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AN AMBITION TO BE HEARD IN A CROWD: MAD HEROES AND THE SATIRIST IN THE WORKS OF JONATHAN SWIFT

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"AN AMBITION TO BE HEARD IN A CROWD": MAD HEROES AND THE SATIRIST IN THE WORKS OF JONATHAN SWIFT

by

Brian Arthur Connery

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1986
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by BRIAN A. CONNERY entitled "AN AMBITION TO BE HEARD IN A CROWD: MAD HEROES AND THE SATIRIST IN THE WORKS OF JONATHAN SWIFT" and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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SIGNED Brian A. Connery
In one way or another, Jonathan Swift has long been associated in literary history with mental illness. The tradition of Swift as misanthropic, misogynistic, maladjusted and malcontented misfit was already in place by the mid-eighteenth century, was fortified by Thackeray’s famous remarks in the nineteenth century, was reinforced again by Middleton Murray’s ungenerous biography, and seemed momentarily to have been scientifically demonstrated through Phyllis Greenacre’s Freudian analysis in the mid-twentieth century. As Swift would surely have known, such reactionary readings are standard responses to satire. Defensive readers of satire frequently prefer to identify the source of their discomfort as the satirist’s malevolence rather than as the shortcomings of themselves or their society. Like the patient’s response to the psychiatrist, the reader’s response to satire is frequently characterized by denial, supported by a projection of the reader’s own fears and anger onto the therapist. The dynamics of such readings were known to Swift (who, after all, himself employs the tactic of discrediting the opposition by calling them mad), and recent reader-response criticism (particularly the work of Claude J. Rawson and Robert W. Uphaus) has clarified the manner in which Swift attempts to short-circuit such readings.

While Swift has now been successfully defended against the more extreme charges of mental disorder, his preoccupation with mental
extremities has continued to attract analysis. In the early twentieth century, most such analysis was Freudian. Greenacre explored Swift's fictions as dreamworks and thereby provided psychoanalytic insights into the supposed man behind the works (Swift and Carroll). In his recounting of Swift's life, Irvin Ehrenpreis has more judiciously offered insights into Swift's compulsions, repressions, and conflicts (Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age). Alan Levensohn, more conservatively, has demonstrated that Swift's preoccupation with madness would probably have arisen regardless of his own mental experience, as a result of circumstances of his youth: his uncle Godwin Swift's mental decay, the revolution in Ireland under Tyrconnel and James II, the Cowleyan fad of poetic frenzy, and his encounters with the Presbyterians around Kilroot (Swift Against Madness). These circumstances were, of course, exacerbated by Swift's own experiences as a sufferer from vertigo and the debilitating headaches of Meniere's syndrome.

More recently, as general interest has increased in the topic of madness in the Restoration and eighteenth century, Max Byrd and Michael DePorte have explored the socio-cultural significance of madness in the literature of the period with particular attention to Swift's Tale of a Tub. Byrd has convincingly demonstrated that madness was seen with increasing sympathy as people increasingly suspected it to be latent within all men (Visits to Bedlam). DePorte has explored the age's general concern for matters of abnormal psychology,
beginning with Locke and leading to the sentimental humorists of the
late eighteenth century (Nightmares and Hobbyhorses).

What follows in this study is more limited in scope, but,
I hope, useful and illuminating on its own terms. Both Byrd and
DePorte have offered selective overviews of madness as image and
metaphor in the Tale, but no one has yet undertaken a detailed and
inclusive analysis of Swift's complete works in this light. In doing
so here, I have taken as my starting point the coincidence of the age's
concern for the heroic--the flourishing of the heroic drama in the
Restoration followed by the flourishing of the mock-heroic--with the
age's concern for madness and reason, looking for ways in which these
two phenomena inform one another and hoping on this basis to suggest
some new insights and to confirm some already available insights into
Swift's views.

Literary scholarship on the nature of the hero during Swift's
lifetime has been sporadic and generally inconclusive, probably because
the mock-heroic, which predominates, is more negative than positive,
saying "the thing that is not" more often than offering the thing that
should be. Much good work has been done, however, on the heroic
literature of the Restoration. This study has relied on work
previously done by Eugene Waith (Ideas of Greatness) and Maurice
MacNamee (Honor and the Epic Hero) on the tradition of the epic hero.
John Steadman's analysis of the Miltonic hero (Milton and the
Renaissance Hero), Michael West's work on Dryden's heroes ("Dryden and
the Disintegration of Renaissance Heroic Ideals"), and J. Douglas
Canfield’s recent work on heroic literature from the Middles Ages to the Restoration (Word as Bond in English Literature) have illuminated the nature of the change in heroic values and literary depictions of heroism during the Restoration. With my exploration of heroes in the works of Swift, I hope to offer some insights into post-Restoration critiques of the heroic.

At the heart of any exploration of heroism, one finds an analysis of ethics, values, and virtue. Swift’s ethics have been ably explored in the past, most directly and exhaustively by Jack Gilbert (Jonathan Swift: Romantic and Cynic Moralist) and indirectly in the countless books and articles on Gulliver’s Travels. Discussions of abstracted principles, however, tend to obscure the problem, central to the work of Swift, of the imperfect way in which ideals suit reality. Swift is nothing if not pragmatic in the development and presentation of his ethics and ideals.

His concern, I believe, is not so much with ideals per se as with ideals as they are embodied in individuals and as they are radically compromised by the human condition. Specifically, this may be observed in his preoccupation with madness, the corruption of man’s gift of reason. More generally, this may be seen in his cast of characters, particularly as they embody his variations on the heroic theme which he had inherited.

In addition to acknowledging the debts owed to the aforementioned scholarship, I particularly thank Dr. Oliver Sigworth for directing my work on this dissertation; Dr. J. Douglas Canfield for
his insights, challenges, and suggestions, which, in spite of my stubbornness, have modified and improved considerably my understanding of the Restoration; Dr. Thomas Willard for sharing his vast knowledge of the scientific and philosophical prose of the Restoration, guiding me toward fruitful sources, and steering me away from barren ones; and Dr. Michael V. DePorte, of the University of New Hampshire, for his engaging correspondence in which I found both insight and some needed reassurance. Any errors or instances of wrong-headed thinking to be found in this dissertation are my own and persist in spite of the best efforts of these advisors.

All of these individuals deserve thanks as well for the encouragement they offered. Similarly, my wife Marlene Mears and my parents, Paul and Audrey Connery, deserve thanks and appreciation for their patient support and encouragement throughout my work and for their gentle prodding which, in times of indecision or discouragement, helped me to get on with it.
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ABSTRACT

In Swift's works, both heroes and madmen are characterized by supra-normal aspiration, imagination, individuality, and pride, and the mad hero becomes an effective emblem for the chaos arising when individual vision challenges traditional authority in religion, politics, and literature.

Swift's view of madness as the willful perversion of reason tends to be traditional, though his sense of its pervasiveness creates a subversive skepticism. Consistently throughout his works, Swift posits conscience as the only safeguard against the madness of pride.

Swift views the traditional hero as subversive, typically portraying him as mad while presenting the sane man as unheroic. As the Tale-teller argues, the traditional hero is a successful madman. Swift's later works demonstrate that madness and heroism often coincide because of the mutually reinforcing relationship between power and ego, and he asserts that the will to power, manifested in the heroic imposition of one's will upon others, is a form of madness. As an alternative to the asocial and amoral traditional hero, Swift promotes a moderate hero in the figures of the Church of England Man, the Examiner, and the Drapier: the one just man, motivated by Roman and Christian virtue, in a mad society. But even the vir bonus remains susceptible to challenges of authority, for in a mad and corrupt
society his singular vision cannot appeal to common sense. Moreover, if he becomes powerful, he risks madness, and if he retreats from madness, he becomes impotent. As a consequence of this double bind, the satirist himself suffers a profound alienation.

Swift recognizes that by engaging in the controversies of his age, he himself becomes liable to charges of the madness of pride. Even as he harangues the world, his recognition of the heroic conceit in establishing himself as satirist is evident in the self-satire of A Modest Proposal and the verses on his death. Similarly, the self-portraits in his poetry and Gulliver's Travels demonstrate his conscience at work as he satirizes his own indignation and reforming urges, striving thereby to maintain a modicum of humility and thus sanity, and, in laughing with the reader, striving to maintain common sense as well.
CHAPTER 1

APPROACHES TO THE IDEA OF MADNESS

DURING THE RESTORATION AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN BRITAIN

The variety of mad Folks we have in England, whose Lunacies in their Turn Distress the World; some for want of Sense, and some by having too much; some rave in High Church Extasies, some in no Church Extravagancies; some have State Calentures burning in their Breasts; some rage in party madness; some have Court Frenzies, some are Country Bedlamites; some are melancholy, mad for want of places, some mad with Rage, and envy at those that have them, and some are delirious in them. . . .

---Daniel Defoe (Daily Review 91, July 30, 1706)

Jonathan Swift's concerns in his satires were the concerns of his age: religion, politics, and literature. Throughout his works, two motifs—the figure of the madman and the figure of the hero—serve to unify his perspective on these concerns. His views on madness tend to be traditional, though his sense of the widespread extent of the influence of madness creates a subversive skepticism. His view of the hero is non-traditional, for he typically portrays the traditional hero
as mad and presents the sane and virtuous man as relatively unheroic in the traditional sense.

The contrast between these two types of men, mad traditional heroes and sane Swiftian *viri boni*, along with its implicit critique of the traditional hero, offers a complex satirical analysis of the impossibility of any great progress toward the achievement of ideals in this world. Particularly, Swift's works demonstrate an implicit concern with the problematic workings of power, essential to those who would improve man's lot but generally unavailable to and incompatible with sanity and virtue. In an ideal world—Houyhnhnmland for instance—power is irrelevant because it is a function of conflict: without conflict, there is no need for power. In a real world, however, particularly a world like Swift's Great Britain, rife with factionalism, sectarianism, and literary in-fighting, power is much a factor to be considered. Yet Swift consistently asserts that the will to power, the traditional heroic assertion of one's own will and the imposition of one's own aspirations upon others, is a form of madness. The madman is dangerous exactly because he expects the world to conform to the products of his imagination. Thus, as The Tale of a Tub's digression on madness argues, the traditional hero is, in effect, a successful madman, and the dynamics of madness correspond to the unrestrained willfulness, imagination, and desire of heroes: conquerors and reformers, Milton's Satan and Britain's Cromwell. Like madness, the will to power is seductive, and like madness it can take root in the best of men and frequently does. Thus, while Swift offers examples
of reasonable and sane men who are able to maintain both virtue and
sanity by retreating from a mad world, he also offers—particularly in
his speakers—examples of potentially good men who are drawn
irresistibly into engagement with the world and who, in their struggles
to assert their virtue and sanity upon the world, risk at least the
charge of madness and sometimes madness itself.

* * *

The general public's concern for madness, as well as its
perplexity about madness, during the Restoration and eighteenth century
in England can easily be accounted for by the fact that madmen remained
highly visible. As Shakespeare's King Lear indicates, Bedlam beggars
were a familiar sight both in London and throughout the countryside
until their licenses to beg were revoked in 1675. Although the
movement toward confinement had begun more than a century earlier in
1547 with Henry VIII's dedication of the Hospital of St. Mary of
Bethlehem to the care and treatment of the insane, even the madfolks of
Bedlam remained in public view and public consciousness as a result of
the hospital's weekly opening of its doors for public visitation and
amusement. Moreover, epidemics of insanity were surprisingly common on
the continent throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Through personal experience and observation or through discussions,
pamphlets, rumors, and artistic renderings, the well-informed or well-
traveled citizens of seventeenth-century England inevitably confronted
the encroachment of the irrational upon their world.
Their reactions and interpretations varied. Although the first tenuous movement toward neurology was made in the late seventeenth century as dissections of the brains of lunatics were undertaken, psychiatry remained for a considerable time thereafter a branch of moral philosophy rather than of natural philosophy or science, and the two disciplines were rarely satisfactorily reconciled in a single treatise (Hunter and Macalpine 335). Indeed, moral psychology seems to have predominated until late in the nineteenth century.

Many major questions remained controversial. Is madness immoral? Does madness cause involuntary immorality or does voluntary immorality cause madness? Is madness an affliction of the soul, a disease of the brain, or an overheating of the imagination? Is madness actually a heightening of the powers of the imagination or a corruption of it? If a heightening, might there not be then a constructive application of madness in pursuits like literature where the imagination predominates? To what extent is society threatened by madness?

This last question points to political and religious concerns closely related to the prevalent questions in psychiatry. Swifts seems to have recognized or to have intuited the socially authoritative power exerted by psychiatry, a factor which is only now being fully recognized by psychiatrists themselves. The prognosis of madness is a potent means of discrediting the supposed madman. In the struggles for power in religion, politics, and literature during the Restoration and early eighteenth century, the quest for authority is complicated by the
increasing rejection of traditional authority. A frequent and potent means of disallowing any authority claimed by the opposition is the charge of madness. Michael DePorte comments that madness, in its imposition of the madman's reality upon the world, "results in psychic imperialism" ("Vehicles of Delusion" 18). But, one might quickly add, so does psychiatry. In a world rife with conflicting views of reality, a great power resides with those who control the definition of madness.

Thus, psychiatry has had a notable impact upon politics and religion. Rather than being solely a means to helping the afflicted, psychiatry has forcefully served as an instrument of power to be used offensively against a variety of enemies. A branch of inquiry which should by its nature demand introspection and self-analysis has instead been deployed as an offensive tool against those out of power (McDonald, Mystical Bedlam 230). Such a use of psychiatry as a good offense is a serviceable defense as well. Thomas Szasz has demonstrated that since the seventeenth century psychiatry has served as a means by which those in power both preserve and disseminate their values (The Ideology of Insanity). Moreover, by concentrating upon the elimination of the "madness" of others, a group in power implicitly asserts its own claims of sanity, thereby avoiding self-scrutiny and alleviating self-doubt. The prosecution of dissenters as madmen effectively acts, like a prolonged foreign war, as a diversion and distraction from internal problems. And by their determination of who is mad and who is not, governments and religions assert their own formulations of what is real and what is not. As Swift's political
pamphlets and poetry during and following the Harley ministry demonstrate, Swift had at least an intuitive appreciation of the efficacy of appropriating the authority of psychiatry to his causes.

The plasticity of the concept of mental illness has only recently been widely recognized. Peter Sedgwick offers several perceptive comments which illuminate the present state of self-analysis in psychiatry:

Whatever exaggerations the more radical anti-psychiatrists and labelling theory sociologists have engaged in, they have shown convincingly that both diagnosis and treatment-measures in psychiatry are founded on ethical judgments and social demands whose content is sometimes reactionary, often controversial and nearly always left unstated. ("Mental Illness is Illness" 206)

From this perspective, the psychiatrist is, in fact, a social agent, in many ways fulfilling the same function which satirists traditionally have claimed—the identification, isolation, and reformation of those whose ideas or behaviors threaten to disrupt society. Much of madness is very much in the eye of the beholder; mental illness may have no more absolute reality than the witchcraft which our ancestors saw. Anthropologists have demonstrated that behavior disdained in some cultures as demented is exalted in other cultures as visionary (Wallace, Personality and Culture; Mehan, The Reality of Ethnomethodology). Indeed, as Sedgwick points out, the very idea of "illness" is an anthropocentric concept, necessarily a value judgment, imposed by man upon nature: "The blight that strikes at corn or at potatoes is a human invention, for if men wished to cultivate parasites (rather than potatoes or corn), there would be no blight" (211). Under
such hypothetical circumstances, the planting of corn or potatoes would instead be viewed as the necessary foddering for the crop of parasites. Similarly, while we seem ready to agree that elms suffer from Dutch elm disease because elms are cultivated, we say that desert grasses, which have little or no social value, have "competition between species."
The problem in defining "mental illness" is no different, and thus, in spite of the efforts of psychologists and psychiatrists to develop a pure science, the language they use and the judgments they make remain loaded with moral, social, and political values, and consequently they themselves are moral, social, and political agents.

Such has been true throughout the history of psychology. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, for instance, though offering an analysis of melancholia, is for the most part a philosophical treatise, the theme of which is the unhappy condition of mankind. One of Burton's thematic insights is that madness or melancholy is, finally, a social problem in that victims are alienated from society and its conventions. The major task of the melancholic is to re-integrate himself into society.

Exploration of the social interests of psychiatry and psychology offers insight as well into the role of the satirist as social agent. As writer, clergyman, and political activist, Swift the satirist seizes the power of the psychiatrist/medicine man as a tool for social control, social reform, and social coherence. Like the traditional psychiatrist who is concerned more with illness than with health, Swift appropriates the power of social authority, as both
satirist and psychiatrist, primarily for purposes of prohibition and for the extinction of unacceptable behavior. The problem faced by Swift, as we shall see, is the difficulty of maintaining this role when, in fact, he is out of power or, worse, when he himself is in the throes of self-doubt. That is, Swift faces a problem of authority, and the appropriation of the role of psychiatrist serves him as a means to maintain his authority. In matters of psychiatry, as well as in politics, theology, and literature, authority during Swift's lifetime was hotly disputed, hard won, and typically of short duration.

In approaching the literary works of the Restoration and early eighteenth century which prominently feature the irrational, then, we need a sense of the variety of beliefs, reactions, and interpretations concerning madness available during the period, particularly as this set of beliefs reflects underlying social, moral, religious, and medical assumptions. Throughout the literature of the Restoration and the eighteenth century runs a dialectic of opposing views on madness, based primarily upon the conflict between social and individual interests. In some literary and religious circles particularly, the vision of the lone individual--frequently standing in opposition to convention and "common sense"--was valued more highly than social equilibrium. In such cases, melancholy and perhaps even madness held a potentially positive value. Among others, not surprisingly, madness was commonly associated with beasts and animality, and with people who held marginal positions in society--women and wild men. Those who value
the coherence of society most highly seem to be those who experience the greatest fear of madness.

Some took comfort in claiming that madness must be willed. Some were moderates, believing that, with caution and care potential madness could be suppressed. However, increasingly, as Max Byrd has convincingly demonstrated, people of the Restoration and eighteenth century began to fear, like Samuel Johnson, that incipient madness could be found in nearly everyone. Johnson's Imlac declares: "Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason" (Rasselas 140; ch. 43).

These fears were both provoked by and manifested in a variety of beliefs about mental illness. For the most part, in spite of the claims of a variety of quacks, people in the eighteenth century believed that madness was incurable. Moreover, there was the frightening possibility that madness was not always perceptible. John Locke insisted that "A Man, who is very sober and of a right Understanding in all other things, may in one particular, be as frantick as any in Bedlam" (Essay concerning Human Understanding 2.11.13). Even those who seemed sane might well be mad. And, even worse, madness might be contagious, as suggested by Meric Casaubon: "I tremble... when I think that one Mad man's enough to infect a whole Province" (Treatise concerning Enthusiasm 173).

Some of those who were able to overcome their fear or who had personal experience with melancholy or madness argued for sympathy for the mad. In his Discourse concerning Trouble of Mind, for instance,
Timothy Rogers in 1691 issued recommendations for behavior toward afflicted friends and associates:

First, Look upon your distressed Friends, as under one of the worst Distempers to which this Miserable Life is obnoxious.

Secondly, Look upon those that are under this woeful Disease of Melancholly with great pity and compassion.

Thirdly, Do not use harsh speeches to your Friends. (Hunter and Macalpine 248-9)

In view of the tortuous cures offered during this period for the disease of madness, such compassion is striking. To many, such sympathy must have been tantamount to aiding and abetting the enemy.

Indeed, to readers of Pope and Swift, whose works seem consistently to lash out at madness as willful immorality, such compassion is more than striking. Satire purports to offer a remedy to those who fall into folly and vice, and the satirist must therefore assume that such people have fallen willfully and that they continue to have a choice about their beliefs and actions. Otherwise, to paraphrase Dryden paraphrasing Horace, satire is much like making fun of the handicapped. The assumption that Pope and Swift believed in voluntarism in madness has recently led to some surprisingly harsh judgments upon them. Lillian Feder, for instance, has argued:

"The metaphors of madness so pervasive in Pope and Swift reflect the prevailing avoidance of any empathic exploration of the mind designated as mad. . . . What is most striking . . . is their reflections of the common assumption that the symptoms resulting from this imbalance of mental faculties reduce their victims to a subhuman state" (152-62).
One potential defense for Swift and Pope is the argument that they mock the behavior of those who are not actually mad, those who, therefore, do have a choice. Madness, one might argue, is merely a trope in their works. Their private views might be more consonant with those, for instance, of Thomas Tryon than Feder would have us believe. Like Defoe, who argued that supposedly sane politicians, bureaucrats, and magistrates were more destructive of the social good than any certifiably mad man, Tryon argues for compassion for the mad on the basis of a comparison to the evils of the sane:

Tell me I pray? Are not all these Intemperances, Violence, Oppression, Murder, and savage Evils, and Superfluities deservedly to be accounted the worst Effects of Madness? As also, Lying, Swearing, vain Imagination, and living in and under the power of evil Spirits, more to be dreaded than the condition of those that want the use of Senses and Reason, and therefore are esteemed Mad? (267)

The question of Swift's attitude toward madness is, however, decidedly more complex than the sympathetic/antipathetic dichotomy suggests, for his view of madness itself was more complex. Swift's sympathy for the mad is evident in his philanthropy in private life. His antipathy to madmen is equally evident in his writings, both public and private, beginning with his presentation of the Tale-teller. This seeming contradiction reflects a distinction rather than a paradox. To the extent that madness can be an unwanted and undeserved affliction, Swift is sympathetic towards its victims. To the extent that a victim may have accelerated his affliction's progress by his own choice of immorality or irreligion, Swift is unsympathetic. And in cases where the victim has not only expedited his loss of sense but has actively
sought to change his fellow men or even to alter his society to accommodate and to perpetuate his madness, Swift is intolerant. In order to understand these distinctions as they appear implicitly in Swift's work, it is first necessary to examine the variety of theories about madness prevalent in the Restoration and early eighteenth century and to look as well at the several arenas--medical, religious, political, and literary--in which debates about madness occurred.

Theories of Madness

In 1758, a bit after the period with which we will be concerned here, John Monro, keeper and head physician of Bedlam, began a defense of his practices by observing: "Madness is a distemper of such a nature, that very little of real use can be said concerning it" (Remarks 1). During the previous two centuries, of course, much had been said, although Monro may be accurate in his estimation of how much of it was of use in practice. Much was unknown, much was debated, and some few ideas were gaining popular acceptance. Particularly, in reading Swift, it is important to understand that madness was seen as a progressive disease, that it was becoming apparent that a man otherwise sane in all else could be mad in an isolated belief, similarly that even a fully developed lunatic could have lucid intervals, and finally that some forms of madness (melancholy and enthusiasm, particularly), rather than demolishing reason, actually subverted or corrupted reason while leaving it almost intact. These points seem to have been gaining general acceptance throughout the late seventeenth century, but to
explore these ideas we must look back briefly to the origins of seventeenth-century psychiatry and psychology.

Three approaches to abnormal psychology—medical/physiological, moral/theological, and philosophical/social—seem to become inextricably tangled during the Renaissance. Through the renewed influence of Hippocrates, the physiological analysis of madness remained influential. During the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, the moral or theological approach to madness gained strength as theories of witchcraft and demonic possession were used frequently to account for the same phenomena which Hippocrates had considered primarily medical matters. In 1487, for example, Jakob Sprenger and Heinrick Kraemer’s *Malleus Maleficarum*, continuously influential for the next 150 years, maintained that all witchcraft arises from carnal lust and that witchcraft may be divided into three branches: dissenters, schismatics, and the mentally ill.

Interestingly, this classification reflects an early use of psychiatry as a force for social order, for it depends primarily upon the ability of those affected to organize themselves into a socially significant force. Thus, while the explanation for the disorder is supernatural and generates a moral prescription, the evaluation of the inherent evil in madness is based upon the degree of threat posed to the social (and religious) order. Mental illness was beginning to be perceived as a significant social problem.

The third approach to what has now become psychiatry, beginning perhaps with St. Augustine, took introspection as its starting point
and method, developed through the work of Robert Burton, and culminated, perhaps, with the works of Freud, which, of course, contain medical and moral components as well. The use of introspection as a means to knowledge about insanity assumes the imperfection of the self, and this assumption, during the Renaissance, is predicated upon the assumption of man's fallen nature. Though Burton's great contribution, in his introspective Anatomy, consisted in the humanizing influence of his apparent compassion for the afflicted, his psychology, like that throughout the Renaissance, is founded upon the humoural psychology of Galen. Thus, while his work is principally philosophical, as well as moral and satirical, it supports itself with an appeal to physiological theory--demonstrating the manner in which proto-psychiatry tended to interweave the three different approaches.

Ultimately, Burton, like Augustine, identifies the relation between society and the individual as the source of melancholy, recommending in a Utopian sketch a reform of society and its institutions to alleviate the frustrations of the individual and thereby to avert the potential institutionalization of melancholy. Having examined physiological and philosophical explanations of madness, Burton concludes, then, with an emphasis upon the social ramifications of melancholy. In so doing, he focuses upon the conflict which provides the basis for several of the Restoration and eighteenth-century satirists' approaches to madness. Burton is unusual in his advocacy that society be altered to alleviate madness, for most approaches to psychiatry up to the mid-twentieth century propose that
the individual must be altered to fit society. Satirists like Swift, having accepted frustration as the lot of man and having accepted that Hobbesian frustration is the price one pays for an ordered society, ridicule those who will not accommodate themselves to the dictates of society.

Burton's work was also influential in its suggestion of the potential progressiveness of madness. Burton uses his distinction of three separate faculties—the vegetal, the sensible, and the rational—to explain the variety of manifestations of melancholy as physical, emotional, and rational. These distinctions produce, as an effect of their hierarchical nature, a progression or pathology for melancholy in that the vegetal disorder provides the potential basis for the sensible which in turn may create a dysfunction in the rational. Burton cites numerous potential causes for the ascendancy of the disease or for a predisposition to the disease, including heredity and an overly indulgent or overly severe education and childhood. The most serious form of the malady may begin, thus, simply as a disposition, but when reinforced by daily life the disposition can become chronic (1: 125-27). Indeed, implying that the disease is both chronic and progressive, Burton outlines a total of eighty-eight degrees of melancholy (1: 153). This sense of the progression of melancholy into madness offers a rationale for subsequent writers to retain the principle of voluntarism in madness in spite of the increasing preponderance of evidence for a physiological basis for mental disorder. The pre-disposition to madness, they would suggest, need not
develop into madness itself if the victim takes appropriate care of his spiritual condition.

In regard to the question of the respective roles of reason and imagination in madness, Burton remains inconclusive. He asserts that the disease begins in the imagination but acknowledges that the faculty of reason is also deficient; otherwise, it would correct the misapprehensions created by the imagination and not allow them to persist: "Forasmuch as this malady is caused by precedent Imagination, and the Appetite, to whom Spirits obey, are subject to those principal parts, the Braine must needs be primarily misaffected, as the seate of Reason, and then the Heart, as the seate of Affection" (1: 195). The course of the disease could easily be hastened under the influence of sickness, misfortune, lack of affection, sexual frustration, dissipation, and the devil. Burton’s apparent uncertainty about the roles of reason and imagination continued into the late eighteenth century.

Burton would also remain influential in his exploration of the possibility that extreme religious scrupulosity may induce melancholy and madness. He notes that religious practices, particularly the ascetic severities often imposed by religious orders, may frequently result in melancholy; meditation, fasting, and celibacy can each produce a melancholic disorder. He distinguishes religious melancholy by its varied symptoms: raptures, flights of fancy, beatific visions (3: 866-78). Or, Burton suggests, a melancholic man may be beset with despair, developing a hyper-consciousness of his own wickedness and fearing that
he is incapable therefore of redemption (3: 939-42). Burton warns that the influence of the devil upon a melancholic man of religious conviction may result in false prophecies, heresies, and fanaticism (3: 891-919). Thus, Burton establishes a basis for the seventeenth-century diagnosis of religious enthusiasm.

Less introspective and more ostensibly medical contemporaries of Burton persisted in embedding the moral approach into their attempts at empiricism. In the work of Philip Barrought, for example, in 1583, moral terms are systematically used as medical terms:

> Whether the melancholiousness be caused through vice of the whole body . . . or through the only evil affect of the braine, you must minister medicines that will purge downward. . . . Last of all the sick must labour that the false and wicked imaginacions, and great sadness may be driven away by all means that can be invented. (Hunter and Macalpine 28)

Similarly, Timothy Bright, writing in 1586, combines a moral with a humoural approach to melancholy, offering a physical splenetic explanation of the disease, but also positing a potential role played by conscience in afflicting the victim. However, Bright suggests that melancholy may not be entirely bad or unuseful, citing Aristotle's assertion that inspiration and contemplation arise from a melancholic disposition. As his treatise progresses, Bright increasingly distinguishes mental from physical forms of melancholy. In scholars, study may result in "natural melancholy," a less contemptible form of the disease caused by the mind's misapprehension. Others suffer from "unnatural melancholy," the result of excessive sanguine and choler (102-110). Bright's analysis is probably tainted by his awareness that mild forms of melancholy were chiefly complaints of the upper class.
Whether or not this is the case, Bright's work does reflect the growing social acceptability of mild forms of melancholy.

Indeed, a study of the relationship between the development of psychology and the development of the book trade might be quite fruitful. Thought and discussion of melancholy and madness became more widespread at the end of the Renaissance than ever before. Michael DePorte suggests the reason: "The amateurishness of psychiatric theorizing [such as Burton's] which made it so vulnerable to ridicule also made it readily accessible to men of general education, with the important result that the writings of physicians were probably read more widely than in any previous age" (Nightmares and Hobbyhorses 12). One can presume that readers in the seventeenth and eighteenth century were little different from readers of today, frequently imagining as they read of their symptoms that they suffer from the afflictions about which they are reading. Perhaps as a consequence, an ever-increasing epidemic of melancholy spread through the literate upper classes throughout the seventeenth century resulting in two co-existing yet contradictory views toward mental illness. Authors on madness certainly must have taken pains to avoid insulting their aristocratic patrons, and some may have gone too far in their attempts to flatter them. Lawrence Babb summarizes the situation at the end of the Renaissance as follows: "The Renaissance, then, held simultaneously two conceptions of melancholy. According to Galenic tradition, melancholy is a most ignominious and miserable condition of mind; according to the Aristotelian tradition, it is a most admirable and enviable condition
of mind" (Elizabethan Malady 66). Indeed, by the seventeenth century, melancholy, vapors, and spleen—all synonyms for the same apparent affliction—were often suspected as ruses used in social climbing. By 1726, Jeremy Collier writes:

Tis commonly said the Spleen is a Wise Disease, which I believe makes some fond of catching it. Tis possible it may be the only system of sense they have about them. But if a man can show his understanding no better way than by troubling himself and the company, let him e’en pretend to it no longer, but rather make it his business to be a fool. (257)

One wonders whether a process of cyclical causation might not have swung into effect, with newly published books spreading the affliction by suggestion and thereby creating a demand for further literature on the subject. If such was the case, this might help to explain the increase in the literature being unaccompanied by any substantial increase in knowledge.

Perhaps the finest example of the amalgamation of physiological, moral, and philosophical approaches to madness during the Restoration period is Thomas Willis’s Two Discourses Concerning the Souls of Brutes (1672). In his dissections and analyses of the brain, Willis pioneered the field of neurology, yet he alternates repeatedly between accepting the common assessment of melancholy and madness as moral and spiritual malaises and insisting upon a physiological basis for the diseases. In his preface to the reader, he qualifies his subsequent claims: "I should declare some [madmen] to be rather sick in Soul, yea first, and chiefly than in Body" (A6r). Many of his suggested
treatments, however, treat the body: bleeding, vomits, phlebotomy, and purgings.

In the work of Willis, the heretofore slowly growing suspicion that mental phenomena are founded upon mechanically regulated physical phenomena surged into prominence. Willis notes that "phrensie," for instance, can be caused by an unnatural suppression of a "usual evacuation" (184). The irregularity of the ideas of madmen is accounted for by the physical irregularities in the motions of the nervous fluids which, in their agitation, carve out new pathways for thought: "Animal Spirits in the Distemper of Madness, becoming very moveable, and very much sharpened, out of their morbid nature, do so likewise leave their former tracts of going and returning to and fro, and do cut for themselves, every where in the Brain, new little spaces or walks" (201). Such a description of mental phenomena is based upon his description of other frenzied disorders, particularly convulsions, epilepsy, and hysteria—three disorders which he sees as forming a progression from physical to mental—as described early in his book:

When the morbid sick matter is admitted within the Head and not presently from thence sent back, oftentimes it produces not its evil, till it is inserted in to the stock of the Nerves; for the animal Spirits within the Brain, being as yet strong, and having got a more free space, they evade the entrances of every heterogeneous Copula; which indeed they are not able to do within the strait channels of the nerves: Besides the morbid sick matter itself, if it cannot be sent away out of the Brain by the excretory vessels, it is by and by sent forth to the System of the nerves as the more ignoble part. (157)

The standard physiology, which provided the basis for Willis's mechanical system, was similarly seized upon by Henry More in his discussion of enthusiasm. By reducing the phenomena of enthusiasm to a
material and mechanical matter, More would deflate the claims of the enthusiasts to inspiration: "That there are sundry material things that do most certainly change our Mind or Phantsy, experience doth sufficiently witness" (5). Indeed, as Swift apparently recognized, the mechanical models of the brain tended to be metaphorical. In their mechanicalness, as Bergson has pointed out in his theory of humor, they deflate human dignity. In their metaphoric nature, as Swift implies, they are more the stuff of the imagination than of practical and useful knowledge.

Willis, though indeed the "father of neurology," drifts frequently from medical into moral discourse. In the "Epistle Dedicatory" to his reprinted works, he declares his purpose to be to offer an understanding of a means to achieve physical health as a prerequisite to spiritual health, and thereby to restore lost souls to the church (Practice of Physick 1). The dynamics of this operation begin to be clear when he explains that men have two souls--the sensitive and the rational, which, however distinct, are in man permanently conjoined, thus offering a communication between two natures, higher and lower. Moreover, though the rational soul should command the sensitive,

the Corporeal Soul does not so easily obey the Rational in all things, not in things to be desired as in things to be known: for indeed, the being nearer to the Body, and so bearing a more intimate Kindness or Affinity towards the Flesh, is tied wholly to look to its Profit and Conservation: to the Sedulous Care of which Office, it is very much allured, by various Complacences, exhibited through the Objects of every Sense: Hence she being busied about the Care of the Body, and apt by that pretext, its natural Inclination, and indulging
Pleasures, most often grows deaf to Reason, persuading the contrary. Further, the lower Soule, growing weary of the yoke of the Other, if occasion serves, frees itself from its Bonds, affecting a License or Dominion. (*Two Discourses* 43)

The result is that man is frequently embroiled in internal rebellion, so much so that it is possible for him to be distracted and perhaps even mad simply because of the upheavals within. In short, then, Willis, although seeking a physiological pathology of madness, ultimately produces a moral treatise, concluding:

Ambition, Pride, and Emulation, have made some mad; the reason of which is, because whilst the Corporeal Soul swelling up with an opinion and pride of its own excellency, lifts up itself, and endeavors on every side to expand or stretch itself most amply beyond the border or sphere of its body, the Animal Spirits being tumultuously called into the head, will not be contained within their wonted bounds, but being there broken and diversely reflected by reason of their too much excretion, are compelled into new and plainly devious tracts (*Two Discourses* 203)

Such a view clearly both accommodates and nurtures the prevalent belief in the dual nature of man. Moreover, it features in microcosm a Miltonic view of Satan's rebellion, emphasizing the dangers of pride. An even closer correspondence may be found in Book 9, in which Adam's fall is precipitated by an inversion of Appetite and Will (1121-31). Such a model of internal rebellion fomented by pride would prove to be an essential component in Swift's satires.

In Willis's conclusion, in spite of the mass of evidence he has accumulated supporting a physiological basis for mental and emotional disorders, his primary remedy is suppression. Not only is the physical body to be weakened and suppressed, but the troublesome personality of the afflicted must also be drained of its willfulness:
For the curing of Mad people, there is nothing more effectual or necessary than their reverence or standing in awe of such as they think their Tormentors. For by this means, the Corporeal Soul being in some measure depressed and restrained, is compell'd to remit its pride and fierceness; and so afterwards by degrees grows more mild, and returns in order: Wherefore, Furious Mad-Men are sooner and more certainly cured by punishments, and hard usage, in a strait room than by Physick or Medicines. (Two Discourses 206)

Though arguing throughout his work that mental illness is primarily an individual and physiological affliction, Willis concludes by prescribing a cure designed to socialize the patient by force. While men of science were excited by Willis's physiological findings, to the popular mind this final recommendation stood out as Willis's contribution to the treatment of madmen and was often used as a justification for inhumane treatment by the keepers of private madhouses.

Willis's experiments and hypotheses, then, did little to consolidate and clarify the issues. Instead, what emerged after his work was a wide variety of eclectic theories and treatments as questions were raised faster than they could be answered. Generally, researchers and philosophers could only agree upon their increasing sense that all men were vulnerable to mental disorder.

Increasingly, as explanations for madness became physiologically based, they became mechanical. In 1729, Nicholas Robinson's mechanistic New System of the Spleen reinforced Burton's suggestion that mental disorder was progressive and that disorders which had frequently been distinguished as having their own pathologies were really stages on a continuum. Robinson identifies the stages as
follows: 1.) spleen, or vapors, 2.) hypochondriac melancholy, 3.) melancholy, and 4.) madness. The basis for this classification remains Galenic—the major difference is that Robinson has posited a dynamic running through the four. While his notion of progressiveness was a tidy synthesis of what many before him had suggested and was readily accepted by those who had criticized the apparently fine distinctions that were made when diagnosing patients (Queen Anne, for example, had vapors but the village blacksmith was incurably mad), Robinson’s attempt to synthesize the physiological explanation resulted only in continued confusion:

Every Change of the Mind, therefore, indicates a Change in the bodily Organs; nor is it possible for the Wit of Man to conceive how the Mind can, from a cheerful, gay Disposition, fall into a sad and disconsolate State, without some Alterations in the Fibres, at the same Time: for the relative Gravity of the Body, that is, what we call the lowness of the Spirits, is no otherwise increas’d upon these Changes but as the Body weighs heavier to the Mind; nor is it possible that the Mind could perceive any Addition of Weight, if the Fluids did not move slower in the Vessels, upon which their attracting Principle is increased to a Degree greater than is consistent with a freer Circulation, and consequently a regular Standard of Health. (Hunter and Macalpine 345)

Robinson’s treatise is typical of what Swift had already satirized as the Modern sort of system and demonstrates the accuracy of Swift’s satirical aim. Highly mechanical, Robinson’s view of the brain is a Rube Goldbergesque construction which applies most of the physical principles available in the science of the early eighteenth century—gravity, vaporization, elasticity and tension—to an inappropriate field of knowledge.
At the end of the seventeenth century, then, psychiatry was in a state of flux. While sympathy for the mad seems to have increased, the primary concern with madness appears to be moral and social. A variety of causes had been proposed for mental disorder: self-absorption, riot of the imagination, humoral imbalances, animal spirits, breakdown of judgment, and contagious infection. While no agreement had been reached on a cause, increasingly the consensus was that mental disturbances came from within rather than from without, that everyone must guard against such disturbances for all were susceptible to them, and that the gradually emerging physiological and metaphorical conceptions of the imagination and the rational faculties were keys to the puzzle. Moreover, in light of the discoveries being made in other sciences and in light of the work performed by Willis, most discussions of the subject of mental illness agreed that whatever the causes, the dynamics of the problem would at least roughly resemble the physical mechanics discovered by Newton and applied indiscriminately by his awed followers.

However, in spite of the progressively greater evidence for a physiological basis for madness, moral issues were deeply embedded in the history of the idea of madness, and as science penetrated the human brain with a scalpel hoping to penetrate human nature, scientists, as we have seen in the case of Willis, entered the realm of the theological, hoping to discover the nature of the soul. That this hope was quite conscious is made clear repeatedly throughout the literature, and is explained logically by Bernard de Mandeville:
If Matter cannot think, we may justly conclude, that we consist of a soul and a Body. How they reciprocally work upon and affect one another, 'tis true, we cannot tell, and whethere the Soul be seated in some particular part of, or is diffus'd through all the Brain, the Blood or the whole Body, is likewise not easie to be determined: But tho' these things are mysterious to us, yet from the Experience we have of our Composition ... we can assert not only that there must be an immediate Commerce between the the Body and the Soul; but likewise that the Action of Thinking in which all that we know of the latter, consists, is to our certain Knowledge perform'd more in the Head than it is in the Elbow or the Knee: From this we may further conclude that as the Soul acts not immediately upon Bone, Flesh, Blood &c nor upon that, so there must be some exquisitely small Particles, that are the Internuncii between them. (Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions 155-56)

Even those who tried hardest to keep their hypotheses, research, and speculations within the realm of the scientific and physiological often concluded with moral pronouncements and judgments rather than diagnoses. Such pronouncements were made and accepted so matter-of-factly that not until the nineteenth century did "moral insanity" become distinguished as a type unto itself (Skultans, Madness and Morals 65-7). Thus, a closer look at the history and nature of the moral component of the idea of madness, particularly as it pertains to free will, is necessary.

The Immorality of Madness

In contrast to the scientists and philosophers already discussed, the majority of those who practiced psychiatry were divines first and occasional physicians second. During Swift's time, for instance, a madhouse was kept by Reverend John Ashbourne, who was both a cleric in holy orders and a "Practitioner of Physick," and consequently was called a "clerical mad-doctor," a common combination
throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Hunter and Macalpine 154). Typical of their approach to madness was the
pronouncement by William Bullein, another physician and divine, in 1558
that "the syckenes of the body muste have medicine, the passions of the
mynde must have good counsel" (Hunter and Macalpine 16).

Abnormal behavior has always been associated popularly with
ungodliness and even anti-godliness. According to the orthodox
theology during the Middle Ages, many forms of madness were recognized
as sickness and were not in and of themselves considered to be immoral.
Madness was, however, frequently seen as the result of sinfulness.

Madness was not God's angry judgment and punishment, for God did not
author such afflictions. Still, God's permission was needed before
devils could vex a sinful man (Shenk 12; Feder 101). Aquinas, in an
Aristotelian argument, shows that any vicious action can develop into a
habit, that indulgence of a passion may result in that passion
overwhelming all others as well as overwhelming the judgment. Such a
description of the progressiveness of immorality dovetails nicely with
Burton's notion of the progressiveness of madness. Thus, Aquinas
asserts that although madness is not itself willed, the initial actions
which lead into madness are freely chosen: "If God delivered some up to
a reprobate sense, it follows that they already had a reprobate sense,
so as to do what was not right" (1-2. Q79.1). Essentially, the Aquinian
argument is as follows: All immorality is a usurpation, a defection of
the will from its proper role. Since the will is a part of the
intellect, such usurpations must result in damage to the intellect.
(Hoopes 94). In short, in such a system there can be no such thing as an immoral rational man. As a demonstration of the immorality at the root of madness, a thread of anecdotes runs throughout Renaissance literature detailing the apparent opposition of madness to religion. A pathology is frequently discovered in those who, like Macbeth, are unable to or refuse to pray (Hunter and Macalpine 6, 103). Outrageously heretical statements were a sure sign of mental derangement.

Continuous records of churchmen's analyses of madness are available from the Renaissance on. Most of these implicitly, if not explicitly, indicate an assumption of voluntarism in madness. In 1541, Sir Thomas Elyot notes the continuing belief in a spiritual component in mental disorder, and he emphasizes the necessity of an upright will, without which the passions "brynge a man from the use of reason, and sometyme in the displeasure of almighty God. Wherefore they do not only require the help of physike corporall, but also the counsell of a man wyse and well lemed in moral philosophye" (Hunter and Macalpine 7). More than a century later, Jeremy Taylor, a bishop and physician who took particular interest in phobias, mistrusted all explanations for abnormal behavior which discounted the role of the will: "If from a state of sin and debauchery they entered into their madness, their case is sad and infinitely to be deplored; but their debt books are sealed up, they are like dead men; until they be restored to reason, they cannot be restored to grace" (Works 8: 95).
In popular theology, as opposed to orthodox doctrine, madness was often actually equated with sin, apparently an equation based upon a common but false syllogism. If all sin is madness, it seems, then all madness must be sin. Thus, sermons delivered from the pulpits throughout Britain reinforced the sense that mental disorder was a theological concern. Typically strong and atypically well-written is Thomas Adams's 1615 sermon, *Mystical Bedlam*, which takes as its text: "The heart of the Sonnes of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live" (Eccles. 9.3). Adams invokes the theory of decay to account for what he sees as an apparent rise in madness: "Now Man is growne lesse; and as his body in size, his soul in vigour, so himself in all vertue is abated" (3). Such a lack of virtue causes mental disorder: "Ignorance, unfaithfulnessse, and refractory desires make a man mad" (37). Not only are raving lunatics mad, but also those who willfully ignore religion: "Ignorance of celestiall things [is] eyther madness or the efficient cause . . . of madness" (38), and so, among the ranks of the mad he includes the epicure, the proud man, the lustful man, the hypocrite, the covetous man, the usurer, the ambitious man, the drunkard, the idle man, the swearer, the liar, the busybody, the flatterer, the ingrate, the angry man, the contentious man, the impatient man, the vainglorious man, and finally the separatists and schismatics--an inventory of the populace remarkably similar to the list of the satiric victims of Horace and, more contemporaneous with Adams, of Hall and Marston at the turn of the century.
As his sermon proceeds, Adams's figurative language heightens. Although the sermon begins with a finely argued philosophical discussion of three types of clinical madness (afflictions of the imagination, the reason, and the memory), it concludes with a highly metaphorical flourish which anticipates the satire in Swift's "The Legion Club" by conflating Bedlam and Hell, madness and depravity: "Remember that there is an innernall Bedlam whereunto they that live and die spiritually mad men must be eternally confined" (70). The blend of theology and pseudo-science is so complete that the two strains cannot be separated.

The dialectic between theological and medical thought may very well have its origin in the common conception of the dual nature of man. Beginning prehistorically and manifesting itself in views such as that of Pythagoras that man and animals share a common soul, the continued belief in man's perpetual conflict between good and evil as a manifestation of a conflict between a better self and a baser nature produced myriad variations on the theme in attempted explanations of mental illness. Richard Sibbs, in 1635, for example, while discounting demonic possession, posits a disruptive source of conflict within man: "That which most troubles a good man in all troubles is himselfe, so farre as he is unsubdued" (Hunter and Macalpine 110). In effect, such a psychiatric analysis posits voluntarism in madness as well as in sin.

As we have seen, even those who sought physiological causes and symptoms were tempted by and often succumbed to the explanatory capacity of an idea of duality. In 1669, Walter Charleton
distinguished two souls: "the one Rational, by which he is made a reasonable creature, the other Sensitive [or Vital] by virtue whereof he participateth also of Life and Sense . . . which being also Animal or Sensitive is common likewise to Brutes" (Hunter and Macalpine 193). Such a distinction between two separate but mutually affecting souls continued for centuries, surviving longer theologically than medically.

Reason was proclaimed by many as the safeguard against madness. Others, however, found man's reason suspect as well. For instance, in his Spital Sermon before the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Governors of several hospitals in London in 1718, Andrew Snape laments:

Distraction . . . sinks unhappy Man below the mute and senseless Part of the Creation: even brutal Instinct being a saner and safer Guide than disturbed Reason, and every tame Species of animals more sociable and less hurtful than Humanity thus unmanned. Sad Blemish of our Nature! most mortifying Reflection to consider that our boasted Reason is not given us by any certain Tenure for the Term of our Natural Lives, but that something with a Human Shape and Voice may for many Years survive all that was Human besides! Frail Man indeed! So liable to be degraded, by the loss of that very Faculty which he values himself so highly, and he who values himself most highly upon it, is in the greatest Danger of being so degraded. (Hunter and Macalpine 303).

Here, not only does Snape allude to the dual nature of man but also makes the common point that a distinguishing characteristic of much of man's madness is pride. Though carefully making the distinction between man's animal and humane natures, Snape, like Rochester in his "Satyre Against Mankind," warns that reason itself is liable to error and that pride in reason necessarily goeth before a fall. Just as pride was considered the greatest of all sins (and intellectual pride was the
sin of Milton's heroic Satan), so pride paved not only the road to damnation but the road to Bedlam as well.

Madness becomes, then, at least in part, a popular emblem for the theological assumption of the fallen nature of man. To the extent that all men are potential victims of madness, madmen may deserve and receive the sympathy of others. However, since madness is often the result of excess, madmen serve as a moral lesson to the sane--and particularly they come to be emblems of insurrection and rebellion. Repeatedly linked with such images of all men as mad comes the diagnosis of pride as the root of the affliction. Consistently, the moral treatment for moral madness is a prescription for humility, consisting, as Henry More describes it, of "an entire submission to the will of God in all things" (37). As an emblem for pride and rebellion, madness found frequent applications throughout the Restoration and the early eighteenth century.

Madness and Reason

Much attention has, of course, been given to this period's concern with reason, on some occasions obscuring the obverse and simultaneous fear of the irrational which plagued Britain. One wonders if perhaps for every spokesman for the ennobling faculty of reason there is not also a doomsayer pointing to the limitations of reason. While exploring this godlike reason, the most prominent philosophers of the period left much room for ungodlike human frailty and error. Hobbes remarks that men make mistakes with reason even as they do with
arithmetic ([Leviathan 1.1.5]). Even with a perfect system, man is susceptible to error.

In his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Locke, probably the most influential of the philosophers of the period, describes in detail the possibility of bad (we might say "maladaptive") associations of ideas, resulting in error. As a consequence, he arrives at a surprising declaration of near universal madness:

Opposition to reason . . . is really madness. . . . There is scarce a man so free from it, but that if he should always on all occasions argue or do as in some cases he constantly does, would not be thought fitter for Bedlam than civil conversation. I do not here mean when he is under the power of an unruly passion, but in the steady calm course of his life. (2.33.4)

And, of course, in the popular theological interpretation of the day, deviation from or opposition to reason is immoral. Man's fallen nature was being made quite evident.

In 1689, Thomas Tryon, focusing upon mental rather than physical phenomena, made the case for men's fears of the irrational within them more sound by noting the affinity between madness, dreams and the passions as he noted the

Affinity or Analogy between Dreams and Madness so that the understanding of one will somewhat illustrate the other; for Madness seems to be a Watching or Waking Dream. . . . The truth is, Madness and Phrensie do generally, and for the most part . . . arise and proceed from various Passions and extream Inclinations, as Love, Hate, Grief, Covetousness, Dispair, and the like, which do . . . break forth, violate, and destroy the five inward Senses of the Soul, whence the outward Senses do arise; So that the Soul loseth its distinguishing property. (Hunter and Macalpine 233-34)

Once the soul has lost this distinguishing property, the victim, according to Tryon goes on a rampage of the imagination.
In 1728, Frances Hutcheson called further into question man’s ability to govern himself, his actions, and his passions, in An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections:

Our Passions are not so much in our Power, as some seem to imagine. . . . We are so constituted by Nature, that, as soon as we form the Idea of certain Objects or Events, our Desire or Aversion will arise toward them; and consequently our Affections must very much depend upon the Opinions we form, concerning any thing which occurs to our Mind, its Qualities, Tendencies, or Effects. (Hunter and Macalpine 336)

Here the influence of Locke’s associationism is clearly evident in what must have been its most frightening implication for the early eighteenth century: the universal unmanageability of the mind and its actions.

In a similar vein, Thomas Tryon had offered an image of internal rebellion which many have suggested as a source of Swift’s imagery in A Tale of A Tub:

The Soul will no longer be confined to the Body and outward Senses, but either withdraws itself, and flings up the Reins of Government, and lets Reason, like a wilde Horse that hath cast off Bit and Bridle, and thrown his Rider, ramble confusedly withersoever the Imagination shall hurry it; or else sometimes breaks off wholly all Commerce with the Body, and separates it self in Indignation, and so the Life its self is destroyed. (256)

What is most striking about Tryon’s work, as exemplified in this passage, is that he attributes subversiveness not so much to the passions as to Reason itself. Reason, not Passion, is the wild horse here, and thus rational men are as suspect as the overtly mad. His treatise, therefore, concludes with an exordium to rational men to leave off their mad ways:
Nor is there scarce one thing in Ten that men in the World do act but is far greater Madness and Evil, than those things which persons do that are deprived of their Sences. . . . These [lust, gluttony, slander, flattery, and so on] and an hundred the like things, which are the main business and the daily employment of many, that would be counted the shrewdest and most notable part of Mankind: Are not, I say, all these far greater and more mischievous Phrensies than for a man to pull off his Garments, and sit naked, and spend time in weaving of Straws or Building with Chalke upon the Walls innumerable Cities, whereof he fancies himself to be Emperor? To speak Truth, the World is but a great Bedlam, where those that are more mad, lock up those that are less. (263)

The world as a vast Bedlam was, of course, an attractive image to satirists and social critics. Defoe made use of it in an extended essay appearing in The Daily Review over several months. Swift used it in a lifetime of work appearing over several decades.

Religious Madness: Enthusiasm

In a period of political and religious rebellion against traditional authority the establishment's seizing upon the image of madness as internal rebellion is not surprising. So, at the time of the Restoration, booksellers' stalls abounded with pamphlets, treatises, and satires decrying the religious madness of dissident sects, particularly the Puritans, but also including Quakers, Ranters, Diggers, and Catholics. The term applied to followers of these sects was, of course, "enthusiasm."

For the contemporary reader and scholar, a clear and objective overview of the controversies about enthusiasm is difficult to achieve, for the purported enthusiasts were largely illiterate or barely literate. Moreover, the phenomena in which enthusiasm manifested itself were ephemeral. Written descriptions of the congregations and
individuals involved in "enthusiastic" worship or theology come primarily from their critics. We have relatively few written accounts from those accused of enthusiasm.

For many of the later critics, it was clear that enthusiasm was closely akin to, if not synonymous with, insanity. In Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists, Lavington writes: "Enthusiasm and Madness are but the same thing in different words for the former is due to Melancholy, Hysterias, Hypochondrias [which] have in themselves a certain Degree of Madness" (qtd in Tucker 147). In their analytic descriptions of enthusiasm, writers tended to blame perverted reason and, somewhat more commonly, overpowering imagination. Defoe, for instance, denies being an enthusiast, characterizing those who are as follows: "those that are apt by poring on Futuristics, to fill [their] Heads with Whimsical Notions, that Dream of Inspiration, and fancy themselves on the other side of Time; that call strong Imagination Revelation and every Wind of the Brain an Impulse of the 'Spirit'" (Daily Review 8: 94). Similarly, Henry More states his opposition to enthusiasm in terms of mistrust of the imagination: "There is nothing that the holy Spirit did ever suggest to any man but it was agreeable to, if not demonstrable from, what we call Reason. ... By Reason I understand so settled and cautious a Composure of Mind as will suspect every high-flown and forward Fancy" (39-40). As psychiatry developed its physiological roots, enthusiasm was more frequently considered to be a manifestation of melancholy, the result of splenetic vapors.
The language of other philosophers against enthusiasm is equally strong. Hobbes indignantly replies to suggestions that examples of enthusiasm are to be found in the Scripture: "I see nothing at all in the Scripture, that requireth a belief, that Demoniacks were any other thing but Mad-men" (1.8.39). Throughout his work, Hobbes seems to consider enthusiasts to be deliberately subversive--no doubt because of the impact which they had upon civil matters. Jeremy Taylor, similarly, objects to enthusiasts on civil and political grounds: "If it be certain that this world cannot be governed without laws ... then it is certain that it is no good religion that teaches doctrine whose consequents will destroy all government and therefore it is to be rooted out as anything that is the greatest pest and nuisance to the public interest" (A Discourse on the Liberty of Prophesying 590).

Locke's section of An Essay Concerning Human Understanding exploring the nature of enthusiasm remains the definitive informing work for the twentieth-century scholar:

"I take to be properly Enthusiasm, which though founded neither on Reason, nor Divine Revelation, but rising from the Conceits of a warmed or over-weering Brain, works yet, where it once gets footing, more powerfully on the Perswasions and Action of Men, than either of those two, or both together. ... The Love of something extraordinary, the Base and Glory it is to be inspired and be above the common and natural ways of Knowledge, so flatters many Man's Laziness, Ignorance and Vanity, that when once they are got into this way of immediate Revelation, of Illumination without search, and of certainty without Proof, and without Examination, 'tis a hard matter to get them out of it. ... This is the way of talking of these Men: they are sure, because they are sure: and their Perswasions are right, only because they are strong in them. (4.19.7-8)
Aside from Locke, perhaps the most notable and most exhaustive examination of enthusiasm during the period is Meric Casaubon's 1655 *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*. Casaubon is fairly straightforward, attempting to be objective and fair (particularly since he is writing before the Restoration and has reason to fear that those in power will not favor his comments), yet his words consistently indicate his fear and disapproval of enthusiastic religion. Consequently, Casaubon is unremittingly stern in his warnings of the possibly catastrophic results of excessive zeal. While granting that natural enthusiasm is nothing new, he repeatedly points out that its effects are consistently pernicious:

> The opinion of divine Inspiration which in all ages, and among all men of all profession, Heathens and Christians, hath been a very common opinion in the world; as it hath been common, so the occasion of so many evils and mischiefs among men, as no other error, or delusion of what kind soever, hath ever been of either more, or greater" (3-4).

Political matters and religious beliefs seem to merge unavoidably in Casaubon's concern, as he appropriates the authority of psychiatry to wage an essentially religious battle.

Casaubon is, interestingly, the only writer prior to Swift to devote his attention to the link between Descartes and enthusiasm. Like Swift, Casaubon notes the egoistic introversion of Descartes: "I took him for one whom excessive pride and self-conceit (which doth happen unto many) had absolutely bereaved of his wits" (*On Learning* 21). Thus, even as he uses the traditional physiological terminology to explain the basis for enthusiasm, Casaubon's work effectively identifies as the prime characteristic of enthusiasm exactly the
characteristic which we have seen to be the focus of theological approaches to madness: pride.

In 1665, writing with the advantage of having a political ally in power, Henry More produced *Enthusiasmus Triumphantus*, considered by many to be the most important precedent for Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. Like Casaubon, More frequently uses the Galenic image of heat in describing the mechanics of the enthusiastical fit: "[Enthusiasts'] Brains are merely heated and infected by this strong spirit of Phantsie that breaths in Paracelsus and his books" (33). In using this imagery, More anticipates Swift's greater exploitation of the simultaneously mechanical (and thus demeaning) and metaphorical (and thus whimsical) nature of contemporary psychiatry.

More begins his treatise, as might be expected from one who is also vulnerable to attack as an extremist (as a Cambridge Platonist), not with a defense of Anglicanism but with an argument demonstrating the affinity between enthusiasts and atheists: "Those that have only a fiery Enthusiastick acknowledgment of God, [after a] change of diet, feculent old age, or some present damps of Melancholy, will as confidently represent to their Phansy that there is no God, as ever it was represented that there is one" (1). Unlike Casaubon, who concentrates upon enthusiasm as it manifests itself primarily in established though marginal religions, More seeks to find as many manifestations (and pernicious influences) of enthusiasm as he can, wherever he can, pressing home the immorality of such madness.
In short, unlike Casaubon who writes dispassionately if not sympathetically in an effort to warn the individual, More writes vehemently to warn society of the potentially disruptive effects of the individual. Interestingly in relation to Swift, in More we see an example of a man whose own beliefs, as a Cambridge Platonist, were subject to attack but who attempts to appropriate the authority of the establishment to promote his own ideas, legitimating them by discrediting his opponents as mad.

Like Locke, More notes that the madness of enthusiasm is not all-encompassing, that a man may be rational in all matters but one: "It is most observable in Melancholy when it reaches to a disease that it sets on some one particular absurd imagination upon the Mind so fast, that all the evidence of Reason to the contrary cannot remove it, the parties thus affected in other things being as sober and rational as other men" (8). All the more reason, therefore, that men should be wary: "Strength of perception is no sure ground of truth" (20). As Swift seems to sense, however, such precautions can lead to mental paralysis, for a corollary of such a precaution would be that the surer one is, the more one needs to doubt oneself.

Central to More's disapproval of enthusiasm is his belief that enthusiasts can and do voluntarily achieve their states of apoplexy, epilepsy, ecstasy, and delusion (Section 29). As a safeguard against enthusiasm, More enjoins his readers to cultivate temperance, humility, reason, and common sense:
By Reason I understand so settled and cautious a Composure of Mind as will suspect every high flown and forward Fancy that endeavors to carry away the assent before deliberate examination ... patiently to trie it [an idea] by the known Faculties of the Soul, which are either the Common notions that all men in their wits agree upon, or the Evidence of outward Sense or else a clear and distinct Deduction from these. (38)

With the exercise of common sense, humility, reason, and temperance, More concludes, his countrymen need "not despair but that it may recover those that are somewhat farre gon in this Enthusiasticke distemper, so I am confident that it will not fail to prevent it in them that are not as yet considerably smitten" (36-7).

Man has, then, a choice: the exercise of common sense or the pursuit of mad enthusiasm. According to More, physical illness alone, without the consent of the victim, cannot lead a man to religious madness:

Though these causes do act necessarily upon the body, and the body necessarily upon the Mind, yet they do not act irresistibly, unless a man have brought himself to such a weakness by his own fault; as he that by his intemperance has cast himself into a Fever, who then fatally becomes subject to the laws thereof. And though the Devil of himself may doe much, yet he can doe no more then God permits, who will suffer no man to be tempted above what he can bear, provided he be sincere and faithfull, and give not himself to fanatrick fits, either from Pride, or for some sinister projects in the world. (47)

The treatises by More and Casaubon set the tone, language, and strategies for anti-enthusiastic rhetoric for the next hundred years (Sena, "Melancholic Madness" 293). Each emphasizes that enthusiasm may be avoided by a determined will. Medical terms combined with dire warnings against pride filled the pages of subsequent tracts. Writing several decades later, Addison sounds familiar when he counsels: "There
is not a more melancholy object than a man who has his head turned with enthusiasm . . . When the mind finds herself very much inflamed with her devotions, she is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up by something Divine within her"
(Spectator 201).

Politicall Madness

In a culture in which religion and politics were as intertwined as they were in seventeenth century England, it is not surprising to find that accusations of madness in one institutional area easily become similar accusations in the other. Indeed, men who concerned themselves with psychology were frequently also men who concerned themselves with politics. Swift's early benefactor, Sir William Temple, the statesman, has often been credited with establishing in Swift the habit of looking at the passions of politicians in order to comprehend their public policy. Locke, himself a physician whose An Essay on Human Understanding was seminal for much psychological as well as philosophical understanding and debate, was of course also a noted political theorist. Later, in the eighteenth century, Mandeville, who specialized in the treatment of melancholy, was known equally as a political satirist.

The tumultuous events of the Civil War, the Restoration, the Popish plot, and Shaftesbury's rebellion make such a confluence of interests natural, as madness became a possible explanation for the disturbing irrational behavior of otherwise seemingly rational men. The popular discovery that madness did not discriminate among its
victims led the public to appreciate the possibility of madness in high places. The accusation of madness against religious zealots led naturally to accusations against political giants. As Tucker indicates, "Cromwell is the great example for the eighteenth century of the religio-political Enthusiast, a true successor of Mahomet" (95).

Christopher Hill, citing the examples of Abiezer Coppe, Arise Evans, and Eleanor Davies, demonstrates that during the 1640's and '50's, a great many of the people designated as mad appear to be political radicals (World Turned Upside Down 244). Indeed, in Dryden's The Hind and the Panther enthusiasm and democracy seem to go hand in hand (1.2.154-234). Just as religious traditions were being challenged by individuals guided by an inner light and challenging the authority of established churches, so in government, the authority of the King and established seats of power were being challenged by the notion that one man's rights were equal to another's, and one man's notion of government was as good as another's.

As in the moral sphere, so in the political sphere, a faulty logic (the fallacy of "affirming the consequences") seems to have been operative. Madness in and of itself is an affront to authority, and many defenders of authority therefore considered any affront to be madness. In his Two Tracts of Government (1690), Locke brings together his psychology of Reason with his notions of Natural (i.e. established) government, and established religion:

In transgressing the Law of Nature, the Offender declares himself to live by another Rule, than that of reason and common Equity, which is that measure God has set to rule
the actions of Men, for their mutual security: and so he becomes dangerous to Mankind, the tye, which is to secure them from injury and violence, being slighted and broken by him. (2.2.8)

The primary political significance of madness, then, is in its threat to the social bond. At the turn of the century, indeed, one of the most stereotypical traits attributed to madmen was criminal action against people and property, particularly against people and property that should have been dear to them (McDonald 125). Madness was, in short, characterized by or even defined as the transgression of social, familial, or economic relationships. Indeed, Doerner notes that Willis’s model of the functioning of the brain became accepted as a political metaphor as well, with the midbrain area functioning as the sensus communis, operating in equilibrium until disturbed by the rebellion of animal spirits (24).

The psychology of individual politicians and activists was similarly analyzed. In Enthusiasticus Triumphatus, More criticizes politicians as well as religionists: "Those whose Temper carries them most to Political affairs, who love and honour and have a strong sense of Civil Rights, Melancholy heating them makes them sometimes fancy themselves Great Persons . . . and Deliverers of the people sent by God" (22). Thus, in the figure of the rebellious Shaftesbury, for instance, many found an example of a brilliant man, whose brilliance made him susceptible to hysterical passions which were frequently associated with individual genius (Doerner 30).

Madness was a charge hurled by dissenters against the establishment as well. During the burgeoning economic growth of the
empire, hypochondriasis, long associated with the ruling class, appeared to become more common, leading many to believe that such mental disorders were a price to be paid for greater economic growth and freedom. The continuing rise in the suicide rate, which climaxed with the burst of the South Sea Bubble, seemed to be an undeniable demonstration that as one increased in wealth one also ran greater risks of succumbing to mental instability. It followed that as went the individual, so went the nation. It appeared to many that wealth, progress and freedom were the necessary causes. The possibility that economic freedom led to a freedom of choice unbounded by institutional guidelines and that the difficulty of such pioneering may have led to mental problems seems never to have been considered. Instead, explanations were primarily confined to moral theories focusing upon degeneration as a result of luxury. In 1732, The Universal Spectator bluntly blames suicides on deism and free-thinking, and blames free-thinking upon melancholy, suggesting that prosperity allows melancholy to flourish. As a case in point, the paper discusses the suicide of Charles Blount shortly after his publication of the liberal Oracle of Reason. Madness was seen increasingly as the penalty of liberty and luxury and as such became a useful accusation for use by political and religious dissenters against the affluent establishment.

Analysis is tricky here--one wonders whether the institutionalization of confinement, which certainly may be allowed to have increased the association of madness with shame, might not also have by a twisted logic led to an apparent obverse truth, that madness was a
manifestation of a frenzied desire for absolute freedom. Certainly, confinement perpetuated this notion once it surfaced. And the exhibitions of the mad by public authorities reinforced it. As Doerner reports, the insane "were quite literally exhibited as caged 'monsters' to a paying populace, which nowhere more concretely than here was an object of administering reason, the object of its educational and ordering intention against the background of coercion" (16). Each case of insanity, then, became a morality mini-play in which the forces of reason and established authority, for the supposed good of the victim, restrained the madman forcibly, thereby protecting the commonweal against disruption and general madness.

**Madness in Literature**

As exploration of the role in madness played by the imagination continued, controversy developed in letters as well as in religion and politics. The discussion harks back to Plato's *Ion*, interesting for our purposes in that therein Plato both acknowledges the inspiration of the poet as divinely granted (thereby attributing to it a positive value) and implicitly decries it because of its extra-social nature. In the Renaissance and on into the eighteenth century, this debate continues. While madness certainly held a negative cultural and social value—particularly when manifested in matters political or religious—a continued suggestion of its potential value in the arts and even in the sciences emerges. As noted earlier, for many of the English upper class, melancholy, hypochondriasis, and vapors were accounted status
symbols inasmuch as they denoted sensitivity and morality. By many, the early and milder stages of neuroses were accounted "the wise Disease" (Moore 228). Although he noted it in a cautionary tone in conjunction with the negative exemplum of Shaftesbury, Dryden observed unironically that "Great wits are sure to madness near allied / And thin partitions oft their bounds divide" (Absolam and Achitophel 163-64). Indeed, during the Restoration and early eighteenth century, hyponchondrias, manifested in sentimentality, became an outward sign for wit and sometimes even for moral virtue. Restoration authors of note included "Mad Nat Lee" and "melancholic Otway." Moreover, notable geniuses such as Newton, Hume, Bolingbroke and the elder Pitt were known to have suffered from melancholy. Poets during the eighteenth century are also notable for their mental problems. Some, like Warton, actively pursued melancholy. Others did not need to, for it found them. Matthew Prior was a depressive. Samuel Garth was manic depressive. Parnell was an alcoholic. Gray, Collins, Cowper, and Smart were all confined because of their depressions and manias. Far from first appearing in the works of Blake, the influence of unreason, whether voluntary or involuntary, had a long tradition. Blake was, perhaps, the climax--but not the beginning. And this phenomenon did not go unnoticed.

The sense of the potentially positive role of the irrational in art is manifest in the comments of James Howell in 1628 complimenting Will Austen upon the strength of the inspiration of his work, "The Passion:"
Surely you were possess'd with a very strong spirit when you penn'd it, you were become a true Enthusiast. ... All the while I was perusing it, it committed holy rapes upon my soul. ... It were an injury to the public good not to expose to open light such divine raptures for they have an edifying power in them, and may be term'd the very quintessence of Devotion. (qtd in Tucker 78)

In this brief bit of criticism, Howell blends several of the themes which we have seen so far to have been facets of madness: enthusiasm, divine inspiration, spirit, and power. Moreover, he clearly reflects the existence of a minority view promoting irrationality in terms of its merits in literature.

Similarly, in his discussion of religious madness, already examined, Henry More makes an analogy to the role of the poet: "A Poet is an Enthusiast in jest, and an Enthusiast is a Poet in good earnest; Melancholy prevailing so much with him, that he takes his no better than Poeticall fits and figments for divine Inspiration and reall Truth" (14). What is impermissible to the religionist is presented here as normal and allowable to the poet.

Max Byrd points out that subsequently "as an aesthetic doctrine, the Sublime appropriated positively most of the ideas and values that the Augustans had associated negatively with madness. And ... it helped to spread a new anti-Lockean conception of the human mind and its powers" (136). This is certainly the case, though the chronology seems faulty: the anti-Lockean movement was developing simultaneously with Locke. In his preface to The Humourists in 1671, Thomas Shadwell remarks that "in fancy mad men equal if not excel all others" (Spingarn 2:159). Similarly in 1701, in his Advancement and
Reformation of Modern Poetry, John Dennis emphasizes the role of the irrational: "Poetical Enthusiasm is a Passion guided by Judgment, whose Cause is not comprehended" (Critical Works 1: 217). Dennis notes and distinguishes several of the enthusiastic passions useful and effective in poetry: admiration, terror, horror, joy, sadness, and desire.

Tucker has noted Dryden's role in revising the idea of inspiration when he ascribes good poetry to "poetical fervour," an idea borrowed from the ancients but stripped of its connections to divinities and muses (162). By 1731, the Daily Courant could cite as commonplace the "known Observation, That all Great Wits have a tincture of Madnesse" (November 16).

Though prevalent, of course, the idea was not undisputed. Most particularly, it received rebuttal in works of satire which culminated with Swift and Pope, with whom we are concerned. As early as 1672, Andrew Marvell satirized the poet and ecclesiastic, Samuel Parker (Mr. Bayes), by remarking upon his embracing the irrational, as he "raised his Hypochondria into the Region of the Brain: that his head swell'd like any Bladder with wind and vapour. . . . Nothing now would serve him but he must be a madman in print and write a Book of Ecclesiastical Policy" (qtd by Pinkus 1: 36-37).

Such literary disputes, however, did not remain confined to the pages of satires and critical pamphlets. A vivid illustration is the case of James Carkesse who felt the full force of psychiatric authority. In 1679, although without acclaim, Carkesse's Lucida Intervalla was published, offering an account of his seclusion in
Bedlam. The poet recounts his disputes with his keepers, consistently asserting that far from mad he is merely poetically inspired. Two titles of poems summarize the debate: "Poet no Lunatick" and "On the doctors telling him that 'till he left off making Verses, he was not fit to be discharged" (Hunter and Macalpine 214-15). Clearly, at this point, a crucial disagreement exists between social standards of lucidity (as proclaimed by the doctors) and a lone poet's sense of the propriety of his individual aesthetic vision.

Such a stand-off has characterized the doctor-patient relationship for centuries. Several writers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most notably Mandeville, cite the presence or absence of denial in the patient as the distinguishing characteristic between melancholy and madness. Almost by definition, melancholic patients, like those today who voluntarily consult therapists, were those who acknowledged their condition and actively sought treatment. Mad folk, on the other hand, were distinguishable by having to be actively pursued and confined because a belief in their own sanity was a component of their madness. The contemporary reader may be more familiar with this tautological argument from Freudians who argue, for instance, that the more vehemently a patient argues against the therapist's suggestions about the existence of sublimation or repression, the more deep-seated and significant the sublimations and repressions are. In the hands of the satirist acting as a psychiatrist like Swift, such an argument is excruciatingly powerful. If the satire's victim admits no fault, such stubbornness is an indication of
the enormity of his madness. If, on the other hand, the satiric victim squirms uncomfortably under the stinging truth, the prognosis has been satisfactorily validated.

Needless to say, though satire like Swift’s and Pope’s frequently won the day, it lost the battle to the emergence of the Romanticization of the irrational. Indeed, in 1986 one continues to encounter remarks such as the following, excerpted from a review of Montaigne criticism: "It needs an inspired madman to think of something totally new and to dare to break ancient social and literary taboos."

* * * * *

Madness, then, during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, inspired a hodgepodge of responses—some of them contradictory. Since many wrote of melancholy out of personal experience, they were not reluctant to claim some virtues for it. To the extent that reason was valued, the usurpation of reason by the madness of the heated imagination was feared. To the extent that reason was recognized as limited—in religious and aesthetic matters, for instance—the aid of the imagination, nigh unto madness, was valued by some and actively cultivated.

Generally, it was agreed that madness was a product of abnormal inner activity, maybe physical, maybe moral. The source and type of the activity was hotly debated—yet a consensus seems to have been maintained that immorality was a frequent precedent to madness. Since madness came from within, all men were thought susceptible to it. Moreover, associated as it was with man’s passions and man’s lower
nature, the prelude to madness was frequently seen as a voluntary surrender—men had to choose to take the first steps toward insanity, although the subsequent progression of the affliction might be irreversible either through the will or through medical and spiritual treatment. Still, madmen were to be pitied for all men must fear madness. In his 1733 poem *Bedlam*, Thomas Fitzgerald describes inmates from all walks of life and warns his readers against pride, the first step toward madness:

> If Pride, if Envy, if the lust of Gain,  
> If Wild ambition in thy Bosom reign,  
> Alas! thou vaunt'st thy sober Sense in vain,  
>
> In these poor Bedlamites thy Self survey  
> Thy Self, less innocently mad than They.  
> (Hunter and Macalpine, 357)

Madness, as the outgrowth of sin, was a moral signifier, and madmen served as exempla in sermons every Sunday.

Madness was also recognized as disruptive to social order, and much that seemed disruptive to social order was consequently condemned as madness. In social terms, the designation of a man as a lunatic was an effective way to strip him of power. Society as a whole had to be vigilant in order to quash outbreaks of potentially subversive widespread madness. This was noted to be all the more difficult because madness was known frequently to occur in short, sporadic bursts—surrounded by lucid and rational arguments—even among the very best of men.
CHAPTER 2

"A MORE MODERATE HEROISM":
THE CRITIQUE OF THE CLASSICAL HERO

The predominant cultural hero of the mid-eighteenth century was indisputably the gentleman, whose ascendancy to hero status was rapid though not uncontested once he entered the lists. In the period between the relative decrease in importance of the courtier (circa Elizabeth) and the hammerlock applied by the Spectator to the public imagination, a wide variety of heroic virtues were proposed for public emulation by philosophers, journalists, and other authors. Contenders for heroic status included the Christian, the businessman, the political savant, the warrior, the scientist, the reformer, the explorer, and even the poet. The English gentleman, ultimately, had the advantage of being in a position to dabble in all these varied realms of experience, virtue, and expertise, and consequently was most consistently recognized as the ultimate expression of the virtues of his culture. However, as much may be learned about this period from an examination of the contestants as from an examination of the ultimate victor.

To be sure, both in verse and on stage, authors like Dryden continued to posit heroic characters somewhat in the classical and romantic mold, whose constancy or whose eventual socialization allow
them to prevail against threats posed by corruption, infidelity, or invasion. Still, what seems most telling about the age is the simultaneous critique of old heroic modes even among those who might otherwise be classified as defenders of the classical faith. While the label "mock-heroic", as applied both to individual works (Le Lutrin, Absalom and Achitophel, MacFlecknoe, The Battle of the Books, The Rape of the Lock, and other less notable examples) and to the age itself, has been rather generally rejected by contemporary critics (e.g., Regan), we should not overlook two important factors which must temper the disapprobation recently directed toward this term as a result of the assumption of a uni-directional satiric effect in these works.

The rationale for the rejection of the label "mock-heroic" is that the works to which the term has been customarily applied direct their satirical energy exclusively to the mockery of contemporary shortcomings and never to criticism of the ancients. Much has been made of the veneration with which both Dryden and Pope approached the classical epic and the ultimate disappointment which both faced upon realizing that their age was not conducive to the productions of equally venerable works in the epic genre. Both contented themselves as best they could by writing translations of the originals. Thus, goes the argument, the juxtaposition of modern content with classical apparatus, classical allusion, and classical style--the standard operating procedure in a "mock-heroic"--serves only to highlight the inadequacies of the current age. Robert H. Bell summarizes the argument succinctly, explaining that English writers after Dryden
"adapted the heroic vision primarily to gauge their characters' inability to live up to it in any serious way" ("Metamorphosis of 'Heroic Enterprise' in Dryden and Pope" 48). Dryden himself, Bell argues, uses the Virgilian heroic model in his satirical poems to "recall a more exalted plane of reference by which to measure current failures" (51).

Such readings flirt dangerously, however, with the intentional fallacy. Waiving questions of intentionality and reading texts qua texts reveals a reflexive dynamic at work within these poems which, intentionally or not, diminishes the perceived stature of the ancients. A major element in classical Greek heroic characterization was the refusal to do battle with unworthy opponents lest heroic reputation be tainted by the undertaking of un-heroic tasks. Yet in Swift's Battle of the Books, ancient authors do battle vigorously against unworthy eighteenth-century opponents. Although their superiority is clear and their victory decisive, the epic poets certainly lose some of their dignity simply by condescending to such a battle. Critics are certainly correct in claiming that the bulk of the criticism is directed at the contemporaries of the poets, but the classical heroes are touched by the satire as well.

Unlike their originals who were characterized as semi-divine, with the emphasis upon the "divine", eighteenth-century mock-heroes are mortalized, humanized, socialized, and made vulnerable thus to criticism. Classical heroes are reincarnated as Mirabel, Gulliver, Macheath, Belinda and Clarissa, Tom Jones, and Jonathan Wild.
While neither the social milieu nor the feats of these modern incarnations of the hero matches the grandeur of those of their ancestors, the personalities are surprisingly and strikingly similar. The pride, ambition, and wisdom of Belinda, for instance, are not unlike the pride, ambition, and wisdom which characterized Glaucus and Sarpedon. In a social and cultural milieu which allows few or no opportunities for the heroic spirit to manifest itself in the same ways as of yore, these personalities seek new ways, defined and sanctioned by the culture, to realize themselves. While heroic enterprise is diminished in the eighteenth century, heroic characterization remains relatively constant. And when the poems' satiric edges are turned toward the personalities of their heroes, they cut into their classical predecessors as well.

Moreover, critics who deny the possibility of an intentional attack upon the ancients consistently refuse to acknowledge the existence or influence of such important though diverse works as Don Quixote, Troilus and Cressida, Coriolanus, Hudibras, and Paradise Lost. A summary of the manifestations of the heroic figure and manifestations of anti-heroic sentiment as well, from classical origins to the mid-seventeenth century, will reveal some of the problems which faced Restoration and eighteenth-century writers and readers when attempting either to create or to appreciate something like a classical hero. An analysis of the way in which authors of different centuries approach the re-creation of the hero and the tradition of the epic reveals the problematic nature of the "heroic"
ideal, so that the judgment of Henry Fielding in *Tom Jones* is hardly unexpected: "Heroes, not withstanding the high ideas which, by means of flatterers they may entertain of themselves, or the world may conceive of them, have certainly more of mortal than divine about them" (1: 509; 9.5).

Because the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries mark a turning point, perhaps a breaking point, in the history of the idea of hero, the term itself is potentially subject to ambiguous interpretation when we discuss the literature and culture of that period. On the one hand is the *epic* hero, still foremost in the minds of the literate British. As has been suggested above, the continuing affection and veneration which authors felt they owed to the literature of the classical period in both Greece and Rome made them ever conscious of the exploits of Hercules, Odysseus, Achilles, Jason, and the rest. At the same time, conscious efforts had been made for several centuries to develop a new form of literature which could accommodate the epic hero within the Christian ethos and the emergent Renaissance culture. Thus, the sense of a *cultural hero*, (that is, the sense of the word which we use most frequently today outside of humanities seminars), though perhaps not yet fully distinct, was certainly in the air.

The *OED* shows continuing primary usage of "hero" in its classical epic sense as late as 1840:

A name given (as in Homer) to men of superhuman strength, courage, or ability, favoured by the gods; at a later time regarded as intermediate between gods and men, and immortal.
The later notion included men of renown supposed to be deified on account of great and noble deeds, for which they were also venerated generally or locally. (s. b. 1)

The modern conception of cultural hero does not begin to emerge until 1586 when the word is applied to "a man distinguished by extraordinary valour and martial achievements; one who does brave or noble deeds; an illustrious warrior." The denotation of military prowess remains until 1661, the beginning of the era in which we are here interested, when Glanville applied the word to philosophers and scientists like Descartes and Galileo. Not until the work of Carlyle in 1840 does the word take on fully and explicitly our current application. Yet the sense of a hero as someone to emulate seems to have been at the heart of the changing concept and to have caused problems because of the incongruities which it created.

Thus, the exploration of the concept of hero in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century is difficult because the concept is more in flux than it is stable. However, an examination of the works of the period reveals a continuing critical attitude toward the traditional epic hero and continuing attempts to re-design the hero with qualities which more exactly reflect the values of Restoration culture.

The Classical Hero

Maurice McNamee distinguishes the differing characteristics of the hero in Greek, Roman, and Christian cultures as follows:

The Greek ideal tends to be exaggeratedly individualistic and self-centered; the Roman ideal, on the contrary, is exaggeratedly social, tending to subordinate the individual to
society or the State; while the Christian ideal attempts to
preserve the best elements of both the Greek and Roman ideals,
but gives new dignity to the individual as a child of God, and
puts a check on his unlimited self-aggrandizement by clari-
fying his dependence on God and his duty to his fellow men and
by orienting his whole life to a clearly conceived destiny
beyond time. (Honor and the Epic Hero 180-81)

From our historical perspective we can see that much of the strength of
the epic poem throughout its history is based, as McNamee suggests,
upon "the congruity between [the heroes'] actions and the ideals of the
culture which the epic embodies" (Honor x). As cultures change, heroes
change. Identification of change in either offers insights into the other.

In general, the classical Greek hero is self-centered, self-
sufficient, and proud. Heroes are for the Greeks by definition
naturally superior to men and must be constantly aware of that
superiority in order to maintain it. While heroic actions are
necessary in order to demonstrate intrinsic heroic virtue, actions are
merely indicative—not definitive.

As early as Aristotle, as Michael West has pointed out ("Dryden
and the Disintegration of Renaissance Heroic Ideals"), a discrepancy
exists in approaches to the Greek hero, a discrepancy which would
subsequently manifest itself in the struggle of the seventeenth century
with the apparent incongruity between Greek epic heroes and cultural
heroes. On the one hand, Aristotle posits "heroic virtue" as an excess
of virtue, a more than mortal degree of virtue (Nichomachean Ethics
1145a). Such heroes are semi-divine, and such a virtue is beyond
ethics and morality just as divinity is beyond humanity. As such, it
invites admiration but not aspiration. Moreover, as the seventeenth century would perceive, such virtu is literarily effective but not socially adaptive. On the other hand, Aristotle designates magnanimity as the primary virtue which distinguishes the generally great man: "The Magnanimous man bears himself as he ought in the matter of both honour and dishonour. In fact, it goes without saying that the Magnanimous clearly have honour as their chief concern: since honour is what the truly great consider themselves specially to merit, and that in a very definite degree" (Nichomachean Ethics 1123b). Magnanimity is achievable by mortals. However, magnanimity and virtu are as often conflated as distinguished in the subsequent history of the idea of the hero.

Even the magnanimous man, however, in his pursuit of honor, is fundamentally unsocial. The Greek conception of honor is based upon one’s recognition of one’s own excellence. Aristotle continues: "Undue humility is more opposed to pride than vanity is; for it is both commoner and worse" (Nichomachean Ethics 1125a). Thus, a hero like Achilles is careful to choose great dangers—combat with Hector, for example. Achilles’s consistent application of superlatives to himself strikes our modern Judeo-Christian ears as shockingly immodest and egocentric, yet he is also consistently sincere, and no one around him, mortal or divine, ever contradicts him. Indeed, the whole of the Iliad may be seen as a gradual revelation of the justness of both his claims and his resentments. A Greek hero must be ever on his guard to protect his honor by not condescending to undertake those labors and dangers
which a more common man might be able to accomplish. In short, as Aristotle explains, "The magnanimous man does not run into trifling dangers, nor is he fond of danger, because he honours few things; but he will face great dangers, and when he is in danger, he is unsparing of his life, knowing that there are conditions on which life is not worth living" (Nichomachean Ethics 1124b). Eugene Waith summarizes:

The hero’s disregard for others is a striking feature of his isolation and of his stature. There is no question of his reciprocating the feelings others have for him. His self-absorption is a concomitant of the primitive aretê which makes obligation to others secondary to the hero’s devotion to his own integrity. (The Herculean Hero 24)

A haughty manner, particularly when in company with the great, is essential to the Greek hero lest he create the impression that he is in any way inferior.

Aristotle’s analysis was not beyond dispute or reproach, although it would exert, via the works of Aquinas, a tremendous influence during the Renaissance. Plato, viewing the problem of the hero from a social context, had taken a position at odds with his student’s regarding both the manner and the nature of the hero. While in his Politics Aristotle argues that heroes, because of their transcendent virtue, deserve to take over the state, Plato had recognized the incompatibility of the self-sufficiency of a Greek hero with a social role. In The Republic, the highest virtue which Plato attributes to a leader is unselfishness. In this respect, Plato resembles the Romans more than he does the other Greeks.

The fundamental difference between Aristotle and Plato, then, represents a disagreement that would not be resolved until the cultural
hero became fully distinct from the literary one. The traditional Greek epic hero excites admiration in his literary exploits but offers little as a cultural role-model. Critics approaching the epic looking for excitement favor the Greek model. Critics looking for social applications of literature must reject him. The difference between these two expectations of heroes is reflected as well in the difference between the heroes of the Greeks and Romans.

The clearest enunciation of Roman ideals appears in the works of Cicero, who, personally and painfully aware of the dangers of tyranny, bases his value system upon duty and generates a social ethics which implies a cultural hero not at all congruent with the Greek epic or Aristotelian hero. Personal honor, far from being a supreme value, may be achieved according to Cicero only through the fulfillment of duty to others: "Our first duty is to the immortal gods; our second to country; our third to parents" (*De Officiis* 1.45). Duty to self is an alien concept in a context where true honor is social rather than individual or personal. Personal virtues according to Cicero only make duty greater; the man with more to contribute is more duty-bound to do so. Aeneas, thus, is the model of the Roman hero. Indeed, as Cicero points out, personal honor may have to be sacrificed for the good of the state: "It is our duty, then, to be more ready to endanger our own than the public welfare and to hazard honour and glory more readily than other advantages" (1.24). Cicero is particularly wary of the dangers of a self-sufficient glory-seeking hero as a powerful statesman: "When one begins to aspire to pre-eminence, it is difficult
to preserve that spirit of fairness which is absolutely essential to justice. The result is that such men do not allow themselves to be constrained whether by argument or by any public and lawful authority" (1.19). For readers in the Restoration and eighteenth century like Swift, who refers specifically to his admiration for "Roman virtue" (Gulliver's Travels 199; 3.8), this critique of the Greek hero was probably as important as the alternative ideal which the Romans offered.

The Christian Hero and His Descendants

Christian values were, of course, also diametrically opposed to the ideal represented by the Greek hero, yet the two approaches vied for predominance in literature and consequently created incongruities for more than sixteen hundred years. Christianity offered a new human ideal based primarily upon humility and charity, both of which were incompatible with the Greek ideal. The Christian emphasis upon a higher kingdom, one not of this world, makes the exploits of the classical hero literally mundane. Moreover, the Christian hero must give to God all glory for whatever is accomplished on earth. In the epistles to the Corinthians, Paul undermines the concept of personal honor by emphasizing that the only thing truly belonging to man is his sin; he has nothing of his own to praise or to glorify (I Cor. 4:7; II Cor. 12). Consequently, in medieval literature, heroes are no longer portrayed as self-sufficient. Both Brythnoth and Roland, reflecting the Christian ideology of their creators, fail when they
trust only to their own valor; both attain heroic status when they explicitly surrender to God. In stark contrast to the haughtiness of the Greeks, the Christian hero's greatest act is submission. As Eugene Waith points out, the pursuit of honor or glory becomes in effect a liability to the hero in Christian romance: "Determination not to lose honour keeps Roland from sounding his horn; a raging thirst for honour launches Raoul on his bloody career. . . . Yvain wins Laudine by his valour and then leaves her for fear of losing his reputation as a fighter" (Ideas of Greatness 15). The haughty magnanimity of the classical Greek hero, then, continues to appear as a characteristic of the Christian hero—-but one which was criticized as a flaw in Christian heroic character.

In light of such a radical redefinition of heroic character, it is surprising that the concept of "hero" could remain in any way intact in literature. What remained, rather than a static literary conceptualization of idealized or transcendent masculinity, was primarily a plot. The plot frequently features a society with an ineffective or passive ruler. In many cases, the society faces a critical threat from outside and a man who partakes of the virtues honored by his society steps forward and makes a formal commitment to accomplish a task which will avert the threat. During his adventure, his virtue (and consequently that of the culture) is tested. The plot sometimes seems to hinge upon an element of chance, indicating Providence at work. In J. Douglas Canfield's reading of Beowulf, for instance, although the hero is tempted to break his troth, he remains
loyal and "his troth is validated by divine power" (Word as Bond 6-21). If the hero remains constant to the cultural code, he and his culture survive the threat, and the code itself is validated.

Such an abstract characterizes the plots of heroic tales from the Odyssey to Superman to Dungeons and Dragons, and its longevity demonstrates the inherent attractiveness of the heroic plot. However, it de-emphasizes the attributes of the hero, as it must, because of the necessity that these be informed by changing cultural components. Indeed, such components are of most concern to us here, for they embody the thesis and antithesis in the dialectic which perpetuated concurrent respectful and critical attitudes toward the hero in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Medieval heroic texts, then, illustrate the maintenance of the same fundamental heroic plot in a society which continued to be plagued by war, but they show also the results of the Christian ethos being brought to bear hard upon heathen heroic values. Three early medieval heroes--Beowulf, Brythnoth, and Roland--are like Aeneas in their sense of inner direction. All three act heroically but not supra-humanly. The divine component of the hero, generally accounted for by the Greeks through parentage (e.g. Herakles), has been physically divorced from the hero's intrinsic nature and is presented as the intervention, grace, or sanction of the Christian God. Beowulf is the most exemplary of these in the poet's Christian and consequently critical attitude toward the protagonist. At the end of his adventure with the Green Knight, Gawaine is humbled rather than exalted, in accordance with
Christ's warning: "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

In the late Middle Ages, there are no truly charismatic heroes exactly because of the Christian milieu in which they are presented: Troilus is defeated, Lancelot is flawed. Galahad is a culmination of several cultures' confluent attempts to combine the virtues of warrior and saint. Interestingly, the warrior is subordinated to the saint, as love of God is portrayed as superior to love of fellow man. Moreover, love of fellow man predominates over love of self. Ascendant virtues, such as constancy, troth, courtesy, and loyalty act as restraints upon the potential exercise of powers, keeping the hero socialized (Waith, Ideas of Greatness 10). Thus, as heroes are created as objects of emulation and aspiration, their function as objects for distant admiration decreases, and the literary hero becomes increasingly culturally heroic and, concomitantly, less epically heroic.

In order to understand this profound change under the influence of Christianity, one needs an acquaintance with the writers who most clearly defined the emerging Christian ethos: Augustine, Aquinas, Erasmus, and Thomas More. Repeatedly Augustine warns of the dangers of the desire for mundane honor and emphasizes the necessity of inner-direction (conscience) and submission to God. While acknowledging that fame and the subsequent approval of men are effective spurs to difficult action, he stresses that such motivation limits a man's vision to this world alone. Conscience, on the other hand, is a
similarly strong motivation, yet elevates man's vision to the next world: "Do not well with an intent that men should see you do so, and so turn to behold you, who by yourselves are nothing: but do so that they may glorify your Father in heaven unto whom if they turn they may be such as you are" (City of God 5.14). Consequently, for the salvation of both his own soul and those of the men around him, the Christian hero must act according only to God's will, relinquishing his own will and those of his fellows:

Wherefore without doubt, we had better resist this desire [for honor] than yield to it. For so much the nearer are we to God, as we are purer from this impurity: which although in this life it be not fully rooted out of the heart, because it is a temptation that troubles even the most proficient in religion, yet let the man of righteousness suppress the thirst of ambitiousness. . . . But the others, living in an earthly city, wherein the end of all their endeavors was by themselves propounded to themselves, the fame and domination of this world and not the eternity of heaven, not in the everlasting life, but in their own ends and the mouths of their posterity: what should they love, but glory, whereby they desired to survive after death in the memories and mouths of such as commended them. (City of God 5.14)

Thus, the concept of glory, like everything else, becomes for the Christian a theological problem because it raises questions about the nature of immortality and eternity.

Taking up the problem eight centuries later, Aquinas dismisses the virtues of ambition and glory even more soundly, defining ambition as an irrational desire for honor (Summa Theologica 2a2ae.131.2) and underscoring in the concept of heroic glory the inherent lack of recognition of man's debt to God:

Honour denotes reverence shown to a person in witness of his excellence. Now two things have to be considered with regard to man's honour. The first is that a man has not from himself
the thing in which he excelles, wherefore on this count honour is due principally, not to him but to God. The second point that calls for observation is that the thing in which man excels is given to him by God, that he may profit others thereby: wherefore a man ought so far to be pleased that others bear witness to his excellence, as this enables him to profit others. (2a2ae.131)

Honor becomes a paradox for the Christian because it can only be achieved by humility.

At the same time and in the same work, Aquinas confuses matters by trying to adapt Aristotelian "heroic virtue" into Christian theology, for he refers to piety as that "more excellent virtue which the Philosopher calls heroic or god-like, which according to us would seem to pertain to the gifts of the Holy Ghost" (2a2ae.159.2). Michael West summarizes the resulting confusion: "Partly in result, Aristotelian heroic virtue was conflated with magnanimity in much Renaissance thought, typically in the belief that in their highest perfection the various virtues are also called heroic, deriving this title from heroic virtue" ("Dryden and the Disintegration of Renaissance Heroic Ideals" 194). Thus, as piety became a new synonym for heroic virtue, the sense of the semi-divine nature of the hero was reinforced in one way, even as it was discredited in another. Clearly, there is a continuing conservative reluctance to relinquish the qualities of the traditional hero which elicit admiration.

Thereafter, not only honor but the activity of war itself came under attack by Christian Humanists. In his study of chivalry, Sidney Painter points out that "love of fame among twelfth century knights was an ethical rationalization which seemed to endow their endless
turbulence and violence with an elevated motive" (French Chivalry 34). To counter such deleterious effects of literature, Thomas More in the discussion of the military tactics of his Utopians deliberately flouts the old military code of honor by promoting payoffs, espionage, and the exploitation of mercenaries as the most effective stratagems used by the inhabitants of the Utopian society. At the end of Utopia, More specifies pride and ambition, components of the personalities of the traditional Greek hero, as the greatest of the potential evils in society, a view which he undoubtedly inherited from Augustine and which he no doubt applied in his estimation of the career of Cardinal Wolsey. Continuing attention to the disparities between literature and life, thus, seems to underlie the continuing criticism lodged against the asocial nature of the traditional Greek hero.

Similarly, Erasmus, More's influential correspondent, in his handbook for the Christian knight (Enchiridion Militis Christiani) emphasizes that the primary role (and any consequent honor or glory) of the citizen/warrior is not personal or individual in nature but social and based upon Christian charity. Rather than praising and promoting professional glory seekers, Erasmus depicts a model knight who is unromantic, private, sturdy, and conscientious, not looking for trouble, and, in battle eager to be done with his work. Spenser's Redcrosse Knight may well be the realization of Erasmus's proposed model.

In the Encomium Moriae, Erasmus blasts the traditional heroes who reap the glory and spoils of wars as "spongers, pimps, robbers,
murderers, peasants, morons, debtors and that sort of scum of the earth" (46). Such a view would become increasingly prevalent in Britain after the Civil War, and Samuel Johnson seems to echo Erasmus in *Adventurer* 99:

I am far from intending to vindicate the sanguinary projects of heroes and conquerors, and would wish rather to diminish the reputation of their success, than the infamy of their miscarriages: for I cannot conceive why he that has burnt cities, and wasted nations, and filled the world with horror and desolation, should be more kindly regarded by mankind than he that dies in the rudiments of wickedness. (*Works* 2: 433)

Just such an attitude seems to have been the outcome of the trend under examination here.

Along with the critique of the classical hero, then, came a critique of the knighthood in its military capacity. By the Renaissance, chivalry, which had kept the knighthood heroic, was primarily a romanticized, ceremonial abstraction of itself. The work of Spenser, in fact, seems to illustrate a movement of the heroic ideal away from martial to Christian and courtly values. Spenser, unlike Augustine, dissociates the pursuit of earthly glory from pride and self-aggrandizement by demonstrating that the pursuit of glory can and probably should be carried out in service—Arthur's service to the Queen, for instance. The adventures of the Redcrosse knight, Sir Artegall, and Sir Guyon are quests for Holiness, Justice, and Temperance, emphasizing Spenser's theme that all victories come from God. The semi-divine nature of former heroes is nowhere in evidence. Instead, the heroes strive to become closer to God by humbly doing his will. Moreover, the poem, insofar as it is an allegory, provides
merely a ceremonial shell in which the surface features of heroism are far less important than the hidden content.

Shakespeare's heroic characters are illustrative in another way of the problem which Renaissance authors had in maintaining the formerly rich and profound sense of the heroic. His works demonstrate the enduring affection for the trappings of the heroic, but his plots show the difficulty of presenting heroic characters. In his first tragedy, both Titus and Aaron are characters derived from the heroic tradition, Titus from the martial hero, and Aaron from the wily adventurer. Aaron, of course, proves astonishingly wicked, and Titus shows himself incapable of accommodating himself to a peaceful society, committing errors leading to the death of his son and ultimately to his own madness and death. Hamlet, later, is haunted by the large and looming heroic figure from the past, his father, murdered by the realpolitik figure of his uncle. Much of Hamlet's dilemma arises from his perception of his own inadequacy in light of the heroic expectations of his father's ghost. Like Titus Andronicus, Hamlet is driven toward the realm of madness by the incongruity between the heroic myths of the past and the domestic realities of the present.

In Othello too, the character of the martial hero is shattered by his inability to handle domestic problems and consequently, "perplexed in the extreme," is driven to murder and subsequent suicide because incapable of adapting to the social milieu in which he finds himself. Antony too finds himself incapable of maintaining both the role of the warrior hero and that of a denizen of a sumptuous culture.
Similarly, in spite of all the talk in Troilus and Cressida about the nature of honor, the figures of Troilus and Achilles, embroiled, as Thersites says, in a bloody battle where "all the argument is a whore and a cuckold", are obviously reduced from the stature which they had theretofore enjoyed in literature.

In Coriolanus Shakespeare most clearly indicates the incompatibility of a Greek-styled hero with a Roman-styled republic. Coriolanus, though capable of serving his people in battle while simultaneously seeking his own heroic glory, cannot abide the contamination which he perceives tainting his honor as a result of his social and domestic role. In fact, his role as good son ultimately proves to be his undoing as martial hero. Like the madness of Ajax, Coriolanus's rage reflects pressures placed by emerging democratic institutions on a sensibility that finds itself unable to abandon old ways.

Only in Prince Hal does Shakespeare create a truly heroic figure—and there have been some who have argued that some of the characterization of Henry IV, Part II, and even Henry V, is not without satire. Falstaff's presence simultaneous with the development of Hal's heroic character, like the later presence in literature of the mock-heroic during the flourishing of the heroic, shows the dialogic imagination at work. Ultimately, of course, Falstaff must be rejected, just as France must be defeated, so that the values of the English culture may be affirmed. Yet, just as Henry goes on to his own play (Henry V), so Sir John reappears in a play of his own (Merry Wives of
Windsor) proving that his spirit is far from dead and that the literary dialectic between hero and mock-hero continues.

Subsequently in Milton, the gathering forces subversive to the classical ideal of heroism combined with the outbreak of the zeal of the Reformation culminate in repeated overthrows of the epic form. In his authoritative study, Milton and the Renaissance Hero, John Steadman makes clear how Milton, in positing Satan as the heroic type, used epic and heroic traditions to undermine themselves and to promote a new Christian heroic ideal in their place, promoting, as Milton claimed, "a better fortitude:"

Unlike the usual heroic poem, [Paradise Lost] does not propose a victory but a defeat. . . . Its hero is not a paragon of virtue, but the archetypal sinner. The results of this conflict are not glory but shame, not dominion or deliverance, but servitude and death. Instead of celebrating his merit, the poem chastises his vice. Its argument is in reality an "argument of human weakness rather than of strength". (v)

In short, in Steadman's words, the argument is "epic heresy." Milton explicitly proposes that Paradise Lost is a heroic poem--yet by showing that heroic attributes are most appropriate to anti-Christian forces (specifically Satan), he subverts the classical heroic ideal.

Milton's views, scattered throughout his works, make clear his consistent viewpoint regarding the glory-seeking hero. In The Christian Doctrine, for instance, he explains:

The virtues more peculiarly appropriate to a high station are lowliness of mind and magnanimity. Lowliness of mind consists in thinking humbly of ourselves, and in abstaining from self-commendation, except where occasion requires it. Magnanimity is shown, when in seeking or avoiding the acceptance or refusal of riches, advantages, or honors, we are actuated by a regard to our own dignity rightly understood. (Christian Doctrine 2.9)
Thus, in his later work, *Paradise Regained*, the major action of the 
true hero (Christ) is to say "No." Such a definition of magnanimity 
radically reinterprets Aristotle's original, in effect making 
Aristotle's discussion of *prudence* (an understanding of the limits of 
human and individual capability and glory) outweigh in importance the 
traditional emphasis upon the pursuit of glory. Magnanimity becomes 
humility—the antidote for madness.

Milton also attempts to re-define glory, denouncing the mundane 
and promoting the eternal. In *Paradise Lost*, the archangel Michael 
notes the irony of the praise which mankind would lavish upon 
 conquerors:

To overcome in Battel, and subdue  
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite  
Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch  
Of human Glorie, and for Glorie done  
Of triumph, to be stil'd great Conquerors  
Patrons of Mankind, Gods and Sons of Gods,  
Destroyers rightly called and Plagues of men. (11.691-697)

Similarly, in *Paradise Regained*:

But why should man seek glory? who of his own  
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs  
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?  
Who for so many benefits received  
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,  
And so of all true good himself despoil'd. (3.134-39)

Throughout his works, then, Milton denigrates the values which informed the 
characterization of traditional epic heroes.

Milton's radically different sense of the arena where glory may 
be pursued is made clear in *Paradise Regained*:

But if there be in glory aught of good,  
It may by means far different be attain'd
Without ambition, war, or violence;  
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,  
By patience, temperance. (3.89-94)

Such emphasis upon the eternal and such scorn for the mundane subverts the traditional hero and heroic endeavor throughout Milton's work. Steadman convincingly argues that Milton's primary target in his attack is exactly the false fortitude which attempts to ignore man's total dependence upon God and that this attack is carried out in a series of contrasts:

He contrasts the specious prudence with the real, the vain wisdom with the valid, the false love with the true, the evil leadership with the good, the hubristic magnanimity with the virtuous, and the apparent constancy of the reprobate with the true steadfastness of the saint. (43)

Consistently, Milton presents classical heroic virtues in their lowest form, thereby demonstrating their incapacity for exactly what they claim most vehemently: self-sufficiency. Samson, for instance, exhibits heroic might, but lacks heroic prudence. In contrast, Milton's admirable characters exhibit strength achieved through submission and recognition of weakness. Adam, for instance, like classical heroes is divinely created, but the action of his plot is initiated by his transgression. Like Achilles, Adam errs, repents, and then continues in his heroic enterprise. In his description of his own poetic undertaking, Milton claims Adam's plot as heroic material is superior to that of Achilles:

Sad task, yet argument  
Not less but more Heroic than the wrath  
Of stern Achilles on his Foe pursu'd  
Thrice Fugitive about Troy Wall. (9.14-17)
While Satan, the very emblem of self-will run riot, is ultimately exposed to shame in his transformation once again into serpent form, Adam achieves a moral victory beyond the capacity of the mundane hero, as he indicates to Michael at the close of the poem:

Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,  
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill  
Of knowledge, what this Vessel can contain;  
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.  
Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,  
And love with fear the only God, to walk  
As in his presence, ever to observe  
His providence, and on him sole depend,  
Merciful over all his works, with good  
Still overcoming evil, and by small  
Accomplishing great things, by things deem’d weak  
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise  
By simply meek; that suffering for Truth’s sake  
Is fortitude to highest victory. (12.557-70)

More subtle in Milton’s work but equally significant, as J. Douglas Canfield argues, is the prominence of a new type of figure that may be deemed heroic: the One Just Man. This new heroic type is manifested in Abdiel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, Jesus, Samson, and even Milton himself. Such a hero is eminently emulable and is posited both for our Christian aspiration as well as for our admiration. Canfield argues convincingly that the emergence of such a heroic figure reflects a shift in English literature from patriarchal authority to fraternal authority, supporting his contention with the demonstration of Restoration drama’s subsequent focus upon the younger brother (Word as Bond). I would add that the example of Milton, the poet, as One Just Man is a significant accompaniment to the re-emergence of the heroic figure of the satirist-poet as hero, particularly in the renewed
influence of Horace and Juvenal as manifested in the works of Dryden, Swift, and Pope.

In the work of Milton, then, are found the three routes which the idea of the literary hero would subsequently follow. In Satan, greatness and evil become inextricably entwined, resulting in a character who inspires both awe and revulsion—much like the contemporary Machiavels of the Restoration stage. In Adam, on the other hand, Milton creates a new, quiet hero whose virtue lies in submission and in repudiation of aspirations and curiosity—a precursor of the domestic heroes who soon were to take over the English stage and to populate the pages of the novel as well. And in Milton himself, the author as prophet becomes heroic.

Milton's Satan served too as the model for the heroes of subsequent comic epics and mock-heroics. Steadman outlines both the similarities and the differences:

The element of heroic pretence is common to both; both deliberately parody epic convention; and both involve a conscious disparity between style and content. The chief difference is that in Paradise Lost the essential disproportion is ethical—it results from the contrast between moral evil and superficial heroism; in the mock heroic tradition, on the other hand, it results, for the most part, from magnifying the insignificant. (Milton and the Renaissance Hero 171)

Steadman's contrast certainly applies to such works as Pope's Rape of the Lock. However, he seems to overlook the moral kinship between Satan and such characters as Achitophel, Swift's Tale-teller, and Fielding's Jonathan Wild. Such characters partake of the same heroic self-will and negative magnanimity combined with the same chaotic and
rebellious intent as is embodied in Milton's Satan. Still, Steadman is correct in his general suggestion: by the overt and explicit contrast of such characters to Milton's Satan, Dryden, Swift and Fielding also seem to play upon the relative insignificance of their victims.

The works of Samuel Butler, inevitably less interesting and influential than Milton's (though perhaps a greater influence on Swift than Milton's were, nevertheless), mark the most overt and explicit break from the reverence with which the heroic literary tradition had been treated in English. In his Characters and Passages, Butler decries both the inherited notion of the literary hero and heroic poetry itself. Of the latter, he writes:

Heroicall Poetry handle's the slightest, and most Impertinent Follys in the world in a formall Serious and unnaturall way: And Comedy and Burlesque the most Serious in a Frolique and Gay humour which has always been found the more apt to instruct and instill those Truths with Delight into men, which they would not indure to heare of any other way. (13)

Thus, for the purposes of instruction, generally accepted as half the burden of literature, Butler finds heroiical poetry unfit because of its elevation and glorification of moral minutiae. He also finds it unfit for the other half, the dulce, because of the increasingly perceived non-Christian and unattractive nature of the traditional epic hero:

A Hero was nothing but a fellow of a great Stature, and strong Limbes, who was able to carry a heavier load of Armes on his Back, and strike harder Blows, then those of lesser Size. And therefor since the Invention of Guns came up, there can be no true Hero in great Fights, for all mens Abilities are so leveld by Gun-shots, that a Dwarf may do as heroique Feats of Arms that way as a Gyant. And if he be a good Markesman, be too hard for the stoutest Hector and Achilles too. (Characters 214)
Like Milton, however, Butler calls explicit attention to the potential heroic nature of the poet as the only remaining undertaker of epic tasks. In his preface to Hudibras, Butler explains the role of satire with an analogy to heroic romance: "A Satyr is a kinde of Knight Errant that goe's upon Adventures, to relieve the Distressed Damsel Virtue, and Redeeme Honor out of Incantanted Castles, And opprest Truth and Reason out of the Captivity of Gyants or Magitians" (36). Such a claim moves the poet into the spotlight as the protector of virtue, the unacknowledged legislator of mankind--an idea relished by Swift, Pope, and Churchill as satirists and by such later individualists as Collins ("Ode on the Poetical Character") and Gray ("The Bard"). Ultimately, of course, such an idea leads to the notion, finally enunciated by Carlyle, of the cultural hero--among whose ranks he particularly highlights writers.

The continuing affronts to the respect for the traditional epic hero were no doubt abetted by the Battle of the Books in France, one product of which, Rapin's Comparaison entre Virgile et Homère (1668), blasted Ulysses for his manners and morals, characterizing him as a drunkard, an adulterer, a liar, and a self-seeker. In England, the attack upon the traditional epic conception of the hero was abetted even by those who joined the controversy in an effort to combat what they clearly perceived as the abuse being heaped upon the traditional literary hero by such as Butler. Sir William Temple, Swift's early patron, undertook to defend the notion of heroic virtue in an essay pointing to the pan-cultural appearance of similar political heroes
worthy of respect and admiration. Temple is known to have enjoyed reading romances and was privately angry at Don Quixote which he clearly saw as a mockery of knight errantry (Elias 80-90). Yet in his essay Of Poetry Temple admits that in medieval romance "the true religion was not found to become fiction so well as a false had done, and all their attempts of this kind seemed rather to debase religion than to heighten poetry" (Works 3: 432-3). Subsequently, in his essay on heroic virtue, Temple turns away from literature and focuses his discussion primarily upon historical characters. Like the Christian Humanists, Temple shifts away from an emphasis upon militarism, giving highest honors to those who establish, maintain, or reestablish peace.

Temple preserves the notion of heroes as those who transcend "the common race of mankind" in their virtues (Of Heroic Virtue, Works 3: 313) and whose virtues and good natures and inventions "were turned and exercised upon such subjects as were of general good to mankind in the common uses of life, or to their own countries" (314). Founders of civilizations are particularly noteworthy as heroes for they transform brutes into civilized men (331). In examining northern Europe, Temple rates Tamerlaine as the greatest hero for his combination of military greatness with moral and political virtue when after conquering the Greeks he granted them liberty out of respect for their culture: "He was, without question, a great and heroic genius, of great justice, exact discipline, generous bounty, and much piety" (360). In his conclusion, Temple reiterates his position that peacemaking is more noble and heroic than warmongering:
After all that has been said of conquerors or conquests, this must be confessed to hold but the second rank in the pretensions to heroic virtue, and that the first has been allowed to the wise institution of just orders and laws, which frame safe and happy governments in the world. The designs and effects of conquests are but the slaughter and ruin of mankind, the ravaging of countries, and defacing the world: those of wise and just governments are preserving and increasing the lives and generations of men, securing their possessions, encouraging their endeavors, and by peace and riches improving and adorning the several scenes of the world. ... And if, among the ancients, some men have been esteemed heroes, by the brave achievements of great conquests and victories, it has been by the wise institutions of laws and government that others have been honoured and adored as gods. (405)

Thus, Temple maintains the usefulness of pre-eminent men as models, but he abandons literary heroes in favor of historical figures. The latent sense of the cultural hero emerges clearly in the work of Temple, and as it emerges the characteristics attributed to it are increasingly spoken of as contrasts to those attributed to the literary hero.

The last two major British voices to speak vigorously for the traditional epic hero were those of Davenant and Dryden. Writing contemporaneously with Milton and Butler, in defense of his own literary production Sir William Davenant claims the usefulness of heroic poetry and heroic characters as models for the general populace and particularly for potential leaders. Davenant proposes to offer great men as models, offering examples, however, of both the dangers and the good of heroic action: "In the choyce of these Objects (which are as Sea-markes to direct the dangerous voyage of life) I thought fit to follow the rule of Coasting Maps, where the Shelv's and Rocks are describ'd, as well as the safe Channell; the Care being equall how to avoyd as to proceed" ("Preface to Gondibert" 13). Thus, Davenant sees
the role of heroic poetry as a spur to heroic action, a model of a proper ambition carefully nurtured and acted upon. Indeed, Davenant praises ambition as "an extraordinary lifting of the feet in the rough ways of Honor, over the impediments of Fortune" and asserts that "good men are guilty of too little appetite to greatness" (14). In the wake of the Civil Wars and the Restoration, during which time Davenant was imprisoned for the actions into which his ambition led him, such praise of ambition lost much of its appeal to many Englishmen. While Davenant's poem emphasizes the potential of individual man, contemporaries like Milton and Butler were emphasizing man's limitations.

Even Davenant admits, however, the unlikelihood of Britain as an arena for heroic action. In his preface, he explains that he has chosen Italy as a setting so that the virtue of his protagonists will not be questioned, as he suspects it would assuredly be if the characters were presented as British (12). Indeed, a central motif, of Gondibert, as Arthur C. Kirsch points out, is the decreased possibility and credibility of heroic virtue and heroic action in a modern age (83). Dryden, who openly admired Davenant, would later follow this lead, setting his heroic dramas everywhere, it seems, except England.

Dryden's career constitutes a continuous exploration of the nature of the heroic, beginning with his first notable poem, a panegyric (defined as a branch of epic poetry in the preface to Annus Mirabilis) on Cromwell entitled "Heroic Stanzas." Like Temple, in this poem and in later works, Dryden seizes upon real rather than legendary
figures and attempts to mold them into heroic form, preserving as much as possible the characteristics of the traditional epic hero. Using Virgilian tropes, Annus Mirabilis, for example, praises the naval exploits of the Duke of Albemarle. In Threnodia Augustalis, Charles II is heroically termed "God’s Image, God’s Anointed" (63), and both Charles and James are compared to ancient heroes who have been often tested. In his dedication of Tyrannick Love to Monmouth, Dryden praises James, ranking him with all past heroes:

You might justly expect an Heroick Poem, filled with the past Glories of your Ancestors, & the future certainties of your own. Heaven has already taken care to form you for an Heroe. You have all the advantages of Mind and Body, and an Illustrious Birth, conspiring to render you an extraordinary Person. The Achilles and the Rinaldos are present in you, even above their Originals; you only want a Homer or a Tasso to make you equal to them. (Works 6: 107)

Unlike Davenant, who proclaimed his instructive intent over and over again, however, Dryden seems to be impelled toward heroic verse for literary rather than moral reasons. His declaration of the epic as the most noble work to which a man can aspire is perhaps the most cited assertion from his entire critical corpus. Significantly, in this statement literary ambition merges with epic ambition, and the poet becomes the hero.

Dryden’s heroic plays, The Indian Queen (1665), The Indian Emperor (1667), Tyrannick Love (1670), The Conquest of Granada (1672) and Aureng-Zebe (1676) show his continuing aspiration to arrive at a balance between contemporary disinclination to believe in fabulous heroes and the romantic belief that certain men in remote times and places did rise above the common virtue and capacity of mankind. His
essay "Of Heroic Plays," which serves as the preface to The Conquest of Granada, makes clear his view of the epic as the basis for the heroic play: "An heroic play ought to be an imitation, in little, of a heroic poem; and, consequently . . . love and valour ought to be the subject of it" (Works 11: 8). Yet each of these plays offers a critique of the Aristotelian Greek epic hero's amorality. The Indian Queen is, in effect, a dialogue between Acacis's moral sense of honor and Zempoalla's Hobbesian interpretation of honor:

Honor is but an itch in youthful blood,
Of doing acts extravagantly good;
We call that Vertue, which is only heat
That reigns in Youth, till age findes out the cheat. (3.1.96-99)

Clearly Zempoalla's "vertue" is based upon "heroic virtue," which Dryden holds up for disapproving analysis in her speeches throughout the play.

Dryden is singular in his far-reaching exploration of the false patterns of heroism (Hughes 79) as well as in his persistent struggle to produce a pattern for a true hero. Almanzor, the protagonist of Conquest is a striking figure for his time, for he begins by defending the wrong side, battling against the Christians. In defense of his use of such heroes, Dryden claimed of Homer and Tasso that "they made their heroes men of honour; but not so as to divest them quite of human passions and frailties; they contented themselves to show you, what men of great spirits would certainly do when they were provoked, not what they were obliged to do by the strict rules of moral virtue" ("Of Heroic Poetry," Works 11:12). Thus, Dryden recognizes that the character of the ancient heroes is determined by their "great
spirits"—not by their moral character. Dryden's plays grapple with the problem of uniting morality with amoral heroic virtue. Of Almanzor, Dryden explains:

I have found a hero, I confess, not absolutely perfect, but of an excessive and over-boiling courage; but Homer and Tasso are my precedents. Both the Greek and the Italian poet had well considered that a tame hero, who never transgresses the bounds of moral virtue, would shine but dimly in an epic poem. . . . The character of an eccentric virtue is the more exact image of human life. ("Dedication to The Conquest of Granada;" Works 11: 5)

Ultimately, like all Dryden's true heroes, Almanzor is tamed and socialized. The primary characteristic of the true hero in Dryden's heroic dramas is his submission of his talents and his will to the dictates of Christianity and society. Thus, with the exception of Tyrannick Love, in which true and false heroes are polarized into the figures of St. Catharine and Maximin respectively, his plays open with traditional Greek heroes and close with Christian ones. Repeatedly throughout his work, Dryden proffers his audiences heroes who operate according to a code in which obligation is the fundamental principle. Unlike the Almanzor of Part I, Act I, the true heroes of Dryden's work are characterized by a sense of order imposed from above them.

Dryden's success in socializing his heroes may have been less clear to his contemporaries than it is to critics today. Dryden readily admits (and seems almost to apologize for) the fact that "I designed in [Almanzor] a roughness of character, impatient of injuries, and a confidence of himself almost approaching to an arrogance" ("Dedication" 5)—and these are the traits which may have been most readily perceived by his audiences. Following publication of Dryden's
preface to *Conquest*, an anonymous critic published a review entitled *Remarques on the Humours and Conversations of the Town* criticizing contemporary playwrights and focusing particularly on Dryden:

The great thing in which they triumph, is an Heroick Play; which yet is Imperfect in that Vertue of which they boast: they have made the three grand characters of a Hero, to be Love, Honour, and Friendship; but to what fantastic heights they have raised these is apparent in their Poems. They have made Love to be the Hot passions of an hour; tried by Chymaerical and odd experiments; unpracticable to the World, and rather an Idea fit to misguide the leisure and the sentiments of Youth, than capable of giving any just assistance to the occasions of Life. . . . Their Honour consists in obstinacy in combate, necessity, and time; in maintaining the fiery ground of Fame; to vanquish Reason and generosity in the contempt of Life. . . . Neither is their Friendship less idle, whilst it consists in resigning an adored Mistress. (qtd: in Kirsch 36)

This commentator ends by denouncing such authors as "idolaters of the Heathen Vertue." In another telling commentary, Richard Leigh, in giving directions for Dryden's *Censure of the Rota*, compares the hero to a Restoration comic libertine protagonist:

It is but framing the character of a Huff of the Town, one that from breaking Glass-windows, and combating the watch, starts up an Heroe: him you must make very saucy to his superiors, to shew he is of the same stamp with Achilles and Rinaldo; then tame the savage with the charming sight of the Kings Daughter (or wife) whom this St. George is to deliver from the Dragon, or greater dangers: to heighten his character the more, bring in a sheepish King with a Guard of poultroons to be kick'd by him, as often as he thinks fit his Miss. should be a witnesse of his Gallantry: if this be not enough, let him play prizes with Armies, still Tumults with one look, and raise Rebellions with another. (qtd by Kirsch 18)

In spite of his attempts to socialize heroic virtue, then, Dryden's audiences were not always able to accept his protagonists and their progress on his terms. Even Samuel Johnson, writing almost a century later, praises Dryden's heroic plays in terms which Dryden would
perhaps not relish: "Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity and majestick madness such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing" (Lives 1:349). By the time of Johnson, then, the old classical heroic model is readily perceived as ridiculous and perhaps mad--though awesome nonetheless.

Dryden himself offered substantial critiques of the heroes of whom he also wrote with admiration. In his dramatization of Paradise Lost as The State of Innocence and Fall of Man, he had, almost necessarily, adapted Milton's Christian perspective on the hero, trivializing love and honour as heroic endeavors:

See yon mad fools who, for some trivial Right,  
For love, or for mistaken honour fight:  
See those, more mad, who throw their lives away  
In needless wars; the Stakes which Monarchs lay,  
When for each others Provinces they play. (5.1)

That Dryden was quite conscious of the incongruity between Christian and heroic virtue is made explicitly clear in his "Discourse Concerning Satire:"

In the severe notions of our Faith, the Fortitude of a Christian consists in Patience, and Suffering, for the love of God, whatever hardships can befall him in the World; not in any great Attempt; or in performance of those Enterprises which the Poets call Heroïques; and which are commonly the Effect of Interest, Ostentation, Pride, and Worldly Honour. (Works 2:611)

Michael West, in "Dryden and the Disintegration of Renaissance Heroic Ideal" (212), identifies Dryden's startling denunciation of Homer in 1693 as the climactic moment in his disillusionment with epic heroism:
[Homer] provokes to Murther, and destruction of God's Images; he forms and equips those ungodly Man-killers, whom we Poets, when we flatter them, call Heroes; a race of Men who can never enjoy quiet in themselves, till they have taken it from all the World. ("Dedication of Examen Poeticum," Works 2: 798-99)

Dryden subsequently commends "lovers of a more Moderate Heroism" (799) as more worthy than the heroes of Homer. Thus, literary historians'
use of Dryden as the emblematic figure of an end of an era is once again validated. In Secular Masque--written as a prologue to Vanbrugh's adaptation of Fletcher's The Pilgrim, which features an unDrydenesque Christian protagonist--Dryden declares the end of an age characterized by the old heroes:

Thy Wars brought nothing about;
Thy Lovers were all untrue.
'Tis well an Old Age is out,
And time to begin a New. (93-96)

Dryden's sense of the end of an age is particularly significant in our understanding of the mock-heroic as well as of the heroic. West points to the blind spot in most approaches to Dryden's work in the satirical form:

[Dryden's] major imaginative achievements in the mock-heroic genre have almost always been treated as non-parodic satire of contemporary abuses, allusively embodying standards derived from his devotion to epic poetry. But they were written in the period when his ambivalence about heroic values was at its height, and one may say in equal truth that they embody a profound imaginative hostility to the heroic world and to the literature that celebrates it. ("Dryden and the Disintegration of Renaissance Heroic Ideals" 212)

Heroic romances celebrate man's attempts to transcend his nature and his society; satire, particularly the mock-heroic, ridicules those attempts. The components of the heroic personality remain much the
same in both genres, and certainly Dryden's mock-heroics demonstrate his growing antipathy to the traditional heroic personality.

While admiration for classical Greek epic remained strong, simultaneous admiration for Roman virtue as well as the dictates of Christian orthodoxy co-operated with the shifting social structure of England to produce a new form of the hero. In his late poem "To My Honoured Kinsman" (1701), as J. Douglas Canfield points out, Dryden celebrates the private gentleman, well-born and wealthy, who avoids the court yet serves when needed (Word as Bond). Self-sufficiency ("wanting no support"), except perhaps in moral concerns, is beginning to emerge once again as a heroic value. It increasingly appears in the novel, notably of course in Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders as well as on stage in the increasing use in comedy of younger sons as protagonists who must fend for themselves.

After Dryden, dramatic literature of the hero degenerates into a mishmash of varied approaches, each of which attempts to keep a heroic character at the forefront of the drama while appeasing the audience's disbelief or moral objection either through modification of the personality or a change in the light in which the character is presented. Otway's Venice Preserved merges the heroic with the pathetic, and ultimately pity replaces admiration. Similarly, the "she-tragedies" of Nicholas Rowe, which seemed to create something of a revival of popularity for heroic literature from 1703 through 1714, excite more pity than admiration. Settle's The Conquest of China (1676), Durfey's The Siege of Memphis (1676), and Crowne's The History
of Charles the Eighth of France (1671), all contain characters who offer a serious critique of Dryden's Almanzor.

This is not to say that heroism itself disappears. Rowe's Tamerlaine was popularly received in its annual production for almost the next one hundred years. However, the traits of the traditional classical hero, which continue to appear even today, seem to be fossils embedded in a different type of cultural hero that became predominant in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Both authors and audiences during this time were keenly aware of the problems inherent in offering the traditional, classical heroic personality as a model, and many attempts to do so failed. Swift's acquaintance, Sir Richard Blackmore (physician to Queen Anne) tried repeatedly to write successful epics and invariably failed. When Addison tried to revive classicism on the stage with Cato, he chose for his protagonist a man directly opposite the standard blustering individualist; Cato is governed by reason rather than by the pursuit of honor from the outset of the play. Eugene Waith cites the character of Addison's Cato as a demonstration of a dramatic reformulation of the heroic personality:

Tamburlain in his chariot, drawn by the pampered jades of Asia, and Cato in his chair, reading philosophy, are emblems of two opposed conceptions of heroism. One is energetic, self-affirmative, "alwaies mooving as the restless Spheares": the other, calm self-denial, almost motionless. While one is unpredictable, emotional, impetuous, the other is reliable, reasonable, superbly controlled. Both are admirable, both courageous, but in ways that differ as much as the active and contemplative life. (Ideas of Greatness 277)

In the works of Swift, as we shall see, these two types--the heroic conqueror of the world and the contemplative and disengaged Christian
who has retreated from the world or who has been defeated or exiled by
the world—designate the fundamental alternatives in human endeavor,
and as both are examined, both are found wanting.

Cultural Heroism in Religion and Literature

As we have seen, the idea of the cultural hero was gradually
emerging throughout the literature of the Renaissance, particularly in
the form of the Christian hero. So too, within society itself,
religious sectarians, martyred both literally and metaphorically for
their cause, attempted to garner for themselves the claim to cultural
heroism. Foxe's Book of Martyres, of course, remained popular until at
least 1715. And Rowe’s last play celebrates Lady Jane Grey as a
Protestant martyr and hero. Still, although such religious heroes
attracted some sympathy, the majority of the public seem to have
rejected out of hand the dissenters’ claims to heroic status.
In Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, Henry More emphatically denies their claim
to heroism, arguing that like any other madmen who are physically
strengthened in their frenzies, their ability to endure pain or to
suffer for a religious tenet sprang more from a brutish and beastly
insensitivity to pain than from inspired patience and religious
inurement to pangs of the flesh. Still, as Christian morality and
theology were being infused into the personality of the literary hero,
religionists were simultaneously appropriating the figure of the hero
to their cause.

However, so questionable was the value of heroism itself, since
the concept remained linked primarily to the epic, that the
religionist's claims to heroic status were seized upon by their critics as indicative of their faults rather than their virtues. Casaubon and More demonstrate the affinity of enthusiasm to both madness and heathenism on the basis of the examples of classical heroes. Similarly, Shaftesbury links the enthusiasm of the sectarians to the madness of the traditional heroic posture in his *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm*: "Men . . . are wonderfully happy in a faculty of deceiving themselves, whenever they set heartily about it: and a very small foundation of any passion will serve us, not only to act it well, but even to work ourselves into it beyond our own reach" (6). As an example, he explores the influence of heroic romance upon the popular imagination. Exactly this constellation of qualities—heroism, madness, and enthusiasm—served Swift as the basis for his satire in the *Tale of a Tub*.

One further element, however in the constellation inherited and subsequently developed by Swift, bears discussion. In light of the shift in approaches to the hero at the end of the seventeenth century, writers too had began implicitly to portray themselves as heroes. Butler's analogy, quoted above, comparing satire to a knight errant anticipates the Jeremiah-like sense of purpose that satirists seem to have have been developing at the turn of the century. Swift's claim to vexing the vulgar mob of the English and Pope's boast to have made "men not afraid of God afraid of me" indicate their sense of heroic battle against the forces of dulness throughout their lifetimes.
Recent studies of the epic clearly reveal what was perhaps sensed by the readers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century: that the singer of the song as the vehicle for the song partakes of some of the magic and power of the song, that Homer shares in the power of Odysseus. This implicit identification was exploited explicitly by Ariosto in Orlando Furioso where the poet pretends his own madness simultaneously as he describes the madness of Orlando (1.2). Beginning in the late Restoration, the figure of the poet as hero appeared increasingly in the poetry of Britain.

In his recent study, Robert Folkenflik traces the rapid development of the image of the poet as hero, beginning with Dryden: "The coming of age of the poet as hero can be traced in the tensions of Dryden's career, his shifting conception of heroism; his disillusionment with the relations between poet and monarch, and in the power of his odes to music and poems to painters and poets" ("Artist as Hero" 93). Folkenflik ignores the satirists, however, and jumps to Gray's "The Bard" as the turning point at which the heroic opposition of the poet to the political rule solidified into convention. From thence, he traces the tradition through the bards of MacPherson to those of Blake, from Beattie's The Minstrel to Wordsworth's The Prelude, and from Tristram Shandy to Coleridge's Biographia Literaria. Omission of the satirists is unfortunate. Similarly, the writers who promoted reform, such as Defoe, maintained an unmistakable air of heroic individualism. Swift's irrepressible hunger for and his pride and pleasure upon receiving the freedom of the city of Dublin in a gold
box in recognition of his work as satirist and as the Drapier (Ehrenpreis, 3: 650-55) are clear indications of his sense of his heroic worth.

Even without the satirists and polemicists to bolster his argument, however, Folkenflik's conclusion is undeniably accurate. He points to Dr. Johnson for authority:

Johnson's very project of the Lives of the Poets shows the shift from executive and legislative heroes to the poet-hero. In the Life of Milton, for example, the revolutionary heroism of Milton the political man is denied but the last paragraph of the biography, concerned solely with Milton's poetic achievement, presents the Achilles of English literature. (107)

Folkenflik, of course, erects his theory upon the foundation of Thomas Carlyle, who first fully explored the nature of the cultural hero and who himself traced the appearance of the Man of Letters as Hero to the early eighteenth century:

The inspired wisdom of a Heroic Soul never till then, in that naked manner [appeared]. He, with his copy-rights and copy-wrongs, in his squalid garret, in his rusty coat; ruling (for this is what he does), from his grave, whole nations and generations who would, or would not, give him bread while living,—is a rather curious spectacle! Few shapes of Heroism can be more unexpected. (On Heroes 156)

As suggested earlier, we may do well to look back past Dryden to Milton as the initial poetic voice establishing itself as heroic. In doing so, we neglect early satirists like Hall and Marston and Donne, but we ought not subsequently to leave out Swift and Pope.

* * *

In the late years of the Restoration period, then, the idea of the hero remained controversial. The traditional epic hero had fallen
into disfavor for his pride, his amorality, and his incapacity for socialization. The Christian hero, or the contemplative hero, continued to be honored—but his dramatic possibilities were limited. Moreover, the literary attraction of the Christian hero was being undermined by his enthusiastic counterparts on the streets of London and throughout the countryside. Writers continued, nonetheless, in heroic literary endeavors, hoping to achieve for themselves perhaps the glory that was no longer available to their characters. Satirists, noting the dichotomy between traditional hero and Christian hero, solved the problem of preserving the excitement of the traditional hero in their works by using him as their satiric target focus in ironic defense of the otherwise somewhat dull Christian hero.

Jonathan Swift, in particular, exploited the contradictions still surrounding the idea of the hero to his own satiric purposes. As we shall see, his first major work conjoins his two themes—abuses in religion and in learning—in the voice of a heroic modern madman, thereby enlivening his presentation of conservative principles with the literary excitement of heroism while bringing to bear upon these principles the most extreme opposition he can find through the madness of his speaker.
CHAPTER 3

THREE MAD HEROES IN

A TALE OF A TUB

During the late seventeenth century, as witnessed by the works of Milton, Butler, and Dryden, the concept of the traditional hero had received mounting criticism, the heroic personality having been increasingly exposed as fundamentally asocial and amoral. This trend, coupled with the age's heightened awareness of madness, had resulted in the use of Greek heroes, by authors like More and Casaubon, as examples of dangerous madmen. Simultaneously, even as heroic drama packed the theatres, mock-heroic poetry, in which the personality of the traditional hero remained fundamentally unchanged in spite of being presented within a bathetic context, proved popular and successful. It was in this literary climate that Swift wrote his first masterwork, A Tale of a Tub, which, in addition to its other targets, purports to satirize the literary climate itself. As his satirical emblem and main satirical device, Swift chose the heroic madman.

In order to appreciate fully the satire of the Tale, it is important to be fully aware of its reflexive nature which, contrary to much received opinion, implicates everyone: the religionists, the writers, the critics, and even Sir William Temple, the ancients, and Swift himself. By confronting the reader with a world in which madness
is universal, Swift forces the reader to make his own choices— for sanity or for madness, for wisdom or for folly, and for virtue or for vice—very much on his own, and therein lies the central agon of the work.

Before proceeding into a discussion of the mad world presented in the Tale, however, it will be necessary to examine some critical commonplaces which have heretofore restricted our understanding of just how widespread madness, folly, and vice are in the world of the Tale.

Critical Difficulties in "A Tale of a Tub"

A Tale of a Tub, probably completed in 1696, has been characterized by readers and critics as difficult and problematical since its first publication in 1704 in a volume also including An Account of a Battel between the Antient and Modern Books in St. James's Library and The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit. This perceived difficulty, no doubt, prompted the rapid publication of Wotton's observations on the text, many of which express simple bewilderment, and these were subsequently incorporated by Swift into the next edition of the Tale in 1710 as Curll's "Complete Key." Since then, able annotaters and critics have developed a sizable corpus of commentary, most of which labels the Tale as problematical in one way or another. Like his later Gulliver's Travels, Swift's Tale is most problematical when critics attempt to make Swift mean what they want him to mean and consequently attempt to homogenize his work into consistency, neatly
separating his allies from his enemies, thus drawing up battle lines and defining Swift's positions along them.

But Swift will not stand still. In the Tale, as in subsequent works, Swift is a shuffle-and-jab artist. In addition to fighting his more public antagonists, Swift carries on a more private fight with his audience. He plays rope-a-dope with readers and critics, exhausting them before delivering the final blow: the revelation that the joke is on them as well as on the explicitly designated satiric victims and that as much as readers or critics may wish to align themselves with the satirist, they will not be allowed freedom from ridicule even when they think they are on his side. Swift satirizes himself and his own aspirations as well as satirizing Grub Street, the Royal Society, and religious zealots. Thus, when the reader aligns himself with Swift, he meets either with insult or, if he refuses to accept the satire and acknowledge the insult, with bewilderment. Hence, perhaps, the persistence of the reputation of Swift as a malevolent misanthropist—a good many critics seem to resent their treatment at his hands. The effectiveness and power of his satiric attack derive from his shifting stances as much as from his defense of his home ground, and his shifting stances both engage and discomfit the reader.

The pose of madness, which Swift first adopts in the Tale, lends itself effectively to the versatility which he needed in order to attack as universally, comprehensively, and overwhelmingly as he wanted. The mask of madness has both opacity and depth, a combination unavailable in other poses. As we have seen, conflicting attitudes
toward madness during the Restoration color it simultaneously with comedy, pathos, and moral tragedy. The growing mistrust of the self-sufficiency of any one man's reason and the awareness that a given individual may be sane in some matters while mad in others complicate the reader's relationship with the speaker in the Tale. When is he comic? when pathetic? when tragic? When is the speaker mad and when lucid? The problem is exacerbated by the Tale-teller's voice seeming to merge with Swift's ironic voice and sometimes with Swift's unironic voice. Critics have further complicated matters by attempting to impose a simplistic unified persona upon the voice, an imposition which only increases the conspicuousness of glaring inconsistencies. Other critics (e.g., Leavis) have attempted to systematize the complexity by isolating and identifying as many as six individual voices. The true voice of the Tale, however, is that of a potential madman posing as a madman, for Swift implicates himself in the satire. Madness becomes a mask that is not a mask.

Madness, as Swift undoubtedly recognized, creates a one-way channel of obligation. The mad personality, like the hero, is liminal, existing outside the boundaries of society. But the very nature of society compels it to incorporate into itself as much as it can. Thus, society seeks to incorporate the madman while the madman shuns incorporation. His ties are broken, although he enjoys the continuing potential at any time of establishing new ties or re-establishing old ones. The pose of madness, coupled with the self-implication and the consequent self-satire implicit throughout the Tale, provides Swift's
escape from the responsibility to socialize his satire. Critics of the Tale, overlooking the manner in which madness sunders obligation, have expected more selective satire than Swift was willing to offer and refuse to recognize passages that cut against those whom they would expect to be his allies. By attempting to impose a predictable regularity upon Swift and his persona, in short, they want to socialize him. As a case in point, critics have been unwilling to recognize that Swift could ever have been so ungenerous as to have satirized his benefactor, Sir William Temple—and so we have missed the joke, which is that everybody is susceptible to Swift's attack. Unwittingly avid to find irony in order to explain unacceptable pronouncements, we have missed the greatest irony of all.

Recent work by John Traugott and A. C. Elias Jr. establishes not only that Swift was capable of criticizing his supposed mentor but that he decidedly did attack Temple repeatedly (Traugott, "A Tale of a Tub"; Elias, Swift at Moor Park). His attacks against allies like Temple are sideswipes, not frontal blows (like those, for instance, against Bentley and Wotton) and have consequently been interpreted as accidents. Yet Swift's blows against Temple occur so frequently that they become painful. Critics have minimized the pain in an effort to deny it, calling the effect something like "uneasiness." It is more than uneasiness.

So too have Swift's attacks against the ancients, and particularly against the classical hero, been overlooked or denied. In most critical approaches to the mock-heroic, the Restoration's
continued reverence for the epic hero seems to be an unwritten assumption derived from the demonstrable continued reverence during the Restoration for the epic itself. As we have seen, Dryden declares the epic poem to be a more than worthy endeavor, but he persistently questions the moral value of the presentation of the traditional epic hero. Too often in contemporary criticism, recognition of the respect accorded the epic poem slides unobtrusively into an assumption of respect for the hero of the epic poem. An influential example of such an assumption appears in Ian Jack’s *Augustan Satire*. In his defense of the heroic or epic genre from twentieth-century misinterpretation resulting from the influence of the mock-heroic, Jack implies that epic heroes themselves, like classical epics, were above criticism during the Restoration and eighteenth century, and that the satire of the mock-epic or mock-heroic genre is unidirectional, aimed only against the moderns. Similarly, Frank Kermode, in his discussion of Pope in *The Classic*, declares that "The *Dunciad* is, characteristically a mock-epic, an indication that the times were simply a parody of the antique ideal" (71). Such is not, of course, the case. The contemporary epics by writers like Blackmore are indeed simply parodies of their classical precedents. But the classical era itself (as Pope, for instance, indicates in his "Epistle to Augustus") is not above reproach and is often at least indirectly criticized. In short, twentieth century critics have not distinguished frequently enough between Restoration attitudes toward classical literature and Restoration attitudes toward classical life and history. Such a lack of distinction is exactly what
led to the now discredited and discarded labels of "neoclassical" and "Augustan." Claude Rawson, while enunciating the importance of the distinction between Restoration perception of classical civilization (particularly in regard to its martial tendencies) and respect for the artifacts of those civilizations, still assumes that Restoration and eighteenth-century authors indiscriminately defended the ancients against critical assault:

The successors to Milton whose tribute to epic took the form of mock-heroic poems, but who like Milton had no wish to convey any radically hostile imputation against the epic originals, effected the separation by the method, though not in the manner, which he appeared to propose: by largely avoiding the subject-matter of war. It is seldom remarked that when we speak of mock-heroic we almost always refer to stylistic or rhetorical parody, and hardly ever to the characteristic subject-matter of epic poems. ("Pope's Wasteland" 50)

Such an assertion may be applied to MacFlecknoe, Absalom and Achitophel, and The Dunciad. But at least as many mock-heroics do include epic battles: Le Lutrin, The Battle of the Books, The Dispensary, and The Rape of the Lock. To these, by stretching the definition of mock-heroic a bit, we may add Don Quixote and Hudibras. In these last two, particularly, not only is epic history not normative but even epic poetry is not normative, as its conventions are repeatedly travestied.

Rawson attempts to bolster his argument specifically with reference to Swift:

[Swift] hardly ever attempted mock-epic (though he mocked most other forms of poetic inflation), as though anxious to avoid damaging the originals through any unintended energies of his irony, or contaminating them by exposure to parody, however innocent of anti-epic purposes. The Battle of the Books, the
only sustained exception, is in prose and offers itself simultaneously as mock-jurnalese in a way which draws some potential disapproval from the alternative or epic model. It is only a paper fight. It is notable that whenever Swift attacks war, it is in contexts conspicuously free of epic association. ("Pope's Wasteland" 53)

Such, as is demonstrated throughout the rest of this analysis, is simply not the case. As we might expect, Swift, more than any other satirist of his time, is willing to castigate not only the absolute villains of his pieces but the potential heroes as well. Swift was well aware that although Rome offered us Horace, Rome also declined and fell and therein he finds the most important resemblance to England (Thoughts, PW 4: 249). In this light, he saw similarities as well as differences between the ancients and moderns.

Critics' efforts to keep Swift consistent, to align him with the ancients, to preserve the designation of "neo-classical," have forced them to ignore the effects of his mad persona's appropriation of the heroic mode. Having postulated Swift as a major voice in an age denominated "neo-classical" post facto (c. 1880), critics have used this postulate as an empirical proof of his neo-classicism (e.g., Crane, "The Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos, and the History of Ideas"). Having given him their own mask to wear, they have attempted to mold his face to fit it. A. C. Elias Jr. has been the most bold recently in declaring that the emperor has fewer neo-classical clothes than many would like to believe: "Practically everyone who reads the Tale or the Battle will notice the inconvenient way in which Swift's satire of the Moderns can spill over onto the defenders of the ancients" (155). Michael Seidel has advanced the attractive thesis that "in all
respects, the Tale is about satirically weakened lines of descent, fathers to sons, ancients to moderns" (Satirical Inheritance 169). Such is undoubtedly true. But fathers and ancients, those who set the progression in motion, are not exempt from Swift's criticism. Though madness is most apparent in the present, that madness is nevertheless congenital and patrilineal. In the scheme of degeneration, all are implicated. In his subtle attacks upon traditional patriarchal authority, Swift himself is implicated in the madness which he establishes as common to all humanity.

Even as Swift defends his idea of the old order throughout his work, he himself is affected by the insurgence against traditional authority so prevalent in politics, religion, and literature throughout the Restoration. He seems unable to resist asking himself the same questions posed by his contemporaries, although he does ultimately resist their answers. W. B. Carnochan suggests that this tendency is at the heart of Swift's literary method: "Technique, for Swift, is the working out of moral and psychological self-confrontations" (Lemuel Gulliver's Mirror for Man 47). This results in Swift's frequent suspensions of his recourse to traditional authority, and during these periods the reader is forced to feel, like Swift, the weightlessness and directionlessness of a moral, political, and social universe whose fixed points twinkle on and off irregularly.

Critics who wish to derive from Swift a coherent philosophy ignore the fact that system makers are among his chief targets. Swift operates a no-win, I-lose-you-lose game: critics who read him properly
must admit that he sees them as part of the problem, while critics who
don't want to see themselves as the problem are unable to read him
properly. His satires are games, and the stakes are the egos of the
author, the victims, and the audience. The games are carefully rigged
so that the author always beats his opponents, but he too, through
self-satire, must make a sacrifice of his own ego in order to do so.

Ego is the point at which the themes of heroism and madness
intersect in the satires of Swift. In order to see the Tale clearly
for what it is, an indictment of universal madness, we must first
discuss two a priori assumptions so long embedded in Swiftian criticism
that they have grown almost invisible: First, that Swift revered his
traditional patriarchal authority absolutely, as represented for
instance in the figure of Sir William Temple, and second that the voice
heard throughout the Tale is that of a Grub Street Hack who bears
little resemblance to Swift. Subsequently, the characterization of the
three mad heroes of the work--Peter, Jack, and the putative author
himself--will more clearly be seen as a satiric attack, based upon the
paradigm of degeneration, against ancients as well as moderns, against
Temple as well as Wotton, and against Swift himself as well as the
Hacks of Grub Street--all of whom madly and heroically strive to
transcend their all too flawed and mortal nature.

Sir William Temple and Swift's Self-Satire

A good bit of the misinterpretation of the Tale arises from the
accompanying piece, The Battle of the Books, which Ronald Paulson
appropriately dubs the "happy ending" for the Tale (Form and Frenzy
Occasions, to be sure, are of the utmost importance in studying Swift. Rarely a theorist or a system maker, Swift wrote most of his work in reaction to events and personalities with which he was immediately familiar. Yet the reader must be careful not to oversimplify Swift's view of such events and personalities. One of the battlelines which critics have attempted to preserve as inviolate is the one drawn between Temple, defender of the ancients, and Bentley, author of the scathing, though accurate, expose of Temple's naive acceptance of the historicity of Phalaris and Aesop in his Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning. On Temple's side, critics align Homer, Aristotle, Galen, and so on. On the other, they find Bentley, Wotton, DesCartes, Grub Street, the Royal Society, Hobbes, Newton, Locke, Paracelsus, the Rosicrucians, and the denizens of London's coffeehouses. To be sure, members of this last group are frontally attacked by Swift as the enemy. But to conclude therefore that the ancients, along with Temple, are altogether irreproachable is to reduce Swift's work to the black hat vs. white hat simplicity of a horse opera. More than he despised moderns and free-thinkers, Swift despised factionalism itself and the chaos which it generated, and he seems to have held all participants responsible.

The black-and-white approach to the Battle has been firmly in place, implicitly assumed, and rarely questioned since it was established in the early twentieth century by Richard Foster Jones's pioneering work on the Ancients-Modern controversy as it was
manifested in the dispute between Temple on the one side and Wotton and Bentley on the other. Jones's analysis is, of course, accurate—but is also incomplete. In his concentration upon the revolutions in science and philosophy, Jones neglects examination of the profound concern, on the part of those authors who defended the ancients, for the relationship between literature and life. This is, of course, exactly the basis for one of the primary objections that Swift levelled against the developing philology of scholars like Wotton and Bentley—that their approach to literature ignored or at least de-emphasized the moral component of literature. And it is, of course, exactly the moral component of the epic which Swift finds wanting and which he attacks indirectly in his use of the mock-epic genre and its techniques.

Moreover, Swift seems more often than not to discover in himself, as well as in his "allies," that which he satirizes in others. The act of writing satire for Swift seems often to have been a purgative. There is probably some Swiftian self-satire in the speaker's introduction to The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit:

"It is now a good while since I have had in my Head something, not only very material but absolutely necessary to my Health, that the World should be informed in. . . . I can contain it no longer" (261).

While in satirizing others Swift refers frequently to evacuation as a standard treatment of distemper, he no doubt discovered himself the therapeutic value of literary evacuation, as well. In attacking others, he attacks his own recognized weaknesses. One cannot help but notice his affinity with the traits which he criticizes among the moderns—his
pride in "Verses upon the Death of Dr. Swift," for instance. The best satire is probably written by one who fully understands the psychology of his victims because he too has felt the propensities which they realize. Kenneth Burke suggests that this is the case with Swift and points to the psychic costs of writing such satire:

The satirist attacks in others the weaknesses and temptations that are really within himself. ... A is a satirist. In excoriating B for his political views, he draws upon the imagery of the secret vice shared by both. He thereby gratifies and punishes the vice within himself. Is he whipped with his own lash? He is. (1.62-63)

The ease with which Swift assumes the pose of the writer for the "universal benefit of Mankind" throughout all his prose pieces, including those written in a voice seemingly his own, is a clear indication that while he found such pride unChristian as well as potentially dangerous, he did not find it alien. Gardner Stout insists on our recognition that much of Swift's own personality is invested in the figures of those whom he satirizes: "Swift's vivid personations express essential aspects of his own personality--they embody his radical, antagonistic kinship with his satiric butts and his complicity in their extravagance, aggressive pride, and subversiveness ("Speaker and Satiric Vision" 184). Thus Swift's attacks upon the pride of the Moderns are attacks on himself as well. Nor are Swift's supposed allies exempt from satire. Sir William Temple seems to have been as inclined as any modern writer toward the sort of self-laudatory writing that Swift both revels in and satirizes in the Tale. Temple's essay "Of Heroic Virtue", for instance, although it purports to be a
treatise on a more universal subject, may easily be read as a defense of his own diplomatic policies and a praise of his role in the formation of the Triple Alliance.

Continued study of the life and works of Temple, particularly during his time as Swift’s patron, has produced a somewhat less appreciative view of his critical intelligence and largesse than was available to earlier readers of Swift. A. C. Elias, the most recent, most thorough, and most critical of the scholars to examine Temple, summarizes his sense of the man at the time of Swift’s association with him:

Whatever talents Temple possessed in his prime, perception and logic had ceased to be strengths by the 1690’s. . . . Temple demonstrated a petty vindictiveness which says even less of his intelligence. Graceful and appealing though they are, his writings of the period show superficial scholarship, fuzzy thinking, and a larger-than-life opinion of himself. (151)

Swift, of course, as secretary to Temple, was exposed to all the minutiae of his writing. To be fair, we must credit Temple with a positive influence upon his protegé’s style and perhaps upon his politics. However, Temple’s work exhibits many of the same traits that Swift was to attack as flaws among the moderns. For example, one of the tricks which Swift plays upon his reader in the Tale is the unfulfilled promise of elucidation. After indicating that a subsequent passage will contain a heretofore undiscovered secret of the universe, the text of the Tale invariably breaks off, frustrating the reader with a feeble explanation for the lapse in the manuscript. The main satiric thrust, in such instances, is against the occultists. But Temple’s Some Thoughts upon Reviewing the Essay of Antient and Modern Learning
does exactly the same thing. At a crucial juncture in explaining the scientific superiority of the ancients, the reader finds only a passage of self-congratulation followed by a long hiatus. Wotton commented: "Just where the Pinch of the Question lay, there the Copy fails" (qtd by Elias 76). In his open parody of the occultists, then, Swift seems also, and probably not inadvertently, to have been taking a shot at his supposed mentor.

One might further speculate that Temple's inaccuracy in his essay on the classics and his subsequent exposure by Bentley deeply influenced Swift, consciously or unconsciously, as to the shape which his future works would take. Throughout his career, Swift consistently delights in the pose of the bogus authority. Although his ultimate aim is always to expose, Swift revels and soars in his passages of fictive knowledge and misapplied erudition. Rather than provide the reader with positive principles, he provides what has been characterized as an "epistemology of error" (Louis 1). He loved the hoax and the practical joke and the triumph of announcing "You're bit." In his simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from hyperbolic, self-serving plots and schemes, we may see both his identification with his victims and perhaps his love-hate relationship with Temple.

We now know that Swift was not fully enamoured of Temple, nor was he treated particularly well by Temple. The biography of Swift by Ehrenpreis emphasizes that Swift was continually disappointed in the results of the relationship, from his first employment in the household to the reading of Temple's will. As would be the case throughout his
career, Swift's ego would not allow him to be undervalued by the rich or the powerful without resentment. Yet Swift's precarious position in society, in the Church, and in politics forced him frequently to cling in hope of advancement to relationships which he felt to be demeaning. Though he may have felt himself to be undyingly loyal to principle, his environment contained more flawed personalities than principled ones, and he responded most frequently to his immediate environment. Because of his sense of being improperly appreciated, he seems to have viewed his life as a series of broken loyalties.

Freudian approaches to Swift, like that of Ehrenpreis, interpret his relationship with Temple as surrogate father-son, noting that his father died before Swift was born and that Temple also had lost a son at a young age. Perhaps the psychological impulses for such a relationship were strongly present—but the fulfillment or realization of such a relationship was never successful between these two men. Both, it would appear, placed their needs for ego-gratification before their needs for self-fulfillment through affection and support. The result seems to have been a quiet Oedipal rebellion by Swift, one which is not quite so shocking when one considers the frequent coldness with which Temple treated him.

These circumstances must necessarily be appreciated when considering the occasion for Swift's first publications. We would be remiss to expect strong loyalties from a man who felt himself consistently betrayed, although we can expect a consequent strong respect for loyalty as normative behavior. On the topic of loyalty, as
with so many other ideals, Swift was constantly torn between his realistic and idealistic impulses, and such a conflict may well be traceable to his relationship with Temple. Paternity and lineage are important motifs throughout both the Tale and The Battle, and patrilineage is a consistent key to Swift's approach to heroic characterization. The spirit of Sir William Temple is present in more ways than one throughout Swift's career, and while the defense of Temple against Bentley is certainly a major purpose informing the composition of the Tale, attempts to reduce the scope and the complexity of the work to suit this single expectation are unjustifiable.

The Swiftian Voice

Indeed, it may be that in Temple's own essays, Swift, the amanuensis discovered the nature of a man who "did conceive it in his Power to reduce the Notion of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length and Breadth and Height of his own" (Tale 166). The voice heard throughout the Tale is the voice of just such a one, who believes in little else except the ability of an Everyman like himself, with a bit of application (and perhaps manipulation) of his mental faculties, to unravel secrets of life, literature, science, and religion "for the Universal Benefit of Mankind." The question of where Swift discovered this voice has never been satisfactorily answered. As already suggested, he may have learned much from Temple in addition to style.

He may have learned, as well, from his own vain struggle for success as a poet. His previous literary productions consisted
primarily of panegyrical odes, one of which was written in praise of his employer. In "Ode to the Honourable Sir William Temple," as in Swift's other early odes, incongruities of image, tone, and theme defeat the poem's purported intention. By the time he began the Tale, Swift had presumably abandoned writing panegyrics--one assumes that he recognized the incompatibility between the form and his own voice. The closest he ever came again were the birthday poems for Stella and his self-congratulatory "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift," and in these poems too his sardonic voice all but overpowers his praise.

Swift's early ode for his employer compares Temple favorably to his contemporaries but speaks most vividly and strongly when condemning the others who,

Affect ill-mannered pedantry,  
Rudeness, ill-nature, incivility,  
And sick with dregs of knowledge grown,  
Which greedily they swallow down,  
Still cast it up and nauseate company. (45-49)

His early gift for the attack and for the repulsive image is clear. When turning to praise for Temple, on the other hand, his voice falters, apparently recognizing its own hollowness, and he falls back upon convention to support it:

You cannot be compared to one,  
I must, like him that painted Venus' face,  
Borrow from everyone a grace;  
Virgil and Epicurus will not do,  
Their courting a retreat like you,  
Unless I put in Caesar's learning too,  
Your happy frame at once controls  
This great triumvirate of souls. (62-69)
The poem closes by abandoning Temple as the subject and turning conventionally with a strained modesty to the subject of the poet himself, offering the poem with humility to his patron, while apologizing for the poetic itch which impels him to such work:

Then (sir) accept this worthless verse,
   The tribute of an humble muse,
   'Tis all the portion of my niggard stars;
Nature the hidden spark did at my birth infuse,
   And kindled first with indolence and ease,
   And since too oft debauched by praise,
   'Tis now grown an incurable disease:
In vain to quench this foolish fire I try
    In wisdom and philosophy;
   In vain all wholesome herbs I sow,
   Where nought but weeds will grow.
Whate'er I plant (like corn on barren earth)
   By an equivocal birth
Seeds and runs up to poetry. (199-212)

Surely the seeds for Swift's future crop of satire are planted here as well: denigration of false scholarship through the physicalization of knowledge and the subsequent disgusting image (45-49), unfelt praise in honor of an expected benefaction (195-212), and the self-referential image of the poet run amok in his own creation, incapable of completing his literary quest, yet driven on by the mad dream of future fame:

   Me she has to the muse's galleys tied,
   In vain I strive to cross this spacious main,
   In vain I tug and pull the oar,
   And when I almost reach the shore
   Straight the muse turns the helm, and I launch out again;
   And yet to feed my pride,
   Whene'er I mourn stops my complaining breath,
   With promise of a mad reversion after death. (191-98)

Here, certainly, is a voice akin to that which chides Prince Posterity at the outset of the Tale. The image of the writer as wayward oarsman, never touching shore, is highly appropriate to the Tale-teller who
launches himself time and again into his work but never completes his journey.

More thematic matter for the Tale is also present in the ode, which focuses upon Temple as the author of *Of Heroick Virtue*, *Upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, and *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*, as well as Temple the modern peacemaking hero so well defined in Temple’s own essay upon the subject. Significantly, the poem ignores the contradiction which it repeatedly discovers between a modern hero and his self-styled wholly modern and new defense of the ancients:

We have too long been led astray
Too long have our misguided souls been taught
With rules from musty morals brought,
'Tis you must put us in the way. (17-20)

and again: "Here we expect from you / More than your predecessor, Adam, knew" (161-62). These pleas coexist uncomfortably with Swift’s emerging motif of patrilineal degeneration:

Why then does Nature so unjustly share
Among her elder sons the whole estate
And all her jewels and her plate? (180-83)

While expecting cultural redemption through Temple, the poet points to the principle of degeneration that denies its possibility.

One axiom that Swift learned directly from Temple, based upon Temple’s own experience and developed at some length in *On Heroick Virtue*, is that psychology is more important than principle in politics. In his *Of Popular Discontents*, an essay subsequently edited and published by Swift, Temple traces riot, rebellion and civil war back beyond political causes to human nature and particularly to "a certain restlessness of mind and thought" (*Works* 3: 32). As the
digression on madness, like the Mechanical Operation, clearly indicates, Swift's habitual reductionism allowed him glimpses of the humbler motivations behind great actions, and his satires unmask those motives. In this ode, he acknowledges his debt to Temple for this knowledge:

Methinks, when you expose the scene,
Down the ill-organized engines fall;
Off fly the vizards and discover all,
How plain I see through the deceit!
How shallow! and how gross the cheat!
Look where the pulley's tied above!
Great God! (said I) what have I seen!
On what poor engines move
The thoughts of monarchs, and designs of states,
What petty motives rule their fate! (97-106)

This will be exactly the argument of the Tale-teller in the "Digression on Madness" and will be used as a means of attack by Swift throughout his career as a political pamphleteer. Such knowledge, however, is liable to be used against the teacher, grateful though the student may be.

The issue of the emergence of a new voice for Swift in The Tale seems then to be predicated upon the faulty assumptions that a.) the voice we hear in the Tale is not Swift's, and that b.) the voice is therefore new. On the basis of the confusion in the early odes (of which the ode to Temple is representative), such assumptions appear invalid. Swift himself had clearly had the experience of the inept poet, hypocritically worshipping at false altars. Robert W. Uphaus has suggested that "Swift's frustrated attempts at writing Pindarics--his 'sublime' desire to panegyrize 'heroic' figures even at the expense of
his own ironic awareness of human imposture—becomes one of the models of the persona's eccentric inventiveness in *A Tale of a Tub* ("From Panegyric to Satire" 55). Later, in the Tale, when he satirizes the Tale-teller, he satirizes Temple, and he satirizes himself as well. Readers are typically unprepared for such strident authorial self-righteousness directed against the author himself. But, as Swift clearly saw, a satire of the universal madness of mankind necessitates exactly such irony. In transforming self-consciousness into self-satire, Swift practices humility, the virtue of the moderate Christian hero, and he is apparently prompted to do so by conscience— a true knowledge of himself—the trait of future Swiftian *vir boni* and a faculty consistently lacking in Swiftian madmen.

Although he implicitly asserts through his irony that he is hiding below the surface of his work, Swift is often thus boldly literal. He asserts that he is wearing a mask when he is, in fact, frequently barefaced. All the voices in the Tale are Swift's, filtered through the mouthpiece of the putative author. The voices are inconsistent, but madness is proffered as the rationalization for the inconsistency. And madness, from Swift's point of view, is not at all a fiction. Madness is just about all there is.

**The "Tale"'s Anatomy of Madness**

Madness as presented by Swift in the Tale and as understood by many today is a perversion of reason. Reason is directly implicated whenever madness appears. Far from being an absence of reason, madness
is more frequently an super-reason or a sub-reason, but always a reason. Critics like Traugott and Pinkus have argued instead that, as in Pope's *Dunciad*, the enemy in the work of Swift is a sort of demonic dulness, the Anti-reason (Traugott, "A Tale of a Tub;" Pinkus, *Swift's Vision of Evil*). Man's reason is, indeed, limited according to Swift: "The bulk of mankind is as well-qualified for flying as thinking" (*A Discourse of Free Thinking, PW 4: 35*). However, the major danger is that reason is often twisted or misdirected, and it is just such a perversion of reason that is consistently presented by Swift as madness.

Reason alone is never promoted without qualification as a virtue in the *Tale*. Even in the laudatory dedication to Lord Somers, most of which demands literal interpretation, reason is never suggested as one of his virtues. The dedication does praise Somers's *wisdom*—but wisdom in the works of Swift seems to be another thing entirely. Swift knew from his own experience the dangers of reason: "I am not answerable to God for the doubts that arise in my own breast, since they are the consequence of that reason which he hath planted in me" (*Thoughts on Religion* 262). Indeed, as Swift admirably demonstrates in his later prose, reason is the soul of rationalization, and rationalization is the primary prop of madness.

In his "Digression on Madness," Swift's Tale-teller characterizes reason as assisting the senses "with Tools for cutting, and opening, and mangling, and piercing, offering to demonstrate, that [things] are not of the same consistence quite thro'" (173). The Tale-
teller dismisses such a function as unnecessary and upsetting at best. Unlike the Tale-teller, who condemns "the Art of exposing weak Sides, and publishing Infirmities" (172), Swift as satirist obviously relishes using his reason and common sense to unmask his victims, showing their inconsistencies and watching "the Defects increase upon us in Number and Bulk" (173-4). But reason, when undirected, or misdirected, or unguided by wisdom and common sense, is dangerous as well, for it can be brought to bear critically upon necessary institutions. This is, of course, part of the lesson of the allegory of the three brothers.

Reason, indeed, had been appropriated as the god of the enemy. Freethinkers, whose morality or lack thereof made Swift shudder, often convincingly claimed to follow reason. Reason defied Scripture. Belief in the sufficiency of reason leads to freethinking, as subsequently defined by Collins: "The Use of the Understanding, in endeavoring to find out the Meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the Evidence for or against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming Force or Weakness of the Evidence" (Discourse of Freethinking 5). Swift would undoubtedly agree with such a definition—but would question the wisdom or necessity of freely questioning all propositions. Indeed, Swift viewed Collins as a lifelong antagonist because of the threat to authority inherent in his proposition. Swift distinguished Collins's reason from Hooker's Right Reason, suggesting that the latter is the superior guide to both belief and action. Although absolute credulity is subsequently satirized and discredited, Swift seems to be speaking unironically in
the Tale as the Tale-teller describes the state of unquestioning thought:

For, 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 particular Notions; because that instructs him in his private infirmities, as well as in the stubborn Ignorance of the People. (171)

As this passage suggests, the faculty of reason when properly applied may be directed toward self-knowledge and lead thus to humility. However, as the experiences of the allegorical brothers and the Tale-teller himself testify, reason can run amok even when initially applied appropriately. The trouble comes, as Swift explains in this famous passage, when other forces are brought to bear upon reason, and reason, though undiminished, is subordinated:

But when a Man's Fancy gets astride on his Reason, when Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses, and common Understanding, as well as common Sense is Kickt out of Doors; the first Proselyte he makes, is Himself, and when that is once compass'd, the Difficulty is not so great in bringing over others. (171)

Madness in the works of Swift, then, is reason driven by desire and imagination, abandoned by understanding and common sense. The Tale-teller subsequently explains his own method in exactly such terms: "In my Disposer of Employment of the Brain, I have thought fit to make Invention the Master, and to give Method and Reason, the Office of its Lacquays" (209). Madness, as opposed to common sense or Right Reason, is individualistic reason, as the Tale-teller makes clear in his promise to supply "An Universal Rule of Reason, or Every Man his own
In its glorification of its own perverse singularity, in its promotion of the products of its own imagination, and in its insistence upon the power of the ego and imagination to transform reality, such reason becomes madness—and in exactly these traits it partakes of the heroic.

**Heroism as Motif in the "Tale"**

From the outset, the Tale concerns itself with self-promotion: "Therefore, since the Book seems calculated to live at least as long as our Language . . . ." (3). Self-promotion is the unifying thread throughout the prefatory material, from the Apology through the implicit argument of excellence by association in the dedication to Somers, on into the more outlandish claims of the dedication to Prince Posterity, and ending with the Preface, instructing the reader to supply for himself a reminder of the author's humility whenever self-praise might appear throughout the rest of the book (47). Swift carefully prepares the reader for the portrait to be presented of heroic ambition run amok.

The Tale proper develops the theme of self-promotion further, beginning by posing the problem of being heard above the multitude of voices crying out for recognition: "Whoever hath an Ambition to be heard in a Crowd, must press, and squeeze and thrust, and climb with indefatigable Pains, till he has exalted himself to a certain Degree of Altitude above them" (55). The problem, upon first reading, may appear to be metaphorically phrased—the reader is not yet accustomed to the literalness and materiality with which the Tale-teller approaches the
world—and may suggest the problem of excellence or the problem of heroism itself. How, the author appears to be asking, may a man distinguish himself? how may he achieve excellence? how may he cultivate virtue so as to transcend the crowd? The measures suggested, "indefatigable Pains," are traditionally heroic. The motivation, "Ambition," is equally solidly linked to the classical heroic role and mode. Yet, in light of the ongoing critique of the traditional hero, we may recognize that distinction from the crowd, like the worldly glory of the traditional hero, is an illegitimate goal.

The discovery that the author is literal, that he intends to describe three physical and mechanical means (the pulpit, the ladder, and the stage-itinerant) for achieving elevation above the mob is a clear indication of the contemporary fallen nature of the writer and hero/adventurer. Subsequently, the author grants that knowledge of these machines has been inherited from the "Wisdom of our Ancestors" for the provision of all "aspiring Adventurers" (56), thereby introducing the theme of speaker/writer as adventurer/hero, as well as indicating the theme of heroic sons appropriating the power of the fathers only to find it diminished in their hands.

The theme of self-promotion continues throughout the authorial commentary of the Tale and culminates in "A Digression in the Modern Kind" wherein the author expounds openly upon the necessity of self-promotion:

I hold my self obliged to give as much Light as is possible, into the Beauties and Excellencies of what I am writing, because it is become the Fashion and Humor most applauded among the first Authors of this Polite and Learned Age, when
they would correct the ill Nature of Critical, or inform the Ignorance of Courteous Readers. Besides, there have been several famous Pieces lately published both in Verse and Prose; wherein, if the Writers had not been pleas'd, out of their great Humanity and Affection to the Publick, to give us a nice Detail of the Sublime, and the Admirable they contain; it is a thousand to one, whether we should ever have discovered one Grain of either. (130)

The author continues in this vein, pointing ultimately to Dryden, the most renowned of the contemporary promoters and explorers of heroic literature, as the sterling example of the practice of self-promotion:

Our Great Dryden has long carried it as far as it would go, and with incredible Success. He has often said to me in Confidence, that the World would have never suspected him to be so great a Poet, if he had not assured them so frequently in his Prefaces, that it was impossible they could either doubt or forget it. (131)

The world of authors, to appropriate a metaphor from the Tale-teller, is but a microcosm. In effect, the Tale illustrates a society in which every individual aspires to heroism. From the enthusiastic preacher to the critic to the Tale-teller himself to the brothers in the Tale proper, every character is driven by ambition to transcend the ordinary, to create a world in his own image, and thereby to achieve fame and followers. This seems most immediately apparent in the literary world (as exemplified in The Battle of the Books). As we have seen in the formulations of Dryden and Milton, the concept of epic or heroic task was shifting to an application to authors as well as to epic plots. Swift himself recognized this: "Whatever the Poets pretend, it is plain they give Immortality to none but themselves: It is Homer and Virgil we reverence and admire, not Achilles or Aeneas" (Thoughts on Various Subjects, PW 1: 242). In the world of the Tale,
heroic ambition among writers has become universal, and the consequent chaos is hinted at in the dedication to Prince Posterity wherein the author laments the neglect by posterity of the 9,743 current wits in England (31-2), each of whom, vying with the others, vainly strives after fame. The Tale-teller allegorizes the struggles of these heroic wits into a metaphorical contest against the monster Time:

But that it may no longer be a Doubt with Your Highness, who is to be the Author of this universal Ruin; I beseech You to observe that large and terrible Scythe which your Governor [Time] affects to bear continually about him. Be pleased to remark the Length and Strength, the Sharpness and Hardness of his Nails and Teeth; Consider his baneful abominable Breath, Enemy to Life and Matter, infectious and corrupting: And then reflect whether it be possible for any mortal Ink and Paper of this Generation to make a suitable Resistance. Oh, that Your Highness would one day resolve to disarm this Usurping Maître du Palais, of his furious Engins, and bring Your Empire hors de Page. (32-3)

The passage ironically indicates that the situation as it stands is right and proper, that such immodest wits and such limited intelligences should be eradicated by Time and condemned to oblivion.

But the pitch of the passage is that of heroic battle, as in The Battle of the Books, in spite of the inevitable loss by the contemporary wits. Moreover, as we shall see, although Time has preserved the ancients, in a world of degeneration even their influence has been perverted.

Again, in "The Preface," the author offers a heroic portrait of himself engaged in battle to stave off the siege of wits and particularly the attack by Hobbes:

Mean while the Danger hourly increasing, by new Levies of Wits all appointed (as there is Reason to fear) with Pen, Ink, and Paper which may at an hours Warning be drawn out into Pamphlets, and other Offensive Weapons, ready for immediate Execution. (40)
The island of Britain is presented as engaged in a great civil war between the offensive wits and the "Grandees of Church and State" (40), a real battle of the books, the stakes in which are no less than the preservation or ruin of the entire kingdom.

The result of every writer setting up like an enthusiastic preacher as his own authority and ignoring or resenting the authority of any others is recognized by the Tale-teller when he laments the internecine strife now apparent between the factions of Grub Street, Gresham College (site of the Royal Society), and Will's coffeehouse (meeting place of the new poets):

> Now, I am not unaware, how the Productions of the Grub-street Brotherhood, have of late Years fallen under many Prejudices, nor how it has been the perpetual Employment of two Junior start-up Societies, to ridicule them and their Authors, as unworthy their established Post in the Commonwealth of Wit and Learning. Their own Consciences will easily inform them, whom I mean; Nor has the World been so negligent a Looker on, as not to observe the continual Efforts made by the Societies of Gresham and of Will's to edify a Name and Reputation upon the Ruin of OURS. And this is yet a more feeling Grief to Us upon the Regards of Tenderness as well as of Justice, when we reflect upon their Proceedings, not only as unjust, but as ungrateful, undutiful, and unnatural. For, how can it be forgot by the World or themselves, (to say nothing of our own Records, which are full and clear in the Point) that they both are Seminaries, not only of our Planting, but our Watering too? I am informed, Our two Rivals have lately made an Offer to enter into the Lists with united Forces, and Challenge us to a Comparison of Books (64)

Throughout this passage, the imagery suggests the themes for the entire Tale: Sons, like rebellious provinces, "unjust, ungrateful, undutiful, and unnatural," rebel against their fathers, rulers, and fatherlands. Writers, like knights, attempt to establish their own reputations by defeating others and consequently appropriating in a perverse
inheritance the fame of the dead and vanquished. Like jousting, which
degenerated into pomp and show without any meaning beyond individual
self-aggrandizement, writing has degenerated into the state
subsequently satirized by The Dunciad in which the authors'
concentration upon bringing each other down so distracts and
disorganizes them that no one among them is capable of significant
achievement. The writers are pictured, like those filled with Ambition
in the Introduction, as wholly preoccupied with finding an elevated
position from which to speak—and wholly unconcerned with what they
will say. Finally, in the last line, the world of writing is reduced
to a world of knightly competition where victory brings fame and honor
to the winner—but accomplishes no other goal because the battle is
divorced from any larger conflict between good or evil forces.
Moreover, the passage echoes the anguished cry of the defeated father
in the Oedipal battle for power, lamenting his having brought
ungrateful sons into the world. The process of degeneration has so
accelerated, Swift implies, that contemporaries now subvert and
overthrow each other.

The motif of writer as adventurer continues throughout the
sections of The Tale devoted to the exploration of the writer's craft.
The author closes the Introduction with a self-portrait, depicting
himself as a rugged survivor of a life of literary battle

in the Service of the State, in Pro's and Con's upon Popish
Plots, and Meal-Tubs, and Exclusion Bills, and Passive
Obedience, and Addresses of Lives and Fortunes; and
Prerogative, and Property, and Liberty of Conscience, and
Letters to a Friend: From an Understanding and a Conscience,
thread-bare and ragged with perpetual turning; From a Head
broken in a hundred places, by the Malignants of the opposite Factions, and from a Body spent with Poxes ill cured, by trusting to Bawds and Surgeons, who, (as it afterwards appeared) were profess’d Enemies to Me and the Government, and revenged their Party’s Quarrel upon my Nose and Shins. (70)

The writer, like the battle-worn knight, returns here from battle to receive the recognition of his liege, the reader.

The motif is repeated in Section V, "A Digression in the Modern Kind," another of the self-reflexive passages in which the author retreats from the battle with his subject and turns instead to the subject of himself, out of which he derives all other subjects. Here again, modern authors are depicted as knights whose "endeavors" are "so highly serviceable to the general Good of Mankind" that they deserve "our great Design of an everlasting Remembrance, and never-dying Fame" (123). The author proffers a nostrum for modern writers based upon an ancient formula, and then congratulates himself with a comparison to Homer:

I must needs own, it was by the Assistance of this Arcanum, that I, tho’ otherwise impar, have adventured upon so daring an Attempt; never atchieved or undertaken before, but by a certain Author called Homer, in whom, tho’ otherwise a Person not without some Abilities, and for an Ancient of a tolerable Genius; I have discovered many gross Errors, which are not to be forgiven his very Ashes, if by chance any of them are left. (127)

The Oedipal rebellion of a hero against his father is obvious here, and again the motif appears of the writer as woolly adventurer engaged in battle and bringing home the prized booty. Such intrepidity is necessary, according to the Tale-teller, to avoid the common fate of writers who are "buried beyond Redress in an inglorious and undistinguishing Oblivion" (149).
The battle for glory which rages among heroic authors is nowhere made more clear than in Section III, "Concerning Criticks," which begins with the pronouncement that

Every True Critick is a Hero born, descending in a direct Line from a Celestial Stem, by Momus and Hybris, who begat Zoilus, who begat Tigellius, who begat Etcaetera the Elder, who begat B--tly, and Rym-r, and W-tton, and Perrault and Dennis, who begat Etcaetera the Younger. (94)

Just as Swift's satiric voice subsequently praises the lineage of the Aeolists by tracing their tradition back to Delphos, so here he presents the modern critic as the culmination of the breeding and development of the critical temperament over two millenia. However, in Swift, following the paradigm eventually explicitly outlined by Pope, a culmination or a climax in the modern style is always bathetic rather than sublime. Searching for the origin of critical practice, the putative writer of the Tale arrives upon the hieroglyph which he translates, using an arcane method in current practice, as the image of an ass, grazing wantonly (98). Subsequently, seeking other authority from antiquity for the art of criticism, the author alights upon a passage in Ctesias about a serpent, an analogy demonstrating the ancient powers of the true critic:

There is a Serpent that wants Teeth, and consequently cannot bite, but if its Vomit (to which it is much addicted) happens to fall upon any Thing, a certain Rottenness or Corruption ensues: These Serpents are generally found among the Mountains where Jewels grow, and they frequently emit a poisonous Juice whereof, whoever drinks, that Person's Brains fly out his Nostrils. (100)

Such were the ancient powers of critics. The Tale-teller mistakes wondrousness for goodness. He implies that after long development the
critical art has been considerably refined though remaining essentially the same. The reader notes, meanwhile, that in this example of the modern art of interpretation, the ancients are subverted and perverted. Interpretation at the hands of the Tale-teller is another form of degeneration.

In this light, the Tale-teller's use of such ancients is not insignificant. In addition to three allusions to Virgil, five to Lucretius, and countless references to Homer, the Tale-teller has referred to Horace five times, Cicero once, Plutarch twice, Herodotus five times, and Photius three times. He uses these references in the traditional manner for authority, but he treats them in the "modern" way, sometimes treating them superficially, sometimes subverting their words to his own meanings. Clearly, however, just as the father of the brothers in the allegory had his simple legacy perverted and ultimately ruined by his sons, so too the legacy of the ancients is inevitably subverted and perverted by the moderns. Just as Peter, Jack, and the Tale-teller exhibit the primary characteristics of the ancient heroes—ambition, pride, and an individualistic pursuit of glory—so all modern would-be heroes, though based upon the ancients, gradually erode the value of the ancients and their heroes. Although the ancients remain unchanged, they are known only through the appreciation of moderns, and thus their works appear only through a dark glass. The possibility of regaining a true appreciation of the ancients or their heroes is as remote as the possibility of the brothers' repairing their coats.
The value, thus, of the ancients and their heroes can never be fully recovered and the sins of the sons are visited upon the fathers.

Among the modern critics and writers in the world of the Tale, newness is the primary virtue. Like heroic knights, writers and critics roam the territory of literature arranging battles between themselves. Each writer or critic, upon his arrival, reigns momentarily supreme because unrivaled, but he immediately attracts the destructive attention of the others. The Tale-teller, seizing upon his momentary supremacy in the very act of writing his manuscript, declares himself necessarily to be the momentary culmination of Western thought: "I here think fit to lay hold on that great and honourable Privilege of being the Last Writer; I claim an absolute Authority in Right as the freshest Modern, which gives me Despotick Power over all Authors before me" (130). Under the paradigm of progress simplified here ad absurdum, whatever is newest is necessarily best. Like our contemporary marketing specialists, the Tale-teller represses the anxiety of influence by the assumption that "new" means "improved." But even in this simplistific view of history, the hazard is that no achievement lasts for very long because of the "transitory State of all sublunary Things" (66). Particularly noteworthy here is the Tale-teller's appropriation of "Despotick Power." The modern approaches to knowledge, beginning with Bacon, having overthrown traditional authority, can locate the power of authority only in novelty and newness. Chronology is the sole determinant of authority. Yet as we
have seen, Swift's insistence upon the relentless force of degeneration robs chronology of its authority as well.

The paradigm of degeneration is both an almost necessary assumption and a useful tool for the satirist. As the preface to the Tale points out, satire is easier to write than panegyric because

Health is but one Thing, and has been always the same, whereas Diseases are by thousands, besides new and daily Additions; So, all the Virtues that have been ever in Mankind, are to be counted upon a few Fingers, but his Follies and Vices are innumerable, and Time adds hourly to the Heap. (50)

Satire itself, according to this passage, will always enjoy the advantage of being new, whereas panegyric can only rework old material. Swift turns the Tale-teller's assumptions against the Moderns, demonstrating that chronology can validate none but the satirist.

Thus, the Tale-teller in his role of modern hero is Swift's refutation of the possibility of modern heroism. In the very process of pursuing heroic ambition, his reason is subverted, rendering him incapable of achievement. Such is the case as well, in the Tale proper, with the heroic aspirations of Peter and Jack, as the degeneration of religion, like that of literature and learning, is linked by Swift to the subversion of Right Reason by mad heroism.

Mad Heroes in the Allegory of the Coat

Consistently, the author of the tale indicates that the three brothers in his allegory, like himself and his colleagues, are to be considered heroic, both because they are the protagonists of the story and because they share (although not equally) the attributes of heroes of long ago. When they go to seek their fortunes, their first pitfall
is in their attraction to ladies, two of whom—Mademoiselle de Grands Titres (Fame) and the Countess d’Orgueil (Ambition)—were familiar motifs in heroic romance. From the outset, Peter, Jack and Martin are characterized as "Brother-Adventurers" (81), and they finally enter into the life of the Town after having "travell’d thro’ several Countries, encountered a reasonable Quantity of Gyants, and [slain] certain Dragons" (74).

Peter, the brother who ultimately becomes most mad (although one is not sure whether this is more a result of character or of the greater amount of authorial attention which he receives), is eventually singled out as "the Hero of the Play" (105) on the basis of his intention to turn "virtuoso" and to develop discoveries and projects for the benefit of mankind. Here the parallel to the critics, modern authors, and the Tale-teller himself becomes most evident, for the Tale-teller digresses momentarily to discuss the future benefits of his own treatise for "this whole Globe of Earth" (106). Throughout the description of Peter’s enterprises, his link to the figure of the classic literary hero is maintained. The Bulls which he breeds, for example, are from the "Race [which] was by great Fortune preserved in a lineal Descent from those that guarded the Golden Fleece"—although they have degenerated somewhat, their hooves now having become leaden. Similarly, the Brobdingnagian tales that Peter tells are heroic in proportion:

He had a Cow at home, which gave as much Milk at a meal, as would fill three thousand Churches; and what was yet more extraordinary, would never turn Sower. Another time, he was
telling of an old Signpost that belonged to his Father, with Nails and Timber enough on it, to build sixteen large Men of War. (120)

Peter is also associated, like the traditional hero, with militarism; when his brothers rebel, he arrives home with "a File of Dragoons" and "very fairly kicks them both out of Doors" (122).

Jack, too, when the author's attention is turned toward him, becomes both heroic and mad. Like Peter and unlike Martin, Jack has "Adventures" (137). Unwittingly following the example of his brother Peter, Jack relies heavily upon his own invention, finding a variety of means to injure himself and others in order to honor his father's will. Of particular interest is his claim of heroic self-importance which he broadcasts to passers-by much in the manner of the reluctant Coriolanus:

Observe this Stroak, (said he, shewing his bare Shoulders) a plaguy Janisary gave it me this very Morning at seven a Clock, as, with much ado, I was driving off the Great Turk. Neighbours mine, this broken Head deserves a Plaister; had poor Jack been tender of his Noddle, you would have seen the Pope, and the French King, long before this time of Day, among your Wives and your Warehouses. Dear Christians, the Great Mogul was come as far as White-Chappel, and you may thank these poor Sides that he hath not (God bless us) already swallowed up Man, Woman, and Child. (198)

Jack, loosely modelled of course after John Calvin, first erupts in phrensie when he founds the "Epidemick Aeolists." Like Peter, he retreats into a solipsistic world, thereby avoiding the temptation to temper his vision with reality. The essential claim of the Aeolists is divine inspiration—in effect, the claim of heroic semi-divinity. Their worship of wind as semi-material, semi-spiritual substance is traced back by the Tale-teller to the art of Odysseus in "carrying and
preserving the Winds in Casks or Barrels" (155) and is thereby authorized by heroic tradition.

Jack's reason deteriorates steadily as he becomes more fixated on his father's will and his own heroic task of redeeming himself by restoring the coat to its original. Students of the mind, contemporary with Swift, had observed the progressive psychotic breakdown which could result from a "scruple." Jeremy Taylor described the progressive madness of William of Oseney who read three hours a day until he had read the Bible six times, then felt compelled to read six hours a day, then seven, and so on increasing the number of hours steadily to match the number of readings he had done—and living in terror of his twenty-fourth reading (Hunter and McAlpine 164). Jack seems similar in his gradual but progressively wider application of his father's will to all areas of his life, to the point that, when unable to recall any injunctions in the will concerning the asking for directions to the jakes, he resignedly accepts the natural consequences.

Individual vision, as portrayed in Peter and Jack, is the heart of madness for Swift. The phrase "mad with pride" is repeated twice within the text of the Tale (115, 179). What distinguishes the madman from his fellows, both in Swift and in contemporary psychiatry, is the madman's unique vision with its inherent twisted logic and his fixation upon this vision. A twentieth-century text detailing the workings of logic in schizophrenia offers an example startlingly similar to that of Peter in his efforts to translate and interpret his father's will. E. Von Domarus offers the example of a schizophrenic patient who does
not distinguish between Jesus, a cigar, and a woman—all three share
the identity of being encircled (by a halo, a band, and a man’s glance,
respectively). Exactly the same logic is at work within any metaphoric
text—but particularly in the work of someone like the Tale-teller who
cannot distinguish metaphoric from literal (e.g. a weighty book and a
book that weighs a lot), like Peter who can discover the identity
between silver fringe and a broomstick—or bread and mutton—or like an
author, Swift might point out, who sees the shared identity of a
broomstick and mortal man. Von Domarus explains that "whereas for a
normal person the particular of being encircled is only one of many
accidentals, for the schizophrenic patient it is the quality expressing
essence" ("Laws of Logic" 109). Moreover, the logic inherent in such a
vision of reality eclipses any awareness of the absence of the logic
which would make the madman’s delusion evident to himself. Reason here
supports and perpetuates madness.

Thus, in spite of the increasing evidence of the
maladaptiveness of their delusions, Peter and Jack, as Michael Deporte
explains

remain to the end great men in their own eyes. ... It is
this inner security which makes them so dangerous. Their
delusions, however ludicrous or damnable, provide them with a
coherent vision of the world which their daily experience
confirms. Whatever happens they either conscript as evidence
or banish from their thoughts. ("Swift and the License of
Satire" 56)

In the cases of both Peter and Jack, the progress which is made
is the progress of madness, the deterioration and devolution of their
common sense and judgment. In seeking self-knowledge, in promoting
their personal visions, they override any knowledge against themselves. In Christian terms, theirs is a failure of conscience. This becomes more clear in the "Digression on Madness," as the Tale-teller promotes self-delusion through deliberate ignorance.

The "Digression on Madness"

That the Tale-teller should praise madness should be no surprise. His tale not only features madmen as the heroes but praises them for the productions of their madness. As we have seen, he consciously takes madness as his method. Moreover, the Tale-teller announces without embarrassment that he too has had "some Time the Happiness to be an unworthy Member" of the society of Bedlam (176). Subsequently, he explains, perhaps not without a bit of pride, that

Even, I myself, the author of these momentous Truths, am a Person, whose Imaginations are hard-mouth'd, and exceedingly disposed to run away with his Reason, which I have observed from long Experience, to be a very light Rider, and easily shook off; upon which Account, my Friends will never trust me alone, without a solemn Promise, to vent my Speculations in this, or the like manner, for the universal Benefit of Human kind. (180)

Throughout the Tale thus far, then, we have been reading a madman's account of the lives of other madmen. Michael DePorte explains that the two alternating halves of the Tale serve to illustrate the two dominant types of madness perceived during the Restoration:

Swift was, as we know, exploiting a view common among philosophers and physicians at the end of the seventeenth century that mental disorder fell into one of two categories: the first characterized by obsession, by an addiction to an idée fixe, the other marked by loss of control over the orderly process of thought, by the sort of triumph of fancy
over judgment which Hobbes and others warned would drive a man into a confused wilderness of private associations. ("License of the Satirist" 56)

The brothers, of course, demonstrate the perils of obsession with an idée fixe. The Tale-teller himself offers the more pointed example of the insufficient exercise of common sense and judgment.

The paradigm for madness previously offered by the Tale-teller (Fancy astride of Reason) illustrates the dynamics throughout the Tale of the uncontrolled energy and surface formlessness that characterizes the piece. The paradigm itself appears throughout Swift's works, being explained most clearly in Some Thoughts on Free-Thinking in Swift's summary of an Irish prelate's definition of madness:

The difference betwixt a madman and one in his wits, in what related to speech, consisted in this; that the former spoke out whatever came into his mind, and just in the confused manner as his imagination presented the ideas: The latter only expressed such thoughts as his judgment directed him to choose, leaving the rest to die away with his memory. (49)

Such an idea of madness resulting from lapsed judgment is essentially Hobbesian: "Without steadiness and direction to some end, a great fancy is one kind of madness, such as they have that, entering any discourse, are snatched from their purpose by everything that comes into their thought into so many and so long digressions and parentheses that they utterly lose themselves" (Leviathan 1.8). Such lapsed judgment, as Hobbes suggests, produces a mad style as well as a mad reality.

Frederick Smith has thoroughly investigated the characteristics of the Tale-teller's style which correspond to the style of such madmen (Language and Reality). Current psychiatric research continues to focus upon schizophrenic language, and Eugen Bleuler, who pioneered
work in schizophrenia research, has characterized the schizophrenic's style in a manner quite applicable to the Tale-teller: "The patients utter trivialities using highly affected expressions as if they were of the greatest interest to humanity" (Dementia Praecox 40).

Through the style of the Tale-teller, the reader is confronted with madness at a very immediate level. Swift manipulates the Tale-teller's style further, as we have seen, by making him blind to the metaphoric qualities of the words which he uses literally. As von Domarus suggests, metaphoric correspondences have reality in the world of the schizophrenic. Thus, while the Tale-teller remains mired in literalness, Swift thrusts the reader into a world where metaphoric connotation and literal denotation vie for supremacy. In effect, to decode the Swiftian irony behind the madman, the reader must frequently use the schizophrenic's method of giving primacy to metaphor and discounting strict denotation. David Nokes has commented astutely on Swift's use of puns and double-entendres in his later work to hint at the insubstantiality of semantic authority:

Swift's puns demonstrate the potentially fissile nature of all sorts of apparently simple words. They are revealed as consubstantiated units which, under persistent ironic pressure, may be split off into their separate component elements, which then resettle in layers, according to their respective specific gravities. Puns perform the Scriblerian trick of revealing the interdependence of the bathos and sublime. ("'Hack at Tom Poley's'" 47)

Such a method of utilizing the disparity between literal and figurative meaning seems to be at work here as well: In the Tale, metaphoric layers of meaning unintended by the Tale-teller demonstrate the
interconnectedness of madness and reason. The reader is forced to sort out possible meanings, and when confronted simultaneously with potential meaninglessness, contradictory meanings, and richly textured layers of meaning, the reader is thrust into the linguistic universe of the schizophrenic.

The reader is further discomfited by the Tale-teller's subsequent seductive argument promoting the benefits of madness. Thus far, the Tale-teller has been sometimes comic or absurd in his madness and sometimes pathetic. In the "Digression on Madness," however, the Tale-teller is transformed from comic butt to monster as he moves beyond simply exhibiting his madness to attempting actively and seductively to win his reader over into madness too.

Jack's degeneration serves the Tale-teller as the bridge into the heart of his treatise, as he claims that the example of Jack and the Aeolists is but one among many instances of the "rise and institution" of beneficial products from madness and he recommends madness as the efficient cause of "The Establishment of New Empires by Conquest: The Advance and Progress of New Schemes in Philosophy; and the contriving, as well, as the propagating of New Religions" (162). That Swift's satire was on target is demonstrated in this passage's anticipation of Collins's declaration in defense of free-thinking that "they who have been most distinguished in all Ages for their Understanding and Virtue, have been Free Thinkers" (123). Perhaps less coincidentally, as he introduces his "Digression on Madness," the Tale-teller refers exactly to the sorts of heroic enterprises which Sir
William Temple considered in his essay *Of Heroic Virtue*: "a survey of all the great actions and revolutions, occasioned in the world by the conquests and progresses of . . . mighty empires" (*Works* 3: 377). As the similarities to Temple’s essay demonstrate, madness and heroic virtue become synonymous in the *Tale*.

All of the *Tale*’s themes converge, both literally and metaphorically, in the "Digression on Madness", particularly with the Tale-teller’s declaration that "Madness [has] been the Parent of all those mighty Revolutions, that have happened in Empire, in Philosophy, and in Religion" (171). While the *Tale* thus far has revolved primarily around philosophy and religion, politics seems never to be very far from Swift’s mind, and it is from the realm of political science that the Tale-teller chooses his first examples of the effectiveness of madness as a force in history, and thereby better demonstrates madness as the source of heroic action. The potential glamour of madness as presented by the Tale-teller is undermined by Swift in his reduction of madness to physicality and mechanics according to the prevalent theories of abnormal psychology.

The digression begins with the account of Henry IV of France’s movement toward war as a result of his irritation by the ascension into his brain of the vapors of unspent semen. As throughout the rest of the *Tale*, Swift strategically manipulates the narration of this episode, first describing in dramatic terms the effects upon the entire Western world of the king’s agitation, then tracing the grand effect to its embarrassingly physical cause, thus beginning with the sublime and
ending in the bathetic. To underscore the point, the Tale-teller compares the king’s motive to "the same Principle that influences a Bully to break the Windows of a Whore, who has jilted him" (165). Like Temple, who advised Swift that psychology was more important in politics than policy, the Tale-teller traces political action to its source—but he continues by tracing psychological action to its source, thereby allowing Swift implicitly to indict all mankind, not just the politicians.

The Tale-teller follows the account of Henry IV with the story of a "hero," Louis XIV and his warring rampage, which caused "Philosophers of each Country" to engage in "grave Dispute, upon Causes Natural, Moral, and Political, to find out where they should assign an original Solution of the Phoenomenon" (165). The Tale-teller traces the cause to repressed flatulence, the gases having ascended to the brain, and concludes that "the same Spirits which in their superior Progress would conquer a Kingdom, descending upon the Anus, conclude in a Fistula" (166). Heroic virtue, in these two cases, is reduced to the base physical causes which have produced the derangement and led consequently to "heroic" action. Heroic virtue, presented thus, becomes a matter of circumstance and chance as well as a result of gross bodily functions. Thus, all such heroes of the past are undermined as what was considered extraordinary becomes seen as merely abnormal.

The allusion to the stories of Curtius and Empedocles further demonstrates the Tale-teller’s belief in the essential relativity of
heroic action. Empedocles (interestingly, the reputed founder of both rhetoric and medicine, and thus a proper figure for redemptive argument by the Tale-teller) in an effort to demonstrate his divinity, died ignobly by flinging himself into Mt. Etna, thereby revealing his mortality. Curtius, however, rode his horse into a pit in the Roman Forum, dying to save the state, and was consequently honored. For the Tale-teller, the actions are the same; both can only be explained by a kind of madness, and only the differing circumstances resulted in differences in fame and honor. For Swift, of course, the difference is clear: Curtius died for others, while Empedocles died in a vain attempt to prove himself something he was not.

Thus far the attentive reader has been able to discern both a distance and a tension between the voice of the putative author and the voice of Swift. As the Tale-teller moves from the topic of heroic action to the subject of individual happiness, Swift's presentation of the logic of madness traps the reader into at least a momentary assent to the irrational. In the "Digression on Madness," the Tale-teller summons the rational to his own defense. The digression plays upon a paradox previously presented by Epicurus and Erasmus. The Tale-teller oversimplifies Epicurus (in an apparent parallel to Temple's interpretation), indicating that not only are our senses bedimmed—but that it is better that way. Yet the Tale-teller's pronouncement that happiness itself is no more than "a perpetual Possession of being well-deceived" is perceived as so strongly true that the reader finds himself involuntarily swept up in the Tale-teller's argument. Perhaps
this is most true for the reader seeking a sense of identification with Swift—for this reader recognizes that the axioms upon which the argument is built are taken from the Swiftian creed of "the flaws and Imperfections of Nature." Unprepared for the self-satire and the betrayal to come, the reader eagerly pursues the argument, looking forward to its culmination in the description of the truly happy man:

He that can with Epicurus content his Ideas with the Films and Images that fly off upon his Senses from the Superficies of Things; Such a Man truly wise, creem off Nature, leaving the Sower and the Dregs, for Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined Point of Felicity, called, the Possession of being well deceived; The Serene Peaceful State of being a Fool among Knaves. (174)

Here, in what Paulson aptly characterizes as the "whiplash" effect of the Digression, the reader is bit by the Swiftian double-bind: one has the choice of being happy or being wise in the Swiftian universe, but the two are mutually exclusive. In wisdom is great sorrow. The Tale-teller's logic is impeccable in spite of his madness—indeed, his logic, like that of the schizophrenic, is part of his madness and the reader has been trapped into assenting to it.

Moreover, the trap has been baited with Erasmian irony. The digression echoes the Encomium Moriae as much as it echoes Temple's Epicurus. Both allusions help to mislead the careful reader into assent. Erasmus had declared, both ironically and literally, that "the supreme reward for man is no other than a kind of madness" (Encomium Moriae 113). Folly had argued: "It's sad, people say, to be deceived. Not at all, it's far sadder not to be deceived" (69). Finally, she had pleaded with all his readers to be fools for Christ. The Tale-teller
has indeed finally found a comfortable handhold on the highly respectable edifice of literature. When the Tale-teller finds solid ground like this, the reader, attempting to maintain a distance from the Tale-teller’s ravings, is displaced and falls into space. One must remember that Erasmus, in the guise of Folly, had also argued: "Nothing is so foolish as mistimed wisdom, and nothing less sensible than misplaced sense" (51).

In achieving the reader’s momentary assent, Swift has maneuvered the reader into a position from which all the madness throughout the text appears momentarily sane. The reader appreciates, for example, the joy of being able to eliminate two of the senses in order to maintain a reference to the mystical number Three (Tale 57). The reader acknowledges the truth in the Tale-teller’s declaration that mankind "received much greater Advantage by being Diverted than Instructed" (124). The reader recognizes the power of the irrational not only to make him happy but to make him the master of the universe: "For 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, and Breadth, and Height of his own?" (166).

The reader must similarly agree with Jack’s wisdom when he declares that "A Wise Man was his own Lanthorn" (192) and with his subsequent comment that "the Eyes of the Understanding see best, when those of the Senses are out of the way" (193).

By unleashing the full power of the mad logic of the argument against sense and for madness, Swift illustrates dramatically the
extreme danger which he perceives to be operating in the modern mind. Just as the reader is about to fall headlong into the void of the argument, he is caught by the phrase "Fool among Knaves"—a reminder, through its overwhelmingly negative connotation, of the madness of the argument for which he has fallen, but more than that a reminder of the potentially grave consequences for a society built upon the argument. One may wish to be a fool—but not a fool among knaves. Rochester’s lines spring to mind: "And honesty’s against all common sense, / Men must be knaves, ‘tis in their own defense" (Satyre 159-60). A man may indeed, as Temple did, seek foolish happiness and tranquillity in his garden; but having thereby become a fool he is no longer capable of maintaining himself in society, nor is a society of such men capable of maintaining itself. Madness is a social problem. In Swift, delusion in and of itself may be harmless. But when it is introduced into society, or, worse, when it attempts to remake society, it is a grave threat. From his account of the Academy of Bedlam to his tour of the Academy in Lagado and his Modest Proposal, Swift’s emphasis is upon the threat posed to society by the seductiveness of madness.

The accuracy of Swift’s aim in the Tale-teller’s conclusion is validated by history, again in Collins’s Discourse of Free-Thinking:

By means of all this [free-thinking], a Man may possess his Soul in peace, as having an expectation of enjoying all the good things which God can bestow, and no fear of any future Misery or Evil from his hands; and the very worst of his state can only be that he is pleasantly deceived. (38)

Probably less coincidentally, the Tale-teller’s conclusion echoes lines
from Rochester's "A Letter from Artemesia in the Towne," describing the dangers faced by overly inquisitive husbands:

They little guess, who att our Arts are griev'd,
The perfect Joy of being well deceiv'd.
Inquisitive, as jealous Cuckolds grow,
Rather than not be knowing, they will know,
What being knowne creates their certaine woe. (114-18)

In the world of the Tale, we are all cozened by our own curiosity and reason, and plunged subsequently at least for a moment into a Rochesterian condition in which reason, in leading us into error and contradiction, seems

an Ignis fatuus, in the Mind,
Which leaving light of Nature, sense behind;
Pathless and dang'rous wandering ways it takes,
Throuh errors Fenny--Boggs, and Thorny Brakes. (Satyre 12-15)

This dangerous condition is the result of the Tale-teller's appeal to the reader's individual rational faculty which leads him away from socially institutionalized reason: common sense. Ultimately, the reader must reach out of the text of the Tale for salvation through the reclamation of Right Reason.

Even Right Reason, in the Tale, faces some serious criticism, however. Hooker's insistence upon the inability of individual man to find truth compels him and his followers to fall back upon traditional and institutional authority, particularly that of the Anglican church, as an institutionalized amalgamation of tradition and common sense, as a point of reference. In the allegory of the coat, of course, the Tale-teller (and Swift) have stripped away, along with the brothers' coats, a good bit of the authority of the established church. Yet the moment of crisis in the Digression impels the reader to grasp for any
accessible handhold, and Martin, the only sane man in the Tale, is the only one available to proffer a helping hand. In effect, the Anglican church, though faulty, is offered as the only solution (and as only a partial solution) to a desperate situation.

The effect of this Digression, then, seems more subversive than traditional criticism suggests in formulating as the satirical norm some hypothetical Swiftian moderation and compromise between extremes. Kathleen Williams, for instance, seems to be understating the case: "Balance and compromise are of the essence of Swift's satiric method" (Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise 140). Such a statement does not take into account the severity of the compromise which is offered to the reader. Instead, Swift's implied solution to the extreme choices of madness and nihilism is represented throughout the Tale as itself somewhat arbitrary and imperfect. Yet it is all that we've got.

This sort of radical compromise—the acceptance of the least unacceptable option, the painful option which will inflict the least moral and social damage—seems to be characteristic of Swift's work. Michael DePorte characterizes the situations which Swift contrives in order to force such radical compromises: "When Swift seizes on contradictions . . . he leaves us feeling both that they must be forced to some resolution, and that no resolution is possible; in his satires, ambiguity is pain" ("The License of the Satirist" 66). Resolution seems to be pain as well.

What is most striking about Swift's (and the Tale-teller's) presentation of madness is the insistence upon madness as an option.
In his capacity of clergyman, Swift in his sermons would bluntly warn his congregations away from the perils of pride and madness. But in his function as a satirist, Swift reveals the full seductiveness of madness as a real choice, forcing his readers into feeling the same uneasiness that he feels. In order to extricate himself from the Tale, the reader is forced to make some choice. The declaration of free will, of course, is an underlying assumption in any corrective satire. Alexander Pope argues, for instance, against the satire of those who cannot help themselves:

We ought in humanity no more to despise a man for the misfortunes of the mind than for those of the body, when they are such as he cannot help. Were this thoroughly considered, we should no more laugh at one for having his brains crack'd than for having his head broke. ("Thoughts on Various Subjects" 553)

Swift, given his experience with mad beggars on the streets and his later governorship of Bedlam, recognized that there were forms of insanity which were not brought on solely by the victims. These people, however, were in no ways dangerous to the culture which Swift attempted to defend, and consequently it was unnecessary to attack them. The subtle power of the logic in madness is precisely what Swift does seek to unmask in the Tale—and he accomplishes his purpose by letting that power work upon the reader.

**Free Will, Mechanical Madness, and Heroic Self-Promotion**

Madness provides the common ground between the abuses in learning and those in religion which Swift claimed as his targets in the Tale. In the two brothers and in the Tale-teller, Swift
demonstrates the similarities between traditional heroism and common insanity. As suggested already, the danger posed by both is a social danger, and that danger occurs when the mad would-be hero chooses to convert the world.

Such a choice is satirized by Swift by means of his presentation of the mechanical means to madness. Having discovered the source of heroic madness, the Tale-teller proposes:

The main Point of Skill and Address, is to furnish Employment for this Redundancy of Vapour, and prudently to adjust the Seasons of it; by which means it may certainly become of Cardinal and Catholick Emolument in a Commonwealth. Thus one Man chusing a proper Juncture, leaps into a Gulph, from thence proceeds a Hero, and is called the Saver of his Country; Another achieves the same Enterprise, but unluckily timing it, has left the Brand of Madness, fixt as a Reproach upon his Memory. (175)

Subsequently, the Tale-teller offers the reader an inventory of ways to achieve the pitch of madness proper to his purposes. For aspiring writers, he offers a receipt for a universal nostrum which

will dilate it self about the Brain (where there is any) in fourteen Minutes, and you immediately perceive in your Head an infinite Number of Abstracts, Summaries, Compendiums, Extracts, Collections, Medulla's Excerpta quaedam's, Florilegia's and the like, all disposed into great Order, and reducible upon Paper. (126-27)

The inherent logic of madness, again, is insisted upon: while the material generated by the nostrum may be a whirlwind of ideas, it will appear in "great Order"—even as the Tale-teller's work, often criticized as formless, is actually highly formal, overly formal, madly formal.

In the allegory itself, Jack too is presented as having voluntarily worked himself into madness:
Jack had not only calculated the first Revolutions of his Brain so prudently, as to give Rise to that Epidemick Sect of Aeolists, but succeeding also into a new and strange Variety of Conceptions, the Fruitfulness of his Imagination led him into certain Notions, which, altho' in Appearance very unaccountable, were not without their Mysteries and their Meanings, nor wanted Followers to countenance and improve them. (189)

Peter, too, earlier in the Tale was described as bringing his madness upon himself:

Alas, he had kept his Brain so long, and so violently upon the Rack, that at last it shook itself, and began to turn round for a little Ease. In short, what with Pride, Projects, and Knavery, poor Peter was grown distracted, and conceived the strangest Imaginations in the World. In the Height of his Fits (as it is usual with those who run mad out of Pride) He would call Himself God Almighty and sometimes Monarch of the Universe. (115)

Again, the connection between pride and madness is emphasized--madness being no more than the imposition of individual vision upon the world. For Swift, such an imposition of self upon the world clearly meant an opposition of the will of the individual to the manifest will of God, the form of heroism embodied in Milton's Satan. Fundamentally, the madness to which Swift objects is moral madness. The self-induced madness of Peter, Jack, and the Tale-teller satirizes modern mechanistic theory--but also offers a metaphor for the role of free will in moral madness. As suggested previously, Swift seems to have accepted with resignation the probability of universal private madness. What he objects to is the heroic promotion of individual vision to society at large. This is the point of the satire which begins when the Tale-teller reveals the final stage of progressive madness:

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. For, Cant and Vision are to the Ear and the Eye, the same that Tickling is to the Touch. (171)

Thus the theme of cant and oratory, begun in the very first section of the Tale with the discussion of oratorial machinery, is but a minor motif in the larger theme of heroic madness. The individual works himself into madness and then attracts his crowd. The means to heroic fame and admiration is the communication of his vision and the consequent conquering of both the populace and the world. And as the Tale-teller has demonstrated, the allure of madness is so great that a following is not long in forming. Peter, Jack, and the Tale-teller himself vigorously strive to attain fame and glory through the imposition of their mad vision upon followers. Again, the Tale-teller offers a mechanical explanation of how this may be achieved:

There is a peculiar String in the Harmony of Human Understanding, which in several individuals is exactly of the same Tuning. This, if you can dexterously screw up to its right Key, and then strike gently upon it; Whenever you have the Good Fortune to light among those of the same Pitch, they will by a secret necessary Sympathy, strike exactly at the same time. (169)

Swift here demonstrates his familiarity with the hypotheses prevalent during his lifetime concerning the potential contagiousness of madness.

It is exactly this urge to proselytize that makes Swift's madmen worthy of satire. Insofar as they hold unacceptable views, they are a nuisance but harmless. Insofar as they attempt to make their visions the norm, they are dangerous. As Erasmus in his fool's cap suggests, complete fools are those who are foolish but pretend to
wisdom (Encomium Moriae 30). Auden has pointed out that folly and vice are not, in themselves, the subject for proper satire, because folly and vice are normal. Only when folly and vice exceed the norms for folly and vice do they become the butt of the satirist’s wit ("Satire" 203). Swift’s madmen are abhorrent precisely because, like the Tale-teller with his mad logic, they try to pass as sane men and even set themselves up as heroes, and in the attempt they become grotesque, monstrous, and dangerous.

* * *

The themes of madness and heroism converge in the Tale, then, in the elevation of the self or ego. Both heroism and madness are functions of narcissism—and consequently both reside deeply within everyone. As contemporary radical psychiatrists have demonstrated, everything that is individual is susceptible to the label of madness. For Swift, the label was automatic.

Swift, it has been noted, uses masks in order to say outrageous things which he really believes. For example, as we shall see, the Modest Proposer, while abhorrent, shares much with Swift’s own personality, which he himself probably also found abhorrent. Swift’s sin against common decency is his admission of his own unspeakable thoughts. He wears his frailties on the surface—and thereby affronts all who would seek to side with him in his satires. Yet his games are so brilliant and his jokes are so good that we are invariably drawn into his company—and then discomfited by his presence.
In writing the Tale, Swift himself proselytizes, committing the very sin which he satirizes. When the Tale-teller lists the reasons of modern writers for writing (183) and all of them reflect a nasty disposition or madness, Swift satirizes both the others and himself. The double-bind is in full operation. As Leavis has suggested, Swift's implied solidarity with the reader is really a means for betrayal ("Irony" 117). Even as he satirizes both proselytizers and their duped followers in the Tale, he himself takes on the role of proselytizer and implicitly satirizes the reader as the dupe. Even as he defends the ancients from the moderns, his use of the heroic tradition as his vehicle undermines some of the authority of the ancients.

Swift is not, however, nihilistic. In the story of Martin and in the shared laughter between satirist and reader, Swift implies standards for both thought and behavior. The father's coat, like the Bible and the will of God, may never be restored to its original purity, for it has been ravaged by time and mankind; still, Martin's conservative approach seeks to ensure that nothing more will be lost and that nothing new will obscure whatever remains of the original. While Swift admits the usefulness of ideals, he emphasizes their unnattainability. Those who seek to achieve ideals are characterized as heroic madmen. Though no ideals remain in the realm of the achievable because of man's fallen and falling nature, we would be remiss to neglect the standards that we have left. That we do indeed have standards is implied by our ability to laugh with Swift at the brothers and the Tale-teller. The bond between satirist and reader
depends upon common sense. But Swift does not hesitate to show the limits of our common sense by turning the laughter uncomfortably back upon both himself and his readers.

For Swift, madness consists in singular vision. The Spectator echoed both Swift's and popular opinion that even when the majority contradict reason,

There is a certain deference due to custom; and notwithstanding there may be a colour of reason to deviate from the multitude in some particulars, a man ought to sacrifice his private inclinations and opinions to the practice of the public.

The Spectator continues with the example of the fate of a man, reminiscent of both Swift and some of his characters, who attempted to be at all times strictly reasonable: "He at length departed so much from the rest of his countrymen, and indeed, from his whole species, that his friends would have clapped him into Bedlam" (Spectator 576, August 4, 1714). The irony for Swift is that in a mad society, individualism like his own may be perceived as madness. He has taken on the heroic task of the vir bonus, the individual who exposes and challenges the madness of his culture and whose vision is consequently regarded by the majority as quackery or worse. Rather than offering a norm, Swift offers himself as one more satiric victim, a sacrificial offering. The self-satire which remains largely implicit in the Tale becomes increasingly more pronounced throughout Swift's career.
CHAPTER 4

THE WRITER AS HERO:

THE EXAMINER, THE DRAPIER, AND THE MODEST PROPOSER

There are heroes in evil as well as in good.

—La Rochefoucauld

During the twenty-four years between _A Tale of a Tub_ and _Gulliver's Travels_, Swift primarily occupied his pen with political pamphlets and histories. His satirical wit found its primary outlet in verse, and he wrote relatively few extended prose satires during this period. For the most part, in his prose of this period, the art of satire is subordinated to the larger art of rhetoric, and his satiric tone emerges only sporadically but strategically in choice phrases and paragraphs to support arguments meant to appeal to the common sense of the British public. Thus, his writing during this period is rarely made difficult by irony. These writings seem to provide readers more direct access to the author's ideas than is provided by the satires, and readers of Swift who decry the minimal provision of norms in the satires would be well-advised to peruse the rest of Swift's prose. Swift's essays are clearly designed to persuade his readers into positive action, while his satires are clearly designed to dissuade...
readers from follies and vice. Even in some of these relatively straightforward pieces, however, readers have sometimes had difficulty determining whether Swift himself or just Swift’s rhetoric is doing the talking.

This extended period in Swift’s writing career is particularly significant in demonstrating his sense of literature’s function as an active institution in a political society and in delineating his political views, which are clearly founded upon Christian ethics as well as upon a realistic philosophy of social expediency. In his portraits of the leading political, literary, and religious figures of the day, Swift repeatedly demonstrates that his sense of politics is based upon personal morality. An examination of his sermons corroborates this view. But even more interesting than the real historical figures are the created speakers Swift uses in his pieces: the Examiner, the Drapier, and the Modest Proposer. Each of these is heroic in his own way. The first two are portrayed as heroic but alienated, singular voices in a mad society. The third, the Modest Proposer, is a parodic cultural hero par excellence, exactly reflecting in his amorality and his subverted rationalism the madness of his entire society. He is, in effect, the Christian vir bonus gone mad. These three figures show the increasing difficulty, sensed by Swift, of uncorrupted heroic action in a mad and corrupt literary, social, and political arena.

As noted earlier, Swift’s work, with the exception of his two extended prose masterpieces, tends to be occasional, rooted in the
events around him. Clearly, his sense of the ontology of his own writing was historically based: his literary productions are events taking place among other events. This is indicated, for instance, in his withholding from publication his *History of the Four Last Years* after delays caused by principal parties rendered release of the work untimely. Clearly, he had expected the work to produce a general shift in political sympathies, and when the death of Queen Anne dashed all Tory hopes, Swift could no longer justify publication of the piece. Repeatedly, through the next three decades, he lamented to his friends the lost opportunity of setting matters straight at a time when a clear understanding of the last ministry of Queen Anne might have done the most good. Thus, we may deduce that public edification in and of itself was not the primary purpose of his writing the history.

Swift's sense of the ontology of reading is similarly based in time. In *Thoughts on Various Subjects*, he remarks that "When I am reading a book, whether wise or silly, it seemeth to me to be alive and talking to me" (*PW* 4:253). Reading and writing form a discourse which, though sometimes discontinuous, takes place in time and which has both causes and effects like any oral discussion. In his *Letter To a Young Gentleman*, Swift argues that the keeping of commonplace books shows a misunderstanding of the way in which reading and writing work:

> If a rational Man reads an excellent Author with just Application, he shall find himself extremely improved, and perhaps insensibly led to imitate that Author's Perfections; although in a little Time, he should not remember one Word in the Book, nor even the Subject it handled: For, Books give the same Turn to our Thoughts and Way of Reasoning, that good and
If such is true for the reader of Cicero or Hooker, how much more immediate and profound must be the effect for the reader of accounts of current events— the peace with France, the proposed abolition of the Sacramental Test in Ireland, the minting of unbacked coinage, and so on. In such writing, where the event and the description of the event are concurrent, the writing merges into the continuity of the event as the event is incorporated into and thereby altered by the writing. Those discourses (press conferences, news releases and other politico-linguistic ceremonies) which the late twentieth century has characterized as "pseudo-events" clearly have a history dating at least to the pamphleteering and proselytizing of the Restoration. As a political writer, Swift clearly saw himself as a historical actor and saw his works as pieces of an ongoing discourse and dialogue which would result immediately in altered perception and subsequently in further action. As a historical actor, the writer has the potential to be heroic in a manner not very dissimilar to that of the military leader (particularly when the writer prepares the populace for an end to war) or of the politician.

**Swift's Politics**

Lamenting the apparent transience of political ideals according to the whims of ambition, party dominance, and fashion, Swift himself held remarkably closely and consistently to several simple political principles and objectives from which he derived his views on most
issues. These principles set him alternately at odds with one party and then the other, and Swift defies simplistic general categorization with terms like "Whig," "Tory," "conservative," "liberal," or "reactionary." Swift's principles and objectives are straightforwardly presented in The Sentiments of a Church of England Man and The Contests and Dissensions, two works written and published anonymously before he had gained recognition as a pamphleteer and, indeed, while he still was aligned primarily with the Whigs then in power. The persistence of these principles throughout his realignment with the Tories speaks strongly for their genuineness.

While the Whigs identified the Tories as the great threat to the constitution and the country, and while the Tories retaliated in kind, Swift identified party strife and factionalism itself as the greatest danger facing the commonwealth. Throughout his works, when a society is idealized (e.g., Brobdingnag or Houyhnhnmland), Swift portrays it as a partyless state. The problem of factionalism must have been felt particularly acutely by Swift, for not only did he find his country divided by party loyalties, but he himself was divided. In his Memoirs relating to That Change which happened in the Queen's Ministry in the Year 1710, he recalls:

I told [Lord Sommers], that, having been long conversant with the Greek and Roman authors, and therefore a lover of liberty, I found myself much inclined to be what they called a Whig in politics; and that, besides, I thought it impossible, upon any other principle, to defend or submit to the Revolution: But, as to religion, I confessed myself to be an High-churchman, and that I did not conceive how any one, who wore the habit of a clergyman, could be otherwise. (PW 8: 120)
The two fundamental goals which Swift supports consistently throughout his work are the protection of the Church of England and the continued succession of the House of Hanover. Thus, a Tory in Church and a revolutionary Whig in politics, as he characterizes himself, he sometimes supports both parties, but increasingly finds himself unable to support either, developing an increasingly alienated position which he characterizes fully and clearly as early as 1708 in The Sentiments of a Church of England Man: "Whoever hath examined the Conduct and Proceedings of both Parties for some Years past, whether in or out of Power, cannot well conceive it possible to go far towards the Extremes of either, without offering some Violence to his Integrity or Understanding" (Sentiments, PW 2: 1). Moreover, because factionalism perpetuates strife rather than promoting unity, Swift is often inclined to wish a plague upon both houses:

And indeed when the two Parties that divide the whole Commonwealth come once to a Rupture, without any Hopes left of forming a Third with better principles to balance the others; it seems every Man's Duty to choose one of the Two sides, although he cannot entirely approve of either; and all Pretences to Neutrality are justly exploded by both, being too stale and obvious; only intending the Safety and Ease of a few Individuals, while the Publick is embroiled. This was the Opinion and Practice of the latter Cato, whom I esteem to have been the wisest and best of all the Romans. But before Things proceed to open Violence, the truest Service a private Man may hope to do his Country is by unbiassing his mind as much as possible and then endeavoring to moderate between the Rival Powers; which must needs be owned a fair Proceeding with the World: Because, it is of all others the least consistent with the common Design of making a Fortune by the Merit of an Opinion. (Sentiments, PW 2: 2)

It may indeed have been party strife which produced Swift’s familiar habit of mind—posing two equally abhorrent alternatives (fool or
knave, Yahoo or Houyhnhnm, nominal Christianity or no Christianity at all, Tory or Whig) and implying the necessity of a third option to mediate or eliminate the dilemma. In any case, Swift's approach to the two parties here significantly resembles his approaches to other problems. In light of the immediate effects of factionalism, the strife between the parties, from Swift's perspective, does more immediate harm than can be justified by any potential of eventual good.

Thus, Swift's position is staunchly conservative, in effect a yearning for an idyllic but hierarchical socio-political golden age. Yet unlike the most reactionary Tories (the October Club, for example), he finds himself unable to advocate a return to a pre-revolutionary state which has been superseded for such a return is neither politically expedient nor realistic: "Sects, in a State, seem only to be tolerated with any Reason, because they are already spread; and because it would not be agreeable with so mild a Government, or so pure a Religion as ours, to use violent Methods against great Numbers of mistaken People" (Sentiments, PW 2: 5). As in other matters, Swift's idealistic principles in politics are balanced, and sometimes even canceled out, by his frequently bitter realism. While his ideals of Christian ethics and liberty remain guiding lights, he bases much of his opposition to party strife and to the programs of either party upon expedience and pragmatism. In matters of both state and religion, the immediate danger caused by dissension about reform and innovation obscures for Swift any possible advantages to be gained:

It is possible, that a Man may speculatively prefer the Constitution of another Country, or an Utopia of his own,
before that of the Nation where he is born and lives; yet from considering the Dangers of Innovation, the Corruptions of Mankind, and the frequent Impossibility of reducing Ideas to Practice, he may join heartily in preserving the present Order of Things, and be a true Friend to the Government already settled. (Examiner No. 29, PW 3: 91-92)

In several political tracts, Swift converts the allegory of the coats from the Tale to a metaphor of house maintenance which becomes thematic throughout his political writing. In light of the current degenerated state of politics and religion, all the minute reformations and schismatic suggestions would cause more damage than good: "It would be to act like a Man, who should pull down and change the Ornaments of his House, in Compliance to every one who was disposed to find fault as he passed by; which, besides the perpetual Trouble and Expense, would do very much damage, and perhaps in Time destroy the Building" (Sentiments, PW 2: 5). From Swift's perspective, the trouble which his government and his religion face is the result of those people who act upon their differences of opinion while ignoring areas of agreement. Swift offers what he believes to be compromise in a sort of Christian resignation to things as they are. He looks to find the ideas and policies on which all men can agree, thus attempting to use common sense as a guide to both politics and theology: "We look upon it as a very just Reproach, although we cannot agree where to fix it; that there should be so much Violence and Hatred in religious Matters, among Men who agree in all Fundamentals, and only differ in some Ceremonies; or, at most, meer speculative Points" (Sentiments, PW 2: 13).

From the outset of his political writing, then, even though he does on some occasions take on the role of the spokesman for a group
(for example, the Church of England Man), most often Swift describes a world run amok in which his voice is the sole voice of reason, wisdom, impartiality, and moderation. His conclusion to the *Sentiments of a Church of England Man* makes clear Swift's sense of his own politics as transcending those of both parties:

I have the Ambition common with other Reasoners, to wish at least, that both Parties may think me *in the right* which would be of some Use to those who have any *Virtue* left, but are blindly drawn into Extravagancies of either, upon false Representations, to serve the Ambition or Malice of designing men, without any *Prospect* of their own. But if that may not be hoped for; my next Wish should be, that both might think me *in the wrong*; which I would understand, as an ample *Justification* of my self, and a sure *Ground* to believe, that I have proceeded at least with *Impartiality*, and perhaps with *Truth*. (PW 2: 25)

Indeed, impartiality and the loneliness of alienation which it entails in a mad and corrupt society are the key characteristics of Swift's non-ironic prose speakers during the next twenty-five years.

**Political Madness and Popular Madness**

Whereas the *Tale* satirized the madness of a type of author and a type of religious enthusiast, Swift's political writings project a sense of an entire country gone mad as a result of the rapidity of changes which have recently occurred: "All great Changes have the same Effect upon Commonwealths that Thunder hath upon Liquors; making the Dregs fly up to the Top" (Examiner No. 24, PW 3: 65). Ultimately, as is his habit (inculcated by Sir William Temple), Swift looks to the nature of man himself for the explanation of the chaos before him: "Few States are ruined by any Defect in their Institutions, but generally by
the Corruption of Manners" (Sentiments, PW 2: 14). For Swift, who analyzes government in terms of individual men, moral or immoral, all of the arguments of the Whigs and Tories are superficial. Man is imperfect and imperfectible, and consequently his institutions, even including the church, are not susceptible to idealistic reform:

We have not better Materials to compound the Priesthood of, than the Mass of Mankind, which, corrupted as it is, those who receive Orders, must have some Vices to leave behind them, when they enter into the Church; and if a few do still adhere, it is no wonder, but rather a great one that they are no worse. (Sentiments, PW 2: 10)

Similarly, while his fellow pamphleteers rage about the Pretender and the Spanish succession, Swift focuses his attention upon the basic and inherent morality (or immorality) and humanity (or inhumanity) which animates all politics. The wellspring beneath the surface of most action, according to the sometimes Hobbesian Swift, is personal interest, as he indicates at the close of one of his political pieces: "I have dealt with the utmost Impartiality, which is that of allowing Men to act upon the Motives of their Interests and their Passions" (An Enquiry into the Behavior of the Queen's Last Ministry, PW 8: 179).

Like the Tale-teller, then, Swift is inclined to find the irrational as the basis for much human action, both private and public.

Because of their inability to recognize the reality of their own imperfections or their unwillingness to accept it, whole groups of men and bodies of government are characterized by Swift as insane. In the closing pages of The Contests and Dissensions, Swift expresses hope of his pamphlet's success as a result of appearing during the "lucid interval" between Parliamentary sessions, thereby indicting both
parties and Houses of madness (PW 1: 234-5). Moreover, he identifies the dissension promoted by the politicians and pamphleteers as the source of a more widespread popular madness:

This must be said in behalf of humankind, that common sense and plain reason, while men are disengaged from acquired opinions, will ever have some general influence upon their minds; whereas the species of folly and vice are infinite, and so different in every individual, that they could never procure a majority, if other corruptions did not enter to pervert men's understandings, and misguide their wills. (Contests and Dissensions, PW 1: 307)

The process of the contagion of popular madness here is strikingly similar to that described for the individual in the Tale. The passion of the political leaders gets astride of the public reason, and the commonweal gallops off down the road to madness. In this whiggish appeal to common sense, Swift points to the singular visions of politicians and parties as the evil which has overtaken the entire country.

At the same time, the manner in which the contagion spreads out from Parliament in this analysis demonstrates the need for strong and moral leadership, an expedient which eventually prompts Swift into alignment with the Tories. Swift longs for stability in government, and stability cannot be achieved by the people, whose fluctuating and fickle will, though an effective safeguard against long-lived tyranny, works too often to destroy institutions, thereby creating opportunities for corrupt leaders:

I think it is a universal truth, that the people are much more dexterous at pulling down and setting up, than at preserving what is fixed; and they are not fonder of seizing more than their own, than they are of delivering it up again to the worst bidder, with their own into the bargain. For, although
in their corrupt notions of divine worship, they are apt to multiply their gods; yet their earthly devotion is seldom paid to above one idol at a time, of their own creation. (Contests and Dissensions, PW 1: 291)

The emergence of leaders, frequently chosen from the society's heroes, is a social necessity, an expedient which Swift readily grants:

[The people choose] some one eminent spirit, who, having signalized his valour and fortune in defence of his country, or by the practice of popular arts at home, comes to have great influence on the people, to grow their leader in warlike expeditions, and to preside, after a sort, in their civil assemblies: and this is grounded upon the principles of nature and common reason, which in all difficulties or dangers, where providence or courage is required, rather incite us to fly for counsel or assistance to a single person, than a multitude. (Contests and Dissensions, PW 1: 260)

In this manner are heroes and political leaders created. The problem for Swift at such a juncture is the question of the personal morality and integrity of the would-be hero or leader. Recalling Caesar and Pompey, Swift remarks: "Civil dissensions never fail of introducing and spiritizing the ambitions of private men: who thus become indeed the great instruments for deciding such quarrels, and at last are sure to seize on the prize" (Contests and Dissensions, PW 1: 293).

Thus, Swift's scrutiny of personal moral character throughout his political writing is more than an ad hominem rhetorical ploy; it reflects a cornerstone of his politics.

When leaders are immoral, the result is madness. In a Letter to a Member of Parliament, Swift points to the utter topsy-turviness in that body:

It looks exceeding strange, yet I believe it to be a great Truth, that, in order to carry a Point in your House, the two following Circumstances are of great Advantage: first, to have an ill Cause; and, secondly, to be a Minority. For both these
Circumstances are extremely apt to unite men, to make them assiduous in their Attendance, watchful of Opportunityes, zealous for gaining over Proselytes, and often successful; which is not to be wondered at, when Favour and Interest are on the side of their Opinion. (Letter to a Member of Parliament, PW 2: 129)

Such subversions of common sense, in Swift's view, are traceable to human nature, for it is "natural to Mankind to be more violent in an ill Cause than a good one" (Some Advice to the October Club, PW 6: 78).

The war in France becomes Swift's example par excellence of the subversion of common sense and common will by a few leaders who work only to achieve their own self-interest. In The Conduct of the Allies, Swift mercilessly exposes the insanity of the war, an insanity in which all citizens have become involved: "We are destroying many thousand Lives, exhausting all our Substance, not for our own Interest, which would be sufficient Folly, but perhaps to our own Destruction, which is perfect Madness" (PW 6: 20).

Consistently, madness is the metaphor used by Swift to characterize his society. In its obsession with the factionalism which distracts society from united efforts toward a common good, Swift discovers a sort of paranoid schizophrenia. Among the Whigs, for instance, all current events and all ministry decisions are causes of concern and indications of plots afoot to bring in the Pretender:

[Whigs] will never agree where to fix their Longitude. The Duke of Savoy is the more dangerous for removing to Sicily: He adds to our Fears for being too far off, and the Chevalier de St. George for being too near. . . .

This was just the Logick of poor Prince Butler, a splenetic mad Man, whom every Body may remember about the Town. Prince Pamphilio in Italy employed Emissaries to torment Prince Butler here. But what if Prince Pamphilio die?
Why then, he hath left in his Will, that his Heirs and Executors torment Prince Butler for ever. (Publick Spirit of the Whigs, PW 8: 64)

Looking at politics from the perspective of a moral psychologist, Swift found corruption and madness almost everywhere.

The Examiner: The Problem of Authority in Bedlam

Amid this madness, Swift reluctantly (or so he suggests) puts his pen to work in the service of moderation and common sense. The character of the Examiner is particularly attractive for his lack of self-interest in his examinations of the proceedings of the State and the Church, probably the sort of character to which Swift aspired. As a rhetorical pose, in order to claim what Aristotle calls the proof of the speaker, the Examiner is highly effective, and he is the genesis of the character of the modern Christian hero, the cives and the One Just Man, which Swift would cultivate throughout the rest of his career.

The question of Swift’s own impartiality is a difficult one. F. P. Lock has argued that such impartiality as is claimed by the Examiner is merely a conventional rhetorical pose and that Swift, although he did not take money for his writing (as did Defoe and others), was in effect owned by the Tories after 1710 (Swift’s Tory Politics 2, 14, 25), suggesting that no one but a blockhead ever wrote but for preferment. Still, even if this were true, however close or distant they are to the actual personality and politics of Swift, the speakers in his political writings reflect consistent tendencies and characteristics, rhetorical or not, which are worthy of consideration in a study of Swiftian heroes. Moreover, Swift’s letters to his
friends are congruent with his public claims to impartiality. Upon finding himself embraced by the new ministry in 1708, Swift wrote to Archbishop King, his superior in Ireland:

Not knowing how far my friends may endeavor to engage me in the service of a new Government, I would beg your Grace to have favourable thoughts of me on such an occasion; and to assure you, that no prospect of making my fortune, shall ever prevail on me to go against what becometh a man of conscience and truth, and an entire friend to the Established Church. (November 9, Corr 1: 105)

Similarly, writing to Archdeacon Wells on the same day, he declares limits in the extent to which he can agree with his newly found Tory comrades: "It is thought that most of those I have credit with will come into play. But yet, if they carry things too far, I shall go to Vienna, or even to Laracor, rather than fall in with them" (Corr 1: 108). Such a self-portrait is entirely consistent with the repeated characterization of the Examiner:

I never let slip an Opportunity of endeavoring to convince the World, that I am not Partial; and to confound the idle Reproach of my being hired or directed what to write in Defense of the present Ministry, or for detecting the Practices in the former. When I first undertook this Paper, I firmly resolved, that if ever I observed any gross Neglect, Abuse, or Corruption in the publick Management, which might give any just Offence to reasonable People; I would take Notice of it with that innocent Boldness which becometh an honest Man, and a true Lover of his Country. (Examiner No. 41, PW 3: 152-3)

As one who perceives party strife and corruption as the root of all national evils ("I am told for certain, that Ambition hath removed her Lodging, and lives the very next Door to Faction; where they keep such a Racket, that the whole Parish is disturbed, and every Night in an Uproar" [Publick Spirit of the Whigs, PW 8: 55]), Swift, as the
Examiner and elsewhere, scrupulously maintains his innocence of being tainted by either. As a result, he emerges as a highly singular character, embattled on every front. On several occasions during the course of his career, the Examiner laments the loneliness of the impartial man. Having no interest in either side, being loyal only to truth, common sense, and moderation, he finds himself attacked from both sides:

The Friends of this Paper have given me more Uneasiness with their Impatience, than its Enemies by their Answers. I heard myself censured last Week by some of the former, for promising to discover the Corruptions in the late Administration, but never performing any Thing. The latter, on the other Side, are thundering out their Anathema’s against me for discovering so many. I am at a Loss how to decide between these Contraries, and therefore shall proceed after my own Way, as I have hitherto done; my Design being of more Importance than that of Writing only to gratify the Spleen of one Side, or provoke that of the Other, although it may occasionally have both Effects. (Examiner No. 19, PW 3: 36)

The Examiner’s repeated insistence upon his impartiality is the result of a problem which Swift had addressed previously in the Tale:

"Whoever hath an Ambition to be heard in a Crowd, must press, and squeeze, and thrust, and climb with indefatigable Pains, till he has exalted himself to a certain Degree of Altitude above them" (55). By virtue of his intimacy with the ministry, the Examiner has clearly been elevated among the pamphlet writers and party hacks, and he makes both explicit and implicit use of his privileged position. But Swift is loath to rely upon such an obviously mechanical differentiation between himself and the crowd, and he seems to yearn for a less precarious authority. Milton and Dryden had validated their true heroes, as the Romans had before them, through Divine or Providential
vindication. *Absalom and Achitophel* concludes, for instance, with the voice from the heavens damning Achitophel and upholding David. But Swift, as we have seen in the *Tale*, disdains those who claim divine authorization for their opinions, and Providence did not seem to be working implicitly in Parliament to validate either faction, much less the Examiner himself.

In the voice of the Examiner, Swift continues to damn singularity and individualism in all its manifestations—yet as the lone just man among the mad, he himself is now damned to singularity and individualism, his own vision of hellish madness. The world, as portrayed by Swift, is a landscape populated by individuals each trying to convince the other of his own individual truths and visions. In an early tract, Swift observes without irony that "Persecution, it seems, is every Thing that will not leave it in Men’s Power to persecute others" (*A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons, PW 2: 122*), and in order to maintain freedom from persecution, Swift now finds it necessary to persecute others, at least verbally. In a mad world, one cannot remain inactive and expect the world gradually to come to its senses. But engagement in a dialogue with that world exacts a high price. Like the personae of countless satirists, from Horace to Donne, Swift as the Examiner is drawn into a discourse with knaves, fools, and madmen, and finds that his own voice, presumably sane, does not ring any more loudly or clearly than those of his antagonists. He is like the one man who really *is* a victim of a conspiracy, locked up with hundreds who, like himself, have been diagnosed as paranoid.
A twentieth century experiment by Milton Rokeach forcibly dramatizes the problem faced by Swift in an age where much authority was precarious. Rokeach brought together three psychiatric patients, each of whom claimed to be Christ, hoping to induce each to recognize, through the example of the others, his own delusion. Each continued in his own delusion, of course, and found a means of discrediting the "imposters." In this contrived situation, Rokeach as the psychiatrist acts, in effect, as Providence, invalidating all of the claimants. Swift, in appropriating the role of psychiatrist, tries to do likewise as he uses the accusation of madness throughout his career. Yet psychiatry, as we have seen, was itself embroiled in controversy. An experimental situation more properly analogous to that of Swift in the pamphlet wars would be an experiment in which the psychiatrist is removed and "patients" claiming to be the psychiatrist are brought together. Even if the "true" psychiatrist were included in the group, could he demonstrate his own identity without recourse to some outside authority? It is no wonder that during these years Swift's voice becomes more shrill and that more frequent notes of despair are sounded. Dialogue with madmen is maddening. Midway through his career, the Examiner remarks, "[T]his Trade of Examining, I apprehend, may at one time or other go near to sour my Temper" (Examiner No. 34, PW 3: 116).

Swift's situation is made more complex by his apparent recognition that certainty of one's own truths is often the characteristic of the madman, who denies his follies as vehemently as
the satiric victim does, while recognition of one's fallibility is a characteristic of the sane man. In fact, Swift explained his habit of publishing pseudonymously with just such a rationale: "It is most certain that all Persons of True Genius or Knowledge have an invincible Modesty and Suspiciousness of themselves upon their first sending their Thoughts into the World: And that those who are Dull or Superficial, void of all Taste and Judgement, have Dispositions directly contrary" (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 105). Thus, Swift trusted to common sense, believing that good work would be applauded by the public and validated thus by the sensus communis. But in a society torn, as Swift saw it, by factionalism and sectarianism, the sensus communis is no longer functional. In the pamphlet wars, Swift finds himself to be the very singular voice which he has scorned in the past. Validated neither by the sensus communis nor by Providence, Swift's situation is exactly like that of his eventual speaker in The Abolishing of Christianity in England: "I am very sensible what a Weakness and Presumption it is, to reason against the general Humour and Disposition of the World. . . . However, I know not how, whether from the Affectation of Singularity, or the Perverseness of human Nature, but so it unhappily falls out, that I cannot be entirely of this Opinion" (PW 2: 26). Even the true psychiatrist when cast into Bedlam must begin to doubt himself somewhat. The problem, no doubt, affected Swift profoundly, for it ultimately leads into the epistemological problems raised by Locke and Descartes, problems which Swift clearly preferred to avoid but just as clearly was unable to.
On the surface, the problem appears in Swift's works as a problem of rhetoric. Deeply self-conscious, he must have realized that he was, by virtue of his engagement in the pamphlet wars, now susceptible to most of the rhetorical and philosophical weapons which he was accustomed to use against others. One of Swift's most potent weapons against his enemy pamphleteers is his exposure of their sense of self-importance. In this defect, they resemble the Tale's hack, who purportedly wrote for the Universal Improvement of Mankind but whose habitual self-congratulation consistently overshadows any profitable advice offered. As the Examiner, Swift attacks the Whig writers on this basis as well: "London-Writers often put Titles to their Papers and Pamphlets which have little or no Reference to the main Design of the Work: So, for Instance, you will observe in reading, that the letter called The Importance of Dunkirk is chiefly taken up in shewing the Importance of Mr. Steele" (Importance of the "Guardian", PW 8: 5). What makes this self-promotion particularly unforgivable to Swift is his belief that such self-aggrandizement is conscious and contrived. By way of contrast, Swift was capable of excusing those writers whom he judged to be well-intentioned but intellectually inadequate: "Sir, upon the whole, your Paper is a very crude Piece, liable to more Objections than there are Lines; but, I think, your Meaning is good, and so far you are pardonable" (An Answer to a Paper called a Memorial, PW 7: 22). However, as A Modest Proposal indicates, after many years of involvement in politics and pamphlets, Swift began to consider the potential dangers of well-intentioned but uninformed
opinions to be perhaps more pernicious than those of deliberately perverse arguments.

Swift, having a most active self-consciousness as well as conscience, must have been exceedingly aware of the potential for the criticism which he levelled at others to be returned in a volley at himself. His situation will be more clearly presented in the example of Gulliver who is proud to disdain pride, but increasingly throughout his later career, Swift seems to be satirizing himself as well as his victims, and in the personae of his later satires, it is easy to hear echoes of the characters of both the Examiner and the Drapier. In *Hints toward Polite Conversation*, for instance, the voice of Swift's victim, a superficial and self-centered gentleman, remarks in a tone not at all unlike the Examiner's or the Drapier's: "Of such mighty Importance every Man is to himself and ready to think he is so to others; without once making this easy and obvious Reflection, that his Affairs can have no more Weight with other Men, than theirs have with him; and how little that is, he is sensible enough" (PW 4: 89). Yet the same speaker also says, again not unlike the Drapier:

> It hath been my constant Opinion, that every Man who is intrusted by Nature, with any useful Talent of the Mind, is bound by all the Tyes of Honour; and that Justice which we all owe our Country, to propose to himself one illustrious Action to be performed in his Life, for the publick Emolument: And, I freely confess, that so grand, so important an Enterprize as I have undertaken, and executed to the best of my Power, well deserved a much abler Hand, as well as a liberal Encouragement from the Crown. (PW 4: 119)

This, of course, is the voice of the *vir bonus*, but here he is the butt of Swift's satire. The same voice is heard without satiric distortion
in some of Swift's political pamphlets, as for instance when Swift without any trace of self-satire, but much like the Modest Proposer, congratulates himself upon the job he has done as the Examiner:

Had not some Active pens fallen in to improve the Good Disposition of the People upon the late Change, and Continued since to Overthrow the Falsehood plentifully, and sometimes not Unplausibly, scattered by the Adversaries, I am very much in Doubt whether those at the Helm would now have reason to be Pleased with their Success. (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 104)

On the basis of his own apparent appreciation for his work and its effects, it seems clear that Swift does believe in some sort of heroic action and that he sees himself, as writer, engaged in a sort of heroic enterprise. Yet his thematic anti-heroic perspective and his use of the mock-heroic as a rhetorical weapon create a seeming self-contradiction which can only be resolved in self-satire.

One characteristic of the hero has traditionally been his defense of his own people and culture against their enemies. In Swift's case, the enemies of his culture are heroes of his culture. The Swiftian hero is, paradoxically, the man who opposes heroes. The threat which Swift perceives to the culture which he wishes to preserve comes from within rather than from without.

The paradox leads ultimately to self-satire and is presented most fully in the final character of Gulliver. However, Swift must have recognized it early on. Indeed, he concludes his career as Examiner with a sardonic look both at his fellow scribblers and at himself:

Those little barking Pens which have so constantly pursued me, I take to be of no further Consequence to what I have writ, than the scoffing Slaves of old, placed behind the Chariot, to
put the General in Mind of his Mortality, which was but a Thing of Form and made no Stop or Disturbance in the Show. However, if those perpetual Snarlers against me had the same Design, I must own they have effectively compassed it; since nothing can well be more mortifying, than to reflect, that I am of the same Species with Creatures capable of uttering so much Scurvily, Dulness, Falshood, and Impertinence, to the Scandal and Disgrace of Human Nature. (Examiner No. 44, PW 3: 171)

This passage simultaneously exalts and denigrates the Examiner.

No doubt dismayed by his own vigorous involvement in the pamphlet wars and his voice's merging with the cacaphony of those whom he considers corrupt, incompetent, or mad, Swift consistently attempts to differentiate himself from the crowd, attacking his attackers, reiterating his superiority, damning for instance his answerers who do all agree in discovering a violent Rage, and at the same time affecting an Air of Contempt toward their Adversary; which, in my humble Opinion, are not very consistent; and therefore it is plain, that their Fury is real and hearty, their Contempt only personated. I have pretty well studied this Matter, and would caution Writers of their Standard, never to engage in that difficult Attempt of Despising, which is a Work to be done in cold Blood, and only by a superior Genius to one at some distance beneath him. (Some Remarks upon a Pamphlet, PW 3: 189)

Swift was, of course, a master of "Despising . . . in cold Blood," and here suggests that this qualifies him as "a superior Genius," but, maddeningly, the more he proclaims his difference from the other scribblers in such fashion, the more indistinguishable from them he becomes. Singularity is the characteristic which he at once derides and aspires to.

Moreover, singularity of vision is the trademark of the Swiftian madman and the root cause of dissension. Swift’s objections to his rivals, both in politics and religion, focus upon the undigested
matter of their thought, their presumptuousness in setting themselves up as authorities, their efforts toward personal ends to be achieved by public means, and their general disruption of the public in their efforts to proselytize. All of these themes are familiar from the Tale, where each is satirized as the result of a singular and mad vision. So too, his attacks upon Collins’s Free Thinking and upon Steele’s The Guardian are similar both in tactics and in content, focusing upon the self-promotion of the mad individual. Paraphrasing Collins for the edification of his readers, Swift, in the guise of a Whiggish free thinker, reveals his own objection to Collins and exposes the weakness of Collins’s probable considered response to such an objection:

But to this it may be objected, that the Bulk of Mankind is as well qualified for flying as thinking, and if every Man thought it his Duty to think freely, and trouble his Neighbor with his Thoughts (which is an essential Part of Free-thinking,) it would make wild work in the world. I answer: whoever cannot think freely, may let it alone if he pleases, by virtue of his Right to think freely; that is to say, if such a Man freely thinks that he cannot think freely, of which every Man is a sufficient Judge, why then he need not think freely, unless he thinks fit. (A Discourse of Free Thinking, PW 4: 35)

However, in spite of this qualification, the speaker continues:

Free Thinking signifies nothing without Free Speaking and Free Writing. It is the indispensable Duty of a Free Thinker, to endeavor forcing all the World to think as he does, and by that means make them Free Thinkers too. . . . I affirm, that if Ten Thousand Free Thinkers thought differently from the received Doctrine and from each other, they would be all in Duty bound to publish their Thoughts (provided they were all sure of being in the right) though it broke the Peace of the Church and State, ten thousand times. (PW 4: 36)
This usurpation of the public good by private vision (and, Swift would argue, private ambition) is general and rampant. In his objections to Steele’s Guardian, Swift indict the Whigs for a similarly chaotic levelling as a result of every man acting as his own political lanthorn:

But Mr. Steele thinks it highly dangerous to the Prince, that any man should be hindered from offering his Thoughts upon public Affairs; and resolves to do it, tho’ with the Loss of Her Majesty’s Favor:

... I ask, What shadow of a Pretence has he to offer his crude Thoughts in Matters of State? to Print and Publish them? to lay them before the Queen and Ministry?

... Every Taylor in your Corporation is as much a Fellow-Subject as Mr. Steele, and do you think in your Conscience that every Taylor of Stockbridge is fit to direct Her Majesty and Her Ministers in the sublime Affairs of her Government?

... in [the Whigs’] Opinions, a Dog-keeper is as much a Minister as any Secretary of State: And this Mr. Steele and my Lord Treasurer are both Fellow-Subjects. (The Importance of the "Guardian", PW 8: 15-24)

Under such a system, each man offers his own vision and his own perspective with the result that each man offers a vision which favors only himself: "[I]t is a Piece of Logic which will hardly pass on the World; that because one Man hath a sore Nose, therefore all the Town should put Plaisters upon theirs" (Remarks upon ... the Rights of the Christian Church Asserted, PW 2: 67). The danger, from Swift’s perspective, is that under the system of the Whigs and the Free-thinkers, every man is a potential hero and must strive toward heroism. The myth and the tradition of the hero, coupled with the rise of the bourgeoisie, have become actively subversive to Swift’s cherished order.
While, as I have suggested, Swift implicitly suggests that his mouthpieces (the Examiner and the Church of England Man) are heroically defending the culture against disintegration, he continues (as in the Tale) explicitly to treat his enemies in heroic fashion, harnessing the ironic power of the mock-heroic to his ends. In Examiner No. 14, for instance, he treats the "Political Lye," the tool of the Whigs and particularly of The Guardian, in heroic fashion:

No Wonder, if an Infant so miraculous in its Birth, should be destined for great Adventures: And accordingly we see it hath been the Guardian Spirit of a prevailing Party, for almost twenty Years. It can conquer Kingdoms without Fighting, and sometimes with the Loss of a Battle: It gives and resumes Employments; can sink a Mountain to a Mole-hill, and raise a Mole-hill to a Mountain ... can wash a Blackamoor white; make a Saint of an Atheist, and a Patriot of a Profligate. (Examiner No. 14, PW 3: 9-10)

The political lie finds its origin in the character of Milton's Satan: "His first Essay of it was purely Political, employed in undermining the Authority of his Prince, and seducing a third Part of his Subjects from their Obedience" (Examiner No. 14, PW 3: 8). In the world portrayed by Swift, populated almost entirely by would-be heroic villains and by a few true heroes, confusion reigns because of the power of the lie and the difficulty of distinguishing true from false.

True heroes, in Swift's view, are ultimately distinguishable from false ones on the basis of personal morality. F. P. Lock suggests that Swift's introduction of personality and morality, while effective in his pamphlets, is no more than rhetoric:

The ability to generalise, to raise the argument above the particular issue or instance, is an important element in his success as a political writer. He pretends to detach himself from petty political squabbles; drawing on the greater
prestige of the general over particular truth, he makes his
own values seem but reflections of the general laws of the
universe. (*Swift's Tory Politics* 41)

Certainly Lock's estimation of the effectiveness of the rhetorical
strategy is correct, but an examination of Swift's other works reveals
such a consistency that Lock's characterization of Swift's morality as
a pretense appears groundless.

**The Moral Basis for Christian Heroism: Swift's Sermons**

Swift believed personal self-interest and ambition to be the
root causes of controversy in both religion and politics. Egoism leads
to ambition which leads to vice which leads to madness. And in
opposition to such a progression, reason is almost helpless: "Reasoning
will never make a Man correct an ill Opinion, which by Reasoning he
never acquired: For, in the Course of Things, Men always grow vicious
before they become Unbelievers" (*Letter to a Young Gentleman*, PW 9:
78). In matters of morality, Swift typically refers to common sense as
the arbiter of controversy which results from apparent disagreements
based on individual reason, and it is in the teachings of the
established Church that he finds the great repository of common sense.

As Kathleen Williams has pointed out, Swift is unusual in that
his political tracts seem to focus upon personal morality while his
religious tracts and particularly his sermons focus upon social
morality (*Age of Compromise* 117). In his tracts on religion and in his
sermons, Swift repeatedly decries the tendency for men to be guided by
personal opinions. It is here that we may see most vividly his
objection that both Whigs and Free-thinkers are a threat to common
"Every man, as a member of the commonwealth, ought to be content with the possession of his own opinions in private, without perplexing his neighbor or disturbing the public" (Thoughts on Religion, PW 9: 261). One who does otherwise is mad. The sane man, before publishing his opinions, consults reason, judgment, and common sense. In Swift's model for sanity, discussed previously in connection with the Tale, judgment acts as a restraint upon man's otherwise irrational thoughts, preventing universally latent irrationality from spilling out into words and action. In Swift's private religious writings and in his sermons (which he never intended for publication), we find that established religion provides a guide to judgment and common sense, and that religion thereby provides the means for maintaining mental as well as spiritual health.

Swift never believed in the efficacy of the Stoic doctrine of disinterested virtue. As Herbert Davis points out, Swift believes that religion is necessary, because in the doctrine of future reward and punishment it provides an appeal to self-interest to which fallen man can respond ("Introduction," PW 9: 113). While conscience provides a basis for action, conscience itself must be formed on the basis of the appeal of religion: "There is no solid, firm Foundation of Virtue, but in a Conscience directed by the Principles of Religion . . . because no earthly Interest can ever come in Competition to balance the Danger of offending his Creator or the Happiness of pleasing him" (On Conscience, PW 9: 154). Locke's challenge to the concept of innate ideas had challenged traditional notions of conscience as well. Swift
accommodates Locke by offering conscience as a reliable guide insofar as it is an agent of established religion.

Religion not only supplies the necessary motivation toward virtue (in its promise of salvation and its threat of damnation) but also provides the collective common sense necessary to determine the nature of virtue, otherwise indeterminable by unaided reason: "Reason itself is true and just, but the Reason of every particular Man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his Interests, his Passions, and his Vices" (On the Trinity, PW 9: 166). As in his description of madness in the Tale, Swift here notes the way in which reason, if unaided by conscience, is typically subverted, becoming a tool for personal interest. Even in matters of supposed disinterested speculation, Swift insists that passion and singularity are almost always indications of reason's being in service to ego: "Violent zeal for truth hath an hundred to one odds to be either petulancy, ambition, or pride" (Thoughts on Religion, PW 9: 261).

In his sermon On Conscience, Swift explicitly argues for the superiority of common-sensical, religion-based conscience as a guide to action over the traditional hero's dubious guide of honor. Swift was not alone in his concern with the relative merits of the two. As has been suggested, the entire shifting of the notion of the heroic is based to a great degree upon the perceived opposition between Christian faith and the pursuit of worldly honor. Mandeville, in The Fable of the Bees, remarked: "The only thing of weight that can be said against modern Honour is, that it is directly opposite to Religion" (Works 1:}
Swift argues that whatever usefulness honor may once have had as a regulator of behavior is now diminished because of the great alteration in the nature of honor:

It is true indeed, that in ancient Times it was universally understood, that Honour was the Reward of Virtue; but if such Honour as is now-a-days going will not permit a Man to do a base Action, it must be allowed, there are very few such Things as base Actions in Nature. No Man of Honour, as that word is usually understood, did ever pretend that his Honour obliged him to be chaste or temperate; to pay his Creditors; to be useful to his Country; to do good to Mankind; to endeavor to be wise or learned; to regard his Word, his Promise, or his Oath; or if he hath any of these Virtues, they were never learned in the Catechism of Honour; which contains but two Precepts, the punctual Payment of Debts contracted at Play, and the right understanding the several Degrees of an Affront in order to revenge it by the Death of an Adversary. (On Conscience, PW 9: 153)

Honor, dependent upon fashion, is useless as either a guide or an impetus to virtue. To the man motivated solely by honor, dishonorable actions which never come to light are allowable and vices which lead to honor are encouraged, while virtues which do not lead to honor are discouraged. And, because fashion is transient, the man pursuing honor must change principles according to the times: "Since the very Being of that Honour dependeth upon the Breath, the Opinion, or the Fancy of the People; the Virtues derived from it could be of no long or certain Duration" (PW 9: 153). Thus, honor lacks a fixed authority. As Swift observed in On False Witness, warning his congregation to stay out of politics, "Opinions in Government are right or wrong just according to the Disposition of the Times; and, unless you have Judgment to distinguish, you may be punished at one Time for what you would be rewarded for in another" (PW 9: 186). Yet honor is both the goal and
the tool of the successful politician and the would-be hero. Herein is the characteristic which, throughout Swift's writings, distinguishes the false hero from the true.

For Swift, pursuit of honor, the characteristic of the traditional hero, is the pursuit of self-interest, the abandonment of fixed principles, and it typically results in damage to society, for the heroic pursuit of honor subordinates social good to personal achievement. Every aspect of such a heroism is abhorrent to Swift's Christian ethics. Swift's sermon, On the Excellence of Christianity, insists upon the repression of self-interest, even as it contradicts antique notions of Stoic virtue and honor: "The Christian doctrine teacheth us all those dispositions that make us affable and courteous, gentle and kind, without any morose leaven of pride or vanity, which entered into the composition of most Heathen schemes: So we are taught to be meek and lowly" (On the Excellence of Christianity, PW 9: 248).

The demand for humility and meekness is a product of Christian ethics' placing the good of society before that of the individual. Two other sermons, On the Duty of Mutual Subjection and On Doing Good, focus upon the Christian duty to service which is a manifestation of "our love to our neighbor in his public capacity, as he is a member of that great body, the commonwealth, under the same government with ourselves; and this is usually called love of the public, and it is a duty to which we are more strictly obliged than even that of loving ourselves" (On Doing Good, PW 9: 233). Swift recognizes that self-love, given the nature of man, is inherently stronger than love of one's neighbor. Still,
if, by a small hurt and loss to myself, I can procure a great good to my neighbor, in that case his interest is to be preferred. For example, if I can be sure of saving his life, without great danger to my own; if I can preserve him from being undone, without ruining myself, or recover his reputation without blasting mine; all this I am obliged to do: And, if I sincerely perform it, I do then obey the command of God. (On Doing Good, PW 9: 232)

This, then, is the true Christian form of heroism: subjugation of the self to the interest of society. Such a heroism is diminished perhaps, in its worldly glory, because such a hero only does what he is "obliged to do." His heroic performance ultimately is the result of his submission to God's commands, which is motivated by his fear of punishment and his longing for eternal reward. Moreover, Swift points out that such service to others is not uncommon (and therefore not very singular or distinguishing), and that only those who are particularly afflicted with self-love will have trouble with the application of his sermon:

And, although this Doctrine of subjecting ourselves to another may seem to grate upon the Pride and Vanity of Mankind, and may therefore be hard to be digested by those who value themselves upon their Greatness or their Wealth; yet, is it really no more than what most Men practice upon other Occasions. (The Duty of Mutual Subjection, PW 9: 144-45)

Backed by the common sense provided by religion and motivated by the promise of redemption (or the fear of retribution), the Christian can take proper action. Ultimately, the action is what counts. Man's fallen nature must be manipulated so that weaknesses lead to virtue:

The Motives of the best Actions will not bear too strict an Enquiry. It is allowed, that the Cause of most Actions, good or bad, may be resolved into the Love of our selves: But the Self-love of some Men inclines them to please others; and the Self-love of others is wholly employed in pleasing themselves.
Religion is the best Motive of all Actions; yet Religion is allowed to be the highest Instance of Self-love. (Thoughts on Religion, PW 4: 243)

The paradoxes of Christian ethics are not unlike the paradoxes of Swift’s politics. Just as Christianity demands personal humility while proclaiming the superiority of itself as a system, so Swift attacks personal and political pride, with only his own implied (and seemingly proud) claims of integrity, humility, and disinterest as a defense for his own vituperation. Just as Swift’s Christianity offers salvation as an appeal to self-interest while demanding the repression of self-interest and denounces worldliness while requiring engagement with the world in charity, so his political philosophy demands his own participation in polemics even while he damns them.

Christian Heroes and Heroic Villains

Both in his pamphlets published for immediate consumption and in the memoirs and histories written for the edification of posterity, Swift typically moves quickly past the actions of his primary actors into an analysis of those actors and their motives. In these character analyses, Swift struggles for a means to express his admiration for his real heroes (Harley and Bolingbroke) without betraying his heartfelt realist’s appraisal of fallen human nature and the unlikelihood of the appearance of heroic virtue among mankind. He continues to use the traditional heroic character as a means to delineate those actors in British politics who might be more accurately described as the villains in his world.
In his descriptions of the leading Tory ministers of Queen Anne's reign, the Examiner consistently fails to find traces of self-interest to supply motivation:

I confess my self so little a Refiner in the Politicks, as not to be able to discover what other Motive, besides Obedience to the QUEEN, a Sense of the publick Danger, and a true Love of their Country, joined with invincible Courage, could spirit up those great Men, who have now under Her Majesty's Authority undertaken the Direction of Affairs. (Examiner 18, FW 3: 33)

Such are the motives of a true Christian as we have seen them delineated in Swift's sermons. Swift laments, however, that a true Christian is liable to be too naive and too innocent to fare well in a political world grown so perverse, mad, and corrupt. One criticism which he lodges against Harley is both a back-handed compliment and a realistic grievance. Harley, Swift declares, lacked "cunning," the quality of character and action which "is always employed in serving little Turns, proposing little Ends, and supplying daily Exigencies by little Shifts and Expedients" (A Character of Harley, PW 7: 179). Such a description of "cunning" emphasizes it as a quality of small minds, appropriate to Lilliputians but not to the character of such as Harley. Yet its lack of cunning did serve the Ministry ill. In the case of Nottingham's gathering support for the demand for continued war with France, Swift laments:

These Preparations were publick enough, and the Ministers had sufficient time to arm themselves. But, they seem to have acted at this Juncture like Men who trusted to the Goodness of their Cause, and the general Inclinations of the Kingdom, rather than to those Arts which our Corruptions have too often made necessary. (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 16-17)
Similarly, Harley, like the Christian hero, working good without concern for fame, honor, or reputation, disregards his reputation and loses credit thereby. Swift, in characterizing his friend, qualifies his praise as follows:

There is One Thing peculiar in his Temper, which I altogether disapprove, and do not remember to have heard or met with in any other Man's Character: I mean an Easiness and Indifference under any Imputation, although he be ever so Innocent; and, although the strongest Probabilities and Appearances are against him. (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 74)

Harley is, then, a fool among knaves—but a heroic Christian fool. In the mad and corrupt world of politics, the innocent and virtuous man stands small chance for long survival:

I have been often considering how it comes to pass, that the Dexterity of Mankind in Evil, should always outgrow, not only the Prudence and Caution of private Persons, but the continual Expedients of the wisest Laws contrived to prevent it. I cannot imagine a Knave to possess a greater Share of natural Wit or Genius than an honest Man.... I suppose the Reason of this may be that the Aggressor is said to have generally the Advantage of the Defender; so the Makers of the Law, which is to defend our Rights, have usually not so much Industry or Vigour, as those whose Interest leads them to attack it. Besides, it rarely happens that Men are rewarded by the Publick for their Justice and Virtue.... Whereas Fraud, where it succeeds, gives present Pay. (Examiner No. 38, PW 3: 136-7)

In Swift's world, while the amoral, self-seeking and self-aggrandizing would-be heroic politicians claw their way to self-interested power with cunning, hypocrisy, and dishonesty, those men who are truly great and could be of true service to the public are invariably kept out of power by the united opposition of their enemies:

When a Great Genius appears in the world, the Dunces are all in Confederacy against him. And, if this be his Fate, when he employs his Talents wholly in his Closet, without
interfering with any Man's Ambition, or Avarice; what must he expect when he ventures out to seek for Preferment in a Court, but universal Opposition, when he is mounting the Ladder, and every Hand ready to turn him off, when he is at the top?
(Examiner No. 6, PW 7: 39)

Moreover, should such a man attain power, in spite of the opposition, continued opposition soon brings him down:

Men of eminent Parts and Abilities, as well as Vertues, do sometimes rise in Courts, sometimes in the Law, and sometimes even in the Church. . . . But these and many more, under different Princes, and in different Kingdoms, were disgraced or banished, or suffered Death, merely in Envy of their Virtues and superior Genius. (Intelligencer No. 6, PW 7: 39)

Thus, even during the short period when his friends were in power, Swift assigns them the status of the underdog, ennobling them in his portrayal of their valiant but futile efforts to stave off evil and to eliminate madness from the commonweal. Such a portrayal both diminishes their traditional heroic stature, in light of the tradition of the victorious hero, and increases their Christian heroism in light of their supposed doomed altruism.

The moment which Swift repeatedly recalls when describing Harley is that of the Lord Treasurer's near escape from death at the hand of Guiscard. Repeatedly in his works, and in a series of pamphlets released immediately following the event, Swift describes Harley's calm detachment after being stabbed, and repeatedly he characterizes this state of mind as "Magnanimity": "a State of Mind, which in such an Exigency, nothing but Innocence can give; and, . . . truly worthy of a Christian Philosopher" (Examiner No. 32, PW 3: 109).

Yet Oxford's form of Magnanimity is exactly the cause for the incapacity of great men to maintain power:
I am at a loss to think how it should come to pass that Men of exalted Abilities, when they are called to publick Affairs, are generally drawn into Inconveniences and Misfortunes, which others of Ordinary Talents avoid.

But, I take the Infelicity of such extraordinary Men to have been caused by their Neglect of common Forms, together with the Contempt of Little Helps, and little Hindrances; which is made by Hobbes the Definition of Magnanimity. (Enquiry into the Behavior of the Queen's Last Ministry PW 8: 138)

Magnanimity, while a personally and rhetorically appealing strength of character, is also a political defect. Magnanimous men, like some of Swift's satiric butts, have their eyes on the stars and so fall in the ditch.

As is made evident in his writing on the assassination attempt, Swift immediately perceived, and probably deeply felt, the appeal of the almost-martyr. One notes that the strength of Swift's prose increases after the death of Queen Anne, when he is once again on the outside looking in and when his cause is that of the underdog. His sense of the world as mad and immoral leads necessarily to his sense of the Christian hero as a lost and defeated man. Swiftian heroism, unlike that of Milton or the early Dryden, is most often validated by defeat.

In such a world, those people who most frequently appear to the public in the guise of heroes are most likely to be villains. Swift offered the public "A Poetical Genealogy and Description of MERIT" in order to allow them to distinguish between the true and false hero:

True Merit was the Son of Virtue and Honor; but there was likewise a spurious Child who usurped the Name, and whose Parents were Vanity and Imprudence . . . . the Bastard Issue had a loud shrill Voice . . . . while the other never spoke.
louder than a Whisper [...]. the false Merit filled the Anti-
chambers with a Crew of his Dependants and Creatures, such as
Projectors, Schematists, Occasional Converts to a Party,
prostitute Flatterers, starveling Writers, Buffoons, shallow
Politicians, empty Orators, and the like. (Examiner No. 30,
PW 3: 98–99)

All this has come to pass since the time of the ancients. The theme of
degeneration runs through Swift’s political prose as it did through the
Tale. False Merit, like contemporary honor as Swift defined it in his
sermons, is peculiar to the modern world. Swift complains, in writing
The Examiner, of the difficulty of finding ancient correspondences to
current events when he tries to find names to substitute in his writing
for those of his contemporaries: "But among the worst of them, I cannot
discover One from whence to draw a Parallel without doing injury to a
Roman Memory" (Examiner No. 17, PW 3: 26). While heroes are diminished
in stature in the time since the ancients, villains have grown larger;
indeed, they have taken on heroic proportions.

Among the would-be heroes—pamphleteers, ministers, lords, and
others—three particular villains of heroic proportions receive Swift’s
attention in the course of his English political writings: Guiscard,
Marlborough, and Wharton. Others, (e.g., Steele), Swift dismisses with
his "cold contempt" like bothersome insects; but these three receive
considered and concentrated attention, as he tries to fathom their
minds and souls.

Guiscard, he decides, is a rather typical mad man, one who
began his career toward villainy with common vices and continued down
the road to madness until his dissolution and the circumstances into
which it threw him drove him to madness:
Guiscard was the younger brother of the Count of that name, a very honourable and worthy person, formerly Governor of Namur. But this Marquis was a reproach to his family, prostitute in his morals, impious in religion, and a traitor to his Prince: As to the rest, of a very poor understanding, and the most tedious, trifling talker, I ever conversed with. He was grown needy by squandering upon his vices, was become contemptible both here and in Holland, his regiment taken from him, and his pension retrenched; the despair of which first put him upon his French correspondence; and the discovery of that drove him into madness. I had known him some years. . . . But although in the later part of his life, his countenance grew cloudy enough, yet I confess I never suspected him to be a man of resolution, or courage, sufficient to bear him out in so desperate an attempt. (Memoirs, PW 8:127-8)

Guiscard's lesson to Swift, and via Swift to the people of England, is the profundity of the madness into which a man may fall, once having chosen that direction. Moreover, he is an emblem of the potential violence and damage that may be wrought by any man so driven. Ultimately, the moral which Swift seems to have derived from this episode is this: Never underestimate the savage madness of your enemies—or even of your acquaintances.

In the character of Marlborough, Swift discovered both a potentially serviceable commander of the armed forces and a personality so driven by avarice and self-aggrandizement as to be thoroughly incompatible with any public service. Writing to Stella at the end of 1710, Swift compares Marlborough to Satan, Milton's heroic villain, yet confesses the country's need for his talent: "He is covetous as Hell, and ambitious as the Prince of it; he would fain have been general for life, and has broken all endeavors for Peace to keep his greatness and get money . . . Yet he has been a successful general, and I hope he will continue his command" (December 31, 1710; Journal 1:145).
No doubt, Marlborough's desire for the lifetime position put Swift in mind of several Roman heroes. Elsewhere he remarks on Marlborough's avarice, describing it as "that little sordid Appetite, so utterly inconsistent with all Pretenses to a Hero" (Examiner No. 28, PW 3: 85). Swift obviously admires Marlborough, but recognizes that potential greatness has been subverted by self-interest. After the fallen Marlborough's complaints of the Queen's ingratitude, Swift defended the Queen by comparing the cash received by Marlborough during the war (which Swift, with his arithmetical assiduity reckoned to be 540,000 pounds) to the cash typically received by a Roman general after a triumph (994 pounds, 11 shillings). By measuring gratitude in these terms, which he suggests would be most readily understood by Marlborough, and offering the contrast to the classical hero, Swift effectively employs the mock-heroic to deflate the British general's complaints. Subsequently, defending the Queen's firing of Marlborough, Swift draws a lesson from Marlborough for both himself and his countrymen: "There hath not perhaps in the present Age been a clearer Instance to shew the Instability of all Greatness, which is not founded upon Virtue" (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 30). Swift recognizes Marlborough's greatness but emphasizes his vice. The general's abilities are undermined by his immorality. By placing his personal interest before social interest, he forfeits his potential heroic status.

Swift understands and accepts that man is prone to vice and madness, but he is particularly disturbed when a vicious or mad man is
placed in a position of power: "Every Body knows that certain Vices are more or less pernicious, according to the Stations of those who possess them" (Examiner No. 29, PW 3: 96). While Swift analyzes all political characters in light of self-interest, in the manner of La Rochefoucauld, Temple, and Hobbes, he is sharply critical only of immoderate self-interest, such as that found in Marlborough.

Wharton is a different character entirely, for his greatness lies in his vice: "He is without the Sense of Shame or Glory, as some Men are without the Sense of Smelling; and therefore, a good Name to him is no more than a precious Ointment would be to these" (Character of Wharton, PW 3: 178). Throughout his Character of Wharton, Swift's tone is surprisingly resigned. He makes no effort to satirize Wharton into good behavior, treating him instead like an awesome and wonderful creature--awful, alien, dangerous, and vicious--but, nevertheless a creature which, by its nature, could never be expected to be otherwise. Swift's prose is oddly quiet throughout in contemplation of such heroic amorality. As in the Argument against the Abolishing of Christianity, the modesty of the tone becomes itself a comment upon the enormity of the problem. Swift claims to write of Wharton as a public service and without malice or expectation of Wharton's reform: "Whoever, for the Sake of others, were to describe the Nature of a Serpent, a Wolf, a Crocodile, or a Fox, must be understood to do it without any personal Love or Hatred for the Animals themselves" (PW 3: 178). Surely his fascination with the absolutely unsconscious amorality of Wharton led eventually to his characterization of the Modest Proposer.
In these three heroic villains, the heroic proportion derives in large part from the magnitude of the power which they wield. Guiscard seizes, in a moment of insanity supported by a perverse courage, the power of life or death over England's chief Minister, thereby demonstrating the danger posed by even the most lowly madman. Marlborough, contrarily, loses his political and military power because of the power which he gives to his petty vices. Wharton, a man of power, comes to represent the truly monstrous danger of immorality. 

In these three figures, Swift discovers the prototype of heroically mad villains: men with power but with no consequent sense of responsibility to anybody but themselves. Vice, and particularly self-interest, Swift consistently and clearly argues, must be separated from power.

But just as clear is Swift's apparent growing suspicion of the inefficacy of virtue in power. His heroes--Harley and Bolingbroke--are portrayed, like his Examiner, as ultimately powerless in a world gone mad. In these three characters, as later in the character of Lord Munodi, Swift portrays heroism as at its height when the hero suffers the loss of power, yet maintains a sense of responsibility to the people and the commonwealth. No doubt, such a hero was perceived by Swift, when he returned to Ireland, to be very close to both his own situation and his own sensibility.

The Drapier: Christian Heroism and Roman Virtue

After the death of Queen Anne, Swift retreated to Ireland, apparently attempting to resign himself both to his own fate and what he perceived to be the fate of the commonwealth. All of Swift's
 engagements with the enemy had seemed to hurt him more than to damage his opponents. The publication of the Tale seems to have been the cause of his not receiving a clerical post in England. After the fall of the Harley ministry, Swift feared the charges of treason levelled by his enemies. In The Intelligencer, which offers insights based upon retrospective reflections on his career, Swift would subsequently comment with approval and admiration upon "discretion," the means to success which he had abandoned during his service in England:

There is no Talent so useful towards rising in the World, or which puts Men more out of Reach of Fortune than that Quality generally possessed by the dullest Sort of People, in common Speech called Discretion; a Species of lower Prudence, by the Assistance of which, People of the meanest Intellectuals, without any other Qualifications, pass through the World in great Tranquillity, and with universal good Treatment, neither giving nor taking Offence. (Intelligencer No. 6, PW 12: 38)

Swift’s own traditionally heroic impetuosity had prompted him to abandon such discretion, and upon his return to Ireland he no doubt felt the consequences acutely. In a letter to Pope, ostensibly private but obviously intended primarily for publication, Swift describes his subsequent manner of living:

I have continued [in Ireland] in the greatest privacy, and utter ignorance of those events which are most commonly talked of in the world; I neither know the names nor members of the Family which now reigns, further than the Prayerbook informs me. I cannot tell who is Chancellor, who are Secretaries, nor with what Nations we are in peace or war. And this manner of life was not taken up out of any sort of Affectation, but merely to avoid giving offense, and for fear of provoking Party-zeal. (Letter to Pope, PW 9: 25-6)

Finding himself in the opposition party, Swift claims to be restraining himself in dutiful service to the government so as to avoid creating
the turbulent factionalism which so troubled the ministry which he served. Yet one senses that although his "manner of life was not taken up out of any sort of Affectation," his apparently resigned attitude toward that life is indeed affected. Later in the letter, his resentments about his lack of preferment surface:

But, if I have never discovered by my words, writing, or actions, any Party virulence, or dangerous designs against the present powers; if my friendship and conversation were equally shewn among those who liked or disapproved the proceedings then at Court, and that I was known to be a common friend of all deserving persons of the latter sort [e.g. Addison, Rowe, Congreve], when they were in distress I cannot but think it hard that I am not suffered to run quietly among the common herd of people, whose opinions unfortunately differ from those which lead to Favour and Preferment. (Letter to Pope, PW 9: 30)

Even though he himself had chosen to leave the safety of the faceless crowd and to "exalt himself to a certain Degree of Altitude above them," such an image of himself as a just man, silenced and exiled and resigned to a quiet life "among the common herd," was assiduously cultivated by Swift among his friends from the time immediately following his return to Ireland. Upon his arrival at Laracor, Swift had written to Vanessa:

I design to pass the greatest part of the time I stay in Ireland here in the cabin where I am now writing; neither will I leave the kingdom 'till I am sent for; and if they have no further service for me, I will never see England again.

If the thing you know of [A History of the Four Last Years] had been published just upon the peace, the Ministry might have avoided what hath since happened. But I am now fitter to look after willows, and to cut hedges, than to meddle with affairs of state. (Corr. II: 53-54)
This carefully cultivated image of Swift as a sort of Cincinnatus, humbly tending his own parish and later his deanery, blossomed into an image, iterated throughout his subsequent work, of a very private citizen roused so violently by the events of state as to be unable to remain silent. As J. Douglas Canfield suggests, the literary hero of the period is shifting from paternal to fraternal (Word as Bond), and just such a shift seems to have occurred with Swift and within Swift at the time of his fall from power. Swift's formerly habitual aristocratic haughtiness and contempt diminish markedly in his prose, and his formerly general disapprobation of the private citizen is modified. Just as his participation in the pamphlet wars altered his perspective on other pamphleteers, so his attitude toward the private citizen seems to have changed upon his withdrawal from public life:

> Few Politicians, with all their Schemes, are half so useful Members of a Commonwealth, as an honest Farmer; who, by skilfully draining, fencing, manuring and planting, hath increased the intrinisick Value of a Piece of Land; and thereby done a perpetual Service to his Country; which it is a great Controversy whether any of the former ever did, since the Creation of the World; but no Controversy at all, that Ninety-nine in a Hundred, have done Abundance of Mischief. (An Humble Address to Both Houses, PW 10: 141)

In his personal journal during this period, Swift honors the private man, disparaging modern politics in light of the example of ancient Rome: "Cives, the most honourable Name among the Romans; a Citizen, a Word of Contempt among us" (Thoughts on Various Subjects, PW 4: 252). While his friends were in power, Swift had seemed to share the general disdain for the "Cit." Now, finding himself among the cits instead of above them, his opinion seems to be modified.
During his service as Examiner for the ruling party, Swift had at once admired and derogated the role of opposition writer. Such writers, he claimed had ready employment, which they enjoyed more out of their employer's necessity than from their own talents. Still, he evidently recognized the rhetorical strength available to the man out of favor:

If you write in Defence of a fallen Party, you are maintained by Contribution as a necessary Person; you have little more to do than to carp and cavil at those who hold the Pen on the other Side; you are sure to be celebrated and caressed by all of your Party to a Man. You may affirm and deny what you please, without Truth or Probability, since it is but Loss of Time to contradict you. Commiseration is often on your Side; and you have a Pretence to be thought honest and disinterested, for adhering to Friends in Distress.... Not to mention the wonderful Delight of libelling Men in Power, and hugging yourself in a Corner with mighty Satisfaction for what you have done. (Examiner No. 26, PW 3: 75)

Now, out of power himself, Swift is prepared to seize the rhetorical strength of his powerlessness to create a potent image of the Christian hero. While he had formerly deprecated the cit's shallow understanding of politics, Swift begins, after his fall from power, to protest that matters of state are not mysterious and that a genius in power (for example, Bolingbroke) is more liable to complicate matters and fail than to do a proper job. Common sense is what is wanted:

I have been frequently assured by great Ministers, that Politicks were nothing but common sense; which as it was the only true Thing they spoke, so it was the only Thing they could have wished I should not believe. God has given the Bulk of Mankind a Capacity to understand Reason when it is fairly offered; and by Reason they would easily be governed, if it were left to their Choice. (Present State of Affairs, PW 8: 77)
He protests to Pope that politicians, like occultists, maintain power by falsely intimating "that there is something profound in politicks, which men of plain honest sense cannot arrive to" (Letter to Alexander Pope, PW 9: 28). Ironically, he disputes this contention by the politicians in terms very similar to those of the deists and free-thinkers, becoming more and more like those whom he abhors:

But I look upon it, that God intending the Government of a Nation in the several Branches and Subordinations of Power, hath made the Science of Governing sufficiently obvious to common Capacities; otherwise the world would be left in a desolate Condition, if great Affairs did always require a great Genius, whereof the most fruitful Age will hardly produce above three or four in a nation. (Enquiry into the Behavior, PW 8: 138)

Obviously, Swift had long recognized the potential rhetorical effectiveness of a non-expert speaker, an effectiveness which he would probably attribute to the strong appeal to common sense. In his Remarks upon a Book in 1708, he had observed: "If a theological Subject be well handled by a layman, it is better received than if it came from a Divine; and that for Reasons obvious enough, which, although of little Weight in themselves, will ever have a great deal with Mankind" (PW 2: 67). Before taking on the position of Examiner, who in spite of his professed impartiality still maintained the haughtiness of power, Swift had, in his first stand as the champion of the Irish, exploited the rhetorical efficacy of a humble posture, particularly as it was useful in establishing an effective contrast to the force of his apparently uncontrollable indignation:

We are generally surprised at your wonderful Kindness to us on this Occasion, in being so very industrious to teach us to see our Interests, in a Point where we are so unable to see it our
selves . . . and although, in my own Particular, I am hugely bent to believe, that whenever you concern yourselves in our Affairs, it is certainly for our Good; yet I have the Misfortune to be something singular in this Belief, and therefore I never attempted to justify it, but content myself to possess my own Opinion in private, for fear of encountering Men of more Wit, or Words than I have to spare.

... whatever Advantage you propose to yourselves by repealing the Sacramental Test, speak it out plainly, it is the best Argument you can use, for we value your Interest much more than our own. If your little Finger be sore, and you think a Poultice made of our Vitals will give it any Ease, speak the Word and it shall be done. (A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons, PW 2: 113-14)

In spite of his own apparent disdain for the Irish, Swift is moved repeatedly by their outrageous treatment at the hands of the British and by his own apparently unavoidable witness to and involvement in the troubles of the island. In a letter to Pope, Swift disclaims any noble motivation in his activism for the Irish: "What I do is owing to perfect rage and resentment, and the mortifying sight of slavery, folly, and baseness about me, among which I am forced to live" (Corr. 4: 34). His first pamphlet for the Irish upon his return to Laracor tells more about his sense of his own fate than his sense of the fate of the Irish: "The Scripture tells us, that Oppression makes a wise Man mad; therefore, consequently speaking, the Reason why some Men are not mad, is because they are not wise: However, it were to be wished that Oppression would, in Time, teach a little Wisdom to Fools" (Irish Manufacture, PW 9: 18). Swift perceives his situation, among the Irish, then, as that of a wise man set among fools and driven mad by his resentment of both their and his own oppression. He must at once
defend them against the oppressor and teach them wisdom, convincing them to abandon folly, all the while trying to maintain his own wits.

These circumstances, increasing Swift's sense of isolation, alienation, and oppression, as well as his mature sense of the rives as hero, catalyzed by William Wood's commission, set the stage for the entrance of the one fully developed, fully admirable hero in the works of Swift: the Drapier. Analyzing Swift in the manner of Swift, i.e. looking for Swift's personal interest in his Irish political activity, Pat Rogers observes:

Hibernian politics, which Swift had thought a procurantist muddle, proved to be a turning point in his career. From now on he was a hero to the Irish people, and a figure of menace to the establishment. One may suspect that Swift relished the latter more than the former. Outside a close circle of friends, he took fewer pains to be loved than to be feared. (Augustan Vision 191)

Such was undoubtedly true, but in the person of the Drapier, who in the course of the series of pamphlets gradually merges with the person of Swift, Swift develops an almost irreproachable example of righteousness tempered by a degree of humility and a dedication to Christian service and brotherhood, dramatically set amid a landscape of madmen by whom he is attacked on all fronts. To the personality of the Christian hero, characterized by humility and charity, he adds the traits of the Roman hero: submission to duty, love of liberty, and selflessness.

While the overall thrust of the Drapier's attack is specifically against Wood and generally against the self-interested schemes and laws perpetrated by the English against the Irish, Ireland comes in for much criticism, both implicit and explicit, for the
Drapier is portrayed from the outset as a prophet in his own land, unheeded even by those whom he would save. In the first letter, he scolds the Irish: "It is great Fault among you, that when a Person writes with no other Intention than to do you Good, you will not be at the Pains to read his Advices" (To the Shopkeepers, PW 10: 3).

Referring pointedly to Swift's pamphlet on Irish manufacture and its lack of appreciative reception, the Drapier continues: "This would be enough to discourage any Man from endeavoring to do you Good, when you will either neglect him, or fly in his Face for his Pains; and when he must expect only Danger to himself, and to be fined and imprisoned, perhaps to his ruin" (PW 10: 3). The Drapier not only repeatedly denies the possibility of any self-interest in his proposals, but also emphasizes the potential risk he is taking. Throughout the series of letters, he insistently invokes conscience as his sole motivation; he writes, purportedly, from his sense of Christian duty which has aroused and informed his Roman civic sense: "By the Laws of GOD, of NATURE, of NATIONS, and of your own Country, you ARE and OUGHT to be as FREE a People as your Brethren in England" (To the Whole People of Ireland, PW 10: 63). As the letters continue, the Drapier's apparent isolation is repeatedly underscored and his tone becomes more heroic: "I was in the Case of David, who could not move in the Armour of Saul; and therefore I rather chose to attack this uncircumcised Philistine (Wood I mean) with a Sling and a Stone" (Some Observations, PW 10: 48).

Such Biblical allusions reinforce the Drapier's insistence upon the issue as primarily moral and secondarily political. Surprisingly, such
allusions and his increasingly apocalyptic tone do not descend into bathetic mock-heroic. As the Drapier gains popular support, he channels it into the rhetorical force of his pamphlets and into the depiction of the vastness of the potential destruction against which he is warning: "People of all Ranks, Parties, and Denominations, are convinced to a Man, that the utter undoing of themselves and their Posterity for ever, will be dated from the Admission of the execrable Coin" (To the Whole People of Ireland, PW 10: 60). Yet, even as the number of the Drapier's supporters swells, Swift maintains a focus, highly effective in both imagery and moral force, upon the one just man crying out: "Those who have used Power to cramp Liberty, have gone so far as to resent even the liberty of Complaining; although a Man upon the Rack, was never known to be refused the liberty of roaring as loud as he thought fit" (To the Whole People of Ireland, PW 10: 63). As the stature of the Drapier is increased by the enormity of the problem which he undertakes to solve and the vastness of the opposition and indifference which he perceives himself to face, the enemy is simultaneously belittled, much in the same manner that Swift belittled Marlborough for his avarice, by means of ad hominem attacks:

For sure there was never an Example in History, of a great Kingdom kept in Awe for above a Year, in daily Dread of utter Destruction; not by a powerful Invader at the Head of Twenty thousand Men; not by a Plague or a Famine; not by a tyrannical Prince (for we never had one more Gracious) or a corrupt Administration; but by one single diminutive, insignificant Mechanick. (To Mr. Harding, PW 10: 19)

In this letter, Swift rhetorically separates Wood from all his supporters and support, stripping him of dignity, exposing him as "this

The Drapier suggests that the Irish people see themselves as too small and see Wood as too large, and that their perspective must be adjusted:

"It is no Loss of Honour to submit to the Lion: But who with the Figure of a Man, can think with Patience of being devoured alive by a Rat?"

(To Mr. Harding, PW 10: 20). Wood is not only a rat but a mad rat. Repeatedly, reflecting his sense that personal morality is the basis for political action, Swift, through analogies, reduces the national situation to a personal threat by a single madman. In disputing the reliability of Isaac Newton's assurance that a sample of Wood's coins proved to be of good metal and proper weight, Swift rebuts: "I have heard of a Man who had a Mind to sell his House, and therefore carried a Piece of Brick in his Pocket, which he shewed as a Pattern to encourage Purchasers: And this is directly the Case in Point with Mr. Wood's Assay" (To Mr. Harding, PW 10: 17). Similarly, the Drapier argues that as a man of business, he can not do business with the mad:

If a mad Man should come to my Shop with a Handful of Dirt raked out of the Kennel, and offer it in Payment for Ten yards of Stuff, I would pity or laugh at him; or, if his Behavior deserved it, kick him out of my Doors. And if Mr. Wood came to demand any Gold or Silver, or Commodities for which I have paid my Gold or Silver in exchange for his Trash, can he deserve or expect better Treatment? (To Mr. Harding, PW 10: 23)

Appealing to common sense, the Drapier repeatedly reduces the stature of Wood, stripping him of self-importance and revealing the self-interested madness at the core of his personality as well as his project.
Having summoned the strength of popular numbers, of moral righteousness, and of common sense to his defense, the Drapier, in his third letter, takes his case to "the Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom of Ireland." In this letter, the Drapier dons the cloak of Christian humility, that he may simultaneously dare to address his betters and yet demonstrate his consciousness of his low station. At the outset of the letter, he confesses that his audience will undoubtedly think that his letter "may seem a strange Way of discoursing in an illiterate Shop-keeper" but modestly claims that "I have endeavored (although without the Help of Books) to improve that small Portion of Reason, which God hath pleased to give me; and when Reason plainly appears before me, I cannot turn away my Head from it" ("Some Observations," PW10: 28). In the figure of the Drapier, Swift's latent anti-intellectualism is finally released. This modest hero, the most admirable of all Swift's characters, fights the good fight, spurred on by conscience and common sense, without the aid of either power or learning. In matters presumably out of the ken of a shopkeeper, the Drapier consults with learned experts ("I have been told, by Persons eminent in the Law . . ." [PW10: 40]), but otherwise his letters are devoid of claims to power, learning, or preferment. As the Drapier argues in a subsequent letter, "the little Virtue left in the World is chiefly to be found among the middle Rank of Mankind; who are neither allured out of his Paths by Ambition nor driven by Poverty" (To Viscount Molesworth, PW 10: 92).
The occasion of the reward of 300 pounds being offered for the discovery of the author of the fourth letter turns the Drapier's attention momentarily away from Wood, his avowed enemy, and back upon the people whose cause he champions. His isolation and alienation in his own country are featured, as he appeals to Viscount Molesworth. Most of the letter is devoted to defense of the Drapier with some lateral denigration of both English and Irish. Again, the Drapier emphasizes the purity of his motives: "I give the whole Profit [of the pamphlets] to the Dyers and Pressers. And, therefore, I hope you will please to believe, that no other Motives, besides the Love of my Country, could engage me to busy my Head and Hands, to the Loss of my Time; and the Gain of nothing but Vexation and ill Will" (PW 10: 83). He reminds the reader, moreover, that he is a reluctant hero: "I begin to grow weary of my Office as a Writer; and could heartily wish it were devolved upon my Brethren" (PW 10: 93). Still, while the Drapier is discouraged by the reception which his work has received, he takes himself to task ironically for having been too innocent to have been able to predict such indifference. He admits to having been corrected in this opinion by one of a more cynical bent: "Advice given me by a certain Dean... shewed me the Mistake I was in, of trusting to the general good Will of the People" (PW 10: 89). Like Harley, as depicted by Swift, the Drapier's naive innocence threatens to be the cause of his failure. But, so good and selfless is the nature of the Drapier that rather than resent the insult he feels at the reception he has
received, he would rather humbly retract any offensive passages so that his message will continue to be heard:

I should be heartily sorry, that this Commendable Resentment against me should accidentally... strike a Damp upon that Spirit in all Ranks and Corporations of Men against the desperate and ruinous Design of Mr. Wood. Let my Countrymen blot out those Points in my last letter which they dislike, and let no Rust remain on my Sword to cure the Wounds I have given to our most mortal Enemy. (PW 10: 87)

Thus, this letter, the last from the Drapier in propria persona, climaxes with simultaneous humility and grandeur, the Drapier apologizing for any mistaken charges while offering up to the public his heroic service against catastrophe. So effective had the Drapier been, both in mobilizing the Irish against Wood and in offering to the Irish a heroic model of a man who, "though I know how to be silent; I have not yet learned to pay active obedience against my Conscience, and the publick safety" (To Middleton, PW 10: 111), that the Irish popularly spoke out against the reward offered for the Drapier's identification and arrest by citing I Samuel xiv: "And the people said unto Saul, shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel" (Davis, "Introduction," PW 10: xx).

Swift's own satisfaction in the performance of the Drapier is made clear in his letter to Middleton wherein he half-modestly concludes: "So that I look upon myself, the Drapier, and my numerous Brethren, to be all true Patriots in our several Degrees" (To Middleton, PW 10: 114). The Drapier stands as the model of the Swiftian hero; great in effect but humble in demeanor, he is selfless
and moral, driven by Christian conscience into righteous Roman civic action.

The Modest Proposer: Mad Christian Hero

Throughout his political writings, Swift’s sardonic, ironic, sarcastic wit glimmers only occasionally in short passages and asides. Lesser opponents, like Partridge the astrologer, were susceptible to his wish-fulfillment fantasies and died on command. More formidable opponents, particularly those with power, printing presses, or wealth seemed resistant to Swift’s holding the mirror of nature up to them: "Satyre is reckoned the easiest of all Wit; but I take it to be otherwise in very bad Times: For it is as hard to satyrize well a Man of distinguished Vices, as to praise well a Man of distinguished Virtues. It is easie enough to do either to People of moderate Characters" (Thoughts on Various Subjects, PW 4: 243). As has been indicated in the discussion of Wharton above, Swift despaired of ever shaming some of his foes into reform, their natures being impervious to appeals either to virtue or to reputation. In answer to a letter charging him with the responsibility of exposing and thus reforming several prominent Whigs, the Examiner had lamented:

I am afraid you did not consider what an abundance of Work you have cut out for me; neither am I at all comforted by the Promise you are so kind to make that, when I have performed my Task, Dobben shall blush in his Grave among the Dead, Walpole among the living, and even Volpone shall feel some Remorse. How the Gentleman in his Grave, may have kept his Countenance, I cannot inform you, having no Acquaintance at all with the Sexton: But for the others, I take leave to assure you, there have not yet appeared the least Signs of Blushing or Remorse in either, although some very good Opportunities have offered, if they had thought Fit to accept them: So that with your
Permission, I had rather engage to continue this Work until they be in their Graves too; which I am sure, will happen much sooner than the other. (The Examiner, No. 28, PW 3: 86)

Faced with such heroically villainous opponents, Swift despairs of reform but still feels compelled by public duty to alert the public:

"Next to taming or binding a Savage-Animal, the best Service you can do the Neighborhood, is to give them warning, either to arm themselves, or not come in its Way" (The Examiner, No. 38, PW 3: 141).

Swift's occasional forays into extended satire during this period (A Letter from Wharton and A Discourse on Freethinking) continue to make extensive use of impersonation, the technique which had proven so fruitful in the Tale. By allowing the satiric victim to speak for himself, in his own words and with his own prejudices, Swift is able to produce a raree show for the benefit and edification of the neighborhood. As we have seen, however, the more Swift became involved in issues, the more he seems to resemble his opponents. The more he cries out for reform, the more he resembles the reformers and projectors. Swift's later satires partake increasingly of the self-satire we have seen in the Tale. Like the famous "Digression on Madness," Swift's subsequent satires incorporate into the speeches of his opponents and victims many of those values, rhetorical strategies, and ideas to which the public and common sense give assent. Thus, these satires demonstrate the subversion of norms and the appropriation of values, and thereby implicate the reader and point to a more widespread malaise than that which is situated in the threat posed by the individual being satirized.
In impersonating Wharton, for instance, praising the publication of the preface to his work by the Bishop of Saint Asaph, Swift demonstrates the appropriation of language which is properly religious to serve what Swift perceives to be an anti-religious cause:

The Preface is equal to the Sermons, less than That ought not, and more cannot, be said of it. In this you play the Part of a Prophet, with the same Address as that of a Preacher in those; and in a Strain no ways inferior to Jeremiah, or any of those old Pretenders to Inspiration . . . . May you never want Opportunities of thus signifying yourself, but be transmitted to Posterity under the Character of one who dares sacrifice every Thing that is most dear to you (even your own darling Labours) to promote the Interest of our Party, and stand sainted in the Whig-Kalendar, as a Martyre for the Cause. (A Letter of Thanks from Lord Wharton, PW 6: 151-55)

In such praise, we may easily discern several of the characteristics which Swift strove to incorporate into his Drapier: devotion to the cause, selflessness, martyrdom, sacrifice for the common weal, and so on. Clearly, as Swift became involved in the dialogues between Whig and Tory, deist and High Church, English and Irish, he became increasingly familiar with the manner in which the rhetoric of righteousness may be appropriated by unrighteous causes, and the manner in which forms of the Greek, the Roman, and the Christian hero may be exhibited to disguise villainy. And there can be little doubt that he saw a resemblance in these subversive processes to the manner in which reason can subvert common sense, as he had demonstrated in the Tale.

*A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of poor People in Ireland, from being a Burden to their Parents or Country; and for making them beneficial to the Publick* is Swift’s masterpiece of extended satire exactly because of the subversion of the speaker's
common sense by reason and of his appropriation of a moral defense for an immoral cause. The characterization of the speaker is haunting exactly because of his resemblance to a potentially admirable reformer, uncomfortably coupled with the moral obtuseness which Swift had observed in Thomas Wharton. The Modest Proposer is, in short, the Drapier gone mad, and the horror and violence which are contained in the satire are not so much the result of the cannibalistic imagery which pervades the piece as the psychological violence which is submerged and which erupts only occasionally from beneath the placid and righteous demeanor of the speaker.

While this effect is undoubtedly conscious and therefore artistic, perhaps the primary factor in Swift's success was his own moral and psychological intimacy with the Proposer. Claude Rawson has articulated what any thorough reader of Swift is bound to see: "To suggest ... even that [Swift's] attitude on certain central questions (poverty, beggars, children) was 'humane' or 'liberal' in a sense which a modern reader would understand or assent to, is misleading" ("A Reading" 29). One need look no further than the Drapier's letters to get a sense of Swift's scorn for the poor and needy. Even the sermons which he preached directly to the Irish, openly condemn poverty as the result of viciousness:

Among the Number of those who beg in our Streets, or are half starved at Home, or languish in Prison for Debt, there is hardly one in a hundred who doth not owe his Misfortunes to his own Laziness or Drunkenness, or worse Vices.
Such Wretches are deservedly unhappy; they can only blame themselves; and when we are commanded to have Pity on the Poor, these are not understood to be of the Number. (On the Poor Man's Contentment, PW 9: 191)

Therein lies the conflict which was translated so effectively into the Proposal: Swift is selflessly devoted to bettering the lot of the Irish even while in his heart he despises them. The internal conflict is evident in the very first lines of the proposal: "It is a melancholy Object to those, who walk through this great Town, or travel in the Country; when they see the Streets, the Roads, and Cabbin-doors crowded with Beggars of the Female Sex, followed by three, four, or six Children, all in Rags, and importuning every Passenger for an Alms" (PW 12: 109). The suffering ("melancholy") grammatically emphasized here is that of the alms-giver and not that of the poor. The proposer is discomfited, perhaps even inconvenienced, by the presence of beggars, and ultimately it is this discomfiture that the proposal is designed to alleviate. What initially appears to be a pamphlet written out of charity is written out of self-interest. As Martin Price observes, "The attempt to make one order a disguise for another yields a peculiarly nasty kind of disorder" (Palace of Wisdom 17). Yet the disorder is very familiar to Swift, mad though it may be. The conflict between form and meaning, between apparent Christian benevolence and petty self-interest, is exactly that which Swift had delineated in his public letter to Pope, declaring himself motivated in his Irish activism by "perfect rage and resentment" rather than by any affection for the people.
Swift's achievement in the Proposal is what might today be termed psychological realism. As Robert Uphaus has demonstrated, the net effect on the reader is what psychologists call "approach-avoidance." Readers, Uphaus says, are attracted to the Proposer, by his appropriation of both moral and rational rhetoric, but ultimately appalled by his conclusion ("Nature of Meaning" 277).

Christian duty in conflict with sensibility, and common sense in conflict with reason--these are the two underlying violences which animate A Modest Proposal. The pervasiveness of the threat of these conflicts is embodied in the proposer's apparent unconsciousness of the conflict. Like the Tale-teller, he is so involved in delineating his ideas that he neglects to examine them thoroughly. Swift had noted similar performances among his contemporaries. He describes Lord Cowper, for example, as follows: "He is what we usually call a Piece of a Scholar, and a good Logical Reasoner; if this were not too often allayed by a fallacious way of managing an Argument; which makes him apt to deceive the Unwary and sometimes to deceive Himself" (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 10-11). Such exactly is the effect of A Modest Proposal, as Charles Pullen has described it: "The modest proposer never has a moment of self doubt, first or last. He is not destroyed by the revelation of his shallowness; he is, as a matter of fact, proud and clean-handed at the end of his work" ("Eighteenth-Century Madness" 58). Like Peter and Jack and the Tale-teller, the Proposer's madness is demonstrated in his self-assuredness, and his danger to the common weal is heightened thereby as well.
A Modest Proposal goes straight to the heart of Swift's implied argument against the sufficiency of reason. The Proposer seems to be the personification of reason; indeed, even those passages which are generally interpreted as satirical asides ("Let no Man talk to me of these and the like Expedients . . ." [FW 12: 117]) are eminently reasonable and therein lies the satire against the madness of both the Irish and the English. Max Byrd indicates that the problem presented is that "reason, when it aspires to more than common sense, pulls the seesaw of the mind off balance and makes a man mad" (Visits to Bedlam 83). In this case, reason accepts madness, building an argument based upon the very real but equally mad treatment of the Irish by England. The Modest Proposer, then, very much resembles Swift in his acceptance of the unacceptable. In this resemblance, Swift offers evidence of doubts of his own sanity and thereby preserves it; he satirizes himself and thereby maintains his humility.

In his private journal Swift had consciously identified two trans-rational but commonsensical precepts against which the Modest Proposer offends:

Although reason were intended by providence to govern our passions, yet it seems that in two points of the greatest moment to the being and continuance of the world, God hath intended our passions to prevail over reason. The first is, the propagation of our species, since no wise man ever married from the dictates of reason. The other is, the love of life, which, from the dictates of reason, every man would despise and wish it at an end, or that it never had a beginning. (Thoughts on Religion, FW 9: 263)

Preservation of life and the protection and sustenance of children are contrary to Swift's reason—but are divinely ordained and commonly
pursued. Yet these are exactly the two principles of which the Proposer has no sense, as when he smugly points out that the "Aged, Diseased, or Maimed . . . are every Day dying, and rotting, by Cold and Famine, and Filth, and Vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected" (PW 12: 114). While Swift keeps his inhumanity to himself as much as possible, the Proposer, in the manner of Peter, Jack and the Talt-teller, not only proposes to act upon his private madness but attempts to persuade others to do so as well.

Consistently throughout the proposal, reason triumphs over humaneness. The careful computations, used by Swift also in pamphlets published in propria persona, reflect a mind coolly and carefully at work. The enumeration of advantages and the countering of objections, methodically presented in the form of a classical oration, create a serene surface of reasonableness. The careful consideration of economics and the scientific specifications (e.g., "a solar Year") work together to convince the reader of the consistently rational approach which the proposer takes to the problem under consideration. Moreover, very much like the Examiner and the Drapier, the proposer insists in his final words upon his lack of self-interest in the project (in spite of his previous suggestion that lesser projectors have earned themselves public memorials):

I PROFESS, in the Sincerity of my Heart, that I have not the least personal Interest, in endeavoring to promote this necessary Work; having no other Motive than the publick Good of my Country, by advancing our Trade, providing for Infants, relieving the Poor, and giving some Pleasure to the Rich. I have no Children, by which I can propose to get a single Penny; the youngest being nine Years old, and my Wife past Child-bearing. (PW 12: 118)
The threat of the proposer is abhorrent not because he is so far from the Drapier (and from Swift and from us) but because he is so near.

The danger portrayed by Swift in this piece is the most profound of those found in any of his works. The insanity of Peter, Jack, and the Tale-teller in the Tale is dangerous to Church, state, and culture, but it is readily identifiable, and with proper warning it may be avoided. The Tale-teller, after all, has friends who tend to him and, when necessary, commit him to Bedlam. In the proposer, however, Swift has created a character potentially subversive to all order, because he appropriates the rhetoric and many of the values of that order. The conclusion of the proposal is more tragic than comic because the proposer remains very much at large, unchecked, and unaware. More destructive than the traditional classical hero, who killed and pillaged to gain his glory, the mad Christian hero who subverts and perverts the values of his culture and actively publishes and proselytizes his beliefs has the potential to use reason to sweep all men into madness.

The most striking characteristic of the proposer, and heretofore the one most unremarked, is his lack of conscience: he has no knowledge against himself. In fact, he has no knowledge of himself. Swift, on the other hand, knew too well his divided self, and from the psychological conflict between his pride and his charity, his reason and his common sense, emerged the character of the proposer. As Swift has repeatedly suggested, a man's thoughts are liable to be contradictory, conflicting, and even mad. All men are liable to
madness. What keeps a man capable of subduing the effects of his madness is the use of judgment before he speaks or acts, and a man can have no judgment without a conscience informed by Christian common sense.
CHAPTER FIVE

MAD HEROES AND THE POET AS VIR BONUS IN SWIFT’S POETRY

Romantic and post-Romantic readers were long loath to recognize or accept the merits of Swift’s poetry, and not until the mid-twentieth century did critics like Maurice Johnson begin to apprehend in Swift’s verses more substance, power, and even beauty than a century and a half of occasional readers had recognized. Swift’s poetry frequently thwarts the expectations of his readers and consequently risks being misunderstood. In some ways, Swift’s poems seem out of step with many of the critical assumptions even of his own age. The influence of Longinus, to which some literary historians trace the rise of Romanticism, was already apparent in the critical works of John Dennis, Swift’s contemporary, who identified the sublime as “enthusiastick passion,” which could include admiration, terror, horror, joy, sadness, or desire, but which was always strongest when arising from an enthusiasm predominantly religious (The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry, Works 1: 215-218). To such statements, Swift’s mentor, Sir William Temple, repeatedly objected in On Poetry: “I cannot allow poetry to be more divine in its effects than in its causes, nor any operation produced by it to be more than purely natural” (Works 3: 408). For both Temple and Swift, enthusiasm denoted
madness far more than it denoted inspiration. And, in spite of his recognition of the limitations of men, in many ways, Temple was more sanguine about the potential of man and his productions than his protege would be. At the same time, Swift would no doubt have agreed with Temple upon the potential function and efficacy of poetry: "There is no question but true poetry may have the force to raise passions and to allay them, to change and to extinguish them, to temper joy and grief, to raise love and fear; nay to turn fear into boldness and love into indifference, and into hatred itself" (410). Swift, of course, eventually turned this power of poetry against bad poetry in his satires of his contemporaries.

The result has been, I think, a critical misunderstanding of the nature of anti-poetry, which began with Maurice Johnson’s characterization of Swift’s work: "By means of a witty stylistic device, in ‘The Day of Judgement’ and other poems, [Swift] builds up an effect only to overturn it. He is deliberately anti-‘poetic’—opposing insincerity, prettiness, and the false sublime" (Sin of Wit xi). Johnson’s point is well-taken, but the label of "anti-poetic" has produced some misunderstanding. Swift is, it is true, poetically anti-bad-poetic, not writing against poetry but against bad poetry and false poetry, just as the Tale is not against religion but against abuses in religion. As E. San Juan Jr. points out, Wallace Stevens aptly, for our purposes, has defined the anti-poetic more positively and effectively than has Johnson, as "that truth, that reality, to which all of us are forever fleeing" (Necessary Angel 25)
and demonstrated the paradoxically poetic use of the anti-poetic in poems such as "On the Dump." Many of Swift's poems, like those of Stevens, may be characterized as flights to reality. It is not too much to claim that the anti-poetic partakes of, or perhaps is even based upon, the anti-heroic. Just as Swift's works denounce and deflate the false virtues of the traditional hero and subsequently replace him with the *vir bonus* in the form of the common citizen like the Drapier, so his poetry denounces the false passion and false glory of the ascendant enthusiastic sublime as a poetic goal and replaces it with a hard-won but genuine and sincere appreciation for the common and the ordinary and, thus, the true. Swift's poems consistently flee from the traditionally heroic to the real, from the idealized to the actual. This flight is particularly pronounced in Swift's rejection of the increasing tendency of poets to portray themselves as heroic visionaries in his own self-portraits which include notice of his shortcomings as well as his virtues. While other poets seek to find a higher truth, Swift seeks ways to force himself and his readers into acceptance of the more mundane truths which we try to avoid. Anti-poetry is another radical compromise.

After his early odes, Swift seems consistently to recognize a fundamental conflict between poetic aspiration and poetic achievement. As Robert Uphaus suggests, Swift's overt and satiric statements upon poetry, culminating in "On Poetry: A Rapsody," consistently point to the "conflict between mankind's vulnerability to the language of pride and flattery and the poet's obligation to uphold the language of virtue
and truth" ("Swift's Poetry" 585). Swift's method, as Uphaus has explained, is a result of his awareness of this conflict: "Swift makes poetry by projecting his own vision of reality—a simultaneous opposition to the visionary imagination and a firm commitment to the material world as the primary source of human knowledge—within certain literary conventions" (569). Such a perception and manipulation of the dynamics between appearance and reality, word and object, is exactly what one might expect from a satiric temperament.¹

The ideas and attitudes expressed in the poetry of Swift are of a piece with those in his prose productions. As A.L. Rowse comments: "There is nothing he said in prose that he did not say as well in verse" ("Swift as Poet" 99). There are, however, several themes which Swift developed in verse that he glanced at only peripherally in his prose. Particularly, Swift's verse contains his most thorough presentation of domestic life, both good ("April First," the Stella

¹ Most recent criticism has emphasized the apparent dualism which results from Swift's poetic practice. As indicated already, Maurice Johnson emphasizes the conflict between poetry and reality (The Sin of Wit). John Irwin Fischer calls attention to Swift's religious orthodoxy which seems to be hidden within and sometimes to be at odds with a primarily secular corpus (On Swift's Poetry). Peter J. Schakel, similarly, addresses the allusions throughout Swift's poetry, noting the traditional foundation upon which Swift's seemingly non-traditional verse rests (The Poetry of Jonathan Swift: Allusion and the Development of a Poetic Style). Recently, A. B. England has extended the formalistic approach, noting the tension between orderly poetic form and Swift's peculiar poetic and linguistic energy (Energy and Order). Louise K. Barnett has synthesized much of what has gone before and then offered astute readings of the major poems (Swift's Poetic Worlds). Nora Crow Jaffe has begun the work of analyzing the figure of the poet in his poems, and much of the last section of this chapter is based upon her work (The Poet Swift).
anniversaries, and the Market Hill poems) and bad (the scatological poems and the poems on Sheridan's marriage). However, since the theme which we have been exploring thus far is by its nature related to public life, we shall here examine only those poems which concern themselves with that larger sphere of activity.

In the poems to be considered here, two basic phases in Swift's career can easily be discerned: First, Swift's experimentation with panegyrics and the sublime, leading ultimately to his rejection of them; and second, Swift's portraits of his opponents as heroically villainous mad men (culminating with "A Character, Panegyric, and Description of the Legion Club") and his simultaneous development of self-presentation as a means of offering a figure worthy of emulation (culminating in "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift").

Swift's Enthusiastic and Heroic Muse: the Odes

Swift's early odes are not very good, yet they remain very interesting. As critical interest increases in the conflicts within Swift's literary personality, more and more attention to the odes must be paid in order to recognize those elements of his own literary personality which he attempts to suppress even as he apes and parodies them in others. The odes clearly demonstrate Swift's aspirations to greatness as a writer, even as they demonstrate the conflicts between his perspective and traditional perspectives upon greatness.

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2 For discussion of Swift's "Ode to Sir William Temple," see Chapter 3, 112-117.
Each of the odes is a panegyric to someone whom Swift admired, and in several cases (those to Congreve and Temple, for example) the ode serves a utilitarian purpose as well by seeking favor and advancement with the person to whom the poem is addressed. Swift also clearly tries to advance himself in the mind of the reader by aligning himself with the dignitaries to whom he writes. At this stage of his career, he is not above the self-seeking self-aggrandizement which he subsequently would condemn so vigorously in the Tale-teller and in the "old sinner" in "On Poetry: A Rapsody."

Virtue as it is distinguished from greatness provides the thematic thread throughout the odes. In effect, the odes are Swift’s first attempts at creating heroes. Like Temple in his essay Of Heroic Virtue and like Dryden in his non-dramatic poetry, Swift chooses to work with real rather than legendary figures, but in Swift’s poems the very reality of the personalities and circumstances of his subjects overwhelms the poems, creating conflicts rather than coherence.

These heroes are typically defined in the world of the poem both by their virtues and by their unvirtuous enemies, and throughout the poems Swift struggles to balance his passages of praise for the hero (frequently ineffective) with his castigation (generally effective) of the world.

Interestingly, the odes contain more Christian mythology than most of the poetry of his middle career, in which Biblical allusions often serve to support his point but do not provide the crucial metaphors. Later poems which do make use of mythological underpinnings
are almost consistently pseudo-classical (e.g., "Baucis and Philemon," "April First") rather than Christian. Even "The Day of Judgement" uses Jove as the central character. In the odes, however, while classical allusions abound, the heroic mold is based upon the figure of Christ, and this creates precisely the problem which Swift is apparently unable to solve in these poems: heroes based upon Christ are doomed to metaphorical crucifixion. Try as he might, Swift cannot create worlds in his poems which satisfactorily and convincingly accommodate the Christian metaphors of resurrection and salvation. Swift's talent, as well as his perspective, is overwhelmingly mundane, and his theology cannot poetically compensate for his realism. As a consequence, the poems turn repeatedly away from their chosen heroic subjects and toward the people, institutions, and conditions which are inimical to Christian heroic virtue, and the panegyrics are overwhelmed by satire. As John Irwin Fisher has suggested, while Pindar had found man's meaning in victory, Swift (like Cowley) had found man's meaning in defeat (Swift's Poetry 13). Unlike Cowley, however, Swift was ineluctably drawn to an examination of the forces which defeat the virtuous man. His heroic portraits fail because of his apparent inability to describe adequately the transcendent qualities of the defeated man.

Moreover, as we have seen in the ode to Temple, Swift frequently seems unable to resist offering at least implicit criticism of those virtuous men whom he praises. The first two odes (to the King and to the Athenian Society) are relatively successful, but the success is cheaply bought. Both King William and the non-existent society of
scientists and scholars are apparently abstract enough in Swift's mind, and certainly in the poems, that their reality can safely escape critique. In the third ode, however, the one to Sir William Temple, a man whom Swift knew intimately, Swift's knowledge of the man overwhelms his muse, and, as I have suggested in Chapter 3, Swift offers characteristics of Temple (for example, his Epicurean tendencies) as praiseworthy even as he damns them with faint praise, ultimately producing more ambiguities than certainties. Noting Swift's repeated failures in the odes, John Irwin Fisher concludes: "They exhibit Swift's progress out of a proud and solipsistic idealism towards a mental stance which can variously be called dramatic or existential, skeptical or Christian, but which, however it is called, recognizes in human uncertainty the only possible ground of human wisdom" (On Swift's Poetry 8).

In his fourth attempt, "Ode to Dr. William Sancroft," Swift chooses for his subject a man whose personal integrity he admired, a man whose virtue led him to be consistently out of favor with those in power, a trademark circumstance of the Swiftian hero. As it progresses, more and more of the poem is devoted to the fallen world and the fallen nation and the fallen nature of man which will not allow virtue to prosper. Sancroft becomes an emblem of truth, incapable of being recognized in a fallen world which Swift characterizes variously as the upside-down world of a camera obscura image, a self-centered Ptolemaic universe which consistently ignores the inconsistencies which
develop from its belief system, and ultimately as a vast hellish Bedlam. The vision of evil overwhelms the vision of virtue. Like Sir William Temple, Sancroft must ultimately be praised for his withdrawal from the world, a result of the impotence of virtue: "Thus SANCROFT, in the exaltation of retreat, / Shows lustre that was shaded in his seat" (211-212). In the world presented by Swift, wisdom, humility, and virtue conquer nothing. Sancroft's poetic apotheosis into heaven is no more effective than Sir William Temple's apotheosis into Moor Park.

From the opening Miltonic allusion ("Truth is eternal, and the son of heaven, / Bright effluence of the immortal ray . . ."), Christian mythology serves as the metaphoric core of the poem. However, far from creating an overwhelming appreciation for Sancroft as the Christian hero, the weight of the ode, even with its overt insistence upon the metaphor, damns the world instead. Sancroft's fate is taken primarily as an indication of the world's continued corruption since the time of Christ:

Among thy stubborn sons there haunts that spirit of Jews,
That those forsaken wretches who today
Revile His great ambassador,
Seem to discover what they would have done
(Were his humanity on earth once more)
To his undoubted master, heaven's almighty son. (129-134)

Swift's poetic world here is less like those of Pindar or Cowley than like that of Dostoevsky. As a consequence, the poet veers back and forth between his subject and his subject's enemies, as if continually on the defense against ambush. Ultimately, the result of engagement with the enemy, as we have seen in Swift's Tale and his Examiner papers, is self-implication and perhaps even self-destruction. Tracing
the poet in the poem demonstrates Swift's difficulties and explains his ultimate failure and his decision not to continue the poem.

In the third stanza, the poet emerges as a distinct person simultaneously with the first appearance of Sancroft in the third stanza: "I'll may I live, if the good SANCROFT in his holy rest / . . . Be not the brightest pattern earth can show" (50-51, emphasis mine). Heretofore, the poem has been written in the third person throughout the first stanza, with a development of a comradely "we" in the second stanza, denoting all mankind and including the poet in the fallen condition of men in a topsy turvy world. Having sketched out that world, the poet introduces the person of Sancroft, and simultaneously emerges himself, linking his own fate to that of the bishop. Yet the poet is unable to remain apart, to retreat like Temple and like Sancroft, from the rest of the factious world. The very act of writing the poem engages the poet with the world, and as the poem progresses the poet finds himself becoming more and more involved and implicated in the factiousness he condemns. Only by discontinuing the poem can he disengage himself from the world which he attacks. Such an abrupt discontinuation will eventually be formalized by Swift as the only possible resolution in two of his greater poems, "The Legion Club" and "On Poetry: a Rhapsody."

The tension between the poet's urge to retreat and his urge to do battle with the enemy emerges and heightens as the poem progresses. In his initial description of the world, the poet establishes a distance from that world, as he laments the difficulty of
distinguishing true virtue which is so obscured by the virulent factiousness of Restoration England:

How shall we find thee then in dark disputes?
How shall we search thee in a battle gained,
Or a weak argument by force maintained?
In dagger-contests, and the artillery of words,
(For swords are madmen's tongues, and tongues are madmen's swords)
Contrived to tire all patience out,
And not to satisfy the doubt. (10-16)

By the fifth stanza, however, the poet acknowledges the impotence of wisdom and of humility, gives up his attempt at virtuous retreat, and is drawn into battle with fools, using his own tongue as his sword like the madman he has just condemned, as he calls upon his muse to inspire his wrath instead of his reason: "Each line shall stab, shall blast, like daggers and like fire" (91). With this outburst, the poet effectively supplants Sancroft as the subject of the poem and turns his attention to himself and the causes for his outrage.

The rest of the poem is an exploration of the poet's consciousness and the poet's disdain for his engagement with the enemy. The sixth stanza opens with an attempt to regain the calm which has been disrupted: "Forgive (original mildness) this ill-governed zeal" (107). The poet simultaneously confesses that he has been driven into madness and asks forgiveness, pleading in effect to be stopped before he satirizes again. But his contrition is short-lived: "No province now is left her but to rail, / And poetry has lost the art to praise, / Alas, the occasions are so few . . ." (110-112). The subsequent stanza condemns the "zeal" of other men as "weak and ignorant, though wondrous proud, / Though very turbulent and very loud" (136-37), feebly
denouncing zeal as impotent while simultaneously longing for its power. The poet's consciousness, and thus the poem, is effectively sundered, and full resolution of the poem is thereafter impossible.

After a brief return to praise of Sancroft's virtue (as evidenced by his absence), the poet again lapses into a zealous, satiric outburst, and then at the end of the fragment attempts to reconcile and resolve the conflicting forces at work in the poem:

Check in thy satire, angry muse,  
Or a more worthy subject choose:  
Let not the outcasts of this outcast age  
Provoke the honour of my muse's rage,  
Nor by thy mighty spirit raised,  
Since heaven and Cato both are pleased. (259-64)

Here the poem breaks off, and an editor might be forgiven for printing "Hic multa desiderantur ..." at its conclusion. The apparently inadvertent irony of the poet's thoroughly active denunciation of his age as he pleads for the wisdom and virtue to retreat from it could not have been lost upon Swift. And of course, his age would enjoy the "honour" of his "muse's rage" for almost four more decades.

The final line, though ultimately unconvincing, is telling in terms of Swift's heroic ideal. The line refers to Lucan, in De Bello Civili: "Victrix causa dei placuit, sed victa Catoni." The ancients revered victory, their heroes were victorious, and these victories were taken as testaments of the gods' favor. Swift, who numbered Cato among his heroes (Of Those Who Have Made Great Figures, PW 5: 83), attempts to reconcile political and theological virtue in the figure of Sancroft here, yet his view of the world shows such virtues to be plainly contradictory, as evidenced everywhere by the defeat of virtuous men.
Swift's idealism is easily apparent in this line, and although it rarely emerges in his work thereafter, its presence here as elsewhere seems to justify the view of critics who maintain that disappointed idealism is the source of Swift's wrath throughout his career. Indeed, this entire poem seems to support that view, for the true conflict within the poem is between the poet's simultaneous longing for two forms of heroic action--furious victory and humble retreat--which the poem is unable to reconcile. Moreover, the poem indicates that the result of either type of heroic action may be madness. Those who achieve power must abandon conscience and virtue, and consequently go mad. Those, like the poet, who try to cleave to virtue may be driven into outraged frenzies by the frustration resulting from virtue's impotence in the world.

"Ode to Dr. William Sancroft" was the last pure Pindaric attempted by Swift. His two subsequent odes make use of the heroic line rather than the Pindaric, perhaps a result of a growing desperation and sense of failure. Swift's poetry proves incapable of reconciling idealism to reality, of creating a hero without being distracted by the enemies of that hero, and of establishing the hero's heroism in a manner that can be comprehended or admitted by a world so full of corruption. The final ode ("Occasioned by Sir William Temple's Late Illness and Recovery"), also abandoned, degenerates similarly from panegyric to disputation with the muse ("Malignant goddess!" 81), and concludes with a denunciation of the madness and delusion of poetry:

Madness like this no fancy ever seized,
Still to be cheated, never to be pleased;
Since one false beam of joy in sickly minds  
Is all the poor content delusion finds.—  
There thy enchantment broke, and from this hour  
I here renounce thy visionary power;  
And since thy essence on my breath depends,  
Thus with a puff the whole delusion ends. (147-54)

Clearly, what is reflected in these poems is a crisis in the poet's faith in mankind as well as a crisis in his faith in poetry's transcendental power. Through the medium of the poem, he attempts to reconcile ideals with reality, but in each of his early poems Swift's sense of reality overwhelms his ideals. His subsequent poems, seen in this light, may indeed be termed "anti-poetic" in the Stevensian sense; Swift abandons his attempted faith in the medium of poetry as a means to faith and flees to reality.

Nora Crowe Jaffe, like several other critics, has interpreted this flight as a bitter retreat leading to a subsequent retaliatory offensive: "His failure at the high-flown style of poetry fostered a life-long animus against it. Quite naturally, the man who wrote the early odes was to write, later in life, such poems as "On Poetry: A Rapsody" (The Poet Swift 74). Certainly, Swift's subsequent poems and the forms that they utilize signal a reaction to his failure. It seems evident that Swift's subsequent animus was against poetry's capacity for pretentiousness and its consequent failures, both in his own poems and in the poems of the scribblers whom he satirized. The animus is particularly vehement because Swift is implicated along with his victims. He is angry at his own former delusions as well as at those of others. As I have suggested in connection with A Tale of a Tub, Swift's failures offered him an effective insight into the nature
of the aspirations and delusions of those whom he satirized. As one who knows of his own vulnerability to delusion and madness, he fears it all the more, and that fear animates his wrath.

Swift’s subsequent poems, in spite of their apparent simplicity, are nonetheless as carefully wrought as his early attempts, demonstrating a continued faith in the power of poetry. He seems to have taken to heart Temple’s explanation in Of Poetry of the labors of poetry:

"Tho’ Invention be the Mother of Poetry, yet this Child is like all others born naked, and must be Nourished with Care, Cloathed with Exactness and Elegance, Educated with Industry, Instructed with Art, Improved by Application, Corrected with Severity, and Accomplished with Labour and with Time, before it Arrives at any great perfection or Growth. (Works 3: 179)

Like Martin, in the Tale, however, Swift apparently felt the need to eliminate some of the extravagance of the clothes of poetry in an effort to reconcile poetry and truth. In doing so, he flew in the face of his mentor, who had decried satire:

Another vein which has entered, and helped to corrupt our modern poesy, is that of ridicule; as if nothing pleased but what made one laugh .... Rabelais seems to have been the father of the ridicule; a man of excellent and universal learning, as well as wit; and though he had too much game given him for satire in that age, by the customs of courts and of convents, of processes and of wars, of schools and of camps, of romances and legends; yet he must be confessed to have kept up his vein of ridicule, by saying many things so malicious, so smutty, and so profane, that either a prudent, a modest, or a pious man, could not have afforded, though he had never so much of that coin about him: and it were to be wished, that the wits who have followed his vein had not put too much value upon a dress that better understandings would not wear (at least in public). (196-7)

Swift did, indeed, wear his wit relatively modestly in his initial poems ("A Description of the Morning" and "A Description of a City
Shower," for example), but his wit and his wrath became increasingly colorful and extravagant as his career proceeded.

After his initial odes, Swift rarely offered public poetry in which the purpose was praise, for such poems had proven suitable neither to his talent nor his disposition. Like the "Ode to Sancroft," later poems in which praise is attempted typically become a means for satirizing a corrupt age which spurns virtue. *Viri boni* continue to be characterized in light of their enemies. Only Harley was to receive a poem generally unadulterated by raillery or satire ("To the Earl of Oxford, Late Lord Treasurer"), and this appeared during his incarceration following his fall from power. Yet even here, with Oxford facing the possibility of death at the hands of his own countrymen, Swift ironically alludes to Horace: "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." Similarly, Swift consistently praises Pope, but part of that praise is based upon Pope's treatment at the hands of his enemies: "None loves his king and country better, / Yet none was ever less their debtor" ("Richmond Lodge and Marble Hall" 83-84). In the poetry of Swift, as in his prose, the telling characteristic of the admirable man and the outward sign of the *vir bonus* is his defeat, death, or exile at the hands of his enemies. In a mad world, those who have power must necessarily be those most mad, while those most impotent must be those who are most virtuous. Swift consistently severs the heroism of the *vir bonus* from victory and power. The admirable figures in Swift's poems, like Stella or even himself, are wise, kind, and patient. Their victory, the poems sometimes imply,
will come hereafter, but little is explicitly made of the promise of salvation—as if Swift cannot believe that his muse will provide the poetic strength to make such a promise convincing.

Swift's Christian heroes in the poems are small, patient men and women who try to endure life and to do God's will. They are diminutive. Their appeal is virtuous rather than political. A short poem, "The Power of Time," printed in its entirety below, masterfully depicts the Swiftian Christian hero:

If neither brass, nor marble can withstand
The mortal force of Time's destructive hand:
If mountains sink to vales, if cities die,
And lessening rivers mourn their fountains dry:
When my old cassock, says a Welsh divine,
Is out at elbows, why should I repine?

Such a hero acknowledges with "a better fortitude" and, at his best, with humor, the brutal forces of the world and admits his powerlessness before them, yet maintains virtue, patience, and wisdom nonetheless.

This is an ideal which Swift himself, as he presents himself in his poems, only occasionally seems to achieve. While acknowledging the desirability of such virtuous detachment, the character of Swift in its variety of manifestations is consistently drawn into a struggle with the forces of evil. And while the true Swiftian Christian hero is diminutive, as has been noted in regard to Swift's political writing, the Swiftian villain is, in contrast, heroically large.

**Mad Heroic Villains in Swift's Poetry**

In the mad world which Swift presents, where virtuous behavior is rare enough to be singular and those who practice the vices which
have been made the reigning virtues of the age are elevated ironically to heroic status, the word "hero" is rarely, if ever, ambiguous: it is always ironic. Although the quality being characterized as heroic may indeed be a quality which the poet admires, the "heroic" label is still typically a signal of satire, indicating in such cases a misapplied virtue. In contrast, the heroism of those individuals whom Swift truly admires is consistently expressed implicitly. For example, in "To the Earl of Oxford," Swift implicitly praises Oxford's courage in facing trial and possible execution. Oxford's character is made somewhat clear by a passing description of his virtue but then is crystallized by a description of his enemies: "traitors" and "villains." On the other hand, Swift's mock panegyric "Clever Tom Clinch Going to be Hanged" offers pseudo-admiration for a common robber's apparent courage, actually the product of an utter lack of conscience (as the poem implicitly makes clear). The poem madly appropriates to evil the language of praise and virtue, and concludes by making Clinch an exemplum: "Then follow the practice of clever Tom Clinch / Who hung like a hero, and never would flinch" (24-25, my emphasis). This, of course, is the sort of inversion of values and language which Gay exploited upon Swift's hint in The Beggar's Opera and which Fielding subsequently used in Jonathan Wild. In the worlds created by Swift, Gay, and Fielding, the literary type of the hero has been so fully subverted by the politicians and the political hacks of the day that greatness can now only mean greatness in evil. Consequently, in the
poetry of Swift, as in the satires of Dryden before him, the heroic figure typically alludes to Milton's Satan.

Indeed, the first poem by Swift explicitly to investigate the nature of a hero (and to use the word "hero") is his "Description of a Salamander" (1706), a satire on Lord Cutts. The reptilian imagery, most of it taken from Pliny, creates a clear correspondence to Satan in the garden. The introductory material of the poem makes clear that the new "heroic" age demands a new means of heroic characterization. Authors previously had looked to the animal kingdom for ways in which to characterize their heroes:

So men have got from bird and brute
Names that would best their natures suit:
The lion, eagle, fox and boar
Were heroes' titles heretofore. (7-10)

The poet, apparently a naïf, recognizes the literary technique of creating a hero without apparently recognizing the weight of meaning which is invested in the word--and therein lies the comedy and the satire of the poem: "For what is understood by fame / Besides the getting of a name?" (13-14). Here, as in the later "Directions for a Birthday Song" and "On Poetry: A Rapsody," the literary technique itself becomes a matter for satire, and the method may be called "mock-heroic" in every implied sense of that phrase.

The naïf poet recognizes that the nature of heroism has undergone a change, but never acknowledges any diminishing of the stature of the hero. Modern times demand modern redefinitions:

But e'er since men invented guns
A different way their fancy runs:
To paint a hero, we inquire
For something that will conquer fire. (15-18)

This need, of course, leads the poet to the happy comparison of Cutts
to a Salamander.

The appropriation by Swift's satire of straightforward literary
techniques traditionally applied to the characterization of heroes is
evident in his use, throughout his poetry as well as his prose, of the
epic tradition of tracing of lineage in order to describe the origins
and character of the hero who is often compounded of god and mortal.
Like the use of the word "hero" itself, the appearance of a genealogy
in Swift's poems always signals satiric intention. Just as Swift
traced the genealogy of the critic in the Tale, so in his poems he
traces genealogies as a means of satiric characterization and a means
to expose continued degeneration over time. A clear example of the
 technique at work appears in the mock-heroic "Pethox the Great" (1723)
which traces the heroic lineage of syphilis back to the goddess Venus,
and subsequently praises the pox for its power of inducing virtue in
men by encouraging moderation. Similarly, in "Verses on the Upright
Judge," the judge's ancestry is analyzed, demonstrating a progressive
strain of congenital madness, which blossoms ultimately in the satiric
victim. Whereas traditional heroic genealogies account for the excess
of virtue in the hero, Swift's genealogies always culminate in madness,
the characteristic of excess pride and the reigning virtue in his
satiric world.

Swift's perspective on traditional and martial heroism and the
literature of heroism is made explicit in "A Satirical Elegy on the
Death of a Late Famous General," written on the death of Marlborough. The poem is a rare instance of Swift offering in his poetry the Christian basis for his critique of traditional heroism. The poem, of course, while attacking the life of Marlborough, is a memento mori:

Let pride be taught by this rebuke,
How very mean a thing's a Duke;
From all his ill-got honours flung,
Turned to that dirt from whence he sprung. (29-32)

The poem never disputes the general's fame or martial glory, nor does it deny him the popular honour which he had achieved. As in A Modest Proposal and An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity, part of the satire lies here in the poet's implicit acceptance of the mad reality which rewards men like Marlborough. Still, the poem's satiric edge is revealed in the explicit description of the manner in which Marlborough achieved his temporal gratification (by creating widows and orphans) and the motivations behind his achievement: pride and avarice.

Not only does the poem remind the reader, in the allusion to the Last Judgment in the last line, of the temporal nature of whatever honor the world can afford, it also denies thereby the classical idea of honour and fame as means to achieve immortality. The poem is unusual in Swift's poetry in its explicit use of Christian mythology as an intrinsic part of its argument:

The last loud trump must wake him now:
And, trust me, as the noise grows stronger,
He'd wish to sleep a little longer. (6-9)

The achievements of this man, who for a time could rule the queen as well as command the nation's armies, are reduced, and he becomes just
one more of the "bubbles raised by breath of kings; / Who float upon the tide of state" (26-27). The poem repeatedly and insistently moves away from the specific exemplum of Marlborough's life, not only exposing the vainglory of all would-be heroes but also deflating the panegyrical, traditional, literary approaches to such heroes.

Significantly, Swift chose the occasion of Marlborough's death for his satire. Samuel Johnson, in a line which through a twist of historical irony links Marlborough's woes with those of Swift, subsequently satirized Marlborough's vainglory on the basis of its effects on his life and constitution at the end of his career: "From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow / And Swift expires a driv'ler and a show" (Vanity of Human Wishes 317-18). Swift never mentions the stroke suffered by Marlborough, nor his consequent mental incapacity. Such an omission supports Swift's frequent contention that he chose to satirize only those who pretended to be greater than they were—a pretence from which Marlborough refrained in his declining years. Moreover, this omission indicates that Swift did not choose to satirize mental illness in and of itself. The madness that he attacks is madness which has, in his view, been freely chosen by the madman and which prompts the madman to solicit support for his madness, thereby making him a danger to society and its institutions.

Swift's views on madness seem to have crystallized during the mid 1720s, the same period, probably not coincidentally, during which he began to make plans for founding St. Patrick's hospital. The image of madness becomes both central and explicit in two poems on Richard
Tighe showing him in the company of a well-known mad beggar, Tom Mullinix, who, as presented in the poems, is concerned about the depths to which Tighe (Timothy) has sunk and promises to instruct him in the proper suppression of his madness so that he may not be an entirely destructive force. Interestingly, the trait which is singled out as most representative of madness is the insistent and repeated carping by Timothy against both his enemies and his friends. Timothy’s madness seems a kind of unlimited paranoia, and the problem identified with paranoia in the poem is that it turns even one’s friends and allies against one. The behavior of Timothy, who is compared by Tom to Thersites who "was more abhorred, and scorned by those / With whom he served, than by his foes" (43-44), is not unlike that of a satirist:

So at this booth, which we call Dublin,
Tim thou’re the Punch to stir up trouble in;
You wriggle, fidge, and make a rout,
Put all your brother-puppets out,
Run-on in one perpetual round,
To tease, perplex, disturb, confound,
Intrude with monkey grin, and clatter
To interrupt all serious matter,
Are grown the nuisance of your clan. (127-135)

The variety and energy of madness is here portrayed as the potential informing and motivating spirit of satiric art. Moreover, Timothy claims for himself the role of the satirist-hero. Abandoned by his allies, he must fight on against evil alone:

The public safety I foresee,
Henceforth depends alone on me.
And while this vital breath I blow,
Or from above, or from below,
I’ll sputter, swagger, curse, and rail,
The Tories’ terror, scourge and flail. (71-76)
As we have seen before, Swift's rage is strongest when vented upon traits or defects recognizable in his own character. The madness satirized in this poem is perhaps the madness which Swift sees latent within his own personality and which he feels duty-bound to suppress.

In "Traulus" (1730) Swift makes more clear than ever before the moral dimension of madness and the necessity of its suppression. The dialogue between Tom and Robin proceeds as Tom questions motivation for Lord Allen's attacks upon Swift. Robin repeatedly offers madness as the only defense: "Why Tom, I think the case is plain, / Party and spleen have turned his brain" (13-14). While partially physiologically based (a result of splenetic disposition), Traulus's madness is provoked by the factiousness of politics, an engagement which he has freely chosen. Now, however, through his madness and his politics, he has sunk below the moral standards of even the common madman: "Yet many a wretch in Bedlam knows, / How to distinguish friends from foes" (23-24). This sort of madness is indefensible. Gratitude, throughout Swift's work, is a fundamental virtue (e.g., Gulliver's Travels 60), and here Swift indicates that even the common madman still possesses a tincture of it. But Traulus is so far gone in madness that any compassionate understanding of his problem is futile. In response to Robin's defense of Traulus on grounds of his insanity, Tom replies:

Agreed. And yet, when Towsr snaps
At people's heels, with frothy chaps;
Hangs down his head, and drops his tail,
To say he's mad will not avail:
The neighbour's all cry, 'Shoot him dead,
Hang, drown, or knock him on the head.' (35-40)
The satire, while successfully diminishing all regard or sympathy for Traulus in his madness, still insists that Traulus, like the mad dog, remains dangerous. He is, in his madness, an instrument solely of destruction. Madness and evil, subsequently in the poem, become inextricably linked in the image of possession:

But he's possessed:
Incarnate with a thousand imps,
To work whose ends, his madness pimps.
Who o'er each string and wire preside,
Fill every pipe, each motion guide.
Directing every vice we find
In scripture, to the devil assigned:
Sent from the dark infernal region
In him they lodge, and make him Legion. (70-78)

The madness of Traulus is manifested primarily in uncontrolled speech, and the battle being waged as presented in the poem takes place in the arena of language and truth. Swift's model for madness is clearly enunciated again in the second part of the poem:

Judgement weak, and passion strong,
Always various, always wrong . . .
Talks whate'er comes in his head,
Wishes it were all unsaid . . . (17-22)

Madness, as is usual in Swift's works, results from a lack of exercise of judgment which would, if properly utilized, suppress and contain those mad and wildly various thoughts to which all men are susceptible.

The explicit hero of the poem is Traulus himself. He is compared to mad Ulysses ("The First Part" 30) and his heroic lineage is traced ("The Second Part" 23-41). The implicit hero, of course, is the satirist poet who battles against the menace of Traulus and the inversion of values that makes vice heroic. Thus, "Traulus" is an
ancestor of Swift's subsequent masterpiece "On Poetry: A Rapsody" which ironically glorifies the writers and politicians of the age, implicitly elevating the satirist to the position of the one just man in a world which values falsehood. Images of heroism and madness are absent in "Rapsody" and the consequent subtlety is perhaps the greatest strength of the poem.

Swift's "On Poetry: A Rapsody" does for political poetry what "The Legion Club" does for political activism generally. Although neither the motif of madness nor that of the hero is explicit in the poem, the poem itself is an outgrowth of a series of poems in which both motifs figure, and as in the case of A Modest Proposal an understanding of the implicit mock-heroic at work in "On Poetry: A Rapsody" leads to a clearer perception of the dynamics of the poem.

Three years prior to "Rapsody"'s publication, immediately upon the heels of an imitation of Horace admitting the satirist's impotence ("A Dialogue Between an Eminent Lawyer and Dr. Swift"), Swift published a series of poems addressed to Dr. Delany, occasioned by Delany's own publication of "An Epistle to Lord Carteret" in which Delany seeks the favor of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In this series of poems we find the now-familiar motif of the writer as aspiring hero. Swift consistently asserts that men of both wit and virtue can never prosper in political writing—unless they sacrifice one or both of these characteristics. Swift points to Pope as an example of one who has avoided vice by avoiding the court:

    Hail! happy Pope, whose generous mind,
    Detesting all the statesman kind!
Contemning courts, at courts unseen,
Refused the visits of a queen;
A soul with every virtue fraught
By sages, priests, or poets taught . . .
His heart too great, though fortune little,
To lick a rascal statesman's spittle . . .
("A Libel on the Reverend Dr. Delany" 71-82)

But such a happy coincidence of virtue and poetic success is rare and
exacts a price (Pope's "fortune little"). Far more frequently, the
poem argues, poets do a disservice to both themselves and their art by
seeking advancement through affiliation with the powerful. The would-
be heroic poet, in his quest for advancement in a hellish world, must
align himself with forces of darkness rather than those of light.
The closing of "A Libel" links politicians to Satan, making the
connection to Paradise Lost explicit:

So, to effect his monarch's ends,
From hell a Viceroy devil ascends . . .
For, no imaginable things
Can differ more than God and kings,
And statesmen, by ten thousand odds
Are angels, just as kings are gods. (185-98)

Because politics has created an inverted, mad, and hellish world, a
mockery of God's creation, only dishonesty and vice can prosper.
When hell is placed at the top of creation, as in this poem, there is
an inherent moral danger in trying to work one's way up in the world.

In the next poem in the series, this opposition and inversion
is developed in the familiar device of the heroic genealogy of wit and
its bastard twin, modern criticism ("To Dr. Delany" 115-134).
Similarly, an extended simile between a green recruit in war and a
beginning poet links the world of poetry to the world of heroic
battlefields. In the world of the poem, victory always entails a loss
of innocence and a loss of morality, while moral victory entails a worldly loss:

Why will you aim to be preferred
In wit before the common herd?
And yet, grow mortified and vexed
To pay the penalty annexed. (36-40)

"Preferred" is here deliberately ambiguous. Whether one is preferred for services rendered to politicians or preferred by virtue of one's excellence, one must pay a penalty, because the two are mutually exclusive. To have entered the battle necessitates an eventual compromise, and again Swift proposes a radical compromise, as he has previously indicated in describing his relationship with Carteret:

"I do the most that friendship can / I hate the Viceroy, love the man" ("A Libel" 151-2). In a world where true merit is punished and vice is rewarded, one's satisfactions, as Swift concludes, are paradoxical, almost irrational:

On me, when dunces are satiric
I take it for a panegyric.
'`Hated by fools, and fools to hate',
Be that my motto, and my fate. ("To Dr. Delany" 169-172)

Yet, as "On Poetry: a Rapsody" makes all too clear, Swift's road is not the common one.

"A Rapsody" opens with heroic gestures and heroic imagery; the art of poetry is elevated to heroic stature:

Not empire to the rising sun,
By valour, conduct, fortune won;
Nor highest wisdom in debates
For framing laws to govern states;
Nor skill in sciences profound,
So large to grasp the circle round;
Such heavenly influence require,
As how to strike the muse's lyre. (25-32)
But, as the poem demonstrates in the person of the old sinner, poetry, the gift of heaven, has been subverted into an instrument of hell. The old sinner, in a mad parody of Horace, demonstrates with his realistic but perverse advice the degeneration of poetic heroism.

The old sinner is much like the Modest Proposer and much like the character of Wharton. There is a Hobbesian realism to his advice that makes him attractive. Much of what he has to say about men, poets, and politicians is undeniably true. Swift's poem pits the old sinner's explicitly stated truths against other implicit truths, those of common sense and of nature. Like Dryden in Absalom and Achitophel, Swift is ultimately forced to manufacture a victory through a deus ex machina in the end, as the old sinner's voice lapses: "Caetera desiderantur." The old sinner's arguments cannot be defeated on his own terms, and the satirist must appeal to a higher form of authority, one not acknowledged by his opponent, to achieve his rhetorical victory in the world of the poem. As in the "Ode to Sancroft," the satirist's only means to his small victory is through disengagement.

In this battle between opposing truths, Swift the poet, the virtuous hero, has little power. Throughout the poem, the old sinner is allowed to display the immensity of the power of his truth: it corresponds to reality. At the end of the poem, the old sinner remains powerful; his argument has not been defeated except rhetorically by a discontinuation of the argument. Walpole reigns, and Cibber, the Whig panegyrist, remains the Poet Laureate. Good writers and virtuous men are impotent in the corrupt world of the court:
"Whence Gay was banished in disgrace, / Where Pope will never show his face" (323-24). Gay and Pope, as _viri boni_, act at once as the satiric norms of the poem and as a demonstration of the futility of the poem's satire. Swift's only victory in the poem is a moral one and thus a subtle one. Such a victory is in many ways unsatisfactory because, unfortunately, the old sinner and the denizens of his world are incapable of recognizing a moral victory. Swift's only fruit of victory is another opportunity to laugh in the corner.

In contrast, subtlety is completely lacking in the victory in "A Character, Panegyric, and Description of the Legion Club," but the perils of victory are demonstrated as great. The poem was too volatile for any printer to publish during Swift's lifetime, and several contemporary critics have continued to characterize it as an inartistic failure because of the naked rage which it articulates. The poem breaks out of the Augustan ironic mode expected of Swift by critics and evokes the power of the more raw satiric conventions, both literary and extra-literary, which Robert Elliott has traced in _The Power of Satire_. In fact, the poem is about power and is its own exemplum.

In "The Legion Club" Swift becomes fully engaged with his enemies and counter-attacks ferociously against the mad world, first stripping his satiric victims of power, then metaphorically and rhetorically seizing power and lashing them, and finally literally damning them. The "uncontrollable outburst" described by Harold Williams ("Introduction," _Poems_ xvi) and others is absolutely essential to the production _ex nihilo_ of the satirist's power as
exemplified in this poem. At the same time, as critical condemnation indicates, the appropriation of this power implicates the poet in the corrupt struggle for power in the vicious world that he condemns. He is able to lash out at madness only by becoming mad himself. And again, he can only save himself by retreating from the corrupt and mad world, and thereby relinquishing his power.

Most of the themes of moral madness and heroic villains traced so far in Swift’s poems culminate in "The Legion Club." The madmen whom Swift had previously attacked, Richard Allen and Richard Tigue, are present, and their potential for destruction is emphasized by surrounding them with 298 other madmen. As the title indicates in its reference to Mark 5:9, madness is presented throughout the poem as fundamentally a moral issue and is associated within the poem with the image of possession, the guiding metaphor of the poem being a triple likeness among Irish parliament, Bedlam and Hell. The motif of the descent into hell is lifted directly from the Aeneid (6: 264) adding to the heroic characterization of both the satirist and his victims. Hades has, however, been Christianized, the four levels depicted by Virgil being conflated into one here by Swift. Peter Schakel, in his study of the allusions in Swift’s verse, summarizes the effects of allusion in "The Legion Club:" "In it, Swift’s handling of allusion becomes totally effective, as the poem’s structure, theme, and tone grow out of a combination of biblical and classical sources which give the poem the prophetic spirit he had sought long before in the odes and heroic verse" (The Poetry 157). This prophetic voice and the
transforming power of metaphor are the two weapons seized by the poet Swift in his apparent desperation to vanquish his enemies. And, for a brief moment in the world of the poem, these enemies are indeed vanquished.

The poem opens with the description of the new Irish Parliament House (now the Bank of Ireland) being built on the north side of the College Green "by the prudent architect / Placed against the church direct" (5-6) at the time of the poem's composition. Certainly the most splendid of all Parliamentary buildings at the time, the facade's balanced and symmetrical design must have reminded Swift of that other magnificent statement of neo-classical architectural design, the New Bedlam hospital at Morefields. The correspondence between Bedlam and government assemblies, as the "Digression on Madness" makes clear, was not a new notion for Swift. However, in contrast to the hack in the Tale who wishes to empower the denizens of Bedlam by giving them a role in government, the satirist in "The Legion Club" proposes to strip the parliament of its power by converting parliament house to madhouse:

Let a royal grant be passed,
That the club have a right to dwell
Each within his proper cell;
With a passage left to creep in,
And a hole above for peeping. (42-46)

Thus transformed, the parliament would be stripped of its power and could safely be allowed to continue in its madness:

Let them, when they once get in
Sell the nation for a pin;
While they sit a-picking straws
Let them rave of making laws . . . .
We may, while they strain their throats,
Wipe our arses with their votes. (47-62)
Within the world of the poem, the transformation of the parliament house into Bedlam is made complete as the satirist takes a tour, guided first by Clio and then, upon her being overwhelmed, by the keeper, of whom Swift demands: "Name your heroes, one by one" (136, my emphasis).

Echoes of the Miltonic Satanic hero are evoked by the satirist's mistaking the first inmate for Satan himself. As the keeper introduces the first two "heroes," the poet, having captured the parliament within the metaphor of the poem, erupts in verbal violence, in the tradition of Skelton and Marston as well as that of the Irish Druidical satirists:

Tie them, keeper, in a tether,  
Let them stare and stink together:  
Both are apt to be unruly,  
Lash them daily, lash them duly,  
Though 'tis hopeless to reclaim them,  
Scorpion rods perhaps may tame them. (153-58)

Repetition and alliteration, along with the trochaic tetrameter, create a verse which verges upon incantation as the satirist seizes the vestiges of power remaining in language to overcome his victims.

The satirist, however, is shortly overcome by the sheer multitude of madmen. He calls upon his ally, Hogarth, to satirize them visually while he attacks them verbally. But ultimately the power of satire is limited, and the satirist finds he must retire. Unable to conquer his enemies alone, he regains his composure and hopes that vice truly contains the seeds of its own destruction:

'Keeper, I have seen enough,'  
Taking then a pinch of snuff;  
I concluded, looking round 'em,  
May their god, the devil confound 'em. (239-242)
The sheer destructive power of heroic madness, as embodied here in the members of the Irish parliament, is, as we have seen in the political writings and particularly in Swift's character of Wharton, ultimately beyond the power of satire to reform or even to punish. Within the world of his own creation, the satirist may make his victims squirm, but within the social reality where the real problem multiplies itself, his verbal lashes remain ineffective. All that is left him is to curse his enemies and to place his hope in a greater reality through which they will finally be punished. Although he advances the theory with some uncertainty, Swift here indicates that madness and immorality contain the seeds of their own destruction. Perhaps that is why impersonation seems more often to be effective as a destructive technique than frontal attack.

Yet the satirist, as portrayed by Swift, is driven, perhaps by his own madness, to attack. The performance of the satirist in "The Legion Club" is a clear demonstration of the existential dilemma of the satirist. John Irwin Fisher remarks on the poem: "[Swift becomes] the maddest of those mad whom he encounters . . . . he shows us that when called on to participate in a world that moves horror, pity, indignation, and contempt, good men like himself must be undone if they respond to what they see, and be undone if they do not" (On Swift's Poetry 200-201). The pattern of "The Legion Club is a mature and competent revision of the latent pattern in "Ode to Dr. William Sancroft." The satirist manages both a successful engagement with the enemy and a successful retreat into sanity. Unable simultaneously to
preserve his virtue and sanity and to do battle with the enemy, the
satirist as hero accepts a radical compromise, alternating between one
and the other.

Such an endeavor is psychologically and spiritually perilous.
Engagement with madmen is maddening, and it is particularly so, as we
have seen, when one recognizes that the madness of one's enemies is
also latent within oneself and may easily be both provoked and
released. Thus, along with his characterizations of the madness of
others, Swift's poetry frequently, through his self-portraits in verse,
depicts his own struggle against madness, his own attempts to use the
judgment necessary to suppress the madness within.

**Swift's Self-Portraits in Verse: The Writer as Compromised Hero**

Although many of Swift's poems seem to contain more genuine and
more intense emotion than the prose pieces, the self-portraits in verse
are, for the most part, no less artificial--and consequently resistant
to criticism--than the masks constructed in Swift's prose works.
Louise K. Barnett, who has done the most interesting and incisive
critical work on Swift's poetic self-portraits so far, warns her
readers that "whatever Swift conceived the reality of his character to
be, we must not expect to find it directly expressed in his poetry"
("Fictive Self-Portraits" 90). Such expectations are, however,
difficult to suppress in a contemporary reader conditioned by both
Romantic and modern confessional verse. Such expectations are, in
fact, encouraged by Swift's unusually prolific references to himself in
his poems. Barnett summarizes: "When Swift is not writing about Swift
third person or speaking as Swift first person, he is devising other ways of making himself the subject, most commonly by inventing some other character . . . whose theme is Swift" ("Fictive Self-Portraits" 103). Indeed, this is probably the major reason that Swift’s poetry received any attention at all before the revival of interest in the 1970s. The most common critical observation on the poetry was a statement of the overwhelming sense of the poet’s presence in the poems. Because Swift himself remained of interest, his poems, insofar as they were expected to illuminate his personality, remained of interest.

Clearly, however, contemporary criticism reveals that a reader attempting to find the "real" Swift in the poems is doomed to the madness of casuistry. Rather than trying to penetrate the masks, sorting out genuine from spurious details and thereby attempting to transform the poetic self-portraits from what they are into what they are not, I propose to investigate these self-portraits on an aesthetic basis as artifices. That is, I suggest that the self-portraits are more valuable for their presentation of a norm within the works of Swift than they are for offering explicit information about the historical Swift.

In his criticism of the early odes, John Irwin Fisher has offered a hypothetical explanation of both their failure and their crucial significance in the development of Swift’s poetic art, arguing that the odes fail, ultimately, because of the poet’s increasing awareness of the disparity between their spirit and content and the
poet's real feelings. In his attempts to channel his poetic energy into panegyric and thereby to portray himself as the optimistic panegyrist, Swift perhaps attained a knowledge of himself, his perspective, and his abilities, which would dramatically affect his work when he returned to verse later in his career. Fisher comments of Swift's efforts towards self-knowledge in his poems:

> Viewed symptomatically, self-knowledge is also a peculiar goal in that progress towards it is often marked not by evidences of an increasing wisdom but rather by increasingly obvious instances of prevarication and self-delusion. This is because, as the real tissues of personality begin to surface in a man or in his poems, hypocrisy and semi-conscious evasion of the truth become at once very tempting to him and increasingly obvious to his observers or his readers. (On Swift's Poetry 43)

This seems eminently true and, when applied to Swift, eminently apt, except for the suggestion of self-delusion. As I have argued thus far, Swift's works make manifestly clear a sense of the human psyche as naturally disordered and disposed to madness. If this is true, then the disparity between one's ideal self and one's real self must indeed be great, and the achievement of self-knowledge cannot but be disillusioning. Pride, as Fisher suggests, is certainly a common motive for misrepresenting oneself as better than one really is. However, as we have seen, in many ways such idealizing of the self is, for Swift, not so much an evasion of private truth as a duty prompted by public responsibility.

The poet is, in short, on the horns of the dilemma proposed by the speaker in the "Digression on Madness". Surfaces are more attractive than realities. In his Project for the Advancement of
Religion and the Reformation of Manners, Swift had actively and unironically promoted hypocrisy as a good superior to acquiescence to man's fallen nature as revealed in the depths of self: "Hypocrisy is much more eligible than open Infidelity and Vice" (PW 2: 57).

Hypocrisy is, in effect, sanity's last stronghold, reason's last-ditch resistance against the complete usurpation of its place by passion. In some cases, Swift seems to argue, it is best for men to wear masks, hoping that in time their real faces will grow to fit them. In fact, hypocrisy of a sort is exactly the characteristic of what has been termed "Augustan irony": the contrast between the flickering rage beneath the surface and the smooth, controlled, civilized surface itself.

Hypocrisy is, no doubt, frequently the underlying reason for good behavior, and Swift has shown his awareness of this phenomenon by stripping away the facade of good behavior from his satiric victims in order to reveal the hypocrisy beneath it. At the same time, such good behavior is still preferable to bad behavior openly and profligately practiced (as in the case of Wharton) as a result of discarding hypocritical pretense, just as private madness is preferable to public madness. Hypocrisy, as Swift had argued in his Project, is particularly important in those people who have public functions and whose behavior must therefore be good in spite, perhaps, of their actually debased personalities.

Such is certainly the case with an author who publishes his work. Swift had observed of "free-thinkers" that "if they publish
[their thoughts] to the world, they ought to be answerable for the effects their thoughts produce upon others" (Some Thoughts on Free-Thinking, PW 9: 77). Swift is, then, directly opposed to the self-revelatory modes of Romantics and moderns. The role of the poet is public, and as such the poet has a responsibility to hide as much as possible of the madness within his own breast. That he should do so does not mean that he denies it to himself or even to others, but only that he can find no aesthetic, personal, moral, or social utility in exposing it indiscriminately. In this light, hypocrisy becomes another radical compromise, and rhetorical posing in literature becomes a form of sanity.

Thus, it seems an indifferent matter that Swift's self-portraits in his verse appear to contradict both reality and each other. This is not to say that Swift's work is bereft of self-awareness and consequent self-ridicule—for it certainly is not. But the very concept of self-ridicule implies an idiosyncratically Swiftian self-transcendence, and such an anti-poetic self-transcendence, such a flight to reality, is a demonstration of reason overcoming passion. Hypocrisy, as a proffered solution to the problem of madness, does not deny the complexity of self; rather, it affirms it. Thus Barnett suggests that Swift's psychology is in many ways modern: "Behind the profusion of perspectives on self in Swift's poetry lies a modern sense of the mosaic of human personality, motivation, and perception—an awareness of and interest in the complexity of the self" ("Fictive Self-Portraits" 104).
Known for his love of raillery and back-handed compliments, insults which implied virtues, Swift is also of course a master of praise which implies vice. This is made clear in On Poetry: A Rapsody. That he should be capable of turning these devices back upon himself should not be surprising—although it apparently has not been frequently or generally remarked. As I have suggested, if the The Battle of the Books is an attack upon moderns, it is also a side­ways poke at ancients. If the Tale is a frontal assault upon Grub Street, it is also an occasion for ridicule of a self that enjoyed talking too much. Both pieces are, to an extent, derived from the self-awareness developed by a young poet in the process of his failure in writing odes.

That Swift is not incapable of portraying himself ultimately as vulnerable and perhaps flawed is made evident in a number of poems which I would classify as private, for Swift’s confessional tone is reserved primarily for friends. Poems such as "In Sickness," "Holyhead, September 25, 1727," the poems to Stella, and "Cadenus and Vanessa" project a humble persona. The tone in each of these is intimate, and none of them was intended for publication.

In his public poems, Swift tends more to be both defensive, attempting to redeem himself, and offensive. Still, these public poems are not without self-deprecation. However, as Barnett observes, such instances of self-deprecation are almost always balanced by implicit self-praise and the self-respect implied by the sane voice behind them:

The characteristic structure of such a poem is a dialectical clash between opposing versions of Swift, in which techniques
of indirection work against both positive and negative portraits. Overt ridicule and condemnation of Swift may be countered by indirectly expressed admiration or by subtle discrediting of an anti-Swift speaker, while praise of Swift may be undercut by irony or called into question by flagrant hyperbole. But invariably the movement of the poetic structure is toward the revelation of Swift as a sympathetic figure. ("Fictive Self-Portraiture" 108)

This creation of a sympathetic figure is achieved primarily by means of a movement toward an integrated personality, and in these poems, which offer such presentations of sanity, we can trace those qualities which befit a Christian hero and vir bonus.

Perhaps significantly, the poet’s presence is remarkably absent in the poems between the odes (1693) and 1713, the probable year of composition of "Cadenus and Vanessa," "Horace, Epistle VII, Book I: Imitated and Addressed to the Earl of Oxford," and "The Author upon Himself." Whether his ultimately disappointing experience in London under the reign of Queen Anne led to a period of unprecedented introspection is a matter for biographers. Certainly, however, his disappointment becomes a theme that is sounded consistently for the next twenty years in poems which present a portrait of his public self. And his disappointment might have provided the stimulus for the exploration of the different and incongruous perspectives which he would explore and sometimes attempt to reconcile in subsequent self-portraits: his idealized self and his self-expectations, his real self, and his self as perceived by others.

Consistently, Swift portrays himself both as a misfit and a virtuous man, the two being oddly congruous because of the mad world in
which he finds himself. In "Cadenus and Vanessa," Cadenus is in many ways noble, and thus suitable to Vanessa:

Cadenus is a subject fit,
Grown old in politics and wit;
Caressed by ministers of state,
Of half mankind the dread and hate. (502-505)

However, exactly because of his pursuit of political and literary virtue, Cadenus is not a fit match for Vanessa:


But time, and books, and state affairs,
Had spoiled his fashionable airs;
He now could praise, esteem, approve,
But understood not what was love. (544-47)

The shortcoming here is not a virtue or a blessing in disguise; it is a legitimate defect and is treated by the poem as such. However, the source of the defect is the character's noble pursuits of wisdom and justice, and so it may be excused even if it may not be overlooked.

What is most characteristic of all of Swift's self-portraits, evident in the character of Cadenus, is the character's finding favor without seeking it. Typically, the character of Swift as portrayed by Swift is that of a man of moderate virtue content to live in quiet and surprised (and generally chagrined) by the favor he receives from the great, whether Vanessa, Harley, Lady Carteret, or Pope. The conflict between a desire for retreat and retirement and an irresistible movement toward engagement permeates Swift's self-portraits. This is exactly the case in Swift's imitation of Horace's Seventh Epistle, in which his rise to fame and favor, at the hands of Harley, is presented as a mildly malicious joke upon him by his better, so that the country
parson Swift in the closing of the poem complains almost bitterly to his patron:

>'Your raillery is misapplied:
Experience I have dearly bought,
You know I am not worth a groat:
But it's a folly to contest,
When you resolve to have your jest;
And since you now have done your worst,
Pray leave me where you found me first.' (132-39)

Swift is here the reluctant hero, powerless over his own destiny, discomfited by his proximity to the great, and ultimately unwilling to remain in public life or favor for any longer than he must. At the outset of the poem, he manages an amusingly humble self-portrait, drawn from the point of view of Harley observing him:

The priest was pretty well in case,
And showed some humour in his face;
Looked with an easy, careless mien,
A perfect stranger to the spleen;
Of size that might a pulpit fill,
But more inclining to sit still. (7-12)

In and of himself, then, Swift is presented as unthreatening, comfortable, humorous, and careless. Swift's characterization of himself as "a perfect stranger to the spleen" is obviously ironic, a good joke at his own expense, and as such a fine complement to a generally humble self-portrait.

As the poem progresses, Harley inquires as to the identity of the parson and discovers Swift's reputation. Clearly, self and reputed self are being kept distinct in this self-presentation. As in his portraits of other true virtuous heroes, Swift's reputation, as presented here, depends as much upon his enemies as upon his friends:
A clergyman of special note,
For shunning those of his own coat;
Which made his brethren of the gown
Take care betimes to run him down . . .
In state opinions a la mode,
He hated Wharton like a toad;
Had given the faction many a wound,
And libelled all the Junta round;
Kept company with men of wit,
Who often fathered what he writ. (27-40)

Again, the characterization is moderate and balanced. He is implicitly praised in the passage, but he is able, as the controlling poet, to pass off the praise as the opinion of others, avoiding the imputation of conceit. Upon being summoned by Harley, the Swift of the poem turns bumpkin, presenting the presumed reality which has been masked by public reputation. Having refused to meet with Harley, believing the request a jest, Swift, upon being summoned a second time, appears very conscious of his being out of his proper sphere:

    Swift, who could neither fly nor hide,
    Came sneaking to the chariot side,
    And offered many a lame excuse:
    He never meant the least abuse--
    'My Lord—the honour you designed--
    Extremely proud—but I had dined--
    I'm sure I never should neglect--
    No man alive has more respect . . . .' (63-70)

The poet's self-abasement is comically clear and comically effective.

In the Horatian satires of this period, Swift apparently learned to moderate and balance his presentation of himself. Barnett comments and explains the efficacy of such self-presentations:

    Mocked [in the context of the poems] by people who are either his social superiors . . . or by the public, whose power proceeds from its size and anonymity, Swift is shown in ridiculous postures. This portrayal of self functions to disarm the powerful. Operating as a subtext beneath the level of professed submission and inferiority is the poet's
ridiculing of those who make sport of his fictive self within the poem and hold power over him in reality. (Swift's Poetic Worlds 67)

That is, the poet seizes the power of poetry and rhetoric, and in a world of his own making, he is able to hold momentary power (as we saw in "The Legion Club") over those who are, in reality, predominant in every way. The poet is able to do this even while presenting himself as a man without power.

Such is particularly the case in Swift's next experiment with self-presentation, "The Author upon Himself," another Horatian imitation. In spite of the title, the poem is written throughout from a third person perspective. From Horace, Swift is still learning the efficacy of a humble detached voice, though this poem refrains from outright self-mockery, and Swift emphasizes more than Horace the theme of retirement. Use of the third person tends to moderate the tone of the poem, offering the reader an understated and well-modulated pseudo-objective account of Swift's reluctant involvement in party politics and his subsequent withdrawal after his party's fall from power.

In her only misreading of a poem by Swift, Nora Crow Jaffe complains of "The Author Upon Himself" that

Swift is clearly not in control of the personality he presents. He wants to elicit pity and admiration, but he does not first take the precaution of convincing the reader that he deserves these responses, as a likable moderate man impelled to violence only by the intolerable vice of powerful criminals. (The Poet Swift 12)

Jaffe's reading of violence into this poem is nowhere supported by the poem itself. The iambic pentameter, rare in Swift's poetry, is relatively sedate in comparison to his usual octosyllabics, and the
portrait of Swift throughout is of a man tossed by fate and faction, but relatively powerless in and of himself.

Swift, the character, remains generally passive throughout the poem, from the introductory lines (not unlike the sympathetic opening of Pope's "Epistle to Arbuthnot") in which Swift is presented as "by an old red-pate, murdering hag pursued" without any apparent warrant. Indeed, as the second section of the poem observes, again in a moderate and non-biting ironic style, the fault of the poet which has roused the ire of his enemies is actually an excess of virtue: "He moved, and bowed, and talked with too much grace; / Nor showed the parson in his gait or face" (13-14). There is of course an irony here, for those who knew Swift himself, as there is in the patently false claim that he "despised luxurious wines" (16). But these falsehoods serve a double function of reinforcing the reader's sense of a distant third person speaker and the sense of Swift's capacity to mock himself.

At the core of Swift's difficulties, as presented by the poem, is his "sin of wit, no venial crime" (9) which, in spite of the advice of his friends, "he turns to politics" (26). His wit is his only claim to power, and it is the threat of this potential power which creates his enemies. Without it, he would be inconsequential. In fact, the power of the poet, as expressed in the poem, is no more than extrapolation; it is never actually demonstrated, nor is it openly claimed either by the third person speaker or by the character of Swift. Instead, the speaker can only describe apparent signs of power, which are no more than signs of personal favor:
By Harley Swift invited comes to court.
In favour grows with ministers of state;
Admitted private, when superiors wait:
And, Harley, not ashamed his choice to own,
Takes him to Windsor in his coach, alone.
At Windsor Swift no sooner can appear,
But, St John comes and whispers in his ear;
The waiters stand in ranks; the yeomen cry,
'Make room', as if a duke were passing by. (28-36)

These are, indeed, as the Journal to Stella attests, circumstances of
which Swift was quite proud—but they are not indications of power (for
he had none) nor are they presented as such.

Instead, these are the circumstances which are converted into
power only by the envious imaginations of outsiders:

Now Finch alarms the Lords; he hears for certain,
This dangerous priest is got behind the curtain:
Finch, famed for tedious elocution, proves
That Swift oils many a spring which Harley moves. (37-40)

Their own envy and lust for power turn Swift’s enemies into monsters,
and, as in the opening passage, the character of Swift is presented
more by means of the characterization of his enemies than by the direct
presentation of his natural virtues. His primary virtue in the latter
half of the poem is his refusal to flee when the Scots induce the Queen
to put a price on his head. As in the character of Sancroft,
the poet’s passivity is more pronounced than his power or his activity.

The conclusion quietly portrays him as constant in the closing
days of the alliance between Harley and Bolingbroke:

By faction tired, with grief he waits a while,
His great contending friends to reconcile.
Performs what friendship, justice, truth require:
What could he more, but decently retire? (71-74)
Again, his activity is minimal, and his power is obviously inadequate. Though serving the virtues of "friendship, justice, truth," he serves them minimally, doing only apparently what they "require." He is not grandly heroic; he is, like other viri boni we have seen in the poems, mildly heroic.

In each of these first three self-portraits, then, Swift presents himself as a man who is called from his natural and proper element into a world which flatters him but in which, ultimately, he does not belong. In the Horatian imitations, the price to be paid for such honor is clearly enunciated. Though the tone in each of the poems is mildly comic, the last two poems demonstrate the tragedy which is latent in the comedy. The Swiftian hero—like the vir bonus—like the satirist, can never prosper for long, if he is lucky enough to prosper at all. His enemies are too great and his power is consistently limited by his sanity, his humility, and his virtue. By his very nature, the Christian hero is doomed to forfeit worldly success.

This theme of the reluctant and humble hero is sounded repeatedly in subsequent self-portraits. A second imitation, simply titled "Horace, Lib 2, Sat. 6," recounts again both the poet's pleasure and his discomfiture in his proximity to the great, the envy he encounters from others, and finally his yearning for retirement and his awareness of the cost he pays for such attention:

Thus, in a sea of folly tossed,
My choicest hours of life are lost;
Yet always wishing to retreat;
Oh, could I see my country seat?
There leaning near a gentle brook,
Sleep, or peruse some ancient book;
And there in sweet oblivion drown
Those cares that haunt a court and town. (105-112)

The hero seeks retirement rather than power and prestige, but when
called upon to defend virtue, he does so. In his contribution to the
"happy man" tradition in another Horatian imitation, Swift writes to
William King:

Him for an happy man I own,
Whose fortune is not overgrown;
And happy he, who wisely knows
To use the gifts, that heaven bestows;
Or, if it please, the powers divine,
Can suffer want, and not repine.
The man, who infamy to shun,
Into the arms of death would run,
That man is ready to defend
With life his country, or his friend.
("Part of the Ninth Ode of the Fourth Book of Horace" 15-24)

In point of fact, neither the Swift of the poems nor Swift himself
could live up to most of the characteristics specified in the closing
of this poem. That he used his gifts is undeniable. However, that he
was not content with his station is equally clear. And that he
actively sought to flee on two occasions when he felt his life might be
threatened by the government is equally apparent in any of his
biographies. Swift rarely claimed to be happy either. Nevertheless,
his admiration for this ideal is ultimately unquestionable, whether or
not he personally could attain it.

These mild heroes are but the predecessors of the Drapier. In
the poetry written after the Wood controversy, the figure of the
Drapier merges with the character of Swift in the self-portraits in
verse. In "To Dean Swift," Swift again adapts a third person speaker
(his landlord, Sir Arthur Acheson) to paint a pseudo-objective self-portrait, reiterating his theme of virtue in retirement and obscurity:

Good cause have I to sing and vapour,
For I am landlord to the Drapier:
He, that of every ear's the charmer,
Now condescends to be my farmer. (1-4)

Like those before it, this poem is characterized by Horatian balance and moderation. Every elevation of the poet is followed by a diminution. Just as in the poem to King the happy man is seen first as defender of country but then diminished to the defender of friends, so here the poet as charmer is rapidly redrawn into the figure of the poet as farmer.

Eventually Swift's bitterness does indeed break through the smooth veneer of the Horatian pose, but his indignation continues to be modulated with the comic. Thus, in "The Revolution at Market Hill," a private poem and a direct contrast to "To Dean Swift," Swift speaks in his own voice and vents his dissatisfaction with his having to condescend to be a farmer. The poem presents the knight/landlord (Acheson), Swift, and the Spaniard (Col. Harry Leslie) as representative proof of the injustice of the way of the world:

O Fortune, 'tis a scandal for thee
To smile on those who are least worthy.
Weigh but the merits of the three,
His slaves have ten times more than he. (25-28)

In direct address to Acheson, the poem becomes strident:

You never ventured to be hanged.
How dare you treat your betters thus?
Are you to be compared to us? (40-42)
But the stridency of these lines, no matter how heartfelt, is diminished by the comedy of the Lilliputian pettiness of the world of the poem, in which the Dean and Spaniard's plot to overthrow the knight and take over the management of the larder and tea chest is likened mock-heroically to the events of 1688. The rage about unrewarded merit is real, but the poem turns the comedy against it, belittling it and implicitly belittling the poet himself for his presumptuousness to claim virtue and his further presumptuousness in expecting his purported virtue to be rewarded. When Swift's pose of humility breaks down, he counters the effect by humiliating himself.

Criticism of Swift's most famous self-portrait, "Verses on the Death of Dr Swift, D.S.P.D.," has long focused upon just such an apparent breakdown in humility. Even Swift's friends, Pope and William King, whom he had charged with correcting and publishing the poem in London, apparently believing that Swift had overstepped the bounds of modesty, excised much of the praise in the eulogy, as well as eliminated passages which they feared would provoke political retaliation. Swift obviously disagreed with their judgment and published the poem in its entirety in Dublin. Though no one has used Swift's definition of madness against him in this case, his seeming lack of judgment and his perceived readiness in this poem to say whatever comes into his head have turned many a reader and critic against him.

The course of criticism in the twentieth century has produced an interesting dialectic about the poem's purported dialectic.
Middleton Murray first edited and published the poem, condemning it for its apparent unreined pride and passion (Jonathan Swift). Maurice Johnson, in answer, proposed that the poem implicitly pointed toward a truth somewhere between the self-condemnation and self-praise which are offered explicitly (The Sin of Wit). Barry Slepián, pointing to the undeniable irony of certain lines in the eulogy (for example, "But what he writ was all his own," which Swift steals from Denham), concludes that the entire eulogy is meant as ironic ("The Ironic Intention"). Marshall Waingrow has asserted, instead, that the eulogy is a version of the standard apologia of the satirist ("Verses"), a point which Arthur H. Scouten and Robert D. Hume wish to moderate even further, claiming instead a "half-genuine [and consequently comic] apologia" ("Pope and Swift"). Peter Schakel has recently added an interesting perspective on the poem by hunting down allusions ("The Politics of Opposition," and The Poetry), but his reading over-politicizes the poem.

Just as the "Digression on Madness" yields a variety of differing and frequently wrongheaded interpretations, so "Verses" seems susceptible to wildly divergent readings. "Verses," like the "Digression," is an olio of truth and falsehood, logical conclusions and unsupportable premises. Like the "Digression," "Verses" is curiously capable of disturbing readers. And, as I have suggested in the case of the "Digression," the seekers of moderation in "Verses" are those most frustrated, because they are not prepared for the radical compromise which underlies the poem. In the "Digression,"
the compromise was with madness. In "Verses," the compromise is with death, for even as the poet longs for an honorable reputation after death, he demonstrates the futility of such longing.

With the maxim of La Rochefoucauld, the poem's proem opens by focusing upon the vanity of man, the egocentricity of his physical, mental, moral, and emotional universe. The poem itself is, of course, but another instance of a man's effort to distinguish himself and to preserve his distinction after death. Thus, it appears to prove its own point and the poet's ultimate failure, which Swift underlines for the reader with his ironic falsehoods, demonstrates the vanity of such vanity.

In the development of the maxim by La Rochefoucauld, Swift turns for an example to the familiar problem of how to elevate oneself in a crowd, implicating himself in the vanity of mankind by using the first person:

I love my friend as well as you,  
But would not have him stop my view;  
Then let me have the higher post;  
I ask but for an inch at most. (17-20)

The rhetoric of this self-mockery is, I think, subtle. As elsewhere, in Swift's poetry, he mocks himself, but even as he does so he implicitly commends his honesty and humility in doing so. Like La Rochefoucauld's maxim, the emotional charge of his self-mockery lies more in the boldness of its public admission than in its truth. Samuel Johnson bluntly condemns such back-handed self-flattery: "Then, all censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to show how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and
all the reproach of falsehood" (Boswell 972). This is, I think, but half true or but true half of the time. In the case of a Colley Cibber, who seems habitually to be confessing his weaknesses in his memoirs, the rhetorical ploy of self-mockery seems weak indeed. In Swift's poems, however, the mockery doesn't seem half so habitual—and as in the case of the character of Gulliver, as we shall see, in Swift's presentation of the satirist satirized, there is at least as much bitterness as implicit self-commendation.

That the self-mockery does not come easily and that the poet must struggle toward the truth about himself is apparent in the second example of envy, which he presents in the second person. In the cases of heroes, Swift asks: "Rather than thus be overtopped, / Would you not wish his laurels cropped?" (25-26). As we have seen, Swift himself has repeatedly set out to crop such laurels. Similarly, in the subsequent example, that of the envious poet, the poet Swift distances himself even further from the vice he explains by using third person, as if in these two examples the flaws are too uncomfortable for him to acknowledge in himself. He has made his one initial confession, thereby initiating the risk-taking which will continue in his implicit dialogue with his reader. He subsequently forces his readers to decide to take a risk in joining him in self-criticism. Having established them as equal partners in crime, Swift can then move into further self-revelation: "In Pope, I cannot read a line, / But with a sigh, I wish it mine . . ." (47-48), and ultimately, at the end of the proem:
To all my foes, dear fortune, send
Thy gifts, but never to my friend:

I tamely can endure the first,
But, this with envy makes me burst. (67-70)

By this point, however, the dirty little secret of vanity which the poet shares with the reader has become outrageously funny, and Swift's hyperbolic confession of the absolute irrationality of envy is attractively comic in spite of being grotesque.

What follows the proem is an extended exemplum of the vanity of vanity. In a little remarked article ("Transformations of Swift"), Philip Anderson has demonstrated that in the course of the poem, the truth of the historical Swift is subject to gradual deterioration at the hands of time and culture. In the initial sections of the proem, we have Swift speaking to us first hand. Subsequently, we see him deteriorating in health and acumen: "His fire is out, his wit decayed" (101). As the poem describes the Dean's deterioration, the accounts given are those of friends, not of the Dean himself. Upon his death, the accounts move from his intimates to his acquaintances. Subsequently, the time shifts to a year later, and to the milieu of literary fashion. And finally, in the eulogy, the poem arrives at a speaker, someone who never knew Swift, who confesses to having no literary insights, holding forth to his Tory companions, long out of power, in the not-so-reputable Rose Tavern. Although some of the virtues and accomplishments of Swift as recounted by the eulogist are both true and prized by the real Swift, both the setting and the speaker diminish those accomplishments. For a twentieth-century
analogy, we might consider putting the eulogy into the mouth of Larry Slade, the syndicalist-anarchist who quotes Horace Walpole in Harry Hope’s bar in O’Neill’s *The Iceman Cometh*. The ideals embodied in the speech are overwhelmed by the reality of the speechmaker.

Moreover, as he is idealized in the course of the poem, Swift the man is rendered powerless. The virtue of Swift as presented in the poem is compromised as well by the discrepancies between the real Swift and the idealized one. As Slepian points out, several lines of apparent self-praise are overtly comic because of the outrageousness of the discrepancy: "He lashed the vice but spared the name" (464). W. B. Carnochan points out that this line "is Swift’s assent to an ideal, not so much Horatian in this case as simply Christian. Measured against the ideal, Swift’s satire is less than perfect, but no more so than frail nature usually demands" (Lemuel Gulliver’s Mirror for Man 49). So too, "Fair Liberty" should have been "all his cry," but as we have seen, both Swift’s feelings and his words during his involvement in the Wood controversy were mixed. In the idealized world of the poem, then, even as in his life, once again reality overwhelms idealism, and Swift forces his readers into settling for what we’ve got. In the course of the poem, Swift is subjected to the same degeneration that the father’s will suffers in the *Tale*. He is patched up and mended, sometimes with truth and sometimes with falsehood, to suit the times and to suit the vanity of those doing the patching. Ultimately, like the father’s will, he becomes an empty sign, an emblem in which men like the Rose Tavern eulogist invest their own
meanings. As such he may be glorified, but he is also rendered absolutely impotent. Like the twentieth century critic, who glibly mouths Swift's pious exhortations against pride, the eulogist glibly defends Swift's satire, demonstrating his own immunity to it as a result of time and distance. As the Tale-teller implied, the number of proselytes gathered by a message is in direct proportion to the amount of meaning lost from the original.

The ultimate futility of Swift's endeavors, however, is signaled even before the poem arrives at the Rose Tavern, when Lintot disparages Swift's works and tries to sell the orations of Henley (a madman) and the tracts of Woolston. Swift, the true hero, is supplanted by Woolston, who, in every way matches the description of the heroic villain as I have previously described him:

He doth an honour to his gown,
By bravely running priestcraft down:
He shows, as sure as God's in Gloucester
That Jesus was a grand impostor:
That all his miracles were cheats,
Performed as jugglers do their feats. (291-96)

Thus, once again Swift's real praise for himself, although implicit rather than explicit, is that he was a fighter for a lost cause. As Swiftian vir bonus, he becomes heroic in his defeat rather than in his victory. And as he becomes the vir bonus, he simultaneously is stripped of power. He is invested with heroic meaning only when he has been silenced and rendered impotent by death.

For the twentieth-century reader, the most admirable quality, perhaps, in Swift's heroism as presented in his poetry appears to be a result of the struggle within himself between the conflicting urges
to retirement and to engagement. The heights of his heroism are defined by the heights of the madness of those opponents who provoke his engagement. The basis of his heroism, better understood today perhaps than in his own time, is its futility and consequent tragedy. And this example of his heroism is, as an implicitly proposed norm, an essential component of his satirical work. As John Irwin Fischer notes, "Watching him struggle against the temptation to reduce the world to the shape of his own anger, envy, pride, and fear, we learn not only to scorn the particular follies and vices that move his fury, but also to recognize how complex the task of virtuous behavior really is" (On Swift’s Poetry 199). This, perhaps, is the essential difference between Swift and Pope, with the exception of The Dunciad. Pope reduces his victims (as in his famous lines against Lord Hervey) and renders them impotent. Swift always grants the power of his enemies, and so allows his readers a glimpse of the anguish and despair he feels. His most potent self-portrait, his epitaph, underscores his sense of his own heroism, noting that the most severe pain caused by his saeva indignatio was felt not by his enemies but within his own breast.
CHAPTER SIX

"I HAVE NOW DONE WITH ALL SUCH VISIONARY SCHEMES FOREVER":  

GULLIVER’S TRAVELS

Swift’s most famous and most disturbing flight to reality, the Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, popularly called Gulliver’s Travels, employs the familiar satirical ploy of leaving home in order to find home, as Gulliver leaves England and uncannily discovers in his voyages far from his native land a variety of disturbing perspectives upon the events and controversies of England from 1699 to 1715. Like much of the narrative fiction of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the Travels defies simple formalistic or generic description, being part travel book, part novel, part romance, part epic, and part allegory. Although the work is wholly satirical, it is so in an almost non-formalistic sense, being a Menippean satire, a "form" characterized by variety and irregularity more than by predictable order. In contrast to its most obvious counterpart, Robinson Crusoe, which romanticizes reality, the Travels uses fantasy to highlight aspects of the English and human conditions which it emphasizes as being both real and intolerable. The voice of Gulliver, the vehicle for the satire’s stripping away of pretension and delusion, though endearingly blunt and disingenuous at the outset,
becomes disturbingly strident at the conclusion. As a key to the satire, and a problematical one at that, Gulliver has been the focus of much critical investigation and analysis.

Most critics and readers have now agreed to accept Gulliver's inconsistency, and few, if any, continue to expect of him the wholeness and developmental consistency of a character in a novel. Attempted explanations for Gulliver's lacking in Part 1 the animosity towards mankind exhibited at the end of Part 4 have invariably been overly contrived and unconvincing. While the character of Gulliver does act as a superficial unifying thread for the work, Gulliver himself remains primarily passive throughout the work, and the narrative interest derives from what happens to Gulliver rather than what Gulliver does. Character development, *per se*, is sporadic and discontinuous.

Rather than a character, Gulliver has now been properly categorized and generally accepted as a "satiric device." As such, his primary importance is to function as the eyes, ears, and very occasionally the analytic intelligence of the reader. As such, he must remain flexible, acting at one time as the representative of virtue who explores vice and folly, and at other times as the embodiment of folly and viciousness being exposed by virtue (Gilbert 98). To date, Claude Rawson has offered the most effective and useful description of the characteristics of the curious satirical device which Swift has made of Gulliver:

> The emphasis is so preponderantly on what can be shown through him (including what he says and thinks) rather than on his person in its own right, that we are never allowed to accustom ourselves to him as a real personality despite all the
rudimentary local colour about his early career, family life, and professional doings. Nor is Gulliver sufficiently independent from Swift: he is not identified with Swift, nor even similar to him, but Swift's presence behind him is always too close to ignore. This is not because Swift approves or disapproves of what Gulliver says at any given time, but because Swift is always saying something through it. (Gulliver and the Gentle Reader 27-28)

Consequently, Gulliver as fictional entity, is irreparably fragmented, and attempts at demonstrating strict psychological coherence or continuity from his beginning the first voyage to his leavetaking at the end of the fourth are hazardous.

Still, critical identification of Gulliver as a satiric device has tended to be overly absolute. At any given moment during the narrative, Gulliver does possess and exhibit personality. Citing Gulliver as a satiric device does not allow the reader or critic to dismiss Gulliver's moods, reactions, or states of mind as arbitrary and meaningless. Thus, when Charles Peake, addressing a crucial critical question, the interpretation of Gulliver's closing harangue and his general behavior upon his final return to England, dismisses the possibility of Gulliver's madness by declaring that a satiric device, by definition, cannot go mad, he oversimplifies the case, confusing the fiction with the form, and inadvertently destroys entirely the utility of the concept of Gulliver as satiric device (Peake, "Unity" 190). A satiric device cannot, obviously, go mad, any more than a symbol, simile, or an alliteration can go mad. However, the personality of Gulliver, as presented at any given moment during the course of the work, certainly must have ascertainable characteristics, though they may not form a perfectly consistent psychological portrait as the work
progresses. It is as possible at any given moment during the work for Gulliver to go mad as to be angry or to be proud or to whinny like a horse. A satiric device may not be susceptible to all the expectations which a contemporary reader of novels might expect from a character, but a satiric device may contain a rudimentary personality susceptible to and worthy of explication.

Gulliver seems to begin the work as a sort of tabula rasa, developing a sense of the world and a sense of himself during the course of the four voyages, which culminate in his tirade at the end of the fourth book. This seeming progression is primarily the reflection and effect of his experience and his exposure to the worlds he visits, and it is to these that we must look for the primary satirical, allegorical, and humorous content of the work. The primary unity of the work may be found in the progressively more sharply focused satire, starting with satire predominantly physical and social and moving to a satire predominantly focused upon the psychological, the intellectual, and the moral.

Nevertheless, Gulliver himself is important, providing a secondary unity to the work, for the reader inevitably establishes a bond of some sort of identification with him. As the satire focuses more upon psychological, intellectual, and moral problems, the reader's attention must focus increasingly upon Gulliver. The crux of the reader's problem is the amount of sympathy and identification with which to approach him, and this depends of course upon what we are to make of his personality at any given time in his travels.
Everett Zimmerman has pointed to the importance of the interplay between Gulliver and his travels: "The story of Gulliver's misunderstanding of himself is superimposed on the story of his understanding of mankind. Following the patterns of travel book and utopia, Gulliver defines mankind's monstrousness. But the autobiographical elements of his book implicate him in the evil that he sees" (Swift's Narrative Fictions 138). Gulliver's "misunderstanding of himself" constitutes a narrative fact crucial to any interpretation of the last book and consequently of the satire as a whole. Similarly, in Parts 1 and 2, an appreciation of Gulliver's initial condition of being well-deceived is essential to an understanding of the satire and subsequently to an understanding of his dramatically altered perspective and perceptions. The primary satiric device of the work is, after all, the careful juxtaposition of a variety of contradictory and therefore mutually revealing perspectives for which Gulliver serves as the medium: microscopic, macroscopic, extraverted, and introspective. The meaning of the work derives from these contrasts, which are revealed through Gulliver but which remain largely unexplored by explicit text.

As with much satire, most of the weight of the intuited intention of Gulliver's Travels rests upon the ancient theme of nosce te ipsum, and in this work it is Gulliver whose self-knowledge is most consistently tested. The fundamental question raised by the work is "What is man?" and Gulliver's Travels poses the question in the form of "What is Gulliver?" At the time of the composition of the Travels,
the question of the nature of man remained primarily the province of
religion. Neither Newtonian science nor Lockeian psychology was able
to offer a satisfactory definition except based upon nominal rather
than real essences (Carnochan, *Lemuel Gulliver's Mirror for Man* 9-11).
Consequently, the *Travels*, in which theology is conspicuous primarily
by its absence, offers more contrasts and contradictions than answers.

Surprisingly perhaps, Swift the Anglican Dean makes no use
whatever of Christian theology in order to address the question. As we
have seen repeatedly, in *The Modest Proposal*, "On Poetry: A Rapsody,"
and other works, Swift meets his enemies on their own ground.
Christian answers to the questions he broaches may be implicitly
offered (as in the conclusion to "The Legion Club"), but they are not
made part of the warp and weave of his works. Thus, a study like
L. J. Morrissey's *The Progress of Gulliver*, which correlates the dates
given in the course of Gulliver's travels to the text of *A Book of
Common Prayer*, may offer insights into influences upon Swift in his
writing but certainly does not provide a key to reading or
interpretation of what is in the text.

In his study of Swift's use of the Bible, Charles Beaumont reveals
that there are no explicit Biblical allusions whatsoever in the work
(53). Unlike Crusoe, Gulliver never demonstrates his religion. True,
he begs leave not to trample the crucifix, but in light of his general
attitudes towards life and the cosmos, this seems more a matter of good
form combined with superstition than of piety. Gulliver swears
repeatedly by the sun and the moon. He apparently believes, if his
words are any indication, in destiny or fate rather than Providence, and in spite of his various calamities he is never impelled to prayer. Implicitly, this may point to Gulliver as a representative of man without religion, but little is actually made of this explicitly. Philip Pinkus has suggested that Gulliver's final tragedy can only be explained in theological terms: "To know man's corruption without knowing God is to be in despair, as Gulliver is in despair" (Swift's Vision of Evil 2: 107), and Pinkus argues that God is the implicit answer to the paradox of Gulliver's Travels. True enough, but in the text the question and the paradox are never broached in theological terms. And Pinkus's solution seems as overly optimistic as it is extra-textual. Instead, the emphasis throughout the Travels is upon the exploration of a purely secular view of the world, as might befit an author who subsequently wrote: "I have long given up all hopes of Church or Christianity" (Lettres to Ford 168). As D. Nichol Smith has remarked, "The man who despairs of Christianity is probably a Christian" (32), and Swift, one suspects, continued to hope for personal salvation through his faith, but there is no evidence at the end of his career that he believed that the Church or Christianity would have any further salutary effect upon society. And the questions and paradoxes raised by Gulliver's Travels pertain not to salvation but to mundane humanity, civilization, and society.

While neglecting Christian mythology, Gulliver's Travels does, however, make loose use of the epic tradition. Like the epic, and like the early novel, Gulliver's Travels seems to explore primarily the
relationship between an individual and his society. Angus Ross has in fact argued that this exploration is the central theme of the Travels: "No ideal society is anywhere presented, but the contrast between different groups is used to discuss or suggest a way of looking at society itself as a controlling force on human nature, and a corruption of that nature" ("The Social Circumstances" 226).

Like an epic hero, Gulliver embodies some of the cultural virtues of his time, and his work, as Michael Seidel points out, is appropriate to his age as an "epic of territorial exploration and expansion in unknown continents and seas of the world" (212). Like the typical Swiftian heroic protagonist, Gulliver is diminished in his heroic stature from that of his predecessors. In the literary continuum, Gulliver, forever characterized as the middle man, is somewhere midway between Odysseus and Leopold Bloom. Jenny Mezciems has explored the way in which Swift makes the constant implicit allusion to Odysseus work:

If Gulliver reminds us of Odysseus in situations where the hero is at his most vulnerable or at his most anxious to make his way home, the purpose of the reminder can only be to make us think in larger terms of the differences between the two figures. Gulliver is not the kind of satiric butt that can bear direct contrast with heroic figures such as we find in Pope's Dunciad. Swift reserves such treatment for his "True Criticks" and other small fry, while Gulliver is quite another matter. It is by means of the barriers between him and a range of figures at various imprecisely measured distances from him, this penumbra of shadowy allusions which causes his silhouette to fade in and out of an uncertain outline, that Swift obliges us to take Gulliver so seriously, as seriously as he does himself. (205)

Throughout the work, Gulliver acts in the heroic and mock-heroic traditions. He is the product both of a two-thousand-year-old
tradition of Western literature and of Swift's thirty-year career of experimentation with the distortion and the reduction of the heroic figure. While Gulliver must not be identified with Swift without qualification, his lineage in Swift's other satiric characters and speakers is easily traceable, for Swift's concerns and criticisms remain largely unchanged. Although Gulliver is not a Christian hero, per se, he comes to resemble Swift's other viri boni as well as Swift's self-portraits in the ultimately self-destructive dialectic between his restlessness, which impels him toward exploration of and engagement with the world, and his repeated yearnings for retreat. His engagement and exploration produce an understanding (or misunderstanding) of the world which has at its heart the assumption of a fundamentally mad and corrupt human nature. Gulliver's travels lead him repeatedly to a loss of his own identity, a subsequent cognitive reorganization and concomitant re-construction of his world, and finally a violent rage which induces his retreat to the stables. In his engagement with the world and in his ultimate lapse into madness, Gulliver is consistent with the Swiftian heroes who preceded him.

Part 1: "A Voyage to Lilliput"

In Part 1, the pattern is established which will subsequently be followed in each book. Gulliver is faced from the outset by the dilemma posed by his restlessness and desire to explore the world and his common sense which repeatedly tells him that he is best off at home. His voyage exposes him to a world which is at first marvelous but is subsequently revealed as grotesque. This revelation results in
a disorientation, a loss of identity, a subsequent need for a reconstructed sense of reality, and a retreat to the homeland.

From the outset of Part 1, Gulliver is established as a descendant of the epic hero, even as the degeneration of the breed is emphasized. Gulliver's function as satiric device is legitimized even as his function as cultural hero is established. Like Odysseus, Gulliver is characterized by his curiosity, but his intelligence is less keen than his ancestor's. Moreover, throughout the first half of the work, Gulliver seems, although incessantly curious about the world, unable to apply to himself any of what he learns.

Gulliver, as modern hero, unlike the ancient who represented the epitome of his culture's virtues, is a representative of the bourgeoisie and is the epitome of middleness. Gulliver is the middle son of a middle-class family from the middle of England. Like the Tale-teller, his primary claim to heroic stature is his typicality of the age. He is, moreover, in some ways similar to the Drapier, a character whose appearance interrupted the composition of the Travels in 1724-25. Like the Drapier, he is educated but makes no claim to being learned. Even more than the Drapier, his style is unelaborate, simple, and concrete. Like the Drapier, he appeals to his audience on the basis of his attention to the physical, and he frequently derives his authority from the truth of arithmetic. In this last trait, he is also ominously close to the Modest Proposer.

Gulliver's function as a satiric device is emphasized by his profession as surgeon. Throughout his career, Swift consistently
associates reason with satire through the images of incision and anatomization: "And then comes Reason officiously, with Tools for cutting, and opening, and mangling, and piercing, offering to demonstrate that [Objects] are not of the same consistence quite thro’" (Tale 173). The physician, who must cause some pain in order to work a cure, has long been a standard metaphor for the satirist. Swift makes use of it in his poetry and other prose as well, most notably in A Vindication of his Excellency, the Lord Carteret, wherein he promises to dissect Lord Allen, a promise subsequently kept in the poem "Traulus."

Of some interest to our extrapolated model of Swift’s paradigm for insanity is the fact that only in Part 1 of the Travels does Gulliver explicitly mention the faculty of conscience. As his business as a surgeon begins to fail, Gulliver refuses to break his Hippocratic oath: "Having few Friends, my Business began to fail; for my Conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad Practice of too many of my Brethren" (20; 1.1). Conscience, as we have seen, is essential to the maintenance of sanity, but it tends to work to the disadvantage of its follower in matters of business and politics—that is, in the matters of the world. Thus, in fact, it is finally Gulliver’s conscience that most alienates him from the Lilliputians, when he limits the extent of his service, according to the dictates of his conscience, after the defeat of the Blefuscan navy: "I plainly protested that I would never be an Instrument of bringing a free and brave People into Slavery . . . . This open bold Declaration of mine was so opposite to
the Schemes and Politicks of his Imperial Majesty, that he could never forgive me" (53; 1.5). Subsequently, as the Travels continues, Gulliver neither mentions conscience nor seems to be motivated in any action on that basis. The removal of the moderating influence of conscience makes him vulnerable both to misjudgment and to madness, as it robs him both of a sense of ethics and of self-knowledge.

Gulliver's heroic stature is never more evident than in Lilliput. While his heroic lineage may be somewhat obscured by the intermediary figure of Rabelais's Pantagruel (evidenced in Gulliver's initial bondage in Lilliput which resembles Pantagruel's bondage at birth, and in Gulliver's prodigious excremental feats), his size and his exploits undeniably demonstrate a sort of heroic status. As Jenny Mescziems points out, travel itself is a traditional motif in heroic literature, serving as the education and the means of testing the hero. Heroes, like Odysseus, travel outward to explore both the world and themselves and then return to their homelands to restore the old order in their native societies (199). In heroic romances, as well, seeking adventure for its own sake is common practice. As a mock-heroic figure, Gulliver's education differs from that of his heroic predecessors, for it ultimately destroys his love both for his homeland and for his English fellow men. As a hero, he is incomplete. Gulliver's restlessness, emphasized at the outset of each part of the Travels, is a defect which Sir William Temple had identified as an inevitable but dangerous adjunct to reason:

There remains yet one other difference between us and the rest of our fellow creatures, which though less taken notice of in
the usual reasonings or enquiries of this kind, yet . . . seems a very ill effect of a good cause, a thorn that ever grows with a rose, and a great debasement of the greatest prerogative mankind can pretend to, which is that of reason: what I mean is, a certain restlessness of mind and thought, which seems universally and inseparably annexed to our very natures. (Of Popular Discontents, Works 3: 32)

Such intellectual restlessness, as Swift has noted throughout his career, is responsible for such dangerous phenomena as free-thinking and dissenting. Such restlessness impels Gulliver to travel both literally and allegorically beyond his homeland and beyond appearances, and, as the Tale-teller had warned, the effect is unpleasant at best.

In addition to his heroic travel, several other heroic allusions seem evident in the picture of Gulliver that emerges in Book 1. He is twice linked to Herakles, first upon waking in Lilliput like Herakles among the pygmies, and again, upon facing the Articles of Impeachment, when the expedient of poisoning him resembles Herakles’s poisoning through the pollution of his shirt with the blood of Nessus. In the Lilliputians’ decision to blind Gulliver, they make of him a descendent of Samson among the Philistines. And the episode of the Lilliputian parade upon Gulliver’s handkerchief ("He desired I would stand like a Colossus, with my Legs as far asunder as I conveniently could" [42; 1.3]) recalls lines from Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar: "He doth bestride the narrow world / Like a Colossus; and we petty men / Walk under his huge legs" (1.2.134).

Heroic allusions such as these reinforce the theme of the satire in Part 1 against the pettiness of the Lilliputians. As Jack Gilbert points out, Gulliver’s relative size in Lilliput corresponds to
his relative magnanimity (100). Gulliver demonstrates prodigious strength and talent which are consistently directed toward the public good, and his strength is thus complemented by his respect for social restraint, as indicated in his pledges to the king, as well as by his generosity, innocence, and modesty. Subsequently, in Part 2, the motif of size corresponding to virtue will be continued in the person of the king of Brobdingnag.

Aside from the character of Gulliver, Swift also makes occasional use of another epic device in the *Travels*. Both W. B. Carnochan and Claude Rawson have commented upon Swift's use in the *Travels* of the epic catalogue, establishing the mock-heroic nature of the work. Carnochan points out that as in satire, "in the aesthetics of the epic of the romantic sublime, the expanding catalog implies that all experience can be assimilated in the heroic world" (*Lemuel Gulliver's Mirror for Man* 61). In satire, the mock-epic catalogue implies that all experience can be assimilated into the mad world which the satire presents. Rawson agrees and adds that while epic lists are designed to show order in plenitude and to express a consequent joy in abundance, mock-heroic catalogues, by threatening to include everybody and everything, indicate a subversively chaotic and undifferentiating sub-level of reality (*Gulliver and the Gentle Reader* 90-94). Such an effect is complemented by Gulliver's undiscriminating reportage of what he finds in the course of his travels, and this too begins in Lilliput.
Each book, through the character and presentation of Gulliver, follows a similar pattern of expectation and disillusionment. Gulliver's character, at the outset, like that of Swift's other mild-mannered heroes, is that of a naif. Upon his arrival in Lilliput, Gulliver declares himself to be, like Swift in his self-portraits elsewhere, "a stranger to courts" (67; 1.7). In his naivete or gullibility, Gulliver is able to remain straightfaced, even while Swift becomes ironic, as he recites, for instance, the titles and virtues of the King of Lilliput in an epic catalogue beginning with his eight names (43; 1.3). As the contrast between the Lilliputians' pride and their pettiness becomes apparent, both the satire of Part 1 and the satiric method of the entire work become clear. The incongruity here is similar to the difference between claims and reality throughout the subsequent books. Part 1 is a satire of society which makes up but a part of a larger satire against man's pride in general, and therein lies much of the thematic unity of the Travels.

As a satire against the social manifestations of pride, Part 1 focuses upon those ceremonial institutions which society manifests in order to perpetuate the self-deception necessary to maintain pride. The heroic myth, as it manifests itself in the King's titles, is one of these institutions. As Elder Olson Jr. points out ("The Pride of the Yahoo"), the King of Lilliput corresponds exactly to Spinoza's description of the proud man: "He delights only in the presence of those who deceive his weak mind and from being merely foolish make him mad" (Ethics 4.7 note). This definition reflects general attitudes
toward pride during the early eighteenth century. Lilliput has institutionalized the madness of pride, and it acts in the *Travels* as a satire of the empty ceremonies of the European courts. With the institutions of leaping, creeping, and rope-dancing, the Emperor of Lilliput perpetuates his own folly and his self-deception, and may even run the risk of madness, hinted at in the outrageous incongruity between his person and his ceremonial titles. Pride is based upon self-deception, but social institutions, being real, give reality to delusion. Ultimately, because of its lack of basis in reality, the entire civilization of Lilliput, founded as it is upon vanity, is a fraud. As Edward Wasiolek points out, Swift's satiric method in the *Travels* is based upon Berkeley's test of contradictions: "By embodying human traits in unfamiliar creatures, he is able to test the substantiality of these traits" (116). Consistently throughout the work, as in Lilliput, Swift exposes false qualities which man's pride has made to seem real. Self-deception, both social and personal, is a major theme of the satire.

Gulliver himself is implicated from the first voyage onward. His character is morally obtuse, and he tends to accept the self-evaluation of each society which he visits. While each of his voyages moves from the marvelous to the grotesque, Gulliver tends to understate the magnitude of the grotesqueness, indicating his resistance to reality. In fact, Gulliver tends to adopt the world view of each society as he visits it. In Lilliput, his own growing vanity is apparent when he begins to resent the animosity of Flimnap who is,
Gulliver reminds the reader, "only a Clumglun," while Gulliver himself has attained the status of Nardac (65-66; 1.6).

Thus, in Part 1, the precedent is set for the conclusion of each of the subsequent parts of the book. Gulliver's experiences in each new world infect him with a new point of view, very little of which corresponds to the reality he finds upon his return to England. In effect, as Maurice Johnson has suggested, in addition to geographical exploration, each voyage is a trip to an "extreme mental situation" ("Remote Regions" 299) from which Gulliver is slow at best to recover. Each voyage ends, like Part 1, with Gulliver's defense of himself against accusations of madness (79; 1.8) and with his subsequent struggle in England to adjust once again to a new world view.

The phases through which Gulliver passes in each voyage have been articulated more clearly in our own age than in the age of Swift. The struggle to develop a new world view to replace a maladaptive one has been the subject of particularly intensive study by psychologists, psychological-anthropologists, and philosophers for the past thirty years, resulting most recently in the constructivist philosophy of Nelson Goodman (Of Mind and Other Matters). Interestingly, the predominant locus of their early study of what might be termed the psychology of disillusionment has been acculturation—the process by which individuals adapt to new cultures and by which cultures attempt to adapt, frequently unsuccessfully, to suddenly revealed contradictions within their reality systems. This psychology of
disillusionment has been applied by Thomas Kuhn to scientific revolutions as well. The same phenomenon occurs in individuals, particularly notable in the process of religious conversion. Freud remarks that frequently delusions arise out of the victim's attempts to reconcile contradictions within his belief system: "The delusional formation, which we take to be the pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction" (qtd in Feder 24-25). During the period of cognitive breakdown and subsequent readjustment, madness of a sort is common. The phenomenon is no stranger to literature, of course, having been explored by Shakespeare in the experiences of Hamlet and Lear and being a standard component in Puritan literature of the seventeenth century in which Despair typically precedes conversion.

In Gulliver, Swift repeatedly offers his readers an example of gradual cognitive breakdown followed by cognitive reorganization. Each of Gulliver's adaptations, however, is maladaptive. Yet he demonstrates, particularly at the beginning and the end of Part 4, the tenacity with which an individual clings, as he must, to an old world view in spite of the ever-increasing heaps of contradictions and dysfunctions engendered thereby.

A similar paradigm informs Swift's satiric method throughout the Travels. Contradictions between the world view of the reader and the world views presented by Gulliver are responsible for the discomfort produced by the work, as Swift insistently probes his audience, attempting a cognitive breakdown of sorts in the minds of his
readers, which will force them subsequently to reorganize their perceptions of reality. While our contemporary social scientists study the shock of the alien, Swift is concerned in a similar way with the shock of the normal, which he makes abnormal through defamiliarization. As the middling man, the cultural representative, Gulliver as hero illustrates the illusions of his society, and through Gulliver's obtuseness as well as through his subsequent disillusionment, Swift attempts to trap his readers into a corresponding re-construction of reality.

That Swift could have intuited such a paradigm and adapted it to his satire and satirical strategy seems likely, given the age he lived in and the concerns which, if his works are an accurate record, were ever in his mind: revolution, science, and religion. Each of these realms of experience is a common locus for the phenomenon. And with Swift's extraordinary concern for the preservation of old realities, his resistance to new orders and new systems, and his fear of chaos as manifested in cultural and psychological disintegration, he may well have experienced acutely the psychological distress, disorientation, and breakdown characteristic of the phenomenon. In any case, the pattern is clearly established in Part 1 and is reiterated, with predictable results in the manifestations of Gulliver throughout the rest of the Travels.
Part 2: A Voyage to Brobdingnag

Readers of Part 1 are allowed to remain relatively complacent throughout the satirical passages, for in spite of the parallels between the political intrigues in Lilliput and those in England, the Lilliputians remain in the role of "other" throughout Gulliver's narrative, while Gulliver himself acts as a mildly amusing but not disheartening representation of Western man. Any reader identification throughout Part 1 must surely be with Gulliver.

In Part 2, the satire is re-directed at Gulliver, and consequently at the reader. The Brobdingnagians, though not a uniformly perfect or admirable race, for the most part take on the role of the magnanimous, as their symbolic size warrants. Yet their enormity, in comparison to Gulliver, makes them "other" while Gulliver, still the reader's sympathetic focus, comes under attack as his pride is threatened repeatedly and his society is censured in an attack which must either include the reader too or force the reader to adjust or abate his sympathies, thereby producing at least a momentary disorientation.

The reader's sympathy for and identification with Gulliver as his representative and ambassador to Brobdingnag are encouraged by Gulliver himself in his strong declarations of his love for England upon his return at the end of Part 1 and as a preface to all his remarks to the King in Part 2. At the same time, Gulliver's report of his second leaving of his native shore is somewhat troubling: "Having been condemned by Nature and Fortune to an active and restless
In the middle-class ethos of eighteenth century England, activity was certainly a virtue, and restlessness itself was perhaps not unadmirable in that it promoted "progress." But restlessness, in the works of Swift, is the source root of much misfortune, and yielding to this restlessness, not once but four times, is certainly Gulliver's **hamartia**.

The weight of the satire in Part 2 is decidedly against Gulliver and the society which he represents. The King of Brobdingnag, able because of his size and his power to afford magnanimity, serves as the satiric norm for this part of the *Travels*. Like Gulliver in Part 1, who is magnanimous enough to restrain himself among the Lilliputians, the King of Brobdingnag demonstrates a quality consistently admired in Swift's works in his unwillingness to increase his power or to use it for purposes of self-aggrandizement, as is made particularly clear in his denunciation of gunpowder (134-35; 2.7). In this dialogue, the self-assured complacency of Gulliver's belief in his native values and customs remains unperturbed, but the reader's complacency is decidedly disturbed.

The satire against Gulliver is achieved most consistently throughout Part 2 by the use of the mock-heroic, Swift's most overt and traditional use of the device since the *Battle of the Books*. All of the allusions, primarily to figures from Homer and Virgil, point to episodes in which the heroes are at a disadvantage and not quite living up to their heroic images. The satire, by reminding us of such instances, cuts against the ancients as well, even as it diminishes
Gulliver. Gulliver's arrival in Brobdingnag parallels the account of Polyphemus wading after the boat which has rescued one of Odysseus' crew. Gulliver's wistful seaside meditations resemble those of Odysseus on Calypso's island. Perhaps the most telling allusive incident, Gulliver's misadventure with the cow dung, alludes to the fall of Ajax. However, although the actions of the two incidents are parallel, the springs of the actions are different. Ajax falls not through his own defect but because Athena favors Odysseus. Gulliver falls and humiliates himself because of his attempts to do more than he is able— in short, because of his pride.

Gulliver's adventures with the hailstorm, the apples, the kite, the molehill, the snail, the frog, the wasps, the monkey, the dwarf, and finally the cow dung all parody the episodic adventures of an epic hero. No sooner does he escape one than he lands in another. But although Gulliver does admit his fear for his life on several of these occasions, the stakes involved in these adventures have more to do with Gulliver's dignity, pride, and self-esteem than with his safety. Gulliver is several times content to go to bed without much complaint to recover physically from these adventures. What he laments vociferously, however, is the loss of his dignity. In fact, the very nature of these adventures does not permit his dignity to remain intact even when he triumphs, for battle with a snail or a rat seems a very different thing than battle with a more prodigious enemy.

Gulliver's heroism in these exploits forms but a part of his struggle throughout this voyage to assert his dignity. From the outset
of his adventures in Part 2, his primary task appears to be convincing the Brobdingnagians that he is a "rational creature" (89; 2.1), and ultimately he fails. His panegyric upon British politics results only in the Brobdingnagian King's famous vehement denunciation of "the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth" (132; 2.6). While Gulliver himself remains unreflective, the King is remarkable for his ability to extract a moral lesson from Gulliver and apply it to himself, as when he remarks, according to Gulliver, "how contemptible a Thing was human Grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive Insects as I" (107. 2.3). Gulliver himself is more obtuse, willing and able to apply the lessons of relativity as he learns them only to others:

I could not forbear thinking of Lilliput, whose Inhabitants looked upon me as the greatest Prodigy that ever appeared in the World; where I was able to draw an Imperial Fleet in my Hand, and perform those other Actions which will be recorded for ever in the Chronicles of that Empire while Posterity shall hardly believe them. (86; 2.1)

Gulliver's apparent lack of introspection, his generally extraverted nature at this point in the satire, underlines the error which will persist even to the end of the work. In remembering his glory days in Lilliput, Gulliver laments the loss of his relative strength but never considers the intellectual or moral nature which remains constant with him in Brobdingnag. Instead, he translates his discovery of enormity in Brobdingnag into a scorn for the diminutiveness of his fellow Europeans:

If I had then beheld a Company of English Lords and Ladies in their Finery and Birthday Cloathes, acting their several Parts in the most courtly manner of Strutting and Bowing and
Prating; to say the Truth, I should have been strongly tempted to laugh as much at them as this king and his Grandees did at me. (107; 2.3)

As satiric device here, Gulliver serves Swift in deflating and diminishing the self-glorification of the English court, much in the manner of Part 1. But further satire lies in Gulliver's absurd obtuseness, his almost desperate insistence upon separating and distinguishing himself from those whom he disparages, when no real distinction is evident. Even at this point, as Gulliver vicariously appropriates the stature of the Brobdingnaggians, he begins to serve as a satiric device directed against itself. His resistance to introspection, evidently spurred by his struggles against self-loathing, is made evident by his avoidance of mirrors: "While I was in that Prince's country [Brobdingnag], I could never endure to look in a Glass after mine Eyes had been accustomed to such prodigious Objects; because the Comparison gave me so despicable a Conceit of myself" (147; 2.8). Even as Gulliver's view of the world changes dramatically, he resists applying his new knowledge to himself, struggling to maintain his sense of identity, however limited or maladaptive it may be.

As a consequence, once again at the conclusion of this voyage as in Part 1, Gulliver's sanity is suspected by everyone but himself: "I behaved my self so unaccountably, that they were all of the Captain's Opinion when he first saw me; and concluded I had lost my Wits" (149; 2.8).
The third voyage, as Samuel Holt Monk has suggested, is Gulliver's digression on madness (61), an exploration of the modern abandonment of sense by reason and rationalism. The reader is thrown into another of Swift's topsy-turvy-lands, where reason is irrational and sense is popularly considered madness.

Gulliver commences the voyage with the same explanation of restlessness proffered in the previous two books: "I could not reject his Proposal; the Thirst I had of seeing the World, notwithstanding my past Misfortunes, continuing as violent as ever" (153; 3.1). A symptom of insanity in a commonplace lay definition is the repeated performance of the same act with an expectation of a different result. Clearly, Gulliver's Fancy is astride his Reason as he commences the voyage.

The bulk of the satire of Part 3 is against the new science and its promoters and projectors, all dismissed by Swift as irrational and ultimately futile. Madness is the central metaphor throughout the section. The population of Lagado is described as distracted in much the same terms as applied to Peter and Jack in the Tale: "The People in the Streets walked fast, looked wild, their Eyes fixed, and were generally in Rags" (174; 3.4). The Academy, which is the focal institution in the society, is described in terms appropriate to a Bedlam, as Gulliver is escorted through its excremental stink by a "Warden" (179; 3.5). Laputa is the utopia of the Tale-teller, his
project come to fruition, and the dominant image, aside from madness, is that of waste.

Moreover, the madness which has arisen in Laputa has extended to Balnibarbi, Gulliver's subsequent destination. David Renaker has recently convincingly demonstrated that Laputa corresponds to the French school of Cartesian inquiry, while Balnibarbi corresponds more exactly to the English Royal Society. Scientific madness is apparently, like religious enthusiasm, contagious and exportable. Here, the accusation of cultural madness and the threat of epidemic madness is brought directly to the doorsteps of Swift's British audience.

Amid the madness, there are several sane men, spokesmen for Swift and common sense, and these men, like typical Swiftian viri boni, are consistently presented as out of favor. The political projectors who prescribe political preference on the basis of virtue and capacity, for instance, are offered by Gulliver as an example "that there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some Philosophers have not maintained for Truth" (187; 3.6). Similarly, Lord Munodi, who is reluctant to adapt the new scientific applications to his own property, is generally regarded as "of a low Contemptible understanding" (175; 3.4). Amid madness, sense itself becomes perceived as insanity. This is just such a world as we have heard the Church of England Man, the Examiner, and the Drapier decry. Gulliver himself remains in flux, somewhat in the middle between sense and madness. Sometimes observant and perceptive and other times dense, Gulliver functions as an
instrument of satire, but also serves to demonstrate man's naturally imperfect understanding.

Part 3, made up as it is of a series of small voyages and visits, repeats and accelerates the sequence of expectation and disillusionment, marvelous prospects and grotesque realities, which the first two parts established, resulting in the repeated disorientation of Gulliver. In gaining admittance to the Academy, Gulliver declares, perhaps with a trace of pride: "My Lord [Munodi] was pleased to represent me as a great Admirer of Projects and a Person of much Curiosity and easy Belief; which indeed was not without Truth; for I had my self been a Sort of Projector in my younger Days" (178; 3.5). Thus he enters the Academy with great expectations, and subsequently leaves bewildered.

Similarly, in Glubbdubdrib, his encounters with figures from history leave him disenchanted in the land of enchantment:

I was chiefly disgusted with modern History. For having strictly examined all the Persons of greatest Name in the Courts of Princes for an Hundred Years past, I found how the World had been misled by prostitute Writers, to ascribe the greatest Exploits in War to Cowards, the wisest Counsel to Fools, Sincerity to Flatterers, Roman virtue to Betrayers of their Country, Piety to Atheists, Chastity to Sodomites, Truth to Informers. . . . How low an Opinion I had of human Wisdom and Integrity, when I was truly informed of the Springs and Motions of great Enterprizes and Revolutions in the World, and of the contemptible Accidents to which they wed their Success. (199; 3.8)

As we have been told both by Temple and by the Tale-teller, the spring of many a great action is madness. Gulliver looks into history and discovers a vortex of madness and absurdity. He faces the same problem encountered by writers of the Restoration who tried to write heroic
poetry about historical figures in spite of the flaws which they
inevitably found.

Yet antiquity is not without true heroes. "Roman virtue" is
still admirable—though it is perhaps no longer available: "I desired
that the Senate of Rome might appear before me in one large Chamber,
and a modern Representative, in Counterview in another. The first
seemed to be an Assembly of Heroes and Demy-Gods; the other a Knot of
Pedlars, Pick-pockets, Highwaymen, and Bullies" (196; 3.7). "Roman
virtue," one may deduce, is action based upon the love of freedom and
the opposition to tyranny, as is made evident in the Sextumvirate who
finally appear: Brutus, Socrates, Epaminondas, Cato the Younger,
Sir Thomas More, and Lucius Junius Brutus.

These six figures, particularly Brutus, haunt Swift’s writings
more than they do Gulliver’s historical imagination. Swift’s clearest
and most concise statement of his admiration appears in Of Mean and
Great Figures Made by Several Persons, in which several of the
sextumvirate appear in the company of Alexander, Scipio, and others.
The other figures in Swift’s list of "Great figures" are included for
their humility while in power (like the King of Brobdingnag).
What distinguishes the six in Gulliver’s sextumvirate from the rest on
Swift’s private list is their virtue when they were out of power or
when they had to put the interest of public liberty before their own
safety. In short, each of the six included in Gulliver’s vision
suffered for his virtue. They are all Swiftian viri boni.
In their absence from power and in their suffering, they represent a decidedly different view of heroism than that held in general by the Romans themselves, who read victory as the supreme outward sign of heroism and the gods' favor. Swift had, as we have seen, considered the opposing types of heroism early in his career when he attempted in Sancroft to find a hero with whom both the gods and Cato were pleased. Cato, as Swift wrote the Travels, had indeed apparently captured the imagination of both writers and the literary public, as demonstrated by the enormous success of Addison's play. Brutus was not so popularly favored, but appears to have been Swift's favorite. It has been suggested (although it can never be proven satisfactorily) that from Marcus Brutus, Swift took both the character and the initials of his Drapier (Gilbert 64). During his days of political writing, Swift had offered Brutus and Cato as examples to be followed by the Whigs in their political programs promoting liberty:

Cato and Brutus were the two most virtuous Men in Rome; the former did not much approve the Intentions of the Heads on either side; and the latter by Inclination, was more a friend to Caesar: But, because the Senate and People generally followed Pompey and that Caesar's Party was only made up of the Troops with which he Conquered Gaul, with the Addition of some profligate Deserters from Rome; those two excellent Men, who thought it base to stand Neuter where the Liberties of their Country was at stake, joined heartily on that side which undertook to preserve the Laws and Constitution, against the Usurpations of a victorious General, whose Ambition was bent to overthrow them. (Letter to a Whig Lord, PW 6: 134)

Swift's admiration for Brutus shows his non-alignment with the traditional Renaissance view as represented in Dante, who placed that Roman in the lowest circle of hell, in Satan's mouth, for the ultimate fraud. Moreover, Swift's admiration for Brutus gives the lie
to those who wish simply to categorize him as a conservative, Tory, monarchist.

Such is made even more clear by Swift’s inclusion of Brutus’s ancestor, Lucius Junius Brutus, among the sextumvirate. The elder Brutus, known primarily for leading the Roman revolt against Tarquin, avenging the rape of Lucrece, and restoring the republic, had become a popular emblem of pro-constitutional and anti-monarchical sentiment as a result of Nathaniel Lee’s play bearing Brutus’s name in 1680. Lucius Junius Brutus was suppressed after only a few performances but was available in print in the early eighteenth century. Moreover, Charles Gilden had struck most of the offending passages and produced a revised version called The Patriot in 1703.

Lucius Junius Brutus was in several ways the embodiment of the cives or vir bonus which we have seen Swift come to admire. He received his name from his practice of feigning stupidity (Lee translates this into madness in his play), as Livy explains: "He even submitted to being known publicly as the Dullard, that under cover of that opprobrious title the great spirit which gave Rome her freedom might be able to hide its time" (1.56). In another telling incident, Brutus offered to Apollo a gift of a golden rod inserted into a hollow stick of cornel wood, representative of his own hidden merit and distinguishing him from those who wore their honor proudly in spite of their truly wooden natures. In spite of his victory over Tarquin, Lucius Junius Brutus was ultimately, like all of Swift’s true heroes, tragic. In the aftermath of the successful revolt, he was forced by
his sense of justice to execute his two sons for treason, and he was himself assassinated by Tarquin's son.

Similarly, in the tragic figure of Epaminondas, Swift focuses attention upon a man who did great service for his city but was subsequently subjected to outrageous ingratitude. Epaminondas is known primarily as the brilliant tactician who, as general, established Thebes as predominant among the land powers. Possessed of the civilizing heroic virtue celebrated by Temple, he also liberated the Messenians from Sparta, rebuilt Messene, and founded Megalopolis. However, Swift surely had in mind the humiliation of Epaminondas as well as his achievements. Charged with exceeding his term, Epaminondas was tried unjustly (according to Plutarch) and subsequently acquitted by the Thebans. Thereafter, he fought as a common soldier in Thessaly and died in battle. In his private journal, Swift specifies a moment of humiliation as the apex of Epaminondas's greatness: "when the Persian Ambassadors came to his House and found him in the midst of Poverty" (PW 5: 84).

Each of the heroes of the Sextumvirate gave his life for his beliefs. Each was, in effect, doomed by his own virtue. One wonders about Swift's feelings, he who had twice feared for his life, upon closing his paragraph on this group of heroes with the phrase "a Sextumvirate to which all the Ages of the World cannot add a Seventh" (196; 3.7). Did he aspire to form a Septumvirate? Surely, the Drapier's encounters with ingratitude and charges of treason,
adventures which closely preceded the composition of Part 3, must have been on Swift’s mind.

In the subsequent encounter between Gulliver and the Struldbruggs, Gulliver loses his fear of death, and is, one might argue, thus prepared for a life of virtue having given up his idealized notions of immortality. Indeed, as Michael Seidel has pointed out, in the Struldbrugs, Gulliver is able to see, although he does not know it, his own eventual condition of permanent exile in his own land (203). Throughout Part 3, Gulliver rides a roller coaster of expectation and disillusionment, clearly exemplified in his trip to Luggnugg as he exults at one moment, "Happy Nation, where every Child hath at least a Chance for being immortal," and despairs the next: "No Tyrant could invent a Death into which I would not run with Pleasure from such a Life" (214; 3.10). After his meeting with the Struldbrugs, the ordinarily flat tone of Gulliver’s reportage becomes even flatter on the voyage home, and like the Tale-teller and the Modest Proposer, he appears inhumanly indifferent to matters which other mortals might find grievous:

Nothing happened worth mentioning in the Voyage ... we arrived safe at Amsterdam, having lost only three Men by Sickness in the Voyage, and a fourth who fell from the Fore-mast into the Sea, not far from the Coast of Guinea. From Amsterdam I soon set sail for England in a small Vessel belonging to that City. (217; 3.11)

As a result of his encounters with history and with immortality, Gulliver has clearly lost, along with his fear of death, some of his sympathy for his fellow man.
Part 4: A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms

By Part 4, then, Gulliver is no longer an ordinary Englishman. His sympathy for mankind is weakened, and his vision of the common road of things is weakening as well. The initial images and events of Part 4 point to a further decline in his common sense and his sympathy for mankind. Again, his restlessness will not allow him to remain home for more than half a year, indicating his loose bonds with family and countrymen, and he clearly is aware that his passion to travel has gotten astride of his Reason: "I continued at home with my Wife and Children... in a very happy Condition, if I could have learned the Lesson of knowing when I was well" (221; 4.1). Unlike the Odyssey, in which the movement is essentially homewards and towards stability and normality, Gulliver's Travels insistently, like the poet in the "Ode to Temple," casts off again from shore, moves away from the haven of harbor and home, and ends in abnormality and madness.

In another demonstration of his pride, Gulliver reaches beyond his calling as Surgeon to accept the position of Captain, for which he is qualified, he attests, because "I understood Navigation well" (221; 4.1). However, as the subsequent mutiny makes clear, Gulliver is unqualified, lacking the ability to manage people, most likely because he generally lacks an understanding of people, for he lacks an understanding of himself. Gulliver's lack of self-knowledge is emphasized at the outset of the voyage, in his disapprobation of Captain Pocock of Bristol, whose ship foundered and lost all men: "He was an honest Man and a good Sailor, but a little too positive in
his own Opinions, which was the Cause of his Destruction, as it hath been of several others. For if he had followed my Advice, he might at this Time have been safe at home with his Family as well as myself" (221; 4.1). The full irony of Gulliver's apparent relative self-satisfaction in this condemnation of another for a defect he himself exemplifies is fully clear at the end of Part 4. But his lack of reflection is clear even here at the outset.

The first detail offered of this voyage is similarly portentous. Gulliver loses several men to calentures, tropical fever and delirium, and as a consequence of his ship's being overwhelmed with madness he must recruit those sailors who ultimately will mutiny against him. The mutiny is only the second occasion in the entire work during which Gulliver fears for his safety at the hands of his own kind, the first being his return from Japan among Dutch sailors. These two occasions, perhaps, provoke his disposition toward the radical personality change which takes place in the course of Part 4. However, even at this point, Gulliver does not rage against the sailors who threaten him. Instead, the tone in the account of the mutiny maintains a typically Gulliverian flatness. This may be the result of the attitude of the post-Houyhnhnm Gulliver who writes the account, but would be a rare instance of such a phenomenon. Instead, it must be accounted for by the effect of his encounter with the Struldbruggs as well as with the figures of history during his previous voyage. He has lost his fear of death and seems consequently to have lost his
over-fondness of life. He has been disillusioned about great men, and consequently has lowered his expectations of all men.

It seems that at this point Gulliver's personality is essentially void, awaiting something to fill and shape it. His old ideas and expectations have disintegrated under the force of his experiences, but a new tenable view of the world has not yet offered itself to him for adaptation. The first half of Part 4 shows Gulliver attempting to establish both his identity and a tenable view of the world. Upon following the Houyhnhnms home, radically disoriented by both the horses and the Yahoos, Gulliver confesses: "I feared my Brain was disturbed by my Sufferings and Misfortunes" (229; 4.2).

While Gulliver's comment is designed to establish his initial incredulity (and thereby to establish his veracity), one thinks that perhaps here as elsewhere he speaks more truth than he knows.

The initial appearance of the Yahoos is troubling to both Gulliver and his reader, posing questions of Gulliver's identity in a world populated primarily by Yahoos and Houyhnhnms. The text focuses upon Gulliver's clothes as the primary characteristic distinguishing him from the Yahoos (225-26; 4.1), and the superficiality of such a distinction is disturbing. Yet such a distinction is consonant with Swift's promotion of hypocrisy which we have discovered previously. Even superficial differences are differences, and the clothes of Western man seen in light of the grotesque physicality of the Yahoos are perhaps an indication of his efforts and potential ability to rise above Yahoo nature. The Houyhnhnms' discovery of Gulliver unclothed
and their subsequent designation of him as a "perfect Yahoo," in conjunction with the climactic telling moment of Gulliver's embrace by the young female Yahoo, clearly indicate Gulliver's kinship with the Yahoo breed. In fact, in Gulliver's search for identity, these incidents are sufficient to induce his acceptance of depraved Yahoo nature as his own. Yet it is, of course, frequently a grievous error in reading to identify automatically his speaker's views as those of Swift. Differences between Yahoo and Gulliver are insisted upon throughout the text, revealing that Western man is not exactly the same creature as the Yahoo. In fact, Western man is revealed to be consistently worse than the Yahoo--although he is simultaneously represented as having the capacity to be somewhat better, as the potential for hypocrisy, represented by clothes, indicates.

Western man and Gulliver are, however, decidedly different from and worse than the Houyhnhnms. Nowhere in the text is there an indication of similarity between the two races; instead, differences are emphasized page after page after page. Much criticism of the book over the past twenty years has attempted to make Swift's insistence upon the futility of man's aspiring to Houyhnhnm status acceptable by making the Houyhnhnms unacceptable. Such is a peculiarly modern approach. The nineteenth century and early twentieth century were much more concerned with Swift's attack on man as Yahoo. Though undertaken, one suspects, with the covert purpose of evading or at least palliating Swift's satire, anti-Houyhnhnm criticism has in fact been helpful, revealing in its desperation some genuine defects among the Houyhnhnms.
Post-Freudian critics particularly have remarked upon the coldness of the Houyhnhnms, noting that their self-control (super ego) dominates to such an extent as to make them incapable of positive as well as negative passion (e.g., Rawson, *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader* 148).

In light of Swift's ignorance of Freud, such criticism may seem contrived. However, a similar idea was available to Swift in a text with which we know that he was familiar: the *Encomium Moriae* of Erasmus. In Erasmus's work, Folly promotes herself as essential to human relationships, remarking upon the service she does for love. It is her work, she insists, that suggests to a lover the kissing of his mistress's mole (35), and she concludes: "Remove me and no one could put up with his neighbor" (44). Such a view is consonant with Swift and with Gulliver, as well as with Freud. In this respect, Rawson's remarks seem particularly insightful and corrective:

The main [critical] charge is that the Houyhnhnms are cold, passionless, inhuman, unattractive to us and therefore an inappropriate positive model. The fact that we may not like them does not mean that Swift is disowning them: it is consistent with his whole style to nettles us with a positive we might find insulting and rebarbative. But... the Houyhnhnms, though they are a positive, are not a model, there being no question of our being able to imitate them. (*Gulliver and the Gentle Reader* 30)

Similarly, Jack Gilbert points to the potential conflict between the tastes of contemporary readers and the tastes of Swift himself:

From his inordinate concern with cleanliness to his despairing appeals to reason (including, too, such pet notions as education of women, the value of conversation, the worth of exercise), the things [Swift] valued most are almost completely identical with the traits of the Houyhnhnms. Yet modern readers find the Houyhnhnms unattractive and cold; they would probably react the same way to Swift's character, if they understood it properly. (143)
The Houyhnhnms do indeed offer a positive, and one which is consistent with the ideals found in Swift's other works. The primary characteristic of the Houyhnhnms is, of course, their instinctive and unproblematical reason (267; 4.8), from which Swift develops all of their other psychological and social characteristics. Such a rational intelligence is exactly what Swift had praised most highly in his friend and hero, Oxford: "That which occurs to other Men after mature Deliberation, offers to him as his first Thought, so that he decides immediately what is best to be done, and is therefore never at a loss upon sudden Exigencies" (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 178). While the products of such an intelligence are not always attractive to man or even at times to Swift, such an intelligence remains the ideal to which many, perhaps Swift included, aspire in their deluded idealism.

Above all, in the serene social system which develops among beings possessed of unwavering and instinctive reasoning, there are no instances of the factionalism, the subversion, the informing, the treason, the flattery, the usurpation, the backbiting, or the wars which were among Swift's primary satirical targets. The society has neither heroic villains nor mild Christian heroes, for there is nothing to fight over, as Jack Gilbert suggests:

The Houyhnhnms are citizens blessed by Nature with Roman virtue. If all the citizens possess the virtue of Cato and Brutus, there is no need for government and, incidentally, no need for the superhuman heroic virtue which sacrifices itself in standing out against wickedness or against tyranny, for example. The Houyhnhnms have the temperate, just, benevolent nature of Swift's heroes, but the possibility of great virtuous action is happily denied them, since they have no imposing evils confronting them. (143)
A necessary concomitant of universally perfected reason is the absence of individual or singular vision. Thus, Gulliver finds it impossible to translate the word "opinion" for the Houyhnhnms (267; 4.8). Universal rationality implies universal sanity. Such a society, like the Reason which supplies its foundation, is clearly unavailable to mankind. Swift’s sermon *On the Trinity* precisely and concisely enunciates the view which all of his works bespeak: "Reason itself is true and just, but the Reason of every particular Man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his Interests, his Passions, and his Vices" (PW 9: 166). The Houyhnhnms, then, do offer, as Rawson suggests, a positive while they simultaneously demonstrate the futility of man’s attempting to use them as a model. By their example, Swift demonstrates the universal madness of mankind.

Such is clearly Gulliver’s perception as well. In his search for his own identity, he is thus thrown back upon the Yahoos as a disagreeable but likely prospect. Readers too have found the prospect disagreeable, a fact which Swift anticipates and explains: "Yahoos were known to hate one another more than they did any different Species of Animals; and the Reason usually assigned, was, the Odiousness of their own Shapes, which all could see in the rest, but not in themselves" (260; 4.7). Like Gulliver, readers and critics have been at great pains to distinguish themselves from Yahoos. That the distinction exists seems evident, but the distinction exists primarily in potentiality. While man has the capacity, as I have suggested, to be better than a Yahoo, in reality he is demonstrably worse, as the text
emphatically insists. The trap of the satire laid by Swift is that when the reader objects to being a Yahoo, he thereby gives up his excuses for behaving like one, and the satire becomes all the more damaging.

A crucial characteristic of the Yahoo which has not yet received critical attention is his unteachableness. One of the Houyhnhnm Master's original puzzlements in regard to Gulliver is his demonstrable ability to learn: "[He] was convinced ... that I must be a Yahoo, but my Teachableness, Civility, and Cleanliness astonished him; which were Qualities altogether so opposite to those Animals" (234; 4.3). Subsequently, Gulliver, who bitterly resolves his identity crisis with the equation, Man=Yahoo, recounts his investigations of the Yahoo: "By what I could discover, the Yahoos appear to be the most unteachable of all Animals, their Capacities never reaching higher than to draw or carry Burthens. Yet I am of Opinion this Defect arises from a perverse, restive, Disposition" (266; 4.8). The very perverse restlessness which has been the cause of Gulliver's own misfortunes, then, is that quality which Gulliver suggests blocks the learning and improvement of the species. Indeed, Gulliver recognizes in the Yahoos the human disorder of spleen:

My Master likewise mentioned another Quality, which his Servants had discovered in several Yahoos, and to him was wholly unaccountable. He said, a Fancy would sometimes take a Yahoo to retire into a Corner, to lie down and howl, and groan, and spurn away all that came near him, although he were young and fat, and wanted neither Food nor Water; nor did the Servants imagine what could possibly ail him. And the only Remedy they found was to set him to hard Work, after which he would infallibly come to himself. To this I was silent out of
Partiality to my own Kind; yet here I could plainly discover the true seeds of Spleen. (263; 4.7)

Whether or not his analysis of Yahoo nature is correct, certainly his application of his analysis to mankind is apt. Man is teachable—as Gulliver demonstrates in his own person. Yet man is also generally unteachable, as Gulliver has demonstrated in all of his departures from home. Moreover, it is ultimately man's refusal to be taught that outrages Gulliver, as evidenced in his letter to Symson:

Pray bring to your Mind how often I desired you to consider, when you insisted on the Motive of publick Good; that the Yahoos were a Species of Animals utterly incapable of Amendment by Precepts or Examples: And so it hath proved; for instead of seeing a full Stop put to all Abuses and Corruptions, at least in this little Island, as I had reason to expect: Behold, after above six Months Warning, I cannot learn that my Book hath produced one single Effect according to mine Intention. ... And it must be owned, that seven Months were a sufficient Time to correct every Vice and Folly to which Yahoos are subject. (6-7)

It must be owned, indeed. Seven months is sufficient time. Aside from Gulliver's obviously puffed sense of self-importance, only resistance to learning can account for the lack of improvement.

In spite of all the critical endeavors to demonstrate man as somewhere above the Yahoo though below the Houyhnhnm, the clear fact of the matter as presented in the text (and as argued recently by Donald Keesey, a Swiftian voice in the wilderness of Swiftian criticism), is that Yahoos are demonstrably better than man, although man does have the potential to become better than the Yahoo. The Houyhnhnm Master points out to Gulliver that, at least physically, mankind "differ for the worse" from the Yahoos (242; 4.4). Moreover, while men, as demonstrated in the person of Gulliver, posses reason and thus have the
capacity to learn, they spurn their most valuable asset, as Gulliver suggests in describing the attractions of wine, which "puts us out of our Senses" (252; 4.6). The Houyhnhnm Master's conclusions, on the basis of Gulliver's accounts of Western man, seem inescapable: "That he looked upon us as a Sort of Animals to whose Share, by what Accident he could not conjecture, some small Pittance of Reason had fallen, whereof we made no other Use than by its Assistance to aggravate our natural Corruptions, and to acquire new ones which Nature had not given us" (259; 4.7). This view is remarkably similar to that of the King of Brobdingnag upon Gulliver's offering him the secret of gunpowder as evidence of European ingenuity. And it is remarkably close to the description of madness which we have been tracing throughout this study: Fancy astride of Reason, Reason in service to desire.

That man's use of his reason has, in fact, made him worse than the Yahoo is substantiated by Gulliver when he remarks upon the Houyhnhnm Master's omission of promiscuity as a characteristic of the Yahoos: "I expected every Moment, that my Master would accuse the Yahoos of those unnatural Appetites in both Sexes, so common among us. But Nature it seems hath not been so expert a Schoolmistress; and these politer Pleasures are entirely the Productions of Art and Reason, on our Side of the Globe" (264; 4.7). Thus, the current effect of art and reason, which do indeed distinguish mankind from Yahoo, is but to further the corruptions natural to man. Gulliver's use of the metaphor of nature as schoolmistress is telling as regards the teachableness of
man. Man is indeed teachable, but is perversely selective in what he chooses to learn.

Gulliver's satire against mankind is thus devastating. Swift offers the reader two ways of receiving the satire. The first way is Gulliver's: reacting with rage and indignation. The second way is Swift's: reacting with humor. Discussions such as this must be wary of stripping Swift of his wit. The fact that someone must always pay the price for humor, that is, that humor will inevitably be at someone's expense, makes us wary in reading Swift, lest we pay more than we are willing. But Gulliver pays, and the Houyhnhnms pay, and the Yahoos pay, and Swift himself pays. As readers, we want to avoid implication, but if we set ourselves apart from the satire, we fall into a satiric correspondence with Gulliver, who ends by distancing himself from his family and countrymen. The only way to win the game of Gulliver's Travels is to accept defeat and to laugh at ourselves.

Humour and irony are, indeed, Swift's standard ways out of the existential corner into which he consistently paints himself. In his Letter Concerning Enthusiasm, Shaftesbury advised: "Good humour is not only the best security against enthusiasm, but the best foundation of piety and true religion" (17). Laughing at himself is one thing that Gulliver is consistently unable to do. Laughter is also the saving grace from misanthropy and self-loathing. Freud remarks upon the generally gregarious nature of humor: "A joke is the most social of all the mental functions that aim at a yield of pleasure" (199). Freud remarks further, particularly aptly in regard to the Travels, that
"only jokes that have a purpose run the risk of meeting with people who do not want to listen to them" (90). Claude Rawson has commented on Swift, specifically in regard to Swift's line "I would hang them if I could" in "Epistle to a Lady," but in terms applicable to Swift's work in general, making a point parallel to Freud's:

If the self-humour in these verses forbids us to take the passage at its literal intensity (as it forbids us to take at their literal intensity the "hate and detest" and "Drown the World" passages in the letters to Pope expressing the "misanthropy" behind the Travels), yet the self-humour is plainly not of the kind that cancels what is said.

In dissociating the thing said from the full violence of the saying, the ironist both unsettles the reader and covers himself. Since we have here no firm alternative viewpoint to give us our bearings, we can only know that the ironist means part of what he says, but not exactly how large or quite what sort of part. (Gulliver and the Gentle Reader 13-14)

The "out" which Swift leaves himself here, as elsewhere, is the precarious relationship between himself and his speaker. Gulliver certainly is misanthropic, but how much, if any, of Swift is reflected in his misanthropy? To answer the question, one must first look at Swift's writings elsewhere for clarification, and secondly look at the character of Gulliver, such as it is, at the close of the final voyage.

In examining the course of Swift's poetic career, most critics agree in seeing an impassioned idealism during the period of the early odes followed by an intense realism for the final thirty years of his career. Clearly, Swift first attempted to fit the world into his vision of what should be, subsequently gave up, and then attempted to reorganize his vision on the basis of the world. Unlike the Houyhnhnms, whose absolute rationality is beyond the attainment of man,
the models for man offered in the works of Swift, like Don Pedro in Part 4 of the *Travels*, are good-natured, perhaps imperfect, yet humane. That is, Swift does not offer models for man which are beyond man's capacity.

Similarly, throughout his writings, Swift urges his readers not to expect men to be Houyhnhnms. In an oft-quoted letter to Sheridan, Swift wrote: "Expect no more from Man than such an Animal is capable of, and you will every day find my Description of Yahoos more resembling" (*Corr.* 3: 94). Such is exactly the attitude toward the Yahoos adopted by the rational Houyhnhnm Master: "Although he hated the Yahoos of this Country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious Qualities, than he did a Gnnayh (a Bird of Prey) for its Cruelty, or a sharp stone for cutting his Hoof" (248; 4.5). In his famous letter to Pope, Swift argues that "vous autres" who, like Gulliver, expect man to be angelic are in fact the ones in danger of turning misanthropic. The case is demonstrated by Gulliver, who expects both himself and his readers to aspire to Houyhnhnmism and who consequently ends in self-loathing and misanthropy.

Gulliver's conclusion, because of its intensity, creates as many difficulties for readers as it does for Gulliver:

When I thought of my Family, my Friends, my Countrymen, or the human Race in general, I considered them as they really were, Yahoos in Shape and Disposition, perhaps a little more civilized and qualified with the Gift of Speech; but making no other Use of Reason, than to improve and multiply those Vices, whereof their Brethren in this Country had only the Share that Nature alloted them. When I happened to behold the Reflection of my own Form in a Lake or Fountain, I turned away my Face in Horror and detestation of my self; and could better endure the Sight of a common Yahoo, than of my own Person. (278; 4.10)
Gulliver's consequent antipathy to mankind is quite real, though founded upon an error, and the proximity of man to Yahoo is so great that the error may seem negligible. Similarly, the proximity of Gulliver to Swift is great enough that, compounded with Gulliver's errors, it has led readers to the conclusion that Gulliver's remarks on mankind as Yahoos are exactly Swift's remarks on mankind, and even that Swift must have relished the various uses to which Gulliver puts Yahoo skins towards the conclusion of his voyage. Such simplicity is probably not the case.

Instead, the close of the book depicts Gulliver in an intolerable state. He has, through his voyages, particularly in his last one, been forced to change his ideas about both the world and himself. The knowledge has been hard, and he continues to resist, in spite of the continued maladaptiveness of his view of reality. An understanding of Gulliver's state of mind at the close of the book is crucial to an understanding of the text, and there is as yet little agreement upon this matter. I suggest that Gulliver must be considered mad—not in the manner of a Wharton, but in the manner which was potential in the Drapier or the Examiner and which was realized in the Modest Proposer, as we have established earlier in this study. That is, in the manner of a reformer whose engagement with the enemy has so destroyed his illusions that his consequent cognitive reorganization is reactionary, incomplete, and maladaptive:

As to those filthy Yahoos, although there were few greater Lovers of Mankind, at that time, than myself; yet I confess I never saw any sensitive Being so detestable on all Accounts;
and the more I came near them, the more hateful they grew, while I stayed in that Country. (230; 4.2, my emphasis)

Gulliver's panegyrics and apologia for his homeland and its denizens have demonstrated the truth of his former love of mankind. Like the satirist and the reformer, like the Drapier and the Modest Proposer, Gulliver pleads for credibility and insists upon his veracity throughout the book (e.g., 291-2; 4.12), resembling the Examiner particularly in his declaration that he writes "without Party ... passion, or prejudice" (293; 4.12). Gulliver's defenses of his countrymen have demonstrated how poorly founded and how naive his love was. The ideal response to his new knowledge would be for him to love his fellow men in spite of their shortcomings. Instead, the force of his disillusionment is so great as to drive him mad.

Such a view, of course, has opponents. Dick Taylor Jr., for example, argues that "Swift did not intend that Gulliver should be viewed as having become mad, because in this state he would be beyond the realm of moral, ethical, and intellectual responsibility. Even in his misguided state in Part 4, Chapter 12, Gulliver still comments with trenchant wisdom on some serious abuses" (10). Yet, as we have seen, madness does not imply the absence of reason but rather the employment of reason toward irrational ends. In fact, throughout his career Swift has been fond of placing fundamental truths in the mouths of absurd speakers—a tactic which effectively conveys the alienation of truth from the world.

The details offered by Gulliver at the end of his final voyage resemble those of previous voyages. The Portuguese who rescue him "all
conjectured, that my Mixfortunes had impaired my Reason" (286; 4.11), and Don Pedro listens skeptically to Gulliver’s account of Houyhnhnmland: "All which he looked upon as if it were a Dream or a Vision" (287; 4.11). W. B. Carnochan has argued strongly that Don Pedro is right—that Gulliver’s voyages are no more than mental journeys. Such is probably not the case, and if it were, it would not much affect a proper reading of the satire of the work. Carnochan’s interpretation is, however, helpful in suggesting that Gulliver, like everybody else, constructs and re-constructs his own reality systems, and that he may do so repeatedly over time. The point of the satire, however, is the horribly dysfunctional nature of the reality system which Gulliver has adopted at the close of the book.

While the skepticism which Gulliver meets at the end of this voyage resembles that of other voyages, it would be a mistake to conclude that he necessarily will adjust eventually to his return. Such a conclusion has given rise to the "Plato’s cave" line of interpretation, suggesting that Gulliver has been dazzled by the truth but will eventually be able to live in the sunlight of reason and truth. At the close of the work, however, Gulliver tells us that it has been five years since his return. In light of his apparent perpetuation of his rage, his indignation, and his self-loathing over this period of time, suppositions about his eventual recovery seem ill-grounded.

And Gulliver’s behavior is incontrovertibly absurd at the end of the book. His adulation of the Houyhnhnms becomes itself irrational
in his seeking the companionship of his horses, who though they have no vices similarly have no reason. In Swift's early work, establishing his commitment to moderation and to common sense, *The Sentiments of a Church of England Man*, Swift makes clear his Shaftesburian sense of how his satire works: "I desire no Stronger Proof that an Opinion must be false, than to find very great Absurdities annexed to it" (*PW* 2: 22). As we have seen, one of the trademarks of a Swiftian madman is his singularity (and this is the point at which the madman overlaps with the Christian hero), and Gulliver is nothing if not singular. Indeed, his retreat from the world indicates that he treasures his singularity. Another passage in Swift's early prose piece makes clear the standards by which Gulliver is to be judged:

A Man of tolerable Reason, some Experience, and willing to be instructed, may apprehend he is got into a wrong Opinion, although the whole Course of his Mind, and Inclination, would persuade him to believe it true: He may be convinced that he is in an Error, although he doth not see where it is; by the bad Effects of it in the common Conduct of his Life; and by observing those Persons, for whose Wisdom, and Goodness he hath the greatest Deference, to be of a contrary Sentiment. (*PW* 2: 15)

Gulliver's resistance to further truths, perhaps for fear of further disillusionment, however, will not allow him to adjust his point of view in light of either the poor effects upon his life or the opinions of those, like Don Pedro, for whom he reluctantly admits respect. Gulliver himself remains unteachable.

One of Gulliver's behaviors in particular signals his madness. His obsessive sensitivity to smell seems to be a reworking of a
description of a melancholic madman given by More in *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, which we know Swift had read:

> A French Poet, who using in a favor *Unguentum populeum* to anoint his temples to conciliate sleep, took such a conceit against the smell of that ointment, that for many years he imagined every one that came near him to scent of it; and therefore he would let no man talk with him but aloof off, nor would he wear any new clothes, because he fancied they smelt of that ointment; but in all other things he was wise and discreet and would talk as sensibly as other men. (8)

Like Peter and Jack in the *Tale*, Gulliver's madness manifests itself in fixations and obsessions. Still, although Gulliver is mad, much of what he has to say is sane. Swift himself sounds very Gulliverian in his *Thoughts Upon Various Subjects* when he writes: "I NEVER wonder to see Men wicked, but I often wonder to see them unashamed" (*PW* 4: 251).

The satire of the fourth book of the *Travels*, then, is directed against not only the mad world of Yahoo-like men, whose reason is in service to their corruption, but also against the madness of men, like Swift himself, who stand apart from that world and hope to reform it or to make it feel the effects of their lashes. Swift recognizes the practical untenability of the proud Gulliverian attitude of a satirist like Rochester: "I'd be a *Dog*, a *Monkey*, or a *Bear* / Or any thing but that vain *Animal* / Who is so proud of being rational" (*Satyre* 5-7).

The satirist, like the Tale-teller, with his pride and his expectation of changing the world, could easily find himself a place in the Academy of Lagado.

Swift, by implicitly distancing himself from Gulliver in his laughter at Gulliver, implicitly claims to have maintained the self-knowledge and consequent humility that Gulliver lacks. Gulliver,
though disillusioned about the world, clings to his illusions about himself. The battle is waged daily, he confesses, as he now habitually looks "to behold my Figure often in a Glass, and thus if possible habituate myself by Time to tolerate the Sight of a human Creature" (295; 4.12). This is, to be sure, a marked improvement over his past avoidance of mirrors and self-reflection, but Gulliver's efforts toward self-knowledge and more importantly towards self-acceptance are, at the close of the book, unsuccessful.

Gulliver is, then, the consummate example of what Robert Elliott has characterized as "the satirist satirized." Like Alceste and Timon, Gulliver retreats into self-exile: "Assuming god-like prerogatives, they damn all men; and because they cannot thrust the world into outer darkness, they exile themselves" (Power of Satire 220). Swift, like many of the butts of his satires, knows very well the pleasures and temptations of solipsism. Gulliver retreats to the stables, surrounding himself with creatures reminiscent of a world unavailable to him, and hiding from the reality of his condition. Like the Tale-teller, he becomes a symbol for all of Swift's misgivings about his satire, and his fear that he himself, like his enemies, may be driven mad by pride.

The pride of Gulliver in denouncing the pride of man is the crucial paradox that culminates from Swift's introspections and doubts, and has been well-explored by other critics. As Samuel Holt Monk comments, Gulliver in his final outburst, demonstrates the proud "gratitude of the Pharisee--'Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other
men" (70). Spinoza summarizes the eighteenth-century disapprobation of pride as follows:

Thinking too highly of self, in view of the limitations of human nature is called pride ("superbia"), and is a kind of madness wherein a man dreams with his eyes open, thinking he can do all things which he follows with his imagination, and which therefore he regards as real, and exults in them as long as he cannot imagine those things which cut off their existence or determine his own power of action. (Ethics 3, prop. 26)

Commonly, pride is considered to be anti-social, for thinking too highly of oneself causes one to think too poorly of others. In the case of the satirist, however, or in the case of Gulliver, the course of pride is reversed: by thinking too lowly of others, he comes to think too highly of himself.

Yet the final paradoxical irony, as demonstrated by the effect of Gulliver's concluding harangue, is that pride offends nothing but itself. In satirizing Gulliver, Swift acknowledges his own pride. And in taking offense at Gulliver's pride, the reader implicitly acknowledges his own offended self-esteem. In the close of the Travels, then, as in that of "The Day of Judgment," all are damned—unless redeemed by the ability to laugh at themselves. Laughter at oneself reveals the presence and the effect of conscience, and conscience in the Swiftian psychology keeps one both sane and potentially virtuous.

* * * * *

In the works of Swift, then, all risk satiric damnation just as all risk madness. The traditional Greek hero is shown for what Swift
and many of his contemporaries believed him truly to be: a madman in a hero's costume. But the exposé is exposed as well. Even the Christian hero, even the vir bonus, and even the satirist himself run the risk of turning into mad parodies of their own virtues, for in their own heroic attempts to reform mankind, they may lose sight of their own fallen humanity. Moreover, the satirist, in stripping away hypocrisy, risks the destruction of the last shred of man's means to virtue. And in his attacks upon vanity and pretension, he risks going mad himself with pride.

Power and conscience appear to be generally irreconcilable in a mad and immoral world. To appropriate power, one needs to abandon conscience and so go mad. To maintain conscience, one needs to forego power, and thus remain impotent against the world. Only a very few men can simultaneously balance power and conscience, and those only for a most limited time, after which they are destined to exile or death because a mad world will not tolerate their opposition or their success for long.

While, as we have seen, the traditional hero came under attack in the late seventeenth century, finally being abandoned by Dryden in his late works, the fear of the universal threat of madness was increasing. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the individual vision of the hero was increasingly suspect, and in a nation exhausted by both civil and international strife, the martial hero was often suspect. The Renaissance idealization of man's potential, which had manifested itself in the continued proliferation of heroic literature, was
noticeably being channeled into the optimism of science, the enthusiasm of literature and religion, and the unabashed construction of the machinery of power in politics. Recognizing the heroic aspirations and personalities present in these trends, Swift seized the traditional hero himself as a satiric emblem in an attack against the individual vision and the ideal of individualism which he saw as the root causes of dangerous revolutions in politics, religion, and learning. The asocial, amoral, and frequently mad hero of the Greeks, formerly the emblem of man's potential for transcendence of his self and society, was easily and rapidly converted in the mock-heroic to a strong indictment of the mad pride of man.

In the truly admirable personalities offered by Swift—in the Drapier, in the self-portraits throughout his poetry, and in the sextumvirate in Gulliver's Travels—we find an alternate model and an alternate definition of heroism, the *vir bonus*: a man capable of achieving the honor of the traditional Greek hero, in battle or in politics, but reluctant to engage in such affairs. That is, a hero who is eminently sane. Swift's heroes do their duty, partaking of the Roman virtue of Cicero and Brutus, but they do not actively seek glory, for they are informed by Christian conscience that the glory of the world is ultimately meaningless. Swift's fear of the dangers of pride and egoism leads him to suggest that a true hero is most often a retiring person whose circumstances and whose sense of justice ultimately compel him to take action, but who otherwise would not try to change the world, knowing that the risks therein are too great.
With the eclipse of the traditional hero at the turn of the century, the English gentleman stepped in to take his place as the bourgeois cultural hero. Such a hero offers a less daring but still transcendent virtue. As subsequent discussions during the age indicate, the gentleman--through education, breeding, and taste--transcends the brutish lot of mankind. In the example of their irony, Dryden, Swift, and Pope had offered a model for just such a gentleman. The cool polished exterior of style and wit serves as a means to the preservation of sanity, covering over the rage and restlessness within, which would do more harm than good if ventilated freely. In one of his earliest works, Swift had praised Lord Sommers precisely for his ability to contain his mad heroic rage beneath the demeanor of a gentleman, "so that his Breast hath been seen to heave, and his Eyes to sparkle with Rage, in those very moments when his Words and the Cadence of his Voice were in the humblest and softest manner" (The Four Last Years, PW 7: 5-6). In the manner and disposition of Sommers, as in the cold disdainful effects of irony and satire, Swift discovered a means to socialize the heroic disposition.

Irony and laughter offered Swift the means out of the dilemma which he had discerned throughout his works between retreat, leading to continued corruption of the world, and engagement with the world which leads potentially to frustration and mad rage. Irony simultaneously attacks and retreats, releases in words the rage and restlessness of the satirist and releases in laughter the simple joy of living that can momentarily hide the absurdity of the sane man in a mad society.
As Sartre points out, irony says and then it unsays (Being and Nothingness 87). Moreover, laughter is ultimately social. Swift may retreat into the corner to laugh, but he always invites us to join him. Swift lived most vibrantly and still lives through the continued laughter which he brings to his readers. At the same time, when he turns the laughter against himself, he brings it to bear upon us as well. The laughter serves simultaneously as the bait and the teeth in the trap.

The only metaphysical principle universally endorsed by Swift and the Scriblerians, enunciated by both the Tale-teller and Martin Scriblerus, is the proximity or contingency of bathos and sublimity. Throughout his works, Swift demonstrates this contingency in terms of the hero and the satirist, both of whom strive for the sublimity of virtue but end frequently in the bathos of madness. The only escape is through retreat, as Temple, Sancroft, Gulliver, and finally Swift himself discovered. In the works of Swift, particularly towards the end of his career in "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift" and in the final pages of Gulliver's Travels, self-satire directed against the satirist as hero offers Swift the means of conscientious retreat he needed to stay sane himself by maintaining his consciousness of his own pride. In his final radical compromise, Swift, the satirist as hero, becomes both bathetic and sublime.

In Swift's late publications and letters, his savage indignation seems to have abated. There is nothing like the fury of his previous writing in, for example, the Drapier's letters:
If so wretched a State of Things would allow it, methinks I could have a malicious Pleasure, after all the Warning I have in vain given the Publick, at my own Peril, for Several Years past...

Wisdom crieth in the Streets; because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof. I also will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh. (An Answer to a Paper, PW 12: 22-3)

Instead, Swift seems, in a triumph of Christian humility, to have arrived at a resigned sense of his own absurdity, as well as that of others. Perhaps this is his greatest similarity to Gulliver, who concedes in his letter to Sympson:

I must freely confess, that since my last Return, some corruptions of my Yahoo Nature have revived in me by Conversing with a few of your Species, and particularly those of mine own Family, by an unavoidable Necessity; else I should never have attempted so absurd a Project as that of reforming the Yahoo Race in this Kingdom; but, I have now done with all such visionary Schemes forever. (8)

Swift too had done with all such schemes, and in fact seems well-satisfied with being done. The letter to Sympson is dated April 2, 1727. Some critics have made much, too much perhaps, of this date having been Easter. That a glimmer of a resurrection may be seen in the letter is probably true, but too much Christian allegorizing clouds the issue. Perhaps the most important feature of the date is that it follows April Fool's Day, long a day of celebration on the Swiftian calendar. The letter and the date promise, in effect, that Swift will no longer make a fool of the world, and that he will no longer allow the world to make a fool out of him.
Thus, Swift ended his career with retreat—like Temple and Sancroft. Such a retreat as his, in Ireland, is much like the exile he had seen undergone by others he admired: Oxford, Pope, and Gay. In his alienation, he no doubt felt the psychological exile of Gulliver as well. But even before Gulliver's Travels, Swift had found in laughter a more subtle means of retreat, his means of disarming himself as well as disarming his reader, and Swift's humor is the quality of his work which consistently attracts his readers, in spite of its frequently mordant nature. Ultimately, perhaps, the Swiftian hero is the man who remains, in spite of his isolation, alienation, and indignation, able to maintain his conscience and thus his sanity by means of a good laugh. After all his insistence upon the depravity and degeneration of mankind, after his merciless attacks upon the politics and the literature of his age, his humor nonetheless pervades his pages, offering both his readers and himself, against what he saw as heroic odds, a respite from madness.
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