SWIFT'S TALE OF A TUB:

SATIRIC TRADITION;

SATIRIC TECHNIQUE.

SATIRIC TRADITION AND SATIRIC TECHNIQUE IN SWIFT'S TALE OF A TUB

By

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The core of Swift's Tale of a Tub is an allegorical narrative that recounts in miniature the history of the Christian Church. In the tailor-worship and Aeolist sections of his account, however, Swift temporarily suspends the narrative and describes a comprehensive system of belief founded in each case on a single, all-important but absurd principle: the tailor-worshippers venerate clothes and the Aeolists, wind. This shift in technique is an important indication of Swift's aim in the Tale. Despite their essentially digressive nature, these two sections have a close relation to the narrative and are obviously intended to comment on it. The most useful approach to an understanding of this shift of technique is by reference to the genre known as the paradoxical encomium which was ideally suited for a satirical treatment of the philosophical issues that Swift was dealing with in the Tale.

Swift's main target in the Tale is generally acknowledged to be 'modernism'. The combined evidence of the Tale, The Battle of the Books and The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit shows that Swift visualized the ancients-moderns controversy less as a contest between the merits of the learning of two different epochs far removed in time than as an eternally recurring struggle between a philosophic cast of thought (modernism) that would more accurately be called 'progressive rationalism' and the traditional Christian humanism to which Swift himself gave allegiance. Swift's main objection to modernism was that it tended to promote fashionable ideas to an importance far above their worth merely on grounds of novelty, to the detriment of what is of permanent value in human affairs. The typical modern reduction of

experience to a naively simple scheme is the central preoccupation of the 'Digression on Madness'.

In order to refute not just individual modern thinkers but modernism in general, Swift turned the paradoxical encomium into a brilliant burlesque device. Because it characteristically elevates to a position of importance something generally considered base or insignificant, the paradoxical encomium is a humorous, far-fetched counterpart to the kind of reductive logic that modernism attempts in all seriousness. The tailor-worship system is at once a paradoxical encomium of clothes and a modern philosophical system. At the same time, since it has no direct historical equivalent, the tailor-worship stands outside time as a permanent diagnosis of all such kinds of thinking. Both the Aeolist and tailor-worship systems are timeless paradigms of reductive thought that transcend the historical limitations of the examples they parody. For purposes of constructing such paradigms the paradoxical encomium was ideally adapted in a way that the allegorical narrative, with its point-for-point correspondence with historical events, was not.

Swift makes further use of the paradoxical encomium in the 'Digression on Madness', in which he humorously places the most reductive thinkers of history within a reductive framework of his own devising. At the centre of this digression, however, he presents a more engaging paradox: in the most famous passage of the Tale he contrives to prove the superiority of credulity to both reason and the abuse of reason. The terms in which he does so are more than just a practical example of the dangers of rhetoric: they are an inverted restatement of the terms of the ancients-moderns controversy, a warning that modernism at its most extreme is truly insane, and an implicit

vindication of the values of Christian humanism.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout this dissertation I have used the abbreviation Guthkelch-Smith to stand for the standard edition of Swift's "Tale of a Tub", "Battle of the Books" and "The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit", edited by A.C.Guthkelch and D.Nichol Smith, 2nd edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

I: INTRODUCTION

". . . what is it that their very own names are often counterfeit or borrowed from some books of the ancients? . . . So that there is no difference whether they title their books with the 'Tale of a Tub', or, according to the philosophers, by alpha, beta."

Erasmus, The Praise of Folly (the John Wilson translation)

"There are others in the world, (These are no flimflam stories, nor tales of a tub.) who being much troubled with the toothache, after they had spent their goods upon Physicians, without receiving at all any ease of their pain, have found no more ready remedy than to put the said Chronicles of Gargantua and Pantagruel betwixt two pieces of linnen cloth made somewhat hot, and so apply them to the place that smarteth, synapizing them with a little powder of projection, otherwayes called doribus."

Rabelais, Gargantua and Pantagruel (the Urquhart translation)

Interpretation of Swift's Tale of a Tub is a notoriously risky undertaking. Swift warns his readers in Section X of the Tale that if every prince in Christendom takes seven of the deepest scholars in his kingdom and shuts them up for seven years in seven chambers with the command to write seven discourses on the Tale, "whatever difference may be found in their several conjections they will be all, without the least distortion, manifestly deducible from the text." This is discouraging for the would-be critic, for it suggests that his efforts to throw light on the work have been anticipated and satirized before he puts pen to paper. Forewarned thus, I make no claim to have produced a definitive interpretation of the Tale, but I hope at least it can be said that my reading of three major sections of the work are "manifestly deducible from the text."

My approach to the Tale is partly an attempt to reconcile two of the main streams of Swift criticism in recent years, the rhetorical and the aesthetic. Although there have been many fine studies of Swift from a rhetorical point of view, I agree with the verdict of John R. Clark in his recent book that "such studies incline to move towards the border of criticism rather than its heartland. For the business of literary criticism is the study of the work of art as art." [1] I likewise share Mr.Clark's concern that there be no prejudgement of the nature of a work according to a prescribed point of view, such as an attempt to read into the Tale evidence of Swift's Anglicanism where the text does not warrant it.

The reservations I have about Mr.Clark's approach concern his own a priori

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[1] John R. Clark, Form and Frenzy in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub', (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 4.

assumptions: Mr.Clark is a "persona" critic. Now the idea that Swift was not writing in propria persona but created a distinct authorial identity, entirely consistent with itself, is very useful as a means of illustrating the fact that Swift's attitudes are not necessarily to be identified with those he professes in the Tale. However, if we are to suppose that the authorial identity (or persona) is that of a stupid and wilful Grub-Street hack, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the result of his labours ought to be a thoroughly bad work. This is not, of course, the case. Nobody believes that a bad author would actually compose a work like the Tale. As Kathleen Williams puts it; "We share the true author's creative liberty, not the supposed Author's captivity in Chaos".[2] This leads us to the conclusion that persona is actually a device Swift uses to control the argument he is constructing: in other words it leads us back to rhetorical criticism.

There is general agreement that in the Tale Swift is satirizing modernism: where dissent arises is on the question of precisely how. I have chosen, limiting myself to a treatment of three sections, to approach the Tale by reference to the genre known as the paradoxical encomium, which is equally amenable to rhetorical and aesthetic consideration since it is both an established genre and a highly rhetorical one. Rosemary Colie has observed that Swift "knew all the conventional ways of paradox very well indeed" and "raised the paradoxical encomium to its highest level of irony in the nonpareil Modest Proposal".[3] For a work that contains a digression in praise

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[2] K.Williams, Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise, (Lawrence and London: The University Press of Kansas, 1958), p. 136.

[3] R.Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 325.

of madness an approach through the tradition of paradoxical encomium seems appropriate. Since the genre is also often termed "the praise of things unworthy" it also seems relevant to a consideration of the two religious sects which Swift describes in the Tale, one of which worships clothes and the other, wind.

The paradoxical encomium offers the satirist a possible means of achieving aesthetic distance, but he still has to adapt it for the purpose of attacking particular targets. We must therefore pay some attention to his historical background in order to identify the satiric butts that exemplify Swift's general target of "modernism". It is not enough simply to identify individual figures, however; we must also discern the principles on which the satirist attacks them. The issues that Swift deals with and the method he uses to deal with them are essentially different aspects of the same thing: we cannot accept the satirist's dislike of his satiric butts simply on the ground that he dislikes them. I shall, however, eschew the question of the general aim of Swift's satire in the Tale since I feel that this is something which can be safely established only after we have examined the issues he presents and the method with which he treats them.

My approach, therefore, is basically twofold. I am investigating the Tale in the light of two kinds of sources: satiric sources for Swift's method in the Tale and philosophical sources that provide him with this matter. I shall try to establish in my first chapter that the paradoxical encomium was the logical form for Swift to use; in the second I shall show the importance of the Ancients-Moderns controversy and the figures involved in it. My final three chapters will be a detailed attempt to interpret three major sections of the Tale by reference to the two kinds of source I have outlined.

II: The Satiric Background

"Whereas if there be anything burdensome, they prudently lay that on other men's shoulders and shift it from one to the other, as men toss a ball from hand to hand..... But it is not my business to sift too narrowly the lives of prelates and priests for fear I seem to have intended rather a satire than an oration, and be thought to tax good princes while I praise the bad".

Erasmus, The Praise of Folly
(the John Wilson translation).

"But tho' the matter for Panegyric were as fruitful as the Topicks of Satyr, yet would it not be hard to find out a sufficient Reason, why the latter will always be better received than the first .... Satyr being levelled at all, is never resented for an offence by any, since every individual Person makes bold to understand it of others, and very wisely removes his particular Part of the Burthen upon the shoulders of the World, which are broad enough, and able to bear it .... 'Tis but a Ball bandied to and fro, and every Man Carries a Racket about Him, to strike it from himself among the rest of the Company".

Swift, A Tale of a Tub.

Caution is necessary in any attempt to find sources for satirical works. Satire, in the broad sense of the word is not, after all, a single genre, although a number of genres are traditionally associated with it. Theoretically there is no genre that could not be adapted for satirical purposes, as the age of Dryden - the golden age of English satire - shows more clearly than any other. For example, Waller's "Instructions to a Painter", which its author intended as a new kind of encomium, immediately spawned a number of satiric imitations, including a famous series by Marvell, which satirized both the convention Waller created and the subject of his praise. It became a satiric genre as soon as the first imitation was penned.

Satire, then, can draw on independent sources for its matter, its form and its manner. I propose in this chapter to deal chiefly with manner and form, reserving discussion of Swift's material until the following chapter. This is admittedly a rather artificial distinction, since in the work itself these three elements operate together. But it is essential for purposes of analysis. There is little point in discovering parallels between two works unless the resemblance shows some genuine kinship between those works. A good case could be made on the evidence of parallels alone to show that Swift was influenced by Shakespeare's King Lear whilst writing A Tale of a Tub, since the two works share a good many motifs and images in common: both refer to clothes and tailors, geese, dogs and asses, madness, "nothing", Sarum Plain, the Barbarous Scythian and the flaying of a woman (in Swift's reference presumably, as in Shakespeare's, a whore); both use the dichotomy between reason and nature; both play on the physical and intellectual connotation of "anatomizing"; and both conflate the physical with the

intellectual (a Shakespearean example is Lear's "an ounce of civet to sweeten my imagination". - IV, vi.) It would be an intrepid critic, however, who would infer more from this than that both works are richly allusive and make full use of their common heritage of knowledge. To push the case any further would require evidence that the two writers treated this material in a significantly similar way; and this brings us back again to the question of manner.

Even when there is a clear distinction between a satire and an earlier work, assessment of the satirist's manner is essential to determine whether he uses this source as the target of the satire or merely the incidental means by which it is conveyed. Sometimes this is no problem. In his "Advices" to the painter, Marvell ridicules the convention he has borrowed from Waller by applying it satirically to the same subject that Waller had treated encomiastically in all seriousness. Marvell's poems thereby become literary as well as political satire. On the other hand, Dryden does not intend mockery of the Bible by using a biblical backcloth for Absalom and Achitophel any more than he intends a reflection on the monarchy when in Mac Flecknoe he attributes kingship to Shadwell. In all of these works the framework helps place the subject, because the very use of such a framework is a satiric strategy. Swift's major satires are a little more problematical, because he did not avail himself of such satirically loaded superstructures. The framework of the traveller's tale or of a narrative with digressions tells us nothing about the satiric content of the work and our attention is focussed on the manner in which the satire is conveyed. Unfortunately the lack of a simple key (such as Dryden provides) or of an overall unifying theme has led to difficulties of interpreting Swift's work, of which the

manifold readings of the "Digression on Madness" in A Tale of a Tub and the fourth book of Gulliver's Travels are abundant evidence. The wide difference of opinion over the precise significance of these central sections of the two satires suggests that Swift was a failed satirist. Yet few would deny the power of his satire or dispute his claim to be one of the greatest satirists in any language. The problem lies in the assumption itself that the satirist must clearly and single-mindedly pursue one easily identifiable quarry in order to produce an aesthetically unified work of art. Thus when the authorial voice puts forward propositions that conflict with one another, it is deemed necessary to attribute them to a persona, in order to detach Swift himself from them, without consideration of the possibility that the inconsistency is a deliberate ploy by Swift to confuse or surprise the reader.

Swift himself, in a famous self-judgement, chose irony as the chief characteristic of his manner, claiming to be the first user of his particular brand of irony:

> Arbuthnot is no more my friend,
> Who dares to Irony pretend;
> Which I was born to introduce,
> Refin'd it first and shew'd its Use.[1]

Swift's claim was confirmed by Roger Bull who, in the preface to his 1739 translation of Frederick Dedekind's Grobianus; or the Compleat Booby dedicated his work to:

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[1] 'Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift', ll. 55 - 8.

> The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift . . . . . .Who first introduced into these Kingdoms/Of Great Britain and Ireland/ An Ironical Manner of Writing/to the Discouragement of/Vice, Ill-Manners and Folly/And the Promotion of/Virtue, Good Manners and Good Sense. [2]

If Bull was implying that Swift owed something to Dedekind as an inspiration for his own ironical abilities, then his compliment is not very flattering: Grobianus is not a subtle work, but a guide for the would-be booby of a whole range of social misdemeanours, remarkable chiefly for their grossness, which the author commends to his reader with transparent irony. It could only have influenced Swift in writing a minor work such as the Directions to Servants, which is characterised by the same simple irony, an irony achieved simply by reversing all the usual social graces to produce their opposite vices, then advocating instead of condemning them.

Irony of this kind has a long history in English literature. It was first defined in English by Wynken de Worde in 1502. "Yronye of grammer", he says, occurs when "a man sayth one and gyveth to understand the contrarye".[3] Pure irony of this kind, however, precludes any real subtlety of effect because once the inversion has been realized the reader merely has to continue transposing the sentiments expressed in order to arrive at the author's meaning, which quickly becomes a tedious process. Apart from its aesthetic defects it has another drawback: unbroken irony

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[2] Friedrich Dedekind, Grobianus; or the Compleat Booby, (Dublin, 1739). Swift had a copy of the original Latin work in his library under the title of Dedekindus, Ludus Satyricus.

[3] See D.Worcester, The Art of Satire, (New York, 1969), p. 78.

runs the risk of being taken at face value -- that is, the reader may take it at face value. Dedekind overcomes this danger by advocating boorishness so extreme that no one would be guilty of it and as a result his satire is quite innocuous. On the other hand, Swift's contemporary Defoe, in his Shortest Way with the Dissenters, suffered the misfortune of being misread in precisely this way. His satire on extreme Toryism was taken as an actual Tory pamplet and by the time the mistake was discovered he had aroused the ire of Whigs and Tories alike. Later in the same century, Burke's satire on Bolingbroke, "A Vindication of Natural Society", suffered a similar fate and was received as a work from Bolingbroke's own pen.

The defect of irony in both these writers was that they were too close to their models. Dedekind's satire may be unsubtle but at least there is no question of it not being satire. The same may be said of Swift's subtler irony; it leaves in no doubt the satiric nature of his work. We are left with the proposition, paradoxical though it sounds, that infidelity to the truth is a prime requirement of good satire. In the same way that a caricature emphasizes weak points and ignores stronger ones, so does satire seize on its target and warp it by distortion, over-statement or suppression. To attempt to be fair to one's victim simply will not do. The principal example that could be adduced to invalidate this point is in fact an excellent proof of it: Dryden's claim that the expert hatchet-job he did on Shaftesbury in Absalom and Achitophel was restrained can hardly be taken seriously, for his aim was to make the man appear dangerous, not foolish. In this he succeeded to admiration, and the little he conceded to Shaftesbury was not conceded idly: it was a case of "reculer pour mieux sauter".

The appearance of giving the devil his due only makes more credible the assertion that he really is the devil. That subsequent generations have taken Dryden's picture of Shaftesbury at his own estimation of it is a testament to his powers of persuasion, showing how well he disguised the distortion and made a personal attack on Shaftesbury seem impersonal. For it was essential, because of the political situation at the time he was writing, for Dryden to secure for himself the middle ground of sanity and calm judgement, to make his partizanship seem a fair-minded conviction, not an extreme enthusiasm. When, later on, he came to write MacFlecknoe he showed that he could ridicule his victim into annihilation when he chose.

Swift uses the same technique of qualified belittlement himself to great effect, as in the following passage from Gulliver's Travels, in which mankind is "vindicated" from the aspersion of being the filthiest of animals:

> Another thing he wondered at in the Yahoos, was their strange disposition to nastiness and dirt; whereas there appears to be a natural love of cleanliness in all other animals. As to the two former accusations, I was glad to let them pass without any reply, because I had not a word to offer upon them in defence of my species, which otherwise I certainly had done from my own human kind from the imputation of singularity upon the last article, if there had been any swine in that country, (as unluckily for me there were not) which although it may be a sweeter quadruped than a Yahoo, cannot I humbly conceive in justice pretend to more cleanliness; and so his honour himself must have owned, if he had seen their filthy way of feeding, and their custom of wallowing and sleeping in the mud. [4]

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[4] Swift, Prose Works, ed. Herbert Davis, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939), 68, xi, 263.

The sentiments are outrageous: the only animal the speaker can think of as filthier than human beings is a pig, and even it is "a sweeter quadruped" than the Yahoo, with which "human" is here used interchangeably. But a pretence of objectivity is maintained by the carefully considered language, with its concessives and qualifications, in a way that is quite at odds with the stark libel it conveys. If burlesque is a disproportion between style and sentiments, then this is burlesque, and is so much more amusing than if Swift had really tried to be fair to the human race and paraded all its virtues in mitigation of its faults.

Another example will show this device used in a more sophisticated way. It has a special interest because it exists in two versions and because of the way the differences between them have been analysed by an excellent critic, Herbert Davis.[5] Professor Davis uses a comparison of the two versions to illustrate his argument that the most important characteristic of Swift's prose style is its conciseness, as against the more traditionally ascribed quality of simplicity.

One version is that supplied by the first edition of Gulliver's Travels in 1726. Swift complains that in this edition certain passages were "basely mangled and abused, and added to and blotted out by the printer".[6] Accordingly, when the work was reprinted in 1735 with Swift's supervision, there were a number of alterations, including a markedly different version of the particular passage Professor Davis cites. Here is the revised version of the opening of the passage:

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[5] For both versions in full, see Appendices I and II.

[6] Swift, Prose Works, XI, xxiv.

> I told him that in the Kingdom of Tribnia, by the Natives called Langden, where I had long sojourned, the Bulk of the People consisted wholly of Discovers, Witnesses, Informers, Prosecutors, Evidences, Swearers . . . [etc] [7]

This, comments Professor Davis, is pointed and definite and unhesitating. The doctored passage, however, begins:

> I told him, that should I happen to live in a Kingdom where Plots and Conspiracies were either in vogue from the turbulency of the meaner People, or could be turned to the use and service of the higher rank of them, I would first take care to encourage the breed of Discoverers, Witnesses . . . [etc] [8]

Here Professor Davis observes that the sting is removed by making the whole affair hypothetical, and that the meaning is carefully packed in soft layers of verbiage. With his first observation I have no quarrel: there is certainly a loss of power from the failure to state that such corruptions actually take place. But against the second, I would argue that the doctored passage is equally clear, if not clearer. It gives a much more detailed account of how the corruptions it describes could arise. On the other hand, the vague and sweeping "Bulk of the people" gains in force what it loses in particularity not because it is more concise but because it is more comprehensive. Apart from this the chief loss in the doctored passage is the anagrams of Britain and England which again is a loss in definiteness. The basic difference between these

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[7] Herbert Davis, "The Conciseness of Swift" in Jonathan Swift: Essays on his Satire and other Studies, (New York: O.U.P., 1964), p.230.

[8] Ibid.,p. 230.

two openings, then, is that Swift claims the corruptions he names are practised by the majority of the people in Tribnia, or Britain. In other words, his version is a libel whilst the other version is not.

Other comparisons from the same passages reinforce the notion that the differences cannot be accounted for on grounds of style alone. Davis quotes again from the doctored passage:

> Men thus qualified and thus empowered might make a most excellent use and advantage of plots . . .
> . . . This might be done by first agreeing and settling among themselves . . .
> . . . They should be allowed to put what interpretation they pleased upon them, giving them a sense not only which has no relation at all to them, but even what is quite contrary to their true Intent and real Meaning; thus for instance they may, if they so fancy, interpret a Sieve . . . [etc.]

Davis comments:

> Swift rarely follows that loose fashion of coupling his verbs and noun like this -- 'qualified and empowered', 'use and advantage', 'agreeing and settling' -- and is incapable of such clumsiness as 'not only which has no . . . but even what'. [9]

The last phrase is undoubtedly clumsy; but as for the habit of coupling verbs and nouns he is quite simply wrong. This is a very common figure of speech, usually called "hendiadys"; and the corresponding passage in the 1735 edition has an example of verbal doubling -- "agreed and settled"; and another of adjectival doubling which is presumably no less clumsy -- "subservient and subaltern". Again the major difference is that Swift's version is much more positive in its assertions:

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[9] Ibid., pp. 230-31.

> The Plots in that Kingdom are usually the Workmanship of those Persons who desire to raise their own Characters of Profound Politicians; to restore new Vigour to a Crazy Administration; to stifle or divert general Discontents; to fill their Coffers with Forfeitures; and raise or sink the opinion of publick Credit, as either shall best answer their private Advantage. It is first agreed and settled among them, what suspected persons shall be accused of a plot: Then, effectual care is taken to secure all their Letters and other Papers, and put the Owners in Chains. These Papers are delivered to a set of Artists very dextrous in finding out the mysterious meaning of Words, Syllables and Letters. [10]

It is essential to Swift's purpose to state that these atrocities are perpetrated and to say where, too. Only through this initial fiction can he contrive the ironies that rebound through the entire passage. To begin with, Tribnia and Langden are only anagrams of Britain and England, but the reader, to interpret them, must acquiesce in the very anagrammatic method that is being satirized. Another irony is the fact that in a later section of the passage which seems to mock far-fetched interpretations by a series of unlikely associated pairs, each commonplace expression proves, on closer inspection, to have a burlesque appropriateness to its political counterpart. A close-stool (with the aid of a pun) could well stand as a debasing analogy for a Privy-Council; a Court of Justice might be described in mockery as a broken reed. The inclusion of a Court-lady amongst the political items conjures up interesting associations of the influence of women in politics; and Swift even leaves us with a problem of interpretation by omitting the letters from one word -- C..t -- inviting us to make of it what we will. Again, one of the

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[10] Swift, Prose Works, XI, 191.

funniest moments of the passage is the contrast between the grossly physical and uncalculating phrase; "Our Brother Tom hath just got the piles" and the supposedly sinister message it is shown to carry: "Resist . . . a Plot is brought home . . . The Tour" -- which is actually meaningless without further interpretation.

The final sentence of the passage, as George Orwell points out, is really redundant, and yet the passage derives a good deal of power from it.[11] "And this is the Anagrammatick method" tells us nothing new, but it does draw attention to itself as a very restrained clinching comment to a passage that is full of exaggeration. But this is only in keeping with the remainder of the account, which is written in beautifully measured prose that jars violently with the fearful accusations it presents. There is careful precision in the way the information is laid out, and a deliberate avoidance of any value judgement that would colour the account with partiality. The concluding remark, which one might expect to furnish at least some hint of disapproval, is firmly and resolvedly non-commital.

Swift here achieves a fine balance between ridicule and condemnation. Towards this the matter-of-fact manner in which Swift retails his account makes a significant contribution. It could be taken as understatement to heighten the incongruity: a tall story is all the more effective for being related in a dead-pan manner. On the other hand Swift's account is a distortion of methods of incrimination that are actually practised: Swift's

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[11] See "Politics vs Literature: an examination of Gulliver's Travels" in Fair Liberty was all his Cry: A tercentenary tribute to Jonathan Swift, (ed. A.N.Jeffares, London: Macmillan, 1967), p.183.

manner is therefore an apt personation of the kind of clinical detachment that is capable of such inhuman calculation. The satirist has only pushed it to the extreme.

The wealth of suggestion this passage achieves is remarkable and accounts for the feeling of conciseness Professor Davis remarks on. The ironies it contains, however, only work effectively when combined with the fiction that the events described actually take place in an ambiguous country called Tribnia.

This kind of fiction is only one way in which Swift achieves his satiric distortions. Louis Milic, through the use of computer analysis, has uncovered evidence that shows how Swift's style, far from having the quality of simplicity that critics generally assign to it, frequently employs tricks that are far from simple and are sometimes grammatically incorrect. Using as an index the stylistic features of other eighteenth-century writers whose works he submitted tc the same process of analysis, Professor Milic found that Swift's style had an unusually high proportion of catalogues, continuators (such as "etcetera", "and the like"), elliptical sentences, connectives (particularly between sentences, but also between clauses) and finally what he calls "neutral"words or expressions, that have no strict grammatical value.[12]

Swift's use of connectives proved from analysis to be more than twice as frequent as of any of the other writers used for comparison.

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[12] L.Milic, A Quantitative approach to the Style of Jonathan Swift, (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton and Co., 1967), passim.

Professor Milic comments:

> It would appear that he begins one sentence in five with a co-ordinating conjunction and one in three with a connective of some sort. The details of the tabulation further reveal that Swift makes unusually heavy use of 'and', 'but' and 'for', half his connectives consisting of these three, his favourite being 'but'. [13]

The interesting thing, however, is the odd use Swift frequently makes of these connectives. Professor Milic goes on:

> It is possible to infer, after one has gathered a sufficient number of illustrations, that Swift does not use his introductory 'and', 'but' or 'for' in the customary way, in order to impart the logical aspect of the connection between one sentence and another. Rather he seems to use it as a kind of neutral connective, that is, a word that shows only that one sentence is connected with another, without reference to the nature of the connection. [14]

Here is an example taken from A Tale of a Tub, a passage in which Swift announces a digression he is about to make, and then introduces the digression with the word "for", as if it had a causal or resultative relationship with the previous sentences:

> But all would not suffice, and the ladies aforesaid continued inflexible: to clear up which difficulty I must with the reader's good leave and patience, have recourse to some Points of Weight, which the Authors of that age have not sufficiently illustrated.
>
> For, about this time it happened a Sect arose, whose Tenents obtained and spread very far . . . [15]

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[13] Ibid., pp. 125-6.
[14] Ibid., p. 127.
[15] Ibid., p. 129.

This is a simple example of a frequent practice by Swift. The multitude of other examples Professor Milic gives provide ample evidence that Swift was given to the use of grammatically redundant words and phrases which are calculated to seem agents of clarity, but are in fact agents of persuasiveness.

> The enchainment of sentences by means of connectives carries the reader along with great mobility and induces him to believe in the clarity and simplicity of what he has read. He has been moved rapidly through Swift's line of argument, has become persuaded by it and has emerged feeling that everything is clear.[16]

A trick such as this, which uses art to conceal art, is obviously invaluable to a writer of satire.

The use of catalogues is a striking feature of Swift's style. His longest catalogue, in Book IV of Gulliver's Travels, is forty-six items long, without taking into account the multiplications of adjectives within the catalogue that themselves constitute independent catalogues. Professor Milic expresses its significance in the following way:

> Swift, Addison and Johnson agree in their general adherence to the principle of multiplication, but there is a crucial distinction between Swift's undisciplined or informed method and Addison's and Johnson's careful and formed adherence to customary models. These doublets and triplets from Johnson illustrate the usual formal pattern: 'consonance and propriety', 'incessant and unwearied diligence', 'reproach, hatred and opposition', 'her physick of mind, her cathartick of vice, or lenitives of passion'. Swift builds his multiplied structures not merely of words two

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[16] Ibid., p. 136.

> or three at a time, but accumulates words, phrases and clauses in seemingly unending series. It is almost as if he could not begin to express enough within the confines of a doublet or triplet. [17]

One of Professor Milic's examples, taken from Gulliver's Travels, makes a good illustration:

> . . . vast numbers of our People are compelled to seek their Livelihood by Begging, Robbing, Stealing, Cheating, Pimping, Forswearing, Flattering, Suborning, Forging, Gaming, Lying, Fawning, Hectoring, Voting, Scribbling, Stargazing, Poysoning, Whoring, Canting, Libelling, Free-thinking and the like Occupations. [18]

It is worth noting that the complexity of this catalogue arises from the apparently indiscriminate mixture of categories that are not normally put on an equal footing. "Voting", "Scribbling", "Stargazing" and "Poysoning" are not usually considered equally pernicious as human occupations. Although the words themselves are simple and direct, the confusion of categories here has quite the opposite effect from simplicity.

This passage also illustrates another of Swift's habitual stylistic devices, the continuator. Here the relevant phrase is "and the like occupations". Like Swift's redundant connectives, it exercises a neutral grammatical function; but in context it is neither neutral nor redundant, because in nonchalantly asserting that the author sees no essential difference between the items in the catalogue, it emphasizes his lack of discrimination. It also looks very much as though Swift is deliberately stressing his apparent indiscriminateness at the same time as he suggests

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17 Ibid., pp. 87-8.
18 Ibid., p. 88.

that the list is virtually inexhaustible. In other words, by stressing his own unreasonableness, instead of trying to disguise it, he is asking the reader to take it ironically.

In other lists the continuator can serve precisely the opposite function, by introducing a pejorative note into a seemingly neutral catalogue, as it does when Swift declare:

> I have long been conversing with the Writings of your Lordship, Mr. Lock, Mr. Molineaux, Colonel Sidney, and other dangerous authors. [19]

Here the incriminating word "dangerous" is surprising in view of the company Swift's addressee is given and also because Swift is addressing him personally. Pejorative though the sentence may be, it loses its force and becomes ironic when set against the reputation of the names Swift cites.

Enough has been said to show that Swift's irony is no simple matter, and that it depends for its effect on distortion, suppression, caricature and over-statement, as well as various kinds of rhetorical manipulation, indiscrimination and contradiction. This sounds like a list of all the faults commonly attributed to a modern persona such as the "author" of A Tale of a Tub; whereas they are the perfectly legitimate weapons of the satirist. This does not, of course, mean one must dismiss entirely the whole concept of persona from one's critical vocabulary: but it does suggest that to explain the Tale solely in terms of an authorial voice entirely divorced from Swift's own is perverse. It is far too easy to

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19 "Letter to Lord Middleton" in the Drapier's Letters. Quoted by Milic, p.97.

explain anything which seems a distortion as a result of the "modern's" warped vision, without considering whether Swift is attacking it *in propria persona*. Insofar as many of Swift's jokes arise from the logical (or metalogical) extension, to the point of absurdity, of what he belives to be conspicuous modern failings, they are at the same time a satiric reduction of modernism in general and the expressions of a putative modern author's personal convictions. It is no new satiric device to caricature the views of one's adversary whilst pretending to support them; but the trick is immediately and necessarily recognizable, for nobody could mistake the modernist passages of the *Tale* as a serious *apologia* for modernism.

Swift had ample precedent both for his mock *apologia* and for his rhetorical trickery in two traditions that had enjoyed continuous popularity since the Renaissance, the "Menippean satire" and the "paradoxical (or ironic) encomium". Both these traditions are generally rather loosely defined, which is understandable in view of the wide range of material any definition has to encompass. The difficulty is apparent with the paradoxical encomium even in finding an appropriate name. There is no difficulty of nomenclature with the other tradition: "Menippean satire" is a term that goes back to classical times. The problem here is deciding exactly what the main qualities of the tradition are. Nor are the traditions mutually exclusive since a number of works -- including the great work that revived both traditions for the Renaissance, Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* -- fit equally well into both.

The paradoxical encomium, as its name implies, is a facetious eulogy, which may or may not be satirical. Menippean satire, on the other hand,

can be defined according to its form, its content or its manner. Northrop Frye in treating the tradition, gives the traditional derivation.

> . . . the Menippean satire, also more rarely called the Varronian satire, was allegedly invented by a Greek cynic named Menippus. His works are lost, but he had two great disciples, the Greek Lucian and the Roman Varro, and the tradition of Varro, who has not survived either except in fragments, was carried on in Apuleius. The Menippean satire appears to have developed out of verse satire through the practice of adding prose interludes, but we know it only as a prose form, through one of its recurrent features . . . is the use of incidental verse. [20]

Already the picture is complicated: the two earliest exponents of the form have not survived, and those who followed them have not adhered very closely to the models of their originals. Menippean satire can therefore be a verse satire with prose admixed, or a purely prose satire.

Having dealt with formal properties, Professor Frye continues with an account of the characteristic content:

> The Menippean satire deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes. Pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuousi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds, are handled in terms of their occupational approach to life as distinct from their social behaviour. The Menippean satire thus resembles the confession in its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories, and differs from the novel in its characterization, which is stylized rather than naturalistic, and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent. [21]

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[20] Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism, (New York: Athenaeum, 1968), p.309.

[21] Ibid., p.309.

Professor Frye goes on likewise to distinguish Menippean satire from the romance, which uses the same kind of loose-jointed narrative as Petronius, Apuleius, Rabelais, Swift and Voltaire. We might infer from this that narrative is an essential quality of the genre, but he then adduces the colloquy or dialogue, as used by Erasmus and Voltaire, as the "short form of Menippean satire".[22] Furthermore, he cites as another subspecies of the genre "the kind of encyclopaedic farrago represented by Athenaeus's Deipnosophists and Macrobius' Saturnalia, where people sit at a banquet and pour out a vast mass of erudition on every subject that might conceivably come up in conversation".[23] This aspect of the genre Frye traces back to Varro, who "was enough of a polymath to make Quintilian, if not gasp and stare, at any rate call him 'vir Romanorum eruditissimus'." As more modern counterparts of these encyclopaedic accumulators, Frye mentions Erasmus, Voltaire, and closer to Swift's time, "the greatest Menippean satire in English before Swift, Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy". Which work of Swift Frye is thinking of here is unclear: the only work he has mentioned as being a Menippean satire at this point is Gulliver's Travels, but A Tale of a Tub has a much better claim to be an encyclopaedic farrago. Finally Frye suggests that Burton's word "Anatomy" provides a useful alternative name for the confusing "Menippean Satire".[24] One can sympathize with this. He has described for us a genre that may or may not be in prose; may or may not be narrative; and may or may not comprise

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22 Ibid., p. 311.
23 Ibid., p. 311.
24 Ibid., pp. 311-12.

an encyclopaedic farrago of knowledge. Later he contrives to include in the genre works of fantasy such as Lewis Carroll's Alice books and Kingsley's The Water Babies;[25] as well as Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy (on grounds of its form and its use of irony) and The Compleat Angler (again because of its form, its rural cena setting and its "gentle Menippean raillery of a society which considers everything more important than fishing and yet has discovered few better things to do").[26] One can only conclude from this that Menippean satire may or may not be satiric.

Professor Frye's account of Menippean satire is confusing in the number of different qualities he assigns to it and the indeterminacy of the number of those qualities required of a work before it constitutes a part of the genre. He is at least fairly definite about one thing: the meaning of the term Menippean satire has broadened since the Renaissance, but

> The word 'satire', in Roman and Renaissance times, meant either of two specific literary forms of that name, one (this one) prose and the other verse.[27]

Even this degree of certitude is modified by the pronouncements on the tradition of John Dryden; for Dryden, writing in the seventeenth century, has as much trouble distinguishing the proper characteristics of Menippean satire as Professor Frye in the twentieth. Though not a scholar of the stature of Scaliger or Casaubon, Dryden knew the writings of the best authorities on satire. In "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" he gives Menippean satire the same double derivation

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25
26 Ibid., p. 310.
27 Ibid., p. 312.
Ibid., p. 310.

as Frye but seems a little stricter in his definition of "satire":

> 'tis that which we call Varronian satire but which Varro himself calls the Menippean, because Varro, the most learned of the Romans, was the first author of it, who imitated in his works the manner of Menippus the Gaderenian . . . [28]

Dryden does not credit Menippus himself with founding the genre because, he explains, Menippus did not write satires "for his were either dialogues or epistles"; and he goes on to contrast Menippus' "cynical impudence and obscenity" and his penchant for parodies in which "he often quoted the verses of Homer and the tragic poets, and turned their serious meaning into something that was ridiculous", with Varro's satires, which are "by Tully called absolute and most various and elegant poems". Varro imitated Menippus only in "his style, his manner and his facetiousness".[29]

Dryden denies the works of Menippus the status of satires, then, on two counts, on formal grounds and because, though they have incidental quotation, they are not strictly speaking "poems". He therefore seems to reject the notion that Frye puts forward, that satires can be either in verse or in prose and that Menippean satire is the name given to prose forms. Quintilian's statement, that Varro was not satisfied with mingling in his satire only several sorts of verse, Dryden interprets to mean that

> Varronian satire, with mixture of several sorts of verses, was more after the manner of Ennius and Pacuvius than

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[28] John Dryden, Of Dramatic Poesy and other Critical Essays, (ed.George Watson, 2 vols., London: Dent (Everyman Library), 1964), II, 113.

[29] Ibid., p. 114.

> that of Lucilius, who was more severe, and more correct, and gave himself less liberty in the mixture of his verses in the same poem. [30]

Later on, though, Dryden does concede that Varro's satires were mixed with prose.[31] Dryden's clear reluctance to give the name "satire" to any works other than poems suggests that he thinks the term applicable only to formal verse satires. This makes what follows surprising. He goes on to give a list of works that may properly be called Varronian satires: the Satyricon of Petronius; the Golden Ass of Apuleius; many of Lucian's dialogues, particularly the True History (a strange judgement, this, considering that the dialogues of Menippus were disqualified on grounds of their form); Seneca's Apocolocyntosis; the Symposium or Caesars of Julian the Emperor; the Moriae Encomium of Erasmus; John Barclay's Euphormio; and "a volume of German authors which my ingenious friend Mr.Charles Killigrew once lent me". (W.P.Ker plausibly suggests that this last work is the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum.) As English examples Dryden cites

> Mother Hubbard's Tale in Spenser; and (if it be not too vain to mention anything of my own) the poems of Absalom and MacFlecknoe. [32]

Only the three English examples are poems in the usual sense of the word. All the rest are predominantly prose. Indeed, the Moriae Encomium or Praise of Folly is entirely prose unless we take account of occasional verse quotations. There is no connection that can be made between these works purely on grounds of form. The only way to rescue Dryden from this apparent

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30 Ibid., p. 114.
31 Ibid., p. 115.
32 Ibid., p. 115.

self-contradiction is to suppose that he means by a "poem" not so much a work in verse as a fiction that may be either prose or verse. Ben Jonson, basing his definition on the Greek etymology of the word, defines a poet as

> not he wish writeth in measure only,
> but that fayneth and formeth a fable . . .
> For the Fable and Fiction is, as it were,
> the forme and soule of any Poeticall worke
> or poeme. [33]

Dryden does, moreover, tell us that Varro's subjects were "tales or stories of his own invention".[34] Ian Jack comments that MacFlecknoe qualifies as a Menippean satire primarily because it is based on a story of the author's own invention.[35] This still does not properly account for the inconsistency, however, because The Praise of Folly of Erasmus lacks a narrative element; whilst according to Professor Jack's definition, Absalom and Achitophel, which is not based on a story of Dryden's invention, would not qualify. The works listed do, however, share in common a fictive element that prevents the author having to present his views by direct statement. This fictive element seems to consist basically of the borrowing of a convention and turning it, by a transposition, into a vehicle of ridicule. Seneca's Apocolocyntosis shows the Emperor Claudius receiving the post of law-clerk to a freedman in Hades, instead of being deified according to the usual tradition. MacFlecknoe's monarchy of dullness is a very similar concept and may owe something to Seneca's satire. The

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[33] From "Discoveries upon Men and Matter" in The Prelude to Poetry, (ed. E.Rhys, London: Dent, Everyman Library, 1951), p.112.
[34] Dryden, op.cit., p.115.
[35] Ian Jack, Augustan Satire, (Oxford: University Press, 1966), p.44.

Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum gets its name from an earlier volume, Epistolae Clarorum Virorum, and mocks the ignorance of the obscure Ortwinius Gratius, who has taken it upon himself to challenge the learning of the great Renaissance humanist and scholar, Johannes Reuchlin. The Satyricon of Petronius seems to be an exception in that its fiction is quite realistic, so that it can almost be classified as a prototype novel. It is hard to judge a work when the vast majority of it is no longer extant, but even this work seems to operate within a borrowed and transformed conventional framework, for there is good reason to suppose that it was a "low" imitation of the Aeneid, in which the hero is pursued by the wrath, not of Juno but of that deity, less respectable but no less influential, known as Priapus. In the Praise of Folly there may be no narrative but there is a conventional fiction. The work is not merely a formal oration in praise of folly but is a panegyric delivered by no less a person than Folly herself, a personage who manages to combine not just the attributes her English name implies, but also the wisdom that belongs to her because her Greek name "MORIA" links her with Erasmus' wise friend, Sir Thomas More.

Given such a convention, which is not only fictive but contrived to the point of being unbelievable, the satirist has a great deal of freedom in which to manipulate point of view. He may adopt the pose of being completely stupid, or he may affect to praise the object of his scorn, but this is a standard part of the humour that the satire provides within the convention. Dryden calls it "witty facetiousness". Here is Varro's account of his humorous manner, as presented by Cicero and translated by Dryden:

> Notwithstanding that those pieces of mine wherein I have imitated Menippus, though I have not translated him, are sprinkled with a kind of mirth and gaiety, yet many things are there inserted, which are drawn from the very entrails of philosophy, and many things severely argued; which I have mingled with pleasantries on purpose, that they may more easily go down with the common sort of unlearned readers. 36

Once the stringent formal requirements are waived -- and in practice neither Frye nor Dryden is prepared to insist on them -- it is obvious how well A Tale of a Tub fits in with this tradition, having the learned allusiveness, the witty facetiousness and (in the convention of the supremely incompetent author -- the Grub Street hack) the fictive core. It even fits reasonably well with the formal requirements if they are so loosely applied as to admit Erasmus' Praise of Folly, since Swift, like Erasmus, has a sprinkling of incidental quotation, and in something like the same proportion.

If I seem to have falsified Dryden's account by stressing manner at the expense of form, another account will serve to clarify the matter, taken from a work Dryden seems not to have known -- the French Satyre Menippée de la Vertue du Catholicon d'Espagne. This work qualifies as Menippean satire on grounds both of its fictional convention and its form. It describes a mountebank coming to Paris and selling an elixir (or "catholicon") so miraculous that it can make men do anything against their own interest. The fact that the French government have partaken of this elixir accounts for the fact that they are prepared to form an alliance with their traditional enemies, the Spaniards, against their own loyal Huguenot subjects. At the same time the satire conforms to the formal

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36 Dryden, op.cit., p.114.

requirements of Menippean satire, since though basically prose, it has a generous admixture of original verse. However, an epilogue to the work, supposedly written by the printer, explains its title without reference to formal considerations, citing instead the example of Varro's satires,

> which Macrobius saith were called Cyniquized, and Menippized: to which he gave that name because Menippus the Cynicall philosopher, who also made the like before him, al ful of salted jestings and poudred merie conceits of good words, to make men laugh and discover the vicious men of his time.

The emphasis here is not on the form but on the comedy associated with the tradition, a comedy achieved here, as in the other examples given, by means of the indirection of a fictive convention. The "printer" goes on to cite his own list of precedents in the tradition: "Petronius Arbiter, and Lucian in the Greek tongue, and since his time Apuleius, and in our own time that good fellow Rabelaiz". He then proceeds to explain that the term "Menippean satire"

> is now become common, and as we say appellative, whereas before it was proper and particular: as not long time since, a learned Fleming and a good Antiquarian hath used the same. 37

The "learned Fleming" mentioned here could equally have been either Petrus Cunaeus or Justus Lipsius, for both had written Menippean Satires

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37 A Satyre Menippized, that is to say, a Poesie, Sharplie, yet Philosophicallie and wisely rebuking vices without regard of persons Touching the vertue of Catholicon of Spayne, and concerning the holding and assembly of the States of Paris, (London, 1595), p.203. In the "printer's" discourse the work is attributed to one Lord Agnoste (i.e. "Unknown"). But its actual authors were Pierre Le Roy, Jacques Gillot, Jean Passerat (who probably wrote the printer's discourse, since he was the chief scholar of the group), Pierre Pithou, Florent Chrestien and Nicholas Rapin.

in Latin earlier during the sixteenth century. Apart from Heinsius' Cras Credo, Hodie Nihil, they and the Satyre Menipée itself are the only works I know that are actually called Menippean satires by their authors, and of these only the French authors attempt to justify their title.

However, enough has been said to show that a satiric tradition was widely recognized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which defied the usual categorization according to form, and was chiefly distinguished by its facetious manner. Even Dryden, who would like to have pigeon-holed it, recognized that manner was more important than form in describing it, and that it was essentially protean. Let it not be forgotten, too, that Dryden placed his two masterpieces of satire, not in the tradition of verse satire, but in the Varronian tradition.

We come now to the tradition of paradoxical or ironic encomium. Despite the difficulty of assigning a proper title, it is not as problematical as Menippean satire. Henry K. Miller, who has compiled the most exhaustive list of paradoxical encomia, defines it as "a species of rhetorical jest or display piece which involves the praise of unworthy, unexpected or trifling objects, such as the praise of lying and envy or of the gout or of pots and pebbles".[38] Miller admits, however, that he uses the term "paradoxical encomium" as being synonymous with "pseudo-encomium", "ironic encomium" and "mock encomium".[39] Sister Mary Geraldine, in an article on "Erasmus and the tradition of paradox",[40] shows very well

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[38] H.K.Miller, "The Paradoxical Encomium, with special reference to its vogue in England, 1600 - 1800", M.P., LIII (1956), p.145.

[39] Ibid., p.145, n.1.

[40] "Erasmus and the tradition of paradox", S.P., LXI (1964), pp.41 - 63.

the heterogeneousness of Miller's list. It comprises works like Erasmus' Praise of Folly which is paradoxical, ironic and satirical; and Henricus Cornelius Agrippa's Vanitie of Arts and Sciences which despite its paradoxical title, and the equally paradoxical "Digression in Praise of the Asse" which it contains, is neither ironical nor satirical. In fact Agrippa's work is not even an encomium except in the digression just mentioned. Somewhere between these extremes comes the clever nonsense of the "Laus Pediculi" (or "Praise of the Louse") by Daniel Heinsius, which is paradoxical and half ironic but not satirical: it is

> fine raillery indeed, satire manquée for no man is left standing with his head severed, and 'no prevailing vice or folly' censured. There is lively parody, exaggeration, incongruity and an inverted attitude which would be ironic if there were a more serious intention in the ridicule. [41]

Sister Geraldine is right to distinguish so carefully between these works. Her article is essentially an eloquent plea for the uniqueness of Erasmus' masterpiece, which is not only the crowning work within the tradition but, at least as far as the Renaissance is concerned, its originator as well. Admittedly Erasmus cites precedents for the kind of mock encomium he is writing: Homer's Batarachomiomachia; Virgil's Gnat and Garlic Salad; Ovid's Nut; Polycrates' and Isocrates' encomia of Busiris; Glaucon's praise of injustice; Synesius on baldness; Seneca's Apocolocyntosis; Plutarch's Dialogue between Gryllus and Ulysses; Lucian and Apuleius on the ass, as well as Lucian's The Fly and The Parasite; and the anonymous

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[41] Op.cit., p.57.

last will and testament of the piglet Grunnius Corocotta.[42] But, says Sister Geraldine

> Erasmus' list includes no work so complex as his own. Parody is not always panegyric nor mock panegyric always parody: neither is necessarily satiric. Homer's 'Battle' is parody but not mock praise; Virgil's Gnat likewise; of the mock eulogies listed, only Lucian's two are parodies of rhetorical declamation; and of the fifteen works listed only five are satirical.
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> The Praise is unique in that it comprises all the qualities of the works Erasmus lists.[43]

Sister Geraldine might have added that one of the works Erasmus cites does not even exist: Glaucon is a character in Plato's Republic, where he is reported to have written a dialogue in favour of injustice. Whilst some of his examples are legitimate, the very length of his list shows that Erasmus was determined to show ample precedent for his own practice in the Praise, though only half seriously -- even as the Praise itself is half-serious and half jeu d'esprit -- and that he is mocking the traditional self-justification of the rhetorician through citation of precedents. Indeed a list of precedents such as Erasmus' is one of the most recurrent features of works written in emulation of the Praise which usually add Erasmus' work to the list. (The author of the Jucunda de Osculis manages to produce a catalogue of twenty-six items, partly culled

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42 Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, trans. Betty Radice with Introduction and Notes by A.H.T.Levi, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 57.

43 Sister Geraldine, op.cit., p. 42.

from Erasmus, partly of his own finding.) [44]

Sister Geraldine finally concedes that many works written in the tradition stem directly from Erasmus, but with the judicious qualification that though the Praise, as mock eulogy and parody

> inspires some paradoxical essays
> delighting in clever urbane dialectic,
> little more than jeu d'esprit;

and though as satire "it is godmother to seriously didactic writing"; nevertheless the works that follow it are on the whole inferior, and few "are similarly compounded of both toothless and biting wit".[45]

Sister Geraldine makes no mention of Swift's Tale of a Tub, but it is undeniable that the very elements she mentions -- parody, mock panegyric and satire -- are the very essence of the Tale. Sister Geraldine thoroughly justifies the distinction she makes between Erasmus' satire and the partial imitations of his successors, but she also shows incidentally that the tradition Erasmus was writing in was not essentially satirical, though a genius such as Erasmus (or Swift) would easily see its satiric possibilities. Satire, as stated before, is not a genre. Miller is quite correct[46] in seeing The Praise of Folly in the context of a broad tradition, a tradition going back to classical times, even if his list does combine works of a rather heterogeneous nature.

Moreover, one should not overlook the fact that though parody, mock panegyric and satire are not to be found in any single work Erasmus cites

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[44] In Facetiae facetiarum, hoc est joco - seriorum fasciculus, (Frankfort, 1605).
[45] Sister Geraldine, op.cit., p.44.
[46] Miller, op.cit., p.145.

amongst his precedents, they are present separately in the three works by Lucian that he mentions: Lucius, or The Ass (satire and parody); and The Parasite and The Fly (both parody and mock eulogy). Erasmus had a special interest in Lucian -- enough interest to collaborate with Sir Thomas More in a Latin translation of Lucian's Dialogues, published in 1506; and Erasmus himself went on translating Lucian until 1517.[47] A.H.T. Levi, the most recent editor of The Praise of Folly, claims that the work begins as a learned frivolity, but turns into a "full-scale encomium after the manner of . . . Lucian". He goes on to state, perhaps over-simply, that the "very notion of praising Folly, the mock encomium, is Lucianic".[48] Celebrated practitioner of the form though he was, Lucian himself drew upon a well-established tradition, "dating back to the earliest periods of Greek rhetoric".[49] In Swift's own time, no less an authority on classical antiquity than Richard Bently alludes casually to the "custom of Lucian and other sophists to choose the Ηττω Λογον, the weaker and paradoxical side of a dispute".[50] The word "sophists" here implies no disapproval, of course; it was the name given by the Greeks who professed knowledge of a particular branch of learning or of learning in general. And Bentley's comment underlines the fact that this kind of rhetorical tour de force was very much the province of professional scholars. From the beginning the mock encomium was a learned art and

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47 The Praise of Folly, (Penguin edition), p.38.
48 Ibid., p.38.
49 Miller, op.cit., p.145.
50 R.Bentley, Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris (&c), (Berlin: Calvary), p.489.

and necessarily so because rhetorical training and broad knowledge are essential to make a case for a proposition that defied commonsense, whether the speaker intended it seriously or not.

This was no less true during the Renaissance than for antiquity. As H.K.Miller notes, "it was a favourite jest with the greatest Latin scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries".[51] Apart from Erasmus, it can boast contributions from such figures as Jerome Cardan ("Laus Podagrae" and "Laus Neronis"); J.C. Scaliger ("Laus anseri"); Philipp Melanchthon ("Laus Formicae"); Jean Passerat ("Laus asini"); Martin Schook ("Laus Fumi" and "Laus Surditatis"); Justus Lipsius ("Laus Elephantis"); Daniel Heinsuis ("Laus pediculi" and "Laus asini"); Erycius Puteanus ("Ovi encomium"); Jacob Guther ("Laus Caecitatis"); Janus Dousa ("In laudem umbrae"); Caelio Calcagnino ("Publicis encomium"); M.Antonius Majoragio ("Luti encomium"); and Franciscus Scribanius ("Muscae ex continua comparatione cum principe encomium"). This is a by no means exhaustive list. At the height of the popularity of this kind of writing, Caspar Dornavius published the Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Socraticae (Hanover, 1619),

> which offered over half-a-thousand Latin examples of the form, drawn from ancient and contemporary authors alike, and ranged under suitable heads.[52]

All the names in the above list are scholars and humanists of some importance; all wrote in Latin, the learned language of the day. But their learning was different from the traditional scholastic learning

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[51] Miller, op.cit., p. 151.
[52] Ibid., p. 152.

which had dominated and directed Christian thinking since the thirteenth century. They tended to reject the speculative subtleties of metaphysics and the dogmatism of formal theological systems, at the same time placing a high value on the tradition of pagan learning. Erasmus

> was a dedicated scholar who spent his life advancing what he called 'good learning', but he did not believe that finite, human learning could pluck the heart out of the mystery of existence or 'by searching find out God'. Appreciation of the harmony of learning and religion, reason and revelation, postulated in Erasmian though is a key to understanding the man and his ideas. [53]

Erasmus, the greatest of the Christian humanists, exhibits to a conspicuous degree the basic beliefs of all the humanists:

> Humanism in the Renaissance normally means Christian faith in alliance with God-given reason, which is the most human faculty in man. [54]

The humanistic tendency to distrust theological speculation and to promote ethical reason naturally elevated the expression of one's ideas — eloquence -- to a position of great importance. By far the majority of Renaissance humanists believed that

> through eloquence alone man is able to use that faculty of reason which God has given to him as distinct from the beasts. Eloquence, Cicero had said, is articulate wisdom; without wisdom it is a very dangerous thing. Such sentiments are echoed, with more or less Christian emphasis, from Petrarch to Pico, from Erasmus to Sturm. [55]

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[53] Erasmus, Ten Colloquies, (ed.Craig R. Thompson, New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1957), p. xi.

[54] Douglas Bush, The Renaissance and English Humanism, (Toronto: University Press, 1968), p.54.

[55] Ibid, p.60.

I have stressed the humanistic background at such length because the tradition of mock encomium, for the Renaissance at least, seems to me very much the creation of the humanists, with its combination of urbane wit and serious intention, as implied by the name "joco-seriae" that Dornavius gave to his collection. Erasmus directly attacks many different kinds of abuse of reason in The Praise of Folly, but even the framework and the very title of his satire are designed to illustrate the dangers of eloquence placed in the hands of misapplied reason: this would be so even without the elements of satire the work contains, and surely constitutes one of the great attractions of the form for the learned practitioners that followed in Erasmus' wake.

The tradition was not, however, the exclusive prerogative of the latinists. It received its French baptism from no less a figure than François Rabelais, whose praises of the belly and of debtors in the third book of his Gargantua and Pantagruel are amongst the most famous. To be sure, Rabelais shared with the latinists a humanistic bias and broad learning, but in using the vernacular tongue he was very much an innovator, and no work of comparable importance was written in French in emulation of his encomia, except the Satyre Menippée, during the sixteenth century. But the fact that Rabelais can be cited in this tradition at all does have some importance. Since Rabelais can include in his vast, rambling work, which the authors of the Satyre Menippée call a Menippean Satire, examples of paradoxical encomium, and since The Praise of Folly can be claimed as both a Menippean satire (according to Dryden) and a paradoxical encomium, they are not mutually exclusive categories — indeed, they blend together very well. We have already noted that Menippean satire itself is not

actually a form but is essentially protean. Other examples where the two traditions meet are Dryden's MacFlecknoe and the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum, which Dryden seems to think of as an example of Menippean satire and which A.H.T. Levi has no hesitation in calling a mock encomium[56] -- with reasonable justification since the supposed correspondents (the obscure men of the title) address their mentor, Master Ortwinus Gratius in terms of praise for actions that most people would deem worthy of condemnation. One of the authors, Ulrich von Hutten, also wrote paradoxical encomia, of which the best known is his "Nemo". Jean Passerat (or Johannes Passeratus) -- "professeur, humaniste, commentateur, philologue"[57] was, with Pierre Pithou, Jacques Gillot, Nicholas Rapin, Florent Chrestien, and Pierre le Roy, joint author of the Satyre Menippée; and he was also a writer of paradoxical encomia, the best known being "Encomium Asini". (The Guthkelch-Smith edition of the Tale also mentions his Latin poem Nihil). It is worth recalling, too, that Justus Lipsius and Daniel Heinsius, both authors of Menippean Satires, also wrote paradoxical encomia.

Why the paradoxical encomium should have been so widely cultivated and should have enjoyed continuous popularity for two hundred years is difficult to say. Erasmus' Praise undoubtedly was an important factor, but this work itself could not have achieved such popularity without the same familiarity with logic and rhetoric as Erasmus had. It is not a coincidence that the paradoxical encomium retained its popularity in

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56 The Praise of Folly, (Penguin edn.), pp. 38-9.

57 C. Lenient, La Satire en France ou la Litterature Militante au XVI^e Siecle, (Paris, 1877), I, 133.

England for as long as scholastic logic and rhetoric remained the core of university education, and thereafter rapidly declined. H.K. Miller's list of paradoxical encomia, extending from 1600 to 1800, shows only the merest handful of examples after 1750. The death-knell of scholastic logic and rhetoric was sounded in the late seventeenth century, with the well-known attacks on pulpit eloquence and highly formalised literary language.

> The final contribution of seventeenth century writers to a new attitude towards rhetoric came in their denunciation of tropes and figures and in their advocacy of the principle that ordinary patterns of speech are acceptable in oratory and literature as in conversation and life. [58]

In the universities the change did not come suddenly. The seventeenth century reader of Paradise Lost had a sophisticated awareness of rhetoric that a modern reader may envy. As John R. Mulder remarks:

> The most ignoble of rhetoricians, and a pattern of all wicked orators to come, is Milton's Satan. As a public speaker Satan is a virtuoso: His rhetoric sways his legions in heaven and hell, deceives Eve into reaching for the forbidden fruit, and still attracts the readers of Paradise Lost to his Party -- He is an excellent rhetorician but a wicked one. Milton saw no danger in a 'graceful and ornate rhetoric' — Paradise Lost is a monument of that art — but he was well aware of its possible perversion by an unscrupulous practitioner. [59]

Indeed, seventeenth-century educators insisted that ethics was the

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[58] W.S.Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), p. 385.

[59] John R. Mulder, The Temple of Mind: Education and Literary Taste in Seventeenth Century England, (New York: Western Publishing Co.Inc., 1969), pp. 36-7.

essential complement to logic and rhetoric, and these three areas of study were major undergraduate subjects at the university. Their close relationship is attested by Bacon, that scourge of the scholastic method, in a convenient formula:

> . . . the government of reason is assailed and disordered three ways, either by the illaqueation of sophisms, which pertain to Logic or by the juggleries of words, which pertain to Rhetoric, or by the violence of the passions, which pertains to ethics. [60]

In view of this, it is surprising that no major writer attempted to write paradoxical encomia in English during the early seventeenth century. It is possible, however, that one major writer, John Donne, was very much influenced by the tradition in a way that was highly significant for the seventeenth century. Donne's juvenilia include a collection of paradoxes, several of which H.K.Miller claims may be considered paradoxical encomia.[61] Furthermore, as Sister Geraldine points out, "Donne seems to have had the Praise of Folly somewhere in his consciousness" while writing the Paradoxes. At one point in his tenth paradox, "That a Wise Man is knowne by much laughing", he cites the Praise as an authority in favour of his argument, "deliberately assuming an inpercipience of Moria's meaning" in a manner worthy of Moria herself.[62]

It would be an interesting speculation whether Donne was directly influenced by The Praise of Folly or by the general tradition that it

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60 The Advancement of Learning, Book II, See Francis Bacon, Selected Writings, (ed.H.G.Dick, New York: Modern Library, 1955), p.309.

61 Miller, op.cit., pp. 173-4.

62 Sister Geraldine, op.cit., p.61.

fathered, not merely in his paradoxes but in the "metaphysical" strain in his poetry. Rosamond Tuve's argument that the logical exactness of the metaphysical poets is due to the influence of Ramist logic has been contested by N.E.Nelson, A.J.Smith and John E.Mulder on the grounds of insufficient evidence. It is insufficiently clear that Ramus' influence was very great; and his authority failed to replace that of Aristotle, at least on the school curriculum.[63] On the other hand, the schools themselves did inculcate in their students an antithetical habit of mind which can be traced in Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress", Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso", Sir Thomas Browne's companion pieces Urne Buriall and The Garden of Cyrus, and even in Paradise Lost.[64]

On the other hand the paradoxical encomium uses not merely rhetoric, but the abuse of rhetoric, in very much the same way as Donne characteristically employs it, though as John R. Mulder prints out, this does not mean he is satirizing the forms he uses:

> It is sometimes thought that Donne's ingenious and satirical performances were meant to disparage the customary academic knowledge of the age. Yet the degree to which he abuses official norms and methods in such an early poem as 'Love's Progress' is no proof of scepticism on his part, nor of an inclination to discard received tradition. University graduates or the aristocrats who had spent a few 'finishing' years at Oxford or Cambridge were quite familiar with the deliberately perverse approach to established views. Satire on, and parody of, scholastic training had

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63 Mulder, op.cit., p.33.
64 Ibid., pp.49-53.

> been incorporated into university ceremonial; Donne's 'Love's Progress' is very much like the Praevaricatio or 'Varier's speech' that was part of the official disputation.[65]

Mulder's analysis of "Love's Progress" illustrates very clearly how it exemplifies "Donne's delight in the calculated abuse of prescribed formulae" and shows that it is a string of those "illaqueations of sophisms" and "juggleries of words" that irritated Bacon.[66] Professor Mulder shows convincingly that this poem of Donne's is a witty amplification of the sophism that runs thus in syllogistic form:

> the end of love is perfection;
> the end of my love is copulation;
> therefore, copulation is perfection.[67]

Since Donne shared the common background in scholastic logic and rhetoric with the paradoxical encomiasts, which made the witty exploration of the perverse possibilities of logic and rhetoric so amusing, it is at least quite likely that this tradition gave him some impetus for his own exercises in this manner. Besides the obvious fact that the arguing of a case plays such a prominent part in his early lyrics, Donne's poetry frequently has a tour de force quality through its rich and learned allusiveness and its use of the conceit which, as Helen Gardner remarks, "is a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking than its justness."[68] All these qualities link it with the paradoxical encomium. Even if Donne knew only the encomium ofErasmus, he could have adapted what he found there

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65 Ibid., p.47.
66 Ibid., p.43.
67 Ibid., p.47.
68 The Metaphysical Poets, edited and introduced by Helen Gardner, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), p.19.

without producing satire, since paradoxical encomium is not inherently satirical, though capable of conveying satire.

Whether or not Donne was directly influenced by the tradition, metaphysical poetry itself proved to have the same satiric potential as the paradoxical encomium, a potential first fully grasped by the first great Restoration satirist, Samuel Butler. As Martin Price puts it:

> One writer in particular seems to underly the decline of the rhetorical conceit from its original seriousness. Samuel Butler, in Hudibras, turned the conceit into a brilliant burlesque device. Charles Cotton had debased the epic style of Virgil in his Scarronides, and had made constant use of bathos, but he did not parody the metaphysical style. Butler, on the other hand, in his antipathy towards tenuous speculation, his hatred of enthusiasm, and his contempt for the tortured wit of Benlowes, found in the wit of the metaphysicals the very idiom of the forced logic of hypocrite or dupe. The incongruous conceit, which at best transcended logic, became in Butler a form of debasing analogy, which returned as insistently to the physical and mechanical as the earlier conceit to the divine and suprahuman. The effect was a thorough inversion: the transcendence of reason became an incapacity for it and the pious hyperboles became phrenetic ingenuities of rationalisation. [69]

Whether or not one agrees with Price's account of earlier use of the conceit his description of what Butler did with it is admirable. The author of Hudibras had seized upon the satiric possibilities inherent in the conceit, a device which in the hands of late metaphysicals such as Benlowes had become very decadent, anyway. But Butler is kin to the metaphysicals not

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[69] Martin Price, Swift's Rhetorical Art, (Hamden and London: Arehon Books, 1963), p.38.

only in this: he has also the learned allusiveness that led Dr.Johnson to compare him with Rabelais:

> If the French boast the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting them with Butler. [70]

Furthermore, Butler has the same tendency as Donne to enjoy presenting the reader with the abuse of logical argument, though unlike Donne, his purpose is satirical. It was Hazlitt who commented that Butler had

> exhausted the moods and figures of satire and sophistry. It would be possible to deduce the different forms of syllogism in Aristotle from the different violations or mock-imitations of them in Butler. [71]

It should be remembered, however, that learned allusiveness and the witty abuse of scholastic logic and rhetoric are also traditional properties of the paradoxical encomium, and this fact takes on added significance when we recall that Butler also wrote a paradoxical encomium of "The Most renown'd Du-Val" (i.e. the highwayman) and another called "A Speech made at the Rota", both listed by H.K.Miller. In fact, Hudibras itself, as "an attack on false wit that wittily imitates what it sets out to destroy"[72] is certainly a species of paradoxical encomium, though it is also much more than that. We know that Butler was acquainted with the works of Erasmus[73] and it is most unlikely that a man of his satirical bent would not have read The Praise of Folly, especially considering the great

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[70] Samuel Johnson, Lives of the Poets, 2 vols., (London: O.U.P., 1961), I, 143.

[71] William Hazlitt, The English Comic Writers, (London: O.U.P., 1951), p.79.

[72] Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, (New York: Doubleday and Co.Inc., 1965); p.261.

[73] See R.Lamar, "Samuel Butler a L'ecole de Roi", Etudes Anglaises, V (1952).

popularity of the work that his almost exact contemporary, Milton, records for us.[74] Ian Jack links Hudibras with The Praise of Folly on the basis of the broad scope of its satire and the close similarity of its attack on rhetorical pedantry.[75] There is no need to suppose that either the paradoxical encomium tradition or the decadence of metaphysical poetry is Butler's inspiration to the exclusion of the other.

Jack goes on to rescue Hudibras from the over-simple label "burlesque" by stating that, like MacFlecknoe, it "belongs to the class of satires which Dryden named Varronian".[76] His corrective is judicious, though his reason for calling Hudibras a Varronian satire — the fact that it is basically a narrative — is questionable, since nearly half the poem consists of dialogue. Hudibras does, however, present a fictive convention of the kind that characterizes all the works in Dryden's catalogue of Varronian satires. Butler presents Hudibras, the Presbyterian justice of the peace and his Independent colleague, Ralpho, in the guise of a knight and his squire. This device is clearly borrowed from Cervantes, and helps to discredit not merely the two chief characters, but the crusade mentality in general and the militant religious enthusiasts of the English Civil War in particular.

It is thus surprising that Dryden, when writing of Varronian satire, does not mention Hudibras along with his other English examples, though to

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[74] In his sixth "Prolusion" at Cambridge.
[75] Jack, op.cit., p.19.
[76] Ibid., p.25.

be sure, he makes amends later in the essay, excusing himself by the slip of an old man's memory. After admitting his fault he goes on to give generous praise to the only man that could contest his own claim to be the greatest satirist of the Restoration:

> The worth of his poem is too well known to need my commendation, and he is above my censure. [77]

Dryden then allows that Hudibras, too, is a Varronian satire.

Butler and Dryden are the last great satirists in this long and varied tradition before Swift himself began to write. Philip Pinkus recently wrote an article in which he claimed that though the satires of the Augustan age (from Butler to Addison and Swift) are not merely different from each other but even represent different conceptions of what satire is, they share characteristics which "are fundamentally different from those of almost all satire before it". Professor Pinkus, in fact, claims that

> in the neo-classical period satire comes of age, that it is the first time that satire, as we commonly understand the mode, is written with any consistency, that in fact, this is what we mean by satire. [78]

Trying to pinpoint the essential distinction between modern and classical satire, he goes on to say that

> The reader feels the impact of satire at the moment when he perceives the ironic difference between the pretense of the

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[77] Dryden, op.cit., p.147.
[78] Philip Pinkus, "The New Satire of Augustan England", U. of T.Q., (XXXVIII, 1969), 136.

> satirist's target -- and the artistic truth as the artist conceives it in the satiric image.[79]

It seems to me that Pinkus is right to look away from the traditional categories of Horatian and Juvenalian satire, for I believe that what he calls "modern" satire developed, not out of formal verse satire, influential though it undoubtedly was, but out of the tradition of Menippean satire which, unbounded by the normal restrictions of form, offered the would-be satirist his own choice of a fictional convention by which to achieve the indirection that is one of the most aesthetically pleasing qualities of the best satire. Dryden, after all, may spend most of his time comparing Horace and Juvenal in his essay on satire, but he derives his own satire and that of Butler from the Menippean tradition. The ironic disjunction between elements in the satire, which Pinkus notes, is made possible by the use of the fictional convention. As an additional, non-satiric model of ironic indirection, however, satirists would also find the paradoxical encomium very useful, particularly after the time of Erasmus, when they had the example of a brilliant fusion of satire and paradoxical encomium to go by. Both the sophistication of technique and the variety of forms employed by the major Augustan satirists from Butler to Swift are, I would contend, attributable to the influence of these two traditions, in which the supreme master had previously been Erasmus. As a secondary influence we should allow the claims of metaphysical poetry. We must remember that Dryden, like a lesser Restoration satirist, Marvell,

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[79] Ibid., p. 137.

began his poetic career in the metaphysical mode. And the fictive convention of either Absalom and Achitophel or MacFlecknoe can legitimately be compared to an extended conceit, exploited for its incongruity.

Swift, of course, is very much in the same tradition as Dryden and Butler. There can be no question that he was familiar with their works, as well as with the metaphysical poets. It can also be inferred, however, that he was well read in the tradition Dryden outlines in his essay on satire. Like any gentleman of his day with any pretensions to a judicious taste in literature, Swift possessed copies of the great Roman satirists, Horace and Juvenal, and Persius as well. But his library also contained many volumes that give a good indication of his taste beyond the more conventional authors.

Two separate catalogues of Swift's library exist. One was compiled in 1715; the other was a sale catalogue and was made in 1745.[80] For the present purpose the earlier catalogue is more relevant, since it shows Swift's acquisitions up to and a decade beyond the writing and publication of A Tale of a Tub. It shows that by 1715 Swift had acquired copies of almost all the works Dryden names as Menippean satires.

Swift's copy of Petronius was the Rapheling edition of 1595. Swift, we know was reading Petronius in 1697.[81] It is worth noting in connection with this that the 1715 catalogue also contains the entry "La Cour de Rome, Paris, 1701", the author of which, Francois Nodot, acquired

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80 See T.P.Le Fanu, "A Catalogue of Dean Swift's Library in 1715, with an Inventory of his Personal Property in 1742", Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, XXXVI (1927), 263-75; and Harold Williams, Dean Swift's Library, (Cambridge, 1932).

81 See Guthkelch-Smith, p. lvii.

considerable notoriety in the seventeenth century for his attempt to pass off his forged manuscript as being a collection of lost fragments from the Satyricon.[82] Bentley called it "that scandal to all forgeries" and Dryden in his discourse on satire showed that he had heard of it; although, writing in 1693, he was not aware that it had already been in print over a year. That Swift had this volume by Nodot may be an indication that Swift had a special interest in Petronius.

There is no edition of Apuleius and Swift nowhere in his extant works makes any reference to that author.

By 1715, Swift had two copies of the works of the younger Seneca, an old edition published in Paris, that cost him eight shillings, and an unpriced, but obviously expensive Elzevir edition in four volumes, published in 1658. He therefore had access to Seneca's Apocolocyntosis.

Lucian is also represented in two editions: a Greek and Latin edition produced through the combined offices of many scholars, including A. Menagius, Graevius, Gronovius and Barlaeus and the famous translation into French of d'Ablancourt, published in three volumes at Paris, 1674. The latter edition had been annotated by Swift by the time the catalogue was composed, but the annotations are not preserved.

If we can admit Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae as a Menippean satire, on Northrop Frye's authority, for its irony, Swift had no less than three copies of that work, one of which he had annotated. Among the works Frye names to illustrate the category he calls the anatomy --

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82 See The Satyricon of Petronius, trans. W.C.Firebaugh, (New York: Washington Square Press Inc., 1966), pp. xviii-xix.

characterized by its encyclopaedic erudition, Swift possessed the Saturnalia of Macrobius, but not the Deipnosophisticae of Athenaeus. This may be simply an indication that Swift's Greek was not up to the task of reading this work, for almost all Swift's editions of Greek works have a Latin text as well. Swift did at any rate have copies of other works in Latin of this encyclopaedic kind such as Pliny's Natural History and Aulus Gellius' Noctes Atticae.

Returning now to Dryden's more confined list and moving on to the moderns, we find that Swift had a copy of The Praise of Folly, published at Oxford in 1668. The 1745 catalogue gives us the added information that this volume also contained Erasmus' reply to Luther on the question of free will. I shall argue later that Swift was also acquainted with the John Wilson translation of Erasmus' satire, also published in 1668.

Swift, interestingly, attributes to Erasmus also the authorship of the Epistles of Obscure Men: the 1715 catalogue lists it simply as "Epist. Obscur. Vir. Francf. 1643" but in the 1745 catalogue it appears as "Erasmi Obscurorum Virorum Epistolae -- Franc. 1643". As we have already noted, this satire is now accepted as being the joint work of Ulrich von Hutten and Crotus Rubeanus, with some help from Hermann von dem Busche. Erasmus denied any part in this satire and did so in print,[83] though whether Swift was aware of this is hard to tell: he was interested enough in Erasmus to obtain copies of his Parabolae and his Colloquies and may

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[83] See Erasmus' letter to Thomas More from Louvain (ca.November) 1520, reproduced in Erasmus and his Age: Selected Letters of Desiderius Erasmus, (ed. H.J.Hillerbrand, New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 155-9.

therefore have taken the trouble to read his letters as well. On the other hand, Erasmus denied authorship of the Julius Exclusus, which is now known to be his work,[84] so that Swift's guess was a reasonable one. It was certainly a more informed verdict on the work than that of Richard Steele, who failed to see the satirical nature of the work at all and believed it a compilation of genuine letters.[85] These Epistles, at any rate, have special relevance for A Tale of a Tub because, arising as they do out of the dispute over whether pagan learning should be studied, a dispute fought between the theological faculty of Cologne University and the great humanist scholar Reuchlin, they constitute a broadside fired during an earlier stage of the Ancients-Moderns controversy than the one with which Swift was principally concerned in the Tale. Swift's edition was a much augmented one, containing besides the Epistles a number of other pieces by Ulrich von Hutten, J. Hartlieb, P. Olearius, A. Gartnerus and Marcolphus.

One would certainly expect Swift to have had a copy of Rabelais in his library but no listing of it appears in the 1715 catalogue. It does however appear in the 1745 catalogue as "Rabelais ses Oeuvres -- Lyon. 1558" with an asterisk to show that Swift had annotated it. Professor Williams says this is probably a false date, since no edition of that date

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84 See The "Julius Exclusus" of Erasmus, (ed. J.Kelley Sowards, Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 10-14.

85 Michael Mattaire edited a new edition of the letters in 1710 which he dedicated to Steele. He believed that he was rescuing from oblivion works actually written by foolish Renaissance clerics, and Steele, who reviewed the edition in Tatler No.197, appears to have followed him in this misconception.

is known.[86] The omission of Rabelais from the 1715 catalogue may be an oversight, for Swift had certainly read Rabelais before 1715.[87]

The Satyre Menippée also calls for mention here, although Dryden does not mention it. It features in the 1715 catalogue simply as "Catholicon d'Espagne, 1612", again with an asterisk to show that Swift had supplied his own annotations to it. The possibility that Swift knew the work before he wrote A Tale of a Tub is increased by the fact that Sir William Temple owned a copy of it in an English translation, dated 1595, with the title: A Satyre Menippized, that is to say a Poesie, Sharplie, yet Philosophicallie and wisely rebuking vices without regard of person. Touching the vertue of Catholicon of Spayne, and concerning the holding and assembly of States of Paris. This volume, with Sir William Temple's autograph on the title page, is now in the British Museum library. Swift was certainly interested in the period of French history that produced this satire, and Henri IV was one of his examples of madmen with visions of conquering the world in the "Digression on Madness".

Apart from these reasonably well-known works, Swift also had Menippean Satires by Heinsius and Lipsius. Swift in fact had the complete works of Lipsius in the fine edition of four folio volumes, published at Antwerp in 1637. It is not feasible that Swift would have bought this lavish edition merely for the "Satyra Maenippaea Somnium" and it would

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86 Dean Swift's Library, p.50.

87 E.g. he quotes Rabelais in Examiner No.19 (December 14, 1710).

seem that despite his comment in the "Treatise on Good Manners and Good Breeding", where he links Lipsius with Scaliger as pedants, he had some respect for the Belgian scholar; indeed, Swift also possessed a copy of Lipsius' famous edition of Tacitus.

Of Swift's opinion of Heinsius, nothing is known directly. The Heinsius volume listed in the 1715 catalogue is given as "Laus Asini", without reference to any author and without any details of publication. The 1745 catalogue is no help here since the work does not appear in it at all. However, since this volume is listed under the sub-heading "Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo", it cannot be the first edition of the Laus Asini, which was a quarto volume, and is most likely to be the duodecimo volume that was published at Leyden in 1629: "Laus Asini tertia parte auctior: cum aliis festivis opusculis". The other festiva opuscula here referred to are another paradoxical encomium, the "Laus Pediculi" and "Cras Credo, Hodie Nihil, sive modus tandem sit ineptiarum Satyra Menippea". Since the work was published anonymously, Swift may not have known that Heinsius was its author, although he acquired between 1715 and 1745 another volume that would have told him: the Epistles of Erycius Puteanus (another humanist scholar and paradoxical encomiast) appear in the 1745 catalogue in an edition published at Leyden in 1647. Puteanus mentions "Cras Credo, Hodie Nihil" and "Laus Asini" in his fifty-fourth and sixty-fourth letters respectively and attributes both to Heinsius.

Neither of the two catalogues mentions any work by the two great English Menippean satirists, Dryden and Butler, but his acquaintance with the works of both can be taken for granted. Of the two, one might expect Swift to owe more to Butler, since the scope of A Tale of a Tub is much

broader than of either of Dryden's major satires. Hudibras resembles the Tale much more closely in its comprehensiveness,[88] in the use it makes of esoteric and unusual learning and in sheer length. The device that Butler uses of attacking religious sects through (supposedly) representative individuals is central to the Tale, and Butler gives his two characters more symbolic status by presenting them as characters in a romantic fiction of their own invention, more or less as Swift adds a dimension to his portrait of the history of the Christian church by relating it as a story about three young men in the Restoration. A further element in the poem is the literary satire that Butler incorporates in the poem, by means of a sort of digressive running commentary on the poem which he interjects at various stages of the narrative. Sometimes he affects to get lost in the diffuseness of his own garrulity.

> They rode, but Authors having not
> Determin'd whether Pace or Trot,
> (That is to say, whether Tollulation
> As they do tearm't, or Succussation)
> We leave it and go on, as now
> Suppose they did, no matter how.
> Yet some from subtle hints have got
> Mysterious light, it was a Trot.
> But let that pass: they now began
> To spur their living Engines on.
> For as whipp'd tops and brandy'd Balls,
> The learned hold, are Animals:
> So Horses they affirm to be
> Mere Engines, made by Geometry,
> And were invented first from Engins,
> As Indian Britans were from Penguins.
> So let them be; and, as I was saying . . .[89]

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[88] See Jack, op.cit., p.26.

[89] Hudibras, (ed.J.Wilders, Oxford: University Press, 1967), pp. 31-2.

Butler here contrives to combine the bad author's inability to stick to the point with satire on crackpot theories of his age (such as Hobbes's description of men as automata and the confirmation of the legend that Madoc ap Owein Gwynnedd discovered America on the flimsiest philological evidence). These theories are ridiculed by their inappositeness in the context and the pedantic satisfaction with which they are trotted out. At the same time phrases like "we leave it and go on", "but let that pass" and "as I was saying" esablish a conversational tone and give the impression of somebody voicing his random thoughts as they come to him, without attempting to refine them into some sort of unity and order. Butler practices this kind of mock-obtuseness regularly enough in the poem to create a pseudo-author or "persona" whose mantle Butler dons whenever satirically appropriate; though it is not a consistent feature of the poem and is at odds with a number of references where Butler clearly speaks in his own voice.

It is not difficult to see in this practice of Butler's one of the literary antecedents of the Grub Street hack in A Tale of a Tub. This, combined with the breadth of curious learning and the wide scope of the satire, as well as the conventional presentation of representative fictional characters endowed with symbolic status, makes Hudibras an important forerunner of the Tale. One important difference, though, should be noted. Swift's story of Restoration life, which he calls "The Allegory" is clearly a parallel to actual history. With Hudibras this is by no means so evident. Whilst the heroes of Hudibras carry the archaic mentality of a bygone era into an era that Butler specifically identifies as the English Civil War, no-one has yet shown convincingly that their engagements

represent real historical events or that the characters they encounter shadow forth historical personages. For this kind of historical parallel, Swift's most illustrious predecessor was John Dryden.

The most famous example of the use of historical parallel for satiric purposes is Absalom and Achitophel. The success of Dryden's poem showed later writers how the habit of mind underlying the allegorizing of scriptures made Restoration readers receptive to an analogy between biblical history and English history.[90] It utilises in the service of a political conviction a literary method with strong sanction in the typological method of reading the Bible, which in theory had been discarded by Protestants at the Reformation but was in fact retained.

> Although the Reformation rejected the mediaeval method of the four senses and urged a return to the literal meaning of the Bible, typology survived. When Donne says that the reader must heed the literal sense of Scripture, he does not, as his sermons clearly show, exclude the practice of typological interpretation. Donne includes under his definition of 'literal sense' the meaning intended by God. It follows that typology must be retained for the very reason that God himself, through the writers of the New Testament, draws the reader's attention to the secret but marvellous, Old Testament prefigurations of his redemptive scheme . . .
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> . . . In the seventeenth century the Old Testament types were known through the study of the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and the lessons of the catechism.[91]

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90 Earl Miner, Dryden's Poetry, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1971), p.153.

91 Mulder, op.cit., p. 137.

Clearly it was a most effective piece of propaganda to show biblical history repeating itself in contemporary England.

Swift's use of historical parallel differs from Dryden's in two important ways, however. In the first place, Absalom and Achitophel keeps strictly within the confines of the Biblical framework and, despite its obvious relevance to the political situation of Restoration England, could be read purely as a story with just a "literal" level and with no implications beyond that level. However, the allegory in the Tale is not realistic on a literal level. The reverence the brothers have for their coats and their father's will would be incomprehensible if we did not understand the father to be God, the coats to be the Christian religion and the will to be the bible. We could not understand Jack's reluctance to clean himself because his father seemed to have forbidden it in his will if we did not interpret this as a reference to a verse in the Book of Revelation: "he which is filthy, let him be filthy still".[92] The lack of obvious equivalents for such creations as the "Tailor deity" or the sect of Aeolists in actual history highlights the difference most clearly. Swift's allegory constantly forces the reader to look through the narrative surface for what it signifies.

Secondly, the allegory in the Tale is a story of the present reflecting the past rather than the past shadowing forth the present. As a result it is less a strict parallel than a rough equivalent on a much reduced scale:

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92 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 191.

a few years during the Restoration represent centuries of Church history; London is the whole Christian world. The fact that a careful, point-for-point correspondence between the small-scale narrative and the large field of history it covers is not possible makes for a different kind of parallel. For one thing the incidents from real history are highly selective; moreover, the way they are depicted, by diminishing them, both simplifies and moralizes them.

The reduction in scale presents history in a selective and exemplary manner that turns it into a fable, though a fable full of burlesque possibilities. This, combined with the discontinuous allegorical presentation, gives a very sophisticated vehicle of satire. Because it forces the reader into a figurative interpretation, without giving him point-for-point equivalents, it thrusts on the reader the burden of finding equivalents, making him participate in the satire. It also has richer comic potential in that it is less predictable, for the shrinkage of scale means that the correspondence of the Restoration narrative to actual history need not be exact and the satirist has greater freedom in choosing his figurative equivalents.

Earl Miner comments that

> The most obvious analogue and source for discontinuous metaphor is the tradition of biblical exegesis, with its reading now purely per literam, now moraliter, now allegorice, and most often together.[93]

He mentions also other traditions related to this: the sacred emblem, the

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[93] Miner, op.cit., p. 152.

beast fable and "a genre something between emblem and fable" exemplified by the crude work, The Fables of Young Aesop (4th edn., London, 1700); and he goes on to say that:

> The religious and political fable developing from such and other sources reaches the height of its popularity well after Dryden. By far the greatest works to show kinship with this literary subtradition are Dryden's poem The Hind and the Panther and those two works by his 'cousin Swift', A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels. [94]

It may seem odd that Swift should combine in his allegory aspects of the fable and the typological reading of the Bible. It is, however, no coincidence that in a satire with the double target of "the misuse of words and the abuse of the Word",[95] Swift is very much concerned with those whose

> particular Talent lies in fixing Tropes and Allegories to the letter and refining what is literal into figure and Mystery. [96]

It is worth considering the possibility that in his choice of discontinuous allegory Swift is showing, consciously or unconsciously, his preference for a figurative reading of the Bible.[97] Choice it certainly was, at any rate, for Swift could equally well handle the method of closed allegory when he wished to. He did so with great success in The Contests and Dissensions between the Nobles and Commons in Athens and Rome , which makes expert use

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94 Ibid., p. 155.
95 Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 208.
96 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 190.
97 See Swift's annotations to Howell, Prose Works, V, 262, where Swift states categorically that the Bible is not history. See also Prose Works, IX, 261-3.

of the historical parallel and was actually published before the Tale, in 1701. Later, in the Examiner papers, he used it frequently, notably when he attacked Lord Lieutenant Wharton for his administration of Irish affairs by borrowing Cicero's oration against Verres.[98] Swift did not therefore choose discontinuous allegory because he could not manage closed allegory but because it suited his purpose.

As Miner remarks, Gulliver's Travels also owes something to the same traditions as the allegory in the Tale. The framework is a traveller's tale which gives unity and continuity to what would otherwise be disparate elements of satire; and whilst it is aesthetically important as the organizing principle and the means by which the satire is conveyed, it only shadows forth the satire, it is not in itself satirical. The controversy between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians is just as much an allegory as Peter's universal pickle and requires of the reader a figurative interpretation. Swift was very much given to obliquity of expression: one recalls that he was fond of riddles and that even in his compliments to friends he was oblique in a manner very close to satire. When he greeted Lord Carteret, the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland his words were:

> What is God's name to you here?
> Get back to your own country, and
> send us our boobies again.[99]

Gulliver's Travels adopts as its fictive convention the traveller's tale and exploits it allegorically. In doing so it utilises the same

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98 Swift, Prose Works, III, 24-9.

99 Quoted in John M. Bullitt, Jonathan Swift and the Anatomy of Satire, (Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 54-5.

traditions as A Tale of a Tub, though the Tale uses them differently. It separates the allegory from the fictitious mouthpiece or persona (though not entirely so) that guides the unwary reader's responses in preposterous directions with plausible eloquence. Apart from this division of technique in the Tale, the main difference of technique between the works is that the Tale traces a chronological development, charting a kind of inverted Pilgrim's Progress with Christianity often moving in a retrograde direction. In Gulliver's Travels the references to history are not chronological and the satire is cumulative. The development that we see is not in the allegory but in the change of attitude of the fictive narrator, under the pressure of accumulated satiric data.

I have suggested that Swift is part of a long tradition of Menippean Satire, influenced by the tradition of paradoxical encomium, and that he also used, as Dryden had used, a kind of discontinuous allegory, related both to the habit of English seventeenth-century readers of typological interpretation, and to the traditions of fable and emblem that were current in his age. It is interesting to note a portrait of Swift that to some extent bears out my claim. Painted by his friend Charles Jervas, it shows Swift at his desk with four volumes standing on it, their titles painted in. The volume nearest his hand is Lucian; then, proceeding to the edge of the picture, we find Horace, Aesop and Don Quixote. It may be that Swift intended these volumes to represent not just individual writers, but the traditions associated with them. Lucian, in the absence of surviving works from either Varro or Menippus, was for the Renaissance the father of both the Menippean satire and the paradoxical encomium. Aesop was, of course, the archetypal writer of fables. As for Swift's knowledge of typological

interpretation, we may safely take that for granted.

I shall refer to these general traditions, as well as some individual works I have mentioned, when I come to examine A Tale of a Tub in detail. For the present, however, I wish to delay that in order to investigate the philosophic background of A Tale of a Tub.

III: The Philosophical Background

"The first of these peccant humours is the extreme affecting of two extremities; the one Antiquity, the other Novelty: wherein it seemeth the children of time do take after the nature of the father. For as he devoureth his children, so one of them seeketh to devour and suppress the other; while antiquity envieth there should be new additions, and novelty cannot be content to add but it must deface . . . Antiquity, deserveth that reverence, that men should make a stand thereupon, and discover what is the best way; but when the discovery is well taken, then to make progression".

Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning.

"The most zealous enemy of innovation must admit the gradual progress of experience, however he may oppose hypothetical temerity".

Samuel Johnson, "Life of Butler".

The easiest way to approach the philosophical background of the Tale is through The Battle of the Books and The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit. The exact relationship these two short pieces bear to the Tale is problematical: since both were printed along with the Tale in a single volume and are to some degree concerned with the same issues it is difficult to gauge how far they should be regarded as an elaboration of the themes in the Tale and how far merely as independent companion pieces. It is a question too complicated to probe here. For the present purpose it is sufficient that the Battle and the Mechanical Operation throw considerable light on the Tale — the Mechanical Operation as an alternative treatment of the same subject (religious enthusiasm) that Swift deals with in the Aeolist Section of the Tale, and the Battle as an analysis of the ancients-moderns controversy to which Swift is constantly referring throughout the Tale. Taken together these two works provide us with the key philosophical issues of the Tale and distinguish them from matters of lesser importance.

In the Battle Swift sets himself to re-examine the terms of the ancients-moderns dispute. It is a dispute in which party lines can be drawn a number of different ways, the most obvious division being between those who prefer ancient and those who prefer modern writers. This is the division adopted by Swift's patron, Sir William Temple, who in his "Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning" simply claims that the major writings of classical antiquity had yet to be surpassed by the writer of subsequent times. He was supported in this view by Charles Boyle and attacked for it by William Wotton; and the great classical scholar, Richard Bentley, later came to Wotton's aid by proving that the "Epistles of Phalaris", which

Temple had praised as an ancient masterpiece was actually a late forgery.[1] Despite Swift's references to this dispute in the Battle, the view that Swift wrote this work simply in order to vindicate Temple cannot be sustained. As Professor Pinkus has indicated, Swift dissociates himself equally from both parties of the dispute when, early in the Battle, he refers to the "warm heads of either faction" and likens them to dogs fighting over a bone.[2] The serious philosophical issues raised by the dispute become clear only when we consider it in a wider context. R.F.Jones sees the Temple-Wotton encounter as a comparatively minor episode in the controversy, which originated in England with Francis Bacon, between those who believed in the decline of the human race and the proponents of the theory of progress. The distinguished Marxist historian, Christopher Hill, sees the question slightly differently, defining the ancients and the moderns respectively as "those who believed it was impossible to improve on the wisdom of classical antiquity and those who thought knowledge was cumulative".[3] The idea that knowledge is acquired cumulatively is so obvious that Hill's formulation of two positions makes that of the ancients look ridiculous. As a corrective to this we should look at Aubrey Williams account of the dispute as it relates to Pope's Dunciad:

> . . . it should be understood first of all that the Battle between Ancients and Moderns is perennial — and that Pope's war against duncery is but one campaign in that enduring struggle. To

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1 See further M.K.Starkman, Swift's Satire on Learning in "A Tale of a Tub" (New York, 1968), pp. 5-22.

2 Philip Pinkus, "Swift and the Ancients-Moderns Controversy", U.T.Q. XXIX (1959), 46 - 58.

3 R.F.Jones, "The Background of the Battle of the Books" in The Seventeenth Century (Stanford, California, 1951), pp. 10-40.
R.F.Jones, Ancients and Moderns, (Berkely, California, 2nd edn., 1961) passim; C.Hill, Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution, (Oxford 1965), p.2.

> use the words 'ancient' and 'modern' is, in fact, to risk a blurring of the issues, for the terms too often appear to restrict the strife to a certain period of time -- the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The War of the Dunces (and that of the Ancients and Moderns) is best described, perhaps, as one waged between eighteenth-century versions of humanist and schoolman. To describe the fray in these terms is to see the parties involved as standing on either side of a cleavage of thought and attitude which extends through the whole of Western civilization: the labels applied to the opposing parties change, but the parties contend about the same issues. [4]

Those issues, according to Professor Williams, are essentially the means, end, use and limits of human knowledge. This is a somewhat different assessment of the dispute from that of either Professor Jones or Professor Hill and, as we shall see shortly, it comes much closer to Swift's own assessment. It is also very different from Temple's straightforward comparison between ancient and modern learning .

Swift's position is most readily ascertained by reference to his treatment of two figures, Bacon and Epicurus, who belong chronologically to the modern and the ancient camp respectively but whom Swift assesses in other than chronological terms. Whereas Temple had placed Epicurus on the same level with Plato and Aristotle as a philosopher, Swift omits him from the ranks of the ancient philosophers, naming only Aristotle and Plato. Swift omits likewise Epicurus' disciple Lucretius, whose poem De Rerum Natura was the best known ancient expression of Epicurean doctrine and whom Temple had praised as exemplifying the "height and purity" of Roman

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[4] Aubrey Williams, Pope's "Dunciad", (London, 1955), p. 104.

style.[5] This cannot be attributed to Swift's ignorance or lack of interest in Temple's ancient favourites, for we know that Swift read Lucretius three times between January 1697 and January 1698.[6] It is simply that Swift's attitude towards them was fundamentally different from Temple's. The most obvious indication of this is the fact that Epicurus appears in the "Digression on Madness" in the Tale as one of half a dozen reductive philosophers whom Swift cites to illustrate his contention that "unrefined reason" is madness. Elsewhere he is more explicit about his objections to Lucretius, calling him "the idol of the moderns" and describing his (and Epicurus's philosophy) as a "compleat system of atheism".[7]

This is not just a question of a difference in taste between Swift and Temple: that Swift could associate with the moderns a figure whom Temple singles out as pre-eminent among the ancients indicates a different concept of what constitutes modernism. For Swift it is not merely a question of having been born at a certain epoch of history. He shows this again in the way that he deals with Bacon. Since Professor Hill and Professor Jones agree that Bacon was the single most important figure in the seventeenth-century English controversy and since Temple paid tribute to him as a great modern wit, we might expect to find Bacon prominent amongst the philosophers of the moderns in Swift's account. The only modern philosophers whom Swift names, however, are Descartes, Gassendi and

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5 See "Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning", Five Miscellaneous Essays by Sir William Temple, Ann Arbor, (1965), p.65.

6 See Guthkelch-Smith, pp. lvi-lvii.

7 Swift, Prose Works, IX, 329; IV, 37.

Hobbes. It is only later on, when the ancient and modern volumes are in pitched battle, that Bacon appears and then his role is insignificant. Swift depicts Aristotle shooting an arrow at Bacon, missing him and instead fatally wounding Descartes.[8] Professor Jones sees this as something of a blunder on Swift's part and suggests that either Bacon's role in the dispute had been obscured by time, or else Swift allowed Bacon to escape in deference to Temple's high opinion of Bacon.[9] In view of Swift's lack of deference to Temple in omitting Epicurus and Lucretius, the second suggestion is unlikely. Bacon may be chronologically modern but, despite his championship of the theory of progress, he belongs philosophically in the camp of the ancients. Swift certainly recognized the importance of Bacon in the ancients-moderns controversy, a fact which he makes clear by means of his allusions to Bacon in the famous episode of the spider and the bee.

Before the ancients and the moderns meet in battle, Swift describes how in the library where they are all assembled a bee happens to alight on a spider's web, arousing the spider's anger and leading to mutual recriminations. In terms that are clearly intended to reflect upon the ancients-moderns controversy Swift depicts the spider as claiming its superiority over the bee on the grounds that spiders are "domestick" animals, furnished with their own "Native stock" within themselves, with which they create their webs; whereas bees are vagabonds born without stock or inheritance of their own and with no possessions but "a pair of Wings and a

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[8] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 244.
[9] "Background of the Battle of the Books", pp. 38-9.

Drone-Pipe, whose livelihood is an universal Plunder upon Nature". The bee defends his species by saying that he has at least come honestly by his wings and voice, which provide him with "Flights" and "Musick"; and counters the charges of vagrancy and looting by declaring that he can enrich himself without the least injury to the flowers he visits. He then goes on to prick the spider's self-esteem by pointing out the deficiencies of the spider's "Native Stock":

> Now for you and your Skill in Architecture, and other Mathematicks, I have little to say: In that Building of yours [i.e. the spider's cobweb], there might, for ought I know, have been Labour and Method enough, but by woful Experience for us both, 'tis too plain, the Materials are nought, and I hope, you will henceforth take Warning and consider Duration and Matter, as well as Method and Art. You boast, indeed, of being obliged to no other Creature, but of drawing and spinning out all from yourself; that is to say, if we may judge of the Liquor in the Vessel by what issues out, you possess a good plentiful Store of Dirt and Poison in your Breast; And tho' I would by no means, less or disparage your genuine Stock of either, yet I doubt you are somewhat obliged for an Encrease of both, to a little foreign Assistance. Your inherent Portion of Dirt, does not fail of acquisitions, by Sweepings exhaled from below; and one Insect furnishes you with a Share of Poison to destroy another. So that in short the Question comes to all this; Whether is the nobler Being of the two, That which by a lazy Contemplation of four Inches round; by an over-weening Pride which feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into Excrement and Venom; producing nothing at last but Fly-bane and a Cobweb, or that which by an universal Range, with a long Search, much Study, true Judgement and Distinction of Things, brings home Honey and Wax. [10]

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[10] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 231-2.

Immediately after the bee finishes his discourse it is Aesop, noted for his skill at interpreting fables, who provides us with the proper application for Swift's anecdote. The moderns, like the spider, pride themselves on their originality, even if their invention produces only dirt and poison; whereas the ancients make no claim to originality except in their mode of expression -- their "flights" and "language" -- but concentrate instead on filling their hives with "honey and wax", thus furnishing Mankind with the two Noblest of things, which are Sweetness and Light .[11]

By means of this fable Swift has transposed the terms of the controversy as expressed by Temple. It is no longer a question of the comparative merits of two epochs far removed in time but one of the rival claims of two conflicting contemporary philosophies. The ancients are those who are convinced that the sum of mankind's accumulated wisdom transcends individual intuitions and insights, whilst the moderns wish to shed the learning of the past as a prelude to a more worthwhile future development. More broadly it is a conflict between humanistic empiricism and progressive rationalism.

This reading of the conflict is precisely the opposite of Professor Hill's, for he attributes to the moderns, not the ancients, the belief that knowledge is cumulative. The interesting thing is that Swift derives his account of the spider-bee confrontation from Bacon, the very figure whom Professor Hill sees in the vanguard of modernism. The Guthkelch-Smith

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[11] Ibid., pp. 233-5.

edition of the Tale notes as a parallel to Swift's fable a passage in Bacon's Novum Organum, Section XCV, in which Bacon makes the following distinction between approaches to natural science:

> Those who have handled sciences have been either men of experiment or men of dogmas. The men of experiment are like the ant; they only collect and use: the reasoners resemble spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course; it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and of the field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own. Not unlike this is the true business of philosophy; for it neither relies solely or chiefly on the powers of the mind, nor does it take the matter which it gathers from natural history and mechanical experiments and lay it up in the memory whole, as it finds it; but lays it up in the understanding altered and digested. Therefore from a closer league between these two faculties, the experimental and the rational (such as has never yet been made) much may be hoped. [12]

In this passage Bacon gives us the very opposition of spider and bee that we find in the Battle, except that Swift's account is biased towards literature rather than natural philosophy. It is now obvious why Bacon does not appear in the ranks of the moderns. Swift is actually appropriating for the ancients the middle course of the bee as adumbrated by, of all people, Bacon; and by implication he claims Bacon as an ancient

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12. Selected Writings of Francis Bacon, (ed. H.G.Dick, The Modern Library, New York, 1955), p.514.

too. This explains why, where we might otherwise expect to find Bacon, among the "Bowmen" of the moderns (who represent philosophy), we are given only Descartes, Gassendi and Hobbes. All three differ from Bacon in being propounders of systems of natural philosophy, all of them exhibiting the tendency to rationalize, which Bacon associates with the spider. Both Descartes and Hobbes inculcated mechanical theories of human behaviour and of the natural world and both prided themselves on the originality of their thought. Gassendi's case is slightly different: he is the chief figure associated with the revival of Epicurean atomism that became a very important part of seventeenth-century philosophy. The fact that the "ancient" name of Epicurus is so closely associated with a modern philosophy underlines the difference between intellectual and merely chronological modernity.

The fact that Bacon originally applied his spider image to scholasticism, *making* scholastic philosophy his chief paradigm of rationalistic philosophy, also helps us understand why Swift includes amongst the moderns what he calls "a confused multitude led by Scotus, Aquinas and Bellarmine."[13] Scotus and Aquinas are amongst the earliest as well as greatest figures in the Aristotelian scholastic tradition and Bellarmine is a distinguished representative near Swift's own time. The logical inference is that Swift sees something distinctly "modern" about the scholastic tradition itself and that these three names with the "confused multitude" are intended to summarize the entire intellectual

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13 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 237.

movement. This ties in with the earlier passage of the Battle in which Swift facetiously describes the original reason why books of controversy came to be chained in libraries:

> When the works of Scotus first came out they were carried to a certain great library, and had Lodgings appointed them; But this author was no sooner settled than he went to visit his master Aristotle, and there both concerted together to seize Plato by main force and turn him out of his ancient station among the Divines, where he had peaceably dwelt near Eight Hundred Years. The attempt succeeded, and the two Usurpers have reigned ever since in his stead. [14]

The reference to Aristotle should not be taken as implying that Aristotle was a modern, since he appears in the ranks of the ancients as a leader of the bowmen.[15] Swift's target here is the alliance of divinity with Aristotelian logic that produced scholasticism. Scholastic philosophers, therefore, who have helped to inculcate the spirit of contentiousness are in this respect prototype moderns. In every respect except the name "modern" itself this is the same diagnosis as Bacon presents of scholasticism.

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[14] Ibid., p. 223. An interesting parallel to this passage occurs in Swift's sermon "Upon the Excellency of Christianity" (undated), in which Swift stresses that it is the disputatiousness of scholasticism to which he objects most strongly: "The Platonic system, first taken into religion, was thought to have given matter for some early heresies in the church. When disputes began to arise, the Peripatetic forms were introduced by Scotus, as best fitted for controversy. And, however this may now have become necessary, it was surely the author of a litigious vein, which hath since occasioned very, pernicious consequences, stopt the progress of Christianity, and been a great promoter of vice, verifying that sentence given by St.James . . . 'Where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work'." See Swift, Prose Works, IX, 249-50.

[15] Cf. Swift's character of Aristotle, Prose Works, V, 345, where he describes Aristotle as "perhaps the most comprehensive genius that ever lived".

Bacon's account of the spider in the Novum Organum is essentially a summary of the much fuller treatment of rationalistic philosophy that he had provided in The Advancement of Learning, in which he presents scholasticism as exemplifying the worst excesses of reason. In this earlier work Bacon uses a number of motifs echoed by Swift in the Battle. Where Swift speaks of the moderns as manufacturing brilliant and original but flimsy intellectual edifices as spiders spin webs out of their entrails, Bacon castigates the "degenerate learning" of the schoolmen who

> did out of no great matter and infinite agitation of wit spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning that are extant in their books.[16]

They thereby created "cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness and thread of the work, but of no substance or profit." Though Bacon never mentions the word "spider", the analogy he is drawing is sufficiently plain. Apart from using the same image, Bacon makes the same criticisms of scholasticism as Swift does of modernism. He objects to the scholastic tendency towards "fruitless speculation or controversy" which produces "monstrous altercations" and "barking questions"[17] and criticizes their failure to cultivate "variety and universality of reading and contemplation", accusing them of intellectual parochialism.[18] Bacon and Swift thus agree

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16 Bacon, Selected Writings, p. 83.

17 Ibid., pp. 184-5. Cf. the "Wonderful Agility" of the moderns in speculation, Guthkelch-Smith, p.225.

18 Ibid., pp. 183-5. Cf. the spider's "lazy contemplation of four inches round" and the bee's "universal Range, with long Search, much Study, true Judgement and distinction of Things." Guthkelch-Smith, p.232.

that the quest for philosophical truth depends less on keenness of intellect than on a protracted and laborious process of acquiring broad experience. But the most significant coincidence of opinion they share is a common diagnosis of the root of rationalistic aberrations. For Bacon the schoolmen,

> as in the enquiry of the divine truth their pride inclined them to leave the oracle of God's word and to vanish in the mixture of their own inventions, so in the inquisition of nature they ever left the oracle of God's works and adored the deceiving and deformed images which the unequal mirror of their own minds or a few received authors or principles did represent unto them.[19]

Similarly, according to Swift, the typical modern is characterized by an over-weening pride, which feeding and engendering [redacted] itself, turns all into excrement and venom; producing nothing at last but Fly-bane and a Cobweb.[20] Bacon, like Swift, recognizes that the intellect does not function purely abstractly or mechanically and is untrustworthy unless its findings are confirmed by common experience.

The fact that Swift reproduces in the Battle not only Bacon's arguments but his very images makes it most unlikely that Bacon's exclusion from the ranks of the moderns was an oversight. No doubt Swift was aware that, as Professor Jones has made clear, Bacon was widely hailed as founder of the "new Science" and a great champion of the moderns against the Ancients.[21]

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19 Bacon, Selected Writings, p.185.
20 Guthkelch-Smith, p.232.
21 "The Background of the Battle of the Books", p. 39.

However, with his empiricism and his suspicions of unchecked rationalism, Bacon is still closer to the empirical Aristotelian tradition than any other.[22] When Swift made Aristotle miss Bacon with his arrow, and instead fatally wound Descartes, he was indicating that the French philosopher constituted a much more dangerous foe to Aristotelian empiricism. After all Descartes, who had doubted empirical reality and had erected his whole philosophical system on what was to him the only self-evident premise, his own existence, represented a far more radical departure from Aristotelianism than Bacon. Descartes had become preoccupied with the need for a self-consistent philosophy that could account theoretically for all phenomena. As one of the great system-builders of history he therefore earned his place, along with Epicurus, as one of the mad reductive philosophers in the "Digression on Madness". Bacon, on the other hand, far from expounding a theoretical system, had proposed the experimental method of scientific enquiry that was designed to forestall too easy an acceptance of such systems. Bacon the so-called modern was temperamentally quite different from the moderns who claimed kinship with him. When Swift therefore chose to include the early scholastic philosophers along with Descartes, Gassendi and Hobbes, and use the Baconian image of the spider to categorize them, he was indicating that the ancients-moderns controversy was a continuing struggle and that the new science of the seventeenth century, far from destroying scholastic rationalism, had merely re-introduced it in a different form. This bears out Professor Williams' reading of the

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[22] See Kearney, Science and Change, 1500 - 1700, pp. 85-95.

dispute as another episode in the perpetual war in which the names of the combatants change but the basic positions of the combatants do not alter.

Descartes appears to be Swift's main paradigm of a modern philosopher. Apart from his engagement with Aristotle, his philosophical method is the one most obviously implicated by the description of the spider. When the spider, indicating his web, declares:

> This large Castle (to shew my Improvement in the Mathematicks) is all built with my own Hands, and the Materials extracted altogether out of my own person. [23]

it resembles Descartes's account of how he came to place less credit in the common experience of the world than in the light of his own reason:

> It is true that while I was doing nothing but considering the mores of other men, I found nothing there to satisfy me, and that I noted almost as much diversity there as I had before among the opinions of the philosophers . . . I learned to have no very firm belief in anything that had been taught me only by example and custom; and so I was delivered little by little from many errors, which can obscure our natural light, and render us less capable of listening to reason. But after I had thus spent some years studying the book of the world, and trying to acquire some experience, one day I resolved also to study within myself, and to use all the forces of my mind to choose the roads I should follow. In this I succeeded much better, it seems to me, than if I had never left either my country or my books. [24]

Descartes is thus a perfect example of what Bacon referred to as thinkers

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[23] Guthkelch-Smith, p.231.

[24] Descartes, "Discourse on Method" and other works, trans. P.J.Olscamp, (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1965), p.10.

"who sought the truth in their own little worlds and not in the great and common world".[25] The reference to "Mathematicks" also points strongly to Descartes, who took geometry as the model for his rational system because of its axiomatic certainty. The importance that mathematics assumed in the seventeenth century is comparable, according to Professor Kearney, with

> the burst of activity in logic which took place during the twelfth-century Renaissance when, thanks to Peter Abelard and his successors, logic became the exciting new intellectual language, which could be applied to the whole range of experience. In the seventeenth century, a similar development took place in the field of mathematics, with Descartes playing the role of Abelard.[26]

Descartes's faith in mathematics as a suitable basis for a philosophic method contrasts sharply with Bacon's observation that mathematics "ought only to give definiteness to natural philosophy, not to generate or give it birth".[27] Whilst Swift undoubtedly did not intend a simple identification between the spider and Descartes, the French philosopher is both an extremely influential and a conspicuously spiderish modern and well illustrates the characteristic "modern" qualities.

The spider-bee confrontation, then, stands at the heart of the Battle and puts the focus on that aspect of modernism that Swift feels is most important, its rejection of tradition for solipsistic rationalism. Indeed, once this distinction is established the terms "ancient" and "modern" are

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25 Selected Writings, p. 191.
26 Kearney, Science and Change, 1500 - 1700, p. 58.
27 Bacon, Selected Writings, p. 514.

redundant for they scarcely express the positions of the two rival camps. Doubtless Swift was aware that in an earlier phase of the ancients-moderns struggle, depicted in Rubeanus and von Hutten's Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum, the same terms had been used with exactly the opposite connotation, "modern" being used to describe the newly-revived humanistic learning and "ancient" to denote the scholastic tradition.[28] But since Swift uses the term "modern" throughout the Tale we have to distinguish carefully between modernism in a chronological sense, which is the basis of numerous jokes such as his mock scorn at the ancients' ignorance of modern conditions — no more than humorous jibes at the terms on which the ancients-moderns dispute had been argued -- and on the other hand the much more important question of philosophical modernism as represented by Descartes, Gassendi and Hobbes.

The philosophies of these three figures, as we shall see later, have an important place in key sections of the Tale. Gassendi stands apart from the other two inasmuch as Swift never mentions his name in the Tale, but this is easily explained by the fact that Gassendi's atomic hypothesis, unlike the mechanical systems of Descartes and Hobbes, was consciously derived from an ancient system, the atomic philosophy of Epicurus; and Epicurus, too, occupies an important role in the Tale. If Gassendi's name is no longer as well known as that of Hobbes or Descartes, we must nevertheless remember that he had as much influence as either of them on thinkers of the seventeenth century. In France his system constituted the

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[28] Ed.cit., pp. 36 - 7.

chief rival to Cartesianism as a scientific paradigm complete and coherent enough to supplant the moribund Aristotelian world-view. Its impact in England was, if anything, greater than in France, for it gained the adherence of two great natural philosophers, Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton, as well as that of the most influential moral philosopher of his time, John Locke. These men gave to mechanical philosophy a respectability it had hitherto lacked, since all of them tried to avoid compromising their Christian faith in the theories they produced. Previously mechanism would have been associated in England either with the Roman Catholics, Descartes and Gassendi, or with the freethinker, Hobbes.[30] And atomism itself was fraught with atheistic implications because Epicurus and Lucretius had denied providence and ascribed the creation of the universe to the random motion of atoms in the void.[31]

We can appreciate how important mechanical philosophy was in Swift's eyes and how much he continued to detest it from the fact that he felt it was still worth attacking in Gulliver's Travels, which appeared in print over twenty years after the Tale was published. The passage in which the

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30 Kearney, op.cit., pp. 171 - 4.

31 Ibid., p. 169. It is worth noting that Swift's reading from 1697 - 8 includes a number of volumes concerned at least in part with Epicureanism. Apart from his three readings of Lucretius, he also read Francois Bernier's Grand Mogol: Bernier was Gassendi's secretary and wrote a popular account of the Epicurean philosophy (1675-7). His Grand Mogol also contains a brief account of this philosophy in the form of a letter to a friend. Sir John Davies's Nosce Teipsum was reissued in 1697 in an edition by Nahum Tate, who in his preface recommended it as an antidote to the poison of Lucretius and Hobbes; and Swift read Davies's poem in the same year. Journal du Voyage de Siam, also on Swift's list, was written by another prominent atomist, the Abbé de Choisy. See Guthkelch-Smith, pp. lvi - lvii; Spink, op. cit., pp. 106 - 8; C.T.Harrison, "The Ancient Atomists and English Literature of the Seventeenth Century", Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, XLV, (1934), 13.

attack occurs is from Book III, Chapter VIII, which describes Gulliver's encounter on the Island of Magicians (Glubbdubdrib) with the spirits of the dead. After meeting Aristotle and Homer, Gulliver reports:

> I then desired the governor to call up Descartes and Gassendi, with whom I prevailed to explain their systems to Aristotle. This great philosopher freely acknowledged his own mistakes in natural philosophy, because he proceeded in many things upon conjecture, as all men must do; and he found that Gassendi, who had made the doctrine of Epicurus as palatable as he could, and the vortices of Descartes, were equally to be exploded. He predicted the same fate to attraction, whereof the present learned are such zealous asserters. He said that new systems of nature were but new fashions, which would vary in every age; and even those who pretend to demonstrate them from mathematical principles would flourish but a short period of time, and be out of vogue when that was determined. [32]

This is essentially the same picture that Swift gives us in the Battle, brought up to date with an oblique allusion to Newton's theory of universal gravitation. There is a reference to the Cartesian system of vortices which features in both the Tale and the Battle, as well as a reference to the mathematical foundation of scientific theories, and a rejection of all synthetic systems of nature that recalls the system-builders of the "Digression on Madness". Moreover, as I shall try to illustrate in the next chapter, it is not just coincidence that here, in connection with theories of nature, Swift uses the fashion metaphor which plays such an important part in the tailor-worship section of the Tale. Swift appears to

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[32] Swift, Prose Works, XI, 197-8.

have been remarkably tenacious in his early opinion of mechanicalhypotheses of natural philosophy.

The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit poses a rather more difficult problem in that, as Professor Starkman observes, its relationship with the Battle and the Tale has always been puzzling.[33] Without entering into the thorny question of why Swift allowed its publication when it obviously goes over ground he has already covered, at least in part, in the Tale, I wish to examine briefly some of the ways in which it is more explicit than the Aeolist section or at least takes a slightly different approach to the subject Swift deals with. The Aeolist section, after all, which satirizes "all pretenders to inspiration whatsoever", is also about the operation of a "spirit" according to a pretty mechanical process. Such a duplication seems redundant unless the Mechanical Operation contains elements that help clarify the Aeolist section.

The most significant distinction between the two accounts is the direction in which the spirit moves. In the Aeolist section a group is described that attempts to introduce "spirit" or wind into the body from outside by artificial means. In the Mechanical Operation, however, the process is reversed, for Swift there defines enthusiasm as: "A lifting up of the Soul or its Faculties above Matter." He proceeds to enumerate four separate ways of achieving this sublimation: Divine inspiration, demonic possession, natural causes ("the effect of strong Imagination, Spleen, violent Anger, Fear, Grief, Pain, and the like") and finally "launching

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[33] Swift's Satire on Learning in "A Tale of a Tub", p. 141.

out of the Soul, as it is purely an effect of Artifice and Mechanick Operation".[34] It is this fourth kind of enthusiasm that Swift proposes to deal with.

The idea of mechanical enthusiasm was not original with Swift. As Professor Harth has indicated, the Anglican divine Meric Casaubon, in his Treatise concerning Enthusiasme (1655), distinguishes nine different varieties of enthusiasm, all attributable to natural causes but frequently mistaken for divine inspiration or diabolic possession. Of the nine Casaubon discussed only five in his treatise, one of the remaining four varieties being "Mechanical Enthusiasme".[35] Swift may well have had Casaubon's work in mind when he came to write his own account of enthusiasm, but he differs from Casaubon in making a distinction even between enthusiasm by natural causes and mechanical enthusiasm. This may seem a small distinction but if we recall that the three philosophers in the Battle who epitomize modern philosophy are all mechanists, and if we recollect also that the spider-bee episode opposes narrow rationalistic systems with the search for the truth of universal nature, then the dichotomy assumes a fundamental importance. The fact that Swift concedes that "many an Operation" beginning as pure artifice has in the course of time grown to be natural, yet insists on maintaining the distinction between an effect wholly natural and one that has grown from art into nature, emphasizes how important a distinction he considers it.[36] We can see the enthusiasts,

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[34] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 266 - 7.
[35] P.Harth, Swift and Anglican Rationalism, pp. 72 - 3.
[36] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 267 - 9.

much alike Descartes, Gassendi or Hobbes, as being imprisoned by their own foolish mechanistic assumptions, indeed, the very title of the Mechanical Operation recalls the main theoretical bias of those illustrious modern systematizers. The enthusiasts differ from them chiefly in that they are less theoretical than practical exponents of mechanism.

Swift shows both the mechanist-enthusiast association and the natural/mechanical dichotomy at their clearest in what seems to me the central passage of the Mechanical Operation, which occurs at the beginning of the second section. He begins by a comparison between the system of worship of the "wild Indians" and that practised by "us", which presumably refers to the Christians. After considering whether these primitives worship the Devil, or God under a limited aspect, or whether they give homage to the dual principle of good and evil, Swift pauses to tell us that he is inclined to look upon the division between good and evil as "the most Universal Notion, that Mankind by the meer Light of Nature, ever entertained of Things Invisible".[37] And despite their primitivism, Swift goes on to commend the Indians for one aspect of their religious practice in which they show superiority over the more sophisticated Europeans:

> What I applaud them for, is their Discretion, in limiting their Devotions and their Deities to their several Districts, nor ever suffering the Liturgy of the White God, to cross or interfere with that of the Black. Not so with us, who pretending by the Lines and Measures of our Reason, to extend the Dominion of one invisible Power, and contract that of the other, have discovered a gross Ignorance in the

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[37] Ibid., p. 274.

> Natures of Good and Evil, and most horribly confounded the Frontiers of both. After men have lifted up the Throne of their Divinity to the Caelum Empyraeum, adorned him with all such Qualities and Accomplishments as themselves seem most to value and possess; After they have sunk their Principle of Evil to the lowest Center, bound him with Chains, loaded him with Curses, furnish'd him with viler Dispositions than any Rake-Hell of the Town, accoutred him with Tail and Horns, and huge Claws, and Sawcer Eyes; I laugh aloud to see these Reasoners, at the same time, engaged in wise Dispute, about certain Walks and Purlieus, whether they are in the verge of God or the Devil, seriously debating, whether such and such influences come into Mens Minds from above or below, or whether certain Passions and Affections are guided by the Evil Spirit or the Good.[38]

This unfavourable comparison with the "wild Indians" is at first sight unflattering to Christianity, but there is no need to infer from it that Swift is advocating natural religion. Both the concepts of good and evil that he describes are pretty crude ones. The point is that a more sophisticated approach to the question of good and evil does not guarantee an intelligent assessment of it. The reasoners that Swift mentions find their rational faculties sufficient for the purpose of making abstract judgements about good and evil but quite inadequate for assessing practical situations. The reference to the "lines and measures" of our reason shows that Swift is pointing the contrast between mensurative (or quantitative)

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[38] Ibid., pp. 274 - 5.

reason and evaluative (or ethical) reason. As Swift frames it in this example it is very like the contrast between the spider and the bee, for he shows the simple idea of good and evil extended into a rigid hypothesis that is remote from common experience. Whereas the ethical reason depends upon the assessment of each situation according to its merits, quantitative assessment in the sphere of morals operates on the basis of rigid and unworkable abstractions. Swift has no need to offer his own understanding of the nature of the supreme deity: the incongruity of the idea that there is a narrow border separating absolute good and evil is sufficiently clear as soon as it is applied to practical human affairs. (Swift mocks the idea also in the Aeolist Section of the Tale, where he remarks "how near the Frontiers of Height and Depth, border upon each other".[39]) It is ludicrous to think of the omnipotent deity battling with the devil even in the most trivial everyday circumstances. This passage, then, is a reflection not so much on God as on the conception that human beings entertain of Him.

Swift's terms of reference thus far in the second section of the Mechanical Operation are general, but he goes on to apply them to the specific question of whether the "English Enthusiastic Preachers" are divinely inspired or possessed by the devil. He dismisses both alternatives, declaring that:

> it is in Life as in Tragedy, where,
> it is held, a Conviction of great Defect,
> both in Order and Invention, to interpose

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39 Ibid., pp. 157 - 8.

> the Assistance of preternatural Power without an absolute and last Necessity. However, it is a Sketch of Human Vanity, for every Individual, to imagine the whole Universe is interess'd in his meanest Concern . . . Who that sees a little paultry Mortal, droning and dreaming, and drivelling to a Multitude, can think it agreeable to common good sense, that either Heaven or Hell should be put to the Trouble or Influence or Inspection upon what he is about? Therefore, I am resolved immediately, to weed this error out of Mankind, by making it clear that this Mystery, of venting Spiritual Gifts, is nothing but a Trade, acquired by much Instruction, and mastered by equal Practice and Application as others are.[40]

Swift's essential diagnosis of the enthusiasts, then, is essentially the same as for the moderns in the Battle -- pride. In depriving the enthusiasts of the dignity of divine inspiration or even demonic possession and at the same time disallowing natural causes which might be thought to mitigate their freedom of choice, Swift administers suitable chastisement to their delusions of grandeur. Taking as his cue the less obvious meaning of "mystery" as a craft or trade, Swift suggests that enthusiasm as practised by English sectarians is no more than a mechanical skill than can be acquired with proper training by any studious artisan; and for the remainder of the Mechanical Operation he occupies himself with explicating ingeniously and in considerable technical detail the operation of the spiritual mechanism.

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[40] Ibid., pp. 275 - 6.

This veiled reference to trade mysteries, however, is more than just a sneer at the low social origin of the sectarian preachers (many of whom were illiterate tradesmen) for it serves as a link with the Battle, in which Swift makes it very clear how he feels about mechanical theorists. To emphasize the point he actually mentions Hobbes by name, as well as making a number of references that sound distinctly Hobbesian.[41] Swift does not deny the possibility of inspiration: he merely demonstrates how easily the sham enthusiasts lend themselves to a mechanical theory of behaviour and thus play into the hands of reductive philosophers like Hobbes.

The weakness of this diagnosis lies in the fact that Swift has distinguished mechanical enthusiasm from other forms of possession, divine or diabolic, which he admits are quite possible. When, therefore, he goes on to give a historical survey of "Fanaticism, from the most early Ages to the Present", as the culmination of his treatise, he is open to the accusation that he is trying to compass too much with his comic principle of explanation. I suggest that this is why in the Aeolist section Swift makes greater concessions to the notion of inspiration as something that comes to its beneficiaries from outside themselves and attempts a serious

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41 The explicit mention of Hobbes is in Guthkelch-Smith, p.277. See also the references to the senses engaged in a civil war with each other, p. 270, and to the "little commonwealth" of the brain, p. 277. The Mechanical Operation is addressed to "T.H.Esquire, at his Chambers in the Academy of the Beaux Esprits in New Holland". For "T.H." I suggest Thomas Hobbes, surely the most famous seventeenth-century Englishman to bear those initials. Hobbes's philosophy rigidly excludes the supernatural from consideration and, like Swift's account of the enthusiasts, deals with all phenomena in purely mechanistic terms. In his Leviathen he has a particularly forceful refutation of the notion of divine inspiration, which I shall consider in detail when I come to deal with the Aeolist section of the Tale.

intellectual consideration of the concept, as is only appropriate when he is dealing with so all-inclusive a category as "all pretenders to inspiration whatsoever".

In the next three chapters I shall argue that Swift is concerned in the tailor-worship section of the Tale with the philosophical issues he distinguishes as most important in The Battle of the Books; and that the connection that exists between the Mechanical Operation and the Battle is essentially the same connection that exists between the tailor-worship and Aeolist sections of the Tale in that both the latter illustrate a perverse brand of mechanistic thinking. Finally I shall try to show that the "Digression on Madness" represents the ultimate diagnosis of all such thinking and that at its core lies a brilliant piece of rhetoric which shows, not by precept but by example, why systems of this kind gain acquiescence. In the process I shall be trying to demonstrate why an adaption of the paradoxical encomium was the logical form for Swift to use in these three sections of the Tale.

IV: THE TAILOR-WORSHIP SECTION

"Wherefore by the contemplation of nature to induce and inforce the acknowledgment of God, and to demonstrate his power, providence and goodness, is an excellent argument, and hath been excellently handled by divers. But on the other side out of the contemplation of nature, or ground of human knowledges, to induce any verity or persuasion concerning the points of faith is in my judgment not safe . . . So as we ought not to attempt to draw down or submit the mysteries of God to our reason; but contrariwise to raise and advance our reason to the divine truth".

Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning

In this chapter and the next I shall be concerned with the Tailor-Worship and Aeolist sections of the Tale (Sections II and VIII), though I shall give some attention to the remainder of the allegory where appropriate. These two sections stand apart from the allegory as a whole because they are not concerned with the activities of the three brothers. For each of these passages Swift brings the narrative to a halt in order to outline a system, partly religious and partly philosophical, which is founded on an absurd principle. Apart from the problems of interpretation each passage poses individually, they present a problem as to why Swift should have chosen to change his method in the middle of the allegory. It is surprising that critics who have attempted to interpret the two passages have failed to account satisfactorily for this shift in method; the more so because the crucial importance of these passages is universally recognized among Swift scholars. The interpretation I shall set out, therefore, will attempt to provide a reading of these two sections as well as to account for their significance in the context of the allegory.

Professor Harth is surely correct when he claims that Swift is satirizing some particular object in the Tailor-worship section.[1] On the other hand the elements it covers are so disparate (they include metaphysics, natural philosophy and moral philosophy) that it is difficult to perceive any single unifying factor apart from the clothing metaphor. Nevertheless, the fact that Swift took the trouble to create such a system and set it out so prominently must mean that he attached considerable

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[1] Swift and Anglican Rationalism, p.74.

importance to it.

The most plausible interpretation has been made by Professor Harth, who observes that "all the evidence points to materialism" as the object of Swift's ridicule.[2] There is no doubt that the brothers disregard the injunctions of their father's will from thoroughly materialistic motives. Moreover, as Professor Harth shows clearly, one part of the Tailor-worship section is a parody of a passage by Hobbes in his Leviathan. Even in Swift's time Hobbes was notorious as the arch-materialist. The passage Swift parodies is taken from the introduction to Leviathan, in which Hobbes likens man to a watch which has an assortment of interlocking parts that keep it in motion -- surely a very materialistic conception. We can add to this fact that the section of the allegory which straddles the Tailor-worship system is concerned with the growing worldliness of the three brothers. Section II closes with a reference to Peter, the elder brother, forging a Deed of Conveyance, which is Swift's allegorical equivalent of the Donation of Constantine, a spurious document by which the mediaeval popes justified their claim to the papal lands. Section IV is also very much concerned with the cupidity of the mediaeval church. Clearly the brothers, above all Peter, do become materialistic.

There are still good grounds, however, for questioning whether their materialism is the central target of the Tailor-worship section. To begin with, one might ask what a passage parodying Hobbes is doing in a section intended to throw light on the corruption of the mediaeval church. It

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[2] Ibid., p. 76.

would be difficult to find mediaeval teachings approved by the church that inculcated a philosophy in any way resembling that of Hobbes. Could such teachings be found, it would still be necessary to explain the relevance of any allusion to Hobbes in this context, which is something Professor Harth does not attempt. Furthermore, "materialism" as Professor Harth employs it is very much a catch-all term. He uses it to describe both Hobbesian materialism (the belief that only material things exist) and the behaviour of the three brothers when "after seven years of close attention to the directions of their father's will, they first began to add ornaments to their coats (that is, to corrupt the Christian religion) in disobedience to their father's commands. And they do so as a direct result of their contact with the tailor worshippers". If one accepts Professor Harth's assertion that materialism is the literal antithesis of religion, one is forced to admit that "the system of belief professed by the tailor-worshippers . . . is an anti-religious doctrine in direct contradiction to Christianity".[3] The big question that Professor Harth leaves unanswered is the identity of this anti-religious sect, because he is more interested in the modern application of the allegory, which he probes in some detail, than in a mediaeval application. But it is incumbent upon Professor Harth to identify the anti-religious sect that influences the mediaeval church to corruption if he is to safeguard the aesthetic integrity of the allegory.

In fact no such sect exists. The clothes-worshippers represent at least some sort of religion inasmuch as they adore a tailor as their deity.

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[3] Ibid., p. 77.

In order to label them as anti-religious, Professor Harth has had to place too much emphasis on the term "materialism", which is his own extrapolation from the passage under discussion. There is nothing in the theoretical materialism of the tailor-worshippers that leads inevitably to the kind of materialism represented by the brothers acquisition of temporal power.

The clinching objection to Professor Harth's argument, however, is the fact that immediately prior to the Tailor-worship passage Swift makes it perfectly clear that the brothers had not adhered scrupulously to their father's commands. Before they came in contact with the Tailor-worship sect, they fell in love with certain ladies called the Duchess d'Argent, Madame des Grands Titres, and the Countess d'Orgueil, or Covetousness, Ambition and Pride. In order to ingratiate themselves with these ladies they

> quickly began to improve in the good Qualities of the Town: they Writ and Raillyed, and Rhymed, and Sung, and Said, and Said Nothing; they Drank, and Fought, and Whor'd, and Slept, and Swore, and took Snuff; They went to new Plays on the First Night, haunted the Chocolate-Houses, beat the Watch, lay on Bulks and got Claps: they bilkt Hackney-Coachmen, ran in debt with shop-keepers and lay with their wives.[4]

Swift describes at great length the corrupting effect that the good qualities of the town work upon the brothers, in spite of which "the Ladies aforesaid continued with inflexible". It is at this point, having shown the brothers' incipient corruption, that Swift introduces the Tailor-worship

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[4] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 74 - 5.

section as a means of accounting for the ladies' inflexibility.

The brothers, then, succumb to the attractions of fashionable corruption and begin to behave in a manner calculated to improve their standing in the corrupt world, though without getting any nearer to fulfilling their material ambitions. Far from connecting their moral degeneration with the Tailor-worshippers, Swift portrays the brothers as prepared to lead an abandoned, rakish life but reluctant to make any additions to their coats; and it is this reluctance that accounts for their lack of success in wooing the three ladies:

> For, on the one side, the three Ladies they addressed themselves to, (whom we have already named) were ever at the very top of Fashion, and abhorred all that were below it, but the breadth of a Hair. On the other side, their Father's Will was very precise, and it was the main Precept in it, with the greatest Penalties annexed, not to add to, or diminish from their coats, one thread, without a positive command in the Will. [5]

This passage immediately follows Swift's account of the Tailor-worship sect. "Fashion" cannot therefore be taken to refer to fashionable vices because the brothers have already subscribed to those. The issue that confronts them is much more basic than that. Swift has already identified the coats as representing "the Doctrine and Faith of Christianity, by the Wisdom of the Divine Founder fitted to all Times, Places and Circumstances".[6] We must infer from this that the Clothes philosophy corrupts the brothers not in

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[5] Ibid., p. 75.
[6] Ibid., p. 73.

their morals but in their very faith, requiring of them not a change of behaviour but one of principle. Following the logic of the allegory, we have to see the fashionable world, insofar as it seeks to determine what people should wear on their coats, as a world of fashionable intellectual ideas, which by its very nature is at variance with the distinguishing character of Christian belief, "fitted to all times, places and circumstances".

If we can agree upon this, then it is easier to see the significance of the Tailor-worship episode. The basic metaphor is, as in the allegory proper, one of clothing and, at least in part, of fashion which, by expressing the purely local and temporary, makes a fitting contrast to eternal truth of the Christian religion. The other important element in the Tailor-worship section is the logic by means of which it reduces everything to a system of clothes. It is a misuse of reason on an all-embracing scale, comparable to the brothers' misuse of reason, on a more selective scale, in interpreting their father's will. If we think in terms of the mediaeval church it is obvious that the single most pervasive form of systematic rationalism, as well as the most influential system on all thinkers of the High Middle Ages, was scholasticism. We should remember, too, that Swift specifically refers to an earlier episode of the ancients-moderns controversy in The Battle of the Books, whereby Scotus and Aristotle contrived to turn Plato out of his "ancient station among the divines". This is a clear allusion to the Aristotelian scholastic revival of the thirteenth century, originally set in motion by the simultaneous arrival in the west of the bulk of Aristotle's lost works in both Greek and Arabian versions. In view of this it would be pleasant to report that the Tailor-worship Section

was a straightforward attack on scholasticism. But it is not. That would still fail to account for the presence of the Hobbesian parody and for the change in technique to be found in that section. Indeed, since Swift attacks scholasticism in the allegory proper it would be superfluous to do so in the Tailor-worship section if that were all he was doing. Scholasticism is a partial but not the whole target of that section. Before attempting to uncover the extra dimension it holds, however, we should examine briefly the satiric context in which the Tailor-worship section occurs.

The brothers cannot add to their coats without the sanction of their father's will. Since the will is "very precise" they cannot use anything that is even remotely "antithetical to Christianity", to use Professor Harth's phrase. To justify their desires they need a system of interpretation that is ethically neutral which, applied with sufficient ingenuity, can overrule the ordinary dictates of common sense. The method they find is that of pure reason, or logic, which has the advantage of arriving at conclusions without passing judgement on their moral probity. It is the elder brother, whom Swift later christens "Peter" and who happens to be "more book-learned" than the other two, who initiates the change by attempting to find the word "shoulder-knots" in the will at first totidem verbis, then totidem syllabis and finally, in desperation, totidem litteris. Even this degree of prevarication is not sufficient until he thinks of citing "Cnot" as a variant reading for "Knot", after which he can declare shoulder-knots "Jure Paterno".[7]

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[7] Ibid., pp. 81 - 4.

The example is a frivolous one but there is no mistaking Swift's target, for the language is that of scholastic logic. The precise nature of the addition is not disclosed: "shoulder-knots" is an allegorical term with no obvious historical equivalent. What interests Swift is the way that an ethically neutral scientific method, when joined with dishonest motives, can easily be abused. In other examples Swift presents Peter logic-chopping, making fine distinctions and using high-sounding technical expressions in Latin, the international language of scholasticism. Here is the passage in which Peter justifies oral tradition as having equal authority with his father's will:

> You are to be informed, that, of Wills, duo sunt genera, Nuncupatory and Scriptory: that in the Scriptory Will here before us, there is no precept or mention of Gold Lace, conceditur. But si idem affirmetur de nuncupatorio, negatur.

Swift ascribes Peter's logical subtlety on this occasion to his reading of Aristotle:

> . . . about this time it fell out, that the Learned Brother aforesaid, had read Aristotelis Dialectica, and especially that wonderful piece de Interpretatione, which has the faculty of teaching its readers to find out a Meaning in Every Thing but it self. [8]

As we have notes, Aristotle was the favourite of the twelfth-century scholastics and from then until the seventeenth century was accorded an authority greater than that of any pagan philosopher. The logical treatises,

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[8] Ibid., pp. 85 - 6.

or the Organon, of Aristotle, which Swift here refers to as the Dialectica, had been known considerably prior to the twelfth century, having survived in a translation by Boethius.[9] Swift may or may not have known this, but it seems likely in view of his comments on the alliance between Scotus and Aristotle that he is thinking mainly of Aristotle's influence on twelfth-century scholasticism. The Dialectica were still an important part of the curriculum in European Universities of the seventeenth century, including Swift's own Trinity College, Dublin.[10]

These passages leave little room for doubt as to the rationale behind Peter's corruption. His method is so clearly scholastic logic that it is almost superfluous for Swift to label him, near the end of Section II, "the Scholastick Brother".[11] But there is one further passage we should glance at, which shows the outcome of mixing orthodox Christian doctrine with scholastic reasoning. This passage occurs in Section IV, the second section of the allegory, which recounts the many novelties Peter introduces into his canon of belief after he turns "projector and virtuoso".[12] As these terms suggest, Swift is more interested in developing the allegory in a direction that satirizes follies current a little closer to his own

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9 See F.Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Volume 2: Mediaeval Philosophy, 2 vols., (New York: Doubleday, 1962), I, 116. Josef Pieper, the outstanding modern authority on scholasticism, dates the movement from as early as Boethius himself. (See J.Pieper, Scholasticism: Personalities and Problems of Medieval Philosophy, (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 37-8.) But most critics see the great scholastic era as beginning in 1215, when the curriculum at the University of Paris abolished the classics and replaced them with formal logic. (See E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 589-90).

10 I.Ehrenpreis, Swift: The Man, his Works, and the Age, Volume I: Mr.Swift and his Contemporaries, (London: Methuen and Co.Ltd.), pp. 58-9.

11 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 89.

12 Ibid., p. 105.

time. That may be the reason why Swift does not further elaborate on the scholastic side of Peter. However, the single incident to which Swift devotes most space in this section has a connection with Peter's scholasticism that is not immediately apparent.

The episode in question describes a meal between the three brothers, at which Peter offers the other two meat and wine but presents them with nothing but slices of bread. This is, of course, a hit at the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. It is a daring attack, for it would be easy to see it as mocking the doctrine of the real presence -- a doctrine still maintained by a number of Anglicans. Swift gives enough detail to obviate such a misreading and it is still the most telling satirical thrust Swift makes against the Catholic Church. Even Wotton, who generally manages to find something semi-blasphemous in Swift's satire, sees this as an attack on the specifically Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and the associated doctrine of concomitance.[13]

This might seem like a fairly obvious target, as being one of the main areas of division between Catholic and Protestant. Swift accounts for it thus:

> I have chosen to relate this worthy Matter in all its Circumstances, because it gave a principal Occasion to that great and famous Rupture [i.e. the Reformation] which happened about the same time among these Brethren, and was never afterwards made up.[14]

Transubstantiation was certainly one of the major issues of the Reformation and Martin Luther, the first man to denounce it openly, did so on the

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[13] Ibid., p. 321.
[14] Ibid., p. 119.

grounds that it was an Aristotelean doctrine, made obligatory a mere three centuries earlier by the Lateran council of 1215.[15] In this he had considerable justification since it was not merely a different way of stating the doctrine of the real presence (which Luther did not oppose) but a technical philosophical term which attempted to define the nature of the change that took place at the consecration. The terminology itself is derived from Aristotle:

> In its technical sense transubstantiation denotes a doctrine which is based on the Aristotelean philosophy as taught by the schoolmen, according to which a physical object consists of 'accidents', the properties perceptible by the senses, and an underlying substance in which accidents inhere, and which gives to the object its essential nature. According to the doctrine of transubstantiation the accidents of bread and wine remain after consecration, but their substance is changed into that of the body and blood of Christ.[16]

Considering the care with which he builds up the character of Peter the scholastic it is unlikely to be coincidence that Swift chooses to stress this particular issue, amongst all of Peter's other projects. The first half of the allegory relates the decline of the church until the time of the Reformation; the decline begins with the infiltration of scholastic method; and it finally comes to a head with the formation of a doctrine

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[15] A.G.Dickens, The Counter-Reformation, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), p. 41.

[16] Documents of the Christian Church, ed. H. Beltenson, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 207.

based on Aristotelean scholastic philosophy. We may be sure, then, that for Swift the advent of scholasticism, together with the ethical failure of the mediaeval church, accounts for the slow corruption of pre-Reformation Christianity.

It is time now to return to the clothes-worship section. I commented earlier that this section has two main elements. In its use of the clothing metaphor it harmonises well with the basic metaphor of the allegory. In its use of logic to reduce everything to a single principle, however, it is a parody of a universal intellectual system. Within the period from 1200 up to 1650 Aristotelean scholasticism, with its collections of scientific observations, metaphysics, ethics and logic, was thought by most European universities to provide "the only acceptable synthesis of human knowledge, even though it might be open to modification in detail".[17] Swift's Tailor-worship section has exactly the same elements as the Aristotelean system: it speculates on the nature of God (metaphysics), of the universe (natural science) and human behaviour (ethics) and it proceeds with a certain kind of logic from one step to the next. What is more, the second paragraph is manifestly a parody of Aristotelean cosmology, because it mentions the "primum mobile", the outermost of the concentric spheres of which the Aristotelean world was composed.

By Swift's day Aristotle's view of the universe, perpetuated by the schoolmen, had been discredited, thanks to the researches of the great astronomers Brahae, Kepler, Galileo and Newton. One might say that it was

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[17] Hugh Kearney, Science and Change, 1500 - 1700, (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 26.

a "fashionable" cosmology that had had its day. There would be little merit in Swift's account, however, if he was merely informing us, with the benefit of hindsight, that the mediaeval hypothesis failed because it was only a fashionable hypothesis with no basis in truth. And this would still not tell us why Swift portrays God as a tailor, and what his target is in doing so.

The argument of the tailor-worship section begins with the concept of the tailor-god. Swift tells us in a footnote that his first paragraph is "an occasional satire on dress and fashion, in order to introduce what follows". This is disingenuous. Although anyone who places a disproportionate emphasis on clothing might be said to make a god of his tailor, Swift's footnote discourages us from reading the identification the other way round, as showing God to be a tailor. But unless we read it in the second way, the succeeding paragraphs make no sense. It is only by seeing God as a tailor that we can justify seeing his artifacts as suits of clothes. Only the first and last paragraphs actually use the fashion metaphor at all, the other three being taken up with an account of the natural world, man and his soul. The idea that God is a tailor is the premise that initiates a whole train of argument extending throughout the Tailor-worship section.

The tailor-deity idea, unlikely though it sounds, is only one of a number of concepts, about the nature of the deity deducible from holy writ. E.R.Curtius lists pagan and Christian sources that helped to promote the notion of God as an artist, an architect, a potter, a goldsmith, a

musician and a theatrical director.[18] Since all are anthropomorphic, they have poetic rather than scientific (or theological) value. The tailor-deity idea rests on a reference in the Book of Genesis, 3 : 21 :

> Fecit quoque Dominus Deus Adae
> uxori ejus tunicas pelliceas.
>
> [Unto Adam also and to his wife
> did the Lord God make coats of skins.]

There is little enough warrant here for a full-scale account of God as a tailor, and Swift initially seems playful rather than serious. As the Guthkelch-Smith edition of the Tale prints out, Swift's defence of the concept depends mainly on a series of puns and witty associations: the tailor sits like a Persian emperor; his goose-shaped smoothing iron recalls the sacred geese of the Capitoline hill in Rome; he has a tailor's hell or rag-box in front of him; and from the proverbial phrase "to pick a louse" (meaning "to be a tailor") the goose becomes a second deity to whom lice are offered in sacrifice. This is an amusing but not very convincing picture. The only hint of a serious meaning is in the reference to hell:

> Hell seemed to open and catch at
> the animals the Idol was creating;
> to prevent which certain of his
> priests hourly flung in pieces of
> the uninformed mass or substance,
> and sometimes whole limbs already
> enlivened, which that horrid Gulph
> insatiably swallowed, terrible to
> behold.[19]

The references in quick succession to "Hell", "Priests" and "Mass" suggest a possible attack on Catholicism, with its emphasis on the mass as a

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[18] European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, pp. 544 - 46.
[19] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 76.

re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Mediaeval theology certainly laid considerable emphasis on the existence of hell. The picture of the tailor-god busily creating his "animals" which are threatened with hell but for the good offices of the priests, with their propitiatory masses, might be intended as a reflection on the hell-centred view of mediaeval theology; but if so it is not very clearly developed.

Swift himself admits that this deity is a fairly preposterous one by calling it an idol, yet he makes it the starting point for the cosmological account in the next paragraph: the tailor-deity concept leads directly to the idea of his creation as a suit of clothes. The premise is unstated and Swift offers no proof except the evidence of one's eyes:

> Look on this Globe of Earth, you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable Dress . . . Proceed to the particular works of Creation, you will find how curious Journey-man Nature hath been to trim up the vegetable Beaux: Observe how sparkish a Periwig adorns the Head of a Beech.[20]

There would be no reason to see Nature as an apprentice tailor but for the original preconception of God as a tailor. Frivolous though it is, Swift's account makes a serious point. It shows the folly of predicating one's notions of the physical world on one's inevitably limited notions of the attributes of God. This was a fault to which the scholastic philosophers, following their master Aristotle, were particularly prone:

> . . . Aristotelean emphasis upon final causes helped to elucidate the operation of God in the world of

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[20] Ibid., p. 78.

> Nature. The god of the theologians, if not the Bible, was a deity whose mind was revealed in the purposive working of the universe. God was a logician whose premises could be scrutinised and his nature examined. The very working of divine grace was open to logical analysis. In this emphasis on purpose and logic, Aristotelean science and scholastic theology marched together. [21]

God the logician is a deity that does not feature in Curtius's list but is implicit in the scholastic view of nature. As Charles Singer puts it:

> . . . the mediaeval mind was obsessed with the idea of the world as mortal, destructible, finite and therefore completely knowable both in space and time. . . . it was characteristic of the mediaeval western thinker that . . . he always sought a complete scheme of things. He was not content to separate, as we do, one department of knowledge or one class of phenomena, and consider it in and by itself. Still less would he have held it a virtue to become a specialist, to limit his outlook to one department with the object of increasing the sum of knowledge in it, and in it alone.
>
> His universe, it must be remembered, so far as it was material, was limited. The outer limit was the primum mobile, the outermost of the concentric spheres of which the Aristotelean world was composed. Of the structure and nature of all within the sphere of the primum mobile he had been provided with a definite scheme. The self-appointed task of mediaeval science was to elaborate that scheme in connexion with the moral world. [22]

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[21] Kearney, Science and Change, 1500 - 1700, p. 35.
[22] C. Singer, From Magic to Science, (New York: Dover, 1958), pp. 85 - 9.

Dr. Singer's account points to an interpretation of the Tailor-worship section as a fairly straightforward attack on the scholastic tendency to mix branches of learning that are now generally considered mutually exclusive. Swift's rather homely example of clothes reminds us how blinkered we are by the narrow limits of our experience when we try to come to terms with phenomena that lie outside our experience. One might say that Swift's tailor-system is a ludicrous but equally plausible alternative hypothesis to the Aristotelean-scholastic world view, based on the same premise that one can argue from the attributes of God to those of the natural world. The notion of the tailor-god is idolatrous because it is a finite view and therefore false when applied to the infinite. Other, more popular finite notions of the deity fall by the same token.

One important element of the scholastic system has received no attention so far and that is ethics. That is Swift's next concern and he introduces it as a continuation of his cosmological disquisition:

> To conclude from all, what is man himself but a Micro-Coat, or rather a complete Suit of Cloaths with all its trimmings? As to his body, there can be no dispute; but examine even the accomplishments of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order, towards furnishing out an exact Dress: To instance no more; is not Religion a Cloak, Honesty a Pair of Shoes worn out in Dirt, Self-Love a Surtout, Vanity a Shirt, and Conscience a Pair of Breeches which tho' a cover for Lewdness as well as Nastiness, is easily slipped down for the Services of both. [23]

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[23] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 78.

This passage, as Professor Harth astutely perceived, is a parody of a passage in the introduction to Hobbes's Leviathan, in which Hobbes expounds an analogy between human beings and machines:

> For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say, that all Automata (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheeles as doth a watch) have an artificiall life? For what is the Heart, but a Spring; and the Nerves, but so many Strings; and the Joynts, but so many Wheeles, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the Artificer? [24]

Swift's parody effectively constitutes an answer to Hobbes's series of rhetorical questions for he supplies what Hobbes omits -- that is, he shows us the moral aspect of human nature. It is man's moral awareness that forms the unbridgeable gap between man and machine. This same passage from the Leviathan also provides a link with the parody of scholastic cosmology: Hobbes, referring presumably to God, uses the term "the Artificer"; in other words he uses a finite abstraction to express the nature of God, in much the same way as the scholastic philosophers used their abstractions, as a prop to support his account of man the machine. This is ironic, to say the least, since no one was a more contemptuous critic of scholasticism than Hobbes, but Swift's diagnosis makes him a lineal descendant of scholastic philosophy.

In reducing man's moral nature under his clothes system, however, Swift

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[24] T. Hobbes, Leviathan, (London: Dent, 1962), p. 1; Swift and Anglican Rationalism, p. 84.

is not merely attacking Hobbes. The Malmesbury sage had several times been rebutted in his own age to the satisfaction of his contemporaries if not of posterity and it would have been rather pointless to attempt it again. The crucial factor is the relationship between the first half of the paragraph dealing with the natural world and the second half dealing with human nature. The key term in the transition is the word Micro-Coat, by which Swift alludes to the macrocosm/microcosm concept according to which man somehow reflects or comprehends within himself the larger world outside himself. The reference is important because it is Swift's only justification for the abrupt transition he makes. Microcosmism is a complicated idea and can take many forms. The one most closely associated with Hobbes, which is elaborated in the Leviathan immediately after the passage that Swift parodies, is the organic theory of the state, according to which individual citizens are analogous to the members of the human body. The idea did not originate with Hobbes, for it goes back at least to Plutarch and was popular in the middle ages,[25] but it cannot be Swift's target here since he makes no mention, even indirectly, of a theory of the state.

As a serious philosophical idea microcosmism is symptomatic of men's efforts to come to terms with his situation in the physical world. "It satisfies the deeply rooted desire for an all-comprehending conception in which everything finds its proper place within the order of being".[26]

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25 R.Allers, "Microcosmus, from Anaximander to Paracelsus", Traditio, II (1944), 368.

26 Ibid., p. 332.

Fr. Maunther distinguishes two main types of microcosmic theory concerned specifically with man's relation to the physical world, which he calls cosmocentric microcosmism, leading to a mechanistic explanation of man, and anthropocentric microcosmism which yields a psychological explanation of the universe.[27] The distinction is a useful one in connection with Swift's use of the concept. Whether Swift differentiated as clearly as this between the two basic types does not matter: his argument certainly exemplifies them both. The first half of the paragraph is anthropocentric in its explanation of the cosmos; the second half reverses the argument and explains human beings cosmocentrically whilst retaining the anthropocentric notion of clothes. For this purpose "clothing" serves as a useful middle term between the human and the inanimate. Whilst "clothes" illustrates the subjectivity of cosmic theories because they are based on human conceptions, it also emphasises the folly of seeing the world in terms not merely of inanimate phenomena, but of phenomena that are purely of man's own devising, as Hobbes does. For the machine, no less than clothing, is a human creation and therefore a human concept. The notion of God the logician leads very easily to that of God the great engineer, a notion held by Descartes as well as Hobbes, and one that acquired great popularity in the seventeenth century.[28]

The origin of the concept is uncertain. Certainly God the applied scientist is implicit in God the pure scientist. But the rise of an Archimedean scientific movement in the sixteenth century may have given it

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27 Ibid., p. 349.
28 Kearney, Science and Change, 1500 - 1700, pp. 41 - 8.

its biggest boost. The first printed edition of Archimedes' works was published by Niccolo Tartaglia in 1543 and was immensely influential.[29] Archimedes was fascinated by mechanical analogies and his approach to scientific method is reflected in a line of mechanistic theorists reaching down to Galileo, the greatest of them all.[30] Nobody, however brought out the full implications of this approach before Descartes.

It was Descartes who in his Discourse on Method (1637)

> transferred Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, which had been set within the framework of Aristotelianism, and made it into the cornerstone of his own view that the human body was a machine.[31]

Here is the passage in Descartes's work:

> . . . this movement I have just described follows from the mere disposition of the organs of the heart which we see with the eye, and from the heat which we can feel with the fingers, and from the nature of the blood which we can understand through experiment, just as necessarily as does the motion of a clock from the force, situation and shape of its counterweights and wheels.[32]

The mechanical illustration Descartes uses of the body is the same as Hobbes's in Leviathan. And Descartes took a similarly mechanistic view of the natural world.

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30 Ibid., pp. 45 - 7.
31 Ibid., p. 47.
32 Ibid., p. 158.
Descartes, "Discourse on Method" and other works, p. 41.

Hobbes's assumptions about the natural world are very similar. His holistic approach could have led to either an organic or a mechanical theory but he comes down squarely on the mechanistic side. The following passage from Leviathan is very revealing:

> The World (I mean not the Earth onely, that denominates the Lovers of it Worldly Men, but the Universe, that is, the whole mass of all things that are) is Corporeall, that is to say, Body; and hath the Dimensions of Magnitude, namely, Length, Bredth and Depth: also every part of Body, is likewise Body, and hath the like dimensions; and consequently every part of the Universe is Body; and that which is not Body is no part of the Universe: And because the Universe is All, that which is no part of it, is Nothing; and consequently no where. [33]

"Body" is rather like Swift's middle term "clothes" in that it has associations of living organism or of dead matter. From the way Hobbes uses it we are left in no doubt that he means inanimate matter. Swift, then faults scientific rationalism epitomized by the macrocosm/microcosm concept, on grounds that its method is unsound. And we can take the implications of this paragraph at least one step further. The aim of a macrocosmic theory is supposedly to produce a completely harmonious pattern, but nothing could be less harmonious than the closing of the paragraph. Swift refers to such "acquirements of the mind" as "Religion", "Honesty", and "Conscience" but what he illustrates for us are hypocrisy, dishonesty, and immorality, together with self-love and vanity. These qualities give

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[33] Leviathan, pp. 367 - 68.

the lie tc any easy attempt to fit man into any cosy rational scheme. Swift's ultimate answer to the pretensions of universal rational systems is man who, because of his moral nature, defies classification according to the criteria that are applicable to the natural world.

But there is a corollory tc this argument. Rational systematizers do not usually ignore the ethical aspect of man; they try to accommodate it within their system. Hobbes felt free to speculate in this area and so did the scholastics. This is precisely where the greatest danger lies, because a system of ethics based on what is "natural" invokes a very dubious standard. The more securely man is established as part of the purely natural world, the more detached he becomes from the sense of being a creature with a higher nature. A natural system operates on the basis of the lowest common denominator. A natural ethics is potentially an appeal to man's lower nature and could become a justification of immorality. All this follows from the initial premise that one can reach an understanding of God through his handiwork, nature. And it is a further reason why Swift chooses to include in his macrocosmic scheme not moral man but immoral man.

It is unlikely, however, that Swift is specifically attacking scholasticism for propagating immoral teachings. The scholastic premises he parodies are amoral, properly speaking, and his point is that they could be taken to support the notorious doctrines of Hobbes. In common with many seventeenth century scientists Hobbes repudiated the Aristotelian aspect of scholasticism but took over the scholastic conviction that God reveals himself through second causes. A.N.Whitehead claimed that scholasticism contributed to the modern scientific movement

> the inexpungeable belief that every detailed occurrence can be correlated with its antecedents in a perfectly definite manner, exemplifying general principles.

He goes on to attribute this to

> the mediaeval insistence on the rationality of God, conceived as with the personal energy of Jehovah and with the rationality of a Greek philosopher. Every detail was supervised and ordered: the search into nature could only result in the vindication of the faith in rationality. . . . the faith in the possibility of science, generated antecedently to the development of modern scientific theory, is an unconscious derivative from mediaeval theology.[34]

This is Swift's insight almost exactly. The pattern of Swift's argument is in three phases; it runs from the concept of the deity to the scholastic world view to the Hobbesian view of man. Despite the parody element it makes the basically serious point that the naturalistic rationalism of Hobbes derives its validity from the discredited speculations of the schoolmen and is subject to the same limitations. His parody of Hobbes is therefore not merely an attack but a diagnosis.

The issues Hobbes's rationalism raised were still important in Swift's time. Though Hobbes's views were so heterodox that no one was disposed to defend them, they were symptomatic of a much broader trend in the latter half of the seventeenth century. As Professor R.F.Jones has shown, that period witnessed the rise of a utilitarian ethics that hailed Francis Bacon

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[34] A.N.Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, (New York: MacMillan, 1953), pp. 12 - 13.

as its prophet, most closely associated with the emergence of the new science and particularly with the Royal Society. Thomas Sprat, in his History of the Royal Society (1667), was one of its chief spokesmen, and in his work he espoused views that sounded suspiciously Hobbesian. At one point, for example, he seems to suggest that spirit is merely matter that is not apparent to the senses.[35] Professor Jones summarizes some of the attacks made by critics of Sprat, one of which I shall reproduce because it shows so well how the issues were seen by an intelligent seventeenth-century mind. The author is Meric Casaubon, who had disagreed with Peter du Moulin about the likely effects of the new science and later voiced his principal objections in an open letter to du Moulin. Swift may well have read this letter because he had almost certainly read the same author's Treatise concerning Enthusiasm.[36] Casaubon argues against scientific utilitarianism by urging

> a higher utility for those things which foster man's spirit, and rightly senses the materialistic and physical basis upon which the new science would place life. He points out the danger of the new Science's leading to atheism, in that it fixes men's minds too much on secondary causes, making them forget the spiritual world and discredit supernatural operations. This danger had been conspicuously revealed in Hobbes's philosophy, and it is undoubtedly with the latter in mind that Casaubon accuses the

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35 See R.F.Jones, Ancients and Moderns, p. 229.

36 Casaubon intended in this treatise to devote a section to "Mechanical Enthusiasm", thus furnishing a very plausible source for the main idea in The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit. See above, pp. 85-6.

> experimental philosophy of leading directly to a denial of God and to disbelief in the immortality of the soul. He, like many others, recognised this as the most dangerous tendency of the new philosophy, and he considered the scientists' contempt for all non-scientific kinds of learning, especially metaphysics, which was all the more divine for being abstracted from the senses, an omen of future disaster . . . He clearly perceived the danger of placing morality upon a naturalistic basis, by which, he says, reason is prostituted to nature instead of ruling nature, and as an example he cites the justification of sexual freedom on biological grounds. [37]

Whilst Swift might not have agreed with everything in Casaubon's account, it serves as a reminder of the currency of naturalistic ethical thinking and the kind of response it provoked. The last argument in this extract, moreover, is exactly the same as the one Swift implies in his parody of Hobbes.

We come at last to the final three paragraphs of the tailor worship section. They need not detain us long for they are not nearly so crucial as the first two. Having shown us the serious implications of the argument he is parodying, Swift now proceeds to show its vacuousness. He opens with the proposition:

> These Postulata being admitted, it will follow in due Course of Reasoning, that those Beings which the World calls improperly Suits of Cloaths, are in Reality the most refined Species of Animals, or to proceed higher, that they are Rational Creatures, or Men. [38]

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[37] Ancients and Moderns, pp. 242 - 43.
[38] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 78.

This is the first time Swift has made an appeal to reason; hitherto he has presumed to be merely stating the obvious. It is noticeable that in conceding that he is arguing a case Swift uses the Latin term "postulata" to emphasize the scholastic angle to the satire. But his main target is again the Hobbesian kind of mechanistic thinking, as will be obvious if we substitute "machines" for "suits of clothes". If man is really a machine and does not differ qualitatively from other machines, does it not follow that machines are men? Once the equation is reversed it looks very silly indeed, revealing its status as merely an analogy that works only so long as essential differences are suppressed. The remainder of the paragraph evokes the comical picture of animated suits of clothes fulfilling the everyday functions of men.

The fourth paragraph deals with a sub-section of the clothes system that tries to demonstrate the nature of the soul. The essential belief of the "more refined" tailor-worshippers who are interested in this more specialized aspect is that

> Man was an Animal compounded of two Dresses, the Natural and the Celestial Suit, which were the Body and the Soul: That the Soul was the outward and the Body the inward clothing; that the latter was ex traduce; but the former of daily Creation and Circumfusion. This last they proved by Scripture, because, in them we Live, and Move, and have our Being: As likewise by Philosophy, because they are All in All and All in Every Part. Besides, they said, separate these two, and you will find the Body to be only a senseless and unsavoury Carcass. By all which it is manifest, that the outward Dress must needs be the Soul. [39]

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[39] Ibid., p. 79.

I quote the passage almost in full the better to deal with Professor Harth's observations on this paragraph. I believe he is wide of the mark in seeing this as an attack on "followers of Hobbes". He interprets the reference to the "natural and celestial suits" as recognition that the soul is separate from the body "though consisting of the same materials" and adds that the two philosophical formulas -- "ex traduce" and "all in all and all in every part" -- were suspected during the Restoration era of lending support to the materialism of Hobbes.[40]

Professor Harth's identification is a guarded one. He sees the paragraph as attacking "followers of Hobbes" rather than Hobbes himself. This is because only two of the elements in the paragraph can be directly linked with Hobbes, namely the ex traduce reference and the belief that the body and the soul are separate but composed of the same materials. The second of these elements is an extrapolation from the text and one which I question. Swift applies the same term "clothing" to body and soul but he does not say that they are made of the same substance. On the contrary the close of the paragraph strongly suggests a qualitative difference, although Swift facetiously gives preference to the clothes over what lies beneath them. It would be more logical to see this as an attack on the radical separation of soul from body that originated with Descartes and which led that philosopher to speculate that the point of contact between the two principles, the material and the immaterial one was the pineal gland. But

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40 Swift and Anglican Rationalism, pp. 77 - 8.

Swift's point does not seem to be that specific: the essence of the joke is his justification for seeing the soul on the outside rather than on the inside whereas the truth is that, the soul being immaterial, efforts to locate it in a particular place are a waste of time. They are speculations of the same order as those about the nature of the divinity. The soul might just as well be on the outside as on the inside.

The second Hobbesian belief Professor Harth detects is traducianism, the belief that the soul like the body is transmitted from parent to child. This was certainly one of Hobbes's major heresies and was a natural consequence of his belief that the soul was material. However, it is not at all clear that Swift is here attacking traducianism, or even alluding to it. The view he presents is that the "inward clothing", or the body, is ex traduce, which presumably no one would deny. It is rather in support of the view that the soul is of daily creation and circumfusion that Swift quotes the "all in all and all in every part" formula -- rather incongruously, too, for it lends no plausibility whatever to his proposition that the soul is a suit of clothes. It may be that the sheer implausibility of the idea was Swift's main reason for using it. But it is worth suggesting as a more cogent reason the fact that it corresponds very closely to the Roman Catholic formula for the eucharist as defined at the Council of Trent:

> If anyone denies that in the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist the whole Christ is contained under each species, and in each part of each species: let him be anathema. [41]

Swift's point would thus be that this particular speculative definition

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[41] Documents of the Christian Church, p. 369.

dangerously close to providing a justification of the Aristotelian eucharistic doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

The other formula Swift uses to justify equating the outer clothing with the soul is a scriptural misquotation "in them we live, and move, and have our being". Though this describes the nature of clothes reasonably well, it, too, is inappropriate because the quotation has nothing to do with the nature of the soul. It is taken from St.Paul's account of "the unknown god" related in The Acts of the Apostles. The context in which it occurs may have something to do with why Swift chose it. Paul identifies the "unknown god" of the Athenians with the Christian God and expatiates to them on the nature of God:

> God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;
> Neither is he worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;
> And hath made one blood of all nations of men for to dwell on all the fact of the earth, and hath determined the times before all appointed, and the brands of their habitation;
> That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us;
> For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are Also his offspring.
> Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.
>
> (Acts of the Apostles, A.V., 17 : 24 - 29).

This is a concept of God very different from the tailor-god, or God the logician or the Great Engineer. Paul presents a God who is pre-eminently the father of his children and who, far from being a distant and detached "prime mover", is the very life of his creatures if they will seek him out. He is in fact the personal God of orthodox Christian teaching. And Paul also delivers a strong warning against idolatory deriving from "art and man's device" : we are back again with the idol motif that Swift first introduced at the beginning of the tailor worship section. At this point it serves as incidental confirmation of Swift's preoccupation with false notions of the deity.

The final paragraph revives the fashion metaphor. Marjorie Hope Nicholson suggests, surely correctly, that in applying the clothes philosophy to "faculties of the mind", Swift is thinking mainly of the stylistic ornamentation, the turns and witty similes that began to characterize poetry after the Restoration.[42] The general intent of the passage is certainly to show a theory of good writing that elevates the style or clothing of thought above the soul, or the thought itself. This follows on naturally from the fourth paragraph which also extols the virtues of outside over inside. At the same time Swift brings us back to the metaphor that he will shortly be utilising to describe the corruption of the mediaeval church.

Within the space of five paragraphs the meanings which Swift finds for his clothing metaphor are astonishingly wide-ranging. The fashion motif, suggesting the local and temporary as against the permanently valuable, is

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42 M.H. Nicholson, The Breaking of the Circle, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 45 - 6.

suggested and then dropped. The next target is anthropocentric conceptions of the universe, followed by cosmocentric interpretations of man and with it natural ethics. After this comes deductive logic, followed by speculation on the nature of the soul and finally literary value. Not only the nature of the referent but the nature of the argument is constantly changing. The question naturally arises as to how Swift expected his readers to cope with the many-sided implications of his argument.

Swift does in fact warn the reader not to take the tailor-worship system lightly:

> I advise therefore the courteous Reader, to peruse with a World of Application, again and again, whatever I have written upon this matter. [43]

There is, however, a genre still very popular in Swift's day that helps considerably in interpreting the tailor-worship passage: for it conforms very closely to the genre of the paradoxical encomium or, more strictly, to the subdivision of that genre called "the praise of unworthy things". On the most straightforward level the clothes-worship section is a paradoxical encomium of clothes. It contains the same combination of witty association and mock-logic that is characteristic of the paradoxical encomium. But because the identification of God as a tailor is effected chiefly by pun and association and because the reader does not know what is to come, it appears jeu d'esprit and nothing more. (The fact that it can also be taken, initially at least, as a satire on fashion, makes it doubly disarming). Exactly the same kind of wit was used by writers in the genre

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[43] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 81.

of the English Character to add a humorous dignity to lowly trades or professions; Sir Thomas Overbury's character of "A Tinker" is a particularly good example of this.[44] Samuel Butler in Hudibras describes a mock-heroic encounter between his hero and a host of tradesmen whom he dignifies as martial heroes in the same way.[45]

It is only when Swift begins to speak of the universe as a suit of clothes that it is clear he is writing a paradoxical encomium. Works written in this genre obviously have to try to establish either the importance or the virtue of the object they praise, or possibly both. This is what Erasmus does in the Praise of Folly, arguing both that folly is a good thing and that many bad things are foolish. With the aid of this double argument he establishes a universal system of folly. The resemblance of Erasmus' system to Swift's is striking, but there is an even more striking example, closer in length to the Tailor-worship system, in Rabelais's Gargantua and Pantagruel. Panurge's "Praise of Debtors" is much closer to Swift's encomium in that it extols something genuinely unworthy, whereas Erasmus's Folly is both good and bad. The Rabelais passage depends entirely on metaphorical extension of the term "debtor".

Panurge begins by praising the debtor as being like God himself in having created something out of nothing. Next he transfers the argument to the cosmic scale and finds in debts the link between heaven and earth. In a universe without debts:

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[44] The Works of Thomas Overbury, ed. E.F. Rimbault, (London: Reeves and Turner, 1890), pp. 89 - 91.

[45] Hudibras, I, ii, 104 - 474.

La lune restera sanglante et tenebreuse. A quel propous luy departiroit le soleil sa lumiere? Il n'y estoit en rien tenu. Le soleil ne luyra sus leur terre. Les astres ne y feront influence bonne. Car la terre resistoit leurs prester nourissement par vapeurs et exhalations, des quelles disoit Heraclitus, prouvoient les stoiciens, Ciceron maintenoit estre les estoiles alimentées. Entre les elemens ne sera symbolisation, alternation, ne transmutation alcune. Car l'un ne se reputera obligé a faicte eau; l'eau en aër ne sera transmuée; de l'aër ne sera faict feu; le feu n'eschauffera la terre.

. . . Entre les humains l'un ne saulvera l'autre; il aura beau crier a l'aide, au feu, à l'eau, au meurtre, personne ne ira à secours . . . Brief de cestuy monde seront bannies Foy, Esperance, Charité. Car les hommes sont nez pour l'ayde et secours des hommes.

. . . Et si au patron de ce fascheux et chagrin monde rien ne prestant, vous figurez l'autre petit monde, qui est l'homme, vous y trouverez un terrible tintammarre. La teste ne vouldra prester la veue de ses oeilz, pour guider les piedz et les mains. Les piedz ne la daigneront porter. Les mains cesseront travailler pour elle. Le coeur se fachera de tant se mouvoir pour les poul des membres, et ne leurs prestera plus. Le poulmon ne luy fera prest de ses soufflets. Le foye ne luy envoyra sang pour son entretien. La vessie ne vouldra être debitrice aux roignons: l'urine sera supprimée. Le cerveau considerant ce train desnaturé, se mettra en resverie, et ne baillera sentement es nerfz, ne mouvement es muscles. Somme, en ce monde desrayé, rien ne debvant, rien ne prestant rien ne empruntant, vous voirez une conspiration plus pernicieuse, que n'a figuré Aesope en son Apologue.

[The moon will remain bloody and dark. Why should the Sun impart his light to her? He will be in no way bound to. The sun will not throw light on the Earth. The Stars will not send down their good influences. For

the Earth will have given up lending them good nourishment in the form of those vapours and exhalations by which -- as Heraclitus said, the Stoics proved and Cicero maintained -- the Stars are fed. Amongst the Elements there will be no combinations, alterations, or transmutations of any kind. For one will not feel obliged by another, which has lent it nothing.

. . . Amongst men, one will not save the other; it will be lost labour to cry 'Help!' 'Fire!' 'Water!' 'Murder!' . . . In short, Faith, Hope and Charity will be banished from this world, for men are born to aid and succour one another.

. . . And if one the model of this peevish and perverse world which lends nothing, you image the other little world, which is man, there you will find a terrible confusion. The head will refuse to lend the sight of his eyes to guide the feet and hands; the feet will not agree to carry it, and the hands will cease to work for it. The heart will grow tired of continually beating for the benefit of the pulses in the limbs, and will lend them no more help. The lungs will not oblige it with their bellows. The liver will not send it blood for its nourishment. The bladder will not care to be in debt to the kidneys -- and the urine will be stopped. When the brain considers this unnatural state of things, it will fall into a daze and give no feeling to the nerves, no movement to the muscles. In brief in this disorganized world, which will owe nothing, lend nothing and borrow nothing, you will see a more pernicious conspiracy than Aesop imagined in his Apology.] [46]

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[46] F. Rabelais, Oeuvres Completes, edition de P. Jourda, 2 vols., (Paris: Garnier, 1962), I, 415 - 20. English translation from Gargantua and Pantagruel, transl. J.M.Cohen, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 295 - 99.

Panurge then goes on to paint a utopian picture of a world where there is borrowing and lending on an unrestricted scale.

The resemblance of Panurge's praise to Swift's praise of clothes is striking. We have the same metaphorical extension of the key term and the same attempt to apply it universally. The two pieces are so alike that it is quite possible Swift had the Rabelaisian passage in mind when he composed his own. Rabelais even presents the same movement from God to the cosmos to the microcosm as we find in the tailor system. But the differences are important, too. The tailor-system, despite its facetious opening, demands more serious consideration in that it reflects actual universal systems. Clothes are, moreover, a less obviously dangerous principle on which to found a universal system. Clearly Swift chose clothing as the key principle in his system purely because it harmonized well with the metaphor he used for the allegory, but he also recognized that it possessed, apart from its humorous connotations, a kind of emotional neutrality lacking in a term like "debt". A man who argues on behalf of debt is suspect because the very term suggests a questionable motive; but it is hard to see the vested interest of a man, who argues for a universal system of clothes. One's attention is directed away from motive and focussed on the merits of the argument.

We can now suggest an excellent reason for Swift's having included the essentially digressive clothes system within the allegory. The allegory proper shows that Swift attributed the decline of the mediaeval church to dishonesty and to its adoption of scholasticism. It is a weakness of the allegory, however, that the Church is represented by only one figure -- Peter -- whose intentions are corrupt right from the start. Swift wished

to do more than merely attack the Church's moral failings; he aimed at a diagnosis of the weaknesses inherent in the very intellectual system that the church espoused, irrespective of motive. But his assault on scholasticism is blunted by the fact not only that it is impossible to distinguish the merits of the system through Peter's corruption of it, but also that Peter is a very poor representative of scholasticism. Many great scholars, who are still considered giants of intellectual history, dedicated their lives to scholastic philosophy. In order to mount a valid critique of scholasticism, Swift had to establish that it was intellectually suspect even when practised with motives of absolute purity.

As Professor Ehrenpreis remarks, scholasticism had been "the fashionable butt of humanist sneers" long before Bacon.[47] The same can be said about humanist attacks on far-fetched interpretations of scripture. A look at some of these attacks will show how novel Swift's approach really was. Erasmus, a Catholic who attacked the corruptions of the Church but nevertheless took his stand with the Church when the Reformation began, was opposed both to scholasticism and -- naturally enough -- to what he saw as eccentric interpretations of scripture, but he does not present them as different aspects of the same thing. He attacks the use of scholastic language in theology in a manner reminiscent of Swift:

> And devoutly, no doubt, did the Apostles consecrate the Eucharist; yet, had they been asked the question concerning the '<u>terminus a quo</u>' and the '<u>terminus ad quem</u>' of transubstantiation; of the manner how the

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47 Ehrenpreis, <u>op. cit.</u>, I, 193.

> same body can be in several places at one and the same time; of the difference the body of Christ has in heaven from that of the cross, or this in the Sacrament; in what point of time transubstantiation is, whereas prayer, by means of which it is, as being a discrete quantity, is transient; they would not, I conceive, have answered with the same subtlety as the Scotists dispute and define it.
>
> . . . They baptized far and near, and yet taught nowhere what was the formal, material, efficient, and final cause of baptism, nor made the least mention of delible and indelible characters.
>
> . . . For who can conceive these things, unless he has spent at least six and thirty years in the philosophical and supercelestial whims of Aristotle and the Schoolmen? [48]

This is bold writing for a man who considered himself an orthodox Catholic. The criticisms it contains show that Erasmus was very close to Swift in his position on scholasticism and held that it did more to obscure than to illuminate essential Christian doctrine. Yet when he comes to speak of scriptural misinterpretation it is motive rather than method that he questions, and he speaks of divines who "forcing out here and there four or five expressions and if need be corrupting the sense, wrest it to their own purpose". And the kind of far-fetched interpretation he speaks of is not the over-figurative, but the over-literal which for Swift is the fault of Jack rather than of Peter. A good example is his attack on Nicholas of Lyra, the fourteenth century theologian and biblical commentator, who resists a fairly straightforward figurative interpretation for an extension of the

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[48] The Praise of Folly, trans. J. Wilson, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966), pp. 96 - 7.

most literal reading. The passage is Luke 22 : 35 - 6, and relates Christ's injunction to his apostles: "he that hath a bag, let him take it and likewise a scrip; and he that hath none, let him sell his coat and buy a sword". Erasmus comments:

> When the sum of all Christ taught pressed only meekness, suffering and contempt of life, who does not clearly see what he means in this place? to wit, that he might the more disarm his ministers, that neglecting not only shoes and scrip but throwing away their very coat, they might be in a manner naked, the more readily and with less hindrance take in hand the work of the gospel, and provide themselves with nothing but a sword, not such as thieves and murderers go up and down with, but the sword of the spirit that pierces the most inward parts, and so cuts off as it were at one blow all earthly affections, that they mind nothing but their duty to God. But see, I pray, whether this famous theologian wrests it. By the sword he interprets defence against persecution, and by the bag sufficient provision to carry it on. As if Christ having altered his mind, in that he sent out his disciples not so royally attended as he should have done, repented himself of his former instructions: or as forgetting that he had said, 'Blessed are ye when ye are evil spoken of, despised and persecuted, etc', and forbade them to resist evil; for that the meek in spirit, not the proud, are blessed: or lest, remembering, I say, that he had compared them to sparrows and lillies, thereby minding them what small care they should take for the things of this life, was so far from having them go forth without a sword that he commanded them to get one, though with the sale of their coat, and had rather they should go naked than want a brawling-iron by their sides. [49]

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[49] Ibid., pp. 134 - 6.

This is fine mockery and again quite close to Swift: it could easily be a picture of Peter's misreading of the will except that the scholastic trappings of Swift's account are missing. But Erasmus' concern is much more limited then Swift's. Because he is content to impugn his opponent's motives rather than his methodology, he does not go on to attack the principles on which the type of reading Nicholas gives us are based, which would constitute a far more deadly assault. As we have seen, Erasmus was enough of a foe of scholasticism to satirize it but, perhaps because he was so dedicated a humanist, willing or able to challenge it only on its practical consequences, not on its presuppositions.

The same limitation holds true for the more militant humanists of the Reformation. Ulrich von Hutten and Crotus Rubeanus, who collaborated together on the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum, both became Lutherans at the Reformation, although Crotus ultimately made his peace with the church. They had as good a reason as anybody to point out the fundamental defects of the scholastic method, engaged as they were in their own Battle of the Books on the side of the humanists.[50] Their picture of scholastic divines however, is one of inept but hedonistic monks, obsessed with Aristotle and the syllogism and completely ignorant of the tradition of litterae humaniores. Thus one monk speculates that the works of Julius Caesar were written by Suetonius, because there is a stylistic similarity between the two writers and because Caesar himself could not have written them for the following reason:

> Whosoever hath business with arms
> and is occupied in labour unceasing

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50 Ibid., pp. 134 - 6.

> cannot learn Latin; but Caesar was
> ever at war and in labours manifold;
> therefore he could not become
> lettered and get Latin. [51]

Another reports the publication of "a new book" by "one Homer" in a Latin edition; he disdains the Greek edition because his master, Magister Ortwinus Gratius, "pays no heed to those Greek fantasticalities".[52]

Von Hutten and Rubeanus also throw doubt on the moral propriety of the schoolmen they satirize. Nowhere, however, do they attempt a systematic refutation of the system itself. For them it was enough to discredit its proponents.

Henry Stephens, who was both a Calvinist and a classical humanist, represents a third point of view but his diagnosis is the same. In his attacks on the Roman clergy he stresses their intellectual dishonesty and their ignorance. One of the stories he relates tells of a priest who required to see and even handle the parts of the body that the penitent had used to commit the sin he was confessing. This he justified by saying that it was no worse to behold the guilty members than to contemplate with the eyes of the mind the filthiness of the sin itself; that the priest as spiritual healer should feel his patient just as the bodily physician does; and that Christ told the sinners that he pardoned to go and show themselves to the priest.[53] In another anecdote he recounts the story of a priest who

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51 On the Eve of the Reformation: Letters of Obscure Men, trans. F.Griffin Stokes, (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p.85.

52 Ibid., p.193.

53 A World of Wonders: or an Introduction to a Treatise touching the Conformitie of ancient and modern wonders: or A Preparative treatise to the Apologie for Herodotus, the Argument whereof is taken from the Apologie for Herodotus written in Latine by Henrie Stephen, and continued here by the Author himselfe, [transl. R.C.] , (London, 1607), pp. 178 - 9.

found the words, "Sol in Cancro" written in his almanac in red letters and, thinking it was a saint's name, took pains to seek out the mass that might fit it best.[54] These are only two examples of an infinitude that Stephens produces to demonstrate the corruption of the Roman clergy, "partly through ignorance, and partly through malice".[55] His attack shows how traditional Swift's satire on Catholicism, in the person of Peter, really was. But Stephen's attack is loosely constructed and nowhere rises above the level of amusing anecdotes.

Closer to Swift's time Samuel Butler launched a satiric tirade against scholasticism in Hudibras. This is particularly interesting in that it takes presbyterianism rather than Catholicism for its principal target. Presbyterianism, like Catholicism supported the scholastic tradition of theological exposition. Butler's choice of a presbyterian as his main satiric butt was, of course, determined by the fact that presbyterians had had a major place in the Civil War on the parliamentary side. Butler's poem is interesting as an analogue to the Tale not only because he uses the device of portraying a religious sect through a single character, but also because his two main characters, Hudibras and Ralpho, profess exactly the same kind of learning as Peter and Jack. We shall come to the resemblance between Ralpho and Jack later on.

Hudibras resembles Peter in a number of ways. Like Peter he is constantly using technical Latin terms from the vocabulary of scholasticism, some of which naturally enough are the same as Peter's; like Peter, too, he is intellectually dishonest and is prepared to reason himself out his conscience. Like von Hutten and Erasmus, then, Butler attacks scholasticism

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54 Ibid., p.342.
55 Ibid., p. 251.

as obscure, uncertain and open to abuse. He also uses a kind of paradoxical encomium to press home his attack on Sir Hudibras, but it is directed more against his religious inconsistency than his learning. By presenting Hudibras as a modern hero of the tradition of the chivalric romance, Butler heightens the contradiction between his nominal Christianity and his self-righteous belligerence. The most famous lines in Butler's poems are the ones in which he powerfully depicts the contradiction:

> that stubborn Crew
> Of Errant Saints, whom all Men grant
> To be the true Church Militant:
> Such as do build their Faith upon
> The holy Text of Pike and Gun;
> Decide all Controversies by
> Infallible Artillery;
> And prove their Doctrine orthodox
> By Apostolic Blows and Knocks. [56]

If Erasmus, von Hutten, Stephens and Butler show how traditional Swift's attacks on scholasticism and Catholicism are in the allegory proper, they also illustrate strikingly the originality of the tailor-worship section. In it Swift adapted the paradoxical encomium to a new purpose and one which no previous writer had previously explored. Though the genre is ideally suited to making fun of the ways in which rational argument can be used to defeat commonsense, no writer had perceived before Swift that it was the perfect weapon by which to attack through travesty rational systems that were actually credited by people of some intellect. But he went beyond even this to attack two such systems simultaneously, scholasticism and Hobbism. In doing so he was able to show that they were closely allied and that the Averroistic tendency of scholasticism needed only slight modification to

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[56] Hudibras, I, i, 190 - 98.

turn it into atheistic materialism. At the same time he offered a fundamental criticism of the method of reasoning involved in both systems, in that they applied to matters outside human experience concepts based on the limited notions of human intellect. Finally, he expressed his criticism by means of a metaphor which he had already associated with the merely fashionable as opposed to the permanently valuable, thus implicitly condemning the local and transitory manifestations of modernist philosophies, Swift's paradigm of misguided reason is the true product of an "ancient" mind, transcending the materials that it deals with. Truly Swift may be said to have exploited fully the rich potential of the paradoxical encomium in retaining its humorous playfulness whilst converting it to a serious purpose.

Once we recognize that scholasticism and Hobbism are the main targets of the Tailor-worship section, the first half of the Tale becomes a quite symmetrical attack on mediaeval and seventeenth-century modernism. Section III, which deals with critics, gives them the same attributes as the tailor-god, thereby suggesting that they have been influenced by the clothes-worship sect to value the fashionable more than works of permanent worth in literature. It also carries the hint that they apply the same criteria in their evaluation as Peter does in interpreting the will. Section V provides us with literary undertakings that smack of the same mountebankery as Peter's projects in Section IV. At least one of them is surely an implicit comment on Section IV's most important scene, the meal of the three brothers. Swift, having donned the mantle of a modern hack writer, proposes to unloose on his public a series of discourses, among which is one called "An Universal Rule of Reason, or Every Man his own Carver". This can hardly fail to recall the

picture of Peter "carving" slices of bread for his brothers and offering them as meat and wine. But the phrase "every man his own carver" also has a quite specific proverbial meaning: to be one's own carver is to have one's own way.[57] It is a strange kind of "reason" that allows everyone to do as he pleases, but this is exactly Swift's point. Dependence on speculative rather than ethical reason ultimately means self-justification for everybody's wildest fantasies, or the rule of anarchy. Peter's reason, properly judged, is unreason. Thus with a punning allusion Swift associates Peter's greatest folly, which leads to the rupture with his brothers, with the rational system that began his corruption.

This chapter can appropriately close by pointing out the significance of one of the two quotations that appear on the title page of the Tale. It is taken from Lucretius and runs:

> Iuvatque novos decerpere flores
> Insignemque meo capiti pefere inde coronam,
> Unde prius nulli relarunt tempora Musae.[58]
>
> [I love to pluck fresh flowers, and to seek an illustrious chaplet for my head from fields whence ere this the Muses have crowned the brows of none].

This emphasis on novelty smacks strongly of the kind of pride the moderns have in being in fashion. But more than this, the passage is a reflection on one of Swift's main targets in the Tale, the scientific rationalism of scholasticism and Hobbism; for Lucretius was notorious in Swift's day, just like Hobbes, as an atheistic materialist. We can take

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57 See M.P.Tilley, A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), pp. 83 - 4.

58 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 1.

this epigraph, then, as a guideline to one of Swift's major preoccupations. The other epigraph, which is taken from Irenaeus's attack on the heretics of his day, obviously indicates another major concern of the Tale; and this brings us to the Aeolist section.

V: THE AEOLIST SECTION

"And again, the scope or purpose of the Spirit of God is not to express matters of nature in the Scriptures, otherwise than in passage, and for application to man's capacity and to matters moral or divine".

Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning

The Aeolist section of the Tale, as its name implies, is concerned with wind. It is obviously intended to complement the Tailor-worship section because it occupies a similar position in the second half of the allegory to that of the Tailor-worship system in the first half and also because it includes many of the same elements: a theory of the universe; a system of religious worship; a system of philosophical belief; a theory of the soul; and a theory of man's place in the scheme of things. Like the Tailor-worship section, the Aeolist section is at the most straightforward level no more than an encomium of a single, absurd principle, supposedly revered by a group of devotees for its all-pervading importance. But, as we might expect, the way Swift applies his encomium is neither simple nor unequivocal. For guidance through the complexities of this section we must again turn to Professor Harth, who has given the most thorough and penetrating analysis of it. His reading, soundly based on historical research, has many valuable insights. Since my interpretation is an attempt to elaborate Professor Harth's, it is with his reading of this section that I shall begin.

The most important distinction Professor Harth makes is between Swift's two main uses of the word motif: wind is both "the principle of explanation that the Aeolists attribute to the universe" and, because they suffer from a disease known as "windy" melancholy, is also "the cardinal symptom of their behaviour".[1] In support of this contention Professor Harth adduces Henry More's tract Enthusiasmus Triumphatus (1662), which describes windy melancholy as an effect of "hypochondriachal flatulency" or "adust vapours" arising

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[1] Swift and Anglican Rationalism, p. 115.

from the hypochondrium to disorder the brain. This condition leads a man into that species of madness known as enthusiasm -- the "misconceit of being inspired", as More defines it.[2] The upward passage of air in the manner described by More is treated in both the Aeolist section of the Tale and The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit,[3] though Swift does not use any of the specialist medical terms. Since Swift announces at the beginning of the Aeolist section that his target is "All Pretenders to Inspiration whatsoever",[4] More's diagnosis becomes an important background work for the study of the Aeolist section. The fact that More also distinguishes three main categories of enthusiasm -- religious, philosophical and political -- further strengthens the case for considering his tract a major source, for these are essentially the same categories by reference to which Swift deals with madness in the "Digression on Madness". There are, however, other possible sources, which Professor Harth does not deal with, that considerably diminish the importance of More's tract. I shall deal with them later, but for the time being it is necessary to examine Swift's other use of the wind motif, as an explanation of the universe.

In the first three paragraphs of the Aeolist section Swift presents the Aeolists as people who see everything in terms of wind and does so in terms which, as Professor Harth says, are associated "not with Puritanism but with occultism".[5] This is clearly a problem if one believes, with Professor Harth, that in the Aeolist section Swift is obviously satirizing

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2 Ibid., p. 62.
3 See Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 154, 156 - 7, 273, 281.
4 Ibid., p. 150.
5 Swift and Anglican Rationalism, p. 59.

the Puritans. It is hard to see any connection between occultism and Puritanism, particularly in the context of a universal system based on wind. Professor Harth explains the connection thus:

> by using 'wind' as an ambiguous middle term standing both for 'spirit' or 'inspiration' as emphasized by the Puritans and for the 'anima mundi' as emphasized by the occultists, Swift is offering the reader amusement at the expense of both occultists and Puritans by identifying the two. [6]

This explanation does Swift little credit. As Professor Harth states later on, occultists were a much less reputable group than the Puritans. An association between Puritans and occultists is therefore very much to the disfavour of the former. If the identification between the two groups rests merely upon the establishment of an ambiguous middle term -- "wind" -- referring to them both, it carries no weight at all. Swift is thus left open to the charge of meaningless distortion of the truth, for Professor Harth visualizes Swift's strategy as one of contriving a connection between two groups who actually have little in common.

To call "wind" as Swift uses it a "middle term" is however, misleading. The anima mundi and the spirit that inspires the Puritans are both allegedly spiritual, whereas wind is a purely physical phenomenon. The first two are closer to each other than either is to wind. Swift may therefore use "wind" as a blanket term to cover anima mundi and spirit, but he can hardly be said to use it as a middle term, for it in no way proves the connection. Unless there exists a genuine connection between occultism and Puritanism, Swift's satire in the Aeolist section stands condemned as trite and irrelevant.

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[6] Ibid., p. 59.

One place where such a connection is to be found is in Henry More's tract Enthusiasmus Triumphatus. As Professor Harth remarks, More has examples of philosophical as well as religious enthusiasm, the most prominent of which is Paracelsus, and Paracelsus is the only person (apart from Jack) whom Swift mentions by name in the Aeolist section. Because he sees the Aeolists as essentially Puritan, Professor Harth discounts the importance of philosophical enthusiasm in the Aeolist system. But when Swift identifies the Aeolists as "all pretenders to inspiration whatsoever" there is no reason to doubt his word. The Tailor-worship section is concerned with a particular cast of mind rather than a single group; we might reasonably expect the Aeolist section to involve a similar breadth of scope. Philosophical enthusiasts are just as much a part of this category as religious enthusiasts.

More is by no means the only seventeenth-century writer to note the resemblance between occult philosophers and Puritans. It can be seen at its most explicit in Butler's Hudibras. Both the main characters of the poem are Puritans but Butler makes a clear distinction between the Presbyterian hero and his Independent squire Ralpho. Whereas Hudibras belongs to the scholastic tradition of learning, Ralpho belongs to an anti-rational tradition:

> His Knowledge was not far behind
> The Knight's, but of another kind,
> And he another way came by't:
> Some call it Gifts, and some New light;
> A Liberal Art, that costs no pains
> Of Study, Industry or Brains . . .
> . . . Whate're men speak by this new Light,
> Still they are sure to be i' th' right.
> 'Tis a dark-Lanthorn of the Spirit,

> Which none see by but those that bear it:
> A Light which falls down from on high,
> For Spiritual Trades to cousen by . . . [8]

Butler goes on to describe the squire's more occult accomplishments:

> For mystick learning, wondrous able
> In Magick, Talisman and Cabal
> Whose primitive tradition reaches
> As far as Adam's first green breeches:
> Deep-seated in Intelligence,
> Idea's, Atomes, Influences;
> And much of Terra Incognita,
> Th' Intelligible world could say:
> A deep occult Philosopher,
> As learn'd as the Wild Irish are,
> Or Sir Agrippa, for profound
> And solid Lying much renown'd:
> He Anthroposophus and Fludd,
> And Jacob Behmen understood,
> Knew many an amulet and charm,
> That would do neither good nor harm:
> In Rosy-Crucian Love as learned
> As he that Vere Adeptus earned.[9]

In this passage we find the same language of occult philosophy (and a similar selection of its practitioners) that Swift uses in the Tale and The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit. The "learning" of the Wild Irish is one of Swift's jokes in the Mechanical Operation. Anthroposophus (or Thomas Vaughan), Robert Fludd and Jacob Boehme are a trinity very similar to the three occult writers whom Swift, in section V of the Tale, reproves Homer with having read only cursorily. The term "adeptus", meaning someone who has achieved the transmutation of base metals into gold[10] or, more broadly, one who has attained mastery in the occult sciences,[11] occurs many times in the Tale, notably in the first paragraph of the Aeolist section.[12]

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8 Hudibras, I, i, 473-6, 497-502 (ed.cit. pp. 15 - 16).
9 Ibid., I, i, 523-40 (pp. 16 - 17).
10 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 354.
11 See Lewis Spence, An Encyclopoedia of Occult Sciences, (New York: University Books Inc., 1968), p. 3.
12 See Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 68, 114, 127, 150.

Perhaps the most striking thing, though, is that Butler supplements his reference to the Rosicrucians with the following footnote:

> The Fraternity of the Rosy Crucians is very like the sect of antient Gnostici who called themselves so, from the excellent learning they pretended to, although they were the most ridiculous sots of all mankind. [13]

Swift, in the tenth section of the Tale, makes not so much an association as an identification of Gnosticism with Rosicrucianism by treating them as if they were interchangeable.[14]

Butler alludes to all the main branches of occult learning of his day: he mentions Cabbalism and Rosicrucianism by name and supplies a number of details also from the Hermetic philosophy. (As many critics have recognized, the portrait Butler gives of Ralph's occult learning is virtually identical with the one he supplies in his "Character of an Hermetic Philosopher".[15]) Both Cabbalism and Hermeticism gained great popularity among Renaissance thinkers who reacted against the sterility of scholasticism in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and conceived of the central form of Christianity as a vision rather than as a doctrine. They include Marsilio Ficino, who first translated the Hermetic writings after they became available to the West (with the fall of

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[13] Ed.cit., p. 17.
[14] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 187.
[15] Professor Starkman suggests Butler's "Character" as one of the sources of the occult lore of the Tale; but the fact that Butler's Characters" were never printed before Swift's death makes this most unlikely. (See Swift's Satire on Learning in "A Tale of a Tub", p. 52.)

Constantinople) in 1453; Pico della Mirandola, who attempted the first synthesis of the Cabbala and Hermeticism; Nicholas of Cusa, author of De Docta Ignorantia (Of Learned Ignorance), whose thought was strongly influenced by Neoplatonic mysticism; the Abbot Trithemius of Sponheim, who wrote a number of treatises showing Hermetic influences; Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (a disciple of Trithemius) Cabbalist, Hermeticist and author of The Vanity of Arts and Sciences, which inculcates the belief that all scientific knowledge, especially scholastic theology, is vain, confuses the mind and is liable to abuse, tending to make a man "as it were rationally mad"; Johann Reuchlin, the Cabbalistic scholar; and Paracelsus, the most famous Cabbalist and Hermeticist of all.[16]

If these writers seem a rather heterogeneous group, they shared an ideal that makes them part of a single tradition:

> They had in common a dislike of the scholastic philosophy in which religion had got itself entangled and . . . upheld, for religion as well as for literature, imaginative interpretation against argument, the visions of Plato against the logic of Aristotle, the Word of God against the reason of man.[17]

Cabbalism provided them with new imaginative interpretations of the Bible, whilst Hermeticism offered a venerable tradition of learning that was less concerned with theological distinctions than with the search for spiritual

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16 See Serge Hutin, A History of Alchemy, (New York: Tower Publications Inc., 1962), p. 51; Kurt Seligmann, Magic, Supernaturalism, and Religion, (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1968), pp. 309 - 22; Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry, (Princeton: University Press, 1969), pp. 150 - 55. Professor Frye, who emphasizes the visionary rather than the occult aspects of this tradition, also includes in it Erasmus, Rabelais and the More of Utopia.

17 N.Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p. 150.

perfection. The veneration that was accorded to the Cabbala and the Hermetic writings was partly a result of the misconception that they dated from very early antiquity. The Cabbala was thought to have been a record of Jewish wisdom handed down orally from Moses himself, though some claimed that it derived ultimately from Adam: hence Butler's wry reference to "Adam's first green breeches".[18] Hermetic philosophy was based on writings supposedly composed by Hermes Trismegistus (or "Thrice-great Hermes"), the Greek name for the Egyptian god Thoth. Plato, Diodorus of Sicily, Tertullian, Galen, Iamblichus and many others, had referred to him as a historical person, so that nobody doubted his existence.[19] His Pymander, an account of the creation, was considered the Egyptian Genesis, because it was in many respects strikingly similar to the Mosaic account, especially in that it ascribed the creation to the Word, or the Logos, issuing forth from the Nous.[20] The resemblances are less impressive when one realizes that the Hermetic writings actually date from the second century and that they belong to the movement of mysticism and philosophy known as neo-Platonism, founded by Plotinus, a fact that was first proved by the great classical scholar Isaac Casaubon in 1614. When he did so the Christian interpretation of the Hermetica had been so thoroughly established that he assumed the works to have been forgeries by Christians.[21]

If this movement of thought appears remote from sectarian Protestantism, there is nevertheless a strong connection. Butler does not explain the

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18 Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p.84.
19 Seligmann, op.cit., p.126.
20 Yates, op.cit., p. 85.
21 Ibid., p. 170.

the connection, but seems to take it for granted that his audience will understand it. Professor Frye, however, points out the influence of the tradition on left-wing inner-light Protestantism. If the ideal of a visionary and theosophical Christianity was rendered hopeless by the Reformation, it survived in modified form in various offshoots, such as the Anabaptists.

> It was to this group that the apocalyptic vision came most vividly. They were political anarchists because they regarded all social systems without exception as tyrannies. They looked for the millennium because they denied natural religion to the point of insisting that the whole physical world was a doomed illusion. They acknowledged no authority but that of the Scriptures and their own 'inner light' . . . The Anabaptist leaven, working in Germany, produced Boehme, and through Boehme and its Quaker descendents it came to England.[22]

The Boehme Professor Frye mentions is the same Jacob Boehme whom Butler and Swift both allude to in their satire on occult learning. He is "the first conspicuous example of the affinity between occult and left-wing inner-light Protestant traditions".[23] Though his writings were essentially speculative and visionary rather than dogmatic he was constantly in trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities of the Lutheran Church on charges of heresy.[24] The fact that, outside the Bible, Paracelsus is the primary influence on his thinking emphasizes how he belongs to a tradition in which the ordinary distinctions between Catholic and Protestant are irrelevant. Paracelsus, like Cornelius Agrippa his contemporary, had sympathy with the

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[22] Fearful Symmetry, pp. 151 - 2.
[23] Ibid., p. 153.
[24] Spence, An Encyclopoedia of Occult Sciences, pp. 74 - 5.

reform movement but chose ultimately to remain within the Catholic Church. Along with many other intellectuals he was attracted by the Anabaptist movement because it combined demands for both social reform and intellectual freedom. When the Peasants' War broke out in Germany in 1524, Paracelsus joined the Anabaptist cause and barely escaped hanging for his part in the revolt. His social, political and economic writings reflect Anabaptist teachings and sometimes he reproduces whole paragraphs from the works of rebel leaders like Michel Geismayer, Thomas Muenzer and Jack of Leyden. When Paracelsus finally became disillusioned with the Anabaptists it was because they had sacrificed the broad idealism that began the movement for the sake of a small collection of strongly held convictions, chief among them being their repudiation of infant baptism from which the name of the sect is derived. The more obvious it became to the Anabaptists that their cause was lost,

> the more stubbornly they clung to dogma. Finally, as is often the case with defeated movements, the urge to assert themselves as 'peculiar people' submerged the original motives. The movement disintegrated into sects which sought to outdo each other in religious bigotry. Religious folly and ecstacies became a sign of loyalty in some fraternities; others gave a literal interpretation to Christ's words that whores would be the first to enter the Kingdom; others were 'seized' by 'spirits'. [25]

All this has a definite bearing on the satire on enthusiasm in the Tale and the Mechanical Operation. The tradition to which Jack of Leyden, Paracelsus

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[25] Henry Pachter, Paracelsus: Magic into Science, (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 95.

and Boehme belong has little to do with the Calvinistic centre of the Puritan reform movement which first fostered it: it was a mystic and visionary movement with strong heretical tendencies. It is this same visionary tradition that Swift has in mind when he refers to the "fanaticks" that

> started up in Germany, a little after the Reformation of Luther; springing, as Mushrooms do at the End of a Harvest; such were Jack of Leyden, David George, Adam Neuster and many others.[26]

Jack of Leyden was one of the founding fathers of the Anabaptists. David George (or Joris), another Anabaptist, was Henry More's principal example of religious enthusiasm: More lists nine heresies that George propagated, including his claim to be the true Christ, born of the Holy Ghost and the spirit of Christ.[27] Adam Neuster, a German Socinian theologian, eventually became a Mussulman and died in the Mohammedan faith. Swift also provides some English equivalents of these fanatics in the sects known as the "Family of Love" and the "Sweet Singers of Israel". The Family of Love was founded by a Dutchman named Henry Nicholas, who taught that the love of God, mystically experienced in the soul, is one with the love of man. Men should therefore live as one great family united in the bond of love, by which alone men can be freed from sin and hell hereafter. However, his universal brotherhood dwindled to relative insignificance and the term "familist" ultimately became a general term applied to any eccentric

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[26] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 286.

[27] Henry More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus (1662), (Augustan Reprint Society, No. 118, Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1966), pp. 23 - 4.

religious mystic.[28] The Sweet Singers of Israel were a group who claimed that, as God's elect, they were incapable of sinning, "although they were the Debauchest and most Profligate Wretches living".[29] These sects are so different from the main body of Puritans that there must be some doubt as to whether the term "Puritan" is broad enough to include them.[30] Orthodox Presbyterians, with their belief in Calvinistic predestination, could still subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles, which were so framed as to accommodate the doctrine of predestination or of free-will as the individual chose. But whereas most Puritans wished to reform the national church along Presbyterian lines, these sects were separatists and set up their own congregations independent of the national church. Many such sects also held beliefs that were the antithesis of Presbyterian doctrine such as antinomianism -- the belief that one has been freed of one's duty to obey the moral law -- and universal grace and free will, as opposed to grace for the elect only.

It is difficult to see how such completely opposed beliefs could have arisen from the same movement. W. Haller explains the development of the sects by reference to the individualistic and equalitarian tendencies in Calvinist teaching.

> The doctrine, too convincingly set forth, of God's immediate concern for the individual soul and of the individual aptitude for understanding what the Holy Spirit revealed through the spoken and printed word, encouraged some to the idea that they

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[28] W.Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 205 - 6.

[29] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 287.

[30] See E.V.Kevan, The Grace of Law, (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1964), pp. 17 - 22.

> need trust nothing so much as their own untutored notions even in defiance of sense and sound learning. The call of the preachers to the unconverted, too evangelically urged, suggested to many that every man either could be saved if he chose or was saved already and must reject grace of his own will if he were to be damned at all. Such were the deviations from orthodox Puritanism which led to the rise of the sects.[31]

On the basis of this explanation it is understandable why some sectarians had enough confidence in their own divine election and in their heterodox opinions to separate into self-contained congregations. By the same token one can appreciate why the sects continued to subdivide and proliferate. The leader of any one sect might be challenged from within the sect by a man confident that his own insights were superior on some question and, failing to reach agreement, would feel obliged to dissociate himself from it. Those whom he had managed to convince would follow him and form a new sect. The extent to which such a sect survived would depend largely on the character and abilities of the new leader.

However, there was obviously a limit to how far this process could continue.

> . . . every sectary tended to draw the lines of tolerance about himself so close, to reject so vast a proportion of the human race as by definition reprobate, that the remnant of true believers still beside him bade fair to dwindle until he should be left utterly alone with his private God, whatever that God might be. The principle of the limitation of grace to a predestined few, of conscience as the determinant of

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[31] Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, p. 175.

> election, of the exclusion from the church of all but the elect, could go no farther . . . [32]

Some sects managed to exercise sufficient control over their members to prevent disintegration. Others rejected the dogma of election of the few, concluding that perhaps nothing could be surely known except that God was revealed in nature and in the Bible, and that men were meant to believe in him and show forbearance with one another. Thus it was possible for men who had begun as reformers impatient to build the New Jerusalem to end as mystagogues and lovers of mankind.[33]

Two preachers associated with the Family of Love indicate what this meant in practical terms. John Everard, who preached the doctrine of universal love and free will and taught God's immanence in nature and man, was constantly in trouble with the authorities. In 1639 he was convicted by the High Commission on charges of familism, antinomianism and anabaptism.[34] John Eaton, author of Honey-combe of free Justification by Christ alone, also preached the general redemption of man and was cited by many contemporaries as the first English founder of antinomianism.[35] Both drew to some extent on long-established traditions of Christian mysticism, particularly the Theologica Germanica, an anonymous fifteenth century work first published by Martin Luther in 1518. It is the classic statement of the belief in the real presence of God in the human soul, relegating the scriptures and the sacraments to a useful secondary but not essential role.

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33 Ibid., p. 203.
34 Ibid., pp. 175 - 203.
35 Ibid., pp. 207 - 8.
The Grace of Law, p. 26.

Everard was the first English translator not only of this work but also of Sebastian Franck's The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Nicholas of Cusa's Vision of God and selections of the writings of Hermes Trismegistus.[36] Nowhere is the split between orthodox Calvinism and Sectarian unorthodoxy more evident than in Eaton and Everard. They also show equally clearly the connection between the extreme Puritan left and interest in occult mysticism. Professor Haller comments:

> There can be little doubt that Everard seconded by Randall and other disciples, was an important agent in putting into circulation in the decade before 1640 the type of mystical enthusiasm which was to flourish so abundantly and so much more extravagantly a little later.[37]

The fact, however, that there is a genuine connection between left-wing Protestant inner light and occultism does not remove all problems from interpretation of the Aeolist section of the Tale. Though Swift clearly devotes most of his consideration to the radical fringe of Puritanism he is careful to include more orthodox representatives as well. Amongst Jack's varied manifestations he lists: Jack the Bald (Calvin), Jack with a Lanthorn (all pretenders to inward light), Dutch Jack (Jack of Leyden), French Hugh (the Huguenots), Tom the Beggar (the Gueses) and Knocking Jack of the North (John Knox). John Knox, the founder of Scottish Presbyterianism, is rather different from the Anabaptist Jack of Leyden. But Swift adds rather tantalizingly that

> it was under one, or some, or all of these Appellations (which I leave

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36 The Rise of Puritanism, pp. 207 - 8.
37 Ibid., p. 208.

> the learned Reader to determine) that he hath given rise to the most illustrious and Epidemick Sect of Aeolists. [38]

The fact that Swift uses Jack of Leyden as his chief example of religious enthusiasm[39] does not alter the fact that Swift finds a place in the Aeolist sect for the more orthodox presbyterians, who had no connection with occultism or mysticism.

The likeliest explanation I can offer is that Swift attributed the rise of sectarianism to the energetic preaching of the more orthodox puritans. Whilst the Presbyterians did not place inner conviction above the Scriptures in authority, they did teach that the inner voice of conscience was the voice of God and that it was the Christian's right to interpret the Scriptures for himself by spiritual illumination. Such teaching obviously fostered the individual's confidence in his inner light, and at least one presbyterian conceded that "Antinomianism rose among us from our obscure Preaching of Evangelical Grace, and insisting too much on tears and terrors".[40] Swift might therefore legitimately include Presbyterianism in a survey of inward light that is especially concerned with the extreme manifestations of it, even though it was not the principle article of doctrine of that sect.

We must be wary, however, of defining too narrowly a category as broad as "All pretenders to inspiration whatsoever". Swift in his survey of fanatics in the Mechanical Operation does not limit himself to the post-Reformation era. He includes also

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[38] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 141 - 2.
[39] Swift mentions him in the "Digression on Madness" and the Mechanical Operation.
[40] The Grace of Law, p. 23.

> the numerous Sects of Hereticks, appearing in the first five Centuries of the Christian Æra, from Simon Magus and his followers to those of Eutyches. [41]

Amongst these early Sects are the Gnostic heretics of the first century A.D. whom, as we have seen, Swift associates with the Rosicrucians. There is, moreover, good reason to see Gnosticism as the epitome of Aeolism for Swift places on the title page of the Tale, along with his epigraph from Lucretius, a Gnostic doxology taken from Irenaeus, the earliest and most comprehensive critic of Gnosticism from among the Church fathers. The two epigraphs are obviously complementary. If Lucretius is the archetype of the atheistic natural philosopher who sees everything solely in physical terms, the Gnostics aptly represent rejection of the physical world in favour of the purely spiritual.

The name "Gnostic" comes from the Greek word "gnosis", meaning "knowledge". The Gnostics, however, were not philosophers in the ordinary sense of the word but theosophists, and their "gnosis" is not discursive intellectual knowledge but "seeing God" and "knowing mysteries", which are attained by personal intercourse with God and by his revelations.[42] It is difficult to generalize beyond this about the group as a whole because the name covers such a wide range of different opinions. Irenaeus reports that they differ widely with respect to doctrine and adds that "those who are recognized as being most modern make it their effort daily to invent some

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41 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 285.

42 K.E.Kirk, The Vision of God: The Christian Doctrine of the "Summum Bonum", (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 211.

new opinion".[43] In this they resemble not only all other sects of the kind Swift is considering,[44] but also the extreme modern attitude that Swift depicts in the Tale. In religion, as in learning, proponents of total originality (or inspiration) cannot be expected to cohere in their ideas. Irenaeus, however, indicates certain points of agreement.

The knowledge on which the Gnostics prided themselves and which they considered essential to salvation was mystical in character. Irenaeus describes at length the cosmic system taught by Valentinus, who recounts how the spiritual world was created by a series of emanations from the divine father. It was as a result of an aberration from spirituality by the last-born and lowest of these emanations that the physical world came into being. The natural world and with it man himself are therefore far removed from the source of their happiness, but by cultivating their spirituality a privileged few can redeem themselves from their corrupt state.[45] This scheme, which contains both a theory of nature and a theory of man, is common to all the Gnostic sects, although they differed over some of the details. In many respects, however, their account of the creation has a resemblance to the Genesis story and they called upon Scripture, adopting highly idiosyncratic interpretations, to corroborate many details. Irenaeus cites as an example their proof of the existence of thirty-two divine emanations by reference to the parable of the labourers sent to the vineyard.[46]

Swift shared the common attitude of learned seventeenth-century writers

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[43] "Irenaeus Against Heresies", The Ante-Nicene Fathers, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), I, 347.
[44] Cf. Guthkelch-Smith, p. 270.
[45] The Ante-Nicene Fathers, pp. 316 - 23.
[46] Ibid., p. 317.

to the Gnostics that they were corrupters of language.[47] This is the main significance of the epigraph to the Tale which runs:

> Basima eacabasa eanaa irraurista,
> diarba da caeobata fobor camelanthi. [48]

This answers very well to Swift's definition of the enthusiasts' inward light:

> that is to say a large Memory,
> plentifully fraught with Theological
> Polysyllables and mysterious texts
> from Holy Writ. [49]

The use of mumbojumbo to give a bogus air of solemnity, instead of proper use of language, to convey meaning, is also Swift's target when he refers to Rosicrucianism in Section X of the Tale, where he connects it with Gnosticism by using the terms Bythus, Syge and Acamoth, all taken from the Valentinian system. In this passage he also mentions (by his pseudonym Eugenius Philalethes) the mystic and defender of Rosicrucianism, Thomas Vaughan. The only other point in the Tale where he mentions Vaughan is in Section V, where he calls Vaughan's writing

> the most unintelligible Fustian
> that, perhaps, was ever publish'd in
> any language. [50]

It is the same criticism that, as we have noted, Butler makes of both Rosicrucians and Gnostics and their pretence to learning, when they are actually "the most ridiculous sots of all mankind".

There is, however, a slightly more subtle meaning to be seen in Swift's

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47 See Martin Price, Swift's Rhetorical Art, p. 6.
48 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 1.
49 Ibid., p. 278.
50 Ibid., p. 127.

use of the Gnostic quotation. Irenaeus provides a tentative translation for it which runs as follows:

> I invoke that which is above every power of the Father, which is called Light, and good Spirit, and Life, because thou hast reigned in the body.[51]

This formula was used by the Gnostics for the rebaptism of those who have attained true gnosis, for they maintained that a second baptism was necessary for redemption. This quotation, therefore, is an interesting reminder of the heretical Anabaptists' insistence on adult baptism. More important, however, is the reference to a power above the father, with its implications that the creator of the world was not the supreme God but one of the lesser emanations, the Demiurge. This heretical opinion, coupled with the references to light and spirit, could well serve as a comment on the heretical opinions to which the alleged inspiration of the seventeenth-century English sects eventually brought them.

Another association of the Gnostic sects is suggested by the Scottish Presbyterian divine, Samuel Rutherford, who stated that the antinomianism of the Puritan left wing was derived from Gnosticism.[52] For this claim Irenaeus gives ample warrant, noting particularly the claim of some Gnostic sects that their members will achieve salvation not by means of conduct but because they are spiritual in nature.[53] Such sects are characterized by the same kind of sexual promiscuity that Swift also singles out as one of the

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51 The Ante-Nicene Fathers, p. 346.

52 See Kevan, The Grace of Law, p. 34. Apart from St.Paul's reference in Romans 6 : 1 - 2, the Gnostics provide the earliest instance of antinomianism in the Christian Church.

53 The Ante-Nicene Fathers, p. 324.

distinguishing characterics of the sectarians of all ages.[54] Irenaeus is led to speculate whether some of these men are possessed by demons, or whether they worship not God but the devil, questions that Swift likewise raises about the enthusiasts.[55]

It should be apparent that Swift's critique of the enthusiasts is largely the same as Irenaeus applies to the Gnostics: visionary mysticism, antinomianism, the abuse of language, pretence to inspiration and the suspicion of diabolic possession all attach to both groups. It was obviously a point in Swift's favour that he could associate the enthusiasts very closely with a group that had been condemned as heretical at the very dawn of Christianity. With particular reference to the Aeolist section, Gnosticism provides a paradigm of false inspiration that complements seventeenth century manifestations of it. However, Swift undertakes to portray in the Aeolist Section not just false inspiration, but all pretenders to inspiration whatsoever. Unless, we can find a better reason for Swift's reducing "spirit" to "wind" in that section than a cheap sneer, then his analysis is trivial and inconsequential. The only way to do this is to show that Swift's use of "wind" is not so much a caricature as a diagnosis.

One indication of a possible diagnosis is supplied by the most obvious satiric antecedent for Swift's use of the wind motif -- Rabelais's account of the Island of Ruach in Book IV, Chapter 43 of Gargantua and Pantagruel. "Ruach" is the Hebrew word for "spirit", but it also designates both "the breath of the nostrils" and "the wind".[56] It occurs with all these meanings

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54 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 286.
55 Ibid., p. 275.
56 See Thierry Maertens, The Breath and Spirit of God, (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, Inc., 1964), p.12.

in the Old Testament. Rabelais plays on these different meanings in very much the same way that Swift puns on "animus", "anima" and "spiritus" in the Aeolist section and there are some resemblances in the way they treat the subject. Here are the paragraphs in Rabelais that most clearly resemble parts of the Aeolist system:

> Deux jours après arrivasmes en l'isle de Ruach, et vous jure, par l'estoile Poussiniere, que je trouvay l'estat et la vie du peuple estrange plus que je ne diz. Ils ne vivent que de vent. Rien ne beuvent, rien ne mangent, sinon vent . . . Quant ilz font quelque festin ou banquet, on dresse les tables soubs un ou deux moulins à vent. Là, repaissent, aises comme à nopces. Et durant leur repas, disputent de la bonté, excellence, salubrité, rarité des vens, comme vous, beuveurs, par les banquetz philosophez en matiere de vins. L'un loue le Siroch; l'aultre, Zephyre; l'aultre Gualerne. Ainsi des aultres. L'aultre, le vent de la chemise, pour les muguetz et amoureux. Pour les malades ilz usent les vens couliz, comme de couliz on nourrist les malades de nostre pays .
>
> Ilz ne fiantent, ilz ne pissent, ilz ne crachent en ceste isle. En recompense, ilz vesnent, ilz pedent, ilz rottent copieusement. Ilz patissent toutes sortes et toutes especes de maladies. Aussi toute maladie naist et procede de ventosité, comme deduyt Hippocrates, lib. de Flatibus. Mais la plus epidemiale est la cholicque venteuse. Pour y remedier, usent de ventoses amples, et y rendent forte ventositez. Ilz meurent tous hydropicques, tympanites; et meurent les hommes en pedent, les femmes en vesnent. Ainsi leur sort l'ame par le cul.
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> Je advisay que ainsi, comme vous, beuveurs, allans par pays portez flacoons, ferriers et bouteilles; pareillement chascun à sa ceincture portoit un beau petit soufflet, Si par cas vent leur falloit, avecques ces joliz souffletz ilz

en forgeoient de tout frays, par attraction et expulsion reciproque, comme vous sçavez que vent, en en essentiale definition, n'est aultre chose que air flottant et undoyant.

En ce moment, de par leur Roy, nous feut faict commandement que troys heures n'eussions à retirer en nos navires home ne femme du pays. Car on luy avait robbé une veze plene du vent propre que jadis à Ulysses donna le bon ronfleur Aeolus, pour guider sa nauf en temps calme.

[Two days later we arrived at the Island of Ruach, or Windy Island, and I swear to you by the stormy Pleiades that I found the conditions and customs of its inhabitants stranger than I can say. They live on wind. They drink nothing and they eat nothing but wind . . . When they hold a feast or a banquet they set up their tables under one or two windmills and feast there as faily as at a wedding, discussing during the meal the goodness and excellence, the rare and salubrious qualities of winds as you, my fellow drinkers, philosophize at your banquets on the subject of winds. One praises the Sirocco, another the Besch, another the Garbino, another the Bise, another the Zephyr, another the Galerne, and so on. Others praise smock winds for suitors and lovers. The sick they treat with draughts of air, just as we do with draughts of sirop. . .

They do not shit, piss or spit on this island. But on the other hand, they poop, fart and belch most copiously. They suffer from all sorts and varieties of diseases. For every malady originates and develops from flatulence, as Hippocrates proves in his book, On Wind. But the worst epidemic they know is windy colic, as a remedy for which they use large cupping-glasses and so draw off much wind. They all die of dropsy or tympanites; they all fart as they die, the men loudly, the women soundlessly,

> and in this way their souls depart by the back passage . . . I noticed that just as you, my dear boozers, carry flagons and leather bottles, and flasks when you go about, so each one of them carried a pretty little bellows on his belt. So if the wind happened to fail them, they could blow up a fresh one with these neat bellows, by process of attraction and reciprocal expulsion. For, as you know, wind in its essential definition is nothing more than air in movement and undulation.
>
> At this moment we received an order, in the King's name, not to let any man or woman of their country aboard any of our ships for the next three hours. For he had been robbed of a full fart of the original wind which that old snorer Aeolus had given to Ulysses of old, to propel his ship in a calm.] [57]

Whilst not precisely a paradoxical encomium, this passage is very like a paradoxical encomium in the way it magnifies the importance of a single principle. Like the earlier praise of debtors it attempts a wellnigh exhaustive treatment of the theme. It is not surprising, therefore, that Swift's comprehensive account of the same theme should have many details in common with Rabelais's: windmills, bellows, the distinction between different winds, the internal operation of wind on the body and the allusion to Aeolus's part in the Odyssey all occur in both passages. There is more to the resemblance, however, than this.

The exact significance of Rabelais's Ruach is still a matter of uncertainty among scholars. A.J.Krailsheimer, however, ventures the plausible

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[57] Rabelais, Oeuvres Completes, ed.cit., II, 165 - 7; Gargantua and Pantagruel, ed. cit., pp. 540 - 42.

suggestion that the episode may be an allusion to the sixteenth-century debate between Averroists and more orthodox thinkers about the complex shades of meaning conveyed by the Green words "nous", "psyche" and "pneuma". Renaissance Averroists made much of the fact that Hebrew "ruach" is Greek "pneuma" which carries strong physical connotations.[58] To them the idea that man's rational faculties derived from a physical principle was unthinkable. As J.H. Randall, Jnr. explains it:

> Aristotle had said that intellect is 'separable' from matter and independent of it, a deathless and eternal activity. He also made clear that whatever is eternal, independent of matter and not individuated by it, can only be one in number in a single species. Moreover, if each body had its own intellect, then those intellects would depend on the bodies for their separate existence and die with them. They would be themselves part of the body or bodily powers; as particular and material things they could never know universals or indivisibles or abstract things but could receive only particulars. They would thus be indistinguishable from sense.[59]

The Averroists thus distinguished individual cogitative souls as a purely physical function, that suffers dissolution and death with the body, from the single and immortal intellect by participation in which men partake of the eternal. When a man dies this intellect does not die but remains the same in number in those that are left. This single intellect of mankind

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58 A.J.Krailsheimer, Rabelais and the Franciscans, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 147 - 8.

59 The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed E.Cassirer, P.O. Kristeller and J.H.Randall Jnr., (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 262.

thus enjoys an impersonal and very abstract immortality.[60]

The Averroistic scheme is clearly opposed to traditional Christian teaching for it allows no place for the doctrine of personal immortality for the soul. That Rabelais was acquainted with the dispute can be taken for granted, for in the 1530's he was living in Lyons, the centre of Italian influence in France, and the chief arena of the dispute was the Italian universites.[61] Like most Renaissance humanists Rabelais had a strong conviction in the personal immortality of the soul and it remained a cardinal tenet of his philosophy.[62] It is logical, then, to regard the Ruach Island episode as a mockery of the peculiarly physical concept of the words "ruach" and "pneuma".

This physical understanding of the nature of the soul would explain why when the Ruach Islanders die their souls are expelled with a fart. It is only logical that physical souls at their departure should prompt physical manifestations. A similarly materialistic concept of the sould would also help to explain why Swift felt justified in treating "spirit" as synonymous with "wind" and why he invokes the concept of the anima mundi as his chief illustration of the meaning of "spirit".

The other significant area where Rabelais's account of wind resembles Swift's is the one dealing with the effects of wind on the human body. Whereas in the first paragraph quoted above wind is described as the staple of life for the Ruach Islanders, by the second paragraph it has become the

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60 Ibid., pp. 261 - 2.

61 See G.T.Buckley, Atheism in the English Renaissance, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 28.

62 Krailsheimer, op.cit., p. 141.

origin of their diseases and ultimately the cause of their death. This dichotomy is very close to the one Professor Harth makes between Swift's two main uses of the "wind" motif in the Aeolist Section of the Tale, as both the principle of explanation that the Aeolists attribute to the universe and, because they suffer from "windy melancholy" the cardinal symptom of their behaviour as well. Rabelais mentions "windy colic" as the worst epidemic that the Ruach Islanders can suffer but does not enlarge on the symptoms. He contents himself with pointing the contrast between the salubrious and the debilitating effects of ventose imbibition to ridicule the idea of a physical soul. Swift may well have taken hints from the Ruach Island episode, but he went much further than Rabelais. We must now return to the Aeolist section and take a closer look at Swift's treatment.

Here is Swift's opening paragraph

> The Learned Aeolists, maintain the Original Cause of all things to be Wind, from which Principle this whole Universe was at first produced, and into which it must at last be resolved; that the same Breath which had kindled, and blew up the flame of nature, should one Day blow it out. [63]
>
> Quod procul a nobis flectat Fortuna gubernans.

It is virtually impossible to tell from this exactly what Swift is up to. There is no system, and never was, that believes wind to be the original cause of things. Professor Harth has suggested that Swift was here thinking of the system of the Greek philosopher Anaximenes who believed that the

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[63] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 150.

original element which produced the other three was air.[64] The basis of Professor Harth's conjecture is a verbal resemblance between the opening of the Aeolist section and the account of Anaximenes supplied in Thomas Stanley's popular history of philosophy. Professor Harth argues the resemblance plausibly, but I find it difficult to see how this in itself contributes anything to the satire. If one concedes the resemblance and the fact that Swift could expect his readers to recognize a parody of a passage from Stanley's History of Philosophy, one still faces the problem of how a system based on wind can be equated with one that is based on air. Some explanation is needed of how Swift got from "air" to "wind" and, ultimately, some justification as well. Wind must in some way correspond to a key element in the Aeolist section, because it is a key word in the satiric portrait.

We have to wait until the second paragraph of the Aeolist section before we get much idea of who the Aeolists actually are. Swift has described the origin of the universe as deriving from wind and has prophesied its end by the same cause. He continues:

> This is what the Adepti understand by their Anima Mundi; that is to say, the Spirit, or Breath, or Wind of the World: for examine the whole system by the particulars of Nature, and you will find it not to be disputed. For whether you please to call the Forma Informans of Man, by the Name of Spiritus, Animus, Afflatus, or Anima; what are all these but several Appellations for Wind? which is the ruling element in every compound, and into

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64 Swift and Anglican Rationalism, pp. 66 - 7.

> which they all resolve upon their Corruption. Farther, what is Life itself, but as it is commonly call'd, the Breath of our Nostrils? Whence it is very justly observed by Naturalists, that Wind still continues of great Emolument in certain Mysteries not to be named, giving occasion for those happy Epithets of Turgidus and Inflatus, apply'd either to the Emittent, or Recipient Organs. [65]

It is in this passage that Swift provides us with the major key to understanding what the Aeolist system represents. Aeolism is a reductive philosophy like the tailor-worship system insofar as both claim the pre-eminence of a single principle that pervades the universe. They should also be antithetical in that the tailor-worshippers are preoccupied with the material world whereas the Aeolists' concerns are spiritual. Surprisingly, though, the principle that the Aeolists extol is no less physical for being spiritual. This is clear from Swift's reference to the "anima mundi" or world-soul which he glosses by the English terms "Spirit, or Breath, or Wind of the World", as if they were all equally valid renderings. The implied equation between two such different concepts as "spirit" and "wind" is a strange one but not without justification on no less an authority than the Bible.

We have seen in connection with Rabelais' Island of Ruach how the Hebrew word "ruach" can have a purely physical meaning or a more specialized theological one. Thierry Maertens' book The Breath and Spirit of God, as its title implies, is devoted to an examination of this ambiguity. Maertens traces the development of the word "ruach" and its Greek counterpart "pneuma"

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[65] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 150 - 51.

in the Bible, showing how it developed by metaphorical extension, from its original meaning of both the breath within men and the breath of air that animates nature, to the more subtle meaning it acquired as expressing the nature of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity.[66] The English word "spirit" has a similar ambiguity, deriving as it does from a physical metaphor.[67]

The identification of the Holy Spirit thus has some etymological warrant, though of a rather questionable significance. The opening of the Biblical account of the creation of the world provides an excellent example of wind associated but not yet identified with God:

> And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit [i.e. the breath] of God moved over the waters. (Genesis, 1:2).[68]

Even after the word "spirit" came to be applied to God's actual nature, wind could still be used as an analogy to illustrate the way God works:

> The wind blows where it will and thou hearest its sound but dost not know where it comes from or where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. (John, 3:8)[69]

The fact that spirit or its equivalent in a number of languages, is derived from a physical metaphor of wind and frequently retains residual associations with it does not, however, justify a close identification of the two. Such

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66 Maertens, op.cit., esp. pp. 7 - 76.
67 See W. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), pp. 54 - 5.
68 Maertens, op.cit., p. 14.
69 Ibid., p. 15.

an identification, taken to its logical conclusion, would result in the concept of God himself, the supreme spirit, as no more than wind.

The equation of spirit with wind has, however, a special relevance in the context of philosophical thought in the seventeenth century. The notion that spirits in general and the soul in particular were material was one of the most notorious heterodoxies of that very heterodox figure Thomas Hobbes. It is not therefore surprising that William Wotton should have suspected an allusion to Hobbes's Leviathan in this part of the Aeolist section. Opposite the second paragraph of the section Wotton remarks:

> All this is like Mr.Hobbes's banter upon in-blowing. [70]

Hobbes uses the term "blowing in" at several points in Leviathan to deride the concept that a man can receive faith, wisdom and other virtues by infusion, "as if the Vertuous and their Vertues could be asunder". (IV, 46).[71] The most significant occasion (in the present context) on which Hobbes employs the term, however, is in the chapter where he deals with "the Signification of SPIRIT, ANGEL, and INSPIRATION in the Books of Holy Scripture" (III, 34).

The three categories Hobbes deals with in this chapter are really different aspects of the same thing since he is essentially concerned with establishing a precise and proper understanding of the word "spirit". He takes as his point of departure the scholastic definition of body and spirit as corporal and incorporeal substance respectively. To this definition of

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[70] See Guthkelch-Smith, p. 314.
[71] Cf. Leviathan, I, iv, ed.cit., p. 17.

spirit he opposes the semantic argument that a substance is by definition corporeal and that "incorporeal substance" is therefore a contradiction in terms. According to Hobbes the distinction between body and spirit is not absolute but relative, and based upon the fact that certain substances are not discernible either to the sight or to the touch.

> Therefore, in the common language of men, Aire and aeriall substances use not to be taken for Bodies, but (as often as men are sensible of their effects) are called Wind and Breath, or (Because the same are called in the Latin Spiritus) Spirits. [72]

That Hobbes illustrates his argument with the example of air and aerial substances is significant: he undoubtedly knew of the experiments conducted by Torricelli and Pascal which demonstrated that air had weight (something denied by Aristotelian scientists) and could to a large extent be treated as if it were a fluid.[73] Hobbes himself had lived in France for ten years preceding publication of his Leviathan and had become one of the circle of natural philosophers that centred around Mersenne and included Descartes and Pascal. Although the work of Torricelli and Pascal did not immediately satisfy everyone that air was actually a substance, it was a strong point in favour of Hobbes's argument.

His rejection of immaterial spirits leaves Hobbes with three categories of spirit. One is a "subtile, fluid, invisible body" like air. The second is "a Ghost or other Idol or Phantasme of the imagination". To these Hobbes adds the metaphorical signification of spirit, "for sometimes

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[72] Ibid., p. 211.
[73] See Kearney, Science and Change, 1500 - 1700, p. 163 ff.

it is taken for Disposition or Inclination of the mind" (e.g. a "froward spirit") and sometimes for any eminent ability or extraordinary passion or disease of the mind" (e.g. the "spirit of wisdom").[74] It is not hard to guess which of these meanings of spirit Hobbes considers most important. A category defined as "phantasmes of the imagination", the chief example of which is ghosts, hardly commands much respect. Since Hobbes lists metaphors along with tropes and other rhetorical figures as one of the chief contributors to absurd conclusions in reasoning [I,5] the only category with real validity is the physical one. Plainly a world of reality that is not subject to physical scrutiny his little interest for him.

This naturally involves Hobbes in some difficulty when he has to find a place for God in his scheme of things, as is apparent from the way he continues:

> Other signification of Spirit I find nowhere any; and where none of these can satisfy the sense of that word in Scripture, the place falleth not under humane Understanding; and our Faith therein consisteth not in our Opinion, but in our Submission; as in all places where God is said to be a Spirit, or where by the Spirit of God is meant God himselfe. For the nature of God is incomprehensible; that is to say, we understand nothing of what he is, but only that he is; and therefore the Attributes we give him, are not to tell one another, what he is, nor to signifie our opinions of his Nature, but our desire to honour him with such names as we conceive most honourable amongst ourselves.[75]

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[74] Leviathan, p. 211.
[75] Ibid., pp. 211 - 12.

In view of Hobbes's readiness to accept the concept of God the great engineer and the use he makes of that concept, this reluctance to predicate the attributes of God is revealing. It shows that Hobbes is on the defensive: he is unwilling to push his denial of incorporeal substances to its logical conclusion and defy orthodox Christian teaching either by denying the existence of God or by asserting that God is material. His admission here that immaterial existence is possible, albeit incomprehensible, undermines the whole basis of his earlier argument.

Nevertheless, Hobbes is satisfied to leave God outside his frame of reference and examine the Bible according to the criteria he has established. The remainder of the chapter is taken up with examination of the different scriptural uses of the word "spirit" or its equivalent. All the examples Hobbes considers he is able to reconcile with his tripartite definition, though occasionally with some difficulty. As his first instance he quotes the opening of the Book of Genesis: "The spirit of God moved upon the face of the Waters". Hobbes comments:

> Here is by the Spirit of God be meant God himself, then is motion attributed to God, and consequently Place, which are intelligible only of Bodies, and not of substances incorporeall; and so the place is above our understanding that can conceive nothing moved that changes not place, or that has not dimension, and whatsoever has dimensions, is Body.[76]

For Hobbes, it seems, there is no alternative to describing God by the same self-contradictory term that he uses to disprove the existence of non-

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[76] Ibid., p. 212.

material spirits. It is easy to see how he acquired the reputation of an atheist: this is tantamount to an essertion that God does not exist. Hobbes nevertheless rescues himself from this imputation by citing another passage for comparison:

> But the meaning of these words is best understood by the like place, Gen. 8:1. Where when the earth was covered with water, as in the beginning, God intending to abate them, and again to discover the dry land, useth the like words, 'I will bring my Spirit upon the Earth, and the waters shall be diminished': in which place by Spirit is understood a Wind, (that is an Aire or Spirit moved,) which might be called (as in the former place) the Spirit of God, because it is God's work.[77]

Hobbes's reconciliation of Scripture with commonsense, therefore, depends on a sharp distinction between the fact of God's existence and his manifestations in the natural order. By this distinction God is effectively cut off from his creation. His providence, if it operates at all, does so not by supernatural but by purely natural means. He is a deus absconditus, a primary cause, outside but in control of the chain of causality that governs a creation that has nothing of his divine nature in it.

The theological difficulties implicit in the Hobbesian dichotomy become apparent in the final two paragraphs of the chapter, where he deals with inspiration. Here his argument is again a semantic one:

> On the signification of the word Spirit dependeth that of the word Inspiration; which must either be taken properly; and then it is nothing but the blowing into a man some thin

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[77] Ibid., p. 212.

> and subtile aire, or wind, in such a manner as a man filleth a bladder with his breath; or if spirits be not corporeall, but have their existence only in the fancy, it is nothing but the blowing in of a Phantasme; which is improper to say, and impossible; for Phantasmes are not, but only seem to be somewhat. That word therefore is used in the Scripture metaphorically only: As (Gen. 2:7) where it is said, that God inspired into man the breath of life, no more is meant, then that God gave unto him vitall motion . . .
> . . . And thought it be said of many, and of our Saviour himself, that he was full of the Holy Spirit; yet that Fulnesse is not to be understood for Infusion of the substance of God, but for accumulation of his gifts, such as are the gift of sanctity of life, of tongues and the like, whether attained supernaturally, or by study and industry; for in all cases they are the gifts of God. So likewise where God sayes (Joel 2:28) 'I will powre out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall prophecy, your Old men shall dream Dreams, and your Young men shall see Visions', we are not to understand it in the proper sense, as if his Spirit were like Water, subject to effusion, or infusion; but as if God had promised to give them Prophetical Dreams and Visions. For the proper use of the word infused, in speaking of the graces of God, is an abuse of it; for those graces are Vertues, not Bodies to be carried hither and thither, and to be powred into men, as into barrels.[78]

This is undoubtedly the passage Wotton means when he refers to Hobbes's "banter upon in-blowing". So anxious is Hobbes to keep supernatural

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[78] Ibid., pp. 217 - 18.

operations out of the natural world that he describes grace not as an aid to virtue but as the virtue itself. Admittedly he seems to allow for the acquisition of God's gifts by supernatural means as well as by study or industry, but he effectively denies this later on by scoffing at the idea that faith, wisdom and other virtues can be infused or "powred into" a man, "as if", he says, "the Vertuous and their Vertuous could be asunder".[79] This rebuttal leaves no room for supernatural agency as a direct cause in the affairs of men: only secondary causes or natural processes remain.

The relationship between the Aeolist section and Hobbes's account of the nature of spirit is at first sight puzzling. Admittedly Swift has already parodied a passage from the Leviathan in the clothes-worship section, but there Hobbes serves as an object lesson in the pernicious conclusions that rationalistic philosophy can reach when sundered from ethical reason. In the present context, however, Swift appears to be agreeing with Hobbes and, far from making him the butt of the satire, using him as convenient source to draw on in his mockery of "all pretenders to inspiration whatsoever". Indeed the closing paragraphs of Hobbes's chapter, with their jibes about bladders and barrels, constitute a miniature satire on inspiration, utilizing motifs that also occur in the Aeolist section. Since Hobbes's account of inspiration is predicated upon his materialistic concept of the soul, one is bound to question how far Swift shared this view as well.

The problem disappears, however, when we look more closely at Hobbes's argument. Given the absolute distinctions between the divine and the natural

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[79] Ibid., p. 369.

that Hobbes argues, it is hard to envisage the immaterial spirit that is God finding any direct access to the material spirits of men: that is why Hobbes's grossly physical account of the mechanics of inspiration is so successful in making the concept sound ridiculous. But if he had followed his argument through to its logical conclusion, Hobbes would have made the deity, like all other spirits, a material being. There would then have been no logical impediment to God communicating himself to his faithful quite literally by "inspiration" as Hobbes defines it. This inconsistency admits of two possible solutions. Since he admits that "inspiration" may be a metaphor derived from the world of physical experience but by common usage now expressive of something quite different, Hobbes may equally well concede the same of the word "spirit". If "spirit" is granted to be a word that conveniently denotes an immaterial entity by analogy with the closest comparable physical phenomenon we can find, then like the God whose existence Hobbes also concedes, the soul is not a fit subject for scientific scrutiny. Alternatively one can take the materialistic view that Hobbes obviously prefers and apply it wholesale. If we bear in mind Hobbes definition of Wind as "an Aire or Spirit moved", this will give us a scheme of things remarkably like the one outlined in the Aeolist section. Indeed, the Aeolists are only more logically consistent Hobbists, since they believe wind to be the substance not only of the soul but of the deity as well.

Despite the abstractness of his argument, Hobbes undoubtedly has specific examples of pretenders to inspiration in mind and it is not difficult to guess who they are. Later on in Leviathan he makes a much more pragmatic objection against inspiration:

> For who will endeavour to obey the Laws, if he expect Obedience to be powred or blown into him? Or who will not obey a Priest, that can make God rather than his Sovereign, may, than God himselfe? [80]

When Hobbes wrote these words he was in exile in France and the Civil Wars in England had barely ended. He knew from experience just how strong an incentive the inspiration of the clergy could be to civil disobedience.

Swift's account of inspiration is also general, like his account of rationalistic philosophy in the clothes-worship section. Nevertheless, the Aeolist section does tie in closely with Swift's account of the dissenters. In Section XI of the Tale Swift makes explicit what Hobbes implies, although he takes the dissenters less seriously as a threat to national security than Hobbes does, regarding them more as a social pest. Thus he devotes a number of pages to retailing a number of Jack's perverse antics that incommode Jack as much as anyone else. Two of these, which Swift dwells on at length, are particularly relevant to the Aeolist system.

The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination is lampooned in a speech that Jack makes after he bumps into a post and damages his nose because he has been walking through the street with his eyes closed. According to Jack it was pre-ordained that the post and his nose should meet at this precise time and place. Admittedly Providence[81] did not alert him to his danger or protect him from it but the injury he suffered is nothing to the perils that await those who put their trust in those "blind guides", the

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80 Ibid., p. 369.

81 After the fourth edition of the Tale, Swift changed "Providence" to "Fortune".

eyes.[82] Here Jack's trust in primary causes rather than secondary causes makes him a danger less to others than to himself. Reliance on God's intervention is an abdication of personal responsibility, but where Hobbes is concerned with the social dangers of this, Swift is content to point out its comic aspect. Jack, unaided by Providence, is an ineffectual automaton. The incident is a humble but effective example of the dehumanising quality of absolute conformity to the dictates of primary causes.

The second major incident that Swift recounts of Jack concerns the interpretation of Scripture. The point Swift stresses is Jack's pedantic literalness in his understanding of his father's will. So obsessed is Jack with the need to consult the will on every occasion that he adapts it for all kinds of mundane purposes, "so that it served him for a Night-cap when he went to Bed and for an Umbrello in rainy Weather".[83] His obsession leads him also to avoid using any word or phrase that has not the sanction of his father's will:

> Once in a strange House, he was suddenly taken short, upon an urgent Juncture, whereon it may not be allowed too particularly to dilate; and not being able to call to mind, with that Suddenness, the Occasion required, an Authentick Phrase for demanding the Way to the Backside; he chose rather as the more Prudent Course, to incur the Penalty in such Cases usually annexed. Neither was it possible for the united Rhetorick of Mankind to prevail with

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82 Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 192-4.
83 Ibid., p. 190.

> him to make himself clean again:
> Because having consulted the Will
> upon this Emergency, he met with
> a Passage near the Bottom (whether
> foisted in by the Transcriber, is
> not known) which seemed to forbid it.[84]

The "passage near the bottom" that Swift alludes to is from the Book of Revelation (22:11): "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still". It gives a pointed reminder that Scripture will not always bear too literal an interpretation. But Jack is the supreme literalist, even to the point of defying commonsense, and in this he demonstrates himself a perfect Aeolist.

The Aeolists surpass even Hobbes in their literalism. It was Hobbes who named metaphors as one of the chief causes of error and absurd conclusions but he at least forbore to claim that God was a material being. For the Aeolists, however, literal inspiration is an article of belief. because they fail to interpret the term inspiration as a metaphor, they are constrained to believe that all spirits are to be understood by their original signification as wind or breath. With perfect logical consistency they are prepared to accept this belief. In order to accommodate fully the spirit or wind that inspires them, however, they must allow it to possess them. This involves the abdication of personal judgement that turns them into automata, like Jack who walks into a post and breaks his nose.

Just as Jack's slavish addiction to the literal makes a neat antithesis to Peter's unscrupulous exploitation of metaphor, so the Clothes-worshippers' elevation of a metaphor into an absolute truth is intended to balance the Aeolist reduction of a metaphorical concept to the literal expression from which it derives. Swift emphasizes the antithesis just before he begins his

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[84] Ibid., p. 191.

account of Jack's eccentricities, which he introduces by declaring his confidence that

> they will furnish Plenty of noble Matter for such, whose converting Imaginations dispose them to reduce all things into Types; who can make Shadows, no thanks to the Sun; and then mold them into substances, no thanks to Philosophy; whose peculiar Talent lies in fixing Tropes and Allegories to the Letter, and refining what is literal into Figure and Mystery. [85]

Along with its misuse of language, each of the two systems involves adherence to a single inflexible principle. In one case it is the evaluation of the universe entirely in terms of the physical; in the other it is the transcendence of the physical by the spiritual. Though these systems appear to be at opposite extremes, they invite the same conclusion: both are deterministic systems that ultimately deny man's role as a free moral agent. Whether human moral freedom is sacrificed to nature or to God does not really matter: man might just as well be a suit of clothes or a puff of wind because his life is meaningless. That is why Peter and Jack eventually become indistinguishable and are constantly mistaken for one another. It is also why both the Aeolist and Clothes-worship systems can so readily be reconciled with the materialism of the deterministic philosophy of Hobbes.

If we return now to the opening paragraphs of the Aeolist section, we are in a much better position to make sense of them. The first two paragraphs

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[85] Ibid., pp. 189 - 90.

have enough resemblance to Hobbes's account of spirit in Leviathan to bear out Wotton's tentative identification. The source of the equation of spirit, breath and wind is Hobbes's observation that:

> in the common language of men, Aire and aeriall Substances, use not to taken for Bodies, but (as often as men are sensible of their effects) are called Wind, or Breath, or (because the same are called im the Latine, Spiritus) Spirits. [87]

This is the key argument of the Aeolist section, and on it the whole philosophy of wind depends. From it derives the whole idea of the Soul (the "forma informans", as Swift calls it, according to the Aristotelian definition) as nothing more than wind by definition, which can also be seen as a reflection of Hobbes's view that the soul is material. There are also two further references that recall Hobbes's argument. When Swift asks

> Father, what is life itself, but as it is commonly call'd, the Breath of our Nostrils?

he is alluding to the phrase used in the Bible to describe the creation of Adam. Hobbes quotes this passage and gives his own interpretation of it:

> Gen.2.7. It is said, 'God made Men of the dust of the Earth, and breathed into his nostrils (spiraculum vitae) the breath of life, and man was made a living soul'. There the breath of life inspired by God signifies no more, but that God gave him life. [88]

Hobbes, then, makes no distinction between the breath (spiraculum) that animates man and the living soul (animam viventem) that man becomes. One could easily infer from this that man's essential nature, his soul, is

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87 Leviathan, p. 211.
88 Ibid., p. 213.

nothing more than the breath he breathes. This is the inference Swift takes, as is obvious from the way he inverts the Biblical phrase ("nostrils . . . breath of life") to "life . . . the breath of our nostrils". The difference is that Swift insists on sticking to the literal meaning of the phrase.

Furthermore Swift's opening lines, where he describes the Aeolist belief that all things originate from wind, can be traced to a Biblical passage that likewise comes under Hobbes's scrutiny:

> Gen. 1:2. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the Waters.

Hobbes remarks that we cannot take this literally, because it attributes to God motion and place "which are intelligible only of Bodies, and not of substances incorporeall". Thus we have to understand "spirit" to mean "a wind (that is an Aire or Spirit moved) which might be called . . . the Spirit of God because it was God's work".[89] Once again in his version Swift rejects the metaphorical reading Hobbes offers and fastens on to his reduction of "the Spirit of God" to a wind.

What Swift tells us about the soul, inspiration and the origin of the universe, then is deducible directly or by implication from Hobbes's account of spirit as it features in the Bible. But there is another element in the opening paragraphs that still has to be explained. The references to the "adepti" and the "Anima Mundi" take us into a world seemingly quite alien from Hobbes's rationalism -- the world of Hermetic philosophy. Moreover these references cannot be considered incidental, for they are an integral

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[89] Ibid., p. 212.

part of Swift's argument. When he claims the synonymity of "spirit", "breath" and "wind", Swift does so not abstractly but by explicit reference to the example of the Anima Mundi, which is, he says, the "Spirit, or Breath, or Wind of the World". The obvious inference from this is that Swift sees some important connection between Hobbes's mechanistic account of spirit and an aspect of Hermeticism.

The Anima Mundi is an important feature of the Neoplatonic tradition. In the Neoplatonic scheme of things it serves as a link between the world of intelligence and the physical world, both of them emanating from the mysterious and transcendent "one". The universe of the Neoplatonists consisted of the "Cosmic Mind" (Greek: Nous, Latin: mens mundana, intellectus divinus sive angelicus); the "Cosmic Soul" (Greek: Psyche, Latin: anima mundana) the Realm of Nature; and the Realm of Matter. The Cosmic Mind was engendered directly by the One, but each successive emanation arises out of the last stage, matter being the very lowest form of creation and furthest removed from the One. Man is imprisoned in matter but is also able to participate in the cosmic mind because he has in miniature all the characteristics of the cosmos, which he reflects microcosmically. Thus he participates in matter and nature through his body, in the Cosmic Soul through his rationality and in the intellect of the world through his own intellect -- an intuitive and creative faculty that transcends mere discursive reason.[90]

Within this broad scheme there were differences about the exact significance and function of the Anima Mundi (or Anima Mundana). I do not

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[90] See E. Panofsky, Studies in Iconology, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 135 - 6.

propose here to examine all its ramifications. The important thing in the present context is to see what characteristics Swift is interested in, and since he invokes Hermeticism with his reference to the "adepti", it is primarily with Hermetic philosophy that I shall be concerned.

Since each successive emanation from the One is the source of the next emanation, it is obvious that the whole of the natural world proceeded from the Anima Mundi. On that count Swift's statement that the origin of the universe is the anima mundi is vindicated. What we now need is an independent means of justifying the notion that the anima mundi is wind, apart from the definition of Hobbes. Something like a justification is provided by Dr. Yates' redaction of Ficino in her book on Hermeticism. In attempting to summarise Ficino's views on natural magic, Dr.Yates gives the following account of the mechanics of the cosmos on which his magic depends:

> In the divine mens or intellect are the Ideas; in the soul of the world are 'seminal reasons' as many in number as there are ideas in the mens, and corresponding to them or reflecting them; to these seminal reasons in the soul there correspond the species in matter, or in the body of the world, which correspond to the reasons or are dependent on them, or are formed by them. If these material forms degenerate they can be reformed in the 'middle place', presumably by manipulating the next highest forms on which they depend. There are congruities between the 'reasons' in the soul of the world and the lower forms - - These links depend not so much on stars and demons as on the soul of the world, which is everywhere present. [91]

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[91] Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, p. 64.

Upon this basis Ficino built a theory of natural magic, according to which changes could be effected in the material world, by drawing a portion of the anima mundi into the realm of matter. The theory is complicated by a further necessary element, a spiritus mundi,

> which is infused throughout the universe and through which the stellar influences come down to man, who drinks them in through his own spirit, and to the corpus mundi . . . The spiritus is borne upon the air and upon the wind, and it is a kind of very fine air and also fine heat.[92]

The relevance of this theory of "pneumatic magic", as Dr. Yates calls it, to Swift's Aeolist section is twofold. The association of the "spiritus" with air and wind shows that Ficino conceives of it primarily in physical or at least spatial terms. That would be enough to warrant the Aeolist identification of the Anima mundi with wind. But in addition this passage is significant for the way it shows the difficulty of conceiving of something purely spiritual acting directly upon something physical. There is an element of inconsistency in the notion no matter how many intermediate stages are invented to facilitate the transition.

It is, nevertheless, a common motion among the Renaissance magi. It occurs in a slightly different form in the works of Paracelsus, as the basis of his medical theories. His three alchemical principles (salt, sulphur and mercury) are anological to spirit, soul and body.[93] Another figure who shows the more alchemical emphasis is Paracelsus's teacher the Abbot Trithemius, who stated in one of his works that the goal of alchemy, the philosopher's

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92 Ibid., pp. 68 - 9.
93 Hutin, History of Alchemy, p. 62.

stone, is the soul of the world, or spiritus mundi, rendered invisible.

> One might call it the petrification of God's breath, as the abbot affirms that the world soul is the breath emanating from its divine source.[94]

Besides furnishing an additional warrant for Swift's identification of the world soul with breath or wind, it also introduces a concept that has considerable bearing on the opening of the Aeolist section.

Whilst Hermeticism is not a Christian philosophy, it has many points of similarity with Christian mysticism. Many efforts have been made to reconcile the two. An added spur to such attempts was, no doubt, the resemblance of some Hermetic teachings to the Mosaic account of creation and to the opening of St.John's gospel. One attempt to weld the two more closely together was an identification of the Neoplatonic One, the Nous, or Intellectus and the Anima Mundi with the Holy Trinity. As a result the Holy Ghost was transformed into the Anima Mundi.[95] This concept was never really orthodox, because it is impossible to reconcile the eternity of the trinity with belief in a series of temporal emanations. Nevertheless, if we unite this notion with Trithemius's statement that the philosopher's stone is the Anima Mundi in visible, petrified form, we end up with the Philosopher's Stone as the alter ego of the Holy Ghost.[96] This would give considerably more force to the passage in Section XI of the Tale where Jack claims that

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94 Seligmann, Magic, Supernaturalism, and Religion, p. 312.

95 Allers, "Microcosmus", pp. 359 - 60.

96 I have nowhere seen this idea explicitly stated. However, the same conclusion can be arrived at in other ways. E.g. the tract on magic called Picatrix equates God with formless prime matter and Thomas Vaughan equates prime matter with the philosopher's stone. (See Yates, op.cit., p. 36 and Vaughan, Works, pp. 51-2.)

his father's will is "the Philosopher's Stone, and the Universal Medicine".[97] It aptly sums up Jack's attitude to scripture that it should be seen as a pocket-size physical manifestation of the Holy Ghost in complement with his natural receptivity to immediate inspiration.

There is no way of proving that Swift knew of this identification by Trithemius and, though it is possible that he came across it elsewhere, this allusion remains doubtful. There is, however, a strong possibility that Swift knew of the association of the Anima Mundi with the Holy Ghost since at one time it had a general notoriety.[98] If he intended to conjure this association by including a reference to the Anima Mundi in his exegesis of inspiration, we can assume that Swift was thinking quite specifically of the Puritans, to whom there is no explicit reference in the opening paragraphs. Beyond this, in any case, the central point of the opening of the Aeolist section is now clear. Taken by itself, the reference to Anima Mundi could be simply an illustration of belief in spirits taken to an extreme. In combination with the Hobbesian allusions, however, it can only refer to the physical character of the spirits envisaged or the physical implications behind the terms in which their operations are described. Whether conceived in terms of spiritual illumination or of pneumatic magic, attempts to tap the higher spiritual forces are truly a mechanical operation of the spirit. To see spirit as a kind of force to be manipulated is to play into the hands of materialists like Hobbes. Alternately, to conceive of spirit as something that enters the individual to possess and govern him is to acquiesce in a

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97 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 190.
98 Allers, "Microcosmus", pp. 359 - 60.

spiritual determinism as invidious as any materialism.

This explains why at the beginning of the Aeolist section we are given a quotation from Lucretius where we might expect one from Irenaeus. Lucretius was the spokesman of the ancients for the atomic view of the universe, a doctrine that was charged with atheistic implications because it ruled out the possibility of divine providence. A quotation from Lucretius at this point is doubly appropriate because, as Dr. Yates points out, atomism is one of the many doctrines that were assimilated to Hermetic philosophy and was chiefly known through Lucretius' De Rerum Natura.[99] This provides a good illustration of the way the spiritists play into the hands of the materialists.

A further illustration of this is given in the closing sentence of the second paragraph. Having established that life is only "the Breath of our Nostrils", he remarks:

> Whence it is very justly observed by Naturalists, that Wind still continues of great Emolument in certain Mysteries not to be named, giving Occasion for those happy Epithets of Turgidus, and Inflatus, apply'd either to the Emittent, or Recipient Organs.[100]

As the mention of "Naturalists" indicates, this is the language of Natural Philosophy. It recalls the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society in 1667 where the terms "emittent" and "recipient" are used in the record of an experiment that successfully transfused the blood of one dog into another. It is hard to see the relevance of blood transfusion as a comment

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[99] Yates, op.cit., p. 248. An illustration of this is the readiness of Thomas Vaughan to quote Lucretius to reinforce a Hermetic point. (See Vaughan, Works, p. 54.)

[100] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 151.

on the Aeolist section except for its general connotations of mechanistic natural philosophy. Swift may, however, be thinking in terms of the equally notorious experiments of the virtuosi performed in their investigation of the principles of respiration. For one of these Robert Hooke opened the thorax of a dog and gave it artificial respiration by blowing air into its windpipe with a pair of bellows. So long as the process was maintained the dog lived, but as soon as Hooke discontinued, it went into convulsions and died. The experiment was notorious enough to get a place, along with the blood-transfusion episode, in Shadwell's satirical play The Virtuoso (1676). Shadwell also uses the terms "emittent" and "recipient".[101] In the context of Aeolism they suggest that Aeolist notions of inspiration are mechanical enough to be put on a par with scientific speculations about respiration.

The two opening paragraphs, therefore, establish a connection between spiritism and materialism. They show that spirit, when conceived as something that can enter a human being and effect a change in him corresponds to the physical spirit described by Hobbes. Unless one understands "inspiration" to be a metaphor for something that really is not susceptible to human analysis, one invites a theory of inspiration that is as deterministic as it is mechanical. This paves the way for Swift's account of how the Aeolists behaviour patterns are determined not by divine inspiration but by their own internal vapours. He does not, however, make the transition immediately, but tells us a little more about their beliefs.

The opening of the third paragraph tells us that, "the Compass of their

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101 See Thomas Shadwell, The Virtuoso, ed. M.H. Nicholson and D.S.Rodes, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966,) II, ii, pp. 47 - 8.

Doctrine took in two and thirty Points". The primary allusion here is obviously to the thirty-two main bearings on a compass and is quite appropriate for a philosophy based on wind, since winds are often designated by a compass bearing. More significantly, it looks like a comic simplification of the microcosm/macrocosm conceit. Renaissance magi were fond of illustrating the relationship of the greater and lesser world with diagrams: both Paracelsus and his disciple Fludd produced countless diagrams of this kind. Since, however, the accent in the Aeolist section is on literalness of interpretation, it is quite apposite for Swift to ignore its possible symbolic significance and treat it as no more than a geographical diagram. This interpretation is made likelier by the fact that Swift refers explicitly to Paracelsus' own peculiar macrocosmic speculations at the end of the paragraph.[102]

Another possible function of the reference to the "two and thirty points" is a veiled reference to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, or rather to the failure of the dissenting sects to give their assent to the basic articles of Anglican belief. As there is no way of confirming the allusion it would be pointless to expend much energy in trying to trace very specific inplications from it. But it is worth noting as at the least an interesting coincidence that the Savoy Declaration of 1658 comprised exactly thirty-two articles. This document was prepared by the Independant wing of the Commonwealth church and was based on the Westminster Confession of 1647. The most important point of divergence of the Savoy Declaration is its twentieth article which lays special emphasis on the

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[102] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 152.

necessity of "an effectual, irresistable work of the Holy Ghost upon the whole soul" for purposes of spiritual justification.[103]

An oblique reference to the Savoy Declaration would have a certain appositeness at this point, then; but the fact that even so uncertain an allusion as this depends upon a recondite identification is an important index of how the argument operates. We have now reached the third paragraph of the Aeolist section without coming across any unequivocal reference to the nonconformist sects or even what could be construed as an oblique reference without a considerable amount of thought. The Aeolist section, therefore, is no simple allegory showing a one-to-one correspondence between the puritans and occult philosophers. Interpretation still has to come less from seeking allegorical equivalents than from examination of the play of ideas.

From the thirty-two points reference Swift moves into an extension of the microcosm - macrocosm idea. He mentions as one of the most important Aeolist precepts the maxim that

> Since Wind had the Master-Share, as well as Operation in every Compound, by Consequence, those Beings must be of chief Excellence, wherein that Primordium appears most prominently to abound, and therefore man is the highest Perfection of all created things, as having by the great Bounty of the Philosophers, been endued with three distinct Anima's or Winds, to which the sage Aeolists, with much Liberality, have added a fourth of equal Necessity, as well as Ornament with the other three.[104]

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[103] See Erik Routley, Creeds and Confessions: The Reformation and its Modern Ecumenical Implications, (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co.Ltd., 1962), pp. 122-7.

[104] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 151 - 2.

This is actually a conflation of two separate ideas. The notion that man's soul is threefold stems originally from Aristotle who distinguished a vegetative, sensitive and rational soul. According to Aristotle, however, man's rational soul virtually contains the other two and subsumes their functions within its own. This was the way the threefold nature of the soul was generally understood in the seventeenth century and, though they were sometimes referred to as separate entities, the "three souls" were actually regarded as "apects" or "virtues" of the same single soul.[105] It was a system that purported to account for the qualitative difference between disparate forms of organic life, vegetable, animal and human. Swift, of course, mocks this division of the soul into parts by suggesting that man's excellence, according to the philcsophers, is founded on the sheer number of souls he possesses. The reason, however, for considering man as the perfection of creation brings us back to microcosmism. Though man is a being imprisoned in matter, the lowest form of creation, he likewise possesses a soul and a spirit (or intellect) that is above mere discursive rationality. By virtue of this threefold structure man is a perfect microcosmic reflection of the universe created by God. The spirit that is above reason may be described as of equal necessity with the threefold soul because if it did not exist man would not be a perfect microcosm, lacking something that corresponded to the divine "Nous", the first emanation from the One. In view of the fact that he goes on to mention Paracelsus by name, Swift may well be thinking specifically of the fourth soul, the "man of the

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105 Allers, "Microcosmus", p. 347; Bamborough, The Little World of Man, p. 32; Burton, Anatory of Melancholy, p. 135.

New Olympus" or "spiritual soul" that Paracelsus postulated. This would be especially appropriate in the present context because Paracelsus accepted the Averroistic teaching that individual souls were reabsorbed at death into the world-soul. His hypothesis of a fourth soul was an attempt to safeguard the traditional Christian doctrine of personal immortality.[106]

Superimposed, however, on this concept is another, more materialistic one. Swift refers to wind/spirit as a "primordium" and this is a word that appears over and over again in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura. For the present purpose the most significant thing is that occurs in that poet's exegesis of the soul, he uses it to describe the operation of air as one of the vital principles of the body. Like the Aeolists Lucretius distinguishes three separate souls, calling them "vapor" (or "calor"), "ventus" (or "aura") and "aer", names suitably physical in accordance with his belief that the nature of mind and spirit ("animi atque animai") is physical. Lucretius is also a good Aeolist in that he finds it necessary to introduce a fourth principle ("quarta . . . natura necessest") that is the "spirit of the whole spirit" (anima est animae . . . totius ipsa") to account for so subtle a thing as thought. This fourth spirit is the most refined substance in the whole body, but substance nevertheless.

This covert allusion to Lucretius brings us back to deterministic materialism. It shows once again the difficulty of attributing merely to matter the functions proper to the soul. No matter how refined matter may be

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106 Pachter, Paracelsus, pp. 194 - 8; Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 135, Swift uses the Paracelsan term "spiritualis" to describe his fourth "anima", Guthkelch-Smith, p. 152, n.1.

107 Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, III, 161 - 281.

it is separated by an unbridgable gap from the notion of an immaterial spirit. This seems to be the point also of Swift's next allusion. Referring still to fourth "anima" or "wind" he points out that this quaternity corresponds to the four corners of the world.

> which gave occasion to that Renowned Cabbalist Bumbastus [Paracelsus], of placing the Body of Man, in due position of the four Cardinal Points.
>
> In Consequence of this, their next Principle was, that Man brings with him into the World a peculiar Portion or Grain of Wind, which may be called a Quinta essentia, extracted from the other four.[108]

This is more than just another parody of the microcosm/macrocosm idea. Paracelsus's use of the conceit here has nothing to do with the concept of a fourfold soul. He believed the traditional teaching that man was made from the four elements and in conjunction with this held that there was a correspondence between the elements and the cardinal points.[109] Now since Paracelsus' day one of the elements had effectively been lost. Air and fire, as the two lightest elements, were supposed to rise until they found their natural position of rest. Since the resting place of fire was not apparent to the human eyes, it was located above the element of air and in all the intervening space up to the sphere of the moon. The burning of comets was accounted for by their passage through the element of fire -- a most satisfactory hypothesis until in 1577 a comet was sighted beyond the orbit of the moon, effectively destroying the neatly ordered plan of the cosmos

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[108] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 152.
[109] Ibid., p. 358.

hitherto universally accepted. Like Tycho Brahae's new star of 1572, it introduced mutability into the spheres beyond the moon, but it also discredited the only real confirmation of an element of fire between the moon and the element of air.[110] By transposing the fourfold soul into the four elements Swift reminds us of the shortcomings of the theory of the elements and suggests the implausibility of the far more tenuous theory of four souls.

There is, however, a more cogent reason for the association. The four elements lead naturally to the idea of the quintessence, which is another idea conveying ambiguous connotations of spirit and matter. As Professor Starkman comments, the quintessence, drawn from the four elements, was strictly material in character according to Aristotle, "a materialism the occultists found repugnant".[111] As conceived by the Hermetic philosophers, it was identical with the Anima Mundi, the source of all material existence and its soul:

> The prima materia, the alchemists declared can be found everywhere. It was considered the essence of all substances, the 'underlying something that always remains identical and one'. It was the world soul, the world spirit, the quintessence from which had sprung the elements.
>
> The alchemists wanted to capture this ever-present and yet unseizable power and confine it to the philosopher's stone.[112]

The notion of the quintessence as at the same time spiritual and the author

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110 See Marie Boas, The Scientific Renaissance, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 90 ff.

111 Starkman, op.cit., p. 49.

112 Seligmann, op.cit., p. 166.

of the physical gives us once again an ambiguously spiritual and material conception. For Paracelsus, however, the quintessence is something that sounds suspiciously physical; "not an essence above the four elements" but a subtle "chaos", invisible to the human eye and so concentrated that "nature has been fortified beyond its grade".[113] The word "chaos" has given us the modern word "gas" and carries the same basic meaning. From this we must infer that man's quintessence, like any other, is also a gas, and that the more tangible physical world that proceeds from it is likewise a degenerate gassy nature. If we add to this the statement of Thomas Vaughan, that there is "no fifth principle -- no quintessence as Aristotle dreamed -- but God almighty",[114] we also have a gaseous God. Even Vaughan's modification of this statement says substantially the same thing:

> this blessed cement [that mediates between the elements] and balsam is the Spirit of the Living God, which some ignorant Scribblers have called a quintessence.[115]

It might seem unfair on the Hermetic philosophers to use one as a commentary on another but of course, if they were less obscure in their explanations it would not be necessary. If their writings were not such an exasperating mixture of arch hints and portentous statements, indeed, they would be subject to the ordinary logical tests of discursive philosophy. It is their method of bypassing discursive reason that creates the difficulty. Even so equivalence of the quintessence with prime matter and of both with

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113 Pachter, op.cit., pp. 108 - 9.
114 In "Anthroposophia Theomagica", Works, p. 24.
115 Ibid., p. 230.

the anima mundi are common ideas among the Hermetic philosophers. Swift's development of Aeolist belief from the anima mundi to the soul and to the quintessence are logical enough by Aeolist standards. The Hermeticists stand convicted of spiritual materialism by their own beliefs.

The first three paragraphs contain essentially the whole of Swift's philosophical rejection of inspiration when understood literally rather than metaphorically. What follows is, on the whole disappointing. The whole of the next paragraph is devoted to an account of Aeolist practices predicated upon the fact that their deity is wind rather than a spirit. To be sure, this does follow on quite naturally from the references Swift had made at the end of the third paragraph, but the whole picture we get is presented for its physical effect and the manner of its presentation degenerates into a purely one-to-one allegory in which by Aeolists we are to understand Puritans. Swift, having shown the macrocosmic effects of wind goes on to show its operation in the microcosm. In other words, as Professor Harth has shown, he portrays the Aeolists as suffering from windy melancholy.

Swift describes the quintessence as "of a Catholic use upon all emergencies of Life" and "improvable into all Arts and Sciences". Here he is obviously hinting at something like the Philosopher's stone and the universal medicine. He goes on to show the Aeolists as so anxious to share with each other their quintessential wind that they pump it into one another by physical means. The most interesting feature of the paragraph comes when Swift gives us the Aeolist's attitude to learning which they justify both logically and by scripture, just as the Clothes-Worshippers justify their contention that the soul is a suit of clothes. The Aeolists believe all learning is "compounded from the same Principle" -- that is, it proceeds from inspiration. The first

proof is syllogistic: "Words are but Wind; and Learning is nothing but Words: Ergo Learning is Nothing but Wind". Rather more significant is the second proof: "It is generally affirmed . . . that Learning puffeth Man up". The source of this proof is St.Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the complete quotation runs:

> Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.
> And if any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.
> But if any man love God the same is known of him.
>
> [Corinthians, I, 8, 1-3]

The opposition of knowledge to charity at this point is a shrewd hit at the doctrine of justification by faith. What is more, it takes place in an interesting context: St. Paul is berating those Christians who have been eating meat that was formerly offered to idols, against the Jewish laws. Apparently Christians had been stressing their Christian freedom by eating it. This is thus an apt comment upon Puritan self-righteousness, particularly when it strayed into antinomianism.

The remainder of the paragraph is taken up with an account of the bodily contortions suffered by the Aeolists when in the throes of wind. It is merely a caricature of Puritan preaching and requires no special comment.

The following paragraph exists chiefly for the purpose of identifying Scotland as the homeland of sectarian enthusiasm. Swift, however, exercises a certain amount of ingenuity in expressing his ideas through occult language. He begins by stating that the Aeolists' gods are the four winds, whom they worship as the spirits that "pervade and enliven the Universe". One might suspect from this that Swift is about to refer to some actual tenet of Hermetic belief, but actually the point is only to enable him to designate

the North wind as the mightiest of all. The purpose of this is twofold: it indirectly designates Scotland but it also raises the traditional association of the north parts of heaven with the rebellion of Lucifer and his angels, a tradition best known through Milton's Paradise Lost. Swift continues:

> This God [i.e. the North Wind], tho' endued with Ubiquity, was yet supposed by the profounder Aeolists, to possess one peculiar Habitation, or (to speak in Form) a Coelum Empyraeum, wherein he was more intimately present. This was situated in a certain Region, well known to the Antient Greeks, by them called Σκοτία or the Land of Darkness. [116]

Scotia is, of course, a pun on "Scotland" and "darkness", but it is also rather more than this. The particular "ancient Greeks" Swift had in mind were those who had read Diodorus of Sicily. Diodorus records in his Library of History a tradition that Hades is actually no more than a legend based upon the burial practices of Egypt. Amongst the evidence for this he lists the fact that there is a temple to Hecate called "the Shades" ("Skotias"). Far from being a "coelum empyraeum", Scotia is actually a temple to the Goddess of the Underworld and patroness of witches! Yet Swift achieves this innuendo without actually departing from the Hermetic context he has suggested. The ubiquity that he attributes to the North wind could be taken for a reference to the all-pervasive intellectus mundi and the Coelum Empyraeum to the specifically Neoplatonic conception of the Nous-Logos as residing immediately beyond the sphere of the fixed stars. (There exist Hermetic diagrams depicting

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[116] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 154 - 5.

the structure of the universe with Christ, the Christian equivalent of the Nous-Logos, sitting enthroned in the Empyrean heaven). Egypt, of course, was the traditional home of Hermeticism.[117]

The next paragraph is another thinly veiled caricature of Puritan preaching: except the opening, there is little worth commenting on. Swift remarks that the "Virtuoso's of former Ages" had a device for "carrying and preserving Winds in Casks and Barrels" and laments its loss. He is therefore, playing the role of the hapless commentator trying to make sense of the data he has by means of a purely literal reading. His literalism extends as far as taking seriously even a work of fiction -- Homer's Odyssey -- that narrates an incredible anecdote. For the remainder of the paragraph he describes the way wind is introduced from such barrels into the "posteriors" of Aeolist preachers in order to induce inspiration -- an allusion once again to Puritan preaching but with suggestions of the effects of "windy melancholy".

The next paragraph continues the account of wind in the body as an agent of inspiration, but extends the range of reference. Swift now begins to speak of the ancient oracles, noted for their charlatanism, and of the female prophetesses that performed in them:

> It is true indeed, that these [i.e. the oracles] were frequently managed and directed by Female Officers, whose organs were understood to be better disposed for the Admission of those Oracular Gusts, as entring and passing up thro' a Receptacle of greater Capacity,

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117 T.Burckhardt, Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul, (Baltimore, Maryland: Maryland, 1967), pp. 47 - 9; Hutin, op.cit., p. 37.

> and Causing also a Pruriency by the Way, such as with due Management, hath been refined from a Carnal, into a Spiritual exstasie. And to strengthen this profound Conjecture, it is farther insisted, that this Custom of Female Priests is kept up still in certain refined Colleges of our Modern Aeolists, who are agreed to receive their Inspiration, derived thro' the Receptacle aforesaid, like their Ancestors, the Sibyls.[118]

The "certain refined Colleges" are identified in a footnote as the "Quakers, who suffer their Women to preach and pray". There is nothing very attractive about the irony in this passage and it is quite the most vicious attack in the entire Aeolist section, as well as the most explicit. The suggestion of sexual excitement as the sole cause of Quaker inspiration seems quite out of character with the image that the Quakers enjoy today. It takes an effort to adjust one's historical perspective and recognize that one of the most notorious examples of religious enthusiasm in the seventeenth century involved a Quaker, James Nayler, who in 1656 rode symbolically into Bristol on an ass with women strewing palms before him.[119]

The hints about the uterus of women are not intended to be merely obscene since uterine hysteria was recognized as a genuine condition in the seventeenth century, though it has since been discredited. Burton mentions uterine frenzy as one of the symptoms of windy melancholy.[120] It is worth noting, to put Swift's remarks in a proper perspective, two notorious examples of supposed demonic possession that afflicted the nuns of Loudon and

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118 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 157.

119 Christopher Hill, The Century of Revolution, 1603 - 1714, (London: Sphere Books, 1969), p. 153.

120 Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 350.

Louviers in France, causing the most extreme physical manifestations in the sufferers and accompanied by blasphemous utterances and behaviour. The court physician, Dr. Yvelin, who saw the evidence of both at first hand, believed they were no more than cases of uterine hysteria. He remarked, in words Swift may have read, "If Aeolus makes the earth shake, why not a girl's body?".[121] The concomitant of rejection of inspiration is rejection of demonic possession and if windy melancholy is the only alternative it is at least a less dangerous disease than possession by a spirit whose identity is questionable.

This may, perhaps, have been Swift's feeling since he chooses to end the Aeolist section by reference to demons and witchcraft. After a long, rhapsodic paragraph, in which he questions exactly why it is that men have to invent an evil principle opposed to the God they worship, and mocks the sharp distinction between good and evil ("how near the Frontiers of Height and depth, border upon each other")[122] Swift finally identifies the devils of the Aeolists as the Chameleon (because it is said to live on air) and the windmill (because it beats the wind with its arms). A great deal of

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121 J. Michelet, Satanism and Witchcraft; a Study in a Mediaeval Superstition, (New York: The Citadel Press, 1969), pp. 225 - 6. The outbreak of "diabolic possession" at Louviers might serve as the best vindication of Swift's point that supposed inspiration could have a sexual origin. The superintendent of the convent was one Father David, a member of a heretical sect called the Illuminati, and he believed that anyone inspired by the Holy Ghost cannot sin, that the body cannot contaminate the soul, and that sin must be conquered through sin. The practices he enjoined on the nuns of Louviers are a mixture of sexual fantasy and deliberate sacrilege and would be hard to distinguish from pure demonolatry. (See Satanism and Witchcraft, pp. 207 - 20).

122 Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 157 - 8. C.f. Mechanical Operation, pp. 274 - 6.

ingenuity has gone into attempts to identify the non-allegorical equivalents of these devils, but I suspect there is no key that will explain them adequately. Swift has simply provided the Aeolists with devils appropriate to their system and pretty silly-looking devils too. Swift actually remarks in a footnote himself that he does not know what the author means by them.[123]

Swift's closing reference is to "that polite nation of Laplanders" whom he includes as a most authentic branch of the Aeolist sect. Lapland had a reputation for producing witches and one of the best known powers of a witch is the ability to raise a storm at sea. However, the witches of Lapland were either more benign or more enterprising than most, as they used to sell their winds to visiting merchants and then enlist the aid of devils to ensure calm weather.[124] Swift's closing remarks can thus be interpreted two ways: the Laplanders, he says,

> appear to be so closely allied in point of Interest, as well as Inclinations, with their brother Aeolists among us, as not only to buy their Winds by Wholesale from the same Merchants, but also to retail them after the same Rate and Method and to customers much alike.[125]

We can understand this to mean that the inspiration of the Aeolists is demonic or else, more likely in view of the suggestion that the customers are dupes, that the Aeolists are simply charlatans.

Having finished his account of the Aeolists Swift brings us back to

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123 Ibid., p. 159.
124 See Seligmann, op.cit., p. 225.
125 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 160.

Jack and does so with a reference to the terms of the will of his father. Some writers, he says, believe that Jack fashioned the Aeolist sect from the Original at Delphos "with certain Additions and Emendations suited to Times and Circumstances", a phrase that recalls Swift's description of the Christian religion as fitted to all times, places and circumstances, as well as Jack's father's injunction in the will that his son's coats be neither added to nor diminished.[126]

The Aeolist section, then, is an uneven piece of writing. The first few paragraphs operate in the same way as the Clothes-worship section, showing the relationship between what seem like profoundly different ways of thinking. The method is a fruitful one and results in the interesting insight that pretenders to inspiration are, philosophically speaking, hand in hand with advocates of materialistic determinism. Swift does not attack inspiration in itself because he does not have to. Hobbes's point that the virtuous and their virtues cannot be separated is a valid one. The true test of a man's worth is ethical, but if a man stands this test there is no way for him or anyone else to ascertain whether it is by the power or aid of God. The man who claims to be inspired is automatically suspect because he does not allow his actions to speak for themselves.

Speaking more philosophically, the sharp dualism between body and soul which characterizes both the Neoplatonists and the followers of Calvin actually tends to foster a material concept of the soul. According to A.H.Douglas:

> The very antithesis of soul and body implies a fundamentally physical concept of the former; to conceive of

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126 Ibid., pp. 73, 81.

> the two as distinct, yet related,
> is to imply some community of
> nature between them and to put
> them in some sense upon a level.
> To speak of the soul as 'separate'
> from the body is to use a mechanical
> category. [127]

Whilst it engages these ideas on a serious level the Aeolist section makes fascinating reading.

Unfortunately Swift succumbed to the temptations to ridicule puritanism. When he claims at the end of this section to have put Aeolism in its truest and fairest light (i.e. to have written a paradoxical encomium?) it is a hollow claim. For too much of the time Swift has forborne to argue a case and been content merely to equate. I suggest that one of the main reasons for the fascination of both the Clothes-worship section and the Aeolist section of the Tale is that they are not mere allegory but a confrontation of ideas out of which something of real philosophical interest emerges. In the main part of the Aeolist section, despite its bright moments, we learn essentially nothing new and Swift is only saying at greater length what Samuel Butler had said in two couplets:

> . . . Wind in th' Hypochondries pent
> Is but a blast if downward sent;
> But if it upwards chance to fly,
> Becomes new Light and Prophecy. [128]

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[127] A.H.Douglas, The Philosophy and Psychology of Pietro Pomponazzi, (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1910), p. 18.

[128] Hudibras, II, iii, 773 - 6 (ed.cit., p. 184).

VI: The 'Digression on Madness'

"For the unlearned man knows not what it is to descend into himself or to call himself to account, nor the pleasure of that 'suavissima vita, indies sentire se fieri meliorem', [to feel himself each day a better man than he was the day before]. The good parts he hath he will learn to show to the full and use them dexterously, but not much to increase them: the faults he hath he will learn how to hide and colour them, but not much to amend them; like an ill mower that mows on still and never whets his scythe: whereas with the learned man it fares otherwise, that he doth ever intermix the correction and amendment of his mind with the use and employment thereof. May further, in general and in sum, certain it is that veritas [truth] and bonitas [goodness] differ but as the seal and the print; for truth prints goodness, and they be the clouds of error which descend in the storms of passions and perturbations."

Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning

Of the three major sections I have chosen to deal with, the "Digression on Madness" is the most obviously related to the paradoxical encomium. The full title of this section is: "A Digression concerning the Original, the Use and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth". As the title suggests, Swift is here more than anywhere else in the Tale both arguing a case and doing so on behalf of something usually considered unworthy of praise. The basic argument of the digression is that madness is of two kinds which can be distinguished only by means of the degree of success those who are tainted with it achieve in their chosen station of life: one variety leads a man to be committed to bedlam whilst the other makes him a venerated benefactor in the sphere of religion, philosophy or military conquest. This is a tantalizing enough proposition but it is not the major stumbling block to interpretation. Where critics really founder is over the long middle section on happiness as the state of being "well deceived", which has been as variously interpreted as there have been critics to attempt it.

In my own endeavour to come to a satisfactory reading I shall be trying to show the importance primarily of two works, The Praise of Folly by Erasmus and the De Rerum Natura of Lucretius. It is in this section above all, I think, that Caroline Goad would best be able to substantiate her suggestion that "Swift seems to have been considerably imbued with the spirit of Lucretius whilst writing A Tale of a Tub."[1] I shall also attempt to show, however, that it is to Erasmus that we must turn for illumination on the

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1 Caroline Goad, Horace in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century, Yale Studies in English, LVIII, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), p. 172.

problematic middle passage. Whilst it is clear that the similarity in subject of the encomia that Erasmus and Swift undertook suggests a basis of comparison, I shall go beyond this general resemblance to contend that Swift was indebted to Erasmus's argument for his own and that Swift at times echoes directly the John Wilson translation of The Praise of Folly.

In attempting to show the usefulness of madness in a commonwealth Swift is not merely offering ironic praise of his satiric targets: he is using their own method against them. Since the "Digression on Madness" claims to be an account of the single principle that causes man to invent reductive systems, whether philosophical or religious, the digression itself is the reductive system to end reductive systems and as such it represents a clinching comment of the Tailor-worship and Aeolist systems that Swift has already outlined. The opening passage of the digression is patently reductive, for it claims, without any attempt at proof, that the greatest actions performed by individuals in recorded history are the conquest of new empires, founding of new philosophical schemes and creation and propagation of new religions. The triplicity of the division is in accordance with Swift's undertaking in the introduction to the Tale to reduce everything under the banner of the number three. Swift may have included the third category of military conquest for this reason or just for the sake of completeness but it is quite possible that, as Professor Harth suggests, he was indebted to Henry More's Enthusiasmus Triumphatus for this hint.[2]

Swift claims that the common factor that leads to innovation in these

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[2] Swift and Anglican Rationalism, pp. 62, 96.

three fields is a disturbance of the "intellectuals" of their initiators which we normally suppose to be a distemper and call it "madness" or "frenzy". In context this sounds like a reference to the "furorem animi" that Lucretius mentions in the De Rerum Natura (III, 828 - 9) which he uses as an argument against the immortality of the soul and in favour of a mechanistic theory of human nature. Since the soul is subject to diseases just like the body, Lucretius argues, it must be subject to mortality just like the body and must be corporeal. This accords well with Swift's mechanistic assessment of human behaviour at this point but would remain questionable as an allusion were it not clear from what follows that Swift has Lucretius particularly in mind. After attributing this frenzy to "Dyet, . . . Education, the Prevalency of some certain Temper, together with the particular influence of Air and Climate", Swift goes on to assign a further cause -- "something Individual in human minds, that easily kindles at the accidental Approach and Collision of certain Circumstances, which tho' of paltry and mean appearance, do often flame out into the greatest Emergencies of Life".[3] This is an unmistakable reference to the "clinamen" of Lucretius, which Swift will go on to name explicitly later in the digression. It is appropriate at this point because it is Lucretius' account of how the original atoms were able to combine into complex forms. Here is Lucretius' account of their "clinamen" or "swerve":

> Illud in his quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus,
> Corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur
> Ponderibus propriis, incerto tempore ferme

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[3] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 162.

Incertisque locis spatio se pellere paulum,
Tantum quod momen mutatum dicere possis.
Quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum,
Imbris uti guttae, caderent per inane profundum,
Nec foret offensus natus nec plaga creata
Principiis: ita nil umquam natura creasset.

[One further point I desire you to understand:
that while the first bodies are being carried
downwards by their own weight through the void,
at times quite uncertain and uncertain places,
they swerve a little from their course, just
so much as you might call a change of motion.
For if they were not apt to incline, all would
fall downwards like raindrops, through the
profound void, no collision would take place
and no blow would be caused among the first-
beginnings: thus nature would never have
produced anything.

II, 217-24 (cf. II, 1058-63)] [4]

The resemblance of this to Swift's "accidental approach and collision" is obvious enough. But even more pertinent is the fact that Lucretius uses the "clinamen" to explain the phenomenon of will

Libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,
Unde est haec, inquam fatis avolsa voluntas
Per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluptas,
Declinamus item motus nec tempore certo
Nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens? . . .
. . Iamne vides igitur, quamquam vis extera multos
Pellat et invitos cogat procedere saepe
Praecipitesque rapi, tamen esse in pectore nostro
Quiddam quod contra pugnare obstareque possit?
Cuius ad arbitrium quoque copia materiai
Cogitur interdum flecti per membra per artus
Et proiecta refrenatur retroque residit . . .
. Pondus enim prohibet ne plagis omnia fiant
Externa quasi vi; sed ne mens ipsa necessum
Intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis
Et devicta quasi hoc cogatur ferre partique

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[4] Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, ed.cit., pp. 100-101, 160-61. Where Lucretius is using technical terms it is worthwhile quoting the original Latin as well as the English rendering, but in other cases I quote only the translation.

> Id facit exiguum clinamen principiorum
> Nec regione loci certa nec tempore certo.
>
> [Whence comes this free will in living creatures all over the earth, whence I say is this will wrested from the fates by which we proceed whither pleasure leads us, swerving also our motions not at fixed times and places, but just where our mind has taken us? . . . Do you not see, then, that though an external force often propels men and forces them to move on and to be hurried headlong, yet there is in our breast something strong enough to fight against it and resist? by the arbitrament of which the mass of matter is compelled at times to be turned throughout body and limbs, and although thrust forward is curbed back and settles back steadily . . . For it is weight that prevents all things from being caused through blows by a sort of external force; but what keeps the mind itself from having necessity within it in all actions and from being as it were mastered and forced to endure and suffer this, is the minute swerving ('clinamen') of the first beginnings at no fixed place and at no fixed time.
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> II, 257-60, 277-83, 288-93] [5]

Lucretius' attempt to explain the measure of freedom man enjoys seems a little odd because in asserting a mechanistic explanation without the interposition of a prime mover he has to attribute the clinamen to chance; but chance is as preposterous as determinism in accounting for free will. This seems to be the point of the contradiction between the phrases Swift uses: "something individual" which "kindles at the accidental approach and collision of certain circumstances", and "accidental" being Lucretius' "incerto tempore incertisque locis". Where Lucretius talks of atoms, Swift

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[5] Ibid., pp. 102 - 5.

refers to circumstances, thereby heightening the incongruity of applying the atomic hypothesis to human behaviour.[6] This follows quite logically from Swift's mechanistic treatment of the soul in the preceding Aeolist section of the Tale, in which Lucretian concepts are also used.

The conclusion of the opening paragraph, if not as clearly indebted to Lucretius, does contain images reminiscent of the Epicurean poet. They are part of an exercise in indiscrimination designed to express the prime limitations of deterministic theories in general. The idea that man's soul is only a threefold vapour and is composed of the same "originals" ("primordia rerum") as the materials of the sky is part of the atomic hypothesis. Differences are accounted for purely by the way the originals combine, since they are finite in number (De Rerum Natura II, 479-80). Swift expresses this notion in a way that accentuates the parallel: "the upper Region of Man is like the middle Region of Air", as if both can be split up into regions in much the same way. The central image hammers the point home: "all clouds are the same in composition, as well as Consequences, and the Fumes issuing from a Jakes, will furnish as comely and useful a vapor, as Incense from an Altar".[7] This passage has incurred the wrath of some critics who have seen it as merely wit at the expense of decency. But this is to miss the point. This witty defence of the fundamental sameness of all matter is undermined by the introduction of words expressing a value

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6 Lucretius remarks at one point that "things done do never at all consist or exist in themselves as body does, nor are said to exist in the same way as void; but rather you may call them accidents ["eventa"] of body, and of the place in which things are severally done". (I, 478-82), ed.cit., pp. 34 - 7.

7 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 163.

judgement -- "comely" and "useful" — and even more so by the reference to objects of very different human connotations, a jakes and an altar, which oppose an idea of discrimination to one of simple cause and effect. Swift chooses to illustrate his mechanistic argument with precisely the examples that best serve to confute it. A reader familiar with Lucretius' poem might also recall that Lucretius uses the image of an altar exhaling its heat ("vapor") into the sky as an illustration of how fine in composition the soul is, and how easily it disperses once the vessel ("vas") that contains it is ruptured. (III, 425 - 9, 455 - 6). The image of Nature's face as overcast and disturbed like a human face, which Swift uses in this passage also has a close analogue in Lucretius (IV, 136 - 38). Lucretius is, of course, trying to show similarities; Swift, by pressing the analogy, is highlighting the differences between the objects of comparison. The reductio ad absurdum technique, whereby one pushes one's opponent's argument to the point when it becomes untenable, is a time-honoured one.

Swift now proceeds to an account of the operation of the phrenzy he has named by reference to two military examples. The first is a mechanistic account of the large-scale military preparations made by Henri IV of France shortly before his death. After describing his actions Swift even calls him an "engine" and a "machine", querying what "secret wheel" or "hidden spring" could account for such industry.[8] This could equally well be an allusion to Hobbes or Descartes, both of whom, as we have seen, used the mechanical analogy to describe man. The references to springs and wheels in this connection occur in the opening of Hobbes's Leviathan and Descartes's Discours

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[8] Ibid., p. 164.

de la Méthde, but it was Descartes who went on to teach in his Tractatus de Homine (1662) that all things in nature, including animals and men, are machines.[9] Both Hobbes and Descartes shared with Lucretius the desire to explain human behaviour in purely mechanistic terms. It is fitting, therefore, that Swift should find a purely mechanical explanation to answer his query, though the "hidden spring" is kept so hidden that he never actually mentions it. His response is an incomplete quotation from Horace:

> -- Teterrima belli
> Causa . . .

the word omitted being "cunnus" (before "teterrima"). H.Rushton Fairclough points out in his edition of Horace's Satires that the passage in which this reference occurs (Satires, I, iii, 99 ff.) is modelled on Lucretius's account of the evolution of society. In context it provides an illustration of the injustice that prevails in primitive societies when Nature is the law; for, as Horace says, Nature can draw a distinction between things gainful and harmful but not between right and wrong.[10] Reducing man to the level of nature, therefore, inevitably abolishes the foundation of the view that man is a moral being: this is exactly the direction in which mechanical hypotheses lead us. It is no surprise to find that Lucretius, that most mechanistic of diagnosticians of love, is again referred to in this passage, this time offering a remedy for Henri IV's malady:

> He tried in vain the Poet's never-
> failing Receipt of 'Corpora quaeque'; For

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[9] See G.R.Taylor, The Science of Life, (London: Panther Books, 1967), p. 42.

[10] Horace, Satires, Epistles and "Ars Poetica", ed. & trans. H.R.Fairclough, (London and Cambridge, Mass.: William Heinmann Ltd. and Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 41.

> Idque petit corpus mens unde est saucia amore;
> Unde feritur, eo tendit, restitque coire.
>
> Having to no purpose used all peaceable Endeavours, the collected part of the Semen, raised and enflamed, became adust, converted to Choler, turned head upon the spinal Duct and ascended to the Brain. [11]

Strange though this sounds it is in accordance with seventeenth-century medical opinion, which held the view, dating back to Hippocrates, that the spinal marrow was an extension of the brain which was thereby connected to the lower organs of the body.[12] The most significant thing to notice in the present context is that the king is as much controlled and possessed by his semen as any Aeolist by his wind. The subject of the last-quoted sentence is not Henri IV but "the collected part of the Semen" and since the martial impulse came from it rather than from an act of volition by the king himself, the activity of the semen is described by the military metaphor "turned head". Ironically, though, the lines Swift quotes from Lucretius describe not his advice but his clinical description of the condition. In fact Lucretius counsels the sufferer not to seek the source of attraction:

> . . . it is fitting to flee from images,
> to scare away what feeds love, to turn the
> mind in other directions . . . For the sore
> quickens by feeding, daily the madness
> takes on and the tribulation grows heavier.
> [IV, 1063 - 69] [13]

Even the mechanistic Lucretius here comes out in favour of exercising the will towards self-restraint.

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[11] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 164 - 65.

[12] This idea persisted throughout the eighteenth century. See Taylor, The Science of Life, p. 198. Cf. The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit, Guthkelch-Smith, p. 287.

[13] De Rerum Natura, pp. 322 - 3.

Less readily identifiable as a reference derived from Lucretius is the description of Henri IV's death at the hands of an assassin who "broke the bag [i.e. Henri] and out flew the vapours". Nevertheless this recalls Lucretius' depiction of death as the moment when a man loses what he calls variously a "warm vapour" and a "vital wind and warmth":

> cum corpora pauca caloris
> Diffugere forasque per os est editus aer,
> Deserit extemplo venas atque ossa relinquit. . .
> Est igitur calor ac ventus vitalis in ipso
> Corpore qui nobis moribundos deserit artus.
>
> [when a few particles of heat have dispersed abroad and air is driven out through the mouth, the same spirit in a moment deserts the veins and leaves the bones . . . There is therefore within the body itself a heat and a vital wind which deserts our frame on the point of death. III, 121 - 3, 128 - 9.] [14]

Swift's conclusion is a model of indiscrimination achieved by witty argument:

> The very same Principle that influences a Bully to break the Windows of a Whore, who has jilted him, naturally stirs up a Great Prince to raise mighty Armies and dream nothing but Sieges, Battles and Victories. [15]

The next example Swift gives of military aggrandisement is Louis XIV, and since it does not differ greatly from the first I shall pass over it.

Swift now brings us to an examination of philosophical innovation, which comes in for lengthier treatment. The discussion is to be twofold: it will be concerned with finding out "from what faculty of the soul" the disposition arises in men of trying to advance new systems "in things agreed on all hands

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[14] Ibid., p. 179.
[15] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 165.

impossible to be known"; and it will also attempt to discover what quality of human nature has been of most importance in contributing to their success at proselytizing. There is an irony in this scheme, of course, in that it sounds suspiciously like the kind of analysis one of these innovators might himself undertake. It is something of a surprise to find Swift referring directly to the soul after he has for so long used only reductive terminology in accounting for human behaviour; but this reference does not indicate the beginning of a less reductive phase of the argument, for it is followed by the phrase "from what seeds this disposition springs" which though here used metaphorically is a figure constantly used by Lucretius with a more literal connotation.

The examination of philsophical innovation is broad-ranging, including "both Ancient and Modern" (in a chronological sense). Swift notes that innovators of this kind were often deemed mad by all except their followers because the proceeded "in the common Course of their words and actions by a Method very different from the vulgar Dictates of unrefined Reason". By inference the reason of these philosophers has somehow been refined -- a word suggesting the expurgation of grosser elements and thus denoting reduction in a good sense. But it is clear that the use is ironic and that their reductiveness is pernicious when Swift demands shortly afterwards:

> what Man in the natural State, or Course of thinking, did ever conceive it in his Power to reduce the Notions of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length, Breadth and Height of his own?[16]

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[16] Ibid., p. 166.

He suggests that a more percipient era than "our undistinguishing Age" would certainly commit them to bedlam for their mad behaviour, which is rather ironic in view of the fact that his own exegesis of the two kinds of madness is a parody of the reductive method which makes a resemblance equivalent to an identification.

The examples Swift gives of innovators in philosophy are instructive. They include Lucretius and his master Epicurus. For Diogenes Professor Harth suggests Diogenes Apollonites, the disciple of Anaximenes, who believed that the principle element was air.[17] The fact that Diogenes Apollonites, however, was a pupil and not the founder of this system makes it more likely that Swift is referring to the famous Diogenes of Sinope, co-founder with Antisthenes of the Cynic school of philosophy. Descartes, like Lucretius and Epicurus, was a mechanist. In The Battle of the Books, as we have seen, he appears alongside the other two great mechanistic philosophers of the century, Hobbes and Gassendi, in the ranks of the moderns. Appolonius of Tyana and Paracelsus represent one ancient and one modern example of the magical tradition which, though seemingly at the opposite extreme from Cartesianism, is equally mechanical in its understanding of "spirit".

The subsequent few lines, describing how these philosophers tried to win followers, parody two of their systems, one ancient and one modern in the chronological sense. The first is the scheme of Epicurus and in quoting this passage I have inserted Lucretius's Latin equivalents for Swift's phrases:

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[17] Swift and Anglican Rationalism, p. 87.

> Epicurus modestly hoped, that one time or another ['incerto tempore'; II, 218], a certain Fortuitous Concourse of all Men's Opinions, after perpetual jostlings, the Sharp with the Smooth, the Light and the Heavy, the Round and the Square ['parvis figuris', 'majoribus elementis', 'levibus atque rutundis', 'amara atque aspera'; II, 385 - 404; 'aliis quadrata . . . multa rutunda; IV, 653 - 4] would by certain Clinamina [II, 292] unite in the notions of the Atoms and the Void ['corpora', 'inanum'; passim] as these did in the Originals of all Things ['primordia rerum'; passim]. [18]

The second is Descartes's cosmology -- not the most notable achievement of his philosophy but the one Swift most commonly associated him with: it is mentioned both in The Battle of the Books, where Descartes is struck by an arrow from Aristotle that causes him to whirl round in pain until Death "draws him into his own Vortex", and in Gulliver's Travels (Book III, Chapter 8) where the theory of the vortices features, in the company of Gassendi's neo-Epicureanism, as an example of vain philosophy.[19] Unlike Lucretius Descartes rejected the notion of atoms in the void and hypothesised that the universe was full of matter. Motion was therefore a displacement or rearrangement, involving a constant impact of particle on particle. A. Rupert Hall comments:

> Under these conditions any movement tends to create a swirl or vortex. The solar system is in fact such an aetherial vortex with the sun at the centre of subsidiary vortices carrying round satellites such as the moon. The whole universe consists of such vortices, each with

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[18] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 167.
[19] See above, pp. 81 - 3.

> a star at the centre, fitting together like a mass of soap bubbles . . . The spots on the sun are amalgamations of coarser particles floating like scum on its surface; should these accumulate sufficiently they would form a skin of ordinary matter, the emission of light would cease, and the vortex collapse. Thus in time a star may become a planet and be captured as a passive body in some neighbouring vortex. [20]

This is exactly the concept that Swift parodies at this point in his account of how system-builders achieve their proselytes: "Cartesius reckoned to see before he died, the sentiments of all Philosophers, like so many lesser stars in his Romantick system, rapt and drawn within his own Vortex". The point, once again, is that these systems sound silly when applied in a mechanical way to human understanding.

Having lampooned these two system builders, Swift returns to his own system again, and it is significant that in doing so he uses another phrase borrowed from Lucretius.

> Now I would gladly be informed, how it is possible to account for such Imaginations as in these particular Men, without recourse to my Phoenomenon of Vapours, ascending from the lower Faculties to over-shadow the Brain, and thence distilling into conceptions, for which the Narrowness of our Mother-Tongue has not yet assigned any other Name, besides that of Madness or Phrenzy. [21]

Lucretius twice apologizes for using Greek, once "because of the poverty of our mother speech" ("nec nostra dicere lingua/concedit nobis patrii

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[20] A.Rupert Hall, From Galileo to Newton, 1630 - 1720, (London: Collins, 1963), pp. 117 - 19.

[21] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 167.

sermonis egestus", I, 831 - 2); and once in a case that comes much closer to Swift's own situation: "because of the poverty of the language and the novelty of the matters" ("propter egestatem linguae et rerum novitatem") Swift is quite aware of the novelty of his argument and that his method is as reductive as that of any of his satiric targets.

Swift now proceeds to the second half of his argument, in which he undertakes to show why system builders have been so successful in obtaining proselytes. His answer is another mechanical one but the mechanism he refers to comes from a different intellectual tradition from Cartesian or Epicurean mechanism: it derives from the occult tradition. According to Swift, a "secret necessary Sympathy" may be established between yourself and another person if you can "screw up to its right key" a "peculiar String in the Harmony of Human Understanding". The notion of sympathetic forces was a very outdated one by Swift's day and had little currency.

The harmony idea has a distinguished ancestry, however. Its earliest propounder was traditionally supposed to be Pythagoras, who used it as an explanation of the order in the universe. As a theory of the soul it was attacked by such different writers as Plato (in the Phaedo) and Lucretius. Many mediaeval and Renaissance occultists imbibed the Pythagorean notion and developed it in different ways. Cornelius Agrippa built out of the microcosm/macrocosm idea the theory that because the world is built to human proportions,

> man moving in harmonious gestures means that he is expressing the world's harmony. He is in relation with the All. When his body moves according to these ideal figures, then he has captured the magical meaning of the earliest sacred dances that are performed in

> mystical rites. Such movements cause the gods to rejoice, and echoes to haunt the planets, like stringed instruments that vibrate when their harmonies are sung. The dance creates curative forces. When a person is sick, he is in discord with the universe. He may again find harmony and regain health, when he turns his movements to those of the Stars. [22]

The famous English magus and Rosicrucian apologist Robert Fludd (1574-1637) developed the concept further in his treatise On the Music of the Soul, where he offers

> an image depicting man, the microcosm, tuned to the harmony above, built in musical intervals, reaching from the head to the hips and comprising his soul and his mind as well as his physical being. Above, there is the diapason spiritualis, extending from the head to the heart, which marks the separation from the diapason corporealis. This dividing line is not arbitrary: as in the greater world the sun is the giver of life, so in the lesser universe the heart takes the place of the sun. Day and night, sunrise and sunset are contained in Fludd's ingenious scheme. [23]

Both of these theories combine the notion of universal harmony with that of occult forces of sympathy. Swift might have known either or both, or he might have come across the idea in reading one of his six mad modern innovators, Paracelsus. The belief in harmonies that roughly correspond to what today a scientist would call "quantitative laws" was a belief shared by all the "magi" of Paracelsus's time. We should, however, note a more

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[22] Seligmann, Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion, pp. 359 - 61.

[23] Ibid., p. 364.

important theory within the same tradition that was framed much closer to Swift's time -- Newton's theory of universal gravitation. Professor Kearney reminds us that Newton's Principia was not given its due when it first appeared in print (1687) precisely because it seemed a reversion to the outmoded occult tradition.

> The Cartesians . . . dismissed Newton's thesis on the ground that it rested upon the assumption of 'action at a distance', in short, occult forces . . . Christian Huygens, the Dutch Cartesian, dismissed Newton's principle of attraction as 'absurd' and in no way 'explicable by any principle of mechanics'. Leibniz wrote to Huygens in 1693 referring to Newton along with Aristotle as a believer in 'sympathies' and 'antipathies', which were completely implausible. Fontenelle, whose Entretiens became a layman's introduction to the heliocentric system, took a similar stand against Newton. [24]

Though Swift's reference to a string in the harmony of human understanding clearly alludes to this tradition, it is too vague to be identified with a single explicit source. The general point of the allusion is nevertheless plain enough: it applies the metaphor of harmony to intelligence as if it were literally true, in the same way as one might extend the modern colloquialism about people being "on the same wavelength" by stating that the human understanding is a radio set. It simply reduces human intelligence to mechanism.

Swift's next comment leads to an interesting illustration of this concept:

> It is therefore a point of the nicest conduct to distinguish and adapt this

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[24] Kearney, Science and Change, 1500 - 1700, pp. 194 - 6.

> noble talent, with respect to the differences of persons and times. [25]

To further this point he adduces Cicero, who wrote sixteen letters to a young protege of his, a lawyer named Trebatius. Cicero understood the difficulty, Swift tells us, and refers to the section in Cicero's Familiar Epistles (VII, vi) in which he advises Trebatius to beware of British charioteers. In Swift's account the charioteers become "Hackney-Coachmen" and Cicero gives a caution

> to beware of being cheated by our Hackney-Coachmen (who, it seems, in those days were as arrant rascals as they are now). [26]

This is in fact a deliberate misreading of the passage. Cicero is actually advising Trebatius, who is about to change his profession from a legal to a military one, to look after himself. In doing so he uses a humorous analogy between the professions to wish Trebatius safety in the field of battle:

> You, who have learnt to take precautionary measures for your clients, must look out in Britain that you are not cheated by the charioteers. [27]

This misinterpretation, based as it is on a failure of historical perspective, can be taken as an incidental satire on the limited horizons of modernism. If it adds nothing to the argument, it should at least alert us to follow the argument very closely and be wary of false conclusions, for Swift proceeds to the text of Cicero which he wishes to use in favour of his harmony theory.

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[25] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 168.
[26] Ibid., p. 168.
[27] Cicero, The Letters to his Friends, ed. & trans. W.G.Williams, 3 vols., (London and Cambridge, Mass., William Heinmann Ltd. & Harvard University Press), II, 29.

The quotation he cites is:

> Est quod gaudeas te in ista loca
> venisse ubi aliquid sapere videre.
> [You may well be overjoyed at
> coming to an area where your talents
> show to best advantage.] (VII, x, 1.)

This is a much more elaborate joke. To begin with, as the Guthkelch-Smith edition of the Tale notes, the words that immediately follow these in Cicero's epistle show that Trebatius never went to Britain at all:

> Had you got as far as Britain, too,
> I am sure you would not have found
> a single man in that great island
> more of an expert than yourself. [28]
> (VII, x, 1.)

In fact, far from the idea of rejoicing at the idea of going to Britain, Trebatius was miserable to be as far away from Rome even as Gaul. As a soldier Trebatius was as much a fish out of water as he possibly could be: Cicero's epistles make it clear that he had a great deal of difficulty adapting to the requirements of his situation. In the twelfth epistle of Cicero's Epistles to his Friends, Book VII, the second epistle after the one Swift quotes from, Cicero discloses that he has learned from a friend that Trebatius has become an Epicurean. The Stoic Cicero would hardly be expected to approve of this and he asks:

> What would you have done if had I
> sent you, not to Samarobrivia, but [29]
> to Tarentum? (VII, xii, 1.)

The implication is that if the rough camplife at Samarobrivia, so far from making a man of Trebatius, had turned him into an Epicurean, it is a good

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[28] Ibid., II, 33; Guthkelch-Smith, p. 168.
[29] Cicero, Letters to his Friends, II, 33.

job he did not go to Tarentum, the most luxurious of winter resorts. Cicero's te gaudeas is therefore more a picus hope than an accurate description of the facts. It is in no way a vindication of the harmony theory that Swift has put forward. The reference to Trebatius turning into an Epicurean is a further irony in view of the position Epicurus holds in this section of the Tale.

After a brief sally against Wotton (a comparison between Wotton and Trebatius) Swift concludes his rationale of successful proselytization and returns to the vapour called "madness" and its usefulness. To the positive data he has already established -- that it is the source of those two "great blessings", conquests and systems -- he adds the negative fact that without its help "even all Mankind would unhappily be reduced to the same Belief in Things invisible". "Things invisible" is such a vague term that it hardly has any meaning. It could refer to the kind of things invisible that Thomas Vaughan, the occult philosopher, would have his readers believe in when he asserts that the upper air is

> Nature's Commonplace, her index, where you may find all that she ever did or intends to do. This is the world's panegyric; the excursions of both globes meet here; and I may call it the rendezvous. In this are innumerable magical forms of men and beasts, fish and fowl, trees, herbs, and all creeping things. This is 'the sea of invisible things' [Mare rerum invisibilium]. [30]

But Swift could equally be referring to the "invisibilia" which God, maker of all things, created along with the "visibilia" according to the Nicene

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[30] Vaughan, Works, pp. 24 - 5.

Creed. There is further cause for confusion in the fact that "unhappily" in the quotation from the Tale just cited was changed to "happily" in the fourth and fifth editions of the Tale; but strangely enough, the change makes no real difference to the argument: one of them ought to be ironical but it is not at all clear which. In fact the possibility of changing a word for its opposite indicates that neither of these words presents so much of a problem as the formulation "things invisible" itself. It is a blanket term and the reader cannot assent to any conclusions as to whether things invisible are credible until they are more closely defined. Furthermore, "things" can equally be taken to mean "some things" or "all things" and Swift never actually tells us which he means: he lets the ambiguity stand. But he does give us some clues. One is in The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit where, as we have noted, he calls the principle of good and evil:

> the most Universal Notion that
> Mankind, by the meer Light of Nature,
> ever entertained of Things invisible.[31]

This might serve to remind us that apart from the moral sense which the soul possesses, the soul itself is likewise invisible and immaterial according to orthodox Anglican doctrine. That Swift himself believed this is clear from his sermon "On the Trinity", where he acknowledges that the manner in which soul and body are united is inexplicable and concludes that, like the union of the Holy Trinity, it is a mystery. In the same sermon he cites with approval St. Paul's definition of faith as "the Evidence of Things not seen".[32] In the context of his recent ridicule of physical theories of the soul,

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[31] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 274.
[32] Swift, Prose Works, IX, 164.

particularly those of the atomists, it seems plausible that Swift might here be thinking of the soul as something that exists invisibly and, by endowing a man with moral choice, redeems him from mere mechanical determinisms. The use of the word "reduced" to describe the state of belief in things invisible then becomes ironic, because it has already been used to describe the systematizers to whom Swift attributes the vapour called madness; and this vapour, because it accounts for the behaviour of human beings without leaving room for free will, is itself reductive.

The next observation is certainly mechanistic in the extreme:

> The former postulatum being held, that it is of no Import from what Originals this Vapour proceeds, but either in what Angles it strikes and spreads over the Understanding, or upon what Species of Brain it ascends; it will be a very delicate Point, to cut the Feather, and divide the several Reasons to a Nice and Curious Reader, how this numerical Difference in the Brain can produce effects of so vast a Difference from the same Vapour as to be the sole Point of Individuation between Alexander the Great, Jack of Leyden and Monsieur Des Cartes. [33]

To achieve this, Swift claims, he will have to strain his faculties to the highest stretch -- it is the most abstracted argument that ever he engaged in. What he presents the reader with is the first half-line of an argument, a hiatus of nearly six lines and a conclusion: "And this I take to be a clear solution of the matter".

This, as Swift might say, is a joke with a number of handles. It could be taken as a parody of ancient texts (such as a text of Lucretius) which

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[33] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 169 - 70.

have been partially lost and have to be presented incomplete. Again, since atomic theorists do not believe in abstracts, it is only logical that an argument so "abstracted" as this should be presented as refined into nothingness. Or again, in view of his observation that without the aid of his theory of vapours mankind would be reduced to belief in the invisible, it makes a nice irony that he should present his clinching argument so invisibly that it even lacks words.

One of the terms Swift uses before this hiatus, however, casts further light on the passage. "Individuation" is a scholastic term to denote what it is that gives man his individuality as distinct from his participation in a species. As Swift no doubt knew, the two greatest scholastic philosophers of the Middle Ages, Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, had differed strongly on this point, a good indication of why they are both included amongst the moderns in The Battle of the Books: it is the kind of debate that is not easily resolved. Its connection with Lucretian and Cartesian thought, and particularly with their materialism, can be seen from Father Frederick Copleston's account of it.

> [In his treatise De Anima] Scotus is . . . engaged in showing that the presence of matter in the soul can be deduced with probability from the premises of Aristotle and St. Thomas, even though St. Thomas did not hold the doctrine. For example, he argues that if matter is the principle of individuation, as St. Thomas (but not Scotus) held, then there must be matter in the rational soul. It is useless to say that the soul when separated from the body, is distinguished from other souls by its relation to the body, first because the soul does not exist for the sake of the body, secondly because the relation or inclination to

> the body, which no longer exists, would be no more than a relatio rationis, and thirdly because the inclination or relation supposes a foundation, i.e. this soul, so that the thisness could not be due to the relation. Thus Scotus in the De Anima is trying to show that if one maintains with St.Thomas that matter is the principle of individuation, one ought to assert the presence of matter in the rational soul, in order to explain the individuality of the soul after death. [34]

We have seen already what Swift thought of scholastic disputatiousness in general and of Duns Scotus's contribution to it. There is not much doubt that for Swift such a dispute would come under the heading of things impossible to be known". Swift emphasizes this with a footnote to his hiatus:

> Here is another Defect in the Manuscript, but I think the Author did wisely, and that the Matter which thus strained his Faculties, was not worth a Solution; and it were well if all Metaphysical Cobweb Problems were no otherwise answered. [35]

The "cobweb" is, of course, the emblem Swift allots to the moderns in The Battle of the Books.

The general trend of the "Digression on Madness" thus far, then, is easy to follow. Swift conducts a survey of those who have invented reductive systems and claims their reasoning is defective. Even the military conquerors come under this heading (if they fit a little oddly along with the

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[34] Copleston, op.cit., II, 237.
[35] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 170.

philosophical and religious thinkers) because one of them is supposed to have a scheme for universal monarchy, whilst another (Alexander the Great) is popularly reputed to have died of grief that there were no more worlds to conquer. All are irrational in wishing to reduce everything to the dimensions of their own notions. At the same time Swift satirizes them with a parody of reductive logic, a highly allusive scheme that diagnoses their defect as a sophisticated variety of madness, distinguished from the more common variety only by the milieu in which it occurs. The operation of this madness is described in terms ostensibly of praise but so mechanistic that the systematizers are diminished to the level of automata. Within the terms of this general proposition, however, Swift is unable to account for the different manifestations of "refined reason" that this malady produces in them.

Having completed his mechanical exegesis, Swift embarks, in a new subdivision of this section, on a psychological investigation of the phenomenon. After restating his theory and reaffirming the tripartite division of its main manifestations, he gives us some indication of what "unrefined" reason is like:

> the Brain in its natural Position and State of Serenity, disposeth its owner to pass his Life in the Common Forms, without any thought of subduing Multitudes to his own Power, his Reasons or his Visions; and the more he shapes his Understanding by the Pattern of Human Learning, the less he is inclined to form Parties after his own Notions; because that instructs him in his private Infirmities, as well as the stubborn Ignorance of the People. [36]

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[36] Ibid., p. 171.

This is about as close as Swift comes to a direct statement of a norm. Humanistic learning is distinguished from that of the Moderns by the appeal it makes to the favourite dictum of the humanists, "nosce teipsum" -- "know thyself" -- with the implication that such knowledge produces humility rather than pride. If "common forms", however, seems to suggest that it is accessible to all but the mad few system builders, the final line about the stubborn ignorance of the people makes it clear that the serenity of true self-knowledge is the prerogative of only the few who have earned it.

There is no break in the paragraph as Swift proceeds to give some account of the reverse of the picture: his subject, without any warning, becomes the psychology of those who are impressed by men of refined reason. This marks a new phase in the argument of the digression. Whereas hitherto Swift has occupied himself with examining behaviour that reduces everything to the level of mechanism, he now begins to introduce large abstract concepts, alternately broadening and limiting them, and illustrates them with physical imagery. This new development means that the satire is taking a different direction, and it is significant that Erasmus's Praise of Folly provides, as we shall see, a number of close analogues to Swift's argument.

It looks initially as though Swift is going to talk again about the system builders, but this is only a means of reintroducing the theme of proselytization. He achieves it by a dichotomy between the processes of convincing oneself and convincing others of one's theories:

> the first Proselyte he makes is himself, and when that is once compass'd, the difficulty is not so great in bringing over others; a strong Delusion always operating from without, as vigorously as from within.[37]

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[37] Ibid., p. 171.

This gives the two processes a somewhat artificial resemblance to one another, and leads away from the madmen towards the effect that they have on the world at large. A further analogy makes "Cant and Vision" the same to the ear and eye that "tickling is to the touch". Next comes a value judgement masquerading as objective comment:

> Those Entertainments and Pleasures
> we value most in Life are those such
> as Dupe and play the Wag with the Senses.

The two expressions Swift gives are delivered as if they are synonyms but to "dupe" someone is usually to deceive him utterly, whereas "to play the wag" implies the subject's knowing participation in the deception. The proposition itself insidiously invites the reader's participation and assent by use of the first person plural. From this we are brought to a definition of happiness as "the perpetual possession of being well deceived". This definition is admittedly limited by two qualifications; it is only happiness as applied to "the understanding or the senses", and it is "what is generally understood" by happiness. R.F.Jones points out that the division or antithesis between mind and senses is one of the most characterisitic scientific attitudes of the seventeenth century, so Swift's more educated readers might be expected to be familiar with the dichotomy. It is, however, a rather artificial dichotomy, that separates mind from senses and deals with each independently, as if there were no connection between the two.

As for the definition of happiness as being "well deceived", Swift has yet to demonstrate its validity, but even here he is slippery enough to avoid making a direct equation of happiness with deception, merely saying that "all its properties and adjuncts will herd under this short definition".[38]

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[38] Ibid., p. 171.

This is, of course, reductive reasoning, but by means of the circuitous phraseology Swift contrives to give an impression of a meticulous attempt at exactness and inclusiveness.

The Guthkelch-Smith edition notes that Swift may have based his definition on a passage in Horace's Epistles, where the poet declares that he would rather be thought a foolish and clumsy scribbler so long as his failings please him -- or even delude him: this would be preferable to being wise and unhappy. And Horace then goes on to relate the story of a man who could convince himself while sitting in an empty theatre that he was listening to a performance by the most marvellous tragic actors. Although this whimsy did not prevent him from performing his household duties properly, his friends took measures to cure him; but when they did he gave them no thanks, only the reproach that they had robbed him of the greatest and most innocent pleasure of his life.[39]

The basic concept is very much the same as Swift's but there is no special reason to suppose this as a source. Another author Swift was fond of reading was Don Quixote, and Professor Paulson goes so far as to call Swift's treatment of delusion "the Quixote theme".[40] The theme of the man who creates his own reality out of his imagination also features in a different form in another of Swift's favourite works, Butler's Hudibras. But a more obvious source, and one which far more closely parallels Swift's argument is The Praise of Folly of Erasmus -- an obvious reference book for a man writing a digression on folly within a digression on madness. Since

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39 Horace, Satires, Epistles and "Ars Poetica", pp. 434 - 35.

40 See R. Paulson, Theme and Structure in Swift's "Tale of a Tub", (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 35 - 52.

it is also largely an attack on the methods of scholastic argument, one of Swift's main paradigms of reductive reason, it has even greater relevance to his purpose.

Erasmus, proceeding by means of definition and restriction or extension of terms, is able to reduce a great many activities under the banner of folly in his wide-ranging work. One of his most basic arguments makes both wisdom and ignorance foolish. Happiness is attainable only through ignorance and therefore through folly; wisdom is inconsistent with happiness and is therefore folly. (Erasmus, incidentally, cites the Horatian anecdote just quoted in support of his eulogy of ignorance). Arguments like these demonstrate how useful a model Erasmus was likely to be for Swift in his attempt to prove that wisdom is to be equated with delusion and thus with folly. Some more specific references will show how close Swift is to the great humanist scholar. At one point in the work Erasmus defends the "possession of being well-deceived" in the following terms:

> But 'tis a sad thing, they say, to be mistaken. Nay rather he is most miserable that is not so. For they are quite beside the mark that place the happiness of men in things themselves, since it only depends upon opinion. [41]

Erasmus' formulation makes man the measure of the relative worth of truth and falsehood, and in adducing happiness as a criterion, reveals that if his happiness is to be taken as the absolute criterion, then falsehood may be preferable because certain truths are painful. Swift uses much the same argument in making happiness the issue and proposing the precedence of

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[41] Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, (trans. J.Wilson), p. 75.

falsehood over truth:

> And first, with relation to the Mind or Understanding; 'tis manifest, what mighty Advantages Fiction has over Truth; and the Reason is just at our elbow; because Imagination can build nobler Scenes, and produce more wonderful Revolutions than Fortune or Nature will be at Expence to Furnish. [42]

The Guthkelch-Smith edition refers to a passage in Bacon's Advancement of Learning with a similar idea. The passage is instructive, because it is Bacon's account of the nature of poetry, which he calls "Feigned History", and explains its appeal by the nature of the soul's superiority to the world "in proportion",

> by reason whereof there is agreeable to the spirit of man a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety, than can be found in the nature of things. [43]

Bacon is restating here the traditional justification of poetry, which dates back to Aristotle, on the grounds that though not literally true, it inculcates the precepts of philosophy more pleasurably than philosophy can and that it presents a higher truth and a higher seriousness than history, which is limited to literal facts. That Swift should oppose truth to "fiction" -- a literary term -- rather than "falsehood" shows that he is appealing, if somewhat covertly, to this justification, although he makes the pleasure of the fiction an end in itself rather than the means to an end. The most famous expression of the theory in English is that of Sir Philip Sidney, whom Swift admired as a critic. He contrasts poetry and history in

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[42] Guthkelch-Smith, pp. 171 - 2.
[43] Bacon, Selected Writings, p. 244.

these terms:

> For indeede Poetry ever setteth vertue so out in her best cullours, making Fortune her well-wayting hand-mayd, that one must needs be enamoured of her. . . .
> . . . But the Historian, being captived to the trueth of a foolish world, is many times a terror from well dooing, and an incouragement to unbrideled wickedness. . . .
> . . . Onely the Poet, disdayning to be tied to any such subiection, lifted up with the vigor of his owne invention, dooth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or, quite a newe formes such as never were in Nature. [44]

Sidney also gives an example of poetry in operation as an incentive to virtue.

> For even those harde harted evill men who thinke vertue a schoole name, and knowe no other good but *indulgere genio*, and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the Philosopher, and feele not the inward reason they stand upon, yet will be content to be delighted, which is al the good felow Poet seemeth to promise; and so steale to see the forme of goodnes (which seene they cannot but love) ere themselves be aware, as if they tooke a medicine of Cherries. [45]

Swift advocates taking the cherry and leaving the medicine. The metaphor is one that he does not use, but it is similar to the one from Lucretius at the beginning of the work, and also to the Horatian admonition to

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[44] Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*, ed. J.Churton Collins, (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1961), pp. 8, 23.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

"miscere utile dulci" which Swift refers to earlier in the Tale. It should also remind us of the shell/kernel image that he uses in one form or another throughout the Tale.

Despite the large number of possible sources for the opposition of fiction to truth, there is still good reason to suppose Swift is also thinking of Erasmus at this point. The metaphor of expense ("than Fortune or Nature will be at Expence to Furnish") is one that Erasmus uses twice in his account of opinion's superiority to truth:

> And now at how cheap a rate is this happiness purchased! Forasmuch as to the thing itself a man's whole endeavour is required, be it never so inconsiderable; but the opinion of it is easily taken up, which yet conduces as much or more to happiness.
>
> . . . the fools have the advantage, first in that their happiness costs them least . . . [46]

Truth, however, has one advantage over fiction, that it does at least exist. This is the obvious objection to a preference for fiction. Swift answers this by restating the terms, calling truth "Things past" and fiction "things conceived". This is a rather artificial antithesis, since it assumes that the two categories of "things" are of the same kind. Within the limits of literary theory the argument is still valid. History is concerned with things past and poetry with things conceived. But the argument is becoming dangerously general. As already noted, "things" has two meanings: "all things", as implied by the title of Lucretius's poem De Rerum Natura -- "of the nature of things", and merely "some things". Unless some distinction

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[46] The Praise of Folly, pp. 75 - 6, 77.

is made to resolve the ambiguity, this argument could lead to a vindication of the modernist position as given by the spider in The Battle of the Books, that the moderns are superior to the "ancients" (those who, like the bee try to correct their infirmities from the common pool of inherited wisdom) merely by virtue of originality. Swift, however, lets the ambiguity stand and redefines the terms:

> and so the Question is only this; Whether things that have Place in the Imagination, may not as properly be said to Exist, as those which are seated in the Memory; which may justly be held in the affirmative, and very much to the Advantage of the former, since This is acknowledged to be the Womb of Things, and the other allowed to be no more than the Grave. [47]

This closes the argument in favour of Imagination, Fiction and Deception. The ambiguous use of "things" is still there in the final sentence but Swift allows no mitigation of the completeness of his formulation. By a continual manipulation of terms Swift has proved the paradoxical proposition that falsehood, and presumably any falsehood, is more real than truth.

This kind of artful manipulation is the classic method of presenting a paradox. One example that proves the continued fascination of such exercises is the refutation of time by the Greek Sceptic, Sextus Empiricus, revived by the popular contemporary writer J.L.Borges in his own "A New Refutation of Time". Sextus Empiricus

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[47] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 172 (Note how similar this formulation is, apart from the inversion of values, to that used by the bee in comparing the ancients and the moderns. See the passage quoted from The Battle of the Books on p. 71 above.

> denies the existence of the past, that which already was, and the future, that which is not yet, and argues that the present is divisible or indivisible. It is not indivisible, for it would have no beginning to link it to the past nor end to link it to the future, nor even a middle, since what has no beginning or end can have no middle, neither is it divisible, for in such a case it would consist of a part that was and another that is not. Ergo, it does not exist, but since the past and the future do not exist either, time does not exist. [48]

The key to this argument lies in the technique of dividing the disproof into sections and applying to the "fourth dimension" terms that treat it as if it were no different from the other three. But since time is not a physical object, the word "dimension" is scientifically inaccurate to describe it. The paradox therefore shows the dangers of describing something in inappropriate terminology and of dividing an argument into separate components. Nobody is likely to be convinced by it that time does not exist.

In the same way Swift shows, not that falsehood is better or more real than truth, but the insidiousness of the method by which he makes a superficially convincing case for this proposition. The terms he uses are wittily but not realistically appropriate: an act of judgement is required to discriminate between the kinds of "things" that are being compared. In making a case for the moderns, Swift resorts to precisely the kind of scholastic subtleties that they claimed to be rebelling against and which are criticized not only by Erasmus but by the putative founder of English modernism, Francis Bacon.

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[48] J.L.Borges, Labyrinths, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 268.

Having dealt with the understanding, Swift proceeds now with his auxiliary proof that the senses also prefer to be well deceived:

> Again, if we take this definition of Happiness, and examine it with reference to the Senses, it will be acknowledged wonderfully adapt.[49]

"Adapt" is a curious word to use as an adjective. It is an anglicisation of the Latin "adaptus", which has essentially the same meaning as the more usual "apt." By using the Latin form where "apt" would be just as intelligible and more natural to an English ear, Swift is probably emphasizing the scholastic origin of his method of argument. The next two sentences are not so much statements as rhetorical questions:

> How fade and insipid do all Objects accost us that are not convey'd in the Vehicle of Delusion? How shrunk is every Thing, as it appears in the Glass of Nature?

Swift follows them up by affirming:

> So that if it were not for the assistance of Artificial Mediums, false Lights, refracted Angles, Varnish and Tinsel; there would be a mighty Level in the Felicity and Enjoyments of Mortal Men.[50]

The Guthkelch-Smith edition notes the resemblance of this to another passage in Bacon, this time from his essay "Of Truth", where he observes:

> Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the

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[49] Guthkelch-Smith, p.172.
[50] Ibid., p. 172.

> price of a diamond or carbuncle, that sheweth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? [51]

But again, there is a passage in Erasmus, from the same context as the previous quotations I have cited, which makes precisely the same point:

> the mind of men is so framed that it is rather taken with the false colours than truth. [52]

Neither of these is very close verbally to Swift's account and both make the same basic point: there is nothing to suggest that Swift had either of the passages in mind to the exclusion of the other. But whereas Bacon makes no value judgement, Erasmus makes this willingness to be deceived praiseworthy as being an important symptom of folly, and in this he is very close to Swift, whose argument in favour of fiction and against truth is a similarly ironic value judgement.

Swift proceeds to offer a disarmingly good-natured criticism of man's powers of criticism:

> If this were seriously considered by the World . . . Men would no longer reckon among their high Points of Wisdom, the Art of exposing weak sides and publishing Infirmities. [53]

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51 Bacon, Selected Writings, p. 8.
52 The Praise of Folly, p. 75.
53 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 172.

Here we may recognize Swift's description of the "True Critick" as a "Discoverer and Collector of Writers Faults" earlier in the Tale (p.95). Recollection of this is likely to give the argument extra force in the reader's mind. But the implied antithesis between finding fault and not finding fault is loaded because the latter is attached to the notion of not minding about faults and deluding oneself that they do not exist. Ignoring faults does not improve them.

The closing words of the paragraph are a remarkable piece of impudence on Swift's part. Exposing weak sides, he says is

> an Employment, in my Opinion,
> neither better nor worse than that
> of Unmasking, which I think, has
> never been allowed fair Usage,
> either in the World or the Play-House.[54]

Having started with a literary argument and developed it into a general, all-embracing formula, Swift has the nerve to return to matters literary and confirm his diagnosis by an analogy of the world to the theatre.

It is worth noting that the theatre is used as an illustration of the power of delusion, not only in the rather special case of Horace's madman who thought he was watching actors who were not there, but also in The Praise of Folly, where the very activity of watching a play is catalogued as folly. The parallel is not close, but since Erasmus is concerned at this point, like Swift, with the love mankind has of delusion, it bears quotation as an oblique commentary:

> If anyone seeing a player act his
> part on the stage should go about to

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[54] Ibid., p. 172.

> strip him of his disguise and show him to the people in his true native form, would he not, think you, not only spoil the whole design of the play, but deserve himself to be pelted off with stones as a phantastical fool and one out of his wits? It is true that actors are constantly charging disguises to deceive the audience but . . . to discover this were to spoil all, it being the only thing that entertains the eyes of the spectators. And what is life but a kind of comedy, wherein all men walk up and down in one another's disguises and act their respective parts? [55]

In connection with this allusion it is also worth recalling that Bacon, in the Novum Organum classifies one category of errors in human understanding as "Idols of the Theatre". These are mistakes "plainly impressed and received into the mind from the play books of philosophical systems and the perverted rules of demonstration".[56] If Swift had this Baconian dictum in mind, he gives no indication of it, but it would at least be appropriate in a section of the Tale so concerned both with system-builders and with faulty demonstration.

The next paragraph, extending a page and a half in the Guthkelch-Smith Tale, has long been recognized as the most crucial passage in it. The main problem is the method of argument by which Swift turns what he starts out by calling "wisdom" into "the serene and peaceful state of being a fool among knaves". Since such an argument is obviously paradoxical, we may expect to find Erasmus's satire useful again as a commentary on the argument. I shall try to show that Swift is not only indebted to Erasmus, but at times actually

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55 The Praise of Folly, p. 44.
56 Bacon, Selected Works, p. 479.

echoes phrases in the John Wilson translation of the Praise of Folly. But at the very beginning of this paragraph it is to Bacon that one may most usefully turn for elucidation. The passage opens:

> In the Proportion that Credulity is a more peaceful Possession of the Mind than Curiosity, so far preferable is that Wisdom which converses about the surface to that pretended Philosophy which enters into the Depth of things and then comes gravely back with Informations and Discoveries that in the inside they are good for nothing. [57]

The initial dichotomy draws on the argument of the preceding paragraph and what Swift has established in it. Credulity is a fair description of a preference for delusion over truth. As alternatives, though, neither is very attractive. "Curiosity" was in Swift's day as pejorative a word as "credulity". In The Advancement of Learning Bacon uses them both to describe "three vanities' in learning" which have contributed most to its dishonour:

> For those things we esteem vain, which are either false or frivolous, those which have either no truth or no use: and those persons we esteem vain, which are either credulous or curious; and curiosity is either in matter or words: so that in reason as well as experience, there fall out to be these three distempers (as I may term them) of learning; the first, fantastical learning; the second, contentious learning; and the last, delicate learning; vain imaginations, vain altercations, and vain affectations. [58]

It can hardly be coincidence that Swift here uses the same dichotomy as

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[57] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 173.
[58] Bacon, Selected Works, p. 180.

Bacon does in the precise section of The Advancement of Learning that gave Swift the two key motifs for The Battle of the Books. One of them immediately follows the passage just quoted as an example of vain affectation and describes how Martin Luther,

> finding his own solitude, being in no ways aided by the opinions of his own time, was enforced to awake all antiquity, and to call former times to his succors to make a party against the present time; so that the ancient authors, both in divinity and in humanity, which had long time slept in libraries, began generally to be read and revolved. [59]

It is but a short step from this to a battle fought between ancient and modern books. The other motif is that of the spider as the representative of modernism. I have tried to show in chapter three that the spider's confrontation with the bee and the arguments that pass between them are based on Bacon's criticism of scholasticism as the prime example of vain altercation. He describes the schoolmen as men who:

> having sharp and strong wits and abundance of leisure, and small variety of reading; but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle their dictator) as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges; and knowing little history, either of nature or time; did out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wit, spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby. But

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[59] Ibid., pp. 180 - 81.

> if it worketh upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of threat and work, but of no substance or profit. [60]

Since Swift dated the decline of Christian learning from the time when Aristotelian scholasticism became supreme, he had a good deal of common ground with Bacon. But Swift also believed that the leading philosophers of the seventeenth century, far from bringing sweetness and light, were system builders of the same brand as the Aristotelian schoolmen. Naturally he found it useful to discredit them with the voice of the very man who was so widely hailed in the seventeenth century as the prophet of the new science.

Not everybody, however, dismissed credulity and curiosity as equally undesirable alternatives. Thomas Hobbes, in his Leviathan, attributes credulity to ignorance of natural causes but defines curiosity as "love of the knowledge of causes" which he claims leads a man directly, by subordination of efficient causes, to a belief in the first cause, God.[61] Here Hobbes is obviously justifying the investigation of natural causes against the usual objection, that it was impious to pry into the secrets of God's ways. It is an objection that features in The Praise of Folly in a passage where Erasmus attempts to reduce the activities of natural scientists under the banner of folly. Speaking of the simple people of the golden age, he says:

> they were more religious than with an impious curiosity to dive into the

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60 Ibid., pp. 183 - 4.
61 Hobbes, Leviathan, ed.cit., p. 53.

> secrets of nature, the dimension of stars, the motions, effects and hidden causes of things. [62]

These different usages of the word "curiosity" illustrate the rather different implications it had besides that of a simple antonym to "credulity". Clearly it is impossible to decide whether Swift is using it pejoratively or not without some definition. Swift, however, does not define it; he only illustrates it by an analogy that exploits rather than resolves the ambiguity by presenting us with a philosophical context of argument, thus playing on its associations with natural science.

> So far preferable is that Wisdom which converses about the Surface to that pretended Philosophy that enters into the Depth of Things, and then comes gravely back with Informations and Discoveries that in the Inside they are good for nothing. [63]

"Informations" are not the same things as "Discoveries". Unlike "information", a discovery is necessarily something that was not known before. The discovery that something is good for nothing sounds much more fatuous than the information because it implies wasted effort. However, "discovery" also has another meaning (now obsolete) closer to the modern "uncovering", which suggests the practice of unmasking, which if applied to the exposure of a charlatan would be by no means a wasted effort. The vague word "things" again gives no indication whether curiosity is the desire to know natural causes or the desire to pierce through deception, so that the "depth of things" might refer to physical objects, people (who may try to conceal their feelings or

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62 The Praise of Folly, p. 53.
63 Guthkelch-Smith, p. 173.

motives) or even abstract statements (such as Swift is using in the present argument). The contrast between the wisdom of surface and the philosophy of depth uses the familiar inside/outside formulation so frequently employed in the Tale, but this does not help because preference for one or the other depends upon the case to be considered: we do not have enough data to go on.

Swift now pursues a kind of opposition between "Reason" and the senses which he expounds in more strongly physical terms. Instead of "things" we now have the more concrete "objects", which he says address themselves firstly to the senses. Reason, on the other hand, wishes to correct the senses and show that these objects are not of the same "consistence" throughout. The matter is complicated by the fact that Swift never states which of the two kinds of reason he has distinguished -- "refined" or "unrefined" -- is involved.

> . . . then comes Reason officiously, with tools for cutting, and opening, and mangling, and piercing, offering to demonstrate that they are not of the same consistence quite thro'.

Reason here comes to life and begins to act in an alarmingly menacing manner. But despite the vividness of the metaphor it is still not clear whether this refers to the process of perceiving imposture or diving into the secrets of nature. Let us look more closely at the "things" which the reason is trying to "dissect" -- to use Swift's implied metaphor.

> The two senses to which all objects first address themselves, are the Sight and the Touch; these never examine farther than the Colour, the Shape and the Size, and whatever other qualities dwell, or are drawn by Art

upon the outward of bodies.[64]

The first half of this passage implies purely physical objects, which may be exactly as nature produced them. But the second half, with its reference to Art, definitely involves human agency. Both possible definitions of curiosity are thus retained. But at the same time the argument has been put on a more physical basis: Swift has moved from "things" to "objects" and then from "objects" to "bodies". The strongly physical description of rational activity that follows this passage, therefore, serves to confirm the physical bias of the argument.

The next step is a vindication of nature, despite the earlier assertion that everything is shrunken when seen in her glass and the fact that Swift has made allowance for qualities to be "drawn by art on the outward of bodies"; then he goes on:

> And therefore, in order to save the charges of all such expensive Anatomy for the time to come; I do here think fit to inform the Reader that in such conclusions as these, Reason is certainly in the right; and that in most corporeal beings that have fallen under my Cognizance, the Outside hath been infinitely preferable to the In: Whereof I have been farther convinc'd by some late experiments.[65]

This is the most brilliant and pernicious part of the whole argument. In this one sentence Swift establishes all the data he needs to complete his case. He has already discredited reason by showing its findings to be negative and directing our attention to the way it operates, damaging

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[64] Ibid., p. 173.
[65] Ibid., p. 173.

whatever materials it is exercised on. He dismisses it therefore as "expensive", using the same metaphor by which he justified delusion in the preceding paragraph. This implicit comparison between reason and imagination is not stated, but it is enough to suggest a metaphorical application of the word "anatomy", which can be applied figuratively to the more limited aspect of reason that we call analysis. On the other hand, a more specific reference is also possible: "anatomy" has the same etymology as "atom" (from the Greek "tomnein", to cut) and describes reasonably well the approach to science of the atomic theorists who divided everything into small basic particles, in opposition to the organic method of the Aristotelians. However, it is at this point that Swift chooses to deflate the remaining objection -- that reason is in the right -- by rather disarmingly conceding the point; and he then proceeds to tilt the argument decisively towards the physical by limiting it to the example of "corporeal beings" -- the latest addition to a series of reformulations which has brought us from "things" through "objects" to "bodies". This prepares the way for the human beings that Swift will soon adduce as illustration. The centre/surface motif also reappears now as inside/outside, again with a purely physical connotation, because applied only to "corporeal beings". Finally the reference to experiments picks up the motif of natural philosophy but with particular application to its specifically modern innovation -- experimental science.

Even after the words "corporeal beings" which suggest something living, it is a shock to find that Swift's example is two human subjects. Flaying a woman and dissecting a beau are scientific experiments that are likely to repel most people, particularly when described with such clinical detachment as Swift here achieves. But even this repulsion is a calculated effect in

the service of the argument. Whilst its most obvious effect is to make experimental philosophy repugnant, although this is a logical extension of treating human beings as if they were merely machines, we may easily forget that it is supposed to stand as an example of the operation of the reason. Whilst this is by implication only the refined reason satirized earlier in the section, no limiting definition has yet been placed on "reason" in this paragraph. The example is presented in the context of a proposal that credulity is better than curiosity and curiosity has been taken as synonymous with reason.

The conclusion Swift draws from his example widens the argument again:

> from all which I justly formed this Conclusion to myself; That whatever Philosopher or Projector can find an art to sodder or patch the Flaws and Imperfections of Nature, will deserve much better of Mankind, and teach us a more useful Science, than that so much in present esteem, of widening and exposing them (like him who held Anatomy to be the ultimate end of Physick).[66]

This image, which is the central point of the argument, is thick with ambiguity. Having shown by his graphic example of a beau and a woman flayed that mankind is not to be treated as if merely a part of nature, but as something to which different values have to be applied, Swift proceeds to ignore the difference and use his experiments as the basis for some general conclusions about Nature. The phrase "sodder or patch the flaws and imperfections of nature" is puzzling because it is not at all clear how this

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66 Ibid., p. 174.

how this might be done. With reference to human beings it might refer to the poetic creation of an ideal nature that will incite men to virtue; but it might equally denote the use of imagination to delude men's minds with a show, which would apparently improve the situation by making falsehood seem true. Just what form that delusion might take is suggested by the more literal meaning of "soddering" and "patching", terms borrowed from the occupations of the metallurgist and the tailor. In view of the uses to which Swift puts the clothing metaphor in the Tailor-worship section of the Tale, both these terms should conjure suggestions of mechanical philosophy. The choice Swift offers us between a "Philosopher" and a "Projector" nicely balances the literal and metaphorical possibilities of the argument, whilst the ambiguity is maintained by the fact that the proposed soddering and patching enterprise is called both an art and a science. The opposite extreme -- widening and exposing flaws -- is also ambiguous: widening implies distortion of the truth and exposing, merely the discovery of it, but on the purely physical level, they are the successive stages of a dissection. Whether a man ever existed or not who actually believed anatomy was the ultimate end of physic hardly matters: he stands as an analogy which, while reinforcing the inhumanity of the human experiment just described, extends the curative suggestions of "soddering and patching" which sounds more plausible when applied to human beings than to nature. Nevertheless, though the stress is now upon the physical, "anatomy" retains the more abstract connotation that it acquired earlier in the argument. It can denote both the scientific approach of atomic theorists and the operation of reason.

The next sentence begins:

> And he, whose Fortunes and Dispositions

> have placed him in a convenient Station
> to enjoy the Fruits of this noble Art;
> he that can with Epicurus content his
> Ideas with the Films and Images that
> fly off upon his senses from the Super-
> ficies of Things. . . [67]

The first half of this is reasonably neutral except insofar as the terms "Fortunes" and "Dispositions" might lead to a mechanistic account of the human situation, such as we have encountered since the very beginning of the digression on madness. The second half, however, is much more particular. There is a reference to Lucretius' mechanistic and rather implausible account of the phenomenon of sight:

> . . . ea quae simulacra vocamus:
> Quae quasi membranae summo de corpore rerum
> Dereptae, volitant ultroque citoque per auras. . .
> Dico igitur rerum effigias tenuisque figuras
> Mittier ab rebus summo de corpore rerum,
> Quae quasi membranae vel cortex nominitandast,
> Quod speciem ac formam similem gerit eius imago
> Cuiuscumque cluet de corpore fusa vagari.
>
> [. . . what we call images of things; which
> like films drawn from the outermost surface of
> things, flit about hither and thither through
> the air. . . .
> I say, therefore, that semblances and thin
> shapes of things are thrown off from their
> outer surface, which are to be called as it
> were their films or bark, because the image
> bears a look or shape like the body of that
> from which it is shed to go on its way.]
> (IV, 30 - 32, 42 - 6). [68]

It is ironical that at this point Epicurus should be cited as an example, not only because he is a prime example of a mechanistic system-builder but even more for the fact that his pupil Lucretius salutes him, in a lengthy eulogy,

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67 Ibid., p. 174.
68 De Rerum Natura, pp. 250 - 51.

as a distinguished anatomist of nature:

> . . . quod sic natura tua vi
> tum manifesta patens ex omni parte
> retecta est.
> [. . . because nature thus by they
> power has been so manifestly laid
> open and uncovered in every part.]
> (III, 29 - 30).[69]

"Nature", of course, includes mankind according to Epicurus and Lucretius. It shows the slipperiness of the argument when Epicurus can be quoted on both sides of it. Furthermore it was part of Epicurus' theory that absence of bodily pain and contentment of mind were all that life required (Lucretius summarizes the doctrine at the start of his second book.); hence the word "content" in Swift's passage has a special appropriateness.

With this passage in Swift we also return to the all-embracing word "things". The reference to Epicurus might suggest that these things are limited to those produced in external nature; but the films and images, we might remember, can be qualities that either "dwell" or "are drawn by art" upon the outward of bodies, and this includes the possibility of deliberate deception, especially when taken with the recent reference to an "art" to sodder and patch up flaws and imperfections. The resolution of the argument could now be given, for this art is no more than a means of fooling people. But Swift defers the resolution as he builds to a climax of maximum impact:

> Such a man, truly wise, creams off
> Nature, leaving the Sower and Dregs for
> Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This
> is the sublime and refined point of
> Felicity, called, the Possession of being

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69 Ibid., pp. 172 - 3.

well-deceived; The Serene and Peaceful State of being a Fool among Knaves. [70]

Many of these terms are restatements of terms we have heard before. "Truly wise" recalls the original definition of that wisdom "which converses about the surface of things". Swift uses the word "wise" in order to give his final statement of the paragraph its most paradoxical form: "such a man, truly wise" is "a fool among knaves". The image of refinement in "creams off" and "refined" recalls "refined reason" and points to a similar distortion of the truth. "The possession of being well-deceived" is a repetition of the same phrase used in the preceding paragraph. For "serene" we have to go even further back, to the point where Swift describes the brain in its natural state of serenity, as disposing its owner to pass his life in common forms. The only thing these two states have in common is passivity: serenity in the present context is acquired by submission to forms so uncommon that nature will not be at the expense of furnishing them. "Peaceful" draws attention to the beginning of the paragraph: "In the proportion that credulity is a more peaceful possession of mind than curiosity". This should remind us that the whole argument is conducted on a relative basis, with peacefulness as the criterion. It also draws attention to the fact that the same word -- "possession of mind " -- is used in connection with "credulity" and being "well-deceived", showing that the conclusion of the paragraph was implicit even at its opening, once the criterion of peacefulness was chosen.

If the reader feels that Swift has somehow given an uncomfortable plausibility to a wrong idea, he can hardly be blamed. The trouble starts at

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[70] Guthkelch-Smith, p. 174.

the opening of the paragraph, where by a kind of logical elision he allows curiosity to mean both the use and the abuse of reason. When he makes the centre/surface dichotomy parallel the curiosity/credulity one and refers to that "pretended philosophy" that enters into the depth of things, he seems to indicate a pejorative definition. But immediately afterwards Swift uses "reason" as synonymous with this pretended philosophy and still fails to define it. This ambiguity is central to the argument: where Swift could be referring either to refined or to unrefined reason, his failure to distinguish between them allows him to refer to both at the same time as if they were identical. When therefore he gives an example of refined reason at work, he can take this as discrediting both false reasoning and the weapon we use to refute it -- unrefined reason. The physical examples he gives of flaying and dissection are appropriate illustration of reason misdirected but might be taken metaphorically as an account of correct reasoning; so that they constitute a kind of masking device to conceal the full implications of the argument. However harmless the illustration may appear, it is the means by which Swift contrives to vindicate reason properly used and yet is able later to claim that he has discredited it. But this would still have been a possible inference from the very first words of the paragraph, where "curiosity" has been given two allowable meanings, oneof which -- "reason" -- was in conflict with the other -- "abuse of reason".

There are other techniques that have almost equal importance with this. The most basic is the reduction of terms in a manner that changes the nature of the argument. The original credulity/curiosity dichotomy is constantly restated and in the process its meaning is drastically altered. "Curiosity" is successively a "pretended philosophy", "reason", "inside", a widener of

flaws, an anatomizer, "sower and dregs" and "reason and philosophy". "Credulity" becomes the "wisdom that converses about the surface", the senses, "outside", a philanthropic wish to patch up imperfections, uncritical acceptance of "films and images", "wise", "creaming off", "refined", "felicity", "well-deceived", and finally a "fool among knaves". Meanwhile a series of significant shifts of meaning modifies the basis on which these two sets of qualities are contrasted. What begins as "things" is transformed into "objects", "bodies", Nature's "furniture", "corporeal beings", a woman, a beau, Nature, a sick person (by inference) and finally back again to "things". In the first two lists there is a clear shift of emphasis from the abstract to the physical and then back again to the abstract. In the third list, however, the movement is more complicated: it starts with the general category "things", begins to focus on words generally used to signify inanimate objects, then suddenly switches to very much animated objects -- a woman and a beau. When no distinction is made between categories -- when, indeed, Swift goes on to apply this human example as typical of nature as a whole -- we can reasonably conclude that this is a parody of the way mechanistic scientists reduce everything to the same (physical) level.

This argument, however, is not something apart, but plays an important role in the development of the whole paragraph. Besides the more limited suggestion that human beings need not be distinguished from external nature -- easily disproved when isolated -- there remains the question of how much force it gives to the abstract assertion that credulity is superior to curiosity. The fact that the argument is general and abstract and the example limited and concrete does not necessarily falsify it. But when the basic dichotomy is one of outside against inside and it is applied first

metaphorically, then literally, and finally metaphorically again, we have an argument that treats two different levels of argument as if they were the same. Reason may have the same relation metaphorically to credulity that the inside of a body has to the outside, but there the similarity ends. Only by means of metaphor is the comparison possible at all.

Swift therefore gives us in this passage the two kinds of argument that he most frequently satirizes in the Tale: conflation of the literal and metaphorical, and conflation of the physical with the intellectual or spiritual. Both are expressed by the inside/outside dichotomy that Swift likewise uses throughout the Tale: Swift shows that such a formulation is unsatisfactory unless we show discrimination in how we use it. The whole passage is in fact an interesting variation on the theme of inside/outside. The illustration at its centre is not a legitimate example of the general proposition that flanks it on both sides. What is more, in the abstract proposition we are looking at human beings from the inside and intellectually (despite the imagery of physical aggression that seems to give "reason" a concrete existence of its own); but in the concrete example we view from the outside and physically. These facts destroy the apparent neatness of the original formulation.

The basic rhetorical and intellectual faults that Swift shows in the passage are false metaphor, false analogy, faulty definition and faulty formulation. But this does not mean that its implications are purely negative. The idea of the dissection of a beau implies the difference in kind between human beings and external nature and hence the need for different standards of judgement. There are two other occasions when Swift suggests what those standards might be.

On two occasions Swift uses a debased version of the humanistic idea that nature is inferior to the ideal nature of the poets, both of them to justify the preference for delusion over truth. But the realization that nature puts her best "furniture" forward and that nature cannot "furnish" the nobler scenes that the imagination can, need not lead to a love of delusion. The argument that Swift here parodies, as given by Sir Philip Sidney, justifies fiction as an incitement to virtue -- much the same idea as Swift uses in suggesting that learning instructs a man in his own infirmities. This theory also allows for the fact that Nature's world is a brazen one, or in Christian terms, a fallen world. It is the orthodox Christian world, in which man must use his free will to choose the best course of action and strive to better not nature but himself.

This brings us to the second implied assertion of value. If we look at the terms "credulity" and "curiosity" from a slightly different point of view -- a Christian one -- a good deal of the argument becomes clearer. Swift equates reason with curiosity -- the zeal for advancing new systems "in things agreed on all hands impossible to be known" -- to show that they are incompatible. The reason is the opposite of both credulity and curiosity but in different ways. The antidote to credulity is obviously reason, because credulity is an abrogation of reason. But since curiosity is an excessive use of reason, it is difficult to judge at what point reason should be told "Thus far and no farther" on rational grounds alone. A different criterion is necessary and that criterion is faith. Faith and reason combined form an answer to the secular abuse of them, credulity and curiosity; for curiosity is an insufficient trust in God, an abdication of faith. Swift puts the matter neatly in his sermon "On the Trinity":

> Faith, says the apostle, is the Evidence of Things not seen: He means, that Faith is a Virtue by which anything commanded us by God to believe, appears evident and certain to us, although we do not see nor can conceive it; because by Faith we depend entirely upon the Truth and Power of God.
>
> It is an old Distinction, that Things may be above our Reason without being contrary to it.[71]

Faith and reason, though they sound like opposites, are in fact complementary, unlike credulity and curiosity, which cannot be combined into a harmonious unity but lead to a "fools and knaves" dichotomy. This quotation also gives us a source for Swift's "things invisible". The "apostle" is St.Paul and the definition referred to is in the Epistle to the Hebrews (11:1). Belief in things invisible (i.e. "not seen") is Swift's alternative to belief in his system of vapours which he labels "madness" and uses mechanistically to explain behaviour. But Christian faith offers man the freedom to make his own choice for good or ill, and gives the lie to Swift's system -- as indeed to all mechanistic accounts of human behaviour.

All this is directly deducible from Swift's argument, but it may help to clarify it if we take another look at Erasmus' Praise of Folly, in which the paradoxical reasoning and the diagnosis of the human condition closely resembles that in the central passage of the "Digression on Madness". Its most important feature is the basic equation it makes between wisdom and folly, which Swift reproduces in miniature. Erasmus also notes that whereas man prefers false colours to the truth, "Nature hates all false colouring and

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[71] Swift, Prose Works, IX, 164.

is ever best when she is least adulterated by art".[72] Swift makes the same comment (Nature always puts her "best furniture" forward); and, having shown that men find her furniture disappointing, uses this as the basis for the need to adulterate nature with art, and ultimately, for delusion. When Swift finally describes delusion as the "sublime and refined point of felicity", he is echoing not just a concept but the very words of Erasmus (at least in the John Wilson translation). Commenting on the value of flattery, Erasmus tells us that "it makes every man more jocund and acceptable to himself, which is the chiefest point of felicity".[73] The resemblance of the concluding phrase to Swift's is unmistakable. It also suggests what Swift's phrase tends to cover up, that man, like nature, has defects which make him unacceptable to himself, which Swift elsewhere calls his "private infirmities". The obvious comment on the Erasmian passage would be, better to improve one's shortcomings than to pretend they do not exist. But if the criterion is one of happiness and one has defects that make one unhappy with oneself, it is obviously "cheaper" in terms of effort, to pretend one does not have faults than to try to amend them:

> And at how cheap a rate this happiness is purchased! Forasmuch as to the thing itself a man's whole endeavour is required, be it never so inconsiderable; but the opinion of it is easily taken up, which yet conduces as much or more to happiness.[74]

Swift's argument is a little more complicated, but it, too, is predicated on the assumption that happiness is the highest good. And Swift presents us with

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72 The Praise of Folly. p. 54.
73 Ibid., p. 74.
74 Ibid., pp. 75 - 6.

the alternatives of recognizing our infirmities and doing something about them or else becoming founders or proselytes ("fools" or "knaves") of foolish systems. To recognize our faults may not make us happy but it does offer the possibility of a real solution rather than an imaginary one.

Swift's method differs in one major respect from Erasmus'. Swift wishes to present the argument as plausibly as possible and surprise his reader by its implications. Accordingly he suppresses the pejorative terms "fools" and "knaves" until the very last moment when, having established his case, he can present them with maximum impact. Erasmus, however, lets the reader see what he is doing from the first. His initial premise is that all worthwhile things come under the banner of folly. Through argument and definition he reduces all under the same heading, good and bad alike, forcing the reader to distinguish between categories that legitimately belong there and those that do not. Even Christianity is ultimately brought within Folly's jurisdiction, by the sanction of the Pauline paradox that if a man seem wise in the world, he should become a fool in order to be wise, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Corinthians, 3: 18-19). This is a paradox that Swift does not use, but Erasmus' argument later on has some relevance to his own. In an interesting passage that contains another definition of "things invisible", probably drawing on the same definition from the Epistle to the Hebrews that Swift quotes in his sermon, Erasmus gives an account of religious belief, using the image of the cave dwellers described in Plato's Republic:

> It fares with them as, according to the fiction of Plato, happens to those that being cooped up in a cave stand gaping with admiration at the shadows of things; and that fugitive who, having broke from them and returning to

> them again, told them he had seen things truly as they were, and that they were the most mistaken in believing there was nothing but pitiful shadows. For as this wise man pitied and bewailed their palable madness that were possessed with so gross an error, so they in return laughed at him as a doting fool and cast him out of their company. In like manner the common sort of men chiefly admire those things that are most corporeal and almost believe there is nothing beyond them. Whereas on the contrary, these devout persons, by how much more they neglect it and are hurried away with the contemplation of things invisible. For the one gives the first place to riches, the next to their corporeal pleasures, leaving the last place to their soul, which yet most of them do scarce believe, because they can't see it with their eyes. On the contrary, the others first rely wholly on God, the most unchangeable of all things; and next him, yet on this that comes nearest him, they bestow the second on their soul; and lastly to their body. [75]

To Erasmus, then, "things invisible" are the most important of all, and he uses the term "madness" to describe those whose faith -- one might call it "credulity" -- goes no further than the corporeal. Some limitations, of course, have to be placed on belief in things invisible, a problem which concerns Swift more than it does Erasmus. Nevertheless, Swift's indebtedness to Erasmus in the terms of his argument and the technique he employs is clear enough.

Swift has one more Erasmian twist to present. Having brought to a conclusion his argument that happiness based on anything other than truth leads to the state of being a fool among knaves, he opens his next paragraph

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[75] Ibid., pp. 145 - 6.

with: "But to return to madness". Apart from the abruptness of the phrase, it is quite a shock to find there the implication that the preceding paragraph, with its ostensible praise of delusion, is not madness. The concluding shift of terminology from praise to blame has made it quite plain that voluntary delusion is tantamount to insanity. It was, however, only a temporary dropping of the mask, for Swift now takes up his phenomenon of vapours and for the rest of the digression develops it to its logical conclusion, that there is no difference between the inhabitants of bedlam and the men occupying positions of power and influence, except that the former lack a proper milieu in which to exercise their talents. For his opening to this renewal of the argument Swift is again indebted to Erasmus, who has a digression within his account of how fools are the happiest of men, where he explains how fools also make others happy. Fools, he explains, are sought by princes because they amuse, and these same princes, who avoid wise men lest they should "dare speak to them things true rather than pleasant", are prepared to hear the same truths from the lips of fools. One might infer from this that such princes suffered a certain degree of folly themselves and that their preference for pleasant things over true ones was rather a foolish one for men in their position. Erasmus, however, makes no such assertion. After completing the paragraph he begins a new one with: "But to return to the happiness of fools".[76] Even amid the brilliance of The Praise of Folly this piece of irony stands out as one of the most striking moments in the entire satire. One might legitimately see Swift's echo of this phrase and of the technique it uses as a tacit acknowledgment of his

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[76] Ibid., pp. 59 - 60.

debt to the model Erasmus created for this, the most Erasmian passage in the Tale.

I do not propose to follow the "Digression on Madness" any further. Enough has been said to show that it is absolutely central to the major issues of the Tale and particularly those introduced by the Tailor-worship and Aeolist sections. The reductive system of madness, by presenting reductive systematizers within a framework as far-reaching in its application as their own, provides a humorous refutation of their brand of refined reason, as well as confirming that various kinds of mechanical thinking are the main preoccupation of the Tale. In contrasting the pattern of humane learning which instructs a man in his infirmities, inducing humility, with preference for one's imagination over one's experience (memory) which leads to pride, Swift reinvokes the confrontation of the spider and the bee and reminds us that the battle of the ancients and the moderns is not a local and temporary event but an enduring struggle. Finally, and with perfect appropriateness in accordance with the mock-logic of the Tale, Swift digresses within his digression to give us a miniature mock encomium of credulity. The paradoxical nature of this argument, in which he manages to prove to us both the necessity and the perniciousness of man's reason, is a brilliant warning of the dangers of logic and rhetoric at the service of an unscrupulous and unethical orator.

CONCLUSION.

"It is not enough to 'use technology with a deeper understanding of human wishes', or to 'dedicate technology to man's spiritual needs', or to 'encourage technologists to look at human problems'. Such expressions imply that where human behaviour begins, technology stops, and that we must carry on, as we have in the past, with what we have learned from personal experience or from those collections of personal experiences called history, or with the distillations of experience to be found in folk wisdom and practical rules of thumb. These have been available for centuries, and all we have to show for them is the state of the world today. What we need is a technology of behaviour."

B.F.Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity (1971)

"Les anciens sont les anciens, mais nous sommes les gens de maintenant".

Molière, Le Malade imaginaire

CONCLUSION

I have tried to demonstrate that in A Tale of a Tub Swift, despite his concern with particular historical events and issues, assumes a perspective which essentially transcends the historical limitations of his examples, and that his adaption of the genre known as the paradoxical encomium is the main method by which he achieves it.

The paradoxical encomium characteristically employs a calculated abuse of logic to elevate a seemingly trivial principle to a position of supreme importance. It is thus admirably suited to parody the kind of logic that attempts to reduce all phenomena within the scope of an all-embracing scientific system. In the tailor-worship section of the Tale Swift offers us an encomium of clothing that is not merely a parody but a diagnosis of the kind of reductive thinking shared alike by Aristotelian scholasticism and Hobbesian mechanism. Furthermore, by linking these two systems together through the clothing metaphor and finding a common source for their shortcomings, Swift contrives to make his critique valid not merely for the genuine intellectual systems he deals with but for all such systems; and he does it, paradoxically enough, by reference to an intellectual system that does not exist and never has. This lifts the satire above the level of mere topicality to abiding comment on human nature illustrated by a memorable image. The clothing metaphor reinforces Swift's diagnosis because he also calls upon the related idea of fashion, suggesting the ephemerality of the intellectual systems he comments upon. The fashion motif itself arises naturally out of the allegory in which Christianity is represented as a coat

"fitted to all times, places and circumstances", which provides a fitting contrast to the transient popularity of scientific paradigms. This in turn illustrates the eternal battle between the ancients, with their concern for what is permanent in human learning, and the moderns with their love of mere novelty. Swift handles all these issues brilliantly and his application of the clothing metaphor is astonishingly fertile.

In the Aeolist section Swift's success is a more qualified one. Like the tailor-worship section it is an encomium of an apparently insignificant principle -- wind. The objective Swift pursues in this section, however, is more limited: he demonstrates by substituting "wind" for "spirit" that the notion of spirit held by the Hermetic philosophers is essentially the same as that held by Hobbes and other materialistic thinkers. Because there is no apparent means by which immaterial substances can act directly upon material ones, both groups tend to regard spirit, either overtly or unsuspectingly, as if it operated in exactly the same manner as wind; instead of seeing wind as no more than an approximate analogy for it. As in the tailor-worship section, Swift intends his diagnosis of a particular kind of thinking to transcend the limited examples he uses. A major weakness of this section, however, is the fact that its basic principle does not arise naturally out of the allegory as the clothing metaphor does: "wind" has no further associations in this section beyond its analogy with a particular understanding of the word "spirit" and its crude physical connotations. There is, however, a more serious flaw in the Aeolist section, for it is considerably longer than the tailor-worship section and Swift does not justify its length. Though Swift initially devotes his attention to a serious philosophical issue, he succumbs thereafter to the temptation of making fun of the sectarians for their belief in

inspiration. Having shown that inspiration, when interpreted too literally, is like inhaling wind, Swift feels it is legitimate to mock the mannerisms of dissenting preachers as being the result of windy melancholy. This is not just a lapse in taste but a failure of art as well, for Aeolism is no longer, like the tailor-worship system, an intellectual system that never existed, allowing an impartial examination of certain ideas and their ramifications: Aeolism becomes a thinly disguised allegorical representation of the sectarians. The Aeolist system thus degenerates from a philosophical analysis to a denigration of a particular group of people. Admittedly the logic of the paradoxical encomium is better suited to examining the abuse of reason than the abdication of it but there is no doubt that this section represents a falling-off from the high achievement of the clothes-worship section.

Swift's finest achievement in the Tale is another exercise in paradoxical encomium. In the "Digression on Madness" Swift creates the intellectual system to comprehend all such systems, including those of the tailor-worshippers and the Aeolists, for he claims in it to have accounted for the psychology of all system-builders by the single principle of insanity. It is a more modest argument than we find in the tailor-worship and Aeolist sections, for Swift does not attempt to account for all phenomena -- only for the psychological motivation of a select group. In doing so he underlines the fact that any theory they produce, for which they claim universal validity, is as applicable to themselves as to anyone else. Hence Swift depicts them not as the originators but as the victims of their own hypotheses, for unless they act rigidly in accordance with their theories they effectively disprove them. However, to act in so mechanical a fashion as their theories prescribe is no better than abdication of their humanity, or madness.

The culminating point of this section, however, deals not with the theorizers but with the proselytes that these mad individuals always manage to attract. After briefly noting that the pattern of "humane learning", by teaching a man of his infirmities, dissuades him from taking such systematizers too seriously, Swift constructs an argument to show that falsehood is actually superior to truth. This is the most paradoxical encomium of the entire Tale, for Swift goes on to prove two essentially opposed arguments simultaneously. By using terms so abstract as to comprehend both "reason" and "the abuse of reason" ("curiosity") he contrives to show that both are inferior to credulity (or "unwarranted faith"). Now the unwarranted credit that the system-builders receive from their proselytes has been Swift's target in the tailor-worship and Aeolist sections, except that hitherto he has focussed attention on the systems themselves. In this passage, however, Swift concentrates his attention on their audience and his own audience, the reader. His explanation of why reductive systems can be attractive is also an example of reductive thought. Abstract thought, when divorced from common experience, can lead to preposterous conclusions. Swift thus demonstrates in a very practical way that to avoid becoming a fool among knaves one must test the logic of hypothesis against the touchstone of Ancient and established truth.

This passage represents a fitting summation of Swift's satire on religious and learned folly. It asserts the importance of what is permanent in human nature along with the eternal validity of true Christianity, "fitted to all times, places and circumstances"; and offers as an alternative to the false dichotomy between credulity and curiosity the vision of a harmonious union of faith and reason in Christian humanism. It is the most practical illustration Swift could have given of how the Ancients-Moderns struggle is

an eternal one.

APPENDIX I

I told him, that should I happen to live in a Kingdom where Plots and Conspiracies were either in vogue from the turbulency of the meaner People, or could be turned to the use and service of the higher Rank of them, I would first take care to cherish and encourage the Breed of Discoverers, Witnesses, Informers, Accusers, Prosecutors, Evidences, Swearers, together with their several subservient and subaltern Instruments; and when I had got a competent Number of them of all sorts and capacities, I would put them under the colour and conduct of some dextrous Persons in sufficient Power both to protect and reward them. Men thus qualified, and thus empowered, might make a most excellent Use and advantage of Plots; they might raise their own Characters, and pass for most profound Politicians; they might restore new Vigor to a crazy Administration; they might stifle or divert general Discontents; fill their pockets with forfeitures; and advance or sink the Opinion of Publick Credit, as either might answer their private Advantage. This might be done by first agreeing and settling among themselves what suspected Persons should be accused of a Plot. Then effectual care is taken to secure all their letters and Papers, and put the Criminal in safe and secure Custody. These Papers might be deliver'd to a Sett of Artists, of Dexterity sufficient to find out the mysterious meaning of Words, Syllables, and Letters. They should be allowed to put what Interpretation they pleased upon them, giving them a Sense not only which has no relation at all to them, but even what is quite contrary to their true Intent and real Meaning; thus, for instance, they may, if they so fancy, interpret a Sieve to signify a Court-Lady, a lame Dog an Invader, the Plague a standing Army, a Buzzard a

great Statesman, the Gout a High Priest, a Chamber Pot a Committee of Grandees, a Broom a Revolution, a Mouse-trap an Employment, a Bottomless Pit a Treasury, a Sink a Court, a Cap and Bells a Favourite, a Broken Reed a Court of Justice, a running Sore an Administration.

But should this Method fail, recourse might be had to others more effectual, by Learned Men called Acrosticks and Anagrams. First might be found Men of Skill and Penetration who can discern that all initial Letters have political Meanings. Thus N shall signify a Plot, B a Regiment of Horse, L a Fleet at Sea. Or secondly, by transposing the Letters of the Alphabet in any suspected Paper, who can discover the deepest Designs of a discontented Party. So for example, if I should say in a Letter to a Friend, "Our Brother Tom has just got the Piles", a Man of Skill in this Art would discover how the same Letters which compose that Sentence, may be analysed into the following Words; "Resist . . . a Plot is brought Home . . . The Tour". And this is the Anagrammatick Method.

(From Gulliver's Travels, 1726 edition.)

APPENDIX II

I told him, that in the Kingdom of Tribnia, by the Natives called Langden, where I had long sojourned, the Bulk of the People consisted wholly of Discoverers, Witnesses, Informers, Accusers, Prosecutors, Evidences, Swearers; together with their several subservient and subaltern Instruments; all under the Colours, the Conduct, and pay of Ministers and their Deputies. The Plots in that Kingdom are usually the Workmanship of those Persons who desire to raise their own Characters of profound Politicians; to restore new Vigour to a crazy Administration; to stifle or divert general Discontents; to fill their Coffers with Forfeitures; and raise or sink the Opinion of publick Credit, as either shall best answer their private Advantage. It is first agreed and settled among them, what suspected Persons shall be accused of a Plot: Then, effectual Care is taken to secure all their Letters and other Papers, and put the Owners in Chains. These Papers are delivered to a Set of Artists very dextrous in finding out the mysterious Meanings of Words, Syllables and Letters. For Instance, they can decypher a Close-stool to signify a Privy-Council; a Flock of Geese, a Senate; a lame Dog, an Invader; the Plague, a standing Army; a Buzzard, a Minister; the Gout, a High Priest; a Gibbet, a Secretary of State; a Chamber Pot, a Committee of Grandees; a Sieve a Court Lady; a Broom, a Revolution; a Mouse-trap, an Employment; a bottomless Pit, the Treasury; a Sink, a C--t; a Cap and Bells, a Favourite; a broken Reed, a Court of Justice; an empty Tun, a General; a running Sore, the Administration.

WHEN this Method fails, they have two others more effectual; which the Learned among them call Acrosticks, and Anagrams. First, they can decypher

all initial Letters into political Meanings; Thus, N, shall signify a Plot; B, a Regiment of Horse; L, a Fleet at Sea. Or, secondly, by transposing the Letters of the Alphabet, in any suspected Paper, they can lay open the deepest Designs of a discontented Party. So for Example, if I should say in a Letter to a Friend, "Our Brother Tom hath just got the Piles"; a Man of Skill in this Art would discover how the same Letters which compose that Sentence, may be analysed into the following Words; "Resist, -- a Plot is brought home -- The Tour". And this is the Anagrammatick Method.

(From Gulliver's Travels, 1735 edition.)

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