Octavius' constitutional position depended on an appearance of conservatism and an appeal to tradition. Thus, it was the official policy of the principate that cultus, in the primary and religious senses, should form the basis of civic and political life. It was a policy with which Virgil could concur; indeed, it reflected his own ideal of a civilized society. Yet, as we have seen, the Aeneid is not a full-hearted endorsement of the Octavian novus ordo: Geoffrey Scott's analysis of the nature of civilization seems relevant to the relationship between Virgil's poetic vision and Augustus' imperial aspirations:

"In life, and in the arts, civilization blends a group of compatible values into some kind of sustained and satisfying pattern, for the sake of which it requires great rejections." 82

The "compatible values" of Caesar and Virgil were the same, but they differed about the nature of the "rejections" which had to be made in order to realise their ideal. Anchises' prophesy in Hades makes plain the kind of civilized values - in the arts, in science and philosophy - that Romans must set aside if they are to fulfil their destiny as law givers and arbiters among the nations.

81. Virgil p.60

82. Geoffrey Scott The Architecture of Humanism London 2nd ed. 1924 p.163

The pursuit of imperial civitas must involve the neglect of cultus in the secondary sense - the cultivation of the mind and imagination. E J Kenny's commentary on Book II of the Aeneid sums up the ambiguity of Virgil's attitude towards the Augustan settlement:

"The note of qualification hangs over the entire poem. The destruction of Troy, like the death of Turnus at the end of the poem, is a symbol of what had to be suffered in order that the divine plan for Rome might be fulfilled. Did Virgil think the price too high? We cannot tell; perhaps Virgil himself could not have given a straight answer to the question." 83

For Virgil, the threat to civilization is posed by the ruthless pursuit of political power (civitas) at the expense of cultus. However, another, more insidious, force was already at work undermining the foundations of the Augustan civilized community and within twenty years of the poet's death this force had found a voice in the irreverent, mock-didactic works of his younger contemporary, Ovid:

"cultus bene Liber ab uvis
Provenit, et culto stat seges alta solo" 84

(from grapes well cared for Liber gives good
vintage, on well-cared-for soil the crops
stand high.)

The lines sound like a quotation from the Georgics - and they are meant to do so. But as we have seen, they refer to a kind of cultus far removed from that practised by Virgil's hardy husbandmen, the cultivation of the body with jewels, fine clothes and cosmetics. In Artis Amatoriae and Medicamina Faciei, Ovid scoffs at the praise of Sabine simplicity and what Peter Green calls

"the rusticitas of Roman virtue." 85

83. E J Kenny "Judicium Transferendi" Creative Imitation and Latin Literature p.120

84. Artis Amatoriae III 101-102

85. Green op. cit. p.44

Unlike Addison, who, by prefacing his essay on the Royal Exchange with a quotation from the Georgics, attempts to reconcile the material refinements of a mercantile society with the traditional georgic virtues, Ovid insists that we must choose between the two kinds of cultus. In this respect he is at one with Bernard Mandeville, who poses the dilemma succinctly in the closing lines of "The Grumbling Hive":

"Bare Vertue can't make Nations live
In Splendour; they, that would revive
The Golden Age, must be as free,
For Acorns, as for Liberty".⁸⁶

By the opening decades of the eighteenth century, the choice of acorns and liberty was no longer a serious option. The "newly sanctified commercial and acquisitive ethic" which Paul Fussell numbers among the enemies of eighteenth-century humanism, was already too deeply entrenched. Against the mercantilist vision of London as the

"Emporium of the whole Earth",⁸⁷

the English Virgilians set up a contrary ideal: Augusta, a city which is neither Rome nor London but which combines the noblest traditions and the finest aspirations of both. It is a city which has never been built and yet it still stands and can still be found in the Eclogues, the Georgics and the Aeneid. That is why, though the Forum and the Capitol may be in ruins, among the jostling crowds in Trivia, in the elaborate rituals of Belinda's toilet and the inane boasting of the fops in St James' Coffee-House, and even in the Hogarthian hugger-mugger of "Morning" and "A City Shower", there is glimpsed, far off but familiar, Virgil's vision of a better world.

86. Mandeville op. cit. 431-434

87. Addison op. cit. I. 69

CHAPTER VI

MUTUAL COMMERCE

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According to the philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, the poetic forms - epic, pastoral and satire - are socio-political phenomena, originating in different areas of life and experience:

"As Philosophers have divided the Universe ... into three Regions, Celestiall, Aeriall, and Terrestriall, so the Poets (whose work it is, by imitating humane life in delightful and measur'd lines, to avert men from vice and incline them to vertuous and honorable actions) have lodged themselves in the three Regions of mankind, Court, City and Country, correspondent in some proportion to those three Regions of the world. For there is in Princes and men of conspicuous power, anciently called Heroes, a lustre and influence upon the rest of men resembling that of the Heavens; and an insincereness inconstancy and troublesome humour of those that dwell in populous Cities, like the mobility, blustering, and impurity of the Aire; and a plainness, and, though dull, yet a nutritive faculty in rurall people, that endures a comparison with the Earth they labour. From hence have proceeded three sorts of Poesy, Heroique, Scomatique, and Pastoral" ¹

What is interesting about this idiosyncratic melange of neo-classical poetics, political theory and mediaeval scholasticism is the automatic assumption, by one of the seventeenth century's most influential thinkers, that the city, far from being identified with the "civilized community" is the haunt of "insincereness, inconstancy and ... impurity". By Hobbes' definition Virgil, the supreme poet

1. "The Answer of Mr Hobbes to Sir Will. D'Avenant's Preface before Gondibert" in D F Gladish (ed) Gondibert Oxford 1971 p.45

of civilization, would not be regarded as a poet of the city at all, but would be associated with the court ("men of conspicuous power" such as Gallus, Pollio and - most conspicuous of all - Augustus, and "heroes" such as Aeneas) and with the realm of pastoral, though Hobbes' emphasis on the "plainness and ... nutritive faculty" of country folk is more appropriate to the Georgics than to the Elogues.

In Hobbes' analysis, the city is an unsatisfactory intermediate state between the heroic nobility of the court and the homely simplicity of the country. In this turbulent, inconsistent, "blustery" half-and-half world satire flourishes, in the form of Dryden's majestically ironic couplets or Wycherley's ferociously comic exposure of cupidity and hypocrisy in such plays as The Plain-Dealer and The Country Wife. And, as we have seen, the urban poems of the early eighteenth-century, Town Elogues, Trivia, The Rape of the Lock and Swift's city sketches, are all satirical in tone. In an economy increasingly dependent upon commercial enterprise for its prosperity and a society increasingly avid for the goods made available by international trade, cultus and civitas have declined into luxury and ostentation, Hobbesian self-seeking and competitiveness thinly disguised behind a mask of urbane sophistication. Hobbes' city was, in fact, two cities: London, the business centre of the nation, and Westminster, the seat of government, and a recurrent motif in Restoration comedy is hostility between "the City", with its bourgeois ethos and commercial values, and "the Town", the world of high fashion and high culture centred on the court. In the poems of Montagu, Gay, Swift and - above all - Pope, we see the Town increasingly succumbing to the mores of the City. The culmination of this process is, of course, the theme of The Dunciad, in which Dulness (the apotheosis

of flashy vulgarity) removes her throne from the City of London to the court of George II in a grotesque parody of Aeneas' epic journey from Troy to Latium.

The belle, as we have seen, is the epitome of this Hobbesian middle ground. She may be depicted as a pastoral figure, as in Jervas' portrait of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu or in her own Town Eclogues, but this only serves to emphasise her artificiality and sophistication; she may be portrayed as a hero, like Belinda, but this merely draws attention to her frivolousness and triviality. The belle's true sphere is the city and her role is to display, in her elegant toilette and flawless maquillage, the fruits of mercantile enterprise. Though

"deck'd with all that land and sea afford," 2

her natural element is the air, the intermediate region, in Hobbes' version of mediaeval cosmology, between the Heavens and the Earth. Both the petticoat belle and the fishing-fly belle are adorned with feathers, like exotic birds, whilst Belinda enjoys the protection of airy spirits,

"The light Militia of the lower sky". 3

Belles, according to Clarissa, are

"Angels call'd, and Angel-like ador'd" 4

but they are not true denizens of the Heavens; their quasi-angelic status is conferred by convention and the hyperbolical language of courtship, and much of the humour in The Rape of the Lock derives

2. The Rape of the Lock V 11

3. ibid I 42

4. ibid V 12

from the spectacle of these supposedly celestial beings in the throes of all-too-human fits of rage, indignation and hysteria.

Failure to live up to an idealised self-image is the very stuff of satire. The classical world, by providing, in David Nokes' phrase,

"a universally recognisable system of analogies" ⁵

afforded a rich source of satirical comment on the contemporary world. By contrasting the idealised past with the un-ideal present, moreover, the "Écommatique" writer practises

"a form of literary alchemy, turning local heroes and forgotten villains into universal types and icons." ⁶

The classical dimension gives depth and definition to our perception of the everyday world, bringing its follies and inconsistencies, its vanity and triviality into sharper focus:

"we are required to view the satiric object through a perspective device that is the literary equivalent of a pair of 3-D spectacles. Between the red lens of contemporary politics and culture and the green lens of classical tradition, a kind of stereoscopic vision is produced that gives an ironic depth-of-field to the satire." ⁷

The principal means of invoking this classical dimension in early eighteenth-century poetry are imitation and allusion. The former creates "universal types and icons" by appealing to the concept of unchanging human nature. Thus, the versions of Virgil's portrait of the Happy Man in Windsor Forest and Rural Sports demonstrate the enduring power of certain values and aspirations throughout the ages. The effect of imitation is cumulative as the reader recognises, point by point, the correspondences between the contemporary poem and the

5. Nokes op. cit. p.32

6. ibid p.4

7. ibid p.4.

original text. Allusion, on the other hand, by bringing about an instantaneous fusion of the classical and the modern worlds, gives an immediate "depth-of-field" to the modern foreground by sketching in a classical background which provides a sense of scale, perspective and proportion.

An instance of the effective use of allusion is the opening of

The Rape of the Lock :

"What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing - This verse to Caryl, Muse! is due:
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my lays." 8

The tone of these lines, the address to the Muse, the reference to "mighty contests" all confirm the reader's expectations, aroused by the title-page, that what follows will be a mock epic or "heroic-comical" work. This impression is reinforced, six lines later, by a paraphrase of part of the proem to the Aeneid:

"tantaene animis caelestibus irae?" 9

(Can resentment so fierce dwell in heavenly breasts?)

which Pope renders as

"in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?" 10

The fifth line of the passage, however, is a clear allusion to the introduction to Georgic IV:

"Protinus aerii mellis caelestia dona
exsequar. hanc etiam, Maecenas, aspice partem.
admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum
magnanimosque duces totiusque ordine gentis
mores et studia et populos et proelia dicam.
in tenui labor; at tenuis non gloria, si quem
numina laeva sinunt auditque vocatus Apollo." 11

8. The Rape of the Lock I 1-6

9. Aeneid I 11

10. The Rape of the Lock I 12

11. Georgics IV 1-7

(Next will I discourse of Heaven's gift, the honey from the skies. On this part, too, of my task, Maecenas, look with favour. The wondrous pageant of a tiny world - chiefs great-hearted, a whole nation's character and tastes and tribes and battles - I will in due order unfold to thee. Slight is the field of toil; but not slight the glory, if adverse powers leave one free, and Apollo hearkens unto prayer.)

By fusing Belinda's world with the world of the Georgics, Pope compares her dedicated self-cultivation with the farmer's cultivation of his land and introduces the idea, developed more fully in the toilet episode, that Belinda's cultus also demands "toil",¹² "care" ¹³ and "labours".¹⁴

Like the beehive, the beau monde is a

"wondrous pageant of a tiny world"

and there are many resemblances between the two. Hampton Court, that favourite resort of beaux and belles, is set in

"meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs"; ¹⁵

the bees, too, must be provided with an equally flowery home:

"haec circum casiae virides et olentia late
serpulla et graviter spirantis copia thymbrae
floreat, inriguumque bibant violaria fontem." ¹⁶

.... "invitent croceis halantes floribus horti" ¹⁷

(All about let green cassia bloom, and wild thyme
with fragrance far borne, and a wealth of strong-
scented savory; and let violet-beds drink of the
trickling spring.)

.... (Let there be gardens fragrant with saffron
flowers to invite them.)

Bees, according to Virgil, reproduce asexually:

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- 12. The Rape of the Lock I 131
 - 13. ibid I 145
 - 14. ibid I 148
 - 15. ibid III 1
 - 16. Georgics IV 30-32
 - 17. ibid IV 109

"... neque concubitu indulgent, nec corpora segnes
in Venerem solvunt aut fetus nixibus edunt;" 18

(they indulge not in conjugal embraces, nor idly
unnerve their bodies in love, or bring forth young
with travail)

And, as we have seen, the fashionable world represses its sexuality,
substituting elaborate social rituals such as cards and coffee-drinking
for more overt forms of courtship.

The conflict between rival "kings" resembles, in its furious
intensity and miniature scale, the battle of the beaux and belles;
even Virgil's recommended method of subduing a swarm is paralleled
in the confrontation between Belinda and the Baron.

"hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta
pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescunt." 19

(These storms of passion, these conflicts so
fierce, by the tossing of a little dust are
quelled and laid to rest.)

Virgil's "pulveris exigui iactu" prefigures the pinch of snuff with
which the triumphant belle vanquishes her adversary.

Most of all, the bees resemble Belinda and her guardian sylphs.
Like them, they are creatures of the air, sporting and fluttering
in their free, inconstant element. There is, however, one further -
and poignant - point of comparison. The sylphs, having survived
their previous mortal existence as coquettes, are now, of course,
immortal. The bees, too, enjoy a kind of immortality; though
individual bees must die the bee-community is undying:

18. Georgics IV 198-199

19. ibid IV 86-87

"genus immortale manet" 20

(the race abides immortal.)

They are spared the common curse of nature, death, at the cost of their individuality. Belinda, on the other hand, is uniquely herself - and the price of this singularity is death, when

"all those tresses shall be laid in dust". 21

Indeed, as a belle she is doubly mortal, since she must expect to outlive her beauty, for, as Clarissa is at pains to remind her,

"curl'd or uncurl'd, ... Locks will turn to grey." 22

Thus, thanks to this single allusion to the fourth Georgic in the opening lines, The Rape of the Lock is imbued with a depth of meaning and feeling which permeates the entire poem, enhancing the irony and pathos of Belinda's story.

Virgil himself makes effective use of both imitation and allusion. Mercury's descent to earth in Book IV of the Aeneid, for example, closely follows Homer's account of the descent of Hermes in Odyssey X. In each case, the divine messenger's headlong plunge is described in vertiginous detail. Mercury's task is to remind Aeneas of his god-given mission and to rebuke him for staying with Dido instead of continuing his quest for

"regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus" 23

(the kingdom of Italy and the Roman land).

Hermes is entrusted by Zeus with the sacred herb, moly, which he gives to Odysseus as a remedy against Circe's magic potions. By

20. Georgics IV 208

21. The Rape of the Lock V 148

22. ibid V 26

23. Aeneid IV 275

recalling this episode, Virgil gains sympathy for his hero, who is about to abandon the loving - and loveable - Queen of Carthage, who is thereby associated with Homer's wicked enchantress. Circe, we remember, turned men into swine with her evil spells; though Dido is no witch, if Aeneas were to remain with her and neglect his duty to Jupiter and to future generations that, too, would constitute a change in his nature, a betrayal of his true self. So, as Odysseus is saved from a base and loathsome transformation by the gift of moly, Mercury's rebuke prevents Aeneas' surrendering to his baser nature by sacrificing pietas to amor. Virgil's use of allusion is equally telling. Like Mozart, he occasionally quotes from his own work. Thus, the Georgics closes with a reference to the opening lines of the first Eclogue:

"Haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebam
et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis
per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo.
illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa,
Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi." 24

(Thus, I sang of the care of fields, of cattle,
and of trees, while great Caesar thundered in
war by deep Euphrates and gave a victor's laws
unto willing nations, and essayed the path to
Heaven. In those days I, Virgil, was nursed of
sweet Parthenope, and rejoiced in the arts of
inglorious ease - I who dallied with shepherd's
songs, and, in youth's boldness, sang Tityrus,
of thee under thy spreading beech's covert.)

The georgic world of labor is here fleetingly merged with the pastoral world of otium (which implies leisure and peace as well as

idleness) and with the community of song. Michael Putnam's analysis of this passage stresses the link, implicit throughout the Georgics and indeed in all Virgil's poetry between the ruler, the farmer and the poet:

"The two important framers of order, the politician and the poet, the wielder of power to formalize society by a structure of laws and the artisan of words, aloof from history's progress, are vital complements at any given moment in civilization. ... The one ... wields the weapons of war on Rome's eastern frontier. At the same time the other ... sings lazily of crops and animals. ... But civilization cannot exist, much less progress, without laws and the studied strength to enforce them calmly, any more than it can without the ennobling qualities of poetry and myth-making poets to uplift our practical lives by the uses of the imagination. Ideally, the lion of military strength should lie down with the lamb of artistic creativity." 25

The political ruler, dedicated to civitas, and the husbandman, devoted to cultus, both need the songs of the poet in which human skill and endeavour resonate with the subtle harmonies of nature.

The effects of imitation and allusion are cumulative. A frequently-cited passage acquires fresh deposits of meaning with each appearance, like the rings on a tree-trunk, and all these layers become available to subsequent writers. Thus Hermes' descent to earth is drawn upon by Virgil to justify Aeneas' desertion of Dido. Milton uses both the Homeric original and Virgil's imitation in his account of Satan's flight to Eden, where the beneficent messengers of classical epic serve to foreground the devil's evil intentions. Mercury reminds Aeneas of Jove's injunction and urges him to obey; Satan tempts Eve to disregard God's command. Moly, the healing, protective

plant, is replaced by the fateful apple. The monstrous perversity of Satan's stratagem strikes the reader all the more forcibly when it is recognised as a distortion of a familiar topos. Hence Pope, describing Umbriel's descent into the Cave of Spleen, can instantaneously activate the reader's responses to Homer's Hermes, Virgil's Mercury and Milton's Satan. There is no need, here, for full-scale imitation; allusion will suffice. The gnome's "sooty pinions" ²⁶ recall Mercury's winged sandals and his "branch of healing spleenwort" ²⁷ combines associations with moly, the medicinal herb, and the caduceus. His mischievous intent, to give "half the world" ²⁸ (i.e. the entire female sex) the spleen is a clear reference to Satan's subversion of Eve and the consequent Fall of the whole human race.

The techniques of imitation and allusion, then, operate to the advantage of later authors, who can draw upon the accumulated associations of such classic topoi as a means of enriching and intensifying their work. Imitation (or, more properly, adoption and adaptation) of poetic forms, however, is a two-way traffic or, as Pope would have it "mutual commerce". ²⁹ Hermes' mission to Odysseus gains nothing from reference to Mercury's descent in Aeneid IV; imitation does not operate retrospectively. However, the Aeneid as a whole does contribute something to our appreciation of the Iliad and the Odyssey. Alongside the grieving, dutiful Aeneas, burdened with the destiny of an unborn race, Homer's splendidly individualistic heroes seem more clearly defined - more fully themselves.

26. The Rape of the Lock IV 17
 27. ibid IV 56
 28. ibid IV 78
 29. See letter to Walsh p.1

We are forced to consider other possibilities and varieties of heroism and thus to recognise more fully the particular variety represented by Achilles. Joan Malory Webber claims that

"like no other genre, the epic cannibalizes itself, mirrors its predecessors, and passes judgement on them." 30

"Cannibalize" suggests a decidedly one-way process; the cannibal is said to derive not only nourishment but also psychic power from the consumption of his victim, but the victim's role in the transaction is purely negative. However, Webber's second metaphor suggests a different and more genuinely reciprocal relationship between old epic and new. A mirror multiplies and by reversing the image, gives new life to the object it reflects. Indeed, a mirror-image, the same yet different, is an apt analogy for the effect produced by this kind of formal imitation. Alastair Fowler's assertion that

"much of literature's proper enjoyment depends on interweaving the pleasurable familiar with the strangely novel" 31

is especially true of this kind of literature, where the pleasure of recognition is combined with the charm of novelty. To find in Town Eclogues a formal correspondence to Virgil's Bucolics and thence to the Idylls of Theocritus is to receive a slight shock, half delightful, half disconcerting, like the experience of catching sight of some commonplace object from an unexpected angle.

Whilst accepting, then, Webber's view that epic "mirrors" its predecessors, I take issue with the phrase, "passes judgement", which implies an attitude of rather censorious detachment. It is

30. Milton and His Epic Tradition Washington 1979 p.87

31. "The Life and Death of Literary Forms" New Directions in Literary History Ralph Cohen (ed) London 1974 p.93

truer to say that the epic poet engages in a kind of creative criticism. Only by responding fully to the inner organisation of his model can he make it truly his own. And this is true not only of epic but of other literary forms. Fowler's theory of the development of genres traces the process by which Theocritus' exquisite sketches of rural life are transmitted through Virgil's vision of Arcadia to re-emerge as Lady Mary Wortley¹ Montagu's acid little vignettes of fashionable life in early Georgian London:

"During the first phase, the genre-complex assembles, until a formal type emerges in phase two, a secondary version develops: a form that the author consciously bases on the earlier primary vision. He makes the latter an object of sophisticated imitation, in the Renaissance sense, varying its themes and motifs, perhaps adapting it to slightly different purposes, but retaining all its main features, including those of formal structure. . . . It is also possible to distinguish a tertiary phase of development in many genres. This occurs when an author uses a secondary form in a radically new way. The tertiary form may be burlesque, or antitheses, or symbolic modulation of the secondary." ³²

Virgil represents the second stage in this process. As we have seen, his distinctive contribution to pastoral, didactic and heroic poetry is the vision of a civilized community based on the integration of civitas and cultus. In Virgil's hands, pastoral becomes a celebration of the harmony between man and nature, yet, even in the community of song, the threat of dispossession and desolation casts its shadows. The poem of agrarian life is transformed into a meditation on the struggle between order and chaos waged by farmer and princeps alike and epic becomes the story of the forging of a national identity, with all the suffering and loss that this entails.

32. Fowler op. cit. pp 90-91

The clearest illustration of Fowler's three-stage process in operation is afforded by the Georgics. The "genre-complex" on which the poem is based was found by Virgil in Hesiod's Works and Days, a loosely-organised work, partly devoted to agricultural advice, though less than a third of the poem is concerned with farming and this is mostly confined to the cultivation of cereals; the rest is a rather rambling series of complaints about the poet's many grievances and moral maxims on the themes of work and justice. Jasper Griffin sums up the tenor of the book as follows:

"'Work and pray' is a pervasive theme: the farmer should observe justice and piety as he follows the rhythm of hard work which accompanies the changing seasons of the year". 33

It is easy to see the germ of the Georgics here. However, Hesiod is mainly preoccupied with his own problems, a rascally brother and corrupt landlords. As Wilkinson observes, Virgil transforms this somewhat unpromising material into

"a panorama of rural life in Italy, with all its social and philosophical implications". 34

It is these "social and philosophical implications" - the political, ethical and religious dimension to the Georgics - which is peculiarly Virgilian. The third stage of development, Fowler's "tertiary phase", occurred within twenty years of Virgil's death, with Ovid's Artis Amatoriae, a frivolous mock-georgic which ironically subverts the Virgilian work-ethic with a spirited celebration of amoral hedonism. The opening lines are a perfect example of that creative criticism which is the hallmark of the best formal imitation:

33. Griffin Virgil p.36

34. The Georgics of Virgil Cambridge 1969 p.60

"Siquis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi,
 Hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet.
 Arte citae veloque rates remoque moventur,
 Arte leves currus : arte regendus amor.
 Curribus Automedon lentisque erat aptus habenis,
 Tiphys in Haemonia puppe magister erat:
 Me Venus artificem tenero praefecit Amori;
 Tiphys et Automedon dicar Amoris ego." 35

(If anyone among this people knows not the art of loving, let him read my poem, and having read be skilled in love. By skill swift ships are sailed and rowed, by skill nimble chariots are driven: by skill must Love be guided. Well fitted for chariots and pliant reins was Automedon, and Typhis was the helmsman of the Haemonian ship: me hath Venus set over tender Love as master in the art; I shall be called the Tiphys and Automedon of Love.)

The two recurrent images of human endeavour that run throughout the Georgics, the boat or ship and the chariot, are here, by a mischievous inversion, applied to the delights of love-in-idleness. Thus, at the very beginning of The Art of Love, Ovid signals to his readers that what follows will be a reversed mirror-image of Virgil's sober "poem of the earth", the "panorama of social life" transmuted into an intimate view of the urban beau monde and Virgil's "social and philosophical" reflections deliberately trivialised : society, in Artis Amatoriae is reduced to a small, self-absorbed circle - lover, mistress, lady's maid, husband or guardian - and, though philosophical-sounding observations abound, their context is invariably amatory. Ovid, or perhaps it would be truer to say his witty and cynical persona, delivers himself of unimpeachable sentiments such as

"Luxuriant animi rebus plerumque secundis,
 Nec facile est aequa commoda mente pati." 36

(Often pride waxes in prosperity, nor is it easy to bear good fortune with equal mind.)

35. Artis Amatoriae I 1-8

36. ibid II 437-438

However, this is simply an argument for making one's mistress jealous, lest she should grow indifferent.

The Art of Love clearly represents georgic's tertiary phase. Ovid has used the secondary (Virgilian) form "in a radically new way". The same is true of Gay's inverted georgics, Rural Sports, which reverses Virgil's theme of rural labour, and Trivia, which presents a panorama of urban, not rural, life. In Fowler's terms, these works may be described as the "antithesis" of the georgic form. Cyder, which simply attempts to recreate secondary georgic by faithfully following Virgil, cannot be said to extend or re-animate the form. Windsor Forest, on the other hand, is a genuine revaluation and re-interpretation of the genre, a "symbolic modulation", in terms of Fowler's analysis, which abandons didacticism altogether and concentrates on the potentiality of georgic as a medium for political and philosophical exploration, developing, through the doctrine of concordia discors, Virgil's theory of the cosmic struggle between order and chaos. Indeed, Pope's relationship with Virgil in this work transcends mere formal imitation; as David Morris points out, it resembles that affinity of temperament between author and translator which Roscommon recommends in his Essay on Translated Verse:

"Then seek a Poet who your way do's bend,
And chuse an Author as you chuse a Friend:
United by this Sympathetic Bond,
You grow Familiar, Intimate, and Fond;
Your thoughts, your words, your Stiles, your Souls agree,
No longer his Interpreter, but He." 37

As Morris goes on to argue, Windsor Forest is a response to the totality of Virgil's poetry, not to the Georgics alone:

"It is not sufficient to say that Pope "uses" the Georgics in order to give his poem a generic coherence or an allusive resonance: his borrowings, in fact, extend over the whole body of Virgil's work and are neither necessary for generic identification nor effective in creating a unity of tone. Instead, as Pope's classically schooled readers would have recognised, Pope embodies in his poem the spirit of Virgil - not as an act of proud impersonation or as a device of rhetorical strategy but as an expression of the deep affinity between their ways of viewing experience." 38

As we have seen, Windsor Forest has affinities with pastoral, in its celebration of harmonious community and sylvan retreat; its vision of Augusta, the splendid city at the heart of a world-wide nexus of peaceable commerce between nations, derives from the Aeneid and particularly from the climactic seventh and eighth books, in which Aeneas, after his long and eventful voyage, arrives at the site of Rome. The central symbols of Windsor Forest are the forest, the river and the city; the same three features dominate this section of the Aeneid. In Book VII, the hero and his companions have their first glimpse of the Tiber and the shady woods of Latium:

"Iamque rubescebat radiis mare, et aethere ab alto
Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis:
cum venti posuere omnisque repente resedit
flatus, et in lento luctantur marmore tonsae.
at que hic Aeneas ingentem ex aequore lucum
prospicit. hunc inter fluvio Tiberinus amoeno
verticibus rapidis et multa flavus harena
in mare prorumpit. variae circumque supraque
adsuetae ripis volucres et fluminis alveo
aethera mulcebant cantu, lucoque volabant.
flectere iter sociis terraeque advertere proras
imperat, et laetus fluvio succedit opaco." 39

38. Morris op. cit. p.135

39. Aeneid VII 25-36

(And now the sea was reddening with the rays of dawn, and from high heaven saffron-hued Aurora shone in roseate car, when the winds fell, and every breath sank suddenly, and the oar blades strive amid the sluggish calm of waters. Then lo! Aeneas, gazing forth from the flood, sees a mighty forest. Through its midst the Tiber, with pleasant stream, leaps forth to sea in swirling eddies and yellow with plenteous sand. Around and above, birds of varied plumes; that haunt the banks and river-channel, charmed the sky with song and flitted amid the forest. He bids his comrades change their course and turn their prow to land, and joyfully enters the shady river.)

The gratitude and optimism implicit in these lines where, in the rose-tinted light of dawn, as the very winds seem to hold their breath in awe, the long search comes to an end, is echoed in Pope's rapturous welcome of the Peace of Utrecht and his anticipation of an ensuing Golden Age when

"Conquest (will) cease, and Slav'ry be no more". 40

The episode in Aeneid VIII, when Evander and Aeneas visit the future sites of the Capitol and Forum and all the other familiar landmarks - familiar to Virgil's readers - of Augustan Rome, is equally poignant and, according to Brooks Otis, would have been particularly so for Pope's contemporaries:

"Virgil's impression of Arcadian Rome must have been much like that of the eighteenth-century tourist we see in a Piranesi print. Pallanteum is a rural village but all around it are the "virum monumenta priorum ... disiectic oppida muris ... reliquas", the relics of civilizations which grew out of the ruins of the golden age (aurea saecula) and were in turn ruined by their own vices. Saturn had civilized a primitive race, a genus indocile, ac dispersum montibus altis, but his civilization had been corrupted by avarice and the belli rabies. This is of course a lesson for the aurea saecula that Augustus is to restore. Pallanteum is the empty interim

between two civilizations and between two golden ages, and it is itself a partial exemplum of golden age virtues. The sheep that wander in the forum, the wild thickets that cover the Capitol are a contrast with both Roman power and Roman luxury." 41

As Pope's drawing suggests, even for those who had not made the Grand Tour, the ruins of Rome were a powerful moral and emotional symbol. As Max Byrd has noted,

"The Augustan Humanists ... inherited from the classical world (a dream) of an ordered community gathered into a beautiful city" 42

Here that dream is combined with the equally haunting vision of the Golden Age. The juxtaposition of broken columns and fallen walls with grazing sheep and leafy bowers encapsulates the central ideals of Virgil's poetry: civitas and cultus, Imperial splendour and Arcadian simplicity. The relics of Augustan Rome became, for Virgil's imitators and their readers, a paysage moralisé, imbued with the ethical and social implications of the Eclogues, the Georgics and the Aeneid. Like him, they were preoccupied with the idea of civilization; like him, they conceived of it as a harmony of cultus and civitas. However, in adapting the Virgilian ideal to the reality of life in early eighteenth-century England, they were compelled to reinterpret Virgil as he had reinterpreted Theocritus, Hesiod and Homer.

Just as, according to Brooks Otis,

"the Aeneid aspired to be both heroic and civilized, both remote and contemporary, both Homeric and Augustan", 43

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41. Otis, Virgil : A Study in Civilized Poetry p.337
 42. Byrd, op. cit. pp 3-4
 43. Otis, op. cit. p.3

so The Rape of the Lock is both genuinely Virgilian and genuinely modern. The opening couplet strikes the 'heroicomic' note which is sustained throughout the poem:

"What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things ..." 44

The antithetical structure of the lines perfectly reflects the tension between epic grandeur and gossip triviality which is the keynote of The Rape of the Lock. It is a twofold antithesis, balancing emotional and quantitative opposites: "dire offence" is paired with "amorous causes" (anger against love) and "mighty contests" with "trivial things" (great against small) but "dire" is also paired with "trivial" (great against small) and "contests" with "amorous" (anger against love). The tensions between aggressive and erotic feelings and between serious and trivial matters are thus incorporated in a wider dichotomy between, on the one hand, furor and amor - both potentially destructive forces - and, on the other, good sense and good humour, the rational, judicious responses which evaluate and de-fuse negative emotions. It is this last tension which underpins the multiple ironies of this deceptively lightweight work. Viewed in this light, the central "contest" of the poem is indeed "mighty", not the squabble between Belinda and the Baron but the struggle against irrational passion and destructive fury, which vanquished Dido and Turnus and all but overwhelmed the virtuous Aeneas. The combat is left unresolved at the end of the Aeneid; indeed, Virgil seems to imply that there can be no final victory over the dark forces which blight the farmer's harvests, threaten the stability of nations and even intrude into the sylvan shades of

Arcadia. As we have seen, Aeneas opposes these forces with the power of pietas. In Belinda's world, however, pietas is vitiated and trivialised. It has become a matter of keeping up appearances and observing social routines. Its rites are conducted at the toilet and the coffee table; its household gods are combs and perfumes, spirit lamps and china cups.

In this single couplet, then, we find the essence of "mock" epic, a genre which mocks neither the epic form nor the contemporary world but which exposes the genuinely epic issues that underly the tempers and tantrums, the follies and flirtations of everyday life. There is a truly "mutual commerce" between the Aeneid and The Rape of the Lock, as Aeneas' adventures provide the context for Belinda's story and Belinda's predicament makes us realise that his struggle against furor is not an exclusively heroic conflict but simply a heightened form of a universal experience. Similarly, "mock" pastoral and "mock" georgic interact with their Virgilian counterparts. The Shepherd's Week highlights, by contrast, the sophistication of Virgil's community of song, whilst Town Eclogues stresses its unspoilt simplicity, compared with the world-weary socialites of early Georgian London. Rural Sports, Trivia and Swift's descriptive sketches, by reversing some important elements in the Georgics (leisure instead of work, town instead of country) emphasise the essential structure of the original - variations on the theme of civitas and cultus - and its relevance to a society in which cultus has degenerated into self-cultivation and civitas is dwindling into civility and thence to bland urbanity and the scrupulous adherence to social conventions. Pope's account of Virgil's relationship with Homer in An Essay on Criticism could be applied to their relationship with the Virgilian

forms:

"When first young Maro in his boundless mind
A work t'outlast immortal Rome design'd,
Perhaps he seem'd above the Critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw:
But when t'examine ev'ry part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same." 45

The "Nature" they found in Virgil's poetry, the world it portrayed, both confirmed and challenged their own experience. With their own memories of civil discord and foreign war, they shared his celebration of peace and social order, but they had to acknowledge that their own age had produced no Augustus, only a queen who has been described by an historian of the period as "the quintessence of ordinariness" 46 and her even less august successor, and, whilst responding to his vision of an ideal civilization in which civitas is grounded in cultus, they were forced to recognise that, in their world, cultus was in danger of declining into the luxury, pride and vanity of Mandeville's beehive and civitas was threatened by Hobbesian aggression and greed. In adapting Virgil's poetic forms to the realities of their own times, they both acknowledged a debt and revitalised a tradition. In Town Eclogues and The Shepherd's Week, in Trivia, Rural Sports, "Morning" and "A City Shower" and, most of all, in Windsor Forest and The Rape of the Lock, the Augustan humanists echo Dante's greeting to Virgil:

"You are my master and my author".

45. An Essay on Criticism 130-135

46. J P Kenyon The Stuarts Glasgow 1970 (revised edition) p186

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