CHAPTER 5

Ingenuity, Industry, Experience
Eighteenth-Century Georgic

The mock arts composed by Jonathan Swift and his circle are a species of literary burlesque. Joseph Addison, writing in 1711, divided burlesque into two kinds: 'The first represents mean Persons in the Accoutrements of Heroes, the other describes great Persons acting and speaking, like the basest among the People.'[1] The distinction is between burlesque as mock-heroic (examples include Samuel Butler's *Hudibras,* 1663–1678, or the fifth-century *Battle of the Frogs and the Mice*) and burlesque as travesty (such as Paul Scarron's *Virgile travesty*, 1648). Mock-heroic was a classical convention for speaking about low subjects in a heightened style. That is what the mock arts did as well. They conferred the relative dignity of didactic exposition on some dubious activities: enthusiastic preaching to uneducated congregations, political lying, walking in the streets of London, composing lyric poetry for a commercial age.[2] In doing so they satirised the whole didactic endeavour. The mock arts were different again from their mock-heroic cousins, however, in one significant respect.

Heroes are elevated in classical epic far above the level of ordinary human valour, while in mock-heroic burlesque their equivalents are as deeply degraded. In the mock arts, by contrast, that value difference between heightened standard and grovelling parody is reduced and compressed, often to the point of ambiguity. Didactic writing occupied a low-to-middling position in the hierarchy of literary genres. Mock-technical satire, its unconventional equivalent, concerned itself with processes that were relatively humble but lent themselves to sophisticated satirical expression. The Swiftian mock arts performed a flattening of cultural hierarchies. They were a neo-classical sub-genre of writings that handled work-a-day themes in subtle ways.

Another ancient genre that compressed cultural hierarchies was the georgic poetry of Hesiod and Virgil. Imitations and adaptations of georgic were popular during the first half of the eighteenth century with writers and readers who relished the deployment of sharply engineered verse on

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down-to-earth subjects. Widely distributed examples include John Philips's *Cyder* (1708), James Thomson's *Seasons* (1726–46) and John Dyer's *The Fleece* (1757). These eighteenth-century georgic poems travelled on a parallel track to the mock-technical satire developed by Swift and his friends. In their positive and practical style, they took a significant share in publicising the early-modern culture of useful knowledge. The circumstances of their composition and publication indicate further connections, as we will see in this chapter, with the institutions of the Industrial Enlightenment. Eighteenth-century poems that adapted the conventions of ancient georgic spun subtle threads of ideas about human invention and skill, traceable through their changing deployment of a series of keywords: experience, industry, ingenuity. During this period the word 'industry' does not yet refer to large-scale, capital-intensive commercial institutions, so the intricacies of its uses by poets will hold little interest for historians of (for example) the emergence of modern factory production. What they do reveal, however, is a further elaboration of the psychological, haptic and bibliopoeic themes present already in the Enlightenment mock arts.

In earlier parts of this book we have looked at satiric and ironic components in otherwise straightforward texts, or at avowed satires. High-minded poems like Thompson's *Seasons* or Dyer's *Fleece* may appear to sit awkwardly alongside the mocking burlesques written by Swift and his circle. There are strong arguments, however, for placing eighteenth-century satire and georgic poetry together in close generic proximity. First, classical georgic is multivocal and typically contains satirical elements. Virgil's poem has a complicated intertextual engagement with earlier parodic and Menippean writing on georgic themes, particularly Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and Varro's *De re rustica*. Leah Kronenberg finds that all three of these authors use allegories of agriculture, and particularly of apiculture, to figure the human selfishness that underlies (so they argue) conventional morality and societal organisation.[3] Virgil's allusions to Xenophon and Varro work Menippean satire deep into the generic coding of georgic poetry. Second, a number of important eighteenth-century satires begin with an allusion to the *Georgics* or end up imitating their form. Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* is a satire, for example, written against those 'desirous of being an Opulent and Flourishing People', who are forever 'exclaiming against those Vices and Inconveniences' that are, he argues, really inseparable from public prosperity.[4] The book is a system of essay-notes (twenty of them in 1714, although Mandeville further doubled the book's length before the *Fable* reached its final form in 1724) built up

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around an original mock-georgic poem, *The Grumbling Hive: Or Knaves Turn'd Honest* (published originally in 1705).[5] We have seen already how John Gay in *Trivia* (1716) and Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) absorbed features from the *Georgics* into their satire. In *Trivia* Gay extended the urban pastoral of Swift's earlier 'Description of a City Shower' (1710), itself a parodic imitation of the description of a storm that closes Virgil's first *Georgic*. These works established idea-shaping associations between the georgic genre and Scriblerian satire. Third, there are examples of British didactic poets writing in the middle decades of the eighteenth century who continued to deploy satirical modes in formal georgic verse. Christopher Smart's 'The Hop Garden: A Georgic' (1752) is full of biting reflections on a corrupt and luxurious age.[6] The most anguished hesitation between satirical, georgic and devotional modes is performed by William Cowper in *The Task* (1785), although the final rejection of satire in the poem's gloomy second book is decisive.[7] These examples, taken together, indicate a persistent eighteenth-century assumption of generic cross-compatibility between georgic and satire. Georgic's Virgilian inheritance of oblique didactic strategies brings it into the category of mock-technical writing.

Ingenuity, Industry and Experience: Dryden, Addison and Philips

Eighteen years before he made his comments on burlesque, while he was still a student in Oxford, Addison had written a strikingly psychological essay on Virgil's *Georgics.* At around the same time (June 1693), he composed a poem in praise of John Dryden's translation of Ovid, which appeared later that year in the third volume of the Dryden–Tonson miscellanies, *Examen Poeticum*. Addison soon became a fixture in Dryden's London circle at Will's Coffee House and in the neighbouring taverns (where the older poet found it hard to keep up with his protégé's festivities).[8] In 1698 Dryden paid Addison the conspicuous compliment of publishing the latter's essay on Virgil's didactics as the preface to his own translation of the *Georgics*.

Addison's theme in his essay on georgic is the skill with which Virgil lifts the muddier aspects of farming practice up to significance and dignity. The Roman poet 'delivers the meanest of his Precepts with a kind of Grandeur', he observes; 'he breaks the Clods and tosses the Dung about with an air of gracefulness'.[9] The georgics of Virgil and Hesiod excel other ancient didactic poems with more serious philosophical themes, says Addison, because they speak 'wholly to the Imagination'. The ideas of these poems, with their natural and material focus, are addressed directly to our swiftly

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perceiving visual faculties, rather than to our sluggish judgement. While other didactic forms impose on their readers with instruction, georgics delineate. They work by description, instead of by clumsy prescription, and this gives them deeper cognitive impact. That is why the concerns of the *Georgics* are, of all didactic themes, 'the meanest and least improving, but the most pleasing and delightful', according to Addison.[10] And so another cultural hierarchy is flattened out. His paradox has a further implication. Its emphasis on the delightfulness of the *Georgics* recalls a comment made by Seneca: that Virgil could afford to give inaccurate and even impractical advice because his great aim was 'not to teach the farmer, but to please the reader'.[11] Imitating an indirection that he locates at the heart of the *Georgics*, Addison absorbs Seneca's reading and then finds a secondary preceptive purpose behind the main pleasure of the text. He indicates, without making his sense explicit, that Virgil's 'rules of Practice' do have external ends – just not straightforward ones. The *Georgics* are mock didactic because they operate at an angle to their apparent purpose, instructing the reader in something other than what they purport to teach.

Addison's essay on the *Georgics* set a new agenda for the poem, although not every reader followed his line. Eighteenth-century commentators usually join Seneca in assuming that Virgil's didactic shows no real practical intention.[12] In 1740 Jethro Tull, the eighteenth-century prophet of agricultural improvement, was unable to find evidence in the *Georgics* of its author's 'long Experience and diligent Observation' in agriculture. This was the sort of experience that he thought necessary before a farmer can 'deviate from the old beaten Road of *Patrios Cultusque Habitusque Locorum*, by Way of Trial'.[13] Tull follows seventeenth-century English agriculturalists who assumed that Virgil's advice had some real customary value but that it was relevant only to northern Italy, not the British isles.[14] The antiquary Thomas Fuller, for example, reported that the poet Samuel Daniel took up farming unsuccessfully in the 1610s, his efforts hampered by the inappropriately continental influence of Virgil:

> For though he [Daniel] was well vers'd in Virgil, his fellow Husbandman-Poet, yet there is more required to make a rich Farmer, than only to say his Georgicks by heart, and I question whether his Italian will fit our English Husbandry.[15]

Addison sees the point, but he argues further that there is an experimental and practical principle running through the *Georgics* with a more general validity, a method that gets at truth 'indirectly' by connotation, 'without

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giving us a full and open View of it, to let us see just so much as will naturally lead the imagination into all parts that lie concealed'.[16] The true subject of the *Georgics* is not farming technology but technical knowledge itself. This insight of Addison's helped keep British poets returning to the *Georgics* as an intellectual model for the next century.

There are signs in Dryden's influential translation that he understood and adopted his protégé Addison's reading of the *Georgics* as a model for oblique didacticism. This was consistent with the generally collaborative approach Dryden took to his work on the Virgil translations, for which the fourth volume of the *Dryden–Tonson Miscellanies*, titled *The Annual Miscellany for the year 1694*, provides more evidence. It includes Dryden's translation of the third *Georgic*, alongside a translation by Addison of most of the fourth, the Earl of Lauderdale's version of the opening of the first and a commendatory ode by John Dennis.[17] In his full translation of the *Georgics* Dryden makes particularly extensive embellishments to lines where Virgil reflects on natural didactics and vernacular technology, such as the often-tagged 'pater ipse collendi' passage of the first *Georgic*.

> The Sire of Gods and Men, with hard Decrees
> Forbids our Plenty to be bought with Ease:
> And wills that Mortal Men, inur'd to toil,
> Shou'd exercise, with pains, the grudging Soil.
> Himself invented first the shining Share,
> And whetted Humane industry with Care:
> Himself did Handy-Crafts and Arts ordain;
> Nor suffer'd Sloath to rust his active Reign.[18]

These eight elaborate lines expand on three-and-a-half lines of Latin (Christopher Pitt would later compress them all into a terse couplet).[19] Dryden finds in Virgil's 'curis acuens mortalia corda' ('sharpening men's wits with care') the anticipation of an important metaphor for baroque poetics, that of rusty metal (representing English as an originally rough and vernacular language and English poetry as a progressive tradition) whetted away to a sharp and polished edge of technical refinement.[20] He introduces new images of plough-shares and handicrafts, neither present in this section of Virgil's Latin, to work up the argument. Like Addison, Dryden emphasises that something more than just agricultural technology is at stake here. An extending system of technical knowledge, including his own bright art of poetry, is traced to this moment of divine ordination.

Dryden's translation of 'mortalia corda' (men's hearts or wits) as 'humane industry' is especially full of associations. Swift seems to have

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noticed Dryden's formulation. In an important epigram he deploys the same Virgilian tag to illustrate providence's 'purpose to stir up human Industry; without which Life would stagnate, or indeed rather could not subsist at all: *Curis acuens mortalia corda*'.[21] At the end of the sixteenth century the word 'industry' still retained some of its old connection to skilful work, even as its modern connection with diligent production came to the fore.[22] The Jesuit classicist Charles de la Rue, whose Delphin edition of the *Georgics* Dryden followed carefully, uses the word 'industria' to gloss the 'experientia' (or skilfulness) of bees in *Georgic* I, line 4, along with the terms 'ingenium, ars [. . .] ingenita' (genius, innate skill).[23] Dryden returns to de la Rue's word 'industria' in his translation of an important passage on horticultural skill in the second *Georgic*, again introducing a connection with 'genius'. The 'learned Gard'ner' must

> Explore the Nature of each sev'ral Tree;
> And known, improve with artful Industry:
> And let no spot of idle Earth be found,
> But cultivate the Genius of the Ground.[24]

Here Dryden expands on the original once again, developing two-and-a-half lines of Latin into six of English – 'the Genius of the Ground' phrase, for example, is his own. 'Improve with artful Industry' goes off at quite an angle from Virgil's 'mollite colendo' ('taming with cultivation'). There is also a near-pleonasm (if those older usages remain in play) of 'artful Industry', which could mean something like 'artful skillfulness'. Read in relation to the previous line's trees, the verb 'improve' can be read as 'raise to a better quality' (*OED* 6a), but in the context of the next line's 'idle Earth' it shades into a more grounded meaning, 'to enclose and cultivate wasteland' (*OED* 2b). Similarly, 'Genius of the Ground' anglicises the expression 'genius loci' (not itself a Virgilian formula of words), but it seems to correspond to human genius and artistry as well, looking back to the ingenious 'Industry' of two lines before.[25] In each of these cases Dryden collapses the 'artful Industry' of the horticulturalist into the natural affordances of a given place and the natural lives of the things that grow there already. The georgic improvement of human intelligence is understood by Dryden, as by Addison, to be a cultural rather than an instrumental process, an aspect of what Bacon called the 'culture and manurance of Minds in youth'. This idea is coded carefully into the language of Dryden's *Georgics* translation.[26]

The first full-scale imitation of the *Georgics* in English, Philips's *Cyder*, appeared ten years after Dryden's translation and was published by the same

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bookseller, Jacob Tonson the elder, through the same informal agent, Francis Atterbury.[27] Philips studied Addison's georgic essay closely and understood his point about the oblique didactic strategies of Virgil, whose muse

> commodious Precepts gives
> Instructive to the Swains, not wholly bent
> On what is gainful: Sometimes she diverts
> From solid Counsels [. . .][28]

'Commodious' is one of Philips's characteristic Miltonisms. It recalls fallen Adam in book ten of *Paradise Lost* reassuring Eve that God 'will instruct us praying' how to make fire and shelter, 'so as we need not fear | To pass commodiously this life'.[29] But the epithet 'commodious', transferred boldly to 'Precepts', does more work for Philips, who retains both its original, now obsolete, sense (*OED* 1a, 'Advantageous, profitable', which runs ironically against the meaning of the sentence) and its more common sense of 'convenient' or 'useful'. Joseph Moxon, for example, uses 'commodious' to describe the qualities of different hand tools, their apparently courteous compliance with human bodies and purposes.[30] Whether it is Philips's swains or his precepts that are relaxed about profitability is left uncertain by the syntax. Both are, presumably – although this may be because the preceptors have somehow accommodated themselves to the requirements of the instructed, anticipating an unrealised expertise. Philips suggests something similar again when he imitates Virgil's second *Georgic* on the 'artful industry' of the arboriculturist. 'Let sage Experience teach thee all the Arts | Of Grafting, and In-Eyeing', he advises.[31] His compacted poetic language assumes a feedback loop of practice. The personification 'Experience' is named for a quality that belongs to the learning subject, rather than standing external to it. By figurative transference, experience initiates the manual arts of which one expects it to be the product.[32]

One element among these ideas that Dryden touched on with subtle indirection, and which Philips now re-emphasises, is the cognitive component of Virgilian 'labor' – that all-conquering georgic principle by which the husbandman is fated to be conquered in turn.[33] In a strikingly insistent passage Philips links labour to 'Experience', to improvement, to the displacement of 'gainful' ends and also to the special intellectual work of poets:

> Thus All things by Experience are display'd
> And Most improv'd. Then sedulously think
> To meliorate thy Stock; [. . .] lo! thoughtful of Thy Gain,

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> Not of my Own, I all the live-long Day
> Consume in Meditation deep, recluse
> From human Converse, nor, at shut of Eve,
> Enjoy Repose; but oft at Midnight Lamp
> Ply my brain-racking Studies, if by chance
> Thee I may counsel right.[34]

The rhetoric here is strained and invites an ironic reading.[35] Philips certainly works hard to align the husbandman's 'labor improbus' with his own solitary studies as a poet. As the lines immediately before this show, however, it is the experimental and demonstrative 'Experience' of the natural philosopher that he has in mind as a model for his literary labour. Seventeenth-century agricultural writers tend to use 'experience' in the sense of a scientific trial made to ascertain truth. The *OED* cites William Blyth, a member of Samuel Hartlib's circle, complaining about improving farmers who 'tell you a story of I know not what experiences they have made, when alas they never knew that an Experiment must hold in all its parts'.[36] In Philips's poetry the experience of the orchard worker and the experiment of the agronomist are not distinguished so carefully. In fact, the haptic skill of the mechanic and the experimental knowledge of the scientist, usually opposed to one another, seem to concatenate and overlap like the low topics and elevated expressions of mock-heroics and the mock-arts. This is a tendency that we have seen before in the comments that Addison and Dryden make about the transmission of knowledge in georgic and manual arts. All three writers, Philips included, deploy modernistic keywords with older mechanical resonances – improvement, industry, experience – and further correspondences with the Virgilian context. Their complicated usage signals an ironic turn in this technical writing. Georgic appears as a form aligned with the Augustan mock-art.

'With various seeds of Art deep in the Mind'

At the end of his brief life of James Thomson, Samuel Johnson comments on the many revisions to successive editions of *The Seasons* that tied up the poet's printers between 1730 and 1744. 'They are, I think, improved in general', Johnson decides; 'yet I know not whether they have not lost part of what Temple calls their *race*; a word which, applied to wines, in its primitive sense, means the flavour of the soil.'[37] The 'race' metaphor is a telling one, given that *The Seasons* is famous for its descriptions of cultivated landscapes and for its georgic blend of agricultural detail with pastoral idealism. A certain earthiness of expression might be good in such

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poems. And yet that is not quite what Johnson means by 'flavour of the soil'. 'Race' refers to a wine's spirit. In fruit it is the rough and sappy 'quickness' that Dryden contrasted, in a similar figure, to the 'dull sweets of rhyme'.[38] In Addison's 1694 translation of the fourth *Georgic*, published by Dryden in the fourth volume of his *Miscellanies*, honey is blended with young wine to 'Correct the harshness of the racy juice'.[39] Sir William Temple had written in 1690 that the *Epistles of Phalaris* have 'more Race, more Spirit, more Force of Wit and Genius' than what he understood (wrongly, as Richard Bentley demonstrated) to be later classical texts.

It is easy to guess why Johnson felt *The Seasons* lost some of its spirit over successive revisions and expansions. Thomson extended the final editions of *The Seasons* with new compliments to his patrons on the Patriot opposition – a panegyric to Viscount Cobham and his grounds at Stowe, an expanded gallery of Whig worthies, addresses to James Hammond and Lord Chesterfield. Evidently Johnson found these hard to digest, poetically and politically.[40] Sermons on public virtue began to crowd more sublime excursions of social love, solitary devotion and rhapsody. But Johnson's criticisms are not entirely fair. There are revised passages in which the original racy spirit of *The Seasons* persisted, not least in the dialogue with Virgil's *Georgics* that Thomson extended in successive editions.

Of all the eighteenth-century poems that imitate and adapt Virgil's agricultural poem, *The Seasons* goes furthest into the georgic discussions of practical and environmental knowledge touched on by Dryden and Philips. Thomson acknowledges the influence of *Cyder* in 'Autumn', and, when he does so, raciness happens to be the quality that he singles out both in the poem and in its '*Native* Theme', arboriculture. He finds the diversity of British apple and pear varieties particularly absorbing: 'A various Sweetness swells the gentle Race' of pears, 'in ever-changing Composition mixt'; a similarly 'various Spirit, fresh, delicious, keen, | Dwells in [the] gelid Pores' of British apples.[41] Their free-flowing, 'piercing' juices correspond with the racy 'Rhyme-unfetter'd Verse' of Philips, for whom Thomson rehearses some sharp epithets – 'careless Bard' in MS, 'facetious bard' in 1730 – before settling on '*Pomona*'s Bard' in revisions of 1744.[42] The fruits Thomson finds scattered through 'the Maze | Of Autumn, unconfin'd' share something of the sappy, loosened spirit he had attributed at the opening of *The Seasons* to earliest spring. In a passage where many Virgilian borrowings set the poem's larger georgic agenda, a farmer seizes his plough:

> Forth fly the tepid Airs; and unconfin'd,
> Unbinding Earth, the moving Softness strays [. . .]

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> Meanwhile, incumbent o'er the shining Share,
> The Master leans, removes th' obstructing Clay,
> Winds the whole Work, and sidelong lays the Glebe.
> White, thro' the neighbouring Fields the Sower stalks,
> With measur'd Step; and, liberal, throws the Grain
> Into the faithful Bosom of the Ground.
> The Harrow follows harsh, and shuts the Scene.[43]

The images of the polished, angled share and the corresponding slant of the husbandman's body are borrowed from Virgil, as is the sidelong fold of the glebe when he turns the plough crosswise through his first set of furrows.[44] Everything is at an angle to everything else, transecting obliquely, turning, folding and passing. Like satire, georgic figures itself as sharp and off-set. Thomson is especially fond of its oblique movements in 'Spring', repeating them in the action of the angler's fly leading its fishy prey 'across the stream', or in the rapid impression of a landscape, 'gliding swift | Athwart Imagination's vivid Eye'.[45] He traces it again with georgic's emblematic insect, the industrious bee – 'Around, athwart, | Thro' the soft Air, the busy Nations fly' – as the poet's own digressive attention zig-zags across a garden: 'Snatch'd thro' the verdant Maze, the hurried Eye | Distracted wanders.' In the modern 'iron Times' that succeeded Saturn's golden age human minds have become distempered, according to Hesiodic myth – and 'all | Is off the Poise within' for Thomson too. But with that painful loss of harmony and balance has come everything that georgic celebrates, everything that is won from entropic nature by the oblique strategies and ingenious labour of humans.

In the last-composed and most public-minded of the four *Seasons*, 'Autumn', Thomson brings this ambiguity about labour and loss into focus, and he does so by half-personifying the Drydenian figure of 'humane Industry'. 'Autumn' opens with the 'gayly-checker'd Heart-expanding View' of a productive landscape just at harvest time. It is a passage that Thomson intended originally for the conclusion of 'Summer'.[46] The poet's eye shoots around, 'unbounded' – an often-used word in *The Seasons*, here recalling the 'unconfin'd' beginnings of spring. The MS version reads 'convolv'd', a Miltonism that suggests twisting and folding. Thomson's original choice is perhaps too strong a word, but it does anticipate some of the tension in the apostrophe to Industry that follows:

> These are thy Blessings, Industry! rough Power!
> Whom Labour still attends, and Sweat, and Pain;
> Yet the kind Source of every gentle Art,
> And all the soft Civility of Life:

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Raiser of Human Kind! by Nature cast,
Naked, and helpless, out amid the Woods,
And Wilds, to rude inclement Elements;
With various Seeds of Art deep in the Mind
Implanted, and profusely pour'd around
Materials infinite; but idle all [. . .]
till INDUSTRY approach'd,
And rous'd him from his miserable Sloth:
His Faculties unfolded; pointed out,
Where lavish Nature the directing Hand
Of Art demanded.[47]

'Rough Industry' has been glimpsed already in 'Summer', among Thomson's personified virtues of Britain. Where Dryden's industry had been 'artful' and 'humane', Thomson's is governed by wilder, half-externalised spirit. His phrase 'rough power' may owe a debt to Richard Maitland, who describes the minor gods of Hades as 'rough powers' in his translation of *Georgics* IV, published by Dryden in *Sylvæ: or, the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies* (1685).[48] There is something of the fallen archangel about Thomson's Industry as well, with 'Labour [. . .] Sweat, and Pains' its georgic or Cyclopaean attendants. When Ephraim Chambers defines 'Art' in his *Cyclopædia*, published soon after *Summer* in 1728, he names 'Industry' as the power that diverts nature (always regular in its self-disposition, as astronomy shows) off course 'to serve the several Purposes of Mankind. This last is what we call *Art*' – a term also used, he adds, 'for Science and Knowledge reduced to Practice'.[49] Thomson has a similar scheme, although his Industry is more of an active force than Chambers's. It has the energy, lacked by 'gentle Art', to unfold and raise in natural mankind whatever 'exalts, embellishes and renders Life | Delightful'.[50] On the scale of separation between human society and the natural world, 'Industry' is a hybridised human principle, despite its rough, disruptive power. It belongs partly to the wildness of primitive humanity and partly to the 'soft Civility' of modern life. A few years earlier in Alexander Pope's *Windsor-Forest* (1713), by contrast, 'Rich Industry' stood for Stuart peace and plenty and seemed thoroughly domesticated.[51]

Thomson handles the contrast between his constructions of 'Industry' and 'Art' in this section with purpose. You would expect 'Art' to belong more to humanity than to nature. It is upon 'Industry' that Thomson's *Autumn* confers personhood, however, while 'Art' remains confined, unexpectedly, to the sphere of natural metaphor. The 'Seeds of Art' stay unhybridised and separate – an alien presence lodged deeply within the

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minds of humans and yet not part of them. The relationship between landscape and civilisation described in *The Seasons* has been called 'dialectical', a push and pull between resistance and control, but in this passage at least there is something more like an entanglement or interpenetration of nature and art.[52] Thomson's seed metaphor owes as much to the versions by Dryden and Philips of Virgil's 'pater ipse colendi' passage in the first *Georgic* as it does to the Latin original. Dryden had figured the 'useful Arts' implied by natural materials as sparks latent in flint, the 'lurking Seeds of their Cælestial Fire' (the seed image is not there in Virgil's Latin). Philips, meanwhile, recruits the microscopist to show tiny trees 'in narrow Seeds describ'd'. This is his primary illustration of how natural things may be 'display'd' and 'improv'd' by 'sage Experience'.[53] The distinctively georgic idea here is that different natural materials might contain a sort of abstract of certain mechanical arts latently in their physical form. A different 'seed of art' is revealed. Dryden had underscored Virgil's essay on this idea in the second *Georgic* with a rare triplet rhyme:

> Yet Heav'n their various Plants for use designs:
> For Houses Cedars, and for Shipping Pines:
> Cypress provides for Spokes, and Wheels of Wains:
> And all for Keels of Ships, that scour the watry Plains [. . .]
> Nor Box, nor Limes, without their use are made,
> Smooth-grain'd, and proper for the Turner's Trade:
> Which curious Hands may kerve, and Steel with Ease invade.[54]

The smooth and emphatic sweep of Dryden's alexandrine mimics the carpenter's fluid shaping gestures. It is the grain and texture of the different woods that actively show their proper use, however, not the determinations of human skill. This same passage from the second *Georgic* is quoted at length by the natural theologian William Derham, whose *Physico-Theology* (1713) Thomson read closely and followed in accommodating 'physico-theological inference', as Philip Connell points out, 'to a more sensuous form of religio-poetic intuition'.[55] The passage from the *Georgics* comes up in Derham's comments on the 'architectonick' or shelter-building facility implanted by God in both animals and humans:

> And a wise Provision this is, inasmuch as it is an excellent Exercise of the Wit, the Ingenuity, the Industry and Care of Man. But since Ingenuity without Materials would be fruitless, the Materials therefore which the Creator hath provided the World with for this very service of Building, deserves our notice.[56]

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Derham gives a Virgilian precedent for the sudden turn of Thomson's attention from the 'Seeds of Art' to the 'Materials infinite [. . .] profusely pour'd around' in the passage above. Once again, what Thomson adds to earlier English georgic investigations of the 'Seeds of Art' is his sense of industry as an energy that is 'convolv'd' and 'rough' enough to overcome the entropy of nature's 'lethargic Powers' – of which an important example for Virgil is a farmer's degenerating stock of seed.[57] Later in 'Winter' Thomson will describe how Peter the Great 'gather'd the Seeds of Trade, of useful Arts' during his heroic European fact-finding tour.[58] *The Seasons* have always been vulnerable to criticism for the Whiggish boosterism of their progress narratives. They tend to emphasise all the positive elements from Virgil's and Lucretius's accounts of the rise of the arts, while glossing over the themes of struggle and exhaustion that give moral texture to those ancient poems. But in *The Seasons* there is evidence too that Thomson responded to the darker shades of his classical models and thought carefully about how they might add depth to his essentially optimistic vision.

The confidence with which Thomson develops his conceptual scheme in the 'rough Industry' passage contrasts with Pope's nearly contemporary and much less convincing handling of similar materials in Epistle III of *An Essay on Man* (1733–1734). Like Thomson, Pope is concerned with tracing how human arts emerge from natural sources, a question that he subsumes within a larger cognitive opposition between instinct and reason. If Thomson places less emphasis than Lucretius and Virgil did on the tendency of that process to corruption and entropy, in Pope those darker tendencies are reduced still further:

> See [humanity] from Nature rising slow to Art!
> To copy Instinct then was Reason's part;
> Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake —
> "Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take:
> "Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
> "Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;
> "Thy arts of building from the bee receive;
> "Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave; [. . .]
> "Here too all forms of social union find,
> "And hence let Reason, late, instruct Mankind: [. . .]
> "Learn each small people's genius, policies,
> "The ant's republic, and the realm of bees;
> "How those in common all their wealth bestow,
> "And anarchy without confusion know."[59]

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Pope works with the same sources as Thomson in this passage. His references to the commonwealth of bees allude to observations made by Virgil in the fourth *Georgic*, which are drawn on in 'Autumn' as well.[60] Like Thomson, Pope responds to arguments from design elaborated by Derham, who had himself turned to Virgil's lines on the bees' portion of divine intelligence ('partem divinae mentis') at the climax of his chapter on the evidence of God in the works of animals.[61] But it is striking how rigidly denotative Pope's ideas about the relationship between instinct and reason are in comparison with those of Derham and Thomson. Pope's 'Reason' instructs mankind to take instruction from the animals. It is at once dominant over the sphere of instinct and dependent on it. For Derham, by contrast, 'Reason' is a plural, connotative force that allows humans to 'to vary their Methods' in a way that animals cannot.[62] For Thomson, without reason (or its analogue 'Philosophy') there can be no 'various Skill | To turn the Furrow, or to guide the Tool | Mechanic'.[63] Pope is unable to find an equivalent principle to Thomson's 'rough Industry' or an explanation for the oblique and disruptive energies required to wrestle art out of the nature's saturnine orbit.

Robert Dodsley and Mid-century Georgic

Dryden, Addison, Philips and Thomson are four writers with contrasting cultural and ideological identities: Jacobite, Court Whig, Harleyite Tory and Patriot oppositionist respectively.[64] They found in Virgil's *Georgics* a common poetic language, however, and a shared source of ideas about personal knowledge and its public applications. Each responded to the openness of the georgic frame for these ideas and to its capacity for comprehending opposable ways of knowing the world: rational and imaginative, theoretical and experiential, sublime and immediately sensual. Thomson is read often as a poet of abstraction and disinterest, whose imaginative instinct is to put distance between the perceiving subject and the natural scene.[65] But *The Seasons* is consistent in its resolution of general descriptions into more local perceptions that are 'delicate', 'obvious', intimate. The poem takes pains to demonstrate how they 'touch the Mind | To Nature tun'd, with a light-flying Hand, | Invisible'.[66] Thomson's georgic muse deploys mechanical metaphors – the 'diffusive' painting of fancy, the 'light-flying Hand' of nature – to evoke cognitive movements that are so fugitive they seem almost to shade into passivity. The imaginative scale here is extensive, but it is grounded carefully in a personal knowledge that extends into the operating hand. Another

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example is Thomson's apostrophe to Nature at the end of *Autumn*, where a prayer to 'Inrich me with the Knowledge of thy Works' looks at once to the 'blue Immense', to the 'disclosing Deep' and finally to the perceiving mind itself, 'The vary'd Scene of quick-compounded Thought'. The prayer is a careful imitation of Virgil's invocation of the muses in *Georgics* II, lines 475–486, which Thomson had translated a few years earlier for the prose introduction to *Winter* (1726). The *Georgics* gave Thomson and his immediate predecessors a model for bringing philosophical reflection home to the rapid cognitive intuitions of practical life in the natural world.

When a new flush of English georgic poems appeared during the 1750s and early 1760s, their authors acknowledged that they were working in this track established by Dryden, Philips and Thomson. First was a pair of Virgilian imitations with a conventional agricultural focus: Smart's 'The Hop-garden: A Georgic' (1752) and Robert Dodsley's 'Agriculture' (1753). The painter and farmer John Dyer, an old friend of Thomson, published his major georgic poem *The Fleece* in 1757; the physician James Grainger issued his Caribbean georgic *The Sugar-Cane* in 1764; and finally came the Warwickshire clergyman Richard Jago's topographic georgic *Edge-Hill* in 1767.[67] These three later poems explored links between primary agriculture, secondary processing and manufacture, and international commerce. As a group, the mid-century georgics have attracted a great deal of critical attention, mainly because they make such a coherent set poetically and ideologically, and because they fit so promisingly into larger historical narratives about agricultural and industrial revolution.[68] No other group of writers took with such willingness to the work of securing the moral and aesthetic connections between farming, industry and empire.[69] This new generation of georgic writers was more optimistic again than Thomson or Philips had been about the capacity of human labour to overcome nature's tendency to entropy.[70] Indeed, their appearance 'marks the point at which the morality attached to frugality and self-limitation is exchanged for the morality of improvement', as Clare Bucknell observes, 'and the georgic poet rejects the genre's traditional investment in modest ambition and difficult circumstances'.[71] The key figure in this mid-century georgic moment was one of its poets, the indefatigably ambitious and self-improving bookseller Robert Dodsley. Besides writing 'Agriculture', Dodsley was behind the financing or publication of every major example of georgic poetry that appeared in Britain between 1735 and 1767. The Dodsley name appears on the title pages of Dyer's *Fleece*, Grainger's *Sugar-Cane* and Jago's *Edge-Hill*. Smart's *Poems*

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on Several Occasions, in which 'The Hop-garden' first appeared, was not published by Dodsley, despite Smart's intermittent efforts to appear under Dodsley's imprint.[72] We now know, however, from the evidence of a recently discovered letter, that Dodsley collected the subscriptions by which that volume was financed, acting in effect as its surrogate publisher.[73]

Dodsley's backing of these rural–agricultural poets is especially significant in the light of his own efforts as a writer of georgic. In 1753 he issued the first book of a three-part project titled *Public Virtue: A Poem*. Dodsley's name appeared on the title page as both author and bookseller. This first volume, the only one of the three completed, was the poem 'Agriculture'. It is, as Juan Pellicer has pointed out, 'the only formal georgic of this century to follow Virgil in describing an emphatically generic farmer's round'.[74] As a publisher Dodsley financed, alongside the formal georgics of Dyer, Jago, Grainger and company, a range of closely related titles. The Dodsleys published two separate translations of Virgil's *Georgics* and distributed a third between 1750 and 1767.[75] The grandest of these was in Joseph Warton's parallel text edition of Virgil's *Works*, which appeared in the same year as 'Agriculture', 1753, and contained the editor's learned essay on didactic poetry, the first critical work to discuss poems like Philips's *Cyder*, Mark Akenside's *Pleasures* and Thomson's *Seasons* as a group. John Baskerville's typographically innovative Latin Virgil appeared in 1757, again with Dodsley acting as London agent and distributor.[76] His edition of *The Works of Michael Drayton* (1748) included the text of *Poly-Olbion*, the first English chorographical georgic. At the same time Dodsley was publishing a steady stream of longish poems on the georgic-adjacent themes of trade, topography and empire.[77]

Dodsley had no obvious commercial motive for his persistence with these georgic poems. It is sometimes assumed that mid-century georgics were among the most popular and influential publications of the age.[78] This is probably due to their connection with Thomson's *Seasons*, which sold so reliably every year that it was the subject, twenty-six years after the death of its author, of the century's most hard-fought copyright dispute.[79] But the book-trade evidence suggests that Dodsley's mid-century georgics were not widely appreciated. None had initial sales strong enough to justify a second monographic edition.[80] It is clear from Dodsley's correspondence that the commercial failure of his poem 'Agriculture' was a disappointment and an embarrassment.[81] Slow sales for Dyer's *Fleece* are indicated by the initial quarto edition's appearance in advertisements of Dodsley stock eighteen months after its publication.[82]

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These disappointments cannot be ascribed straightforwardly to a public distaste for didactic. John Armstrong's famously frank medical poems, *The Oeconomy of Love* (1736) and *The Art of Preserving Health* (1744), both of which use georgic themes and conventions, enjoyed sustained sales during this period.[83] Dodsley's own *Oeconomy of Human Life* (1750), which owed a poetic debt to Armstrong, went through more than 200 editions and impressions during the century. Despite these successes, Dodsley's sustained commitment to publishing long-form georgic poems had no clear commercial rationale. The format was seen as prohibitively costly even by Dodsley's authors. In a 1743 letter from London to Jago, William Shenstone mentions 'a poem of this season, called "The Pleasures of Imagination," worth your reading; but it is an expensive quarto; if it comes out in a less size, I will bring it home with me'.[84] Dodsley persisted with these slow-moving books either as loss leaders or, more likely, because he had a personal commitment to the georgic genre and to the themes that went with it. He simply wanted to present them, apparently, as handsomely as possible.

Dodsley, Georgic and the Society of Arts

Dodsley's likely motive for investing so much in mid-century georgic involves a triangulation of real cultural enthusiasms, commercial principles and specific socio-institutional allegiances. His work as a georgic poet shows that he was committed creatively to didactic verse on rural themes. In terms of commercial policy, he published and supported writers with whom he shared a patriotic, manufacture-focused, physiocratic agenda in economic policy – even when to do so involved him in financial risk. In terms of institutional allegiance, he involved himself deeply, as we will see, in an organisation that was committed to the same agenda. This triangle of artistic enthusiasm, economic principle and associational allegiance corresponds with themes found in all the georgic poems that Dodsley published. Dodsley's main channel for voluntary activity in civil society during the last decade of his life was his fellowship of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Commerce and Manufacture (now the Royal Society of Arts). Dodsley's work with the society is important because it provides us with otherwise elusive evidence of his socio-political orientations, his interest in commercial and agricultural economics and their correspondence with the selections he made as a publisher.

The Society of Arts was founded in March 1754, five or so months after Dodsley published *Public Virtue*.[85] The rapid growth of the organisation

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was in great part due to the energies of three founding fellows. The first was William Shipley, the drawing master who wrote the original proposals for the organisation. The second was Stephen Hales, the natural philosopher and philanthropist, Pope's 'Plain Parson Hale'.[86] The third was Henry Baker, the microscopist and innovative teacher of deaf people. There was a close connection between Baker and Dodsley, who published his popular treatise *The Microscope Made Easy* in 1742. Much earlier, in 1713, Baker had been apprenticed to the Pall Mall bookseller John Parker, and it was Parker's business that Dodsley bought out in 1735, re-establishing it under the sign of Tully's Head.[87] The foundation of The Society of Arts was Shipley's idea, but it was Baker's connections at several learned societies and his administrative expertise as drafter of official documents and plans that ensured its flourishing.[88]

The documents were usually printed, and it is likely to have been Baker who put this lucrative jobbing work in Dodsley's way. Dodsley was elected fellow of the Society of Arts in July 1755. When on 6 April 1757 he was appointed 'Printer and Stationer to this Society', its secretary George Box acknowledged that Dodsley 'has long taken Care of correctly printing whatever has been order'd for the press'.[89] Dodsley seems to have taken other opportunities to pursue commercial interests through the society. He tried unsuccessfully in March 1756 to persuade Viscount Folkestone, the society's president, to adopt a 'Scheme for the Encouragement of Letters', which would have been to one side of the new society's declared purpose and possibly too much like the aim of an earlier failed 'Society for the Encouragement of Learning', with which Thomson had been involved.[90] A few weeks later, on 7 April 1756, Baker drafted an unpublished memorandum discussing the innovative presswork of Dodsley's business partner Baskerville and calling for two new premiums to be awarded for fine printing as an encouragement to the trade.[91] This was a proposal that Dodsley would have been reluctant to make on his own account, and it seems likely that Baker acted on his behalf, or at least in his interest. In June 1757 Dodsley wrote anonymously and again unsuccessfully to Box. This time he proposed a Swiftian project 'to promote the knowledge of *own* language' – an idea that resembles similar proposals being made around this time by the elocutionist Thomas Sheridan, another author published by Dodsley.[92]

Several of the most important treatises on political economy, trade and manufacture that Dodsley published in the 1750s connected with the Society of Arts. William Bailey's *Treatise of the Poor in Workhouses* (which Dodsley co-published in 1758 – it is much more than a treatise on

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workhouses and contains important investigations of linen manufacture) is based on a scheme of workhouse certification to be administered by the Society of Arts, the project funded by a premium awarded to Bailey in 1756.[93] The georgic proposals made the following year by Dyer in book III of *The Fleece* to raise 'Houses of labor, seats of kind constraint' align closely with those of Bailey.[94] Adam Anderson's influential *Historical Deduction of the Origin of Commerce* (published by James Dodsley in two volumes, 1764) is dedicated not to a monarch or patron but to the Society of Arts. James Burgh's *Crito* (published by James Dodsley in two volumes, 1766–1767) reproaches the government for being outdone entirely by the Society of Arts in the provision of emoluments for mechanical inventions.[95] There was a network of connections between Robert Dodsley's official role at the Society of Arts, his long association with its co-founder Baker and several of the writers on political economy whose writings he and his brother published.

How does the involvement of Robert (and later James) Dodsley with the Society of Arts help us understand the mid-century georgics and their place in the growing knowledge economy of the early British enlightenment? Both the organisation and the literary genre were manifestations of a new attentiveness towards the interrelations between various proto-industrial mechanical processes, from domestic-scale farming and artisan production to factory-scale manufacture, which observers (the georgic poets among them) understood to be developing in some way through mutual interaction.[96] The Society of Arts had set out to become the nation's leading repository of 'operative knowledge' – that is, for expertise in mechanics, agronomy and handicraft. As early as 1751 Shipley proposed that the business of the society should be the raising of a fund

> by subscription for the distribution of some suitable premium or honorary gratification for any and every work of distinguished ingenuity. That whoever shall make the most considerable progress in any branch of beneficial knowledge, or exhibit the most complete performance in any species of mechanic skill [. . .] may receive a reward suitable to the merit of his services.[97]

Shipley's identification of ingenuity and information with haptic skill – that is, with the manual facility of tradespeople – illustrates a particular interest in the passive, tacit dimensions of the knowledge he hoped to encourage. This was a patriotic undertaking, and the founding fellows of the Society for Arts linked their projects for developing and disseminating useful knowledge to the especially favourable geographical circumstances unique to Great Britain: to its mines, woods and sheepwalks. Shipley

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wanted 'to render Great Britain the school of instruction, as it is already the centre of traffic to the greatest part of the known world'.[98]

Dodsley published his friends' georgics and joined the fledgling Society of Arts at a point when many of the commercial, associational and intellectual structures that we characterise retrospectively as 'enlightened' were already in place. So a little before the 'useful knowledge' of practical, empirical people had begun fruitfully to converge with the experimental, analytic knowledge of natural philosophers, a process which would accelerate during the second half of the century.[99] Eighteenth-century people, as Joel Mokyr points out, 'spent an enormous amount of intellectual energy on describing what they could not understand'.[100] Shipley's original proposal for the society had imagined it helping to 'embolden enterprise, to enlarge science, to refine art, to improve our manufactures, and extend our commerce', and in his earliest plans he mentioned painting and poetry among the arts it should support.[101] In both the mid-century georgic poets and in the early Society of Arts we find a pursuit of a modernising and progressive agenda that is not yet exclusively instrumental or analytical but remains open to the hybrid exploration of natural, social and human things. The question remains whether an understanding of the socio-technical agenda of the Society of Arts can reveal corresponding priorities in the work of the mid-century georgic poets. To what extent did the georgic genre encode ideological aims for the transmission of practical or technical information to which these poets were alert and on which they were able to draw as intellectual and artistic resources?

Making Experience Take Thought: Dyer, Grainger and Jago

To answer this question we need to start with the qualities that were thought essential to georgic by eighteenth-century poets. A didactic mode and agricultural themes were givens. But commentators agreed also that a certain obliqueness was characteristic of the genre, a distinctive misalignment of its external ends and its narrative tendencies. The knowledge that georgic seeks to inculcate is not technical as such, and it cannot be denoted in any straightforward way. As we have seen, in book one of *Cyder* Philips notices how Virgil's muse gives advice 'not wholly bent | On what is gainful: Sometimes she diverts | From solid Counsels'.[102] This diversionary tendency was much dwelt upon by Joseph Warton in his 1753 essay on didactic poetry. Warton reflected on the part played by sentiment in so many Virgilian digressions and the opportunities that this afforded the poet for amplification and reiteration. After all, 'The understanding feels

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no pleasure in being instructed twice in the same thing; but the heart is capable of feeling the same emotion twice, with great pleasure.'[103] The psychology behind these oblique strategies had been sketched half a century earlier by Addison in his 1697 essay on the Georgics, anticipating a theme in his *Spectator* papers on the pleasures of imagination. '[Virgil] loves to suggest a Truth indirectly', Addison wrote, 'and without giving us a full and open view of it: To let us see just so much as will naturally lead the Imagination into all parts that lie conceal'd.'[104] Addison's insight is that they are still more relevant to the mundane representations of georgic, where we 'find our Imaginations more affected by his [Virgil's] Descriptions, than they wou'd have been by the very sight of what he describes'.[105] Although georgic is the most four-square and down-to-earth of genres, early commentators noticed in it a characteristically fictive swerve. The swerve was understood to be rhetorical, but it corresponded also with a real principle in the making of the material universe – with a certain natural principle of generative plurality. There was a connection here (latent in the early-modern commentary on the *Georgics*, though brought up by eighteenth-century commentators usually to deny it) with the swerve or 'declination of atoms' described in Epicurean physics and proposed by Lucretius as the constitutive core of the material universe. In his critique of Lucretius Bentley described those digressive atoms as 'Almighty Tools that do everything for themselves without the help of a Workman' – that is, without the direction of a divine creator.[106] Human workmen, of course, had limited powers to use their earthly tools in shaping the world around them – of working with the atomic swerve. It was assumed that Virgil followed Lucretius' physics on these points.[107] Virgilian georgic was understood both to describe and to represent in its poetic form the plastic powers of human workers – of makers, cultivators and operators. The fictive swerves of georgic discourse both imitate a basic natural principle and embody the necessary pattern of human work that responds to it.

Eighteenth-century British commentators define georgic in terms of the access it promises to an extra dimension of knowledge beyond the poem's immediate instrumental purposes as agricultural didactic. What Virgil's didactic seeks to imitate is the experience of 'knowing how'. It simulates what it feels like to reflect on our experiences and, through reflection, to make them our own. Virgil says as much himself in the famous passage of the first *Georgic* where Jove condemns iron-age man to the life of 'labor':

> That studious Need might useful Arts explore;
> From furrow'd Fields to reap the foodful Store:

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> And force the Veins of clashing Flints t'expire
> The lurking Seeds of their Cælestial Fire.[108]

The Loeb translator, H. Rushton Fairclough, puts more stress here than Dryden does on the word 'meditando': 'So that experience, from taking thought, might little by little forge [beat out – 'extunderet'] all manner of skills.'[109] The normative assumption with which Virgil works is that 'usus' ('experience' or practice) is a cognitive category quite distinct from conscious reflection ('meditando'). By making experience take thought in his *Georgics*, Virgil is conscious of creating a hybrid way of knowing.

Of the mid-century English georgic poets, Dyer is the most responsive to Virgil's thinking here (and more so than Dryden). In book one of *The Fleece* he carefully unpacks that word 'paulatim' (little by little) while describing the diversity of the sheep-farmer's arts:

> Through slow experience, by a patient breast,
> The whole long lesson gradual is attain'd,
> By precept after precept, oft receiv'd
> With deep attention.[110]

Virgil's image (discussed already in the context of Dryden's translation) of the 'ignem' (sparks) that lie hidden, abstruse within veins of flint – an image with Lucretian precedents – flashes up again in book two, when Dyer describes the conversation of skilled workers at a rustic meal:

> Divulging each to other knowledge rare,
> Sparks, from experience, that sometimes arise;
> Till night weighs down the sense.[111]

Dyer is consistent with Virgil in his ascription of a certain cognitive irregularity to the knowledge with which his *Georgics* deal. Experience is sluggish and slow but always capable of coruscation, of ignition into sparks of creativity. Later in book two, when Dyer describes Lewis Paul's 1738 spinning machine, he attributes it to a 'patient art | That on experience works, from hour to hour, | Sagacious'.[112] With distinguishing care Dyer keeps separate the three mental strands of denotable art, immediate cognition and slow experience.

Of these three it is 'experience' that matters most to the English georgic tradition, as we have seen already in the cases of Dryden and Thomson. In the first sentence of his poem Virgil identifies 'experientia' with the skilful bees to whom the fourth *Georgic* is dedicated and for whom his eighteenth-century imitators struggled so hard to find an equivalent (there is no fourth book to Dodsley's 'Agriculture'). One passage from the fourth

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Georgic that did resonate was the extended simile of bees likened to the Cyclopes who work in Vulcan's forges under Mount Aetna. 'Strongly they strike', says Dryden, 'huge Flakes of Flames expire, | With Tongs they turn the Steel, and vex it in the Fire.'[113] Cyclopean technology has not been beaten out by the action of thought upon experience, however. The point of Virgil's simile is that both the bees and the Cyclopes go about their work skilfully but unreflectively. Their complicated division of labour does much of their thinking for them, and each worker is confined to their task by instinct. As Michael Putnam comments, 'They have their psychological, and to a certain extent literal, enclosure [. . .] neither could be termed thoughtful.'[114] Dyer touches on this theme in book IV of *The Fleece* when he describes the blind contribution of individual traders to the networks formed by international commerce, 'though all, unconscious of the union, act'.[115] Grainger and Jago set about the passage more directly, both declining to follow Virgil's (or Dyer's) point about unconscious labour. They feel compelled to put a foreman or technical supervisor in the frame. Grainger compares the skilful work of plantation slaves as they refine and crystalise the raw sugar-cane to the labours of the Cyclopes as they make the shield of Achilles:

> With bellows, some reviv'd the seeds of fire;
> Some, gold, and brass, and steel, together fus'd
> In the vast furnace; while a chosen few,
> In equal measures lifting their bare arms,
> Inform the mass [. . .] their sire beholds,
> Amaz'd, the wonders of his fusile art.[116]

Rather than introducing a Vulcan-figure (or an elite 'chosen few' of skilled workers) to lead his Cyclopes, Jago literalises the whole Virgilian passage. He describes an actual Black Country foundry. It is presided over by a foreman, who takes charge of the forge's tongs and throws himself into the middle of the whole process:

> Now, Cyclopean chief!
> Quick on the anvil lay the burning bar,
> And with thy lusty fellows, on its sides
> Impress the weighty stroke. See, how they strain
> The swelling nerve, and lift the sinewy arm
> In measur'd time; while with their clatt'ring blows [. . .]
> The tortur'd metal spreads a radiant show'r.[117]

In their different ways, Dyer, Grainger and Jago all socialise a process of labour that in Virgil is confined and automised. There is hierarchy in these

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social arrangements, of course, and in Grainger's case there is forced labour and enslavement, but there is also a new connection between the reflective direction of the Cyclopean chief and the industrial experience of his workers. The 'fusile art' evoked by Grainger could stand as an emblem of that crucial combination. What in the Virgilian original was a defining division between intelligent direction and unreflective labour has become a hybridised process.

Virgil's Daedalean bees and metal-vexing Cyclopes both represent experience abstracted, with all traces of personal knowledge and creative ingenuity burned out of it. As such their skills are the opposite side of the coin to the enlightened production activity that the Society of Arts and the mid-century georgic poets both appeared to be encouraging. So it is worth looking again, by way of contrast and conclusion, at the positive corollaries of the practical knowledge that georgic claims to embody. Can we now say exactly what kind of knowledge these mid-eighteenth-century didactics were designed to communicate? Who did they imagine their students to be?

Johnson said that Dodsley was his patron, and it is evident that Dodsley patronised his fellow georgic poets as well by seeing their works to the press. His poem 'Agriculture' was written with the sincere intention of bringing such educated readers as could afford his lavish quartos to devote their minds to practical agriculture. 'Turn to the arts', he urged, 'the useful pleasing arts | Of cultivation:

> Leave not to ignorance, and low-bred hinds,
> That noblest science, which in ancient time
> The minds of sages and of kings employ'd.[118]

It is a little ungenerous to point out that Dodsley lacked the finesse to turn the Patriot commonplaces about Cincinnatus and his plough into a plausible state programme, even to armchair agriculturalists. On the other hand, he did have his friend Dyer to articulate with real enthusiasm what that programme might involve. Here is Dyer's restatement of Dodsley's case in book III of *The Fleece*:

> man is born to care;
> Fashion'd, improv'd, by labor. This of old,
> Wise states observing, gave that happy law,
> Which doom'd the rich and needy, every rank,
> To manual occupation; and oft call'd
> Their chieftains from the spade, or furrowing plough [. . .]
> Hence strength of arm, and clear judicious thought.[119]

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These lines reiterate Virgil's sense of 'labor improbus' as not only intrinsic to God's providential dispensation for man but also our best clue in the search for self-knowledge. The collocation 'fashioned, improved' takes one word from the sphere of manual operation and another from the general enlightenment project of human betterment. But it is the defining and ineluctable involvement of 'care' that gives these words a truly Virgilian stamp. Dyer echoes Dryden's translation of the 'pater ipse colendi' passage from the first *Georgic*, discussed above, on how Jove 'Himself invented first the shining Share, | And whetted Humane Industry with Care: | Himself did Handy-Crafts and Arts ordain; | Nor suffer'd Sloath to rust his active reign.'[120] Dyer adds value to this idea. He indicates how the experience of manual occupation, once it has taken on thought and become self-reflective, has further therapeutic benefits, causing both strength to the arm and 'clear judicious thought'. Turning between Dodsley's straightforward call to the plough and Dyer's Virgilian sense of redemption through the vexations of 'labor', we see a tired Patriot Whig culture catch alight briefly from the spark of an ancient idea.

The persistence of these Virgilian themes gives support to this chapter's argument that eighteenth-century georgic poems should be understood as forming a second category of the Enlightenment mock-arts. Admittedly, georgic writers have little of the eccentricity or exuberance of the Scriblerian mock-artists. Where their approach to the practical, mechanical world is positive from the start, that of Swift and his circle begins with ridicule and develops only latterly into a more circumspect and critical position. The Swiftian mock-arts shifted from simple satire into a more complicated engagement with didactic and technical discourse. At the same time, georgic poetry was pursuing a similar, convergent project, as eighteenth-century writers developed the oblique strategies programmed into the genre since its ancient origins. Those strategies included the rational appeal to slow, unconscious experience and the swerve into digressive anecdote, haptic description and mythography.

Satire and georgic have a common interest in the processes by which people sharpen their wits: through the trials of raillery, through the 'labor improbus' of skilled work. The Scriblerian mock-arts proved their versatility when Swift and John Arbuthnot deployed the form in political satire to deconstruct modern statecraft. Georgic writing also applied representations of the mechanical arts to political contexts, although its interventions were contrastingly positive and programmatic and its commentary on commercial policy and the economics of trade relatively uncritical. The commercial contexts for the publication of georgic books can be read directly into their

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substantial printed formats and their exclusive association with Dodsley's high-profile publishing house. Where Swiftian mock-arts appeared often as mock-books, making satire of their own material form, georgic books were, by contrast, almost over-determined by their lavish appearance, their size and expense signalling the conspicuous prosperity of their producers (rather than that of their consumers, as you would expect). Each of these contrasts between satirical mock-art and georgic poem is possible because of what they have in common. They share a rhetoric of indirection, a psychology focused on extended cognition and tacit knowledge, and a fascination with the mechanics of commercial production.

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