



rhetoric and Philosophy in Swift's "A Tale of a Tub".

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Abstract

My aim is to show that Swift's rhetorical method in the Tale is determined by his adherence to a tradition of political philosophy which held that there is a radical distinction between the philosopher, or lover of knowledge; and the non-philosopher, or lover of delusion. In this ultimately Platonic view, 'noble lies' are thought to be more useful to the generality of mankind than certain truths which weaken the fabric of society. The philosopher must work with illusions rather than attempting to destroy them; in fact, to be of any use to the state, he must vigorously maintain opinions which he secretly believes to be false. If he wishes to speak to his philosophical readers as well, his text must contain a second, concealed level which can be uncovered by readers with enquiring minds, but which is not apparent to the non-philosophical majority.

I suggest that the forceful defence of Anglicanism in the Tale is Swift's popular level, and is secretly contradicted by an argument addressed to the philosophical reader, in which Swift admits that established opinions - among which we can number not only Anglicanism but Christianity itself - are false, but asserts that it would nevertheless be folly to discard them. Form and content are thus perfectly welded, as Swift practises exactly what he preaches. The Tale's rhetorical method is shaped by a dual aim: to lead on the enquiring reader to its deepest levels, and to exclude 'superficial' readers from all but a defence of healthy illusions. The Tale encourages two types of response because what is beneficial to one type of reader is not so to the other. This study treats equally of form and content because the Tale both utilizes and illustrates the principles which it secretly advocates.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of Ruth Alice White (nee Sedgwick), and I would also like to thank Howell, John and Mattie for their support.

Preface.

Like many another young cynic, the first thing that struck me about the Tale was the destructive power of its wit. I was not interested in making the careful distinction between the stripping away of "real prejudices" and nihilistic, indiscriminate ridicule, which Swift outlines in the "Apology" to the Tale. When I started my research my plan was either to conduct a highly technical analysis of the Tale's use of metaphor, or to mount a systematic criticism of attempts to show a hidden unity beneath the work's apparent multiplicity, all of which seemed to me inadequate. My sceptical enquiry into the Tale's artistic coherence led me to examine the discussions of the esoteric which seemed to me the one common factor in the digressions. This led me to wonder why esoteric communication received so much attention in the early modern period. When I returned to the Tale after attempting to answer this question, I was humiliated to find that I had been deliberately excluded from its deeper argument, and that both my attraction to, and my misunderstanding of, the work, had been carefully calculated by Swift.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of Ruth Alice White (née Boddington), and I would also like to thank Newell, John and Hattie for their support.

Chapter I. "A Digression on Madness".

I. "A Digression on Madness" - The Philosophy of Rhetoric.

Does A Tale of a Tub have a single, central teaching? It does not appear so. Martin's role in the religious allegory is so unobtrusive that it hardly sheds light on Swift's positive beliefs. In the digressions on learning the persona veers in bewildering fashion between a variety of intellectual positions.

Proclamations of a desire to teach profound truths alternate with denials that his work is anything but innocent diversion.¹ Then there is the notorious problem of the relationship between the digressions and the allegory.

Paulson, in the most thorough attempt to find unity in the Tale, claims that gnosticism, or the rebellion of the individual against ecclesiastical tradition and authority, is the principle target of Swift's attack (Paulson, Theme and Structure). However even if you accept Paulson's concentration on the main allegory, his theory seems to fit Jack's revolutions better than Martin's revolt against Peter, which is surely the assertion of the individual judgement against authority, which, although "properly subordinated to the law of the will" (Theme and Structure, p. 227), finds itself called upon to decide upon a compromise between the pure and the corrupted law; a compromise for which there is no precedent or authority. Of the

¹ Paulson, Theme and Structure in Swift's "Tale of a Tub" (1960), p. 173.

other efforts to uncover the underlying theme of the Tale, many take up a position almost opposite to the one just discussed. Whereas Paulson finds Swift's norms in traditional opinions - what Swift calls the 'common forms' - Rosenheim, who concentrates more on the digressions, finds the Tale unified by its attack on smug, superficial delusion and Swift's determination to lay bare a terrible and barely achieved truth¹. It is difficult to believe that Paulson and Rosenheim are reading the same book, and yet their views are complementary in a strange way. Just as the logic of Paulson's argument makes it difficult for him to criticise Sartorialism, in which the social structures remain intact, so the logic of Rosenheim's argument creates the same difficulty with regard to Jack, who endangers the social order in his search for the true form of the coat beneath Peter's ornaments.

We must then agree with that early critic of the Tale who declared, "how difficult it is everywhere to judge what his views are."² This difficulty creates a secondary problem - it is not enough to discover a meaning in the Tale; one must also explain why it was couched in this obscure form. If Swift defends the common ecclesiastical tradition against individualism, why does the common reader find it so difficult? If the attack is on glittering but defensive surfaces why is the Tale's own appearance so glittering and delusive?

Most of the interpretations of the Tale fall into one of these two opposing camps. Broadly speaking, they either see

¹ Rosenheim, Swift and the Satirist's Art (1963), pp. 204-6.

² Le Clerc (1721), in Swift: The Critical Heritage, ed. Williams (1970), p. 60.

Swift as defending commonly accepted opinions or as favouring the intrepid philosopher who sees the delusive nature of these opinions. Thus we find Paulson wondering whether "...the insights commonly shared are more profound than those lone flights or dives, when, like the whale, you come up with bloodshot eyes " (Theme and Structure , p.233). Rosenheim, on the other hand, can claim that, for Swift, "the ultimate heroic act is an act of discovery."¹ We can link these two views of the Tale to the imagery of alternating surfaces and depths, which, Clark has shown, informs the work. Clark argues that the two extremes are played off against each other and that it is arbitrary to isolate either one.² I would argue that the Tale's ability to support contradictory readings points us to a problem, which concerns the respective merits of what one could very broadly describe as philosophy and common opinion. The moment in the Tale when that problem is revealed most clearly, and when the most general significance is attached to the 'surface' and the 'depths' is the famous, central crux in the Digression on Madness:

Having therefore so narrowly past thro' this intricate Difficulty, the Reader will, I am sure, agree with me in the Conclusion; that if the Moderns mean by Madness, only a Disturbance or Transposition of the Brain, by Force of certain Vapours issuing up from the lower Faculties; Then has this Madness been the Parent of all those mighty Revolutions, that have happened in Empire, in Philosophy, and in Religion. For, the Brain, in its natural position

- ¹ Rosenheim, Swift and the Satirist's Art , p.207.
Pinkus, "The Upside Down World of Swift's A Tale of a Tub" (1963), is another who finds the Tale to be unified by its attack on form without inner content.
- ² Clark, Form and Frenzy in Swift's "A Tale of a Tub" (1970), pp.62-8.

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 Reason 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. 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; 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. Those Entertainments and Pleasures we most value in Life, are such as Dupe and play the Wag with the Senses. For, if we take an Examination of what is generally understood by Happiness, as it has Respect, either to the Understanding or the Senses, we shall find all its Properties and Adjuncts will herd under this short Definition: That, it is a perpetual Possession of being well Deceived. And first, with Relation to the Mind or Understanding; 'tis manifest, what mighty Advantages Fiction has over Truth; and the Reason is just at our Elbow; because Imagination can build nobler Scenes and produce more wonderful Revolutions than Fortune or Nature will be at Expence to furnish. Nor is Mankind so much to blame in his Choice, thus determining him, if we consider that the Debate meerly lies between Things past, and Things conceived; and so the Question is only this; Whether things that have Place in the Imagination, may not as properly be said to Exist, as those that are seated in the Memory; which may be justly held in the Affirmative, and very much to the Advantage of the former, since This is acknowledged to be the Womb of things, and the other allowed to be no more than the Grave. Again, if we take this Definition of Happiness, and examine it with Reference to the Senses, it will be acknowledged wonderfully adapt. How fade and insipid do all Objects accost us that are not convey'd in the vehicle of Delusion? How shrunk is every Thing, as it appears in the Glass of Nature? So, that if it were not for the Assistance of Artificial Mediums, false Lights, refracted Angles, Varnish and Tinsel; there would be a mighty Level in the Felicity and Enjoyments of Mortal Men. If this were seriously considered by the world, as I have a certain Reason to suspect it hardly will; Men would no longer reckon among their high Points of Wisdom, the Art of exposing weak Sides, and publishing Infirmities; an Employment in my opinion, neither better nor worse than that of Unmasking, which I think, has never been allowed fair usage, either in the World or the Play-House.

In the Proportion that Credulity is a more peaceful Possession of the Mind, than Curiosity, so far preferable is that Wisdom, which converses about the Surface, to that pretended Philosophy which enters into the Depth of Things, and then comes gravely back with Informations and

Discoveries, that in the inside they are good for nothing. The two Senses, to which all Objects first address themselves, are the Sight and the Touch; These never examine farther than the Colour, the Shape, the Size, and whatever other Qualities dwell, or are drawn by Art upon the Outward of Bodies; and then comes Reason officiously, with Tools for cutting, and opening, and mangling, and piercing, offering to demonstrate, that they are not of the same consistence quite thro'. Now, I take all this to be the last Degree of Perverting Nature: one of whose Eternal Laws it is, to put her best Furniture forward. And therefore, in order to save the Charges of all such expensive Anatomy for the Time to come; I do here think fit to inform the Reader, that in such Conclusions as these, Reason is certainly in the Right; and that in most Corporeal Beings, which have fallen under my Cognizance, the Outside hath been infinitely preferable to the In. Whereof I have been farther convinced from some late experiments. Last Week I saw a Woman flay'd, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her Person for the worse. Yesterday I ordered the Carcass of a Beau to be stript in my Presence; when we were all amazed to find so many unsuspected Faults under one Suit of Cloaths: Then I laid open his Brain, his Heart, and his Spleen; but, I plainly perceived at every Operation, that the farther we proceeded, we found the Defects encrease upon us in Number and Bulk: from all which, I justly formed this Conclusion to my self; That whatever Philosopher or Projector can find out an Art to sodder and patch up the Flaws and Imperfections of Nature, will deserve much better of Mankind, and teach us a more useful Science, than that so much in present Esteem, of widening and exposing them (like him who held Anatomy to be the ultimate End of Physick.) And he, whose Fortunes and Dispositions have placed him in a convenient Station to enjoy the Fruits of this noble Art; He that can with Epicurus content his Ideas with the Films and Images that fly off upon his Senses from the Superficies of Things; Such a Man truly wise, creams 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.

(A Tale of a Tub (1704), pp. 170-4)

The first thing that strikes us about these paragraphs is their extreme generality. It is the value of knowledge itself that is under discussion and it seems unimportant to wonder whether the experiments of the Royal Society or the Protestant rediscovery of the original Christian revelation are the primary subject. This

should encourage us to believe that the specific satires in the Tale all point to some such theoretical formulation as happiness is "a perpetual Possession of being well Deceived"; or happiness based on illusion is worthless; or some combination of the two views such as knowledge is only to be valued insofar as it leads to happiness. If the digression does not give us the "basis of conviction" from which Swift's satire stems in quite the straightforward way that Rosenheim argues (Rosenheim, Swift and the Satirist's Art, p.191), it surely implies that there is such a basis.

Leavis argues that there is a double betrayal of the reader in these paragraphs¹. In the first part of the first paragraph one finds Swift's norm in the 'common forms', just as Paulson does, and his satirical target seems to be 'enthusiasm', seen as an instance of man's general tendency to delude himself. The first reversal occurs when Swift begins to argue for the "mighty Advantages Fiction has over Truth". The love of delusion is admitted to be so general that it must no longer be seen as a fault but rather an inevitable part of the human condition, which it would be foolish to disturb, since the truth would be merely painful and disruptive. As in several of Swift's works we are bewildered to see satire turn to moral philosophy. Steele phrases it thus: "But Swift finds so many, and such apparently ineradicable, instances of wicked and absurd behaviour that the world looks to be a fools world au fond. This means that a man is a fool, by the world's estimation, not to come to terms with it."² Gulliver's final return to England is a famous parallel, and

¹ Leavis, "The Irony of Swift" (1934)ed. Tuveson.

² Steele, Jonathan Swift: Preacher and Jester (1978)p.59; see also Traugott, "Swift's Allegory : The Yahoo and the Man of Mode" (1963-4),p.13.

we could mention also some of Swift's poems, where normal life is seen to depend on illusion¹; or the Argument against Abolishing Christianity (1708), where 'real' Christianity, ostensibly Swift's norm, is suddenly identified with an impossible ideal:

I hope no Reader imagines me so weak to stand up in the defence of real Christianity; such as used in primitive Times (if we may believe the Authors of those Ages) to have an Influence upon Mens Belief and Actions: To offer at the Restoring of that, would indeed be a wild Project; it would be to dig up Foundations; to destroy at one Blow all the Wit, and half the Learning of the Kingdom; to Break the entire Frame and Constitution of Things; to ruin Trade, extinguish Arts and Sciences with the Professors of them; in short, to turn our Courts, Exchanges and Shops into Desarts: And would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace, where he advises the Romans, all in a body, to leave their City, and seek a new seat in some remote Part of the World, by way of Cure for the Corruption of their manners. (Works, II, 27-8)

The reader, according to Leavis, is confirmed in his hostility towards the 'unmasker' throughout the second paragraph until the 'credulous' man is shown to be a 'Fool among Knaves'. At this moment, Leavis argues, satire turns to negativity - there is literally nothing left. Leavis concludes that Swift had a pathological preference for surfaces which led him to support nothing more than the "shallowest complacencies of Augustan common sense". Several contemporary critics agree broadly with Leavis, finding the energy of the "Digression" generated out of an inward panic and emptiness. Swift is seen as "the Theatre of a battle, the register of furiously conflicting tensions" beyond his power to control.

Leavis describes well the problems set by the "Digression": the 'common forms', the vantage point from which delusion is

¹ Rawson, "The Nightmares of Strephon" (1977), pp.68-9.

² Traugott, "A Tale of A Tub" (1971)p.111-2; Adams, Strains of

attacked, are themselves shown to be a necessary part of the human condition. His reading effectively refutes those, like Rosenheim, who find a simple support for the depths in these paragraphs.¹ Such a simplicity seems to be gained by fudging the issues: Quintana, for instance, claims that, "it would be fatal to be misled by the irony of this passage to a conclusion directly opposite to Swift's meaning. As an anti-intellectualist he taught, it is true, that we should restrain every impulse to indulge in speculation outside the bounds of common sense. But the search for moral truth beneath the concealments of false appearances not only did not constitute intellectual aberration but was the prime function of reason."² It seems strange to talk of a 'common sense' which defines happiness completely differently from the way it is "generally understood" or does not consider happiness important at all. This is not to deny that the anatomist is like the satirist - a tried and tested analogy³ -, or that we sense Swift's own moral realism in the description of the stripped Beau, but simply to point out that here it is precisely a moral realism such as Swift's that can only be reached by an act of speculation which is outside common sense. Swift, in his own terms, cannot be both a moral philosopher and an anti-intellectualist, and to the extent that he criticizes intellectualism he is repelled also by a fundamental component of

Discord (1958), p.159; Rawson, Gulliver and the Gentle Reader (1973), pp.38-42; Dyson, "Swift: The Metamorphosis of Irony" (1958), p.80.

- 1 Elliot, "Swift's Tale of a Tub : An Essay in Problems of Structure" (1951); Ehrenpreis, "Mr. Swift and his Contemporaries" (1962), pp.222-3.
- 2 Quintana, The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift (1936), p.96; Quintana later reverses his view and finds support for Baconian common sense in the 'credulity' paragraph - "Two Paragraphs in A Tale of a Tub Section IX" (1975-6).
- 3 Randolph, "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory" (1941).

his own satirical urge.

Aware of these problems, Leavis opts for the 'surface' - the "shallowest complacencies of Augustan common sense". The curious thing here is that this conclusion does not seem to be justified by his own argument. The second betrayal is the revelation that since the 'common forms' are not just stable and healthy political and ecclesiastical traditions, but can be innovations propagated by 'Knaves'; the "Serene Peaceful State" of not looking beyond those forms amounts to folly. As Leavis says in another part of his article, satire turns to negativity, and that means complete negativity - there is no more place for the 'common forms' than for 'curiosity'. In Leavis's own terms it is as arbitrary to say Swift believed only in "shallow complacencies" as it is to say that he believed in "heroic acts of discovery". One can find the cause of this illogicality in Leavis's revulsion at the notion of glossing over unpleasant truths. Ultimately he attacks Swift for doing this rather than for his "negativity".¹

Donoghue tries to eliminate this inconsistency, which seems inescapable for all critics who see the Tale as defending surfaces: he argues that 'Fool' in the final sentence is not used in a derogatory sense, but refers to the wise fool who leads a retired life when the whole world is mad. He believes there is "abundant evidence that Swift feared the depths and detested the urge to challenge them... He was not, after all, one of the great questioners". Donoghue speaks as though it were obvious that Swift hated the depths - however we have already seen Rosenheim's diametrically

¹ See also McKenzie, Swift: Reason and some of its Consequences (1940).

opposed belief that for Swift, "the ultimate heroic act is an act of discovery". Much therefore depends on Donoghue's analysis of 'fool'. We can surely agree that 'fool' can have a eulogistic sense in similar contexts, and we can also agree that the life of retirement from the world is Swift's subject here. What is difficult to accept is that Swift approves of the retired life. Rather he seems to be making the same point as More's persona makes to Hythloday in the first part of Utopia. To be passive in a deluded world is to leave the world and oneself at the mercy of the deluders. Can we believe that Swift is asking the reader to do something which the Tale itself does not do - watch contentedly as the 'common forms' are dismantled by 'enthusiasts'? Swift forces us to realize that the life in the 'common forms' is only as good as those forms, and that the forms are easily attacked.¹

Problems of this sort have led critics to search for some sort of compromise.² A certain vagueness enters in here, perhaps because of the absurdity of an instruction such as, "Enquire, but not too deeply". How would one know when to stop enquiring without following one's enquiries through? Are we to say, "Swift commends but does not idolize intellectual curiosity. The pursuit of knowledge à l'outrance is, he believes, in certain circumstances, no more legitimate than the unbridled pursuit of power."³ What does it mean "to commend but not to idolize curiosity"? Such a

¹ Donoghue, Jonathan Swift: A Critical Introduction (1971), pp.7-8, 55-7; see also French, "Swift, Temple and 'A Digression on Madness'", (1963-4).

² Voigt, Swift and the Twentieth Century (1964), p.60; Price, Swift's Rhetorical Art. A Study in Structure and Meaning (1953); Williams, Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (1968) p.145; Clayborough, The Grotesque in English Literature (1965) p.117.

³ Reilly, Jonathan Swift. 'The Brave Desponder' (1982), p.167.

notion makes nonsense of the image of surfaces and depths, which implies that enquiry leads to a sudden and complete penetration to the truth with no halfway point (although one could argue that the 'common forms' represent a state where delusion is minimized, rather as Martin's coat has the minimum number of ornaments). The real difficulty with this view is one that it shares with the view that Swift is entirely behind the praise of 'credulity': for Swift to try and limit the enquiries of others he must himself, like his persona, have followed those enquiries through to their unpleasant conclusion. To defend delusion one must be a realist who hates one's own realism. It is this which has led to the view that Swift is deeply confused in these paragraphs.

Is there any way to resolve this difficulty? I believe one has already been hinted at. Donoghue sees Swift as defending, not folly in a fool's world, but the wise man who goes along with folly in a fool's world. In fact the persona's conclusion is ambiguous. He supports first the "Philosopher or Projector who can find out an Art to sodder and patch up the Flaws and Imperfections of Nature," and then the "truly wise" man who "creams off Nature"; but the latter is the beneficiary of the former, rather than being identical with him, for the "philosopher" must in the first place see the "Flaws and Imperfections of Nature" in order to patch them up. The persona himself, having glimpsed the depths, can only "cream off nature" if he is an expert at double-think. Similarly, Swift shifts imperceptibly in the first paragraph from a discussion of the pleasures of being "well deceived" to an attack on unmasking.

These considerations lead one to wonder whether we are misled when we consider the subject of these paragraphs to be the extent to which we should try to discover the truth. Kelling, for

one, argues, in a strangely neglected article, that the subject is the methods by which the truth can be communicated once it is known.¹ According to Kelling, 'credulity' and 'curiosity' represent the extremes between which Anglican rhetorical theory attempted to steer: the Nonconformists' appeal to the imagination was considered deceitful, but on the other hand plain reason was considered powerless unless adorned with wit, brought down to the level of practical morality, and given a concrete form fitted to work on the common passions. The 'common forms' are, in other words, the popular version of the truth known to the clergy.²

Kelling's view can shed some light on the discussion of 'curiosity'. Here, as with the discussion of "creaming off Nature", there is a double concern - with personal enquiry, and with the communication of the discoveries made thereby: "... that pretended Philosophy which enters into the depth of Things, and then comes gravely back with Informations and Discoveries, that in the inside they are good for nothing." For Kelling, the important word here would be "gravely" - the 'curious' man is attacked for his manner of expression rather than for the discoveries themselves. This is born out by the persona's comment on the flayed woman - " you

¹ Kelling, "Reason in Madness: A Tale of a Tub" (1954); criticized by Voigt, Swift and the Twentieth Century, p.59; Paulson, Theme and Structure, p.4.

² Kelling provides convincing evidence for his view that the Tale's subject is rhetoric. He argues that the Introduction to the Tale is a proper divisio despite its seeming lack of organization. The divisio is the introductory section of a declamatory work in the classical rhetorical tradition, where the subject is formally analysed into the various sections which will structure the discourse which follows. The subject of the Tale is here revealed to be rhetoric, or the methods by which to gain power over a large group of people through words. "Poetry and Faction," and Grub Street entertainments are mentioned alongside preaching as principal subdivisions. Interestingly, the Introduction first considers philosophy in this connection, but dismisses it as ineffectual, being "often out of Sight, and ever out of hearing", (Tale, p.56). The three "machines" are admittedly subphilosophical but necessary because of the powerlessness of philosophy.

will hardly believe how much it altered her Person for the worse"- which is notable for its dryness, and lack of concern with the ordinary human reaction to his 'discovery'. The theory allows us to avoid the difficulty, mentioned previously, that Swift seems to satirise his own moral realism at this point. In Kelling's view he may seem to satirize the very act of looking beneath the surface, but his real attack is on the gravity with which some philosophers record their discoveries. Swift's own satire of course is never 'grave'.

We could go further than this, however, and argue, with Rosenheim, that discovery is heroic for Swift, and that not because the discoverer is miserable himself while protecting others from the truth, like the persona, but because knowledge of the truth can lead to a sort of happiness. This would account for the contempt Swift shows for those "Entertainments (which) Dupe and play the wag with the Senses", that Leavis noticed. Moreover there are unobtrusive qualifications in the argument that happiness is the "perpetual Possession of being well Deceived": this is a definition of "what is generally understood by Happiness", which could thus reflect as much on the 'general understanding' as on happiness itself. Also, if delusion were removed, we are told, "...there would be a mighty Level in the Felicity and Enjoyments of Mortal Men." There is an ambiguity here: is 'Level' used in the same sense as when we talk of a building being 'levelled' to the ground -as a synonym for 'destruction'- or in the sense of 'limit'? If the latter, Swift is claiming no more than that happiness has natural limits, as is implied by the seemingly irrelevant word 'Mortal' -most men, he would be saying, live their lives as if they were immortal.

There is no doubt that Swift exploits the traditional

negative associations of 'curiosity'.¹ He seems to criticize an attitude which has been seen as characteristically modern: that, "however fearful the knowledge, we must embrace it like a Christian with the cross, assured that agony is the only way to salvation".² On closer inspection, Swift seems to admit the major premise of the pre-Modern attack on 'curiosity' -that knowledge is only good if it contributes to happiness- but question the minor -that knowledge of some things makes one unhappy. This impression is confirmed later in the Tale when the persona speaks of 'curiosity' as one of the few passions "riveted to the intellect" and as the "Spur in the side, that Bridle in the Mouth, that Ring in the Nose of a lazy, an impatient, and a grunting Reader" (Tale, p.203). There is no doubt that one of Swift's aims in the Tale is to excite curiosity. Therefore to deny that the curious philosopher has any part of Swift in him is to see Swift as theoretically opposed not only to his own moral realism, as we have seen, but to the very methods by which he goads the reader into speculation.³

Can we then, following Kelling, completely reverse the judgement of Leavis and Donoghue, and say that for Swift all

¹ Hoopes, Right Reason in the English Renaissance (1962), p.80; Crane, The Idea of the Humanities (1967), pp.34-5.

² Reilly, Jonathan Swift. The Brave Desponder, p.169.

³ Although Rosenheim, Elliott & others might agree with this (see above p.10) it should be noticed that this is in direct opposition to the common view of Swift as a man who distrusted speculation: see for instance Steele, Preacher and Jester, p.89; Røstvig, The Background of English Neoclassicism (1961), p.61; Morris, "Wishes as Horses" (1972-3); Fussell, The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism (1965), pp.7-8, 125; Greene, "Augustinianism and Empiricism" (1967-8); Landa, "Introduction to the Sermons" (1968); Reilly, Jonathan Swift. The Brave Desponder, p.85; as well as the works of Leavis, Donoghue and McKenzie already cited. See however Gilbert, "Knaves, Fools and Heroes" (1962), pp.62-3, for an attack on the view that Swift was a man of "profound orthodoxy" in his thought.

should aim at knowledge of the depths? What Leavis saw as Swift's revulsion from the depths is merely a warning to the rhetoricians that most men will be revolted by the truth at first unless it is properly adorned and adapted. This would fit in with much that we know about the Augustan age, in which the classical rhetorical theorists still had a wide influence.¹ Quintilian makes it quite clear that rhetoric is the art of popularizing and rendering practically effective the truths known to the philosopher.² Sheridan, for instance, is close to Quintilian when he argues that pure reason will convince very few among an audience; the preacher must "command the passion of mankind", but he must also be a philosopher: "Whilst therefore Philosophy was guarded (if I may be allowed the expression) by the priesthood of oratory, the profane and the vulgar were kept out of her sanctuary. Her doctrines were explained only by such as had studied and understood them; knowledge in those being as necessary to the orator as skill in speaking; for the latter would be vain and useless without the former."³ Sheridan goes on to attack the Church for neglecting oratory, allowing the false rhetoric of the Nonconformists to command the field.⁴ This 'neglecting of oratory' probably refers to the new antirhetoric of the Royal Society and their supporters, which here seems to be

¹ Crane, The Idea of the Humanities (1967), pp.96-9; Jack, Augustan Satire. Intention and Idiom in English Poetry 1660-1750 (1965), pp.1-13; Kristeller, Renaissance Thought and its Sources (1979), p.225; Clark, John Milton at St. Pauls (1948), pp.7-8; Williams, Pope's Dunciad (1955), p.112; Hamilton, The Two Harmonies (1963), p.128.

² Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, I, i, 10-15

³ Sheridan, British Education (1756), pp.87-112. See also Lawson, Lectures Concerning Oratory (1758). Compare Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, V, xiv, 27-35.

⁴ Sheridan, British Education, pp.152-3.

parodied in the persona's grave reports of his 'experiments'.¹ Swift would then be attacking the "cold, dry, didactick way" of the new learning, which endangered religion, "...now considered, barely in the light of truth: and...discussed, like other truths, with a dry cold unconcern, which neither interested nor influenced any one mortal on its behalf".² In order to avoid becoming 'Fools among Knaves' Swift would be urging the Anglican clergy, not to deceive, but to dress the truth up a little.

This is a plausible account, but again there are a number of objections. If these paragraphs are really about the communication of knowledge, which is assumed to be a good thing, why do they appear sometimes to be about the search for knowledge, which at least seems to be treated with disapproval? Moreover, the first paragraph bears out Kelling's view only insofar as there is a greater stress on the communication of opinions than on the forming of them. The life in the 'common forms' represents a decision not to communicate unusual ideas: "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 Reason 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." The problem for Kelling's theory is that there is no indication

¹ Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England 1500-1700 (1961), p. 365; Jones, "The Attack on Pulpit Eloquence in the Restoration" (1931). See also Glanville, On Teaching (1678).

² Delany, Revelation Examined with Candour (1732), I, preface, p. XIV.

that the 'common forms' are any closer to the truths known to the 'curious' philosopher than the 'artificial Mediums' of the 'credulous' man. The most that we could say is that the men of learning only discover their own ignorance through their learning, which leads to a scepticism, which in turn leads to a support of accepted opinion as being the safest and easiest among many opinions which are equally likely or unlikely to be true.

Perhaps it is this interpretation of 'private Infirmity' which has given rise to the view that the paragraphs are about epistemology, or what one can know, rather than what one should know.¹ The phrase seems almost deliberately vague, but the theory is suspect because it would mean that Swift is querying the very possibility of 'curious' enquiries being successful, which would make the problem confronted by the persona of the desirability of knowledge completely irrelevant. One alternative interpretation is that the learned man realizes, rather in the manner of the persona, that neither he nor anyone else is psychologically strong enough to enquire deeply into the unpleasant truths beneath the 'common forms'. This leads to the paradox, discussed above, of the unhappy wise man, shielding others from a similar unhappiness. But this man, unlike the persona, is not unhappy - his brain is in a 'state of Serenity'; moreover his doubts are not about the forming, but the propagating of 'particular notions'. This indicates that the learned man may himself enjoy enquiry, but comes to realize from a close examination of human nature, which resembles that of the 'curious' philosopher, that there is a 'stubborn Ignorance' in men which leads them to reject the truth. The learned man himself is not

¹ Quintana, "Two Paragraphs in A Tale of a Tub"; Smith, Language and Reality in Swift's 'A Tale of a Tub' (1979), p.126; Louis, Swift's Anatomy of Misunderstanding (1981), pp.62-8.

deluded; even though Swift is vague about the nature of his 'particular notions', these certainly involve a recognition of human infirmity very different from the glossy illusions of the 'credulous' man; and, moreover, they are hard to communicate, unlike the 'credulous' man's delusion.

All this points to the fact that the learned do not believe in the 'common forms'. This means that we cannot think of these 'forms' as in any sense a popularization of the truths known to the 'curious' philosopher, as Kelling argues. They are 'reasonable' in an entirely different sense from the 'officious' reason, "with tools for cutting..."; a sense which is the corollary of the persona's relativistic definition of madness as an attempt at radically changing the status quo. Nevertheless, Kelling is right in so far as the outward conformity which accompanies the inward scepticism of the learned man seems to be praised by Swift. We could perhaps take the attack on 'unmasking' as ironical, or directed only against too unadorned a manner of expressing the truth, but it is surely impossible to say that Swift favoured exposing the 'weak sides' of the 'common forms'. One can also express a doubt about Kelling's account of the stripped beau and the flayed woman - these are not just plain truths which need adornment: they are deeply unpleasant to those who pursue "what is generally understood by happiness." Once again we have to take seriously the argument against telling the truth when one knows it, and / or trying to discover the truth in the first place. Those who pass their life in the 'common forms' are wiser than those who "come gravely back with Information and Discoveries, that in the inside they are good for nothing."

But this means that we are back to where we started. If it is reasonable to conform to the accepted view, then what

platform does Swift have from which to attack his fanatic, whose "first Proselyte...is Himself, and when that is once compass'd, the Difficulty is not so great in bringing over others" ? At least we have defined the problem more exactly: Swift calls those who, like the persona, investigate beyond common opinions, but do not use their knowledge in any way, 'Fools among Knaves'. On the other hand, he attacks those who expose 'weak sides' of common opinions. A possible solution emerges when the dilemma is phrased in this way. Could there be a way of opposing the 'credulous' fanatics which does not endanger those healthier delusions which are called the 'common forms'? In other words, should the 'curious' philosopher turn rhetorician, just as Kelling suggests, but to defend, not the truth, but pious frauds or noble lies against the malign delusions propagated by the 'credulous' knave, and we might add, the destructive truths propagated by the 'curious' philosopher, whose knowledge of human infirmity has not taught him not to utter his 'particular notions' as it has done the learned who pass their lives in the 'common forms'. Several critics see Swift as advocating and himself following an approximately similar procedure. Here, more clearly than anywhere else, Swift seems to reveal the extent to which his work exists in the realm of expediency and compromise.¹ It is deeply irresponsible to disillusion the majority of people - battles against folly must be fought within the world of illusion. The man who doubts the 'common forms' may know that human nature is best

¹ Ramsay, "The Fault is in Mankind" (1973), pp.158-62; Rogers, "Swift and the Idea of Authority" (1968); Robertson, "Swift's Argument: The Fact and Fiction of Fighting with Beasts" (1976-77); Paulson, The Fiction of Satire (1967), p.140; Rawson, "The Character of Swift's Satire" (1971), pp.39-44; Price, To the Palace of Wisdom (1964), pp.181-203; Mezciems, "The Unity of Swift's Voyage to Laputa" (1977); Clayborough, The Grotesque in English Literature, p.157.

fulfilled in a society run on the principles of 'real' Christianity and the rationality of the Houyhnhnms, but he also knows that the attempt to convince others of that is fraught with difficulty, since to do so, the illusions which sustain society must be dismantled with no immediate prospect of any replacement.¹

If this is Swift's view then his rhetorical theory starts from a tension between philosophy and rhetoric. Rhetoric is not to be understood as primarily concerned with ways of enabling truth to overcome falsehood but rather with the defence of accepted traditions which the rhetorician himself can recognize as false. In his examination of the history of this tension, Seigel shows that those who took part in the Renaissance revival of rhetoric tended towards an ethical relativism which was often linked with a distorted neo-Epicureanism. He argues that they did so because, as rhetoricians, their task was practical persuasion, which tended to produce a suspicion of theoreticians who claimed there were standards beyond those of popular opinion.² Swift's 'fools among knaves' conclusion is, I believe, a rejection of such relativism. For Swift there is something beyond the standards of the community. Someone can be a 'knave' even if his opinion has been successfully propagated. Nevertheless, the standards of the community are the framework within which the philosopher as rhetorician must work.

¹ This view is borne out by the description of Brutus two paragraphs later, who "...only personated the Fool and Madman, for the Good of the Publick" (Tale, p.175; discussed below, p.208).

² Seigel, Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism (1968), Introduction, pp.xiv; pp.139-65.

For the humanist tendency towards intellectual scepticism and its link with the active life, see Rice, The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom (1958), esp.p.184; and Trinkaus, In Our Image & Likeness (1970), pp.765-71.

Even Quintilian, after a pious opening in which the relation between philosophy and rhetoric seems unproblematic, by no means objects to a pragmatic use of falsehood: "...if we are attempting to keep men of bad character to the path of virtue, we must take care not to seem to upbraid a way of life unlike our own." More startlingly, Quintilian also advises similar tricks when trying to persuade an honourable man to do something dishonourable but expedient.¹ It seems he envisages the orator, who he always stresses must be a philosopher, as seeing the limitations both of honour and of expediency, in a way that neither the honourable man nor the populace, who tend to support expediency, can do.

Aristotle's view is equally ambiguous -he begins his Rhetoric by stressing that the basic constituent of rhetoric is logical argument, but he goes on to write that one of the reasons rhetoric is useful is that, "before some audiences not even the possession of the exactest knowledge will make it easy for what we say to produce conviction. For argument based on knowledge implies instruction and there are people whom one cannot instruct. Here then, we must use, as our modes of persuasion and argument, notions possessed by everybody, as we observed in the Topics when dealing with the way to handle a popular audience."² This might give the impression that arguments based on knowledge could be used with some popular audiences, but there is a crucial link here with the teaching of the Politics that most men's reasoning about the nature of the good is partial; because it is determined by their own interests, which vary according to the community or the section of the community in which they have been brought up (Aristotle, Politics, 1280a). A good speaker must appeal to the love of freedom,

¹ Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, II, xvii, 19-28; III, viii, 31-58.

² Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1355a.

of wealth, of the traditional culture, or the will of the ruler according to whether he is speaking in a democracy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy or a tyranny (Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1365b-1366a).

Arnhart argues that when Aristotle comes to discuss general lines of argument, the examples he uses reveal that he is concerned with the tension between philosophy and popular opinion. As an example of "distinguishing the parts of an argument" Aristotle rather puzzlingly gives Socrates' question to his accusers, "What temple has he profaned? What Gods recognized by the state has he not honoured?" The next topic deals with the consequences of an argument: e.g. education leads both to unpopularity, which is bad, and wisdom, which is good; and the next, which deals with two opposed courses, each yielding both a good and a bad result, is illustrated by the priestess who advised her son not to take up public speaking, "For if you say what is right, men will hate you, if you say what is wrong, the Gods will hate you" (Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1399a). Arnhart speculates that the distinction Socrates draws in the first example is between the appearance and the reality of piety. He concludes, justifiably, from these and other examples given at this point of the book that Aristotle's view is as follows:

Both the life and the teachings of Socrates draw attention to the differences between convention and nature and between the public and private. Unlike the Sophists, however, Socrates does not want to undermine the public conventions-particularly with respect to piety- because these are necessary for supporting standards of justice that could not be maintained for most men in any other way...A noble rhetoric depends upon the widespread and unquestioning acceptance of certain standards of public morality. Although these standards may be unable to withstand rational examination, they are the only standards acceptable for most men. For if one demanded that all men rationally examine their opinion about morality, the result would be not to create rational morality, but to throw most men into such doubts about public morality that they would tend to yield to

their ignoble private desires.¹

This is not to say that Aristotle depreciates the role of reason in political affairs -on the contrary, he asserts it strongly right at the start of his Rhetoric - the syllogism as used by the rhetorician is a logical deduction from an opinion held by his audience which is only partially correct.²

Aristotle's view of the relationship between philosophy and common opinion seems to be as deeply pessimistic as Plato's. Of the philosopher Socrates says, "the whole rabble will join the maidservants in laughing at him, as from inexperience he walks blindly and stumbles into every pitfall,"³ and this is because "Philosophy,...the love of wisdom, is impossible for the multitude." This pessimism emerges as a warning to the philosopher in the Statesman :

It seems to follow that there is an invariable rule which these imitative constitutions must obey if they mean to reproduce, as far as they can, that one real constitution, which is government by a real statesman using real statecraft. They must all keep strictly to the laws once they have been laid down and never transgress written enactments or established national customs.⁴

I will argue that Plato believes it is exactly the man who sees the defects of the laws most clearly who can also be their most vigorous defender.⁵

¹ Arnhart, Aristotle on Political Reasoning (1981), pp.150-3.

² Arnhart, Aristotle on Political Reasoning, p.7; Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1354a, 1357a.

³ Plato, Theaetetus, 174c; Republic, 494a.

⁴ Plato, Statesman, 300e-301a; see also Anastaplo, "Human Being and Citizen" (1964). Strauss, The City & the Man (1964), p.125; Cairns, "Plato as Jurist", (1942), p.289.

⁵ I agree with Quintilian (Institutio Oratoria, II, xv, 24-32) that Plato's attacks on rhetoric are themselves rhetorical and do not represent his considered view -- see above, pp.90-1.

I would suggest then that the only escape from the dilemma Swift sets is for the wise man to defend the 'common forms' against the 'knaves'. Even here the problems set by the digression do not end. There is, as we have seen, an implicit distinction between those who believe in the 'common forms', and those who do not disturb them partly because of their recognition of the "stubborn Ignorance" of those who do not believe in them. It is precisely this "stubborn Ignorance" which allows the 'knave' to proselytise these latter so easily. Swift implies that only those who do not believe in the 'forms' can judge as to which are worth defending. This leads one to wonder how defenders of the 'forms' are to be created, since they must possess a knowledge which Swift warns us must not be communicated. Moreover, not only is there a practical need for 'curiosity', but, as we have seen, there are hints that Swift values man's innate love of knowledge more than would at first appear. For these reasons the 'curious' man would both need and want to lead others on to the discoveries he himself has made; but as soon as we say this we are back to the attack on 'unmasking', where, as Leavis says, we find Swift when we expected to find the naive persona. There is a tension between 'curiosity' and 'credulity' which can only partially be resolved through the wise man's defence of the 'common forms'.

We can infer from these paragraphs that some people find happiness of a sort through learning, and others do not. There is a distinction between, on the one hand, those who "shape (their) Understanding by the pattern of Human Learning" and remain in a "state of Serenity" despite their knowledge of their own and other people's "Infirmities", and the 'curious' philosopher who has a passion for knowledge; and, on the other, those who believe in the 'common forms', or who propagate and are disposed to believe "Cant

and Vision". I would argue that the persona's experience shows not that "humankind" in general, but that some men in particular, "cannot bear too much reality". We remember that, at this moment in the work at least, the persona is not himself 'curious', but embarks on his enquiries convinced that this very type of enquiry is "the last degree of perverting Nature", and "in order to save the Charges of all such expensive Anatomy for the Time to come." The persona, in other words, crosses a gap that should be crossed only by those with a certain sort of disposition. It is not a matter of intelligence, but of two conflicting notions of happiness. 'Credulity' refers to a state of mind which is not merely 'ignorant' but 'stubbornly' so. Many men resist actively the notion that there is a 'mighty Level' to happiness; nor do they enjoy knowing or learning for its own sake. Such men should not be exposed to the 'Depths' in Swift's view. Their antipathy to philosophy means that the destruction of the 'common forms' would merely leave their "ignoble, private desires", in Arnhart's terms, or dispose them to adopt some other, harmful delusion. For the 'curious' philosopher the problem then becomes one of distinguishing between these two groups and communicating on a deep level only to those whose temperament is similar to his own.

Put like this, the solution seems simple: the 'curious' philosopher should gauge the character of his listeners in private. Any attempt at communicating publicly would expose itself to the objection that Plato levels at writing:

The composition, whatever it may be, drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it but equally of those who have no business with it; it doesn't know how to address the right people, and not address the wrong. And when it is ill-treated and abused it always needs its parents to come to its help, being unable to defend or help itself.¹

¹ Plato, Phaedrus, 275e.

Yet Plato's deed refutes his speech -he did write and so did Swift. If our argument is correct and Swift was himself 'curious', we would expect him to do more than uphold the 'common forms' -we would expect him to communicate the truth as he saw it, but this without 'unmasking'.

II "A Digression on Madness" -- The Rhetoric of Philosophy.

At this point, I would argue, study of the form and the content of the Tale merge. Part of Swift's solution to the problem to which he has led us resides in the manner in which he leads us to it. Let us assume that the advice Swift gives to the 'curious' philosopher is "defend the common forms". This advice itself is not a defence of the 'common forms': it is Swift's message, aimed only at the 'curious'. His manner of giving that advice will therefore show how to aim messages only at the 'curious'.

It is worth considering the reactions that these paragraphs have produced in various readers. We started from a point of view -- Leavis's-- which was the product of an extremely close reading. However, it should be noted that the digressions were not the first thing that struck readers of the Tale. The allegory was the focus of attention, though there was a division of opinion as to its orthodoxy.¹ An early critic was exceptional in his interest in the digressions and seems to recognise this: "... (it is) impossible for a reader with enough penetration and judgement to understand the delicate strength of these ironies to be impatient to return to the main subject".² The paragraphs we are considering come at the centre

¹ Swift. The Critical Heritage, ed. Williams, compare pp.197, 56, 60, 128, 227.

² (1721) in Swift. The Critical Heritage, ed. Williams, p. 54.

of a digression which is itself towards the centre of the Tale of a Tub volume. In fact they occur at the most unobtrusive place in the work that one could imagine. Moreover Swift, as throughout, encourages his readers simply to enjoy the flow of wit and nothing more. All this means that the importance of the "Digression" can be missed.

Modern critics who deal with the "Digression" select arbitrarily one or other of the two terms of the dilemma Swift sets us, as Leavis himself does, despite his perception that there is a dilemma. These paragraphs can be seen in two different ways, both of them simplistic, like Wittgenstein's picture of a duck's head which is also a rabbit's head. Once this fact is noticed there is bewilderment, which here again we can distinguish according to whether it is intrigued or dismissive. Leavis's reading is a fine example of the latter.¹ (I use 'dismissive' in a very broad sense here to refer to those critics who deny that there is a coherent meaning beyond the contradictions). A good example of 'intrigued' reading is Le Clerc's contemporary appraisal: "How difficult it is everywhere to judge what his views are; it is better to believe they are not as bad as they have, to some people, appeared to be" (Swift, The Critical Heritage, p.60).

The complexities of certain passages in Swift's work have led critics to argue that they constitute attempts to involve, humble and educate the reader, using a method developed by the ancient dialecticians, in which the reader or interlocutor is induced to give assent to a position which is then refuted.² His aim is to shock the

¹ See p.9 above.

² Sams, "Swift's Use of the Second Person" (1959).

reader into questioning his deepest assumptions, or teach him to make the careful distinctions that will protect him from delusive rhetoric.¹ Schaeffer argues that this produces "a finely graduated hierarchy of more perceptive readers." As well as being educated, these "more perceptive readers" will have their enjoyment increased by the thought of the less perceptive readers who have not penetrated the irony.² Presumably these less perceptive readers will not be educated or protected against delusive rhetoric, but surely it is precisely these who need such protection most. It is very difficult to account for Swift's complexities as primarily didactic in intent.

Schaeffer himself suggests an alternative view -- that Swift simply enjoys deceiving his readers, and offers his "more perceptive readers" the same enjoyment-- the Tale actually produces foolish readers, as well as teaching others to distinguish carefully. Using the same evidence as Schaeffer it is possible to deny that Swift's aim was to instruct at all: "Swift will always entrap the reader if he can and delight in the trick. But the reader whom he cannot fool is the one he is really after, quasi alter ego. Such a one is his true and private audience...Irony is the instrument, a sort of geiger counter, by which he finds out his proper reader."³ This view is borne out by the gleefulness of the Scriblerians when Gulliver's Travels was read as an actual voyage history.⁴ A deliberate intention to exclude

¹ Uphaus, The Impossible Observer, chap.1; Schaeffer, "Them That Speak And Them That Hear" (1973). See McCowan, Montaigne's Deceits (1974), p.57, for another analysis of this method.

² Schaeffer, "Them That Speak and Them That Hear".

³ Bronson, "The Writer" (1968); quoted in Steele, Jonathan Swift. Preacher and Jester, p.75.

⁴ Swift, The Critical Heritage, ed, Williams, pp.61-4: For the puzzlingly solid and unironic appearance of Gulliver's Travels see Rawson, Gulliver and the Gentle Reader, pp.9-10.

certain readers is also implied in the Apology to the Tale, where the key word is 'distinguish', and Swift's audience is divided into the 'men of taste' who can distinguish and the others who cannot. Here he wishes,

...that his Faults may not be multiply'd by the ignorant, the unnatural, and uncharitable Application of those who have neither Candor to suppose good Meanings, nor palate to distinguish true Ones,

and goes on to declare that "...there generally runs an Irony through the thread of the whole Book, which the Men of Tast will observe and distinguish..."(Tale,pp.4-5,8). Le Clerc, one of Swift's early critics, found clear evidence in the story of the whale and the tub (Tale,pp.40-1) that the Tale aimed to fool its readers.¹

For Swift, irony bordered on hoax: the Bickerstaff pamphlets, for instance, can be either, depending on the sensitivity of the reader.² In a passage in Cadenus and Vanessa Swift lays down some rules for "those who aim at ridicule", arguing that they "...should fix upon some certain rule,/ which fairly hints that they are in jest,/ Else he (the dupe) must enter his protest:/ For, let a man be ne'er so wise,/ He may be caught with sober lies..."³ Irony retained its classical, and especially Socratic, links with deception for the Augustans in general.⁴ This does not always mean that the excluded reader is simply being laughed at. Often he is being carefully

¹ Le Clerc(1721) in Swift.The Critical Heritage,ed.Williams,p.59.

² Paulson,The Fictions of Satire,pp.139-62.

³ Swift,Complete Poems,p.147.

⁴ Knox,The Word Irony and Its Context 1500-1755(1961),pp.45-55; Watt,"The Ironic Tradition in Augustan Prose from Swift to Johnson"(1957); Novak, "Defoe's Use of Irony",(1966); Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth,(1961),pp 37-43.

For Aristotle, the ironic man jokes only to amuse himself (Rhetoric 1419b). Quintilian too links irony and dissimulation and instances the life of Socrates (Institutio Oratoria,II,xv,24-32; IX,iv,17.)

manipulated, as in the case of Defoe's Shortest way with the Dissenters (1702), which first brought the term 'irony' into common use among the Augustans.¹ Here, Defoe's persona is a High Churchman with a fanatical hatred for Nonconformists. Quite deliberately, Defoe allowed his fellow Nonconformists to take him literally in order to stir them up from their apathy, while covertly parodying the High Churchmen.² A relatively simple example of Swift's use of such techniques in the Drapier's Letters is brilliantly explicated by Sheridan, an early critic and biographer of Swift:

But I will now demonstrate beyond all contradiction, that Mr. Walpole is against this project of Mr. Wood and an entire friend to Ireland, only by this one invincible argument; that he has the universal opinion of being a wise man, an able minister, and in all his proceedings pursuing the true interests of the King his master: and that as his integrity is above all corruption, so is his fortune above all temptation.

By the use of this irony, a double edge weapon, which he knew how to manage with peculiar dexterity, his argument cut both ways. To the bulk of readers it might pass for a real acquittal of Mr. Walpole of the charge brought against him, which would answer one end; and to those of more discernment, it obliquely pointed out the true object of their resentment; but this so guardedly, that it was impossible to make any serious charge against the author of his having such a design.

(Swift. The Critical Heritage, ed. Kathleen Williams, 1970, p. 233)

According to Sheridan concealment was a way of life for Swift, who was content not to be generally considered the profound moral philosopher which in fact he was.³

To return to the "Digression on Madness": if my analysis of the

¹ Knox, The Word Irony, pp. 24-8.

² Novak, "Defoe's use of Irony." For the complexities that often lurk beneath an apparent sincerity and moderation in the Augustan Age see also Zwicker and Hirst, "Rhetoric and Disguise: Political Language and Political Argument in Absalom and Achitophel" (1981). See addenda.

³ Sheridan, Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift (1784).

"Digression" is correct, it has great complexity; assuming also, for the purposes of argument, that this complexity is totally within Swift's control, then it must be explained in one of the two ways we have discussed, viz. either as educating or as excluding readers. My suggestion is that it does both, and that the form of the Tale constitutes Swift's solution to the antagonism between 'curiosity' and 'credulity' that he outlines in the "Digression", which therefore illustrates the solution to the problem itself.¹

The "Digression", like most of the Tale, entertains with its "false Lights, refracted Angles, Varnish and Tinsel." It also defends the 'common forms'.² We can either take the persona's words literally, or systematically reverse his judgement to find support for 'curiosity'. There are problems with both readings, but neither of the 'betrayals', as we have called them, seem shocking enough to be recognized as betrayals by many readers. Both readings are possible, although Swift weights the balance against the view that it is always good to know the truth by the images of the flayed woman and the stripped beau, which strike all readers with some immediacy.³ Taken individually, the argument for 'curiosity' obtained by inverting the persona's view is as innocuous as that for 'credulity', principally because of Swift's extreme vagueness as to the character of the unpleasant truths he is discussing. Swift does not spell out the fact that the 'common forms' have more kinship with 'credulity'

¹ In contemporary terms, the signifiers themselves form part of the signified; for a view of Gulliver's Travels which is similar in this respect see Holly, "Travel and Translation: Textuality in Gulliver's Travels" (1979).

² It will seem startling to speak of the Tale as supporting the 'common forms' when it was decried in some quarters as the work of an atheist, but see p.104.

³ See Rawson, Gulliver and the Gentle Reader, pp.34-7, for the way these images stand out from the rest of the argument.

than 'curiosity'; in fact he presents them as the same alternative either to glossy delusion or dangerous glimpses of the truth.

I would argue that we are not necessarily intended to see that there is a dilemma in these paragraphs, and farther, that if we do, we are -to use Bronson's metaphor- giving a high reading on Swift's geiger counter. To recognize that there is a dilemma and to treat these paragraphs as the starting point to a dialectical enquiry is to show oneself a man of taste or 'palate' of a peculiar sort, for the taste will be for knowledge. Swift, in other words, encourages only certain readers to speculate, or to conduct dialogues with him, as Plato implies his own philosophical readers must do.¹ At this point, in my view, the Tale can yield its secret. To address all readers, and to say either that they should seek the truth, or that they should not, as Swift appears to do, is innocuous. What is decidedly not innocuous is to declare that some readers should seek certain truths and that others should not, and that the first group has a responsibility to the second not to reveal their discoveries. Yet if we are to appreciate both the seriousness of the attack on the delusion and the seriousness of the attack on unmasking, and the distinction between the two, I believe this conclusion is inescapable.

This is not to deny that there are a wealth of ambiguities in these paragraphs; but the great merit of this theory is that it can explain these as part of a conscious rhetorical strategy necessitated by Swift's subject matter. As we have seen the description of the life in the 'common forms' is highly ambiguous. On the one hand the nature of the 'particular notions' seems unimportant -it is enough to say that they are departures from

¹ See above p. 27.

common opinion and therefore to be censured; but on the other hand there are, as we have seen, indications of a less relativistic view -these 'particular notions' are surely nearer the truth in some objective way than the delusions of the 'credulous' man, for the latter finds it easy to proselytise, while the former is obstructed by the "stubborn Ignorance of the People." Similarly the phrase "private Infirmities" is highly ambiguous. Is it that the learned man is aware he might be wrong? Again there is another point of view: instruction in "private Infirmities" could refer to that self knowledge that reveals natural human limitations, which would disincline its possessor from entering public life precisely because he is wiser than the common man (see p.19). In the first of each of these pairs of interpretations Swift seems to deny man's very capacity to question beyond common opinions with any success; in the second he admits that capacity but denies that it is possible to act on the knowledge gained thereby.

Similarly, the attack on unmasking at the end of the first paragraph may come as a slight surprise -we had thought that the persona's advice was against enquiring too deeply, but now it seems that Swift is assuming the existence of a group of people who have enquired deeply. It is easy not to make this distinction, and, I believe, made deliberately so by Swift. As with the "Life in the common forms", the concern with the communication of knowledge once acquired is phrased as if it were a concern with the acquiring of knowledge. The curious modulation in tone that Leavis noticed half way through the paragraph can be explained as the moment when Swift unobtrusively switches from considering 'credulity' as a threat to the 'common forms' to a view of that same quality as a necessary constituent of those 'forms', which cannot therefore be attacked directly. There is a similar ambiguity at the end of the second

paragraph. We assume that when the persona speaks of the wise man being "well deceived" he is speaking about himself, but he also mentions the philosopher who "can find out an Art to sodder and patch up the Flaws and Imperfections of Nature," and this in fact is all the persona can hope to be (see p. 13). Again we can say that the theme of the relationship between the knowledgeable man and the common people is there, although the most obvious subject is the value of acquiring knowledge.

In the next section of the Tale we find one of Swift's many satires on esotericism:

If the Reader fairly considers the Strength of what I have advanced in the foregoing Section, I am convinced it will produce a wonderful Revolution in his Notions and Opinions; And he will be abundantly better prepared to receive and to relish the concluding Part of this miraculous Treatise. Readers may be divided into three Classes, the Superficial, the Ignorant, and the Learned: and I have with much Fekicity fitted my Pen to the Genius and Advantage of each. The Superficial Reader will be strangely provoked to Laughter...The Ignorant Reader (between whom and the former, the Distinction is extremely nice) will find himself disposed to Stare, which is an admirable remedy for ill Eyes, serves to raise and enliven the spirits, and wonderfully helps Perspiration. But the Reader truly Learned, chiefly for whose Benefit I wake, when others sleep, and sleep when others wake, will here find sufficient Matter to employ his Speculations for the rest of his Life.
(Tale, pp. 184-5)

I hope my analysis of the "Digression" has shown that the persona speaks more truly than he knows here, not for the first or the last time in the Tale. The reader is supposed to receive a "wonderful Revolution in his Notions" (with all the disruptive effect that the word "Revolution" implies). If we take this literally, it implies the deeply philosophical nature of Swift's concerns in the Tale, and the seriousness of his desire to teach. However, not only the superficial, but the 'ignorant' reader are to miss this teaching. The first will merely be amused; the second will "stare" -this, I

believe, is Swift's reified analogy for the state of bewilderment and puzzlement which the Tale does indeed induce in many of its readers. Why does Swift bother to make the "extremely nice Distinction" between these two sets of readers who are equally excluded from his meaning? The answer, I believe, is that one of the most important aims of the Tale is to discover who wants to learn among its readers. Superficiality is different from ignorance because it is wilful or 'stubborn' in the terms of the "Digression". The lovers of delusion see an aspect of the Tale fitted to their "Genius and Advantage"; however, among those who 'stare', some may become 'learned'. It is perhaps these as well as the already truly "Learned" who undergo the "wonderful Revolution". If Swift is serious in a way here, then he considers the "Digression" to be the moment in the work most likely to produce such a radical transvaluation in his reader. Leavis's double betrayal of the reader should be seen as an attempt to produce "wonderful Revolutions" in those who are not wilfully ignorant, but to preserve the delusions of those who are.

There is, moreover, an ambiguous link between the first and second sentences of the previous quotation. Does the analysis of the types of reader explain how to read the Tale? Is the persona, in other words, discussing his rhetorical strategy -or is it actually a paraphrase of what has been argued in the "Digression"? I believe it is both. My analysis would suggest that this paragraph reveals that the solution to the problem of how to address only the 'curious' is to be found in the very quality which distinguishes the 'curious' from the 'credulous'. The 'credulous' man will be a 'superficial' reader, while the 'curious' man will puzzle over the text. Swift's text exploits this difference of temperament to defend the 'common forms' in an entertaining manner, while, on another level, acknowledging their falsity, but still proclaiming their utility.

Later on Swift states more clearly the importance of the Tale's appeal to curiosity, as one of the few passions "riveted to the intellect" (Tale, p. 203). Swift wanted his readers to speculate and conduct dialogues with his text in order to resolve all its numerous contradictions and ambiguities. He did this not only because he considered curiosity a healthy passion to be developed and trained, but also to distinguish the 'curious' from the 'credulous' reader. In particular, I would suggest, he did not wish it to be obvious that the paragraphs are neither a warning against, nor an incitement to, enquiry, but rather advice to those in whose nature it is to enquire, as to the proper relationship between knowledge and society. If his argument is as I have stated, then it would be illogical for it to have any other form, for if it did Swift would be revealing the very gulf between the 'curious' and the 'credulous' which he is counselling his 'curious' readers to obscure. We could say that, paradoxically, considering their vagueness and inconsistencies, these paragraphs have nothing redundant about them, but are a tool perfectly adapted for Swift's purpose. To clarify the fact that the "life in the common forms" could also be a 'curious' life, or to distinguish between those who believe delusions and those who refrain from unmasking them would be to defeat Swift's whole purpose, which is to make only the 'curious' aware of the fact that not all men are 'curious', and hence of the need for discretion. What an example it would be if Swift appeared indiscreet in counselling discretion! However, as I have intimated, the methods Swift actually used in communicating this advice do stand as an example of the secrecy which he advised. His dialogue is completed when its form is contemplated as a potential tool for future 'curious' rhetoricians. This means, however, that we cannot understand Swift's full meaning until we have read the Tale closely with

regard not only to its underlying theme but to the stages by which we are led to, or excluded from, this theme. This justifies the dual concern with form and content of the present thesis.

Chapter 2. Parallels to the "Digression" in Swift's Work.

I wish to support my argument by showing that the rhetorical strategy discussed above and the view of the relations between philosophy and the community from which it arose are both to be found in other works by Swift.

We have already noted a parallel between Swift's Argument against Abolishing Christianity and the "Digression on Sainness". In both cases an abuse which we had thought particular and rectifiable is suddenly shown to be a general and integral part of society (see p. 9). It has been argued that there is a cross-current of ironies in the work, which is revealed most explicitly in the passage quoted above. The most obvious aspect is the satire on the persona's assertion that the "System of the Gospel, after the Fate of other Systems is generally antiquated and expired." From this perspective, Swift, as a believer in the Christian religion, attacks free-thinkers who were to be Christianity were not "our rule of Swift, and confessed as 'entirement', or, alternatively who say no more than the service of Christianity as an expedient, purely civil religion (like the persona).¹ However Swift is equivocal towards the persona's 'original Christianity' - not only would one have to break the entire Frame and Constitution of Things" to restore 'real Christianity', a project which, rather oddly, is compared to "... the Proposal of Hoggs, where he advises the Means, all in a Body, to

¹ Swift, Works, II, p. 27. See Davis's Introduction to this volume, p. xiv; Jackson, "The Character of Swift's satire" (1911), pp. 41-2; Miller, The Eighteenth Century Background, p. 102.

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¹ Swift, Works, II, p.27. See Davis's introduction to this volume, p.xix ; Rawson, "The Character of Swift's Satire"(1971), pp.41-2; Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, p.102.

leave their City, and seek a new Seat, in some remote Part of the World, by way of Cure for the Corruption in their Manners", but "nominal Christianity" occasionally seems to be a pretty good substitute:

For the rest, it may perhaps admit a Controversy, whether the Banishing of all Notions of Religion whatsoever, would be convenient for the Vulgar. Not that I am in the least of Opinion with those, who hold Religion to have been the Invention of Politicians, to keep the lower Part of the World in Awe, by the Fear of invisible Powers; unless Mankind were then very different from what it is now: For I look upon the Mass, or Body of our People here in England, to be as Free-thinkers, that is to say, as staunch Unbelievers, as any of the highest Rank. But I conceive some scattered Notions about a superior Power to be of singular use for the common People, as furnishing excellent Materials to keep Children quiet, when they grow peevish; and providing Topicks of Amusement in a tedious Winter Night.¹

The persona here seems to be satirized not so much because of his belief that Christianity is merely a political expedient but because he does not appreciate the full extent of its expediency. Rawson has argued that this ambiguity arises because of Swift's subversive temperament -he himself was a free-thinker and this shows despite his rhetorical aim which was to attack the free-thinkers.² Davis argues that it was part of Swift's aim to address the sceptics among his readers, and to justify 'real Christianity' with arguments, adapted to their unbelief.³ Robertson accepts that Swift is proving the utility of Christianity to the free-thinker but argues that the project of restoring 'real Christianity' even by pragmatic methods is doomed to failure, since its principles are so foreign to the

¹ Swift, Works II, p. 34.

² "The Character of Swift's Satire".

³ Swift, Works, II, p. xix.

generality of mankind. Swift is therefore defending 'nominal Christianity' as a permanent compromise. Why then does Swift even bother to mention his impossibly high ideal of 'real Christianity'? Robertson's answer is that the Argument is addressed to two groups of readers -besides demonstrating the utility of Christianity to the Free-thinkers it also addresses the witty rhetorician, who is himself a lover of 'real Christianity' and shows him by example that although the rhetorician cannot defend what he believes in most deeply, he can compromise and defend the established version of Christianity by appealing to the selfish passion which motivates the Free-thinker.¹

There is a play on 'real Christianity' here similar to the play on 'reason' in the "Digression on Madness". 'Reason' in the first paragraph is, as we have seen, literally common sense -what is accepted by most people-, and delusions are defined as eccentric innovation. In the next paragraph however, a new and rarefied sense of 'reason' emerges, by virtue of which the common-sensical 'reason' appears itself to be a delusion. Similarly, as Sheridan insightfully points out, the 'nominal Christianity' of the persona is intended to rouse the Anglican reader out of a lethargy and indifference regarding the established religion.² To do so Swift exaggerates "...how much the Genius of a Nation is liable to alter in half an Age, so that within a lifetime it has become absurd to defend Christianity".³ In fact, the first reaction of the average reader is supposed to be an indignant assertion of their own real

¹ Robertson, "Swift's Argument : The Fact and Fiction of Fighting With Beasts."

² Williams, Swift. The Critical Heritage, pp.229-30.

³ Swift, Works II, p.27.

belief in Christianity; a reaction which is not in any way interfered with by the following paragraph, quoted above, on the disruptive effects of returning to 'real Christianity', since this can be read as ironic exaggeration, implying that Swift really supports the restoration of 'real Christianity'.¹ According to the other interpretation, already discussed, Swift is by and large in agreement with his persona: he defines 'real Christianity' as something at once timeless and unlikely to be actualized in time, like the principles which underly Horatian satire. In this interpretation the real belief of most of Swift's readers, and its opposite -the appearance of belief which the persona urges- come to resemble each other in an unexpected way. What have either Anglicanism or the appearance of Anglicanism got to do with 'real Christianity'? Similarly, in the "Digression", 'common forms' and 'credulous' delusions are closer to each other than either are to the 'curious' reason.

Surely, as Rawson argues, there are "many coils" in Swift's irony here, but to speak of its "unpredictable autonomy" is misleading. On the contrary, if the Argument is really setting forth a rhetorical strategy for the man of wit, then the 'coils' are precisely determined by Swift's purpose in writing the work. Swift is not merely addressing the free-thinkers or the rhetoricians who have to appeal to the free-thinkers, but also the majority of his readers who, despite what the persona argues, still believe that Anglicanism is the true religion. To put it another way: we can indeed distinguish between free-thinkers who are urged to adopt a 'nominal Christianity' and rhetoricians who take 'real Christianity' seriously, but are urged to defend only 'nominal Christianity' in

¹ Davis for one does not find in this paragraph an attack on the very possibility of such a restoration, but rather an attempt to get the sceptics on the right side for the wrong reasons: Swift, Works II, p. XIX.

just the way Robertson argues, but the more obvious distinction is that between both of these and those who believe in the established religion to which the free-thinkers are urged to conform outwardly. Because Robertson does not stress this latter distinction, she does not apply Watt's notion that Augustan irony often distinguishes the fools from the wits among its readers to the argument (though she does mention it).¹ The ambiguities arise because Swift's aim is to hold the persona's assumption that only outward conformity to the established religion is defensible up to the scorn of the majority of his readers, and yet at the same time allow it to be taken seriously by the sceptics and the believers in the shadowy 'real Christianity'. The work therefore divides its readers into the 'credulous' and the 'curious', and indeed it would have been inconsistent for a rhetorician who believed the established religion was 'nominal', but wished to convince others like himself that it was useful, to adopt any other course, for to state his view openly would be to undermine belief in, and hence the utility of, 'nominal Christianity'.

As another example, we can take the passage quoted previously (p.41) where the persona seems to be criticized for limiting the social utility of Christianity to "providing Topicks of Amusement in a tedious Winter Night." From this point of view, Swift could be among those "who hold Religion to have been the invention of Politicians, to keep the lower part of the World in Awe, by the Fear of invisible Powers." However, the primary impact of the passage is, on the contrary, to ridicule free-thinkers who imagine the clergy to be a sinister and Machiavellian body of men, when in fact they are almost completely ineffectual. This emphasis,

¹ Robertson. "Swift's Argument".

which is calculated to stir the orthodox to indignation, obscures the fact that the persona accepts the accusation of his fellow free-thinkers that those who uphold the established religion do so primarily because of its utility.

Both in form and content the Argument resembles the "Digression on Madness". In the one, the established religion, and in the other the 'common forms', appear as the reasonable alternative to extremism, but in each case there is a defence of outward conformity to the established structures by a persona who assumes their delusive character -not without some indications on Swift's side that he agrees with this view. In each case, the ambiguities can be explained as a necessary tool for a rhetorician who wishes to agree with a group of his readers as to the delusive character of a widely accepted opinion, but to disagree with their desire to expose this character. Both works therefore address the thoughtful man in his capacity as rhetorician, and in a strangely self reflexive manner, since they themselves illustrate how to avoid disturbing common opinion. In both works, I would suggest, the irony becomes the meaning in a sense, once its dialectic structure has been noticed, since Swift at first seems to criticize his persona's defence of outward conformity, but secondly, once the delusive character of the 'common forms' is admitted, to advocate precisely such a conformity, differing only from his persona in point of the vigour and aggression with which he supports the 'forms'. Swift's meaning can be reached in both works only by treating the vehicle and apparent tenor of the irony as the opening terms in a debate, running something like this: the persona defends a mere pretence of belief in accepted opinion; therefore inward belief is what Swift values; but these opinions are delusions, therefore Swift does defend outward conformity; but this means identifying ourselves with the persona's passivity. Therefore

Swift is urging us to be active in the defence of delusions. That Swift is attacking the free-thinkers' lack of interest in upholding the established beliefs rather than their scepticism is intended to be evident only to the free-thinkers: 'real Christianity' and 'curiosity' represent what should motivate those who do not believe in the 'common forms'.

The second example I want to take is Gulliver's Travels. I have already remarked on the solid and unironic appearance of the narrative level (see p.30, note 4). This is because it is first and foremost a good yarn. Many critics have praised the work for entertaining as it instructs.¹ This would mean that Swift hoped to reform mankind by, as it were, sugaring the bitter pill. His irony would be an attempt to instruct readers who would be indignant at any open claim for superiority which the teacher who used more direct methods would necessarily make.² The argument against this plausible and certainly partially correct view is the same as stated earlier (see p.30): Swift's irony is just too complex to be understood by many readers, especially in Book IV. Not to be understood is an occupational hazard for ironists, but with Swift it seems wilful.

Yet there is a curious aspect to Book IV - Swift states quite openly and with no attempt at softening the blow, an extremely low opinion of man, which shocks and angers many readers: as Swift

¹ See Desfontaine's view (1727) that Swift entertained "the common run of readers" with "vain imaginations" so as not to shock those who "delight and idolise" their "weakness and passion"- Swift: The Critical Heritage, ed. Williams, pp.81-5; see also pp.196,272, 288,335-6.

² For this as the primary function of irony as used by Swift and other satirists see Hatfield, Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony (1968), pp.207-15; Worcester, The Art of Satire (1940), pp. 35-54. For the traditional view of literature as instructing through entertainment see Atkin, English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance (1951), pp.26,188,349; Bush, The Renaissance and English Humanism (1941), pp.43-7; Davenant, "Preface to Gondibert," in Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Spingarn, p.49: morality is "sweetened and made more amiable" by poetry.

says, his "chief end" in the work was to "vex the world rather than divert it".¹ He succeeded in every sense of the word - readers are both puzzled and angered by Book IV. He was commonly attacked as a misanthrope, and indeed the only alternatives to this view seem to be either that the Houyhnhnms represent an attainable ideal,² which is belied not only by their alien and grotesque aspects,³ but by the absurd behaviour of the 'enlightened' Gulliver on his return to England;⁴ or that Gulliver's alternatives are to be rejected: human nature operates in a sphere between perfect rationality and absolute irrationality.⁵ This view is open to the objection that the Houyhnhnms, despite their otherworldly and fantastic qualities, are not without many characteristics which are inescapably (though to some of us unpleasantly) rational in Swift's view; and that the absolute irrationality of mankind seems to be conclusively demonstrated in the conversation between Gulliver and the Houyhnhnm Master.⁶ In the light of these facts, any compromise, such as advocated by the 'soft' critics, is tantamount to an admission that man is by nature irrational.

¹ Swift's Correspondence, (1725), III, p.102-3.

² See, for instance, Halewood, "Plutarch in Houyhnhnmland" (1965); Reichert, "Plato, Swift and the Houyhnhnms" (1968); Kelsall, "Iternum Houyhnhnms" (1974); Pierre, "Gulliver's Voyage to China" (1975-6).

³ For the possibility that the Houyhnhnms' very name is a punning reference to their ambiguity see Probyn, "Swift and the Human Predicament", (1978).

⁴ For Gulliver's behaviour at the end of the book as reflecting on the normative status of the Houyhnhnms see for instance Ross, "The Final Comedy of Lemuel Gulliver"; Winton, "Conversion on the Road to Houyhnhnmland" (1960); Tuveson, "Swift: The Dean as Satirist" (1964).

⁵ See as well as Ross, Winton and Tuveson, Mack, "Gulliver's Travels" (1964) and Williams, Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (1968) pp.187-20. For Gulliver's 'teachableness' see Gulliver's Travels p234.

⁶ Crane, "The Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos and the History of Ideas" (1962); Ehrenpreis, "The Meaning of Gulliver's Last Voyage"; Morris, "Wishes as Horses" (1972-3).

The form of Book IV duplicates in many respects that of the two paragraphs from the "Digression on Madness" discussed above - the reader is first persuaded that mankind in general is irrational, then he is shown the unhappiness caused by this disillusionment with the 'common forms'. Swift's dialectic in each case seems calculated to provoke two basic responses among readers- either one can choose knowledge and reject "happiness as it is generally understood", or one can adhere to the 'common forms' and reject a rationality which estranges one from one's fellow men. One is tempted to agree with the critic who declares that the choice depends entirely on the temperament of the reader.¹

One way out of the dilemma, however unobtrusive, is to notice that there is at least one exception to the sort of pride Gulliver condemns in the last paragraph in the book, and this is Gulliver himself, who is convinced he is a Yahoo, as is shown by his intention "...to behold (his) Figure often in a Glass, and thus if possible habituate (him) self by Time to tolerate the sight of a human Creature".² I say the "sort of pride" because I am not denying that the joke is on Gulliver in some sense for his pride, but I think you have to distinguish between Gulliver's pride and that of the common 'Yahoo'.³ In a sense Gulliver is too humble -he does not realize that by his very self-knowledge and his desire to imitate the Houyhnhnms he has to some extent overcome his Yahoo nature. In fact, one might say that his self-contempt is what causes his pride: because he does not understand that he himself

¹ Clifford, "Gulliver's Fourth Voyage", p.47.

² Swift, Works, XI, p.295.

³ Something that 'soft' critics tend not to do - see for instance Winton, "Conversion on the Road to Houyhnhnmland" (1960).

has been instructed, he isolates himself, for he believes no-one else can receive instruction either.

This is as much as to say that, covertly, Swift has progressed from a discussion of human nature in general to an examination of the gulf between the man who is rational because he is aware of his 'private infirmities' and the 'stubborn, ignorant' people who delight in delusion. His portrayal of Gulliver's education has shown that man is 'rationis capax'; that the pride or self-love which is part of his more general 'credulity' can be overcome. He now asks, what is the man whose capacity for rationality has been developed to do, given that he is surrounded by those in whom that capacity is extinct or dormant?¹ Gulliver's answer is to retire altogether from human society, which resembles the persona's decision to become a 'Fool among Knaves' in the "Digression". In both cases, Swift's argument is that we might as well have retained our illusion if to apprehend the truth is to appear a lunatic in the eyes of our fellow men. From this perspective Gulliver's Travels Book IV and the "Digression on Madness" both reveal that no human society can be founded on truly rational principles.²

In the satire on Gulliver after his return to England Swift anticipates the charge of misanthropism directed at him by the vast majority of his readers. This 'vexed' response was precisely the one he wanted. The openness of his attack on mankind can be explained as a deliberate demonstration that his readers are not like Gulliver, for by and large they will not admit that they are Yahoos.³ Through

¹ For Swift's substitution for the conventional definition of man as an 'animal rationale' the qualification that he is no more than 'rationis capax' see his letter to Pope (1725), Swift's Correspondence, III, 103. For the view that this is an elitist distinction between those who do and those who do not develop their reason see, Gilbert, "Knaves, Fools and Heroes" (1962), p. 232; White, "Swift and the Definition of Man" (1975-6).

² See Ehrenpreis, "The Meaning of Gulliver's Last Voyage"; (Cont.)

Gulliver Swift raises in an acute form the question of why he and those like him should not lead a completely retired life. This is particularly evident in Gulliver's letter to his more optimistic publisher:

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 Intentions. (Swift Works, XI, 6)

Before saying, as some critics do, that he wrote against his own logic, admitting that he was deluded in expecting reform, we should consider whether Swift's writing itself contains a rational solution to Gulliver's problem. Here, as with the "Digression" and the Argument, I would argue that Swift's deepest concern is with the philosopher as rhetorician, and that his teaching has a self-referential character; to be arrived at by considering form as content.

Several critics have argued that Swift invites us to attend closely to the "process of signification" in Gulliver's Travels.¹ The distinction between Swift and Gulliver has been found to reside in Swift's playfulness and willingness to fantasize.²

² (Cont.) Mezciems, "The Utility of Swift's Voyage to Laputa" (1977).

³ The history of indignant assertion of what Swift would call the pride of his readers is examined by Morris, "Wishes as Horses".

¹ See Holly, "Travel and Translation" and Kingsley, "Gentle Readings: Recent Work on Swift" (1981-2).

² Clayborough, The Grotesque in English Literature, pp.151-7; Morris, "Wishes as Horses".

Strachan puts the matter lucidly:

One of the first hints of the suspect nature of the rationality of the Houyhnhnms comes when in rejecting lying as 'saying the thing which is not' he also rejects the mode in which we comprehend the work -irony. If the Houyhnhnms were an ideal then the paradox is that Swift would not have been able to express this as he does for he would have no conception of irony.
(Strachan, "Literature as Manipulation" (1979))

For Traugott, Gulliver's 'final comedy' reveals the antagonism between philosophy and the 'common forms', which Plato and Thomas More also examined. His solution is the same as theirs -irony: the wise man must never reveal where he really stands.¹

These critics are vague regarding the exact sense in which Swift's playfulness allows him to avoid Gulliver's passivity. Traugott seems to see Swift's irony as a private joke to preserve his sanity. This would mean that Swift is ultimately passive in the face of human folly, like those who "pass their lives in the common forms," and who turn out to be little better than 'fools among Knaves'. Any theory of Swift's irony as sweetening his bitter didactic pill (see page 46), on the other hand, is up against the obstinate pride of most men, who as Swift describes them, can hardly be imagined as gradually digesting a deeply serious truth after an initial 'diversion' or 'vexation'.

Let us approach the problem from another angle. What is it that allows Gulliver to learn humility, while those who read about him or talk to him do not? The answer, I would suggest, is that he goes through the experience of nearly being raped by the female Yahoo, which we only read about. Swift takes care to show that the attempted rape was crucial in Gulliver's moral development. The conversation with the Houyhnhnms had previously:

¹ Traugott, "A Voyage to Nowhere with Thomas More and Jonathan Swift" (1964).

so far opened my Eyes, and enlarged my Understanding, that I began to view the Actions and Passions of Man in a very different Light; and to think the Honour of my own Kind not worth managing; which besides, it was impossible for me to do before a Person of so acute a Judgment as my Master, who daily convinced me of a Thousand Faults in my self, whereof I had not the least Perception before, and which with us would never be numbered even among human Infirmities.

Swift, Works, XI, 258.

There remains however some pride, which can resent a "malicious Insinuation; which debarred human Understanding below the Sagacity of a Common Hound " (ibid, p.263); and a merely theoretical interest in human depravity which leads him actually to seek out contact with Yahoos in a scientific spirit:

As I ought to have understood human Nature much better than I supposed it possible for my Master to do, so it was easy to apply the character he gave of the Yahoos to myself and my countrymen; and I believed I could yet make further Discoveries from my own Observation. (Ibid, p.265).

As in the "Digression" this impersonal investigation leads to a horrific moment of self-knowledge. At the moment of the attempted rape Gulliver was "never in (his) Life so terribly frightened", and afterwards "could no longer deny that (he) was a real Yahoo, in every Limb and Feature". Only now can he fully appreciate the Houyhnhnms' virtues (ibid, p.267). My suggestion is that, through Gulliver, Swift shows how man can begin to fulfil his capacity for rationality, and, in particular, how a good reader will react to his own work.¹ The fact that Gulliver is, as it were, living the allegory could stand for a peculiarly intense involvement with his text that Swift expected some readers to have, which allows them to overcome their initial reaction to the Yahoos as a "malicious

¹ For the common use of a surrogate reader as a guide in Medieval and Renaissance allegory see Maccaffrey, Spenser's Allegory (1976), pp. 44-5.

Insinuation". These readers must already recognize their 'infirmities' in a theoretical way, as Gulliver comes to do through his conversations with the Houyhnhnm, and as some readers will have done by previously "shaping their understandings by the pattern of human learning". Swift shows that this impersonal curiosity will eventually open the way for a more passionate self-knowledge. (The persona of the "Digression" lacks this quality.) With such preparation, Swift implies, his portrayal of the Yahoos will strike the reader with the force of a rape. If Gulliver had reflected on his own education he would have realised that any attempt to educate mankind must start at the knowledge that 'superficial readers' -to use the terminology of the Tale- cannot be educated. By his portrayal of the Yahoos Swift tests his readers and invites those who respond to his text to reflect on the difference between themselves and those who cling to their illusions. The crucial thing about Swift's rhetorical method is its acceptance that not all readers are open to instruction.

An example of the strategies that result from Swift's view that the majority of his readers are unteachable is provided by Gulliver's behaviour after his return from Houyhnhnmland. As we have noticed, Gulliver does not fully appreciate the difference between himself and other 'Yahoos'. He thinks that to be a Yahoo in "every Limb and Feature" is to be a Yahoo in every respect. Swift's joke at Gulliver's expense is, I believe, that this very act of self-awareness is what can distinguish man from the Yahoos. However, it is also a joke at the expense of his readers, who either persist in charging Swift with misanthropism,¹ though here he makes a misanthropist his butt, or are led to believe that Swift has not

¹ In which case the work would act as a provocative polemic against the new optimistic philosophies, the rise of which is documented in White, "Swift and the Definition of Man" (1975-6).

been entirely serious in his sweeping condemnation of mankind. Only a third group, consisting of readers who have been deeply struck by the portrayal of the Yahoos, will be shocked by his folly at the end of the work; only these are intended to perceive Gulliver as failing as a rhetorician. The way forward for Gulliver, I have suggested, would have been to have meditated on the stages of his own instruction as revealing the condition in which man's capacity for reason can and cannot be developed. The way forward for the reader who has, like Gulliver, been shocked into humility, is to remember that he himself has been instructed, and to reflect on the characteristics and circumstances which have allowed this to happen. Again, such an advance can only be made if great curiosity is aroused regarding Swift's contradictory assertion that Gulliver learns in Houyhnhnmland and is foolish in England. In reflecting on his experience of reading Book IV, a reader who has understood that the portrayal of the Yahoos was intended to vex readers and so reveal the pride that makes it impossible to reform mankind in general, may also see that Swift's manner of conveying this truth to the few who can be instructed is itself an illustration of the ironic defence they must adopt in view of this truth. In other words, Swift's final aim in Book IV is covertly to teach those who can truly learn that they can only hope to teach the truth to those like themselves. He shows how to do this by example, in his very manner of teaching this truth, as well as by a cautionary illustration, since his portrayal of the Yahoos is intended to reveal that the bulk of mankind are unteachable.

Gulliver is like the man who passes his life in the 'common forms' because he is instructed in "his private Infirmities, as well as in the stubborn Ignorance of the People". Both of them, like the advocate of 'nominal Christianity', carry a heartfelt message to those who do not believe in the 'common forms' regarding

the pointlessness of disturbing them. The message would itself disturb the 'common forms' if openly revealed, so it is conveyed only to the 'curious' reader, thus providing a model for the way all disruptive truths should be communicated.

However, none of the works discussed communicate only to the 'curious': this would be to render Swift as much a "Fool among Knaves" as his persona. The Argument, as we saw, vigorously defended the established religion against non-believers, even as it implied covertly that Swift too was unorthodox. The "Digression on Madness" and Gulliver's Travels Book IV, are from this point of view unusual in Swift's work, for they are concerned with the rhetorical basis for what we might call the philosopher's descent to the sphere of common opinion, rather than with practical operations within that sphere. These parts of Swift's works do not seriously attempt to influence accepted views. What they do is give us an insight into the objectives of Swift's work as a whole and, in particular, the greater part of the Tale and the Travels, which clearly aim at influencing public opinion in all sorts of practical ways, as well as addressing the 'curious' among Swift's readers. I would argue, with Allan Bloom, that Gulliver (or Swift, the difference is unimportant here) is not entirely a misanthrope, because he "...is a liar and admires successful liars like Sinon. A liar can hardly be a misanthrope; he cares enough about his fellow men to respect their prejudices; noble lies are acts of generosity. They are based on the truth of becoming and the existence of opinion; they prove an understanding not possessed by the Houyhnhnms." He picks out the description of the original institutions of the Lilliputians as Swift's deliberately realistic programme of reform, fitted to "the common size of human Understandings" rather than "great abilities", in which traditions are to be restored to their original purity rather than questioned fundamentally.¹

¹ "An Outline of Gulliver's Travels", p. 255. Swift, works, XI, 59.

I will argue that the Tale has a pragmatic as well as a philosophical aim in a similar way. If this is the case then Swift is in agreement with Aristotle, "...that the legislator, and he who is truly a politician, ought to be acquainted not only with that which is most perfect imaginable, but also that which is the best suited to any given circumstances."¹ Elkin asserts that Augustan satire died because, "...whereas Pope and his contemporaries saw man as a free and responsible agent, capable of ordering his life and society in the light of Reason, we tend to think of him instead as impelled by all sorts of forces from within and without, from his own personality and society, which he is powerless to control - at best he may slightly alter their direction," but to "slightly alter their direction" would be precisely Swift's aim - we would have to look elsewhere for an explanation of the death of satire; perhaps to the fact that our sense of powerlessness over our "own personality and Society" lead us to doubt the very existence of reason as the Augustans understood it, or its capacity to compromise in order to gain practical results.²

¹ Politics, 1288b.

² This is not to deny Book IV is intended to vex those who favoured the new optimistic philosophies, the use of which is documented in Vereker, Eighteenth Century optimism (1967); Gay, The Enlightenment (1967) pp. 375-89; Hazard, The European Mind (1953), pp.10-25. For the attack on deism in Gulliver's Travels see for instance Williams, Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise pp.187-91; Mack, "Gulliver's Travels" (1964) p.111. However, I do not believe he expected Book IV to reverse this trend in the same way that he expected the Tale and the Argument to influence public opinion in favour of the established religion. As I have argued, he expected Book IV to be condemned as the work of a misanthrope.

III "A Digression on Madness" -- Renaissance and Classical Analogues

From what has been said we might be tempted to find analogues for the "Digression" not in Augustan satire but in Renaissance allegory.¹ The orthodox critical view in the Renaissance was that the purpose of allegory is to divide its audience, addressing different messages to different types of reader.² This view by no means ended with the onset of Neoclassicism, but rather was an intrinsic part of Neoclassical reverence for the ancient epics.³ Le Bossu, such an important figure in the growth of Neoclassicism, has this to say about the classical poets:

...our way of writing is plain, proper and without the turn: whereas theirs was full of mysteries and allegories. The truth was masked under these ingenious inventions, which for their excellence go under the name of fables, or sayings; as if there were as much difference between these fabulous discourses of the wise and the ordinary language of the vulgar, as there is between the language that is proper to men and the sounds brute beasts make use of.....And perhaps they were jealous of the advantages they reaped from such excellent and refined learning and which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy of.
(Le Bossu, Treatise of the Epic Poem (1675), p.3)

Historians have explained this view as a way of minimizing the differences between Christianity and Paganism; or avoiding persecution for dissenting views; or involving the reader deeply in the work.⁴

¹ For views of Swift as fundamentally a man of the Renaissance see Fisher, "An End to the Renaissance"; Williams, Age of Compromise (1959), especially pp.21 and 49; Paulson, Theme and Structure p.158; Fussell, The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism (1965) pp.11-25; Hart, Viscount Bolingbroke: Tory Humanist (1965) intro, p.VIII, p.142.

² Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance, p.349; Lemmi, The Classic Deities in Bacon (1933) pp.4-41; for primary sources see Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. Smith, (1904), I 136, 322-33, II, pp.198-203; Reynolds, "Mythomystes" (1933), in Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Spingarn, vol I; Boccaccio, Genealogia Deorum Gentilium, XIV and XV; Comes, Mythologie ou Explication des Fables (1627), p.840.

³ Tuverson, Millennium and Utopia (1949) pp.200-13; Allen, Mysteriously Meant (1970), p.308.

Le Bossu, as we can see above, is rather hostile in his account of the purpose of the ancients' concealments, even though they are a crucial part of his account of Virgil and Homer. This perhaps heralds our own hostility to, and bafflement by, such elitist procedures. I do not believe that any of the previous explanations account for the almost universal acceptance among poets and critics that it is the task of allegory to exclude 'vulgar' readers, not merely temporarily in order eventually to teach or overcome a tyrannical regime, but permanently.

In his study of Spenser's allegory, Murrin argues that the poet's deliberate division of his audience is the consequence of his recognition that when the wise man tries to reform society radically he is at best ignored. For Spenser such an alienation of one's audience is in fact a sign of the true prophet or philosopher,¹ just as, for Swift, those who have studied the "pattern of human Learning" know that they should not "form Parties after (their) particular Notions", partly because of the "stubborn ignorance of the people". It is this common, and in most cases unassailable, pride which renders it highly unlikely that the rationality of the Houyhnhnms and of 'real Christianity' could come to inform a whole community. Murrin argues that the failure of the prophet/philosopher led in the Renaissance to a sort of rhetoric, almost identified with poetry, which excluded from the poet's meaning all except those who could take it seriously. Its aim was not primarily to teach the few or to avoid censorship, but to provide a literal, or moral, level

⁴ Walker, "Esoteric Symbolism" (1975); Allen, Mystreriously Meant; Maccaffrey, Spenser's Allegory, pp. 39-45.

¹ Murrin, The Veil of Allegory (1969), pp. 22-52.

which, although false, benefited the majority of readers in the only way possible. The philosophical level dealt with the falsity of the moral level and so had to be concealed. The philosopher was not so ineffectual as to be unable to destroy 'noble lies' if he wished. His helplessness lay in his inability to institute positive reforms, to create a society which was fully rational. The poet therefore resembles the hierophants of the ancient mystery cults who publicly propagated the notion that there were many Gods, as best adapted to promote virtuous conduct among the many, but to their initiates taught that there was only one.¹ This explains why the 'moral' was always thought of as the initial and more obvious level in the allegory.² Yet in a sense it is the more important one, since without it the philosopher / prophet is completely unable to turn his knowledge to any practical use.³ Our puzzlement at Renaissance allegorical theory therefore stems ultimately from an optimistic

¹ Ibid, pp.8-13,39-52. For the survival of this idea of the Egyptian mystery cults well into the eighteenth century see Warburton, The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated (1738-41), I,149:

"...what was taught and required in the lesser mysteries, became the foundation of Instruction in the greater: The obligation to a Good Life in those, made it necessary to remove the Errors of Polytheism in these; and the Doctrine of a Providence taught there facilitated the Reception of the one Cause of all things here"; and see also Blackwell, for whom Homer's gods are allegorical, but intended to be taken literally by the 'vulgar' in which practice he was imitating the Egyptians, which "...wise People seem to have observed early the Curbs of the human Passions, and the methods of governing a large society: they saw the general Bent of Mankind, to admire what they do not understand, and to stand in awe of Unknown Powers, which they fancy capable to do them good or ill: They adapted their religious Belief and Solemn Ceremonies to this Disposition..."--An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (1735), p.50.

² Harrington (1591) in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. Smith, I,201-3; Murrin, The Veil of Allegory, p.115-7; see also Trinkaus, In Our Image and Likeness, p.715, where it is argued that the humanists could reconcile their practical interest in rhetoric and moral philosophy with their more theoretical philosophizing by assigning them to different levels of the allegory.

³ Blackwell, An Enquiry, pp.314-5.

or a pessimistic reassessment of the prophet's dilemma : we question the possibility of anyone, even the prophet, arriving at a rational principle against which society can be measured, or we arrive at such a principle which we believe can be generally propagated. Both these views can be contrasted to that of the allegorical poet, for whom there is a permanent rift between the philosopher and the majority of men.¹ If Murrin is right, then a close reading of many Renaissance allegories would reveal a paradoxical method, aimed at leading the reader on and at denying him access to the author's full meaning.

Murrin uses 'allegory' in the broad sense it had for the Renaissance, to refer to all tropes, including irony.² This means that we could hope to find examples more obviously related to the "Digression on Madness". Since the "Digression" is so clearly reminiscent of Erasmus' Praise of Folly in its jesting but somehow serious attack on the philosopher who 'unmasks' popular delusion, this seems the natural place to start, though critics tend to feel that the "Digression" has a savage, rueful or stern edge which the Praise lacks.³

It seems to me that there is at the heart of the Praise of Folly precisely the notion of the permanent rift between philosophy and common opinion which we have discussed:

At this point let us suppose some wise man dropped from Heaven confronts me and insists that the man whom all look up to as god and master is not even human, as he is

¹ Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing (1952), pp. 34-7.

² Murrin, The Veil of Allegory, p. 58; Knox, The Word Irony, p. 6; Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, VIII, vi, 54 -irony is discussed along with aenigma as an obscure figure of speech.

³ Fisher, "An End to the Renaissance"; Paulson, Theme and Structure in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub', pp. 79-80; though see Hammond, "In Praise of Wisdom and the Will of God" (1983).

ruled by his passion, like an animal, and is no more than the lowest slave for serving so many evil masters of his own accord.....If he had this same sort of thing to say about everyone else, what would happen? We should all think him a crazy madman. Nothing is so foolish as mistimed wisdom, and nothing less sensible than misplaced sense. A man's conduct is misplaced if he doesn't adapt himself to things as they are, has no eye for the main chance, won't even remember that convivial maxim 'Drink or depart', and asks for the play to stop being a play. On the other hand, it's a true sign of prudence not to want wisdom which extends beyond your share as an ordinary mortal, to be willing to overlook things along with the rest of the world and wear your illusions with a good grace. People say that this is really a sign of folly, and I'm not setting out to deny it - so long as they'll admit on their side that this is the way to play the comedy of life.

(Erasmus, Praise of Folly (1515), pp.124-5)

Erasmus elaborates on this in his account of the adage, Sileni Alcibiadis, derived ultimately from Plato's Symposium, which he interprets as meaning that all truly valuable things are not recognized to be such by the majority, who judge in the sensual, external way (Erasmus, The Adages (1508), pp.269-79). This shows that we are correct if we feel that in the above speech from Folly, Erasmus's tone changes abruptly to one of great seriousness. We are in Leavis's position when he found himself shocked into taking Swift's attack on unmasking in earnest.¹ Kaiser feels that satire becomes so general that it turns to sympathy, and the mask is accepted as a necessary part of the wise man's life.² As in the Tale, it is possible to read the passage merely as a further, humorously exaggerated attack on the folly of society; but attentive readers are forced to ask whether they are to remain in the 'common forms' and live as if they are deluded like everyone else. Erasmus's own satire seems to

¹ The technical term for this sudden change of tone is 'prosopopoeia' -see Kennedy, Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature (1978), pp. 85-7; Williams, Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'The Praise of Folly' (1969), p.10.

² Kaiser, Praisers of Folly (1964), p.61.

reveal his disagreement with such passivity. Moreover, this reading blurs the distinction between Folly herself, who sees delusions as delusions, and the fools who believe in them. On the other hand, the alternative is to speak only 'misplaced sense'.¹

I believe that it was Erasmus' aim to bewilder some of his readers, although we should not forget that it is perfectly possible to read the Praise simply for amusement, without noticing such contradictions. The irony is dialectical in structure: by presenting two opposed positions, each revealing the other to be untenable, it induces the reader who gives it close inspection to search for a compromise. As in Rabelais' work, the use of the serio ludere is not simply to entertain on the literal level, and to instruct on the deeper, ironic level, but rather for the literal and the ironic level to be opposites, which must somehow be brought to 'coincide' by the reader.²

But, as with the "Digression on Madness", it is by no means easy to see how this 'coincidence' is to be realized. Kaiser argues that it is only by combination -the solution is not only derived from the extremes but "...includes something from each extreme as well." He argues that by opposing an Epicurean to each Stoic virtue, Erasmus achieves a transvaluation in which the role of the passions is reasserted.³ The difficulty with this view should be

1 An example of a reading which glosses over this latter difficulty and sees Erasmus as aiming to replace common folly with divine folly is Deans, The Praise of Folly and its Background, pp. 54-8.

2 For the classification of irony under the general heading 'contradiction' in Renaissance rhetorical theory see Murrin, The Veil of Allegory, p. 58. For Erasmus' irony as inviting the reader to participate in a debate, see Kaiser, Praisers of Folly, pp. 54-60, 92-3; Kennedy, Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature (1978) pp. 86-93; Kinney, "Rhetoric as Poetic: Humanist Fiction in the Renaissance". For the link in Rabelais' work between the 'serio ludere', the Silenti image, and the Cusanian notion that the truth must be arrived at by a mediation between opposites, see Weinberg, The Wine

apparent from the previous quotation from Erasmus. Insofar as the wise man readmits the common passions, he is compromising his wisdom. What Kaiser sees as Erasmus' sympathy with the common man, in whom self-love rules, is rather a pragmatic acceptance of his irreversibly self-loving nature. Folly has argued that it was not the logic of the philosophers but the "silly childish fables" of the rhetoricians which made civilization possible (Kaiser, Praisers of Folly p.100). This context indicates that Erasmus is concerned less with questioning the value of philosophy to the philosopher himself than to society as a whole. He follows the classical philosophers we have discussed in considering it absurdly unrealistic to expect the majority of men to live by fully rational standards.

Erasmus refers to the Sileni Alcibiadis just before his attack on unmasking. It is likely that he borrowed the image from Rico, who had used it to elucidate his projected reconciliation of philosophy and rhetoric.¹ This would indicate that Erasmus does not intend us either to reject philosophy or to ignore the fact that most people are attracted to delusions rather than knowledge. Does Erasmus give us any hints as to the nature of his solution? At the end of the Praise, Folly demonstrates that Christianity is a popular religion, designed for common, foolish readers; "the very young and the very old" ("God chose to save the world through folly since it could not be redeemed by wisdom"; Christ gave his unflinching protection to the ignorant multitude": Praise, pp.97-200) But it also

(cont.) and the will (1972); Masters, Rabelaisian Dialectic and the Platonic Hermetic Tradition (1969).

³ Kaiser, Praisers of Folly, pp. 54-93.

¹ Praise of Folly, p.103. For Erasmus' concern with rhetoric see Boyle, Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology (1977). Kinney, "Erasmus' Adagia" (1981), and Grassi, Rhetoric as Philosophy (1980), pp. 55-9 discuss the Silenus image as representing a union of philosophy and rhetoric.

encompasses "the man who has gained understanding" -compared to Plato's philosopher returning from the sunlight, who finds satisfaction in his complete loss of selfhood through his love of God's ultimate goodness (ibid,pp.202-4). Christianity therefore contains both aspects of the Silenus:

Since, then, all the power of the pious soul is directed towards what is furthest removed from the grosser senses, these become blunted and benumbed. The vulgar crowd of course does the opposite, develops them very much and more spiritual faculties very little.....Then there are what we call intermediate affections which are quasi-natural to all, like love for one's country, and affection for children, parents and friends. The crowd sets great store by these, yet the pious strive to root them too from their soul, or at least sublimate them to the highest region of the soul. They wish to love their father not as a father, for he begot nothing but the body and this too is owed to God the father but as a good man and one in whom is reflected the image of the supreme mind which alone they call the summum bonum.....They also say that even in the sacraments and the actual observances of their religion, both body and spirit are involved. For example they think little of fasting if it means no more than abstaining from meat and a meal - which for the common man is the essential of a fast. It must at the same time reduce the passions, permitting less anger or pride than usual....(Ibid,pp.204-5)

The 'vulgar crowd', now rather despised, are the 'ignorant multitude' of a few pages before, for whom Christianity is especially adapted. Christianity avoids the rhetorical problem caused by the gulf between the wise man and common humanity by, in a sense, accepting it, and accommodating itself to those who cannot hope to escape from the 'grosser senses'. As Boyle argues, the Christian religion is multi-levelled and allegorical in character; an ordered cosmos of meaning leading towards Christ.¹ We find an ambivalence towards passions

¹ Boyle, Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology, (1977), pp. 113-30. For the survival of this notion that Christianity is adapted to every degree of egocentricity into the eighteenth century see John Brown's attack on the deist Shaftesbury, who "confines his idea of [Christianity] to that part which consists in ...adoration of the supreme being, without any prospect of future happiness or misery [which is] the noblest part, yet it is beyond the reach of all, save only those who are capable of the most exalted degrees of Virtue" (Essays on the "Characteristics", p.211). 1751.

which sublimate but do not entirely transcend vulgar sensuality in Erasmus himself, according to the editor of the Praise:

Folly carefully distinguishes the passions belonging to the senses in which the 'vulgar crowd' is enmeshed, from the higher affections, however hesitant she may remain about these. They are 'intermediate', 'quasi'-natural, capable of being transferred to the highest point of the soul. The uncertainty is transferred from the Anchiridion where some of the affections come near to being virtuous. Erasmus, far too empirically minded to systematize his teaching, does in fact move towards greater sympathy with these 'intermediary' affections. (Levi's annotation to the Praise, p.205; see Anchiridion militis Christiani, (1503-4) pp.62-3, 81-3)

We would expect Erasmus not to attack but actively to urge love for one's country and one's relatives because they are one's own rather than because they are good, because he gives every indication that the majority of people are incapable of anything more selfless. To seriously criticise these passions as delusions would be at best pointless, at worst, irresponsible, since true wisdom seems utterly mad to most people, and could not serve to replace these 'intermediate' qualities.¹

¹ In his Education of a Christian Prince (1516), Erasmus does indeed strongly recommend these qualities: "If (the prince) has any children, devotion towards them should urge him on; if he has no family, he should be guided by devotion to his country; and he should always keep kindled the flame of his love for his subjects." Although he stresses that the prince must be a philosopher in this work, there is a tension which he seems to admit at various points: "He who is carrying on the offices of the state must give his attention to nothing but that. He must perform kindnesses even to those who are ungrateful, to those who do not understand and to those who are opposed. If these conditions are not to your liking, why do you desire the burden of ruling?" or again, rather curiously: "As we have already said, sound doctrines suitable to a prince should be implanted at once. It was to this same end that Plato wanted his guardians to take up dialectic at a late period, for the subject deals with every sort of question and tends to shape one's opinions with regard to true virtue and the dishonourable" (my italics). (see pages 182, 183 and 205)

It has been shown that Erasmus' concern with practical, ethical reform led to a mistrust of the esotericism and cabbalism which became associated with the humanist movement at one point.¹ Certainly he condemns a certain sort of cabbalism, but he can also speak in an approving way of the deliberate concealment of meaning; in the Colloquies, Thalia finds in barbarism's very attack on the ancient poems a proof of the success with which they wrap up and hide the truth in ambiguous words and enigmatical expressions so as not to cast pearls before swine.² In his rhetorical manual, De Copia, he writes that,

...allegory sometimes results in enigma. Nor is that bad, if you are talking to the learned, or writing; indeed, in the latter case, not even if for the general reader. For things should not be written in such a way that everyone understands everything but so that they are forced to investigate certain things and learn.

(De Copia (1512), p. 30)

Screech asserts that Erasmus was interested in Christ's parables as esoteric rather than didactic allegory, and stresses the extreme elitism of which this was a consequence; an elitism characteristically expressed through the two Platonic images of the Silenus and the Cave.³ However, there is a problem in this view, which Screech seems to recognize when he admits that Christ's folly had a didactic purpose - to make the divine comprehensible to the human - but denies that Christ's

¹ Gundersheimer, "Erasmus, Humanism and the Christian Cabbala" (1963); Ziska, "Reuchlin and Erasmus: Humanism and Occult Philosophy" (1976-7).

² The Colloquies (1527), II, 352-3.

³ For Plato's Cave see Praise, pp. 137, 202-3. See also Screech, Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly, pp. 89-93, 228-39; and for Erasmus' elitism, Kennedy, Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature, pp. 92-3.

parables were a way of accommodating truth to the understandings of the common people (Screech, Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly, pp.232-4). As we have seen, Christ is seen in the Praise as directing his words as much to the common simple folk as to the "man who has gained understanding".

In fact, many critics see Erasmus as valuing simplicity in allegory, the universality of the appeal of Christianity, and the social consensus.¹ Yet in this view too there is a problem: while, as Kinney rightly remarks, the Adagia does reflect a certain faith in the 'social consensus', it is surely paradoxical that it is in this work that we find the explication of the 'Sileni Alcibiadis', where it is argued that everything truly valuable is hidden from the common eye. Kinney argues that Erasmus moved from a conception of allegory as only comprehensible to the few to a faith in the enlightening capacity of everyday speech; but this involves a view of the Silenus image as referring entirely to Socrates' humility, common sense and awareness of his limitations.² This is not the way Erasmus uses it - on the contrary, it symbolizes the way Christ and Socrates, as well as other classical philosophers, disguised their wisdom as humility (Adages, pp.270-1). Rather than bringing to light the things which are truly divine, and therefore concealed from the common eye, they concealed them in their own discourses. We might say that they listened to Folly's advice and avoided ruining the play.

I would argue that it is impossible to resolve these contradictions without understanding the widely accepted view of allegory already discussed, in which teaching and concealing went hand

¹ Stone, "Humanist Exegesis" (1974-5); Kinney, "Erasmus' Adagia" (1981); Boyle, Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology, pp.120-30.

² D. Kinney, "Erasmus' Adagia", pp.188-92.

in hand. Because many cannot be taught a truly wise way of life, the allegorist must, as it were, descend into the Cave and defend opinions which although ultimately unwise are morally beneficial. For instance, to love one's father because he is one's own is absurd in Erasmus' terms, but it would be wrong to point out this absurdity since it is as naive to expect virtue to take the place of traditional modes of behaviour as to expect philosophers to be kings, and the attempt to enlighten the people might weaken the traditional modes but with no positive result. To entertain on the other hand; to support what one would call selfish morality; and at the same time to hint at the delusory nature of that morality, would be to produce a multi-levelled allegory in which the philosophical and the 'moral' level were antagonistic to each other. This is why, to recapitulate, the poet is like the priest of a mystery cult who actively promotes a polytheistic civil religion, while initiating some into the the worship of the one God, who is to be imitated and loved rather than feared as a stern lawgiver; and this is why the moral and the philosophical are sharply distinguished levels in Renaissance criticism.¹ To teach, the wise man must also exclude, because falsehoods are more useful to some people than the truth.

The distinction between on the one hand the 'ignorant multitude' and on the other the "man who has gained understanding (and) pities his companions and deplures their insanity" is blurred by the fact that both are called fools, and both are catered for specially by the Christian religion. Only later does Erasmus say that all other fools seem mad to these 'biggest fools', for to do otherwise would be to imply that Christianity was partly a delusion from the start. The

¹ Murrin, The Veil of Allegory, pp.39-42; Harrington (1591) in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. Smith, p.203.

transition is made in the line, "Finally, the biggest fools all appear to be those who have once been wholly possessed by zeal for Christian piety" (Praise, p.201). Erasmus, in other words, disguises the fact that when he speaks of "...the very young and the very old, women and simpletons (being) the people who take the greatest delight in sacred and holy things," he means that they delight in the very external rites which are thought little of by those who have gained understanding. Folly's perspective alternates between the popular and the philosophical. For a full view the reader must combine the two in what we might call a 'coincidence of opposites'.¹ Erasmus does not make it clear that to qualify severely the importance of the external rite is also to qualify the account of Christianity as a religion of the common people.

This raises an interesting point -- if Erasmus can both confirm readers in their view that Christianity is the religion of the common man, and attack this view in an unobtrusive way, then, in the words of Thompson, the irony "...does more than affect the meaning. There theme and image blend: the irony becomes the meaning" (quoted in Kaiser's Praisers of Folly, p.38). In other words, Erasmus shows us how to avoid the absurdity, ineffectuality and dangerous irresponsibility of 'misplaced sense', by an irony that both teaches and conceals.² The praise is a straightforward mock declamation to 'superficial' readers. We assume at first that everything said is subjected to a simple ironic inversion. However, this reading leads us to become

¹ For the importance of Nicholas of Cusa's Platonist humanism to Erasmus see Levi's introduction to the Praise, p.21.

² See particularly praise, p.137; where delusions are compared to the shadows on Plato's Cave. Folly only says 'The majority of men' find happiness in these, rather as Swift only speaks of 'happiness as it is generally understood.'

Erasmus' dupes, chiefly at two moments¹ - firstly, when we are told that delusions are necessary for most people 's happiness; and secondly, in the final section on the Folly of the Cross.² We can think of this interpretation which we can call 'inflexible inversion', as calculated to entertain many, vex a few³, attack corruptions in the Church and influence public opinion against the 'barbaric' scholastics. It is quite possible to read the previous quotation (see p.60) along the same lines as a humorous exaggeration, as it is that whole part of the work (especially sections 24-33 and 42-48). Erasmus' aim was to produce foolish readers, and he was entirely successful in this.⁴ This does not mean the work was aimed only at the few - on the contrary, on the literal or 'moral' level, the work is an entertaining and effective humanist polemic and one that defends Christianity as a whole, not merely the rarefied, internalized Christinaity of the conclusion.

Folly is the Goddess of a mystery cult and the fools she addresses are 'mystas' or semi-initiates, ready for their second stage of initiation.⁵ This is a joke of course, since, it seems, the first stage is reached simply by becoming a fool; but everyone is a fool according to Folly, so her audience cannot be exclusive, as she implies. Nevertheless, one group of people are not in her audience -- the morosophers, who have the delusion that they are the wise (Praise, p.68-9). Her 'Devotees' therefore have a folly which is almost synonymous with the Socratic concept of knowledge of one's own ignorance (which, in the case of Socrates, meant that he always wanted to learn⁶). Erasmus

¹ For the Praise as giving rise to different levels of reading see Hudson, "The Folly of Erasmus" (1941), pp.30-2.

² For this double paradox see Miller's introduction to the Praise, xxi-xxii.

³ See Erasmus' letter to Martin Dorp (1515), in praise, pp.223-8, for the indignation of the scholastics.
(For 4, 5, & 6, see over page.)

implies that he writes for those who are prepared to recognize self-love, the basic delusion, in themselves, and excludes the morosophers in some way from his meaning.¹ The second stage of initiation, I would suggest, comes when Folly raises the question of the utility of the knowledge of the near universality of delusion (quoted p.60). She does this on the literal level of the irony, so that her demonstration of the uselessness of wisdom will be taken as a joke by all 'superficial' readers, who are intended to be identical with those who have not seriously examined their own souls and found folly there. Erasmus accepts that most readers will not take Folly's words to heart and actually exploits that fact. For the 'devotees' Erasmus' prosopopeia is a shock, since having taken Folly seriously they are again asked to become morosophers and "wear their illusions with a good grace". For these readers, declamation opens up like a Silenus to reveal Erasmus' dialectic,² the aim of which is to bring them to recognize the gulf between themselves as Folly's 'devotees', who are aware of their folly, and the morosophers.³ The dilemma here, properly understood, prepares us

4 For the way the Praise divides its audience see Kaiser, Praises of Folly, pp.31,38,91-2; Kennedy, Rhetorical Norms, pp.92-3; Thomson, Irony: An Historical Introduction(1926), pp.216,230,234.

5 Boyle, Christening Pagan Mysteries(1981), pp.30-61.

6 For Socratic self-knowledge as awareness that the essence of the soul is the desire for knowledge, see Hyland, The Virtue of Philosophy (1981).

1 For self-love as the supreme delusion see Praise, pp.94-5.

2 For the way sophistic declamation becomes dialectic in the work of Erasmus, More and Plato, the identification of this with 'poetry' as the Renaissance understood it, and the link to the Silenus image, see Kinney, "Rhetoric as Poetic Humanist Fiction in the Renaissance".

3 For the paradox that anyone who admits his folly cannot be foolish see Pavlovski's Praise of Folly. Structure and Irony (1983), p.5.

to understand later that Christianity is accommodated both to the wise and the foolish; and necessarily so since "there is total disagreement between the two parties on every point and each thinks the other mad.." (Praise, p.206).

Although it was the apparent Montanism of Erasmus' conclusion which was chiefly attacked (Screech, Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly, p.203), in the context of the whole work the folly of the Cross teaches another equally controversial lesson: the wise man must accept and encourage the mode of worship of ignorant and 'sensual' men, even though, in his view, it amounts to idolatry. He thus resembles the priest of the mystery cult and the allegorical poet (Murrin, Veil of Allegory, pp.39-42), and finally Erasmus himself as a rhetorician, who has shown the reader how to hide a harmful philosophical teaching, which reveals religion as commonly practised to be a delusion. Only the attentive reader will see that the praise of Christianity's popular appeal is in conflict with the praise of its appeal to the few, but then these have been prepared to recognize that Erasmus' covert methods are needed to protect that popular appeal, by the earlier demonstration of the folly of unmasking delusion.

If this is Erasmus' teaching, then it decisively determines his method of teaching, which in turn can clarify the doctrine itself. To avoid the absurdity of telling everyone that not all truths can be spoken Erasmus allows the literal level of Folly's words to come startlingly near the truth at certain moments. Swift does the same in the "Digression on Madness". It is crucial to the success of both of these attacks on unmasking that it is possible to overlook, as well as to perceive, their seriousness.

Just as the "Digression on Madness" looks back to the Praise, so Gulliver's Travels, Book IV looks back to More's Utopia.¹

1. see over page.

A discussion of the latter work will further clarify the rhetorical problem and the solution to it outlined above. The central question raised by the work is whether Hythloday's Utopia is a desirable or realizable ideal. Critics are divided on this point. Those who think it is have a problem in More's support for that

...philosophy more civil, which knoweth, as ye would say, her own stage, and thereafter, ordering and behaving herself in the play that she hath in hand, playeth her part accordingly with comeliness, uttering nothing out of due order and fashion.....For by bringing in other stuff that nothing appertaineth to the present matter, you must needs mar and pervert the play that is in hand, though the stuff that you bring be much better. What part soever you have taken upon you, play that as well as you can and make the best of it.
(More, Utopia, p.47)

This is circumvented by demonstrating that this part of the first book was not part of More's original conception, but rather deals with the specific problem of counsel, when one is face to face with powerful and foolish men. According to this view the second book avoids the problem by being written. It is then argued that Book Two represents a genuine ideal which More's rhetoric can help society attain.^{1a} In particular it is maintained, More thought of pride as "that 'serpent from Hell' which inevitably 'entwines itself around the hearts of men' in any inegalitarian society"; or in other words, that More finds the origin of self-love in insecurity and insufficiency, and that therefore if

¹ Hart, Viscount Bolingbroke: Tory Humanist, p.142; Traugott, "A Voyage to Nowhere"; Mezciems, "The Unity of Swift's Voyage to Laputa". For evidence of Swift's possessing both works see Williams, Swift's Library, catalogue no.45; Le Fanu, "Catalogue of Dean Swift's Library", p.272.

^{1a} Hexter, More's 'Utopia'. The Biography of an Idea (1965), pp.27-34, 122-44; Fleisher, Radical Reform and Political Persuasion, (1973), pp.129-50.

social institutions promote equality men will respond by behaving rationally.¹

It seems to me that this view is based on a misreading of Hythloday's conclusion to his description of Utopia, where he laments that rich men do not share out their grain to the starving, and doubts not that Utopian communism would have been instituted long ago,

...if it were not that one only beast, the princess and mother of all mischief, pride, doth withstand and let it. She measureth not wealth and prosperity by her own commodities, but by the misery and incommunities of other. She would not by her goodwill be made a goddess if there were no wretches left over whom she might, like a scornful lady, rule and triumph, over whose miseries, her felicities might shine, whose poverty she might vex, torment, and increase by gorgeously setting forth her riches. This hellhound creepeth into men's hearts and plucketh them back from entering the right path of life, and is so deeply rooted in men's breasts, that she cannot be plucked out.

(More, Utopia, p.134)

More specifically denies here that insufficiency is the mother of pride; on the contrary, pride is spoken of as the mother of all evils, including insufficiency. The mistake is understandable, however. More traps his readers: they are first spell-bound with admiration at his perfect commonwealth and only then informed that Utopia is literally 'nowhere' and never could be actualized in the real, prideful world. The shock is equivalent to that caused by Polly's demonstration that it is unwise to disillusion most people, and should lead us to reassess the importance of More's 'philosophy more civil', which makes use of the same stage metaphor as Erasmus.

On close inspection, Utopia is full of deliberate inconsistencies and surprises, all of which lead us to question the view that it is a radical work in any simple sense. For instance, we

¹ Skinner, The Foundation of Modern Political Thought (1978), I, pp.260-2. Hexter, The Vision of Politics on the Eve of the Reformation (1973), pp. 104, 126-30; Fleisher, Radical Reform and Political Persuasion, p.41-5; Ames, Citizen Thomas More and his Utopia (1949) p.10 have similar views.

are told that many positively delight in farming work; and, immediately afterwards, that the chickens follow men rather than hens when they hatch. This bizarre detail leads us to suspect that we are being duped in both cases. Sure enough, later we are told that

The people be gentle, merry, quick, and fine witted, delighting in quietness and, when needs requireth; able to abide and suffer much bodily labour. Else they be not greatly desirous and fond of it; but in the exercise and study of the mind they be never weary.
(Ibid, pp.58,94)

It is not after all natural to love physical labour, though it may be to love mental labour. This supports 'More's' belief in the need for incentives (ibid, p.52). Similarly, we are told that

...there is nothing within the houses that is private or any man's own... [But, immediately afterwards] ...they set a great store by their gardens...their study and diligence herein comes not only of pleasure, but also of a certain strife and contentian that is between street and street concerning the trimming, husbanding, and furnishing of their garden, every man for his own part.
(Ibid, p.61)

even in Utopia, apparently, there is pride, which renders even more puzzling an already puzzling paragraph in which Hythloday defends the practicality of the Utopian communist system:

For why should anything be denied unto him, seeing there is abundance of all things, and it is not to be feared lest any man will ask more than he needeth? For why should it be thought that that man would ask more than enough which is sure never to lack? Certainly in all kinds of living creatures either fear or lack doth cause covetousness and ravin, or in man only pride, which counteth it a glorious thing to pass and excel others in the superfluous and vain ostentation of things, the which kind of vice among the Utopians can have no place.
(Ibid, p.71)

Hythloday explains perfectly why covetousness will not lead to theft. Nowhere does he justify his flat statement that pride has "no place" in

utopia. We could go so far as to say that Utopia is a vision of what man could achieve were he without pride.

Does this mean that More, like 'More' and Polly, advocates a life of prudent conformity?¹ 'More' is clearly himself satirized for his view that, through communism, "...all nobility, magnificence, worship, honour, and majesty, the true ornaments and honours, as the common opinion is, of a commonwealth, utterly be overthrown and destroyed..."(ibid,p.135), and yet if self-love or pride characterizes man then the sphere in which the would-be reformer must work is indeed that of 'common opinion', and some sort of compromise such as 'More' argues for is necessary.² Such a compromise would involve an utter and continuing opposition between ideal and practice.³ Weiner identifies this opposition with Erasmus' Christ's Silenus-like preference to seem humble and reform the world through a veil, and, rightly in my view, sees Hythloday's retirement from active politics as a mistaken response to a real dilemma.⁴ There is clearly a narrow line between this policy and simple conformity: there is no mid-point between truth and delusion, as Hythloday realizes - "...whiles I go about to remedy the madness of others I should be even as mad as they "(More Utopia,p.48). This 'rhetorical Polly' must therefore be thought of as the manipulation of delusions: "...that which you cannot turn to good, so to order it that it be not very bad "(ibid,p.48).

¹ For something approaching this view see Bolt's comments(1962) in More's Utopia and its Critics, ed. Gallagher.

² Bevington, "The Dialogue in Utopia"(1961).

³ Surtz, The Praise of Pleasure (1957), p.186.

⁴ Weiner, "Raphael's Utopia and More's Utopia" (1975-6).

more gives a very concrete example of a practical reform Hythloday achieves, although Hythloday himself rather oddly sees it as an illustration of his utter ineffectuality in the field of practical reform. He persuades Morton, who has the power to implement his decisions, that there should be an indefinite deferral of the penalty for theft, as least as an experiment (ibid, p. 35). Hythloday's discussion is at first devoted to those who literally have to turn thieves because of the enclosures and other reasons. The direction of his argument is that the fault is in the 'system', as we would put it (ibid, pp. 22-8):

All their homenold stuff, which is very little worth though it might well abide the sale, yet being suddenly thrust out they be constrained to sell it for a thing of nought. And when they have wandered abroad till that be spent, what can they then else do but steal, and then justly partly be hanged, or else go about a-begging. (ibid, p. 27)

The lawyer, in reply is about to defend the status quo to one who is "but a stranger" when Morton interrupts and asks, rather subtly,

...what other punishment you can devise more expedient to the weal-public. For I am sure you are not of that mind, that you would have them unpunished. For if now the punishment of death cannot cause them to leave of stealing, then, if ruffians and robbers should be sure of their lives, what violence, what fear, were able to hold their hands from robbing... (ibid, pp. 29-30)

In fact the drift of Hythloday's argument had been precisely that many thieves do not deserve punishment at all, which is clearly why he sees his story as exhibiting his failure to institute reform. This, as Morton implies, would amount to destroying the system altogether; but Hythloday retreats from this extreme position, and produces some practical solution which partially convinces Morton. Nevertheless the force of his earlier argument remains - any punishment for those who have been forced off their land is unjust. Hythloday himself understands that it would be foolish to carry through his arguments to their

logical conclusion - an attack on the very system more is concerned to preserve - for the result, even if he convinced him, would not be to reform, but to radically transform society along utopian lines, which here, as at the end of the work, he considers impractical. The joke is that the story Hythloday means to exhibit the ineffectuality of wisdom more clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of Hythloday's compromise with delusion¹ (ibid, pp.30-35). (An argument particularly adapted to one whose concern is the preservation of order is that equally severe punishments for minor and major crimes can lead to the thought that one might as well be hanged for a sheep as a goat -p.31.)

There remain some difficulties in this account. It seems a very roundabout way to go, to urge a pragmatism adapted to human pride by presenting a utopia, the admirable aspects of which surely outnumber the unworkable or fantastic elements; so much so that many readers can take it perfectly seriously as a programme for reform. The case is parallel to that of the Houyhnhnms, who are unmistakably admirable at times but also carefully distanced by such details as their ability to thread needles with their hooves. More's account of Utopian communism has struck many readers with some force, as has Hythloday's attack on the enclosures and imperialistic warmongering. If More's aim is to show that political reforms can take place only within the accepted structures of particular societies, why did he not limit himself to suggesting such pragmatic reforms? The answer, I believe, is that More is addressing those few readers who resemble Hythloday in not valuing the "nobility, magnificence, worship, honour" on which 'more' lays such stress. Although we could say that Hythloday is proud not to stoop to the lies which would be a necessary part of the active,

¹ For this curious aspect of the account see Logan, The meaning of more's "Utopia", pp.45-7.

political life, he is surely not proud in the simple sense 'more' is, and so is a living refutation of his own view that pride "...is so deeply rooted in men's breasts, that she cannot be plucked out" (ibid, pp.134-5. For similar points regarding Gulliver see page 46). His account of Utopia may reveal the limits of rationality in most men, but his own case reveals, on the contrary, man's potential for rationality.¹ To put it another way, if Hythloday were a citizen of Utopia there is no doubt that he at least would not abuse the system.² Utopia aims to inspire those of a 'Hythlodayan' disposition with a love of justice.

It is worth asking then, what distinguishes Hythloday and allows him to escape the common sort of self-love. His travelling is given a metaphorical weight:

He hath sailed indeed, not as the mariner Palinurus, but as the expert and prudent prince Ulysses; yea, rather on the ancient and sage philosopher Plato. For this same Raphael Hythloday (for this is his name) is very well learned in the Latin tongue, but profound and excellent in the Greek language, wherein he ever bestowed more study than in the Latin, because he hath given himself wholly to the study of philosophy; whereof he knew that there is nothing extant in Latin that is to any purpose, saving a few of Seneca's and Cicero's doings.
(More, Utopia, pp15-16)

If travel symbolizes the search for wisdom, Hythloday has literally "given himself wholly" to philosophy:

For he made such means and shift, what by entreatance, and what by importune suit that he got licence of Master

1 Contrast Campbell, More's Utopia and his Social Teaching (1930), where prayer is seen as the crucial factor needed to make people willing Utopians.

2 Weiner is one who argues that the inconsistencies in the Utopian regime show the "limits of reason in human nature generally" - "Raphael's Utopia and More's Utopia". He is a part of a 'soft' school of more criticism with which my disagreement is as great as with those who believe Utopia represents an achievable political goal.

Amerigo (though it were sore against his will) to be one of the twenty-three which in the end of the last voyage were left in the country of Gulike. He was therefore left behind for his mind sake, as one that took more thought and care for travelling than dying.
(Ibid, p.16)

Hythloday is an intense lover of wisdom, and this, More seems to say, can be dangerous. I believe Kinney is right when he argues that More expands on this theme covertly when he describes the harmful consequences of Hythloday's introduction of the compass to a nation where it

...before that time was unknown, and therefore they were wont to be timorous and fearful upon the sea, nor to venture upon it, but only in the summertime. But now they have such a confidence in that stone, that they fear not stormy winter: in so doing, rather from care than danger. Insomuch that it is greatly to be doubted lest that thing, through their own foolish hardiness, shall turn them to evil and harm, which at the first was supposed should be to them good and commodious.
(Ibid, pp.17-18)¹

For Hythloday, wisdom is the supreme good, but More intimates that this is not the case for the common citizen. With reference to Hythloday's debate with Morton, not to punish thieves whose criminal behaviour has been determined by socio-economic conditions would be to destroy all order, as would be the attempt to eliminate all inequalities, which is based on the recognition that socio-economic conditions lead to criminality; but an ignorance of the deep-seated character of pride. It is often useless, at worst harmful, to reveal that the laws are in many respects unjust. But the example of Hythloday shows that although a little learning is a dangerous thing, a love of knowledge can be supremely desirable since it can overcome pride or self-love; Hythloday we remember "took more thought and care for travelling than for dying",

¹ See A. Kinney, "Rhetoric as Poetic: Humanist Fiction".

and had "given himself wholly to the study of philosophy". If all were philosophers, Utopia would be realized.

Are the utopians philosophers? More is self-contradictory and ambiguous on this point. We "pass them in wit" alone, we are told, but later we learn that "...in music, logic, arithmetic, and geography they have found out in a manner all that our ancient philosophers have taught"; and that they are "almost equal to our old ancient clerks" (my italics). We have already seen his remark that "in the exercise and study of the mind they be never weary" (See page 74). This comes towards the end of a section which More opens by describing the hierarchy of true pleasures, in which "intelligence and that delectation that cometh of the contemplations of the truth" is ranked first, followed by "the pleasant remembrance of the good life past"; but when More comes to expand on this list, the first item rather strangely vanishes, and the "chief part" of pleasures becomes "the exercise of good life". (More Utopia, compare pp.90&92). In the transition from false to true pleasures we are told that the "common sort of people doth take (the former) for pleasures, yet they, seeing there is no natural pleasantness in them, do plainly determine them to have no affinity with the true and right pleasures (Ibid, pp.89-90).¹ It clearly requires wisdom to determine what is true pleasure and what "perverse and lewd customs", but earlier we learn that not all spend their leisure time in learning, but "...many whose minds rise not in the contemplation of any science liberal", occupy themselves with music, "wholesome communication" and games, in which the virtues and vices are represented. It is to be presumed that these games are played for fun rather than to

¹ There is a question as to whether it is ordinary Utopians or other nations being alluded to as "common sorts of people".

learn, but morality is instilled by a subterfuge. There is an "order of the learned" into which handicraftsmen can be promoted if they show a desire to learn, and which make up the ruling body. (ibid, pp.65&67). Later we are told that those who have a "singular towardness" and intelligence to match devote their lives to learning; while only the "better part of the people" devote even some of the time to it (ibid, p.82).

All in all, we can say it is overstating the case to argue that there is no philosophy in Utopia, as Brann claims¹, but the number of people who love knowledge to the extent that Hythloday does is small, for More admits that you cannot constrain people to learn in their leisure time who are not naturally curious.² (This is in contrast with the Houyhnhnms who are full of curiosity, and whose lives are spent in mutual instruction.³) This means that the majority of Utopians are not philosophers; but in More's book we see only one man who does not desire "nobility, magnificence, worship, honour" and that is Hythloday, because he has "given himself wholly to the study of philosophy". If we take this together with More's silence on how the Utopians eliminate the sin of pride, and indeed his occasional admission that the sin is not eliminated, we can infer that More believes Utopia only possible if all its citizens are philosophers. This gives us an insight both into the importance of philosophy to More and into the enormous gap between the life of the philosopher as he perceived it and the life style of the majority of men.

Here, as with the other works discussed, it is useful to

¹ "An Exquisite Platform".(1972-3),pp.15-16.

² Utopia,p.65. Contrast Surtz Praise of Wisdom(1957), for whom Utopia represents the best reason alone can do -p.7.

³ Swift, Works,XI,pp.234,235,238,243,259,267,277.

think of More as addressing two types of reader - the common reader and the philosopher, or potential philosopher. If we see his full meaning as aimed only at the part of his audience whom he considered teachable, we can understand both the forcefulness of the attack on the 'play' and the forcefulness of 'more's' advice that one must act one's part.¹

When 'more' distinguishes the various reactions he expects from the work, he lists first those who will dismiss or despise his work as merely humorous; then those who, on the contrary, retreat from every "snappish word"; then those who "...be so mutable and wavering, that every hour they be in a new mind, saying one thing sitting and another thing standing " ; and then finally the dogmatists who "...among their cups...give judgement of the wit of writers".² More does not in any way attempt to lead to philosophy those who prove by their superficial reading of his work that they are not among those who really desire to learn. In fact, by allowing 'more' to have the better of the argument in Part One; by giving him his own name; and through the comic and fantastic aspects of Utopia, he actually confirms some readers in their view that his book is not in any sense a serious critique of society. It is also possible to give the world of Utopia a 'Hythlodayan' reading, which affirms human potential strongly. Many of these serious or philosophical readers must be thrown off balance by More's jokes. They are the 'unstable and wavering', whom, I would suggest, More picks out by allowing a seeming declamation to turn into a dialogue on close inspection.³ These readers will be unsure whether 'More' or Hythloday

¹ For More's addressing only the few see Kinney, "Rhetoric on Poetic in More's Utopia" (1979), pp. 34-5; Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing, pp. 34-5; Fleisher explains More's deceptions as intended to involve the reader actively, Radical Reform and Political Persuasion, pp. 39-41. See Addenda.

² Utopia, p. 10.

³ Kinney, "Rhetoric as Poetic in Thomas More's Utopia"; "Rhetoric as Poetic: Humanist Fiction in the Renaissance".

is right, and they will be struck by the many admirable features in Utopia. For these, Hythloday's final demonstration of the universality of pride comes as a crushing blow to their growing feeling that Hythloday is right. This blow is equivalent in force, and performs the same function as, Erasmus' and Swift's demonstration of the folly of unmasking. It causes a careful rereading and a 'wavering' in which they are drawn deeper and deeper into More's dialectic. In the end, I have argued, the solution lies in the distinction between their own 'Hythlodayan' natures and other 'Morean' natures, which renders Utopia not a practical ideal. More aims to show philosophical natures the limits of the political sphere, and therefore the nature of the practical value of philosophy.¹

This is not to suggest that More is hostile to philosophy: perhaps it provides a "mark of view", as archers use, so that they "shall be more likely to hit upon what is right", to quote Aristotle's highly ambiguous metaphor for the relationship between the summum bonum and practical conduct.² The first true pleasure of the soul is "intelligence and that delectation that cometh of the contemplation of truth".³ The fact that Utopia could be actualized only among a society of Hythlodays implies the excellence of philosophy as well as its ineffectuality.⁴ More's point is rather that the intellectual and

¹ For an identical view see Brann, "An Exquisite Platform ; Utopia".

² Aristotle, ethics, 1094a. For Aristotle's view that the magnanimous man, the political man par excellence, often is so useful to the state precisely because he is misguided as to the nature of true happiness, see Jaffa, Thomism and Aristotelianism (1952), chap. VI, "Magnanimity and the Limits of Morality".

³ More, Utopia, p.90. Erasmus refers to Plato's divine madness, indicating a similar view on his part, but for the opposite view that Erasmus did not value knowledge for its own sake but for its practical use, see Rice, The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom (1958), p.156.

⁴ For a completely different view of More as opposed to theory when it has no practical value, and as a rhetorician concerned only with influencing the will, see Fleisher, Radical Reform and Political Persuasion, pp.71-101.

practical virtues pull in different directions, so to speak. The text of Utopia itself reflects this tension; it is a sweeping attack on all actual societies only for philosophical readers in whom more is concerned to encourage critical thought. They, unlike 'more', are deeply struck by Utopia, as if, as Hythloday says, "... (they) had been with (him) in Utopia and had presently seen their fashions and laws, as (he) did which lived there five years and more " (Utopia, p.52). While others will be confirmed in their view that Utopia is purely a fantasy and beyond human nature to attain by the final description of the universality of pride, these may, as it were, combine Hythloday's and more's perspective on Utopia to understand the antagonism between philosophy and common 'pride'. more's teaching to the philosopher is necessarily concealed from the nonphilosopher - it would be self-contradictory to disrupt common opinions in order to reveal that philosophers should not disrupt those opinions. This would be like handing over a compass to a foolhardy voyager. In contrast to Hythloday's dogmatism, 'more' unobtrusively engages some readers in his dialectic while allowing others not to take him seriously.¹ However, if I am right, he also gives the reader an example of a rhetoric not aimed at teaching the truth, but rather at practical reform (see p.76). The details which confirmed some readers in their suspicion of idealistic theorizing will reveal to the philosophical reader the unteachable natures which these very readers share with the majority of men.

The implication of these necessarily brief analyses of Utopia and The Praise of Folly is, I believe, wide for contemporary criticism, which at present examines many Renaissance works which deliberately confuse the reader as if they were purely didactic in intent, aiming to involve the reader by withholding from him a clear

¹ A. Kinney, "Rhetoric as Poetic in Thomas more's Utopia".

meaning. I am far from denying that this is partly true, but we have no warrant for ignoring the repeated statements by authors and critics of the time to the effect that the aim of 'poetry' is to conceal some truths from some people as well as to teach. In the case of Erasmus and More, this view arises because the philosopher, although himself supremely happy to spend his life in contemplation, is unable to communicate to more than a few that such a life brings supreme happiness. The problem then, is that to reveal his knowledge that life as it is commonly lived is almost entirely based on delusion, is analogous to reminding an audience absorbed in a play that it is a play. Certainly the information can be conveyed and understood, but its effect can only be harmful; for many people, delusions will not be replaced by a love of knowledge, but rather by a disillusionment imagined by More and Erasmus to be less desirable than either delusion or philosophy. This is not only because disillusionment will bring unnecessary unhappiness (though this is the case), but because the political order is ultimately founded on illusion. Love of knowledge is the only private desire which naturally leads men to live a just life. All those in whom other passions are dominant must be habituated to a just life. With More and Erasmus, as I believe with Swift, the unmasking image conveys an important difference between the objects of the desires of the philosopher and most people, which imposes restrictions on what the philosopher can say. To use More's image, which puts it as clearly as one could expect such a point to be put, one must not give the compass of learning to the wrong people "lest that thing, through their own foolish hardiness, shall turn them to evil and harm". The fact that these writers are examining the limits which this recognition sets for philosophers in their public communications, as well as themselves staying within them, produces a curious strategy in all five of the works discussed. They all manage to affirm simultaneously the folly of

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the 'common forms' and the folly of venturing beyond them. Their aim in so doing is to involve certain readers only in a dialectic which ends with the recognition that the ambiguous mode of expression they have used is itself an illustration of the way the philosopher must question the 'common forms'. The practical consequence of this is an active support for traditional beliefs which encourage the non-philosopher to lead a virtuous life.

A Tale of A Tub differs from the Praise and Utopia only because it not only covertly presents the reasons why the 'common forms' must be defended, but actually itself also offers such a defence in a vigorous and popular manner. I wish now to discuss the classical origins of the type of rhetoric Swift employs. As many have remarked, the humour of More and Erasmus owes much to Lucian.¹ There is, however, a basic difference, since it has not to my knowledge been argued that Lucian had any deep philosophical basis from which to mount his attacks on the hypocrisy of the philosophers.² His common sense and deflating humour do not appear to mask an intense seriousness - as many people feel is the case with Erasmus, More and Swift - which has led some critics to argue that the resemblance to later satirists is superficial.³ I would agree: The serio ludere as practised by Swift, Erasmus and More was not derived from Lucian, though all three admired and imitated his playfulness. If they were, as I believe, philosophers who disguised this

¹ See Pinkus for instance, Swift's Vision of Evil (1975), p.69.

² Allison, Lucian. Satirist and Artist (1927), pp.47-8.

³ Thomson, Irony - An Historical Introduction (1926), pp.194-206; Manuel and Manuel, Utopian Thought in the Western World (1979), pp.99-103; Dean, "The Praise of Folly and its Background" (1946), p.53.

fact by their playful tone, we would have to look, not to Lucian or Aristophanes for a precedent, but to Plato. Plato is mentioned three times in the first part of Utopia; twice to lend authority to Hythlodais' view that political life is irremediably corrupt (Utopia, pp.15,39,48). As we have seen, there is also a mass of Platonic references in the Praise of Folly; notably the images of the Silenus and the Cave, the first of which is linked with Erasmus' advocacy of prudent conformity, the second with the divine madness described at the end of the work. (Praise, pp.103 and 202). Many critics have found evidence for Swift's admiration for, and imitation of, Plato, especially in his description of the Houyhnhnms and of Gulliver's return to England, which is some times likened to the philosopher's return to the Cave.¹

Soon after Alcibiades' famous comparison of Socrates to a Silenus, right at the end of the Symposium, Plato taunts us with the sketchiest of reports of a dialogue between Socrates, Agathon and Aristophanes -the latter pair themselves representing tragic and comic poetry- in which Socrates was proving that "the tragic poet might be a comedian as well" (Symposium, 223d). Plato, one could say, is nearly the first theoretician of the serio ludere. Rosen suggests that the Symposium itself exhibits in its form the way the views of Agathon and Aristophanes can be reconciled in Platonic philosophy.² Aristophanes differs from the other speakers in that he is genuinely concerned with the problem of how to contain the eros, which leads the other speakers to revolt against the most fundamental laws of the city. His solution

¹ For general evidence, see Samuel, "Swift's reading of Plato" (1976); Trowbridge, From Dryden to Jane Austen (1977), chap.4. For Gulliver's Travels see Worcester, The Art of Satire p.104; Reichert, "Plato, Swift and the Houyhnhnms" (1968); Traugott, "A Voyage to Nowhere", p.166. For the strongest possible statement of this view see Bloom, "An Outline of Gulliver's Travels", pp.240-252-4, who finds in Swift's support for Plato the key to his character. For links between the "Digression" and the Symposium and the Phaedrus see Hammond, "In Praise of Wisdom and the Will of God" (1983).

² Rosen, Plato's Symposium (1968), p.326

is simple: he gives us a mythical demonstration that man is naturally monogamous. He sees the necessity of laws to preserve the city, but sees no reason why people, as individuals, should obey them: "It is such reunions as these that impel men to spend their lives together, although they may be hard put to it to say what they really want with one another".¹ This fundamental inarticulateness manifestly did not impede his popular influence, but leaves him open to Agathon's sophistic demonstration that it is of the essence of the human soul to love, and this without any restraint: "I may take it, I suppose, for granted that temperance is defined as the power to control our pleasures and our lusts, and that none of these is more powerful than love. If, therefore, they are weaker they will be overcome by love, and he will be their master, so that love, controlling, as I said, our lusts and pleasures, may be regarded as temperance itself" (Symposium, 196c).

Socrates responds to Agathon with a myth, but also with an argument which can show the ultimate rationality of self-restraint. He argues that love must have an object, and Diotima's speech shows that these vary in the happiness they bring according to the extent that they allow one to transcend one's mortality. The highest love is not opposed to the law of the city, though it is above it in a sense:

Starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find him ever mounting the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung -that is, from one to two, and from two to every lovely body, from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning in general to the special love that pertains

¹ Symposium, 192c. See Rosen, Plato's Symposium, pp. 125-57. For the view that one of the fundamental political problems for Plato was the proper direction of eros, see Grene, Man in His Pride (1950), pp. 140-4; reviewed by Strauss, What is Political Philosophy? (1959), p. 301.

to nothing but the beautiful itself - until at last he comes to know what beauty is.
(Ibid,211c)

However, not all are fitted to make this ascent, as the final portrayal of Alcibiades shows. Although it is he who uses the famous Silenus image, his love for Socrates remains fundamentally physical. He cannot take to heart Socrates' urgings to self-knowledge because he lacks the necessary introspective character. His aptitude is political and his goal is honour (Symposium 216a). Diotima speaks of the sublimation of love as an initiation (Symposium,210a,210e); and it appears that Socrates takes the analogy literally and excludes Alcibiades from his teaching. He does not do so successfully, however, as shown by Alcibiades' frustration, which issues in a 'charge' of arrogance, which ominously foreshadows Socrates' trial (ibid,219c). His error here was to "...jeer at the one thing (Alcibiades) was really proud of" - that is, his body (Rosen, Plato's Symposium, p294-304). Plato seems covertly to criticize Socrates for allowing Alcibiades to see too much. His own 'tragicomedy' would therefore avoid revealing to readers like Alcibiades Plato's own contempt for bodily things. Nevertheless it must combat sophism by showing that, from a purely rational and self-interested view, abandoning oneself to desires of all sorts is unwise; but this can only be done by showing that bodily things should be held in contempt, since unlike the love of wisdom, they do not bring true happiness.

What strategy could encompass two such contradictory objectives? Alcibiades is a creature entirely of the city - his love of praise reveals him to be at a point low down on Diotima's ladder of eros. The same could be said of all the earlier speakers up to Aristophanes, who are all selfish in a base way. If Socrates is unable to teach the sublimating of such selfishness to these men then he is

largely helpless.¹ Plato, however, is not helpless, for he can adopt the persona of Aristophanes, who is able to answer all those who have gone before in terms to which they can relate: "Moreover, gentlemen, there is every reason to fear that if we neglect the worship of the Gods, they will split us up again, and then we shall have to go about with our noses sawed asunder, part and counterpart, like the basso relievos on the tombstones" (Symposium 193a). Plato affirms, albeit humorously the gods of the city and the physical threats that appear to go with them. This is the sense in which a Platonic dialogue is Aristophanic.² However, it also has an Agathonic aspect, the aim of which must be to liberate or celebrate eros in some way, presumably specifically the love of learning and the 'good': but, as we have seen, this antagonizes the city by revealing its limitations. It must therefore exist on a concealed level and in delicate tension with the Aristophanic teaching. One of the main teachings in the Symposium which must be so concealed is the very necessity for such concealment. It is significant, I believe, that only Agathon and Aristophanes are present during the final conversation about tragicomedy.

The Symposium therefore discusses the same problems, and embodies the solution in the same way as the other works discussed. The humour, the omissions, the multiple narrative perspective, all aim at teaching only the 'curious' reader, who is finally directed to a

1 For the tension between Plato's love of knowledge and his concern for the moral health of society see Morrow, "Plato's Conception of Persuasion" (1979); Rosen, Plato's Symposium, pp. 261-3; Strauss, Political Philosophy, pp. 28-30, 219-20.

2 See Strauss, Socrates and Aristophanes (1966), Conclusion, for the view that Plato's rhetoric is partly shaped by an agreement with Aristophanes' critique of the young Socrates as lacking in prudence of speech. For the importance of Socrates' friendship with his apparent arch-enemy, Aristophanes, see Rosen, Plato's Symposium, pp. 137-57. For the view that Plato, contrary to appearances, allows for and practises a deceptive rhetoric see Black, "Plato's view of Rhetoric" (1979), pp. 189-90; and Strauss, On Tyranny (1948), p. 26: "Socratic rhetoric is emphatically just. It is animated by the spirit of

consideration of the form of the dialogue as completing its content.¹

I wish finally and briefly to discuss the Republic as a practical example of the Platonic serio ludere, or tragicomedy.

Considered as a philosophical treatise on the best possible regime, the Republic is both inspiring and deeply paradoxical, for, as is well known, this regime is realizable only if philosophers should become kings. One of Plato's two main statements on the possibility of its realization is as follows:

All inhabitants above the age of ten (the philosophers) will send out into the fields, and they will take over the children, remove them from the manners and habits of their parents, and bring them up in their own custom and laws. This is the speediest and easiest way in which such a city and constitution as we have portrayed could be established and prosper..."
(Republic 541a)

It is the essence of the education of future Guardians that it be tightly controlled from the start, as is proved in Book III: mass voluntary exile is therefore a necessary condition for the establishment of Plato's ideal regime. We can say with Plato that this is "in a way

social responsibility. It is based on the premise that there is a disproportion between the intransigent quest for truth and the requirements of society, or that not all truths are equally harmless" For an approach completely opposed to my own and that of the above critics, see Hunt, "Plato and Aristotle on Rhetoric and Rhetoricians" (1961), pp. 33-54.

¹ For Plato's esoteric way of writing see Klein, A Commentary on Plato's 'Meno' (1965), pp. 4-21; Rosen Plato's Symposium, Introduction; Strauss The City and the Man (1964), pp. 51-62; On Tyranny (1948), p. 26; Cropsey, Political Philosophy and the Issues of Politics (1977), pp. 231-51; Koyré, Discovering Plato (1945), pp. 3-7. See Hyland, The Virtue of Philosophy (1981), pp. 29-30, 38-9 for the ambiguous status of Socrates irony as accommodation to, or exclusion of, his listeners; for the link between Plato's humour and the recognition expressed in the Statesman that traditional laws must be obeyed in the absence of a truly wise statesman (quoted above p. 25), see Friedlander, Plato. An Introduction (1954), pp. 115-25, and for Plato's irony seen as a veil, pp. 137-53.

possible", just as it is possible for the "Romans all in a body, to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world, by way of cure for the corruption of their manners" (see p. 9); but what chiefly strikes us is the utter improbability of such an event.

Plato seems quite deliberately to draw attention to this improbability at many points, most notably regarding the community of women and children, which is absolutely of the essence of his project of eliminating private desires in his Guardians. Socrates compares himself to men of 'lazy minds' who, "...to save themselves the labor of deliberating about possibilities and impossibilities, assume their wish fulfilled and proceed to work out the details in imagination, and take pleasure in portraying what they will do when it is realized, thus making still more idle a mind that is idle without that", in his "desire to postpone and examine later the question of [the] feasibility of the community of women and children." He never examines this question later. Moreover it is admitted by Socrates that the 'noble lie' of the metals would not convince anyone, but he suggests no alternative strategy, though it is vital to persuade people who cannot see that the hierarchy of the city corresponds to a natural hierarchy (Republic, 415a-d; see Unger, "Contemporary Anti-Platonism" (1949), 649). Moreover the myth suggests that there will be some fluidity between the classes in the city¹, but this means extending the strict 'music' education and the community of wives to all, lest the recruits should be tainted with private desires; but, as Aristotle points out, Socrates is silent on the possibility of extending communism to the lower classes.²

¹ Field, "On misunderstanding Plato" (1944), p. 59.

² Strauss, "Plato", p. 182. Aristotle, Politics, 1264a.

These details effectively refute the view which many of Plato's recent friends and enemies have shared that the Republic represents in any sense a practical proposal for reform. It is not clear that it is even an ideal or a model for such reform, for everything in the Republic depends on philosophers being in power. The Guardians are not themselves willing communists except through habituation by their strict education in 'music', which has taught them that the city is all important. As Adimantus says, "They get no enjoyment out of it as ordinary men do by owning lands and building fine big homes and providing them with suitable furniture." Their reward is entirely honour, but this, it appears, will not be enough to prevent purely private dissensions, or the desire to dissent. Young Guardians will fight, and they will not strike their elders ("except by command of the rulers") only because of "...fear and awe, awe restraining (them) from laying hands on one who may be his parent, and fear in that the others will rush to the aid of the sufferer, some as sons, some as brothers, some as fathers." (Republic, 419, 464d-465e). In a sense, the new system has weakened social bonds - the Guardians would clearly be much more willing to defend the elderly if they were sure they were their parents - and is maintained only by the vigilance of the philosopher kings. Far from being in any sense a model for reform, the Republic shows that, in the absence of the philosopher kings, the best procedure is "to keep strictly to the laws" (see p. 25).

If the Republic is neither a proposal for practical reform nor a yardstick by which such reforms might be measured, what is its purpose? Some commentators have found the answer in the famous passage when Glaucon concludes that the wise man "will not willingly take part in politics" since Socrates' city "can be found nowhere on earth", and Socrates responds that, "...perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it and so beholding to constitute himself its citizen. But it makes no difference

whether it exists now or ever will come into being. The politics of this city only will be his and of none other."¹ Glaucon replies: "That seems probable". In other words, the main practical effect of the dialogue on Glaucon is to convince him to refrain from politics; advice particularly pertinent because he himself is a patriot and a genuine lover of justice, and might have been tempted to join in the disastrous effort to restore the old aristocratic order, the collapse of which is dramatized in Book One.²

However, it seems rather a roundabout way to go, to imagine an ideal commonwealth simply to show the impossibility of its implementation and the consequent limits of the political sphere. There is no reason to believe that Socrates' overt aim of showing that the just life is also the happy life is not also one of his main aims. Glaucon and, we presume, the rest of Socrates' listeners, and indeed ourselves, the readers, are persuaded that his initial portrayal of his city shows that justice is in one's own interest (Republic445a,b). As we have seen, however, there are strong reasons for believing that, although the Guardians are habituated to the communistic system, there remains a dissenting element in their souls; and Socrates admits that they will not be happy in any normal sense of the word, saying vaguely that happiness "is something we must look to see develop in the city as a whole." At no point in Book Four does he explain where happiness could be found in his city (Republic,419-421c). Later, he seems to

¹ Republic,592a,b. See for instance, Nelson, Western Political Thought (1982), p.46.

² Republic,368a-c. See Strauss, The City and the Man, pp.63-5. It is my view that the dramatic context of Plato's dialogues is as important as the ideas therein expressed for a complete understanding of his meaning -see Hyland, The Virtue of Philosophy Preface; Klein, A Commentary on Plato's "Meno", p.17.

realize the inadequacy of this response, and declares that the happiness of the Guardians lies in the fact that "they receive honour from the city while they live and when they die a worthy burial". However this is to admit defeat, albeit covertly, for the whole purpose of the discussion was to reveal virtue to be desirable for its own sake (republic 465e. Compare 363-367. See Strauss "Plato", p.177).

The comparison of man to a city seems calculated to obscure a central fact about justice, i.e. that it is not choiceworthy for its own sake. From this point of view one has to see the republic as a lie, although a noble one, or as exemplifying the "fear, often unconscious, that clear thinking would lead to anarchy".¹ However, this is to ignore the famous discussion of philosophy, which culminates in the Cave myth. The ascent from the Cave describes primarily a reorientation of the soul, so that its object is not honour or pleasure but knowledge of the truth:

Observe then, said I, that this part of such a soul, if it had been hammered from childhood, and had thus been struck free of the leaden weights, so to speak, of our birth and becoming, which attaching themselves to it by food and similar pleasures and gluttonies turn downward the vision of the soul --if, I say, free from these, it had suffered a conversion toward the things that are real and true, that same faculty of the same men would have been most keen in its vision of the higher things just as it is for the things toward which it is now turned. (republic, 519,a,b)

It is this understanding of philosophy as a desire equal in intensity to common bodily desires which allows Socrates to demonstrate in a far more convincing manner than at the end of Book Four that, "when the entire soul accepts the guidance of the wisdom loving part and is not filled with inner dissension, the result for each part is that in all

¹ Russell, Unpopular Essays (1950), p.13.

other respects it keeps to its own task and is just, and likewise that each enjoys his own proper pleasures and the best pleasures, and, so far as such a thing is possible, the truest " (ibid, 586e-587a).

In other words, it is only philosophers who can be said truly to want communism, because their desires are not oriented toward bodily things, which are necessarily private.¹ This means that the conventional view of Plato's analogy between city and man, that "there is no discrepancy between individual and social morality",² must be revised, and we must accept that there is "...an important difference between genuine philosophers and others...with regard to the way in which they are motivated to act on the claims of justice."³ To be precise, nonphilosophers, the vast majority, must either be coerced into acting justly by law, or persuaded by 'music'. But this means that there is a great danger in what Plato calls the 'lawless' study of dialectics, since it can produce mere disobedience to the established codes, which could be compared to the reaction of a child who suddenly discovers he is illegitimate:

...We have, I take it, certain convictions since childhood about the just and honourable, in which, in obedience and honour to them, we have been bred as children under their parents.

Yes we have.

And are there not other practices going counter to these, that have pleasures attached to them and that flatter and solicit our souls, but do not win over men of any decency; but they continue to hold in honour the teachings of their fathers and obey them?

It is so.

Well then, said I, when a man of this kind

¹ Strauss, The City and the Man, pp. 115 and 127; White, A Companion to Plato's Republic, pp. 51 and 242.

² Baker, The Political thought of Plato and Aristotle (1906), p. 6.

³ White, A Companion to Plato's Republic, p. 52.

is met by the question, what is the honourable? and on his giving the answer which he learned from the lawgiver, the argument confutes him, and by many and various refutations upsets his faith and makes him believe that this thing is no more honourable than it is base, and when he has had the same experience about the just and the good and everything which he chiefly held in esteem, how do you suppose that he will conduct himself hereafter in the matter of respect and obedience to this traditional morality?

It is inevitable, he said, that he will not continue to honour and obey as before.

And then, said I, when he ceases to honour these principles and to think that they are binding on him, and cannot discover the true principles, will he be likely to adopt any other way of life than that which flatters his desires?

He will not, he said. (Republic, 538, a-e)

This is the basis for Plato's belief, referred to as we have seen by Erasmus, that dialectics should only be taken up at a late stage in life, and then only by a few (see p.64).

Seen from one perspective, the Republic demonstrates to the philosopher the difference between his own and other natures, which necessitates all sorts of improbable lies to allow others to achieve a condition which he himself desires naturally as a result of his love of wisdom. Moreover, much of the Republic itself should be thought of as 'music' to move the souls of Socrates' nonphilosophical interlocutors to a love of justice (Strauss, "Plato", pp.198-9). Glaucon goes away bearing the 'heavenly city' in mind though it is not clear that he is a 'wisdom-lover'. Socrates achieves this by concealing his far-reaching critique of the motives of honour and patriotism in an inspiring myth. Although Polemarchus's patriotic definition of justice as doing good to friends and harm to enemies is refuted in Book One, it is reinstated in every respect and apparently uncritically in the next three books. In Book Five, as we have seen, Socrates refrains from examining why a community of women and children might be impossible. The admission that there will be dissension among the Guardians, discussed above, is incidental and almost self-contradictory, given that it is preceded by

this paragraph:

Then will not lawsuits and accusations against one another vanish, one may say, from among them, because they have nothing in private possession but their bodies, but all else in common? So that we can count on their being free from the dissensions that arise among men from the possession of property; children, and kin.

With these assurances one's eye rather skates over the next paragraph: "And again there could not rightly arise among them any lawsuit for assault or bodily injury. For as between agefellows we shall say that self-defense is honourable and just, thereby compelling them to keep their bodies in condition" (Republic, 464d,e). In the course of making a virtue of necessity Plato admits that there remains a cause of dissension; and he directs our attention to this cause by pointing out that one private possession remains to the Guardians - their bodies, which are unimportant only to the philosopher. Critics who see the Republic as a 'sermon' or 'manifesto', rather than an enquiry,¹ fail to see that its smooth surface, like that of More's Utopia, conceals a mass of opportunities for the philosophical reader to, so to speak, enter into debates with Plato.

What chiefly conceals Plato's point is the political analogy, apparently designed to make justice "easy to apprehend" (Republic 368e). What it actually does is obscure the fact that there is no happiness in the just life as it is portrayed in the first four books (see especially the beginning of Book four). Socrates is able to beg the question because a well-ordered city is clearly admirable, while a self-controlled man is not obviously happier than a man who exploits the fact that all around him are living a just life in a well-ordered city to

¹ Hyle, review of The Open Society and its Enemies (1948), p.170.

further his own selfish ends. Moreover, philosophy is introduced only in an apparent digression, as the means to establish the just city. Plato never makes explicit the fact that the philosopher alone actively wishes for justice, while all others are in some sense compelled to be just by laws or 'poems' (Strauss, The City and the Man).

The Republic thus reveals itself as a part of, perhaps the origin of, a way of writing concerned both to instil faith in justice and to exhibit to philosophers the problematic relationship of philosophy to society and the type of rhetoric to which this gives rise. Strauss designates this way of writing "Socratic rhetoric", and describes it in these terms:

Socratic rhetoric is meant to be an indispensable instrument of philosophy. Its purpose is to lead potential philosophers to philosophy both by training them and by liberating them from the charms which obstruct the philosophic effort, as well as to prevent the access to philosophy of those who are not fit for it. Socratic rhetoric is emphatically just. It is animated by the spirit of social responsibility. It is based on the premise that there is a disproportion between the intransigent quest for truth and the requirements of society, or that not all truths are always harmless. Society will always try to tyrannize thought. Socratic rhetoric is the classic means for ever again frustrating these attempts. This highest kind of rhetoric did not die with the immediate pupils of Socrates. Many monographs bear witness to the fact that great thinkers of later times have used a kind of caution or thrift in communicating their thought to posterity which is no longer appreciated: it ceased to be appreciated at about the same time at which historicism emerged, at about the end of the eighteenth century. (On Tyranny, p.26)

In the remaining part of the thesis my aim is to show that A Tale of a Tub presents different aspects to the 'curious' and the 'credulous' reader. It is intended to benefit the 'credulous' reader in many ways, but not to enlighten him regarding the errors in traditional laws, for it is precisely he who must continue to believe in the doctrines which on a deeper level of the Tale the 'curious' reader is instructed not to 'unmask'. Swift's adherence to the

tradition just discussed is best exhibited in one of his

Thoughts on Various Subjects:

The Humour of exploding many Things under the Names of Trifles, Fopperies, and only imaginary Goods, is a very false Proof either of wisdom or Magnanimity; and a great Check to virtuous Actions. For instance, with Regard to Fame: There is in most people a Reluctance and Unwill- ingness to be forgotten. We observe, even among the vulgar, how fond they are to have an Inscription over their Grave. It requires but little Philosophy to discover and observe, that there is no intrinsick Value in all this; however, if it be founded in our Nature, as an Incitement to Virtue, it ought not to be ridiculed. (Swift, Prose works, IV, p. 244)

A few 'thoughts' earlier Swift has said, " Religion is the best Motive of all actions; yet religion is allowed to be the highest Instance of self-Love" (Prose Works, IV, 243).

IV A Tale of A Tub -- The Prefatory Material

There are two quotations on the title page of the Tale: the first is taken from the initiation ceremony of the Marcosian gnostics, which, as Wotton puts it in his Defense of the Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning (1705), seems 'Gibberish'. Wotton looked up the reference and discovered that the obscure dialect can be translated as, "I call upon this, which is above all the Power of the Father, which is called Light, and Spirit, and Life, because thou hast reigned in the Body" (Tale, p.323). He sees this as another example of Swift's delight in playing with what "mankind have always esteemed as Sacred." The second quotation would have been more familiar to most readers: it is taken from Lucretius' De rerum Natura, and proclaims his intention to discuss themes never before treated in poetry. This is the first in a series of quotations from this work, which Swift read no less than three times in 1697 (Tale, introduction, p.1vi). It is to be noted that his claim is for a rhetorical rather than a philosophical innovation: "what joy to pluck new flowers and gather for my brow a glorious garland from fields whose blossoms were never yet wreathed by the Muses round any head" (On the nature of the Universe, p.54). Earlier he speaks of himself as "elucidating in Latin verse the obscure discoveries of the Greeks" (*ibid*, p.31). Lucretius goes on after the passage Swift quotes to explain first his purpose -to win fame by "loosing men's minds from the tight knots of superstition" -and then his strategy, which is to sweeten with his poetic skill a doctrine which would otherwise seem bitter to the 'multitude' who "shrink from it". (*ibid*, p.54).¹

¹ For Lucretius as a populizer of previously hidden doctrines see Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern (1968), pp.91-2.

I believe we can infer from Swift's quotation that he was especially interested in Lucretius' poem as an attempt to popularize philosophy. We could expect that one of the Tale's main purposes would be to examine such attempts. Lucretius, I would suggest, is the prototype of the 'curious' philosopher who reveals that "in the inside (things) are good for nothing".

In contrast, the gnostic 'gibberish' could stand as an example of the innovations which result from 'credulous' delusions. But this would mean that the Incarnation itself is ranked by Swift among these delusions. There is a curious series of Thoughts on religion which is pertinent here:

Violent zeal for truth hath an hundred to one odds to be either petulancy, ambition, or pride.

There is a degree of corruption wherein some nations, as bad as the world is, will proceed to an amendment; until which time particular men should be quiet.

To remove opinions fundamental in religion is impossible, and the attempt wicked, whether those opinions be true or false; unless your avowed design be to abolish that religion altogether. So, for instance, in the famous doctrine of Christ's divinity, which hath been universally received by all bodies of Christians, since the condemnation of Arianism under Constantine and his successors: Wherefore the proceedings of the Socinians are both vain and unwarrantable; because they will never be able to advance their own opinion, or meet any other success than breeding doubts and disturbances in the world. Qui ratione sua disturbant moenia mundi.

The want of belief is a defect that ought to be concealed when it cannot be overcome.

The Christian religion, in the most early times, was proposed to the Jews and Heathens, without the article of Christ's divinity; which, I remember, Erasmus accounts for, by its being too strong a meat for babes. Perhaps, if it were now softened by the Chinese missionaries, the conversion of those infidels would be less difficult: And we find by the Alcoran, it is the great stumbling-block of the Mahometans. But, in a country already Christian, to bring so fundamental a point of faith into debate, can have no consequences that are not pernicious to morals and public peace.

(Works, IX, pp.261-2)

This passage is vague in many respects, perhaps because of its remarkable admission of the possibility that the doctrine of the Incarnation is

either a harmless or an actively useful falsehood. However, it forms part of the Marcosians' initiation procedure: such secrecy stands in direct contrast to Lucretius, who hopes to convert the 'multitude' to his materialism. If the gnostics are needlessly secretive, perhaps the reverse is true of Lucretius.

We have already touched on the Apology as revealing Swift's expectation that only the "Men of Tast" will understand fully his meaning (see p. 31). Swift sheds light on the identity of these "Men of Tast" when he states that,

...he thought the numerous and gross Corruptions in Religion and Learning might furnish matter for a Satyr, that would be useful and diverting: He resolved to proceed in a manner, that should be altogether new, the World having been already too long nauseated with endless Repetitions upon every subject...He was then a young Gentleman much in the world, and wrote to the Tast of those who were like himself; therefore in order to allure them, he gave a Liberty to his Pen, which might not suit with maturer years, or graver characters, and which he could have easily corrected with a very few Blots, had he been Master of his Papers for a Year or two before their Publication. (Tale, p.4)

This passage gives the impression that Swift was an orthodox man overtaken by youthful high spirits. It is curious that he should declare that the novelty of his method was "resolved", and the "Liberty" he gave his pen was in order to "allure" those who were "much in the World". It would follow that the 'Tast' of these men differs from Swift's own, since his satire is both "useful and diverting", while these men seek only diversion. Since the adoption of the manner of these men seems to be what has offended the orthodox so deeply, one can deduce that Swift is referring to the free-thinking wits, from whom he carefully distinguishes himself by his attack on the "dangerous Heights (to which) some Men have proceeded." Swift, therefore, is claiming, in a suitably indirect manner, that his was a pretence of unorthodoxy to 'divert' the sceptical, and at the same time teach them

a 'useful' lesson, which would presumably be orthodox in some way.

But Swift did not merely write for the free-thinkers. For everyone, he implies, old orthodoxies could become stale by "endless Repetitions" unless revived by his "new manner". This substantiates the view of Sheridan, one of Swift's most acute critics, as we have seen, who argued that the purpose of the Tale was to make religion once again a topic of conversation in polite society, where it was fast becoming a dead issue due to the moderate and unconcerned attitude of the Low Church Whigs (Swift: The Critical Heritage, ed. Williams, p.227). This purpose would involve 'vexing' the latter group. This explains the ferocity of the attack on Nonconformist 'enthusiasm', which puzzles critics because it is so outdated.¹ In both a shocking and an entertaining way Swift reminds his readers that there is supposed to be an established Church. I would not deny that Swift found an outlet for his subversive temperament in his religious allegory, as some have argued; but this is perfectly compatible with the view that the violent satire was a calculated attempt to provoke a response in his readers,² whether intrigued by the hints of irreligion, in the case of the free-thinkers, or roused out of an unconcerned tolerance in the case of the Anglicans. The distinction between the orthodox and the free-thinkers which the Apology establishes is very important in the Tale. I would argue that the useful lesson aimed at the latter is not merely that Anglicanism is the true religion, but concerns the "dangerous Heights" to which stripping prejudices can lead. It is noticeable that Swift does not say 'misguided Heights': it is typical that he seems concerned not with the truth, but the practical consequences of a belief.

¹ Harth, Swift and Anglican Rationalism (1961), pp.106-15; Maybee, "Anglicans and Nonconformists" (1942), Preface; Webster, "Swift and Earlier Satirists of Enthusiasm" (1933); "The Satiric Background of the Attack on the Puritans in A Tale of a Tub" (1935).

² see Rawson, "The Character of Swift's Satire", p.65; and Rogers, "Swift and the Idea of Authority" for opposite views on this subject.

The next item in the prefatory material is the "Dedication to the Right Honourable John Sommers," supposedly written by the bookseller, and apparently a nicely turned compliment to the Whig Chancellor. The bookseller is about to dedicate the book to Sommers with an eye to his liberality as a patron, when he comes across Swift's Latin inscription on the papers, detur dignissimo, which, a translator informs him, means, "Let it be given to the worthiest." In order to ascertain who is the worthiest man of the age, the bookseller visits several wits in his employment, all of whom nominate themselves and then Sommers. Following an ancient maxim, he decides "...that those, to whom every Body allows the second Place, have an undoubted Title to the First" (Tale, pp.22-7). It seems at first that Swift has nicely differentiated himself from those who dedicate for purely vulgar reasons, but it is the bookseller, whose ignorance of the classical languages and literature and general vulgarity is stressed, not Swift, who departs from his usual shrewdness. He has neither the capacity nor the inclination to judge of worthy men for himself, but relies on the votes of his hacks. In this way Swift invites us to wonder how far the 'common people' can be thought of as judging with discrimination, a central theme of the Tale. To the extent that Swift is a confirmed democrat, his praise of Sommers will be genuine. In his De Augmentis Scientiarum, Bacon takes the above-mentioned maxim as an example of a logical sophism, citing Cicero to the effect that most people will praise after themselves only the least worthy man, since they are likely to envy those they believe are really great too much to give them their due.¹

In the "Epistle Dedicatory to his Royal Highness Prince Posterity" the dispute between the Ancients and the Moderns becomes the main

¹ Bacon, Philosophical Works, p.539.

subject for the first time. There is some debate among critics as to the seriousness of Swift's support for the Ancients. Quintana writes that Swift was "supremely indifferent" to the philosophical questions which were involved in the dispute.¹ This view leads critics to virtually ignore long passages in both the Tale and Gulliver's Travels in what seems to me an unwarranted way. It arises, perhaps, from the embarrassment felt even by critics who stress the importance of the dispute to Swift: "Rarely has so great a book been written in a lost cause."² Such comments are influenced by the positivistic studies of the dispute which have been accepted as authoritative in many quarters.³ More recently, as these studies have been questioned, it has been argued that Swift, in common with the other combatants, saw himself as involved in a struggle between "two comprehensive systems of radically opposed thought."⁴ We are free to take Swift's support for the Ancients seriously now that classical political and moral philosophy is itself taken seriously as an alternative to Modernism.

The Modern persona is attempting to show Prince Posterity that Modern books are not completely transient, but finds that "...altho' Their Numbers be vast and Their Production numerous in proportion, yet are they hurried so hastily off the scene, that they escape our Memory and delude our Sight" (Tale, p. 34). Throughout the "Epistle" it is

1 Quintana, The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift, p. 77. See also Rosenheim, Swift and the Satirist's Art, p. 113; Pinkus, Swift's Vision of Evil, I, pp. 27-30.

2 Starkman, Swift's Satire on Learning (1950), p. 13.

3 See especially Jones, Ancients and Moderns (1936); Bury, The Idea of Progress (1920). For accounts more sympathetic to the Ancients' position see Crane, The Idea of the Humanities (1943), pp. 70-118; Williams, Pope's Dunciad, pp. 106-26; Levine, "Ancients and Moderns Reconsidered" (1981-2); Strauss, Political Philosophy.

4 Bloom, "An Outline of Gulliver's Travels", p. 239; Tarcov, "Swift and Socrates" (1977). The view shared by these critics that Plato was at the root of Swift's support for the Ancients is supported by the fact that Socrates is the only 'Yahoo' the Houyhnhnm will praise, since he rejected "systems of natural philosophy where that knowledge, if it were certain, could be of no Use": Works XI, 268.

the sheer bulk of books which constitutes the main claim of the Moderns on posterity. The persona's view, it has been argued, is characteristic of cultures where print is the dominant medium, and therefore where information is best preserved by frequent publication; in contrast to oral/scribal cultures, where secret traditions are the most accurate method of transmission.¹ Swift, and the Ancients in general, have been seen as resisting the inevitable advance of the age of print.² Whether or not it is an oversimplification to see the premodern distrust of publication as determined by a reliance on outdated media, the dedication reveals that this distrust is shared by Swift and is indeed one of his central objections to Modernism. Swift does not reveal his alternative to the Moderns' "...immense bales of paper." (Tale, p.35): here, as elsewhere, the reader is invited to hold Modernism in contempt, in a superficial and purely destructive way.

For the first time, but not for the last in the Tale, Swift turns the tables on the Moderns here in a curious but very effective fashion. In an essay which had given rise to the most recent skirmish in the battle of the books which was the immediate occasion of the Tale itself, Sir William Temple, Swift's employer for many years, had expounded his theory that learning waxes and wanes in cyclical fashion, and concluded from it that preclassical learning must have been immense, although only faint traces of it remain. William Wotton had replied for the Moderns, and pointed out that Temple had absolutely no evidence for his assertions.³ Temple's grandiose but insubstantial claims for the

¹ Eisenstein, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change (1979), pp.114-16, 270-3; Yates, The Art of Memory (1966); Zilsel, "The Genesis of the Concept of Scientific Progress" (1945).

² Kinsley, "The Dunciad as Mock Book" (1971-2); Eisenstein, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change, pp.274-99; Murrin, The Veil of Allegory, pp.85-7.

³ Temple, An Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning (1690), pp.52-3; Wotton, Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning (1694), pp.75-115.

ancients bear an uncanny resemblance to the persona's claims for the moderns. Elias has shown that there are similar resemblances throughout the Tale, which leads him to conclude that "...Swift's crack-brained narrator demonstrates a certain kinship with Temple, though not the sort which Temple would have recognised or relished."¹ However, the theory that there is covert satire of Temple in the Tale cannot apply to the "Dedication", which shows Swift to be in agreement with Temple's central criticism of Modernism, directed at the view that knowledge is best preserved by printing lots of books. According to Temple, only a few books are of any value, but "scribblers are infinite, that like mushrooms or flies are born and die in small circles of time, whereas books, like proverbs, receive their chief value from the stamp and esteem of ages through which they have passed."²

There is a more plausible explanation of the parallel we have noticed, which does not involve one in the awkwardness of viewing the scathing attacks on the Moderns which punctuate the Tale as, for the most part, a disguise for a personal vendetta against Temple. Swift was aware that the public nature of the controversy in which he was involved meant that the result would be judged by popular opinion, which, as the "Dedication" just discussed shows, Swift holds in low esteem. I would suggest that, in one of its aspects, the Tale is propaganda for the Ancients, directed at those who have only a vague and superficial notion of the arguments on either side. Wotton's attack on Temple was particularly hard to reply to on a philosophical level for reasons which I shall clarify later; it was more effective to go on the attack and try and hoist the Moderns with their own

¹ Elias, Swift at Moor Park (1982), p.179.

² Temple, An Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning, p.38.

Petard. Wotton criticized Temple for basing large claims on mere traces of ancient learning; Swift shows that not even traces of Modern learning will survive. The advantage of this strategem is not only that it 'allures' readers by its wit, but also that it is purely destructive: Swift sacrifices clarity regarding his own positive values for persuasive force, and hence is not vulnerable in the way Temple was.

At the start of the Preface, Swift describes a meeting of the "Grandeers of Church and State", in which the way to prevent the "Numerous and penetrating" free-thinking wits from picking "...holes in the weak sides of Religion and Government" is urgently debated. They decide that they need some "present Expedient" to decoy these wits away from the more important targets until the "main Design" of setting up an academy to employ them in various trivial studies can be completed: "a Curious and Refined Observer" of the meeting points out "...that Sea-men have a custom when they meet a Whale, to fling him out an empty Tub, by way of Amusement, to divert him from laying violent Hands upon the Ship." The "Grandeers" allegorize this parable: "The Whale was intended to be Hob's Leviathan, which tosses and plays with all other Schemes of Religion and Government, whereof a great many are hollow, dry, and empty, and noisy, and wooden, and given to Rotation." The ship becomes the commonwealth, and, "after long Enquiry and Debate," the tub's "literal meaning was preserved." The task of diversion will be performed by A Tale of a Tub itself (Tale, pp. 39-42).

The frivolous tone of this passage and its position amidst a mass of prefatory material are calculated to mislead readers as to its seriousness. As we have seen, in his review of the French translation of the Tale (1721), Jean Le Clerc advocates extreme caution in reading the work on the grounds that this parable seems to inform the reader that Swift is out to deceive him (Swift, The Critical Heritage, ed.

Williams, p. 59). If we take the Apology and this passage together we can deduce that the free-thinkers will be 'allured' by the seeming irreligion of the piece, which will only later turn out to be a façade, and then perhaps only for the more alert amongst the wits. However, the tub is also an apt symbol for the capacity of the Tale to stimulate 'curious' readers to search for deep meaning, a search which is frustrated time and time again. It is above all curiosity, "That Spur in the side, that Bridle in the Mouth, that Ring in the Nose, of a lazy, an impatient and a grunting reader," which will hold the attention of the reader (seep. 33), just as, we can conjecture, the whale wishes to see inside the tub; and just as the analysis of the allegorical tub is a matter of 'difficulty' to the Grandees, over which there is "long Enquiry and Debate".

This debate is in the end fruitless, for we are given no indication that the "curious and refined Observer" intended his tub to be taken "literally". We may surmise that the Observer is playing with the Grandees, rather as the Grandees play with the Hobbesian wits. The Observer sees the "weak sides of religion and Government" as well as the Grandees, we may assume, but differs from them by virtue of his detachment. Unlike the Grandees, he does not have a vested interest in preserving the status quo, but is "curious". In this context, Swift's agreement with Hobbes in many of his criticisms of "Schemes of Religion and Government" is significant. As appears from the above quotation, the Grandees unwittingly reveal the aptness of the comparison of many of these schemes to dry, hollow tubs even as they search unavailingly for the correct allegorical interpretation. In a sense Swift is closer to the Hobbist wits than the Grandees, for the Observer agrees with Hobbes that ideally it would be better to discard the very schemes which the Grandees are concerned to defend. If so, the tub would be a suitable metaphor for a regime which is maintained because it is established, rather than because it is the best. The

Grandeess would be supported only to the extent that Swift supports the nominal religion of the persona of the Argument. The Observer can be distinguished from the Hobbist wits not because he thinks less freely but because he speaks less freely, as is revealed by the mysterious character of his parable, which conceals from the Grandeess its teaching concerning the hollowness of their regime. While the Grandeess wish only to conceal the hollow centre of their regime, and the Hobbist wits wish only to reveal it, the Observer's parable teaches as well as conceals the merits of various regimes. The tub which the Grandeess see as protecting the establishment, in fact reveals its hollowness, but only to the 'curious' reader, whose enquiries lead him beyond its outer surface.

Swift's parable implies that the Tale presents different aspects to those who defend and those who criticize the current regime. Without disturbing the 'credulity' of the former, it actually stimulates the 'curiosity' of the latter. The passage itself illustrates this strategy, since both those who skim through this passage noting only the humour, and those who identify the Observer with the Grandeess, noting only the attempt to banter the free-thinkers, are excluded from Swift's meaning.

Amongst the more trivial passages which conclude the Preface and divert attention from its seriousness, the persona declares to those who would "...descend to the very bottom of all the sublime throughout this Treatise...", that they must gain a "thorow Comprehension" of the author's thoughts by placing themselves in "...the Circumstances and Postures of Life, that the writer was in...", which means, in this case, starving in a garret (Tale, p.44). Milton Voigt has argued that the Hack is rarely simply wrong but should be seen as a lens, which distorts consistently and can therefore be corrected consistently.¹

¹ Swift and the Twentieth Century (1964), p.58.

The persona's reductive materialism can be decoded to reveal serious and elevated themes, which means that the reader must always be alert to the possibility that the seemingly ridiculous offers debased parallels to Swift's real values.¹ I would argue that only those who are themselves "curious and refined Observers" will understand Swift's parables, and that such a man is necessarily ascetic.

The last part of the Preface is devoted to a discussion of the relative merits of panegyric and satire. Satire is more popular than praise because the vices are far more interesting and numerous than the virtues and because praise is "...bestowed only upon one or a few Persons at a time (so) is sure to raise Envy..."(Tale,p.51). Satire, on the other hand, is rarely resented because the blame is always shifted by the reader: "'tis but a Ball bandied to and fro, and every man carries a Racket about Him to strike it from himself among the rest of the Company"(Tale,p.52). The only time when this is not the case is when satire is directed against individuals, as it was in the ancient world. The persona, realizing that praise is displeasing to readers only because of its particularity (a point which supports my interpretation of the bookseller's "Dedication"), and finding himself incapable of satire, decides to write "A Modest Defence of the Proceedings of the Rabble in all Ages"(Tale,p.54). If we correct his

¹ For the Tory satirists' shaping of evil into a precise inversion or parody of good see Paulson, The Fictions of Satire, pp.125-7; Williams, Pope's Dunciad, pp.46-9,142-58; for a Renaissance analogue see Panurge's praise of debt, which parallels Plato's praise of love in the Symposium as well as revealing Panurge's worldliness -- Gargantua and Pantagruel, Book III(1546), pp.295-301; see also Screech, Rabelais(1979), pp.226-30; Masters, Rabelaisian Dialectic, p.25. In Plato's Symposium itself, the highest sublimation of eros is foreshadowed in its lowest manifestations, since even Phaedrus recognizes that the selfishness of the lover must be transformed into selflessness in order to be satisfied - Symposium,178,e; see also Rosen, Plato's Symposium, pp.35-6. "The Aristophanean comedy is only a partial mirror of life. Therefore it points to what escapes it or transcends it " --Strauss, Socrates and Aristophanes, p.312.

distorting lens, we discover he is discussing a genuine rhetorical problem for those who wish to instruct readers, even though he himself wishes only to entertain, namely, that real moral instruction will inevitably be unpleasing since it necessarily involves the reader having to admit that he needs it.

We have already seen how this might be applied to the Tale. In the persona's "Dedication", as throughout the Tale, there is a light and entertaining satire at the expense of the moderns. These paragraphs support my view that this is not because Swift took only a superficial interest in the controversy, but is rather a deliberate strategy aimed at influencing popular opinion, adopted because direct and serious praise "is sure to raise envy". We can deduce two further points from this passage if we assume that Swift wishes to instruct his readers in a true sense despite all the difficulties. Much of the text will cater for readers who are incapable of self-condemnation, but there will also be an effort to bring the satire home to those who are capable of it. According to Sams this is the purpose of the abrupt self-contradictions in Swift's work (see p. 21). Certain readers are expected to experience "wonderful revolutions" at these moments (see p. 36). In particular, since the Tale addresses itself especially to the free-thinkers, as we have seen, Swift hopes to cause some of these to rethink their Hobbist assumptions. I hope to show how Swift both "allures" and unsettles his free-thinking readers throughout the Tale.

Beyond this purely destructive level I will show that Swift's positive instruction emerges, but I will argue that it is intended to be hidden from all but those who have already shown themselves willing to take Swift's satire to heart, since in these alone it will not "raise Envy". To recognize one's folly is the first stage of Swift's initiation, as it is Erasmus' (see p. 70).

Swift concludes the Preface with the following words: "...yet I

shall now dismiss our impatient reader from any farther Attendance at the Porch; and having duly prepared his Mind by a preliminary discourse, shall gladly introduce him to the sublime Mysteries that ensue"(Tale, p.54). This is the first of many references to "mysteries" in the Tale, and one does not have to be an occultist or a Hermeticist like the persona to accept that there are indeed concealed meanings in the Tale, although to call them "sublime" is highly misleading.

I have cited Kelling's view that the Introduction reveals the subject of the Tale to be rhetoric (see p.14). We can now add that Swift deals principally with the more specific problem of rhetorical authority: how to make an audience attend to one's words. As always, the reader must decode the persona's reified view:

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. Now, in all Assemblies, tho' you wedge them ever so close, we may observe this peculiar Property; that, over their Heads there is Room enough; but how to reach it, is the difficult point; it being as hard to get quit of Number as of Hell...(Tale,p.55)

To support his point, the persona quotes from the Aeneid the Sibyl's cautious reply to Aeneas' request to be guided down into the underworld, in which she points out that the descent is easy but "...Evadere ad auras, / Hoc opus, hic labor est"("but the difficulty comes when you want to return from the light"). The philosophers, the persona continues, have sought to achieve this "altitude" by "erecting certain Edifices in the Air" -- and he mentions in particular the suspended basket of Socrates in Aristophanes' Clouds -- but these have two disadvantages: "First, that the Foundations being laid too high, they have been often out of Sight, and ever out of Hearing. Secondly, that the Materials, being very transitory, have suffer'd much from the Inclemencies of Air, especially in these North-West Regions" (Tale,p.56).

On a casual reading of this passage, it appears that Swift envisages a sort of Hobbesian state of nature, in which the strongest gain a hearing and influence the crowd. The persona's mechanistic vocabulary encourages this reading. We are entitled to wonder, why Swift chooses precisely these lines from the Aeneid, the context of which would suggest that the rhetoricians Swift is talking about must have descended in some sense before they climb. Aeneas' descent to the underworld was often thought of as an allegorical description of an initiation into a mystery cult. (Warburton: Divine Legation, 1, 182-93). Socrates' basket has very similar associations, since Aristophanes' Clouds takes as its subject Socrates' initiation procedure. The persona's Hobbesian assumptions, which are evident in his reified vocabulary and his inability to see beyond the literal level of his own metaphors, lead him to believe that the philosophers' edifices are simply another way to gain power over the crowd, but as he himself admits, "they are often out of Sight, and ever out of Hearing." Swift implies by this that philosophers always discourse in private, and reproduce this secrecy when they write. Height above the crowd has a different meaning for the philosophers and the persona's rhetoricians. The persona praises what is blameworthy -- i.e. enthusiastic preachers and Grub Street hacks. He praises these men for their success in gaining power -- i.e. by their own standards. If we attend to the gaps in the persona's univocal discourse, it is clear that Swift is praising the philosophers for their wisdom and that the persona cannot understand their wisdom precisely because he is one of the crowd from which wisdom necessarily removes itself. But the persona's incomprehension reveals that there is a genuine problem for the philosophers, since knowledge cannot be put to good use without power over the crowd, and since, as the quotation from the Aeneid hints, gaining this knowledge is less difficult than gaining the skill needed to adapt it to the

mentality of the common man, so that it can be of service to him. The persona's discussion of the ways of gaining power open to the rhetorician is only partially misleading, nor is his criticism of the pure philosopher totally misguided, true to his function as a "distorting glass". The reader should remain open-minded enough to appreciate the persona's insights as well as his limitations.

To turn for a moment to the possible effects of Swift's own prudence of utterance; one can imagine a superficial reader who, entirely untroubled by these questions, would attend only to the play of wit, and a 'curious' reader who will no doubt be delighted by the satires on Grub Street and 'enthusiasm' but will also have an uncomfortable feeling that he is being bantered. The parody of mechanistic philosophies here is a secondary layer of satire, as it were, which runs throughout the Tale. For those perplexed readers who are willing to learn, a dialogue is set up between the persona's argument and its ironic inversion, neither of which can be accepted unreservedly. The problems centre on the persona's acceptance of Hobbes' axiom that it is "...a generall inclination of all mankind (to have) a perpetuall and restlesse desire of power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death."¹ Swift reveals that there is a tension between this and another Hobbesian doctrine that there is a "Desire to know why, and how (called) CURIOSITY; such as is in no living creature but man; so that man is distinguished, not onely by his reason; but also by this singular passion from other Animals; in whom the appetite of food, and other pleasures of Sense, by praedominance, take away the care of knowing causes; which is a Lust of the mind, that by a perseverance of delight in the continuall and indefatigable generation

¹ Hobbes, Leviathan (1651), p.161.

of knowledge, exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnall Pleasure." ¹
 This "lust of the mind" has nothing to do with the desire for power, so it cannot be important in Hobbes' own scheme. On the other hand, Swift seems to be far from denying that the desire for power can in general explain human behaviour. There is a similar ambiguity in his treatment of Hobbism throughout the Tale.²

Swift's aim is to confuse the reader. Even if there is a hidden key to the persona which could be clearly stated, it would be unwise to leave out of an account of the Tale the process of searching for it, which only the most dogmatic reader could by-pass. If the reader decides that the Tale is entirely concerned with powerful oratory; decides, in other words, that the persona errs only in taking literally metaphors which perfectly describe Swift's theme, then he will not go beyond the limits of the persona's world to consider the implications of his conflation of the rhetoricians' "altitude", which brings authority, and the philosophers' "altitude", in which gaining authority is not even the aim (and which, Swift implies, could be as well described as a descent into concealed, hellish depths). Another reader might decide that everything the persona says must be inverted, and that therefore his rejection of philosophy means that philosophy is the central theme of the Tale. Such a reader would have to argue either that Swift did not believe that there is an unbridgeable gulf between the philosopher and the 'crowd', or that he considered this gulf

¹ Ibid, p.124. For this tension in Hobbes' thought see Strauss, What is Political Philosophy (1959), pp.171-96; Cropsey, "Hobbes and the Transition to Modernity" in Political Philosophy and the Issues of Politics.

² Some critics argue that Swift's outlook was basically Hobbist; see Ong, "Swift on the Mind" (1954); Donoghue, Swift. A Critical Introduction, pp.45,95 passim; French, "Swift, Temple and a 'Digression on Madness'" --others, that the attack on Hobbism is central to the Tale --Hopkins, "The Personation of Hobbism in Swift's A Tale of a Tub" (1966).

unimportant. At least on the surface, Swift does seem to criticize mere "Edifices in the Air". Nor must one ignore the fact that the three machines represent genuine ways of communicating with the crowd. Rather than adopting either of these extreme interpretations, it is humbler to believe that a problem is being stated in these first two paragraphs, a problem to which the reader will not address himself if he takes the person's words either purely ironically or purely literally. The persona can understand that powerful rhetoric alone can influence the masses, because he is one of the masses. The attentive reader will understand that Swift considers philosophy a truly noble activity which is inevitably unpopular. I would argue that the Tale guides the reader toward a way of combining the excellence of philosophy with the power of rhetoric.

The persona's discussion of the three machines which follows is free of what might now be termed 'value judgements', which means that he is blinded to the fact that his 'scientific' discussion of rhetorical power treats entirely of inferior counterparts to the "men of Taste" and the Anglican clergy -- the hacks and the dissenters. We can only criticize what he accepts as fact if we go outside the persona's own terms and admit that unwise men may become powerful. Although the persona's subject is rhetoric, he is cut off from a genuine understanding of the problem of rhetorical authority by his mechanistic vocabulary and reliance on visual analogies. Walter Ong is surely wrong to see Swift himself as a product of 'print culture'. On the contrary, the persona is used to satirize the new dominance of the eye over the ear (Ong, "Swift on the Mind"). Swift shows us that the new necessity to find geometric analogies can lead to a clumsy literal-mindedness when discussing the subtlety and power of human speech, which is indeed incomprehensible to those who consider the comparatively lifeless printed word a model for all human communication. Much of the

humour of the Tale lies in the persona's attempts to describe old things in the new way. The second quotation from Lucretius occurs as the persona struggles to explain why words from a "superior, Position of Place" should make "deep Impressions" on us. He argues that if, as Lucretius has demonstrated, sounds have a corporeal nature, then the greater the height from which they fall, the greater will be the force with which they strike us (Tale, p.60). This supports my view that it was Lucretius' rhetorical tactics that interested Swift. Since Lucretius' aim was a general enlightenment, he clearly did not believe that the "Foundations" of philosophy are "laid too high" for the crowd, as the persona puts it (Tale, p.56). In this second quotation, Swift identifies the Lucretian view with that of the persona, who conceives of rhetoric as part of a struggle for power, which means that for Swift, Lucretius' aim was not the communication of wisdom. It should be noted that in the passage from which the first Lucretian quotation is taken, the poet explains that his motivation for treating in verse for the first time these lofty and obscure teachings is his desire for immortal fame.¹

Clearly, the persona's discussion of the orator's words is absurdly reified, but Swift makes it difficult to be any more precise about the nature of his criticism. The persona agrees with the Lucretian belief that words physically strike an audience, and argues that this is facilitated by the way they "...stand with their mouths open, and erected parallel to the Horizon, so as they may be intersected by a perpendicular Line from the Zenith to the Center of the Earth. In which Position, if the Audience be well compact, every

¹ Lucretius was cited as an authority in support of both Ancient and Modern positions-see Harris, All Coherence Gone (1966), p.192 -- but if I am right, Swift at least saw him as the father of the Moderns.

one carries home a Share, and little or nothing is lost" (Tale, pp. 60-1).

As Smith and Guthkelch point out, this is one of the many times in the Tale when Browne's Vulgar Errors (an attempt to popularize the New Science, inspired by Bacon) is parodied. The attitude to rhetoric which the New Science encourages is clearly oversimplified, but in what way? The notion of equal 'shares' of words for all seems to be under attack. Swift continues: "...there is something yet more refined in the Contrivance and Structure of our Modern Theatres." The "refinement" lies in their tiered structure, which allows "weighty Matter... (whether it be Lead or Gold) [to] fall plum into the jaws of certain Criticks," who are seated in the pit; while the "...whining Passions, and little starved Conceits, are gently wafted up by their own extreme Levity, to the middle region, and there fix and are frozen by the frigid understandings of the Inhabitants;" and the "Bombast and Buffonery, by Nature lofty and light", soar up to the "Twelve-Peny Gallery" to a "suitable colony, who greedily intercept them" (Tale, p. 61).

If we look beneath the puzzlingly irrelevant satire on Augustan theatre, and assume that it has been inserted at this point for a reason, it supplies us with a key to Swift's critique of Modern rhetoric. There is no indication that the upper galleries of the theatre seat an audience capable of appreciating anything less superficial than what is offered them by the contemporary plays Swift satirizes. Therefore, although the persona discusses inferior plays, even these offer us a model for the way all plays are appreciated. If we correct the persona's distorting lens, we can extract from this passage the dichotomy of entertainment and instruction, familiar to all Augustan critics. In what we might call the concealed argument of the Introduction, Swift seems to deny that those who wish to convey "weighty Matters" can treat their audience as if they are all on the

same level so that "every one carries home a share". It is implied that the rhetorician who is also a philosopher must attend to the various levels of his audience like the "prudent Architect" of the theatre, who is indeed "more refined" than the Lucretian rhetorician, who behaves as if everyone desires knowledge to an equal extent.

The genre of the Tale is mock declamation. The mock genres of the Augustan age shape what is blameworthy into a precise analogue of what is praiseworthy, and should therefore be given an analogical reading. The persona's opposition between the milling throng and Socrates' basket, and his description of the divisions of the theatre audience both point to and conceal things which might be seriously praised, just as in Pope's Dunciad the random multiplicity of vice is made to reflect in a consistently distorted way the greatness of the epic heroes.

Now the persona informs us, in complete contrast to the mechanistic literalism of his description of the "machines", that his "...physico-logical Scheme of Oratorical Receptacles or Machines, contains a great mystery, being a Type, a Sign, an Emblem, a Shadow, bearing Analogy to the spacious Commonwealth of Writers, and to those methods by which they must exalt themselves to a certain Eminency above the inferiour world" (Tale, p.61). From the two quotations on the title page right through to the end of the Tale the persona veers between gnosticism and mechanism. This has several effects, but the most obvious is to discredit modernism by recalling its links with the radical Hermeticism which flourished in the Interregnum and was still vaguely associated with the Royal Society.¹ Again, it is important to

¹ For the close links between early modernism and Hermeticism see Bouwsma, Concordia Mundi (1957), pp.273-87; Bonelli, Reason, Experiment & Mysticism (1975), pp.3-7, 239-45, 260-1; Eisenstein, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change, pp.125-6, 273-87; Jacob, The Radical Enlightenment (1981), p.35; McGuire, "Newton & The Fires of Pan" (1966); Manuel, Utopian Thought in the Western World (1979), pp.207-20; Rossi, Francis Bacon. From Magic to Science (1968), p.31; Sailor, "Moses & Atomism" (1964); Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment (1972).

see the Tale as, among other things, propaganda directed at those who were not well versed in the Ancients-Moderns controversy.

We can also infer that we must ourselves avoid extremes of literal-mindedness and exclusive concern with rarefied hidden meanings in our reading of the Tale. The questioning reader will have to search for Swift's position between the two extremes. We have already seen the necessity for such a search in the first two paragraphs of the

Introduction, where the reader is invited to enquire how the love of wisdom can be united with powerful oratory, when the two seem fundamentally incompatible. We saw that initiation into this dialogue is a privilege allowed only to those who are prepared both to stay within and to go outside the persona's view; to read flexibly, ironically or literally as the occasion demands, avoiding the more obvious, purely ironic, or purely literal interpretative strategies. As appears from the passage quoted above, the persona himself writes alternately at these opposite extremes, moving between the complete literalization of all metaphors and sudden, occult glimpses beneath this surface. Swift invites the reader to produce a 'union of opposites' from his fragmented outlook.¹

Of the three "oratorical machines" it is the second, the "Ladder"-which one would expect to be the most important if Swift is indeed practising number symbolism -that is left obscure. On the metaphorical level, it refers to the speeches of criminals who are about to be hanged. Mystically, we are told, it is "an adequate Symbol of Faction and of Poetry" (Tale, p.59,62). Two uses of rhetoric seem rather roughly yoked together here, in contrast to the first machine which simply represents Nonconformist preaching, and the third, which

¹ For Rabelais' similar aims see Masters, Rabelaisian Dialectic, pp.2-17.

represents Grub street. In the Apology, Swift tells us of these machines that "...in the Original manuscript there was a description of a fourth, which those who had the papers in their Power, blotted out, as having something in it of satyr, that I suppose they thought was too particular..." (Tale, p.8). This seems to point our attention to the ladder, since a hiatus in the manuscript occurs just as Swift is about to explain why it is an "adequate symbol of reaction".

This is the first of several "pretended defects in the manuscript", which, we are told in a note almost certainly written by Swift himself, occur when the author "...thinks he cannot say anything worth reading, or when he has no mind to enter on the Subject, or when it is a Matter of little moment, or perhaps to amuse his reader...or lastly, with some satirical intention" (Tale, p.62). There is an explanation to suit all types of reader here. These gaps and the various explanations offered for them may remind us of the controversies between orthodox critics and the new scientific textual critics like Spinoza and Simon over the flaws in the Bible, which the new critics argued were scribal errors rather than hidden mysteries.¹ It has been argued, and I believe with some justification, that Swift's deepest concern is with modern biblical criticism: Bentley's methods used in the demonstration that the epistles of Phalaris were not authentic were exactly those used by Simon to prove that there is no authoritative text of the Bible extant.² Apart

¹ Spinoza, Tractatus Theologico Politicus (1670), pp.139-45. See also Simon, A Critical History of the Old Testament (1678), pp.25-45; owned by Swift Williams, Dean Swift's Library, cat.nos.342, 516. For discussions of the new criticism and the threat it posed to the authoritative status of the Bible see Briggs, Biblical Study (1887), pp.196-9; Grant, A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible (1965), pp.116-21; Hazard, The European Mind 1680-1715 (1635), p.183; Spink, French Freethought from Gassendi to Voltaire (1960), pp.289-91; Steinmann, Richard Simon et Les Origines de l'Exégèse bibliqué (1960).

² Levine, "The Design of A Tale of a Tub" (1966); Vallier, "The Impact of Descartes on the Satire of Swift's Tale of a Tub" (1970), pp.241-65.

from Temple, the other Ancient mentioned in the Battle of the Books is Isaac Vossius, whose De Sibyllinis (1680) Swift had just read, having received it as a gift from William Temple. This work was a defence of the Septuagint as the authentic translation of God's word. Simon replied to it in his Animadversions upon a Small Treatise (1684).¹

If the three machines do indeed 'distinguish' the subject of the Tale, then it is clear that the "Pulpit" is linked with the religious allegory, while the "Stage-Itinerant" is linked with the digressions on learning. We can infer from this that the machines stand, not for the particular corruptions of religion and learning which the persona details, but for religion and learning themselves, and by that same token, where the persona says that he is going to discuss "Faction", Swift is going to discuss politics. But the Tale does not seem to discuss politics at a cursory reading. I would suggest that Swift is hinting at his deepest theme, which lies behind both digressions and main allegory. This would make poetry too, a central theme. Swift explains very cryptically why the Ladder can represent poetry (whereas he gives no such explanation regarding 'faction'): "...because climbing up by slow Degrees, Fate is sure to turn [roets] off before they can reach within many Steps of the Top: And because it is a Preferment attained by transferring of Propriety, and a confounding of Meum and Tuum" (Tale, pp.62-3). We may take this as an enigmatic indication that Swift is in agreement with Temple's view that true poetry is created in a sort of heroic frenzy, which in turn is in agreement with

¹ Tale, pp. Ivii, 238. Elias, Swift at Moor Park, p. 103. Vossius upholds the "Neoclassical synthesis", in which classical and Christian traditions are welded into a single great authority—Johnson, The Foundation of English Neoclassical Thought (1967), pp. 107-57. In fact he claims that the knowledge of Christ's coming was more widely disseminated in the classical than the Judaic traditions. Not only the oracles but Zoroaster & Trismegistus, "...clarius de adventu Christi fuisse locutos quam veteres locuti sint prophetae", p. 40.

the common renaissance belief that the true poet is a philosopher or prophet who is radically opposed to the established social structures. This could explain the link between poetry and 'faction'. The difference between the Ladder and the two other machines lies in the fact that its purpose is not simply to give the orator power over the crowd, but to teach certain individuals in the audience. In Swift's words, it allows some to "climb up by slow Degrees", although, as Swift also stresses in his key to the 'machine', many will be "turned off before they can reach within many Steps of the Top." The image of the Ladder reminds one of the gap between the philosopher's basket and the pressing crowd below. Although the other machines could be understood as ways of giving the philosopher power, or allowing him to manipulate the 'common forms', in the terms of the "Digression on madness", the Ladder alone can lead to philosophy itself. One reaches a "Transferring of Propriety" through a gradual ascent, just as the theatre of the "prudent Architect" can deliver both "weighty matter" and more popular material because of its construction on several levels. In the description of the Ladder Swift once again moves outside the persona's Hobbist perspective, in which all human behaviour can be understood in terms of the drive for power. He also, I believe, adumbrates the reasons for the fact that philosophy is "often out of Sight, and ever out of Hearing", by comparing it to thievery. It is the relationship between philosophy and lawlessness which necessitates the "slow Degrees" by which potential poets must climb. The account of the Ladder is one of those extremely enigmatic moments of the Tale which are intended to arouse the curiosity of the attentive reader.

Swift, however, does not make it easy to ask questions about his work, as it is his dazzling display of wit which is the first thing to strike all readers of the Tale. In particular, the "young Gentlemen

much in the World" will be attracted by the seemingly purely destructive, satirical energy. As Swift suggests in the Preface, the next stage would involve some of these cynics applying the satire to themselves, or at least being disturbed by the frequent changes in the direction of the banter. The free-thinkers will be delighted by Swift's attacks on 'enthusiasm' and Grub Street, but disconcerted by the fact that these are conducted in a vocabulary which burlesques their own fashionable mechanism. Since Swift tells us that the work is aimed mainly at the free-thinkers, and since 'enthusiastic' Nonconformism of the type he satirizes was no longer a force in the land when he wrote, we can gather that his assault on 'inspired' preachers is in part a way of gaining the attention of the free-thinkers for doctrines that they would otherwise unthinkingly scorn. The rapid alternation between the satire on 'enthusiasm' and that on mechanism in the Tale can be explained as an effort to switch from a controversial and aggressive defence of Anglicanism which the Hobbist or free-thinking reader will find highly entertaining, to a direct assault on the assumptions of this very reader, after which he will perhaps be prepared to consider the hidden discussion of a philosophic rhetoric which is commenced in the Introduction.

The central section of the Introduction begins with the persona's announcement that he himself is a member of the "Illustrious Fraternity" of Grub Street. He proceeds to defend the fraternity against two "Junior start-up Societies", Gresham and Will's --i.e. the Royal Society and the Restoration wits:

But the greatest pain given to that general Reception, which the writings of our Society have formerly received, (next to the transitory State of all sublunary Things,) hath been a superficial Vein among many Readers of the present Age, who will by no means be persuaded to inspect beyond the Surface and the Rind of Things; whereas, Wisdom is a fox, who after long hunting will at last cost

you the Pains to dig out: 'Tis a Cheese, which by how much the richer, has the thicker, the homelier, and the courser Coat; and whereof to a judicious Palate, the Maggots are the best. 'Tis a Sack-Posset, wherein the deeper you go, you will find it the sweeter.' wisdom is a Hen, whose Cackling we must value and consider, because it is attended with an egg; But then, lastly, 'tis a Nut, which unless you chuse with Judgment, may cost you a Tooth, and pay you with nothing but a Worm. In consequence of these momentous Truths, the Grubaeen Sages have always chosen to convey their Precepts and their Arts, shut up within the Vehicles of Types and Fables, which having been perhaps more careful and curious in adorning, than was altogether necessary, it has fared with these Vehicles after the usual rate of Coaches over-finely painted and gilt; that the transitory Gazers have so dazzled their Eyes, and fill'd their Imaginations with the outward Lustre, as neither to regard or consider, the Person or the Parts of the Owner within. A Misfortune we undergo with somewhat less reluctance, because it has been common to us with Pythagoras, Aesop, Socrates, and other of our Predecessors. (Tale, p.66)

Clearly of course, one's immediate reaction to this is intended to be precisely opposed to the one that the persona is attempting to produce. That is, we consider Swift to be satirizing the pretension and superficiality of Grub Street. But on closer inspection, several questions inevitably arise. If the irony is that these superficial readers are in fact good readers, and that there is nothing that truly goes beneath the surface in the products of Grub Street, does this mean that there are some secretly profound works which these readers understand but which the persona does not? On the other hand, does Swift mean that no work "inspects beneath the surface", so that Grub Street hacks are only to be distinguished by their fraudulent pretensions to do so? The alternatives seem to be: either we must accept that good literature is only better than bad because it is honest about its superficiality or we must accept some genuine link between the esoteric and the profound. Critics who discuss these matters assume that the Tale consistently attacks secret meanings, which they often link exclusively with gnosticism.¹ However, a problem

¹ See next page for note.

remains in this interpretation, which is made as explicit as Swift cares to in "The Digression on Madness": if we refuse to take seriously the idea of wisdom as necessarily a diving beneath the surface - whether it be of the text, of man or of the universe - then we are left only with the surface. There are no half measures. Swift and the persona seem to have the same frame of reference in this respect. Of course, we must not rule out the possibility that Swift finally desires us to choose the surface, as he often seems to imply; but even this act, by virtue of its declared superficiality, admits the existence of deeper levels. The difficulty for critics who assume that we cannot infer Swift's interest in these levels from the Tale is that the alternatives dissolve on a close reading. Clearly, in the previous quotation, the persona is absurd in his search for esoteric meanings where there are none, but we can turn the satire in the other direction and point out that Grub Street's superficiality can only be criticized in terms of the persona's own metaphor of surfaces and depths. The last sentence quoted implies that, just as too much attention to surface entertainment often hides an inner void, so too, a surface level which is not quite so smoothly acceptable is the mark of an inner wisdom. As Smith and Guthketch note, Pythagoras, Aesop and Socrates were all men of proverbially ugly appearance, which we can take symbolically as referring to the first impressions one gains from their words.

The satires on esotericism form a large part of the Tale (pages 66-9, 97-100, 125-30, 155-7, 184-7, 270-3, 283-5). As we have seen, this can be partially explained in terms of Swift's attempt to discredit the

¹ Pinkus, Swift's Vision of Evil, I, 61-7 and "A Tale of a Tub & the Rosy Cross" (1960); Rosenheim, Swift and the Satirist's Art, pp. 87-8; Eliot, "Hermeticism, Enthusiasm and Symbol in Jonathan Swift's Tale of a Tub" (1971); Andreasen, "Swift's Satire on the Occult in A Tale of a Tub" (1963).

Moderns by reminding readers of their Hermetic origin, and as part of the 'bait' with which Swift attracts his Hobbist readers in order to mock the very reductive mechanism from which he at first appears to mount his assault on Hermeticism. These, however, do not explain the sheer frequency with which Swift returns to this theme. In fact, along with the imagery of surfaces and depths, it is one of the few elements of the Tale which suggests on a first reading that the work does form a unified whole. Since it is unlikely that Swift thought the occultist groups of his own day posed any real threat,¹ he must have some other purpose in mind.

In the series of 'wisdom' images we can find a parallel to the curiosity/credulity crux on a much less obviously serious level. That knowledge can be harmful is implied by the fox and the sack-posset images as well as, more obviously, by those of the cheese and the nut, as Paulson has pointed out.² But Paulson omits from his account the excitement of hunting and drinking, both Platonic symbols for philosophical enquiry;³ and also the fact that nuts, eggs and cheese can provide good nourishment. Moreover, the reference to the beautiful exterior of the ancient sages, which causes their less obviously attractive interior to be overlooked, precisely inverts the Silenus image,⁴ which, as we have seen, symbolized a philosophical rhetoric which resolved the antagonism between wisdom and common opinion. All this would suggest that Swift's mockery of esotericism is not all that it
 - seems.

¹ which is not to deny that radical Hermeticism still existed -see Jacob, The radical enlightenment(1981).

² Theme and Structure in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub', p.143.

³ For hunting see the Sophist, for drinking the Symposium.

⁴ For inverted: or vulgar Sileni see Erasmus, Adages, pp.273-9.

V. "A Tale of a Tub" and the Ancients and Moderns Dispute.

There is a curious aspect to Swift's connection of modernism with esotericism. Although, as we have said, modernism arose out of the occult movements of the Renaissance to a large extent, and some moderns used secrecy as a temporary measure,¹ there is the paradox that the rejection of secrecy was central to modernism right from the outset, and indeed, it has been argued, was the crucial distinguishing feature of the early moderns, rather than any particular philosophical position such as support for the experimental method.²

² Rossi, "Hermeticism, Rationality and the Scientific Revolution" (1975), pp. 250, 262; and Francis Bacon from Magic to Science, pp. 31-3; Eisenstein, Printing Press as an Agent of Change, pp. 270-9; Zilsel, "The Genesis of the Concept of Scientific Progress" (1945). Of the earlier moderns, Bacon sees parables primarily as ways of popularizing knowledge. Although he is willing to support his own theories with esoteric interpretations of ancient myth, in the Advancement of Learning (1605) he argues that the original myths were innocent of such meanings - pp. 83-4; see also Philosophical Works, pp. 822-4. (But for a view opposed to this and Rossi's, cited above, see Lemmi, The Classic Deities in Bacon (1933), who argues that Bacon's attitude to esoteric allegory was entirely traditional.) For the restoration moderns, the enigmatic mode has been used by sages of the past to hide their ignorance and is now to be superseded by the clear style of the New Science - see Sprat, History of the Royal Society (1667), pp. 5-6, 112; Parker, A Free and Impartial Censure of the Platonick Philosophie (1666), pp. 68-74.

¹ Eisenstein, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change, pp. 274-6; Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli (1958), pp. 168-73.

The Moderns' attacks on secrecy became more confident and thoroughgoing towards the end of the seventeenth century.¹ In France, Perrault criticized Ancients who see classical works as "des choses divines que la profondeur des mysteres qu'elles renferment, et notre foiblesse nous rendent impenetrables."² Fontenelle, noted for his popular work on the New Science, A Plurality of Worlds (1686), argued that the pagan priests surrounded the oracles with mystery merely in order to gain power for themselves, and that Homer was completely unaware of the hidden meanings which have since been discovered in his work.³ St. Evremond, another French free-thinker, argued that the ancient poets were impostors who pleased the multitude with "fables and false mysteries" to protect the falsehoods that they themselves believed.⁴ These attacks continued on in France throughout the early part of the eighteenth century. Terrasson, a devotee of Cartesian "clear and distinct ideas", rejected the esoteric mode as the mark of an ignorant age, since "...the Allegory is only understood by a small Number of the Wise and Learned, who don't want Instruction, and the literal sense corrupts the generality of Men who want to be instructed."⁵

In England also, the decline of the status of the classical poets

¹ For the slow death of the allegorization of classical poetry see Allen, Mysteriously Meant, final chapter; Manuel, The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods (1959), pp. 19-29, 46, 245; Gordon, "Ripa's Fate" in The Renaissance Imagination ed. Orgel (1975).

² Parallele des Anciens et des Modernes (1688), p. 26.

³ History of Oracles (1687), pp. 95-110; Dialogues of the Dead (1694), pp. 24-8. Swift possessed no less than three editions of the latter work, and nine books by Fontenelle in all, though he did not own the History of Oracles - see Williams, Dean Swift's Library, cat. nos. 2, 74, 127, 128, 137, 138, 310, 459 and 460.

⁴ Works (1728), II, p. 350. Owned by Swift - Williams, Dean Swift's Library, cat. no. 56.

⁵ A Critical Dissertation on Homer's "Iliad" (1722), II, 100. The passage occurs in one of the most exhaustive modern critiques of esotericism - pp. 87-189. Rather curiously, Terrasson seems to retract much of what he says here in The Life of Sethos (1732), in which, on the whole he speaks reverently of the ancient mystery cults - pp 156-95.

was inseparable from the belief that esoteric modes of communication had now been superseded, an attitude best seen in the work of Burnet,¹ who argued that "...there was a twofold doctrine among the antient Nations, a vulgar, and a secret one; and that not only by reason of the Diversity of the matter, but they often handled the same materials in a double manner, a popular, and a philosophic one." This was because "uncultivated minds, who are only accustomed to the Senses...are not able to endure the clear Light of Truth, but rejoyce to behold it by Fables, as through a cloud: Nor will the fierce and obstinate multitude suffer themselves to be directly brought to Religion and the Worship of the Gods; but they must be led through winding Paths." (Doctrina Antiqua de Rerum Originibus(1692),pp.108,154). At the same time he argues that "...what was made known to the Ancients only by broken Conclusions and Traditions will be known (in the Later Ages of the World) in a more perfect way, by Principles and Theories." Burnet, whose work has radical undertones,² envisages a coming millennium which will be accompanied by the rending of all previous veils: "And the whole mass of knowledge in this Earth doth not seem to be so great, but that a few Ages more, with two or three happy Genius's in them, may bring to light all that we are capable to understand in this state of mortality."³ Usually modernism has a political dimension, since it is closely linked with the view that the enigmatic symbols of the pagan priesthood were simply deceitful ways of hiding ignorance.⁴

The opposition between the New Science and the older, secretive

1 Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia(1949),pp.162-213.

2 Jacob, The Newtonians and the English Revolution(1976),p.109.

3 Burnet, The Sacred Theory of the Earth(1631-9),pp.48,203.

4 Blount, Essays on Several Subjects(1697),pp.156-8. Here modernism moves close to the radical deism of Toland's Christianity not Mysterious(1696),pp.68-70.

methods of communication is also stressed by several other eighteenth century thinkers: the Ancients, we are told,

...did not furnish their Students with the Reason of Things, or teach them by a Course or Argument to raise a theory of the Powers of Nature, for in truth they themselves had never turned their Studies this way. The Art which they had cultivated was that of disguising and concealing their Traditions from the Vulgar...and all that the Student had to do, was to unravel these Intricacies, to learn to read what was written and to be able to explain a dark and enigmatic Sentence...

The Ancients themselves perceived that the defence of esoteric modes of communication was central to their position. There is little difference in this respect between the Renaissance and the Neoclassical Ancient. Reynolds asks despairingly:

...what bookes have wee of whatever knowledge, or in what mysteries soever, wisely by our Auncients (for avoiding of this present malady the world is now falne into) couched and carefully infoulded, but must bee by every illiterate person without exception deflowred and broke open, or broke in pieces, because beyond his skill to unlocke them?

The high value the ancients set on their secret doctrine is shown by the "...care they took to conceale them from the unworthy vulgar, and which doth no lesse commend their wisdome then conclude, by their contrary course, our Moderns empty and barren of anything rare and precious..."² Casaubon, who was to become the first Ancient to attack

¹ Shuckford, The Sacred and Profane History of the world Connected (1728-30), Preface to vol. I, xlix. See also, Woodward, Of the Wisdom of the Ancient Egyptians (1777), pp.9-11. For the decline of the esoteric symbolism see also Korshin, "Figural Change" (1972).

² Mythomystes (1633), pp.144-5, 155. For the typical view of the Renaissance critic see page 56; and for the way this view began to be outmoded see Murrin, The Veil of Allegory, pp.85-8.

the Royal Society, more cautiously advocates secrecy for those who realize certain aspects of religion are purely customary. Truth, although always precious, is "... not always Seasonable to be divulged, where the error is generall, and cannot bee opposed without much scandall." Casaubon carefully distinguishes this concern for "publicke tranquillity" from mindless conformity. His attack on the Royal Society takes the form of a criticism of probings into natural causes beyond what is visible to the common eye, revealing that, in common with other Ancients, Casaubon believes the search for knowledge needs to be limited by a fine sense of what type of knowledge is useful or beneficial.¹

Le Bossu, though more hostile than most Ancients to the motives for the secret meanings of the ancients, was typical in basing his readings of Homer on the assumptions that there are such meanings, and was attacked for this view by the moderns.² Other French critics deeply admired the wisdom of the ancients in concealing things from the vulgar eye. Anne Dacier declares that:

it was the custom in Homer's Days, to propose to the People the greatest truths under Fables and Parables. The wiser sort were proud of diving into those Mysteries and discovering the Sense of Them: And the Vulgar paid respect to those Learned Obscurities.

She laments that her own age should "despise these Veils and Shadows, and Value nothing that is not plain and open."³

Augustan defence of the ancients was conducted along similar

¹ A Letter to Peter du Moulin (1669), p.23; A Treatise of Use and Custome (1638).

² See p.56 ; and Terrasson, A Critical Dissertation, II,91.

³ Anne Dacier, The Iliad (1711), Introduction, I, v-vi, xli; see also André Dacier, The Life of Pythagoras (1706), pp.24-8; The Works of Plato Abridg'd (1699), pp.75-6.

lines. Pope begins his annotations to his translation of the Iliad by cautioning us against allegorizing Homer at the expense of appreciating his poetic beauties; and some critics argue that his admiration for Homer was purely aesthetic.¹ However, there is evidence that esoteric allegory was central to Pope's case for Homer. In the Essay on the Life, Writings and Learning of Homer by Parnell, that Pope included in his preface to the translation, Parnell sends the poet on his entirely traditional errand to Egypt to learn "...rites and traditions which were reveal'd but to few."² Here he learns to use the established polytheism so that the common people would be "allured to attention by pleasure and awed with the opinion of a hidden mystery"; and yet, Parnell tells us:

...There are several rays of Truth streaming through all this darkness of those sentiments he entertains concerning the Providence of the Gods; deliver'd in several Allegories, lightly veil'd over, from whence the learned afterwards pretended to draw new knowledges, each according to his Power of Penetration and Fancy.

He quotes the belief of Maximus Tyrius that "it is the madness of men.. to disesteem what is plain and admire what is hidden; this the Poets discovering invented the Fable for a remedy, when they treated of holy matters; which being more obscure than Conversation and more clear than the Riddle, is a mean between Knowledge and Ignorance...Thus as Poets in Name, and Philosophers in Effect, they drew Mankind gradually to a

¹ Poems of Alexander Pope, VII, 7, see also p.82; Warren, Alexander Pope as Critic and Humanist (1963), pp.67, 100-2; but for the view that Pope's reading of Homer was still basically allegorical, see Swedenberg, The Theory of the Epic (1944), p.71.

² Poems of Alexander Pope, VII, 48. See Allen, Mysteriously Meant, and Iversen, The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs (1961); Walker, The Ancient Theology (1972).

search after Truth, when the name of Philosopher would have been harsh and displeasing" (Poems of Alexander Pope, VII, p.68-70). Parnell, it seems to me, does not depart from the Renaissance view that the exoteric level of the allegory promotes great piety among the 'credulous'. This is more than a way of proving Homer to be a Christian before his time. As Parnell's remark about about the multitude being awed by a "hidden mystery" reveals, he views Homeric allegory as a political tool. Pope sees Homer's use of polytheistic 'lies' as "the whole secret of the great and the wise to govern the simple and ignorant Herd" in the "first ages" (the quotation is from the Modern, St. Evremond, which Pope turns on its head). He also quotes Stanyan defending the oracles: "...whatever juggling there was as to the religious Part, Oracles had certainly a good Effect as to the Publick; being admirably suited to the Genius of a People who would join in the most desperate Expedition...when they understood by the Oracle, it was the irresistible Will of the Gods" (ibid, VIII, pp.166, 250-1). The crucial question, however, is whether Pope and Parnell believed, with Plato, that secrecy is always useful to the wise man, like Mme. Lacier who criticizes her age for despising "veils and shadows", or whether, like Burnet, they see it as having been superseded by the New Science. Can the "simple and ignorant Herd" be enlightened? In his preface Pope says that it is reasonable to speak literally now since "the mode of Learning changed in following ages, and science was delivered in a plainer manner." Parnell however, speaks without qualification of the "madness of men (who) disesteem what is plain."

To resolve this uncertainty we can consider Pope's projected plan for an epic with Brutus as hero:

The plan of government is much like our original plan, supposed so much earlier; and the religion introduced by him is the belief in one God, and the doctrines of morality...Brutus is supposed to have travelled into Egypt, and there to have learned the unity of the Deity,

and the other purer doctrines afterwards kept up in the mysteries.

(Spence, Observations, Anecdotes and Characters, 1820, p.56)

We can say for certain that Brutus' secret knowledge which "turns wholly on civil and ecclesiastical government" was not merely Christian doctrine which is now generally communicated, for later we learn that the work was not written because it would have provoked "every church on the face of the earth" (ibid, p.73). The mystery cults were, it appears, wiser in some aspect of "civil and ecclesiastical government" than Pope's own age.

In this context it is pertinent to note that the subject of the Dunciad is the spread of a new, vulgar culture to aristocratic circles;¹ in a sense, precisely the opposite of the translation of the mysteries to a new part of the ancient world. The work is full of references to the mysteries.² The goddess Dulness presides over a cult which is a contradiction in terms, since its aim is to popularize its doctrines. Pope sets a high value on rhetoric, "the art by which knowledge of matters both spiritual and temporal was oriented towards the betterment of society" (Williams, Pope's Dunciad, p.106): this leads him to criticize the modern system of education, which first teaches a materialistic metaphysics and then leads youths to "Find virtue local all Relation scorn, / See all in self, and but for self be born"; who "Thus instructed and principled... (are) admitted to taste the Cup of the Magus (Dulness') High Priest, which carries a total oblivion of all obligations divine, civil, moral, or rational. To these her Adepts she sends Priests...; confers on them Orders and Degrees." Pope's norm here, it has been argued, is the Neoplatonic concept of the sapiential

¹ Williams, Pope's Dunciad, p.17

² Howard, The Mystery of the Cibberian Dunciad (1968); Faulkner, "The Classical and Mythographic Sources of Pope's Dulness" (1979-80).

ladder, of which we are given a distorted view in the free-thinkers' condemnation of those who "...creep by timid steps and slow, / On plain Experience lay foundations low, / By common sense to common knowledge bred, / And last, to Nature's Cause thro' Nature led."¹ The venture beyond "common knowledge" is made finally, but cautiously, in contrast to the Moderns, who question established paradigms right from the start.

It has been argued that the Greater Dunciad was written under the influence of Pope's friend, Warburton.² Whether or not this is the case, Warburton is relevant to our discussion as an influential eighteenth century thinker, who combined great admiration for the wisdom of antiquity with the belief that the cults were "the retreats of sense and virtue" in an idolatrous age.³ He was famous for his curious argument, directed against the free-thinkers, that Moses' omission of any mention of rewards and punishments in an afterlife, far from revealing that this doctrine was not part of an original, divine revelation, is definitive proof of Moses' 'divine legation', since all other ancient legislators had recourse to an exoteric doctrine of an afterlife - which they themselves disbelieved, and led initiates of their mystery cults to reject - in order to "keep the people in awe, under a greater veneration for their laws", and in the belief that obedience was ultimately in their own interest.⁴ However, as some of

¹ Poems of Alexander Pope (one volume edition), pp. 765, 789-91. See Kropf, "Education and the Neoplatonic Idea of wisdom in Pope's Dunciad" (1972-3).

² Howard, "The Mystery of the Cibberian Dunciad".

³ Spence, Observations, p. 301.

⁴ Divine Legation. See especially I, 150.

his critics realized, Warburton's apologetic aim is almost overshadowed by his high estimation of the pagan lawgivers' 'double doctrine', in a way that implies that Warburton himself saw the doctrine of divine rewards and punishments as a useful lie.¹

In fact Warburton admits that his long discussion of the mysteries and hieroglyphs, "the two grand Vehicles of Egyptian learning and Religion...(and) the cardinal Points on which the Interpretation of Greek antiquity should henceforth turn," is not just auxiliary proof of his thesis but was designed to give a sense of the "Force and Genius of Eastern Eloquence" (Divine Legation, II, 205-6). The 'double doctrine', by which the Egyptian sages were "...perpetually inculcating to the people the Doctrine of a future State of rewards and punishments in their Discourse and writings, (while) they were all the while Philosophizing in private on other Principles," was practised only at the peak of civilization, when moral and political philosophy were valued above all and it was realized that "UTILITY AND NOT TRUTH WAS THE END OF RELIGION." Civilization declined when philosophers "...returned back into the Original old fashioned road of Physics, rejecting all Politics, Legislation and Logic; and accordingly (which deserves our Notice) with them, rejected the use of the double Doctrine."² Warburton says that the Egyptian ecclesiastical policy is a model for eighteenth century England in some respects (Divine Legation, I, 232, 238, 266-7), but for obvious reasons cannot examine explicitly whether it

¹ Leland, The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation (1768) I, 188; Sykes, An Examination of Mr. Warburton's Account of the Antient Legislators (1744), pp. 2-3. See Manuel, The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods (1959), p. 65 for the view that Warburton was a deist. If he was, it was in a concealed way, for his overt aim is to defend the Christian revelation, afterlife and all. Kuhn, "English Deism and Romantic Syncretism" (1956), sees Warburton as defending the Church. For the connection between deism and the Ancients see Lovejoy, "The Parallel of Deism & Classicism" (1931-2).

² Ibid I, 303-19. See also II, 94-157 for a discussion of hieroglyphs based on similar principles, which Pope singles out for special praise - Correspondence, IV, 341.

was so in this as well, although I believe the inference that it was can unmistakably be drawn from a careful consideration of the work as a whole.¹

We can find an identical view of the ancient political wisdom in the work of Blackwell (quoted p.58 and cited in the Divine Legation, I, 231): Homer, like the other ancient sages, recognized that a lively literal level can be "...the great Bridle of the Multitude, to whose Passions, they knew, they were obliged to speak, and could never pretend to govern them by Reason and Philosophy."² Blackwell's and Warburton's acceptance of idolatry as a necessary accommodation to the 'vulgar' would have struck a chord in several Renaissance critics, as we have seen; and he is also traditional in seeing poetry as a sort of heroic madness in which the arts of the legislator, theologian and philosopher are combined. He makes the contemporary application of his views clear, when he contrasts to such 'poets' free-thinkers, who are philosophers without concern for what is of practical, political benefit:

How unlike in this to some Authors of our own Growth!
Who I hardly know for what End, have written against the
Religion of Their Country, and without pretending to
Substitute anything better, or more practicable, in its
place, wou'd deprive us of our happy Establishment.
(ibid, pp.77-8; see also 151-7. But for the view that
there were some new trends in Blackwell's thought, see
Swedenberg, The Theory of the Epic, pp.74-8)

Blackwell cites Socrates' view from the beginning of the Phaedrus, that the literal meaning of myth should not be questioned, but rather

¹ Among other eighteenth century thinkers who agree with Warburton on the crucial point of the need for an exoteric, civil religion, see the Abbé Barthelemy, Travels of Anacharsis (1794), I, 110-11; II, 341, 365; V, 490, 474-5; VI, 2-4. Barthelemy several times shows the Platonic belief that philosophical truth is in a sense subordinate to political and moral utility.

² Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (1735), p.145.

reinterpreted in a private, philosophical sense (Enquiry, pp.209-14).

Similar views can be found in the works of Bolingbroke, who believed the Egyptians were wiser than his own age, and praised their legislators for encouraging idolatry:

Appeals to the reason of unreasonable men would have had little effect: and they had no power to force inward conviction, any more than outward profession... (so they employed therefore the only expedient, as bad a one as it was, that they had, sufficient to force both; the dread of a superior power, maintained and cultivated by superstition, and applied by policy.
(works(1754-98) III,222-6)

A similar 'double doctrine' characterizes all civilized periods (*ibid*, 245-6).

Another acquaintance of Pope's who shared some of these beliefs was Andrew Ramsay.¹ Like the other Ancients we have discussed, he envisages a series of wise legislators who reintroduce 'politeness', and with it the 'double doctrine'. Hermes, for instance:

...conceal'd the mysteries of religion under Symbols, Hieroglyphicks and allegories; and expos'd nothing to the eyes of the Vulgar but the beauties of his morality. This has been the method of the Sages in all Times, and of the great Legislators in all Countries. These divine men knew, that corrupted minds could not relish sublime Truths, till the Heart was purg'd of its Passions...
(Travels of Cyrus, I, 197. See also The Philosophical Principles(1748), 9-22.)

The esoteric teachings of the ancients are the central theme of The Travels of Cyrus.

¹ A query about the Essay of Man was perhaps the first of their contacts - see Spence, Observations, p.42. In two letters to Swift, Ramsay thanks him for reading his work with "goodness and patience" and even for his "obliging zeal" with which he endeavours to make his "work esteemed" - Swift, Correspondence, III, 225, 331. The work referred to is certainly the Travels of Cyrus(1727), which Swift possessed - M. Williams, Dean Swift's Library, catalogue no.496. See Walker, The Ancient Theology, p.238.

One can conclude from this brief survey that the belief that certain truths were hostile to the very fabric of society was characteristic of the Ancients, and that, as a natural consequence of this, they held that those who know these truths must impose upon their public communications certain restrictions. I would argue that the 'double doctrine' they found in Homeric allegory and the mystery cults was not merely an ingenious way of denying that the ancients were idolatrous, nor of demonstrating the existence of a deistic perennial philosophy,¹ for neither of these theories account for the fact that they are often more interested in the exoteric than the esoteric doctrine. The former is a noble lie, without which the philosopher is unable to civilize mankind. There is little difference in this respect between the Ancients and the tradition discussed in Chapter Three. The Moderns also perceived the central importance of secrecy to the Ancients, and frequently singled it out for criticism.

All this makes it odd that Swift should associate modernism with secrecy, as he does in the Tale; and when one looks at the immediate context of the Tale the problem becomes even more baffling. It was intended, in part, as a reply to Bentley and Wotton; two Moderns who had attacked Temple's Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning (1690), which was itself intended as a reply to the work of two Moderns already discussed - Burnet and Fontenelle. The tendency is to think of Temple as a pompous dilettante (Elias, Swift at Moor Park), which is perhaps partly justified, but in many ways he is representative of the Ancients. He was ranked alongside Locke by some Augustans (see, for instance, Spence, Observations, pp. 23-4).

¹ Kuhn, "English Deism and Romantic Syncretism"; Walker, The Ancient Theology; Schmitt, "Perennial Philosophy: Steuco to Leibniz" (1966); Cook, "Leibniz and Chinese Thought" (1981).

As we have seen, Temple did not believe printing was of any use in preserving 'politeness' (see p.108). In preclassical and classical times the work of preservation was performed by "...colleges, or societies of priests, [which] were mighty reservoirs or lakes of knowledge, into which some streams entered perhaps every age from the observations or inventions of any great spirits or transcendent geniuses that happen to rise among them." The cycle of 'politeness' that occurred in classical Greece was introduced by "great spirits" like Orpheus, Homer, Plato and Pythagoras travelling east to be initiated into these institutions. Even in "regions accounted commonly so barbarous and rude" there were particular successions of men dedicated to learning though the majority were indeed ignorant (Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning, pp.39-47).

The originators of these colleges were presumably the great poets, heroes and prophets discussed in Of Heroic Virtue.¹ These lawgivers, while all themselves adhering to the same pure but rather vaguely specified theology, were unanimous in their acceptance of the necessity of an exoteric religion for the 'vulgar'. In China, P'ohu and Confucius set up a regime in which the majority were idol worshippers, while the learned "...adore the spirit of the world which they hold to be eternal; and this without temples, idols or priests." Mango Capac and his sister civilize the previously savage Peruvians by teaching them to worship the sun, while again the learned worship only "he that animates or enlivens the world." The fearlessness of the northern races in battle is attributable to another extremely useful pagan doctrine, namely, that those who died in battle would be rewarded in an

¹ P.98. Temple's view is basically a secularized version of the Neoplatonic notion of the 'heroic fury' so popular in the Renaissance - Klibansky, Saturn and Melancholy (1964), p.247 & passim.

afterlife (Of Heroic Virtue, pp.112-42).¹ In Temple's account, the poets of antiquity resemble the legislators just discussed in that they possessed 'heroic virtue', which made their works profitable, but also an extra ability to entertain. For Temple, as for Spenser, whose allegories Temple rather strangely criticizes as too obvious, the poet is also a 'lawgiver', whose wisdom seems to be of divine origin to the 'vulgar'. Homer, whose knowledge and invention were "universal", is an example. He was one of those who invented the "riddles, parables, or fables, wherein were couched by the ancients many strains of natural and moral wisdom" (Of Poetry, pp.173-95).

In Wotton's reply to Temple the central theme becomes the role of secrecy in Temple's scheme, not surprisingly considering its importance in all three of the essays discussed:

Before I examine Sir William Temple's Scheme, Step by Step, I shall offer, as the Geometers do, some few things as Postulata; which are so very plain, that they will be assented to as soon as they are proposed. (1) That all Men who make a mystery of matters of learning, and industriously oblige their scholars to conceal their Dictates, give the world great reason to suspect that their knowledge is all Juggling and Trick.
(Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning(1694))

He goes on to associate Temple with precisely the type of eccentric Hermeticism with which Swift attempts to link Wotton himself throughout the Tale (ibid, pp.90-122).

The personal beliefs of the Ancients no doubt differed widely and it is unimportant to my thesis to determine what they were, beyond the fact that they disagreed with established, especially religious, beliefs

¹ There is therefore an element of truth in Gilbert Burnet's view that Temple "...thought religion was only for the mob. He was a great admirer of the sect of Confucius in China, who were atheists themselves but left religion to the rabble." Temple, Five Miscellaneous Essays, p.viii. Though again, this view is expressed covertly, since Temple excludes prophets from his discussion on the grounds that they were divinely inspired. Of Heroic Virtue, p.98. Nevertheless, Temple is exceptional among the Ancients because of the openness of his deism.

to a greater or lesser extent; but I would suggest that they were united in their view that it is far more useful politically to work within those beliefs than to question them. The passage quoted previously from the Thoughts on Religion implies, as we have seen, that Swift was in agreement with this view, as does his persona's doubt as to whether the "Banishing of all Notions of Religion...would be convenient for the Vulgar "(see pp.101 and 41). Bloom argues that Swift's adherence to Plato led him to defend the Church though in fact he was a nonbeliever (Bloom, "An Outline of Gulliver's Travels", p.240). One can add also the warning given in the Sentiments of a Church of England Man (1708) that "...any great Separation from the established worship, although to a new one that is more pure and perfect, may be an Occasion of endangering the publick Peace..." which is why "...Plato lays it down as a Maxim, that Men ought to worship the Gods, according to the Laws of the country."¹ The fact that the Ancients/moderns debate was in one of its aspects highly political is evident from the way it became a symbol for the rift between the High and the Low Church.² Temple's view that "religion was only for the mob", in the hostile phrasing of the Low Church historian Burnet, was far from depreciating the value of an established religion; in fact quite the reverse, judging from the nature of his support in the controversy.³ Implicit

¹ Swift, Works, II, 11-2. For the common defence of Christianity as of great utility as a way of promoting moral behaviour among the common people (which of course by no means precludes belief that it is also the true religion) see Swift's view that the "true Misery of the Heathen World" was not that the philosophers were ignorant in the "Article of Morality" but "...the Want of a Divine Sanction, without which, the Dictates of the Philosophers failed in the Point of Authority" - Works, IX, 74. See also Rogers, The Necessity of Divine Revelation (1727), pp. 7-45; Leland, The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation, I, 3-25; Sheridan, British Education (1756), pp. 79-81.

² Jacob, The Newtonians and the English Revolution, p. 78

³ See Warburton's defence of an established religion on the grounds of its supreme use to the state - The Alliance of Church & State (1736).

in Temple's scheme was a high estimation of the importance of the priesthood. At the other extreme were free-thinkers like Fontenelle and Blount, whose Modernism was inseparable from their disgust at the Machiavellianism of priests of all periods.

The attitude to wisdom which Swift attributes to the "Grubean Sages" is precisely the one we would expect him to defend if he were a serious Ancient. The parallels go beyond the defence of secrecy - the "two junior start-up societies" represent the two main forces hostile to the Ancients: the free-thinking wits and the Royal Society (Tarcov, "Swift and Socrates", p.24). His criticism of the "superficial vein [of] many readers of the present Age" is identical with that of Temple and Mme. Dacier (see p.134, and Temple's Of Poetry, pp.178-95). The obvious conclusion is that Swift is actually more in agreement with the Moderns than the Ancients on this central point in the dispute; and, as we have seen, it has been argued that Swift secretly disliked and opposed Temple.¹ But Swift, at least overtly, satirizes the Moderns here as throughout the Tale, and in fact links them rather than the Ancients with esotericism.

¹ See Elias, Swift at Moor Park. Some of the implications Elias draws from Swift's Ode to Sir William Temple seem suspect to me; for instance, where he takes the gambling metaphor Swift uses in discussing Temple's diplomatic successes as evidence of a desire to depreciate them. The notion that civilized values will inevitably "at the last" be swept "all away" is essential to the scheme of Temple's Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning and of many other Ancients discussed, who usually envisaged "barbarism" as only warded off for a while by heroic efforts. (See Elias, p.89, and Swift, The Complete Poems, p.54 for his view that "Gothic Swarms" will soon "break all this peaceful government!") I would not, on the other hand, suggest that Swift followed Temple slavishly in every detail of his thought.

I can think of no reason why Swift should covertly attack the Ancients' advocacy of secrecy. There is in fact evidence that Swift is covertly defending secrecy, apart from the context just discussed and the indications already mentioned that Swift conducts such a defence elsewhere in the Tale. There are implications in the letter that accompanied Swift's Ode to the Athenian Society that despite his laudatory tone, he considered the enterprise to be some "new folly, just suitable to the Age" (see Elias, Swift at Moor Park, p.94). Certainly The History of the Athenian Society (1696) revealed that the Society was thoroughly modern in its hostile attitude towards the secrecy of the classical philosophers and its concern with popularizing knowledge:

The Design as well as the Performance seems so extraordinary, that when I reflect on it, I often admire, that the general, nay, universal Advantage it brings, should never have inspired anyone to have thought of it before now; till I consider, that the Good of Mankind was not the aim of the Grecian philosophers, so much as their own Personal Glory...and to maintain this, 'twas necessary for them not to communicate Learning to any but their immediate Hearers, who by word of Mouth were to deliver it to their successors in the schools. This made all their Doctrines confin'd to their Gymnasia, their Porches and Gardens. (History of the Athenian Society, p.1).

This makes much of the ode ironical, for Swift converts the Society into one of the secret colleges, beloved by the Ancients, which preserves learning even amidst the greatest catastrophes. In stanzas III-V the main theme of the poem is introduced: secrecy. The Society is addressed for the first time as "Ye great unknown", a title which Swift uses throughout the poem. He consistently sees its anonymity as evidence for their wise acceptance of the need to veil great learning from the vulgar eye. Mankind is divided into three groups: sages (often compared to heroes, ll. 284 and 88) and two types of fool. The hero-sages surround themselves with mystery: "And you whom Pluto's

helm does wisely shroud/ From us the blind and thoughtless crowd,/ Like the famed hero in his mother's cloud,/ Who both our follies and impertinences see,/ Do laugh perhaps at theirs, and pity mine and me" (Complete Poems, p.49). Their secrecy gives rise to two opposite reactions. Among the first group of fools, "All merit that transcends the humble rules/ Of [their] own dazzled, scanty sense/ Begets a kinder folly and impertinence/ Of admiration and of praise" (Complete Poems, p.49). The second group, "possessed of present vogue", have fallen into an excess of 'curiosity' which, Swift informs us, he himself takes care to avoid. These are the Cartesian Moderns with their "new modish system of reducing all to sense", who, when confronted with the mysterious Society, will "to their ancient methods fall,/ And straight deny you to be men, or anything at all", explaining that what seems to be mortal wit is merely "a crowd of atoms jostling in a heap." This vulgar censure of the Society is "the authentic mark of the elect". By describing the reactions of these two groups of fools, Swift conveys to us the immense social utility of mystery. Among the 'credulous' it can create an awed regard for beneficial doctrines; and it shields the bases of these doctrines from attack by those who lack a sense of civic responsibility (Complete Poems, pp.48-50). Swift goes on to reveal that secrecy is needed precisely because these doctrines are so vulnerable to attack:

But as for poor contented me,
 Who must my weakness and my ignorance confess,
 That I believe in much, I ne'er can hope to see;
 Methinks I'm satisfied to guess
 That this new, noble, and delightful scene
 Is wonderfully moved by some exalted men,
 Who have well studied in the world's disease,
 (That epidemic error and depravity
 Or in our judgement or our eye)
 That what surprises us can only please:
 We often search contentedly the whole world round,
 To make some great discovery,
 And scorn it when 'tis found.
 Just so the mighty Nile has suffered in its fame,

Because 'tis said, (and perhaps only said)
 We've found a little inconsiderable Head
 That feeds the huge unequal stream.
 Consider human folly, and you'll quickly own,
 That all the praises it can give,
 By which some fondly boast that they shall for ever live,
 won't pay the impertinence of being known;
 else why should the famed Lydian king,
 Whom all the charms of an usurped wife and state,
 with all that power unfelt, courts mankind to be great,
 did with new, unexperienced glories wait,
 Still wear, still coat on his invisible ring. (pp.50-1)

Swift is saying far more here than his initial profession of "weakness" and "ignorance" might lead a superficial reader to believe. Although he starts off by claiming that he is content to remain ignorant of what he cannot understand, he ends by defending the concealment of discoveries that definitely could be understood by all. The hero-sages resemble the 'curious' Observer of the Tale's Preface, who conceals his knowledge of the flaws in established regimes. One is left to wonder what truths Swift is thinking of, which, like the source of the Nile, would be "scorned" if known. Throughout the ode Swift makes the anonymity of the society into a metonym for the support for secrecy in general which he attributes to them. In this and other ways he more or less reconstructs the society's position so that it is seen as opposing the very popularizing projects of which in reality it was itself an instance. The ode reveals that Swift approves of secrecy as much as the other Ancients. It also reveals Swift's willingness to reinterpret the moderns' values, rather than openly rejecting them, and so to insinuate the views of the Ancients. I would argue that these are precisely his tactics in the passage from the Tale under discussion, where the resemblance between Grub Street and the Ancients is to be explained by the fact that Swift is seriously praising those who recognize that the truth can be harmful and should be concealed.

If this is the case, then the distorting lens of the persona

misleads the reader at this point. As we have seen, the reader must be on the alert for base analogies which point to Swift's real values. He must determine constantly the precise moment at which Swift parts company from his persona. This technique means that Swift can be in agreement with his persona where he would at first appear to be satirizing him. But why deny that Swift is secretly criticizing the Ancients, and then accept that he is secretly praising them? There are perfectly pragmatic reasons for the latter course: firstly, praise, "being bestowed upon one or a few persons at a time, is sure to raise envy", which is especially the case with the sort of praise the Ancients wished to bestow, inseparable as it was from a low estimate of the dispositions of the majority of men. Secondly, if one could publicly explain the reasons for the need for secrecy in a way that was not dangerous to society then the secrecy would not be needed in the first place. This means that Temple's admiration for the "secret colleges" was peculiarly vulnerable to Wotton's charge of elitism and fraudulence. Indeed, as soon as the need for secrecy was challenged publicly, and the Ancients were forced to engage in a controversy, the victors of which would be determined ultimately by popular opinion, indirect methods such as Swift adopted were necessary. My point is not that Swift was addressing only the 'curious' reader, for this would mean that the Tale would be without influence over popular opinion. On the contrary, most readers are expected to read the passage as satire directed at the superficiality of modern writings, and as returning Wotton's charge of fraudulent esotericism against the Moderns themselves (rather in the manner of the "Dedication to Prince Posterity"). Satire, as Swift explains, is more popular than panegyric since it can always be applied to others. Swift's aim is to make Wotton and Bentley the subject of universal derision, albeit for the wrong reasons. He uses his reader's delight in seeing others

ridiculed. Swift, like Erasmus, distinguishes his readers according to whether they notice the difficulties which attend a simple ironic inversion or not. This means that the Tale has a superb unity, since Swift is explaining the need for concealment even as he practises it himself. In the terms of the "Digression on Madness", Swift is fighting a battle within the 'common forms', but at the same time not relinquishing the 'curious' philosopher's concern for truth. The result is a text which is intended to give rise to two conflicting interpretations.¹

The persona now embarks on a defence of Grub Street, along lines which are self-contradictory given his own view that knowledge can be harmful, since he aims to reveal all the meanings his colleagues had carefully concealed:

...to travel in a compleat and laborious Dissertation

¹ I would suggest that the scriblerian's work, The Origin of Sciences (1741), another attack on the Moderns, adopts similar tactics, since it is a knowledgeable and systematic burlesque of learned works on the esoteric tradition, but delivered by a Modern ingenu and dedicated to a "Dr. W.....", almost certainly the much abused Woodward - Arbuthnot, Life and Works, p.360. Woodward, like Wotton, always rejected secret, ancient traditions as associated with deism - An Essay toward a Natural History of the Earth (1695), pp. 55-62 (possessed by Swift in the 1714 edition, Dean Swift's Library, ed. Williams, catalogue no. 467); Of the Wisdom of the Ancient Egyptians (1777). The Origin argues that wisdom has originated in and been preserved by "pygmies" like Socrates and the "Indian Gymnosophists", grotesquely ugly on the outside, but immensely wise within - Arbuthnot, Life and Works, pp.360-8. These, I would argue, are literalizations of Plato's Silenus image. One can trace a series of other works in the earlier eighteenth century which adopt Swift's technique of attributing support for esotericism to those who in fact rejected it in the strongest terms: see King, Comment on the History of Tom Thumb (1711); A Letter from the Grand Mistress of the Female Freemasons (1724) -- an ambiguous defence of freemasonry which alludes to Swift and has been attributed to him, Prose Writings, V--; The Grand Mystery or Art of Meditating (1726).

upon the prime Productions of our Society, which besides their beautiful Externals for the Gratification of superficial Readers, have darkly and deeply couched under them, the most finished and refined Systems of all Sciences and Arts; as I do not doubt to lay open by untwisting or unwinding, and either to draw up by Exantlation, or display, by Incision.
(Tale, p.67)

As Guthkelch and Smith inform us, the word "Exantlation" specifically parodies Browne's Vulgar Errors. The persona's project is now revealed to be very similar to Browne's, whose aim was also to popularize knowledge (and who attacked among the causes of 'vulgar' ignorance the "Pious Fraudes" of priests of all eras¹). Here again, although there is entertaining satire at the expense of the Moderns, who are made to read deep meanings into apparently trivial texts, just as Wotton attacked Temple for finding secret traditions even in seemingly barbaric ages, the persona's contradictions can be the starting point of a dialogue. If knowledge is dangerous as well as intoxicating, is the persona's dissertation wise? Are not the "types and Fables" of his Grub Street colleagues necessary? This would mean that Swift's target would not be the persona's method of interpretation, as it would at first appear, but rather, as in the "Digression on Madness", his inability to keep a secret. He is like the persona of the Argument, who admits the falsity of Christianity even as he argues that this falsity should be concealed, or that of the "Digression on Madness", who "gravely" reveals the horrors of the depths even as he advocates concealment.

The persona could be understood, within the terms of the problem

¹ Vulgar Errors, p.178. It is also similar to that of Moderns like Burnet, and many earlier members of an intermediate group between the Ancients and the Moderns, whom scholars have labelled Pansophists; who tended to believe that secrecy had been valuable in the past, but was now outmoded.

stated metaphorically at the start of the Introduction , as claiming for Grub Street the ability to unite the power of the rhetorician with the powerless wisdom of the philosopher. The popular power of Grub Street is undoubted. The persona's claim that the hacks also convey profound truths beneath the glittering surface, which allows them to wield this power, is unconvincing to say the least, and yet this does not mean that he is not grappling with the right problem. The most that we can say is that he seems to embody a split outlook which Swift associates with modernism. In the discussion of the machines, he seemed to be entirely concerned only with power and popular appeal, but now he is concerned only with the conveying of profound truths, forgetting his own comments on the remoteness of the philosopher's basket, which should lead him to see the folly of his work of "Exantlation". If he himself is a hack, then we cannot agree with his view that the hacks unite power and wisdom, but neither do the "Junior start-up Societies" of Gresham and Wills's. The failings of Modern writings of all types are satirized in the extracts the persona proceeds to give us from his "laborious Dissertation" (Tale, pp.67-9).

What first strikes us about these extracts is the satire on occultism, as the persona offers cabbalistic and alchemical readings of folk tales and ballads like Tom Thumb, Dick Whittington and Tommy Potts, and claims Wotton's Discourse is itself an esoteric interpretation of such a tale. As we have seen, Swift's most superficial manipulation of popular opinion in the Tale is the attempt to turn Wotton's 'axiom' against the Moderns themselves; an attempt likely to be entirely successful among ignorant readers, since Modernism had not long separated itself from its Pansophist or Rosicrucian roots. Wotton, who had appealed to common-sense in formulating his axiom

regarding the fraudulent character of esoteric wisdom, now himself appears in the role he had given Temple: the harmless eccentric, obsessed with occult interpretations. The retort, "same to you" carries a certain ambiguity since it is not clear whether the charge is admitted to be just or not. If the charge is damaging in the eyes of the people, then simply to return it is an effective defence, which yet leaves open the possibility that the common judgement is not the correct one.

Swift makes concessions to common-sense and convention in the five "extracts" from the persona's "Dissertation" in which he gives profound interpretations of trivial texts, which might lead us to believe that he is satirizing esotericism in general. In the other two, however, there is an almost imperceptible shift in the direction of the satire. The persona tells us he has decided not to treat the fable of Reynard the Fox, because it has already been revealed to be "...a compleat Body of Civil Knowledge, and the revelation, or rather the Apocalyps of all State-Arcana," a discovery which is now "universally received". Smith and Guthkelch inform us that the fable was indeed constantly used by the Augustans as a vehicle for political allegory. If then the persona is not wrong in his interpretation, what is being satirized here? Could it be the very ease with which the interpretation has been "universally received" and "State-Arcana" have been unveiled? The persona also informs us that he is going to treat of Dryden's The Hind and the Panther, which is a "compleat Abstract of sixteen thousand Schoolmen from scotus to Bellarmin". Here again he is not completely off the mark. We can deduce that Swift is criticising a certain sort of allegory, rather than allegory itself. The joke appears to be that the persona treats as esoteric an allegory which is so obvious as to be positively boring.¹ Again there

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See also Prior's Hind and the Panther Transversed (1687), p.3, where

is a precise dialectic beneath the Tale's witty surface. The Modern works discussed are criticised for two precisely opposite reasons. Some instruct too obviously while others are not concerned with instruction at all. These two undesirable extremes correspond to the societies of Will's -- the Epicurean wits whose aim might be expected to be purely 'entertainment' -- and Gresham -- the Royal Society, the members of which were for the most part earnest Low Church divines who would be unlikely to understand how 'entertainment' can serve the ultimate end of 'instruction'. These two extremes will be satirized throughout the Tale, while the reader is encouraged to deduce the unstated mean.

The character of this mean as a combination of these extremes in some way is suggested during the final section of the Introduction (Tale, pp. 70-2). In general, this section attempts to obscure the significance of some of the themes raised in the earlier sections, with some incidental satire on Dryden. At one point, however, the persona returns to his theme. He believes that by revealing the profound meanings of the hacks he has defended Grub Street from the charge that its products are "...of little farther Use or Value to Mankind, beyond the common Entertainments of their Wit and their Style: For these I am sure have never yet been disputed by our keenest Adversaries: In both which, as well as the more profound and mystical Part, I have throughout this treatise closely followed the most applauded Originals." We can expect the Tale itself to exemplify the

(Cont.) Dryden's failure to maintain a consistent literal level is said to abuse the ancient parabolic mode, "begun and raised to the highest Perfection in the Eastern Countries", when it "...delivered the most useful Precepts in delightful Stories, which for their Aptness were entertaining to the most Judicious, and led the vulgar into understanding by surprizing them with their Novelty, and fixing their Attention."

way entertainment and instruction must be combined.

The introductory sections of the Tale resemble Rabelais' prologues in the way they leave untouched the superficial reader's desire to be entertained, but at the same time convey to the "noble drinker" that the Tale calls for a philosophical reading, which Rabelais compares to gnawing a bone. Both writers divide their readers by their self-contradictory attitude to esoteric wisdom.¹ However, the Tale's prefatory apparatus does far more than this. My argument is that a reflexive relationship between the Tale's form and its themes is implied in the above quotation, where the persona reminds us that his work itself exemplifies the methods he is advocating. On its deepest level, the Tale's defence of the ancients and the Anglican Church is a defence of a rhetoric which combines wisdom with popular appeal by the use of secrecy, and which is exemplified by the Tale itself. The argument of the Introduction is that the philosopher must descend both to the Pulpit and the Stage-itinerant- that is, he must gain popular power by entering a subphilosophical sphere. The truth, however, remains only "often out of sight" -the images of the Stage, the ladder, the coach, the nut and the cheese all imply the possibility of a multi-levelled text which can both wittily defend the 'common forms' and instruct philosophical natures.

¹ Gargantua and Pantagruel, prologues to books One and Two. See Walker, "Esoteric Symbolism"; Kline, Rabelais and the Age of Printing (1963), pp. 51-3; Masters, Rabelaisian Dialectic; Weinberg, The Wine and the Will for Rabelais' secretive mode of communication. See Stone, "Humanist Exegesis" (1974-5); "A word about the Prologue to Gargantua" (1971-2) for a critique of the view that Rabelais attacks esoteric texts in his prologue to Gargantua. For the traditional view see Seznek, The Survival of the Pagan Gods (1940), p. 95.

VI. A Tale of a Tub -- Sections II and III.

The first thing to determine about the allegory is why Swift chose to represent Christianity as a coat. Critics have noted that the symbol tends to reduce Christianity as a whole, implicating the Anglican Church along with the Nonconformists and the Catholics.¹ The question is, is this Swift's tub thrown out to attract the free-thinkers, as the banter on the number-three in the Introduction seems calculated to do,² or is Swift in agreement with the free-thinkers, rather as the Observer of the Preface implies that he agrees with the Hobbists that a "great many Schemes of Religion and Government are hollow, and dry, and empty"? Clothes play an important role in Gulliver's Travels as well, where they both protect Gulliver from the elements and deceive not only the Houyhnhnms but Gulliver himself as to his bodily links with the Yahoos. Gulliver is only attacked when he strips.³ Perhaps Christianity too protects and conceals human frailty. Clothes are one of the many surfaces in the Tale and so have more links with 'credulity' than 'curiosity'. We can add to this the fact, noticed above, that only the Ladder, not the Pulpit, can be conceived of as leading to the philosopher's basket.

Swift's account of the will further supports the view that the Tale is concerned with the utility of particular doctrines to human

¹ E. Dargan, "The Nature of Allegory as used by Swift" (1916).

² Tale, p. 57. For Wotton's reactions see p. 317.

³ Swift, Works XI, 236-7, 266-7. See Byrd, "Gulliver's Clothes: An Enlightenment motif" (1972).

societies rather than with the nature of those doctrines. The character of the divine law which is symbolized by the coats is not discussed - we are informed only of its flexibility: with "good wearing, they will... be always fit". Also the brothers must live "together in one Home" (Tale, pp. 73-4). The extent to which the command to preserve civil stability and the changes in society, symbolized by the "lengthening and widening" of the coats, should be allowed to compromise the purity of the divine law itself is not determined, though this becomes a central theme in the allegory. If the aim of the divine law is to protect mankind, as the coat symbol suggests, then the injunction to "...live together in one Home like Brethren and Friends" would surely be central to it.

The obvious thing to say about what follows is that it is a satire on Catholicism, and hence the first part of a witty and entertaining defence of Anglicanism. To universalize the allegory that follows, even as he gives the impression that Christianity is the only subject, Swift shifts between time scales in a rather bewildering way. The brothers emerge out of a fairy story in which they "encountred a reasonable quantity of Giants, and slew certain Dragons" into the Restoration world of fops and intrigue. Sartorialism is a pagan religion: the Sartorialists have household idols resembling the Roman Penates and "shewn in the Posture of a Persian Emperor"; their "Ensign," the goose, is thought to be derived from Jupiter Capitolinus, and is also considered a Deus minorum Gentium (i.e. a subordinate god or deified hero); savage sacrifices are made to their idols; and, referring to euhemeristic theories of the origin of paganism, Swift tells us that the god, who is of course a tailor, was "worshipped as the Inventor of the Yard and the Needle". When concluding his account of the "Sect", the persona apologizes for discussing the "State of Dispositions and Opinions in an Age so remote" (ibid, pp. 75-81). And yet, from this point until the section

on the Aeolists, which parallels the account of Sartorialism in many respects, the main allegory is set fairly specifically in the thirty years preceding the writing of the Tale. Susan Tarcov reads it as a very precise exercise in historical parallelism, with Sartorialism representing the shift towards tyranny and Epicureanism under the Stuarts, and Aeolism, the anarchy to which Swift feared the Glorious Revolution would lead.¹

Sartorialism represents most obviously the Catholic exclusive attention to the external rite; **but** although the importance of the more obvious satire should not be minimized, since it is through this that Swift defends the 'common forms', there is clearly far more to it than this. The Sartorialists:

...held the universe to be a large Suit of Cloaths, which invests every Thing: That the Earth is invested by the Air; the Air is invested by the Stars; and the Stars are invested by the Primum mobile. Look on this Globe on Earth, you will find it to be a very compleat and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land, but a fine Coat faced with Green? ...To conclude from all, what is man himself but a micro-Coat, or rather a compleat suit of Cloaths with all its Trimmings? As to his Body, there can be no dispute; but examine even the Acquirements of his Mind, you will find them all contribute in their Order, towards furnishing out an exact Dress; To instance no more; Is not Religion a Cloak, Honesty a Pair of Shoes, worn out in the Dirt, Self-love a Surtout, Vanity a Shirt, and Conscience a Pair of Breeches, which, tho' a Cover for Lewdness as well as Nastiness, is easily slipt down for the Service of both. (Tale, pp.76-8)

It has been argued that there are specific parodies of Hobbes and his

¹ Swift and Socrates, pp.20-44. See Patrick's Supplement to Grotius' Truth of the Christian religion(1694), p.212: "Popery is just such a depravation of the true Christian religion, as paganism was of the natural religion". See also Swift's Thought: "The Epicureans began to spread at Rome in the Empire of Augustus, as the Socinians and even the Epicureans too, did in England, towards the end of King Charles the Second's reign...They both seem to be Corruptions occasioned by luxury and Peace, and by Politeness beginning to decline" (works IV,249). For the Growth of Epicureanism and Hobbism in the Restoration see Mayo, Epicurus in England. 1650-1725(1974).

followers beneath the satire on Catholicism in these paragraphs.¹ It becomes fairly obvious that some kind of materialism is under attack when the persona informs us that the Sartorialists actually go beyond the drawing of analogies to identify man as "...an Animal compounded of two Dresses, the Natural and the Celestial Suit, which were the Body and the Soul: ...the Soul was the outward, and the Body the inward Cloathing..." (Tale, p.79). Swift is attacking those who "make Nature still inroach upon [God's] plan;/ And shove him off as far as e'er [they] can."² This can explain an awkwardness in the satire on Catholicism, which is that Swift himself has symbolized Christianity as a cloak and imagined God as a tailor. He can only blame the Sartorialists for sharing his own insight. The hidden satire on materialism points to the possibility that this is precisely what he is doing.

The Sartorialists depart from the traditional, hierarchical view of the universe in which God is thought to 'invest' the lower levels, in the fullest sense of that word.³ For them there is no divine justice controlling the universe. Their idol is seen "sitting on a Superficies" above a "Horrid gulph" which is only appeased by the priests flinging "Pieces of the uninformed mass" to it (Tale, p.76). Their situation is parallel to that of the persona in the "Digression on Madness" who only wishes to "Sodder and patch up the Flaws and Imperfections of Nature" which he has uncovered. However, Sartorial metaphysics have practical consequences which follow absolutely necessarily: "These Postulata being admitted, it will follow in due course of Reasoning, that those beings which the world calls improbably Suits of Cloaths, are in reality...men." (Tale, p.78). The

¹ Harth, Swift and Anglican Rationalism, p.24 (Hobbes, Leviathan, p.81); Hopkins, "The Personation of Hobbism in Swift's A Tale of a Tub".

² Pope, Poems (1 volume edition), p.790.

³ Chiasson, "Swift's Clothes Philosophy and Hooker's Concept of Law" (1962).

outward symbols of power are admired rather than inner moral qualities; "If certain Ermins and Furs be placed in a certain Position, we stile them a Judge..." (Tale, p.79). Human society reflects our perception of the natural order. A materialist metaphysics conduces to a view of society as a series of relations of power. This is the Epicurean world of the Restoration play in which the appearance of virtue is all important. Clearly Sartorialism is unstable: the rest of Section II not only satirizes the Catholic church but demonstrates the dire practical consequences of a metaphysical theory which Swift admits to be at least partially correct. The law restraining covetousness, ambition and pride is more and more openly disobeyed.

On the other hand, Sartorialism contains much of value. Prudent conformity seems to be preferred to open 'unmasking' in the "Digression on Madness". Moreover, the Sartorial rhetoric, which is all ornament and "sheer wit" is by no means completely rejected by Swift. Like many other targets of the Tale's satire, Sartorialism contains a partial truth, and so opens the door for a dialogue with its opposite-Aeolism.

The persona closes his description of the sect with this injunction: "I advise therefore, the courteous Reader, to peruse with a world of Application, again and again, whatever I have written upon this Matter" (Tale, p.81). Although Swift too sees Christianity as a surface, he does more than hide his scepticism like the Sartorialists. His aim is actively to defend Anglicanism - hence the overt satire on the early corruptions which led to the Catholic church. This means that the criticism of the free-thinkers, which admits some of their points, must be hidden, only to be discovered by 'curious' readers with a "world of Application". Here as often, Swift shocks the 'curious' into thought by switching abruptly from a 'credulous' sphere to more philosophical concerns. Sartorialism is a "Body of Philosophy and Divinity" (Tale, p.80).

My suggestion is that the "Digression Concerning Criticks" expands

on this theme of the disastrous social consequences of "curious" theorizing. Swift tells us that "...the Taylor's Hell is the type of a Critick's Common -Place-Book". He thus directs our attention to parallels between the digression and the main allegory, and also hints at the difference between the two: while the latter is concerned with the "superficies", and takes as its controlling image the coat, the former deal with the "horrid Gulph" (as is signalled by the anatomy image, which occurs twice, and by other metaphors of penetration, like the dragging of Cacus from his den or the discovery of a nutshell in an Iliad¹). I would suggest that the oblique character of the relationship between the digressions and allegory is intended to tease the reader into thought about the links between learning and religion. The potential hostility between learning and generally accepted beliefs of any kind has already been adumbrated in the "wisdom is a fox" passage, and is stated more clearly later in the persona's attack on 'curiosity'. This might lead one to see more contrasts than parallels between the parts of the Tale, since the Christian revelation is itself a generally accepted belief. If my approach to the Tale is correct one could also expect the digressions to deal with less popular subjects, since they will be considered the less important part of the work by the majority of readers.

Swift opens the "Digression concerning Criticks" with an account of an "extinct race" of critics, which clearly represents his norm: these draw up "...rules for themselves and the world, by observing . . . which, a careful Reader might be able to pronounce upon the productions of the Learned, form his Taste to a true Relish of the Sublime and the Admirable, and divide every Beauty of Matter or of Style from the Corruption that apes it."² Critics of this sort believe that "errors

¹ Ibid, pp.95,102,123,143,173. These all recall the series of wisdom metaphors already discussed: Talep.66.

² Ibid, p.92. The notion of corruptions as "aping" beauties is central to the Tale, as we have seen.

and defects" should be analysed only in order to formulate these rules and not out of an academic or 'curious' interest in the corruptions themselves. In contrast, we are told that the persona's "True critick...is the most Antient of all," and that "every True Critick is a Hero born, descending in a direct Line from a Celestial Stem, by Momus and Hybris, who begat Zoilus..." Critics can achieve "Heroick Virtue" in Temple's sense, but, the persona informs us, heroes have been thought to do more harm than good to society precisely because of their compulsion to combat every monster that comes into their path. We are informed that:

...from this Heavenly Descent of Criticism, and the close Analogy it bears to Heroick Virtue, 'tis easie to Assign the proper Employment of a True Antient Genuine Critick; which is, to travel thro' this vast world of Writings: to pursue and hunt those Monstrous Faults bred within them: to drag out the lurking Errors like Cacus from his Den; to multiply them like Hydra's heads; and rake them together like Augeas's Dung. Or else to drive away a sort of Dangerous Fowl, who have a perverse Inclination to plunder the best Branches of the Tree of Knowledge, like those Stymphalian Birds that eat up the Fruit.¹

The persona's "true critics", among whom he includes Bentley, Wotton and Perrault, lack a sense of social responsibility. Swift implies that they allow a knowledge of good and evil which is harmful to man and oppose the efforts of the other thinkers represented by the Stymphalian birds. They are descended from "Hybris". It now appears that Swift was being slightly disingenuous when he spoke of the -- genuinely -- true critic's task of laying down rules for distinguishing

¹ Tale, pp.93-5. false heroism 'apes' true heroism here -- see mezciems, "Gulliver and other Heroes"(1978); Swift also turns the traditional interpretation of Hercules' labours as symbolizing the civilizing power of eloquence on its head -- See Aliciati, Emblemes (1531), pp.168,222. The notion of a "direct line" of critic-heroes, also perhaps 'apes' the Ancients' "secret colleges".

the good from the bad. Swift tells us that the critic examines the inferior literary works he comes across -which he compares to Edinburgh filth- "...only with a design to come out as ~~clean~~ as he may". This means that dirt which does not sully the critic is best ignored. But there is a shift of reference here (which reminds one of the "Digression on madness") away from the attack on acquiring knowledge and towards a criticism of indiscreet communication of that knowledge. Swift admits in his portrayal of the "Stymphalian Birds" that some beings might desire knowledge simply for its own sake, although (as in the "Digression on madness") he does this in a concealed manner. The critic himself must have ventured into Cacus' den in order to know that there are "lurking errors" which should be left alone. We learn now that he does not merely teach others how to avoid the "filth" but actually frees others from the need to follow complex rules by concealing it altogether. The critic himself is the only one at risk from certain truths which now appear not merely repulsive but actively dangerous.

Swift's immediate target is clearly Bentley, since it was he who had demonstrated that the ancient texts which Temple had praised were fakes. Swift does not deny that they are fakes, but merely questions the advisability of expressing that knowledge, since the critic's work is only good in so far as it is good for society. That this is Swift's point is obscured by the complexities of his analogies and the playfulness of his tone, which avoids publicizing the dangerous revelation that some truths must not be revealed. The danger is particularly great because of possible connections with the main allegory. Behind Bentley stood biblical critics like Hobbes, Spinoza and Simon. Swift is rather deceptive: he implies that the Moderns distort secular, as the Catholics distorted sacred authorities. In fact, the cases are precisely opposite: the brothers allow errors of

interpretation to creep in, and so corrupt a divine law which is beneficial to society; the Modern critic is dangerous precisely because he has a knowledge of errors in authoritative texts themselves. Swift does not countenance this possibility in the main allegory except insofar as he hints that the Sartorial view of religion as a cloak is correct. The brothers' actions are, as we have seen, the practical consequences of this scepticism, even when it is concealed. The Modern error of open scepticism is therefore a fundamental one.

As with the Introduction and the second digression, the central section of the "Digression concerning Criticks" deals with esoteric wisdom. The reader who is aware of the fundamental issues in the controversy between Temple and Wotton will be confused by the persona's argument, since, although avowedly a Modern, he 'apes' Temple's defence of the Ancients in practically every important respect. The very Moderns who despised secret traditions are made to resort to them in an attempt to demonstrate the antiquity of Modern criticism. The persona proceeds "...to refute the Objections of those who argue from the Silence and Pretermission of Authors; by which they pretend to prove, that the very Art of Criticism, as now exercised, and by me explained, is...Modern." This is an exact inversion of Temple's project, if we follow Swift's implication and identify true criticism with the "heroic virtue" of the Ancients. Like Temple, the persona finds that whenever ancient writers touched on the tradition he is discussing, they did it "...with abundance of Caution, adventuring no farther than mythology and Hieroglyphick... [which] gave ground to superficial Readers, for urging the Silence of Authors, against the Antiquity of the True Critick..." He proceeds to give a string of absurd esoteric interpretations of passages drawn for the most part from the ancient historians, designed to show the existence of an

ancient tradition of modern criticism (Tale, pp. 96-100).

The quotation from Lucretius stands out from the rest as being drawn from the work of a philosopher rather than an historian. In the Penguin translation, this reads, "among the high hills of Helicon there is even a tree with the property of killing a man by the baleful scent of its blossom" (On the Nature of the Universe, p. 241). This is the third quotation from Lucretius (see p. 119). I argued that both the previous references implicitly criticize Lucretian rhetoric for aiming at a universal enlightenment. Here, the subject is explicitly secretive rhetoric. Lucretius could be said to have exposed the harshness of nature to all by rendering it initially attractive in his poetry, a technique aptly symbolized by blossoms that give off a "baleful scent". The Greek tree may also remind us of the tree of knowledge, which has just been mentioned. Lucretius himself resembles the 'curious' false critics who threaten society itself by "dragging out the lurking errors" on which it is based, in a blind search for knowledge. It is more than jest to place him in a modern tradition, though it is ironic to ascribe "an abundance of caution" to this popularizer of Greek philosophy, or to think that he might criticize a modern lack of discretion which resembles his own.

The persona tells us that "...the reason why those Antient Writers treated this Subject only by Types and Figures, was, because they durst not make open Attacks against a Party so Potent and so Terrible, as the Criticks of those Ages were..." (Tale, p. 98-9). I suggest that Swift himself resembles these "Antient thinkers" in conducting a sort of guerilla warfare against the increasingly dominant moderns, in which he always disguises the central issues. Here, as previously, he is basically saying, "Same to you". to the Moderns - with all the ambiguity and effectiveness that that retort usually carries - in his proof of the antiquity of the moderns, which stretches

credulity in just the same way as Temple's arguments for a secret, ancient wisdom. This technique allows him to avoid a direct confrontation with modern scepticism, and to turn the distrust of 'mysteries' among less knowledgeable readers against the moderns themselves; like a Judo expert, using the weight of his opponent. This is the popular face of the Tale. Less noticeable than this is the level on which Swift accepts the charge of the moderns that the Ancients supported concealment of some truths and praises them for doing so. Not only does he veil the fact that the Ancient Critic does not communicate all his discoveries of "lurking errors", but also his technique of returning the moderns' accusations allows him to shape modern "corruptions" into a form which "apes" Ancient "beauties", so that the whole gives rise to a hidden analogical interpretation. On this analogical reading, the ancient tradition of modern criticism argued for by the persona points to the genuine antiquity of the type of critic favoured by the Ancients. The line of dissenting critics, who covertly opposed the false critics' lack of restraint, can be identified with Temple's secret tradition. At the same time, superficial readers will only find satire on those who seek esoteric meanings. Those who view the text from the standpoint of "common-sense" will find popular assumptions confirmed. In this way Swift practises the caution which he preaches. The reader is constantly tested by the "distorting lens" of Swift's persona, whose words are often not ironic in the way that they first appear to be. At the same time Swift invites his readers simply to invert his persona's statements, and so be excluded from all but those parts of the Tale which are closest to propaganda. By his satire on modern 'mysteries' and Catholicism Swift attracts his public and influences their viewpoint; but, as he intimates in the Preface, his deeper aim is to pick out and trap the free-thinker into applying to himself a criticism that rests on quite

different principles.

The last section of the "Digression concerning Criticks" is an incidental satire on critics, which by its triviality will allay any doubts that the more serious central section might have raised in the 'superficial' reader's mind concerning the status of the Tale as simple 'entertainment'.

In view of a "projected and intended" ...
...for the first time ...
...will reveal ...
...and thus ...
...of ...
...together ...
...and ...
...the attempt to ...
...is the corruption of a ...

Section IV proceeds ...
...possible by the ...
...is to drag out ...
...consign to ...
...by his "...abominable ...
...occasions..." ...
...because he has ...
...natural law of ...
...law of the will. ...
...innovations with ...
...language" used ...
...finds its parallel ...
...on the modern critic) ...
...they are silenced ...

Tale, pp. 105-6. ...
the importance of ...

VII Sections IV -V

Swift begins section IV by stressing, not the contrasts between Modernism and Catholicism that we have noticed, but their resemblances. Peter is seen as a "projector and virtuoso". The persona himself now reveals for the first time how extreme his Modernism is. Global enlightenment will result when not only France and Italy, but China also have accepted "these humble Offers, for the Advancement of Universal Knowledge".¹ Once again Swift links opposites together: he obscures the difference between the manufacturing of 'mysteries' and the attempt to eliminate them once and for all, implying that Modernism is the corruption of a tradition in the same sense as Catholicism.

Section IV presents an extreme of corruption and tyranny, made possible by the locking up of the will. While the error in learning is to drag out hidden, harmful knowledge, the error in religion is to consign to obscurity a beneficial divine law. Peter is characterised by his "...abominable Faculty of telling huge palpable lies upon all Occasions..." He has the authority to force acceptance of these lies because he has control of the will. Luckily, there appears to be a natural law of reason in addition to what we may term the conventional law of the will. The two brothers can accept the lawfulness of Peter's innovations until he claims that mutton is bread. (The "very civil language" used by the brothers when they protest that bread is bread, finds its parallel in the "abundance of Caution" used in the attacks on the modern critic.) When the brothers venture to criticize openly they are silenced by the threat of persecution, and forced into outward

¹ Tale, pp.105-6. See Cook, "Leibniz and Chinese Thought"(1981) for the importance of China to the Fansophists.

conformity (Tale, pp.107-18). If Swift were purely concerned with defending conformity to the 'common forms' as some critics suggest (see p.5), he would not, as he does, make it clear that some regimes are corrupt beyond endurance and must be overthrown. The secrecy of the two brothers is a temporary measure, and, once the will is recovered, it ends in open revolution and criticism voiced in "plain words" (Tale, pp.121-3). This should be treated as a limiting case, particularly when the subsequent course of the allegory is considered. We can recall that, in the Thoughts on Religion, Swift shows us the need to strike a careful balance between the citizen's duty to conform to the established religion and his equal duty to use his private reason to determine his own religious beliefs. When a particular "degree of corruption" is reached, private thoughts should lead to subversive actions but only when "your avowed design be to abolish that religion altogether" (see p.102).¹ There is a certain "degree" up to which we should give complete assent to the established religion, but after which we have a duty to completely overturn that religion. The brother's behaviour at this point represents the first premise in a dialectic, the subject of which is the proper relationship between private reason and the established order. It refutes critics who see Swift as conservative in a simple sense, and provides a solid base for the advocacy of concealment of one's private thoughts which we find elsewhere in the Tale. Swift shows that to praise conformity in certain conditions is not to identify oneself with the Guardians of the Preface, or the Sartorialists, or the Epicurean philosopher of the "Digression on Madness", who patch up or hide flaws regardless of the "degree of corruption" to which the regime has proceeded. There are absolute standards of reason, which sometimes must become the basis of revolutionary action (although it is the rediscovery of the will which allows the brothers to realize "how grossly they had been

¹ See Addenda.

abused").

At the start of the "Digression in the Modern Kind", the persona gives us some insight into the motives of the Moderns. He points out that they would never be able to bring about their "...great Design of an everlasting Remembrance, and never-dying Fame, if [their] Endeavours had not been so highly serviceable to the general good of Mankind". Quoting from Lucretius for the fourth time, he declares that it is this motive which leads him to "stay awake through the quiet of the Night" (Tale, p.123; and see De Rerum Natura, p.31). If we turn to the context of the Lucretian lines, however, we find that the poet is in fact telling us that his aim in writing the poem is the "merit and the joy" he hopes to derive from his "delightful friendship" with his interlocutor, Memmius. Swift is indicating that Lucretius contradicts himself on this point, since in the passage from which the quotation on the title page is taken, he does indeed declare that his one aim is to achieve fame among future generations. His implication is that Lucretius' concern for his fellow men is only apparent, and masks a desire for fame which is actually antisocial in the final analysis.¹ As we have seen, the passage from which the quotation is taken deals with Lucretius' desire to enlighten his fellow men by "elucidating in Latin verse the obscure discoveries of the Greeks" and allow Memmius to "gaze into the heart of hidden things."²

What follows should be read in the light of this implied criticism of Lucretius' enterprise. The passage resembles the "Digression on Madness" but is more obviously concerned with communication. The persona begins his discussion of Modern rhetoric with the recognition, phrased in the terms of the Moderns, that mankind is by and large

¹ Of the Nature of the Universe, p.54. For a similar point see Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern (1968), p.92.

² For the contrast between Lucretius' popularizing aims and the obscurity of some previous philosophers see Strauss, Liberalism, Ancient and Modern, p.90.

worth little. In order to gain "never-dying fame" he has "...with a world of pains and Art, dissected the Carcass of Humane Nature, and read many useful Lectures upon the several Parts, both Containing and Contained; till at last it smelt so strong, I could preserve it no longer." He declares his readiness "...to shew a very compleat Anatomy thereof to all curious Gentlemen and others" (Tale, p.123). One feels it is not quite accurate to speak of this as the persona's metaphor. Rather, as often, he seems unsure as to whether he is discussing natural or moral philosophy. Swift intends to show that, for the Lucretian mechanist, the latter collapses into the former. When philosophy is practised out of pure 'curiosity', and conducted like a scientific experiment, without regard for its human end, the result is that harsh truths are revealed to all "curious Gentlemen and others." Swift's italics emphasize that it is not only to the 'curious' that they are revealed. The persona's assumption is that all men find fulfilment in enlightenment. Swift's implication is that moral philosophy proper, which is the science of ultimate ends, or what makes men happy, should take precedence over natural science, which is a technical art, concerned with means rather than ends. That moral considerations play little part in the persona's own soul is shown not only by his indifference to the corruption of human nature but by his willingness to expose this corruption to all. If the persona was genuinely concerned with the "general Good of Mankind", he would realize that the exposure of evil is no more the ultimate end of moral philosophy than "anatomy [is] the ultimate end of Physick," as Swift puts it in that other, more famous dissection image in "The Digression on Madness".¹ The fact that the same image is used might

¹ See p.137, for Williams' definition of eloquence as "the art by which knowledge of matters both spiritual and temporal was oriented towards the betterment of society."

not only reveal a similarity of theme but also serve as an indication of the importance of the passage under discussion. Both are concerned with the use to which a profound knowledge of the world's harshness should be put, and the need to unite philosophy with prudence of expression. Since these passages treat of philosophy, they are in a sense deeper than the main allegory, which treats of law. This is implied, as I have said, by the anatomical imagery: where Jack strips away his coat and exposes his body, the philosopher strips away the body to reveal the internal organs. Later we are told that Jack rubs away his coat with such violence that he "proceeded a Heathen Philosopher". Philosophy, it appears, can be represented as the removal of all coats. Nowhere is Swift more explicit about the tension between learning and religion (Tale, p.199-200).

In accordance with Swift's usual policy, he takes care to shape the evils he satirizes into a form that 'apes' his positives. The persona has "...found a very strange, new, and important Discovery; That the Publick Good of Mankind is performed in two Ways, Instruction and Diversion." (The persona contradicts himself at the end of the paragraph when he describes this as a "Lesson of Great Age and Authority"). In this way, the persona attempts to answer our query concerning the way in which a knowledge of the harshness of nature might benefit society. His argument bears analogy to the Ancient's reasoning in that the necessity to 'divert' arises because of a general frailty in mankind. However, the Ancients' awareness of this frailty, always accompanied by a faith in the potential rationality of man, becomes in the persona a complete acceptance of the dominant role of man's bestial elements. This cynicism disturbs the balance between the two ends of literature. 'Diversion' is valued almost to the exclusion of 'instruction' and so rhetoric becomes entirely 'Sartorial': "...as Mankind is now disposed, he receives much greater Advantage by

being Diverted than Instructed; His Epidemic Diseases being Fastid-
iosity, Amorphy and Oscitation; whereas in the present universal
 Empire of Wit and Learning, there seems but little matter left for
Instruction" (Tale, p.124). Like Lucretius, the persona produces a
 pale imitation of ancient rhetoric. He is involved in a self-
 contradiction since he solemnly reads "useful Lectures" on human
 depravity while accepting the universality of this depravity and the
 impossibility of reform. I believe this contradiction is caused by
 the fact that he exhibits a problem to the alert reader, which Swift
 believed would only be solved by the type of rhetoric I have discussed.
 Modernism, as Swift sees it, is caused by the part being mistaken for
 the whole - either instruction or entertainment is stressed to the
 exclusion of the other. This applies also to the "Digression on
 Madness", where again a 'curious' study of human nature results in a
 rejection of 'curiosity' itself, and a relativistic decision to accept
 the way "Mankind is now disposed." This passage thus supports my view
 that the subject of the curiosity/credulity paragraph is rhetoric. Of
 course one could argue that Swift's point is simply that unpleasant
 truths must be phrased in an entertaining manner (likewise with the
 "Digression on Madness" see p.13). But this would mean that Swift is
 in fundamental agreement with Lucretius' tactic of sweetening the
 bitter pill. On the contrary, as I have argued, the misleading
 quotation is intended to convey that Lucretius' desire for never-
 dying Fame was his real motivation rather than concern for the
 "general Good of Mankind". The fact that most desire only 'diversion'
 means that it is not useful to lecture on certain topics even in
 Lucretius' manner. The gap between "curious Gentlemen and others" is
 decisive.

The persona concludes the paragraph with the declaration that,
 despite his doubts over 'instruction' he has "...attempted carrying

the Point in all its Height; and accordingly throughout this Divine Treatise, [has] skilfully kneaded up both together with a layer of Utile and a Layer of Dulce." It is to be hoped that the serious application of this to the Tale is by now evident. There is also a comic equivalent in the persona himself, who is alternately the profound instructor and the superficial diverter. The movement between these extremes structures the Tale. Aeolism and Sartorialism, Gresham and Will's, the "Pulpit" and the "Stage-Itinerant" are all repetitions of the same pair of opposites. The persona, although himself ignorant of the way they could be made to 'coincide', points the reader in the right direction by his very alternations; for, if Modernism is a dislocation of previously hierarchically ordered levels, then a character who is Modern successively in every possible way will exhibit the thought of the Ancients to the reader who is astute enough to combine these various points of view. It is in order to point the reader indirectly to his meaning that Swift gives his persona his conflicting desires for popular appeal and for knowledge. In these paragraphs, as in the Introduction, the persona is allowed to see in a distorted way the need to unite the two, and in fact to claim that he does so in his own "treatise".

The persona continues in his Pansophist vein: he bewails the fact that "...no famous Modern hath ever yet attempted an universal system in a small portable Volume, of all Things that are to be Known, or Believed, or Imagined, or Practised in Life" (Tale, p.125). A consideration of the previous paragraphs will reveal the direction of Swift's satire, which, as usual, is not immediately obvious. The passage clearly strikes the reader initially as a general attack on the arrogance of the Moderns, but there is a concealed unity of theme here, as throughout the Tale: Swift's point is that such a system would have no room for any 'diversion' to balance its 'instruction'.

He goes on to give the reader an alchemical recipe, in which Modern books are distilled and sniffed through the nose, so that the head is filled with "...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" (Tale, p.127). Here the fact that Swift is on the attack so completely allows him to defend the Ancients more effectively than Temple could do, but at the expense of veiling his positive values. Even as he criticises the excessive stress on 'instruction' that characterizes one strain of Modernism, he himself entertains or 'diverts'. As he says in the Preface, satire has a more general appeal than praise which "raises envy". The corollary of this, I have suggested, is that praise is more 'instructive' even though less attractive. As we have seen, Swift resolves this tension by satirizing in an entirely popular way, while causing the "corruptions" he satirizes to "ape" the "beauties" which he really admires. Here, his point is clearly that Modern learning is vulgarized and superficial, but he is never more explicit about the proper sort of learning than his initial representation of philosophy as "often out of Sight, and ever out of Hearing" and "poetry" as attainable only by "slow Degrees". There is only the hint that the Hermetic allusions do more than establish a connection between Modernism and Rosicrucianism (a connection most apparent on p.127, where the persona is linked with several well known Hermeticists): once again they covertly raise the subject of secrecy, since the persona's 'nostrum' is so absurdly out of key with the traditional exclusiveness of the alchemical tradition.

In the central section of the digression, the persona claims that his own "universal system" is superior to Homer's epics, which he says, "...we are assured, he design'd...for a compleat Body of all

Knowledge Human, Divine, Political, and Mechanick..."; a view which the persona proceeds to question (Tale, p.127). As we have seen, the defence of Homer's universal genius was important to the Ancients, who were not fundamentally different from Renaissance critics in their basically allegorical reading of the classical epics.

The digressions, like the allegory, show a gradual departure from tradition. In the "Digression concerning Criticks", the persona establishes a paradoxical ancient tradition of Modern criticism. From this rival tradition he now derives the authority to criticise the ancients, and ultimately to reject authority and tradition altogether. In a sense this actually is how Modernism arose.¹ He attacks the classics from the vantage point of an even earlier, purer tradition. Homer has not heard the voice of the fire -- "audivisse ignis vocem" (Tale, p.128). This supposedly Zoroastrian injunction was quoted by Vaughan on the title page of his Anthroposophia Theomagica (1650) as an ancient authority for his stress on experimentation. Here again we must be puzzled by the sheer frequency of Swift's assaults on a tradition of thought which he could not have imagined to be a serious threat. The passage is one of deceptive complexity. One assumes, and I believe readers are intended to assume, that Swift is arguing against Modern Hermeticism for a common-sensical, literal reading of the classics. On this level, Swift turns Modern attacks on esoteric readings back against the Moderns themselves. However, there are two alternatives to the persona's allegorizing. There is the literalism that appears to be Swift's implied norm, but there is also the view the persona rejects, that

¹ For Bacon and Burnet's willingness to support their own basically Modern views with an ancient esoteric tradition see pp.130,131; and see also Sailor, "Moses and Atomism"; McGuire, "Newton and the Pipes of Pan"; Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia, pp.162-5; Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment; Primer, "Erasmus Darwin's Temple of Nature" (1964).

Homer's epics are a "compleat Body of all Knowledge", which would surely entail going beneath the literal surface of the works in the same way as the persona does, although doubtless with different results. Swift is reluctant to defend this latter type of allegory openly or to describe its nature in detail, but we can deduce from the earlier attack on Dryden's Hind and the Panther that he believes the truths illustrated should not be limited to particular times and places. This is implied in the persona's condemnation of Homer's "...gross Ignorance in the Common Laws of this Realm, and in the Doctrine as well as Discipline of the Church of England" (Tale, p.128, see also p.69). This suggests that we can find in Homer a basic, immutable political philosophy by which all particular laws and churches can be judged (and also that Anglicanism is not the only subject of Swift's own allegory). The fact that the persona only finds accounts of the most transitory contemporary fashions -like tea and the spleen- in the epics (Tale, p.129), seems to tell rather against his trivial reading, than esoteric interpretations of the ancients in general. His eccentric interpretations discredit all mysteries if read superficially, but also point the way for the serious reader by the very earnestness of his misdirected search.

We should pay close attention to the persona's claims to have excelled Homer in his own "universal treatise". He says that "...the Judicious Reader shall find nothing neglected here...", and mentions as one of his hidden subjects, "An Universal Rule of Reason, or Every Man his own Carver..." (Tale, pp.129-30). The mention of carving should remind us of the events of the main allegory immediately preceding the digression, in which Peter carves and serves bread, declaring it is beef (Tale, pp.116-9). Swift implies that the opposite extreme from Peter's tyranny is the enlightenment envisaged by the Moderns. Here again we find that one of the deepest concerns of the

Tale is the possible threat that reason could offer to divinely revealed law. It is not only that the shadow of the new biblical criticism stood behind Bentley, but that Bentley and Wotton themselves, although orthodox, were typical of the new Low Church movement in their great stress on the rationality of Christianity. Other Moderns, such as Fontenelle, were openly deistic.¹ This means that the rebellion of the two brothers against Peter, which is an assertion of the private reason, albeit reliant also on the will, offers parallels to the Moderns' position. It resembles the persona's anatomies in being a potentially harmful penetration of surfaces, although as we have noted, the controlling image of the coat implies that the allegory as a whole has more to do with the surface than the depths. We have already seen that Sartorialism alludes not only to Catholicism but to a decadent materialism which endangers piety through its covert indifference. I would suggest that the allegory has a consistent double focus: Peter, Martin and Jack represent three distinct views on the relation between religion and learning. Once this fact is noticed the allegory can be seen to illustrate very clearly some of the points which the digressions adumbrate.

The allegory and the digressions can now be seen to have contrasting structures. In the allegory, the growth of Sartorialism, which is dominated by images of surface, is ended by the brothers' rebellion. Section IV ends with the two brothers seemingly about to restore the coats to their original purity, but we soon learn in section VI that the attempt to restore the divine law to its primitive purity is not prudent: the false and the superficial must sometimes be preserved. Section V begins in the same vein as Section III, which, as we have seen, deals primarily with the Moderns' indiscreet desire

¹ See above pp. 131-2 ; and Bentley's The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism (1693).

to communicate their knowledge of "lurking Errors", and is thus in complete contrast to Sartorialist rhetoric which is concerned only with 'diversion', or "sheer wit". But although there is talk of penetrating surfaces and communicating one's knowledge of the depths at the start of Section V, the balance suddenly shifts dramatically when the persona proclaims his desire to 'divert'. This is a shift parallel to the brothers' rebellion, but away from the depths rather than towards them. In the end, just as Section VI shows Martin practising delicate adjustments so as to compromise between what one might call the surface and the depths of his coat, Section V gives us as near to a similar balance as the persona can get, in his talk of combining a layer of Utile and a layer of Dulce, and of the two 'layers' of Homeric allegories. Swift exhibits this balance in his own work: while the satire on Catholicism is part of his powerful defence of Anglicanism, it is exoteric, being covertly undermined by the digressions, which, though again attacking the Moderns in a superficial manner, are also aimed at the free-thinker, and deal secretly with the rules which govern communication of knowledge which endangers the 'common forms'. The notable aspect of the Tale is not its esoteric doctrine but the effectiveness with which Swift defends Anglicanism, while not sacrificing the truth as he saw it, which is constantly being adumbrated only, since it contradicts this popular level.

Like the Introduction and the first digression, "A Digression in the Modern Kind" ends with some incidental, particular satire on Dryden and others, which belies the seriousness and universality of its argument (Tale, pp.130-2).

X "A Tale of a Tub" - Sections VI -VIII.

Having rescued the will, and thus performed the task of restoring ancient texts which is the first duty of the true critic, the brothers move on to the second task, which is to "divide every Beauty of Matter or Style from the Corruption that Apes it"; but here, I would suggest, an ambiguity occurs that parallels the shift in the "Digression on Critics" from the view that the true critic lays down rules to allow the world to distinguish 'corruptions' to the implication that he actually hides some 'corruptions', and so protects the world from the risky business of having to make such distinctions (Tale, pp.92-5, above p.164). The brothers are seized by a reforming zeal and start to remove all the additions to the coats. Martin's enthusiasm, however, is tempered with reason: "...the first Heat being over, his Violence began to cool, and he resolved to proceed more moderately in the rest of the work; having already very narrowly scap'd a swinging Rent..." (Tale, p.136). By an almost imperceptible transition, Martin, who has hitherto represented the body of believers, that first allowed the Christian tradition to become corrupted and was then deceived by the Catholic clergy, now appears as one of the theoreticians of Anglicanism, since he realizes that there is a problematic relationship between his own knowledge of the pure Christian tradition and the faith of most Christians. In order not to damage the coat, Martin proceeds very cautiously when removing his embroidery, and in fact accepts that some corruptions cannot be removed:

...where he observed the Embroidery to be workt so close, as not to be got away without damaging the Cloth, or where it served to hide or strengthen any Flaw in the Body of the Coat, contracted by the perpetual tampering of Workmen upon it; he concluded the wisest Course was

to let it remain, resolving in no Case whatsoever, that the substance of the stuff should suffer Injury...
(Tale, p.136)

This he thought the best Course to preserve the "true Intent" of the will, which, as he points out to Jack (who is bent on schism and faction), "...was very exact in what related to the wearing of their Coats; yet it was no less penal and strict in prescribing Agreement, and Friendship, and Affection between them. And therefore, if straining a point were at all dispensable, it would certainly be so, rather to the Advance of Unity, than Increase of Contradiction" (Tale, pp.136 and 139). Swift shows us that Christianity is a political phenomenon as well as a divine truth.

Swift passes over Martin very quickly, and indeed almost parenthetically, and proceeds to dwell on Jack's eccentricities.¹ This can be explained as part of his general strategy of defending his norms in a popular, diverting manner rather than "raising envy" by direct praise. The danger here is more specific, however: Martin's inability to restore the coat to its original form shows that Anglicanism is not the true religion, but rather a compromise favoured by Martin because of his view (expressed also by Swift in the Thoughts on Religion, as we have seen) that some corruptions become so embedded in religious tradition that the attempt to remove them will endanger popular faith in that tradition altogether. Swift comes close to arguing that there must be some elements of superstition in an established religion, although he is not specific about which doctrines can be put in this category. Nor does he stress the fact that Martin is not himself superstitious, but only recognises that superstition in others must be left untouched to a certain extent.

¹ For an interpretation of this as the result of Swift's basically destructive energies see Rawson, "The Character of Swift's Satire" pp.56-7.

Presumably, if all were like Martin, 'real Christianity' could be restored, but Martin's wisdom consists of a recognition that religions are in part a popular, political phenomenon. In the Tale's terms, he sees the need for surfaces, but himself is aware of the depths. Clearly for Swift to have stressed these points would have been to endanger the very surfaces which Martin realizes must be preserved. His remarks are aimed only at the 'curious'. Nevertheless there is some evidence that this part of the Tale was objected to (Swift. Critical Heritage, ed. Williams, pp.54-7). It is the moment when Swift states most clearly that the 'common forms' are illusions, and the moment which will therefore shock his 'credulous' readers most deeply. Swift reveals that there is a crucial relationship between his attack on Modern criticism and his defence of Anglicanism. The "lurking Errors" can be found in sacred as well as secular traditions. There is no reason not to make the further step of speculating, as Wotton does, that the allegory "...shews at the bottom [Swift's] contemptible Opinion of every Thing which is called Christianity " (Tale, p.322). As he says, and as we have noticed, although Martin is preferred to the other brothers, in the end all three are concerned only with coats. On this interpretation, Swift is more open about the "lurking errors" here than in the digressions, precisely because his allegory accepts unquestioningly the authority of the divine law. The lesson he illustrates through Martin could also be applied more controversially to the free-thinker who rejects that authority altogether. The difficulties which attend a return to the true divine law mirror on a more innocuous level Swift's objections to philosophical or critical arguments which endanger that law itself. Nevertheless, Swift does not advocate mere passive conformity. In fact he condemns this in his account of Sartorialism. Martin actively works to retain parts of the coat which he knows to be later additions.

Swift's defence of Anglicanism as a necessary illusion is a part of his support for the Ancients, who, as we have seen, often recognized a conflict between the truth, as they saw it, and what it was best for most people to believe. Wotton, whether designedly or not, stresses Swift's lack of belief rather than his defence of illusions, and so reveals an incomprehension, or a rejection, of the concealment of the truth for political reasons which is characteristic of the early Moderns (see p.130). Wotton fails to mention not only that the Tale shows the 'curious' why the established religion should be defended, but also that it offers such a defence itself, directed at the 'credulous', and consisting of a lively satirical assault on the enemies of Anglicanism. It is Wotton who spells out the way all religion is reduced in the Tale, not Swift. Swift's rhetorical method could well be compared to a ladder with several rungs, and a "transferring of Propriety" at the top.

The last part of Section VI is concerned with Jack's immoderate desire to return his coat to its original state. The actual fabric of the coat is damaged as he is ripping away the ornaments. Once again it is to be assumed that the Puritan critics themselves know the proper state of the coat, but such is the unwieldy nature of churches, the members of which are for the most part ignorant and 'credulous', that no simple translation of knowledge into action is possible. The attack on superstition may lead to the overturning of the divine law itself. Jack's stripping of the ornaments turns out to be the most obvious of a series of moments in the Tale in which surfaces are penetrated to expose truths which might have been best left covered. Jack is in danger of appearing entirely naked, without the protective veil of the law. One is tempted to infer that civilization itself rests on a certain obscuring of the anarchic nature of things.

Clearly Jack is to be compared to the moderns, many of whom were

indeed part of the Low church movement when they were not free-thinkers (see p.132). Like the persona in one of his aspects he denies that any truths need to be veiled, though there is the difference that the authoritative character of the divine law is taken for granted in the allegory. (The persona's complexity is revealed by the fact that Sartorialism also corresponds to his project of "creaming off Nature".) Martin's conduct points the way to a compromise between 'curiosity' and the persona's Epicurean alternative that involves a concealment which is not the same as passive conformity. These wider implications remain hidden unless one contemplates the relationship between the allegory and the digressions, especially those on "Critics" and "Madness", which, as we have seen, are likely to be among the most profound if one takes the number symbolism of the Introduction seriously (Tale, p.57-8). However, one must not forget the obvious sense in which the satire on Puritanism serves to defend the established Church. This defence of the 'common forms' is as important to Swift as any hidden meaning of the work. In fact, my aim has been to suggest that it was precisely because of the importance of this level that the other levels had to remain hidden. It is, as it were, a 'noble lie', which puts some of the more theoretical aspects of the Tale which I have discussed into practice. The fact that Swift's satire is based on popular assumptions and is to some extent misleading does not mean that it was not inspired by genuine anger. Swift's intention not to become a "fool among knaves", which emerges in a satirical rhetoric aimed at influencing popular opinion, in a sense takes precedence over his more 'curious' meanings, which are concealed precisely because they are in conflict with his popular defence of Anglicanism. Swift concludes this section with the introduction of the "most illustrious and epidemick sect of Aeolists," of whom the persona is

"advancing to gratify the World with a very particular Account -- Mellaeo contingens cuncta Lepore" (Tale, p.142). This fourth quotation from Lucretius, which is from the same passage as the one on the title page, can be taken as implying that especially harsh truths will be discussed in section VIII, since they need to be sweetened by the honey of the muses; and also, bearing in mind Swift's opposition to Lucretius' rhetoric of enlightenment, that the humour of the discussion will conceal its harshness.

The theme of penetrating surfaces is continued in the first lines of the "Digression in Praise of Digressions": "I have sometimes heard of an Iliad in a Nut-shell; but it hath been my fortune to have much oftner seen a Nut-shell in an Iliad" (Tale, p.143). Modern digressions are responsible for this latter phenomenon, by which Swift represents the lack of interest in surfaces which characterises the new learning. The subject of the digression is the final perfection of Modernism as imagined by the Pansophists. In the previous two digressions, the persona has set up a rival esoteric tradition to that of the Ancients; which is now replaced by a typology that foreshadows the era of 'clear and distinct' knowledge, in which "Nut-shells" are no longer considered necessary (Tale, pp.147-9). However, it appears that to dispense with surfaces is also to endanger the 'depths': 'instruction' degenerates into 'diversion' under such circumstances. Swift fears that, "with Knowledge, it has fared as with a numerous Army, encamped in a fruitful country: which for a few days maintains itself by the Product of the soyl it is on; Till provisions being spent, they send to forrage many a mile, among Friends or Enemies it matters not. Mean while, the neighbouring Fields trampled and beaten down, become barren and dry, affording no sustenance but Clouds of Dust." 'Progress' in knowledge simply means that harmful-"friend or enemies"-or superfluous facts will be discovered and the

few, vital truths forgotten (Tale, p.144).

Paul Korshin has pointed out the many ways in which the latter part of this digression appears to parody Puritan typological readings of the Bible: the persona describes how the sciences have all been drawn up into "Systems and Abstracts" by the "Modern Fathers of Learning", who have "...spent their Sweat for the Ease of Us their Children", so that now there is hardly anything left to discover. The Modern critics are compared to the Church Fathers and the fruit of their labours is the millennium. The persona takes the recent advances in the area of obscene wit as exemplifying Modern progress, and declares that, "...tho' some Remains of it were left us by the Antients, yet have not any of those, as I remember, been translated or compiled into Systems for Modern Use." The Moderns' genius in this area "...was prophetically held forth by that antient typical Description of the Indian Pygmies; whose Stature did not exceed above two Foot; sed quorum pudenda crassa..." Swift gives two other ancient 'types', each drawn from the Scythians, generally considered to be equalled in barbarism only by the Goths. The Moderns' books shall remain "for a long Eternity" unread on the booksellers' shelves and, "when the Fulness of time is come, shall haply undergo the Tryal of Purgatory, in order to ascend the sky".¹

In this way, Swift leads us to ponder on the link between Modernism and Puritanism. Both are 'curious', in the sense that their desire to expose the truth is not moderated by a recognition that truths can be harmful to society. As we have seen, some Moderns were indeed millenarians.² However, there are contrasts as well as

¹ Ibid, pp.145-9. See also Korshin, "Swift and Typological Narrative" (1970).

² See p.132; and Tuveson, Swift and the Worldmakers (1950) for attacks on Burnet in the Tale. Swift sees Burnet's Golden Age as merely another cycle of barbarism, as his references to the Scythians imply.

parallels. This section shows a degeneration of the earnest modern critic, bent on his 'heroic' task of dragging out "lurking errors", into the frivolous and obscene wit, as the "fruitful Country" of knowledge becomes overpopulated. The Moderns have chosen 'diversion' over 'instruction' just as the persona did in the second digression (see p.174). In contrast, Jack is in deadly, destructive earnest, while it was the Sartorialists whose talk was all "sheer wit". In other words, the allegory and the digression move in precisely opposite directions. Swift's point is, I believe, that the chief dangers to religion and learning are also opposite. Religion should not be subjected to a misplaced earnestness of enquiry, while the essence of learning is earnest enquiry. We can deduce further that the attempt to separate learning from 'diversion' eventually leads to the trivialization of learning itself. The Tale's central teaching is that the surface and the depths are both important, but are in tension with each other, and must be kept clearly separated.

We have understood the quotation from Lucretius which prepares us for the section on the Aeolists as indicating that the harshest truths are now going to be discussed, since they need the honey of poetry to sweeten them. After stating that the Aeolists believe wind to be the ruling principle, from which "...this whole Universe was at first produced, and into which it must at last be resolved...", Swift quotes again from De Rerum Natura : "From such a fate may guiding fortune steer us clear." The "fate" which Lucretius fears is the most unpleasant imaginable: the ultimate destruction of the world (Tale pp.174 and 150). The quotation indicates that, just as Sartorialism is more than a satire on Catholicism, so Aeolism comprehends more than Calvinism. (This is not to deny that on one level Swift directs an extremely effective, not to say inflammatory attack on the Nonconformists, and one calculated to affront the Low Church

moderates, who were less than enthusiastic in their support for an established religion.) As in the description of Sartorialism, Swift draws parallels between the obvious target of his satire and materialistic or atheistic philosophies. Not only is Lucretius referred to, but, as Wotton noticed, there is an unmistakable echoing of Hobbesian Biblical criticism in the Aeolist reduction of spirit to wind, which has led some critics to see Hobbes as Swift's principal target here.¹ What is Swift's intention in linking two such disparate outlooks as Hobbist or Epicurean materialism and Non-conformist 'enthusiasm'?

As if to further confuse the reader, there are also many references to Hermeticism and esoteric traditions, as the editors point out: the Aeolists are "Adepts" who have garnered their system from "antient records", perhaps "copied from the Original at Delphos" (Tale, pp. 150-1, 154-7, 161). This raises in even more pressing form than previously the problem of why Swift satirizes esotericism so fiercely. One could see the relating of Modernism to radical Hermeticism as an effective gambit, but it is hard to understand what is gained by making the same connection in the case of Nonconformism.² In the account of Aeolism, as in that of Sartorialism, the allegory opens up to reveal a puzzling breadth of reference, which forces the "ignorant" reader to "stare", as Swift puts it. The persona was right in surmising that his "treatise" would gain a firm "Hold" upon some of his readers via their "curiosity" (Tale, pp. 185, 203). The surface of the Tale - its controversial and witty defence of

¹ See Tale, p. 314; Hopkins, "The Personification of Hobbism in Swift's Tale of a Tub". See p. 160 for similar views on Sartorialism.

² Though there was such a connection during the Interregnum -- see Debus, The Chemical Philosophy, pp. 386-448. See also Webster Examination of Academies (1654).

Anglicanism-is important, and Swift does not try to distract his readers from it, but there **is** also a series of riddles for those who wish to look beneath the surface.

I would suggest that the link between Hobbism and **Nonconformism** is visible in the initial quotation from Lucretius, which reveals the fear experienced by the poet when contemplating the bleakest conclusion of his materialism, which is that the world will end and with it the human race. The indifference of the universe to man, of which this is the supreme example, is the doctrine which Lucretius aims to "sweeten" with his poetry, but the poet himself, let alone his audience, finds it frightening. I believe that Swift implies that this doctrine, like the "lurking errors", should not be dragged out into the open, but should remain one of the truths known only to the 'curious' philosopher.

Similarly, in the religious allegory, the earnestness of Jack's desire to restore the coats to their original state distracts him from wondering whether the truth is in this case useful to society. Aeolism stands for the attempt to discard all surfaces -- to eliminate all the errors on which society is founded. This can be disastrous even when the errors being discarded are misrepresentations of a law, the original aim of which was to protect man in some sense. Swift is relatively candid about this. He is less direct about the the parallels to a far more dangerous attempt to expose flaws in the divine law itself; but his criticism of the free-thinkers is in fact identical to his criticism of the Puritans. It is clear why the analogy can only be dimly sketched in, for it is one thing to agree with the Puritans in many of their criticisms of the established religion, and to counsel silence, but quite another to agree with many of the free-thinkers' criticisms of Christianity itself. Such an agreement, openly expressed, would be in contradiction with Swift's own attack on 'unmasking'. This is not to say that the satire on Puritanism is only important insofar as it bears analogy to the Tale's

deeper levels. On the contrary, as I have said, the whole aim of Swift's secrecy is to allow him to defend the 'common forms', even as he addresses the free-thinkers on a deeper level.

Aeolism stands for an attempt to discard those harmless errors which come under the heading of the 'surface', in the terms of the Tale. The allegory as a whole presents Swift's theory of the proper relationship between surfaces and depths, and the way this relationship tends to be distorted. As we have seen, Sartorialism stands for a secret materialism which leads to a gradual corruption of the traditional religion. It is all surface and outward conformity. Conversely, the portrayal of Aeolism is, in part, Swift's comment on an age when, as he says elsewhere, free-thinkers were using "less reserve than any of [their] Predecessors" (Swift, works, IV, 27-8). The allegory, which deals always with the practical consequences of theory, shows that this leads not to a gradual corruption but to immediate chaos and barbarism.¹ In contrast to both extremes, Martin reveals the nature of the compromise between surfaces and depths, not only for the Christian but for the non-Christian.

This technique of addressing both the 'credulous' and the 'curious' on different levels of the same text produces an ambiguity which I believe Swift intends to be unsettling: the "enthusiasts" are satirized from the vantage point of a reductive materialism which is itself parodied.²

The double movement in the satire is evident in passages like the following: "For, whether you please to call the Forma informans of Man, by the name of Spiritus, Animus, Afflatus, or Anima; What are all these but several Appellations for Wind? which is the ruling Element in every

¹ See Tale, pp. 160, 194 for the notion that an age of barbarism comparable to that found in the most primitive races was threatening.

² Hopkins, "The Personation of Hobbism."

Compound, and into which they all resolve upon their Corruption" (Tale, p.151). Like the picture which can appear to represent either a duck or a rabbit, the reduction of inspiration to wind can tell either against the reducer himself or the thing reduced. The free-thinker is attracted by the banter on inspiration, but it is hoped that at some point he will realize his own Hobbist assumptions are being parodied: the tub is revealed to be hollow, and the satire is suddenly deprived of any firm norm. As several critics have argued, the effect of passages like this is that the reader himself feels under attack (see above p. 29). The witty surface of the Tale opens up to reveal its dialectical structure. What is there left over when both animism and mechanism are rejected?

My theory is, that although radical Nonconformism and Hobbist materialism are opposites in a sense, they are linked by a common outspokenness. Similarly, in the "Digression on Madness," the proselytising, 'credulous' knave and the 'curious' philosopher, who gravely reveals that all is good for nothing, are both criticised. In the famous crux and the accounts of the two 'sects' Swift points out the links between the allegory - which stays on the surface, as it were, and within the limits of 'credulity' - and the more 'curious' digressions. The way each illuminates the other typifies the Tale's method. As I hope now to show, the concern with the theme of outspokenness is evident throughout the account of the Aeolists.

As is the case with Sartorialism, Aeolist theory has a practical consequence -- a view of the way human life should be lived. In each, the logical connection between the moral philosophy and rhetoric of the 'sects' and their metaphysical schemes is stressed heavily: "In consequence of this, Their next Principle was, that Man brings with him into the World a Portion or Grain of Wind, which may be called a Quinta essentia... [which] is improvable into all Arts and Sciences, and may be wonderfully refined, as well as enlarged by certain Methods in

Education." One might say that, for the Aeolists, man is spiritualis capax. Their view 'apes' Swift's belief that man is characterized by a potential for rationality.¹ Swift seems to be satirizing overoptimistic views of human nature, whether it is the power of the spirit or the reason which is overestimated (here too the double 'credulous' and 'curious' perspective is maintained). The difficulties which attend the acquiring of true learning are a constant theme of the digressions (Tale, pp.125-6, 145). The facility with which an Aeolist can be 'educated' is matched by the facility with which he can educate others. As Swift puts it in the "Digression on Madness", when one has proselytised oneself, "the Difficulty is not so great in bringing over others." In contrast to Sartorial rhetoric, which aimed only to entertain, the Aeolists are characterized by the unrestrained attempt to communicate the deepest truths: when their "quintessence" has been "...blown up to its Perfection, [they believe it] ought not to be covetously hoarded up, stifled, or hid under a Bushel, but freely communicated to Mankind. Upon these Reasons, and others of equal weight, the Wise Aeolists, affirm the Gift of BELCHING, to be the noblest Act of a Rational Creature" (Tale, pp.152-3). Belching is a very natural symbol for a rhetoric which knows no restraint. It reminds us of the persona's earlier Lucretian account of words, where "every one carries home a share and little or nothing is lost" (*ibid*, pp.60-1). I would suggest that Swift's real views can be inferred from the alternative course which the Aeolists reject. rhetoric is truly noble when it involves 'hoarding up', 'stifling' and 'hiding under Bushels'.

This is followed by yet another of the Tale's satires on esotericism. The Aeolists have a Cabbala, which is even more paradoxical than the support for esoteric wisdom which Swift has habitually attributed to the

¹ Tale.p.152; see Yolton, John Locke and the Way of Ideas(1969),pp.40-1.

Moderns, since he has just emphasized their inability to keep a secret. We must ask again why Swift does this, and, I believe, the same answer must be given: Swift is indicating, obliquely, the very qualities that the Aeolists lack. Among their "mysteries and Rites" is a "Contrivance for carrying and preserving winds in Casks or Barrels...", which has now been lost (Tale, p.155). Swift describes how these barrels were converted into oracles by being fixed into temples, so that, on "Solemn Days", the priests could enter to be filled with wind, and deliver their "oracular Belches"; a custom which has led "some Authors" to maintain that the Aeolists "...have been very antient in the World. Because, the Delivery of their Mysteries...appears exactly the same with that of other antient Oracles, whose Inspirations were owing to certain subterraneous Effluvioms of wind..." The most obvious effect of this is to discredit the Nonconformists by associating them with pagan frenzies. Once again it should be stressed that Swift does not expect or want the 'superficial' reader to do anything but enjoy the joke at the expense of the Nonconformists (see above p.185).

However, as the editors of the Tale indicate, these paragraphs also recall the Moderns' reductive view of the priests who controlled the oracles. While Temple and the other Ancients believed that the priests were "...a colledge or Society of wise and learned Men, in all sorts of Sciences", Fontenelle was typical of the Moderns in denying that the oracles were anything more than frauds by which the pagan priests shrouded their ignorance in mystery. The frenzies of the initiates were caused by the intoxicating effects of subterranean winds.¹ The satire in this passage does not end with the debasing comparison of Nonconformist zeal to pagan frenzy; but is also directed at the peculiar

¹ Tale, pp.155-7; Blackwell, Enquiry, pp.184-94; Fontenelle, History of the Oracles, pp.95-6. See also Pope's view, above p.136.

literal-mindedness of the persona's mechanism. What is metaphorical banter to us is to him a serious scientific account. He describes the way a "secret funnel" is conveyed from the priest's "...Posteriors, to the Bottom of the Barrel, which admits new supplies of Inspiration from a Northern Chink or Crany. Whereupon, you behold him swell immediately to the Shape and Size of his Vessel. In this posture he disembogues whole Tempests upon his Auditory, as the spirit from beneath gives him Utterance..." This creates a confusing counterflow of irony. The reductive mechanism which forms the basis of the attack on 'enthusiasm' is itself attacked. Fontenelle's theories about subterranean exhalations are rendered absurd by extension. Modern materialism is seen to threaten the very concept of wisdom. All human achievements are described as physical processes -- wind. In this way Swift first amuses, and then attempts to bring his criticisms home to, his own free-thinking readers, who reject that 'hoarding up' or 'stifling' of words which characterized the oracles. There is approval of the oracles beneath the satire on those who attacked them.

The art of making the "Casks or Barrels" which preserved winds on "long sea Voyages" has now been lost and has been "with great Negligence omitted by Pancirollus." Pancirollus' book on lost arts is mentioned again later in connection with the view that 'curiosity' is the most useful passion to attract readers (Tale, pp.200-202). The best way to stimulate curiosity is to hide one's meanings. The barrels and the sea voyage remind us of the tub of the Preface, which perhaps attracted the whale because he could not get a good look inside. The secrecy Swift urges not only protects the 'common forms' but actively stimulates the 'curious' reader's desire to learn. Swift implies that it can also be used to preserve learning. The Tale exemplifies the secretive methods which it advocates. Here, Swift obscures his basic point, but leads the free-thinker to ponder on the links between Hobbism

and Nonconformism which the passage implies. The persona introduces his discussion of the Aeolists' devils in the following way:

And, whereas the mind of Man, when he gives the Spur and Bridle to his thoughts, doth never stop, but naturally sallies out into both extreems of High and Low, of Good and Evil; His first Flight of Fancy, commonly transports Him to Idea's of what is most perfect, finished, and exalted; till having soared out of his own Reach and Sight, not well perceiving how near the Frontiers of Height and Depth, border upon each other; With the same Course and Wing, he falls down plum into the lowest Bottom of Things; like one who travels the East into the West; or like a strait Line drawn by its own length into a Circle. Whether a Tincture of Malice in our Natures, makes us fond of furnishing every bright idea with its Reverse; Or, whether Reason reflecting upon the Sum of Things, can, like the sun, serve only to enlighten one half of the Globe, leaving the other Half, by Necessity, under Shade and Darkness. (Tale, pp.157-8).

The two devils he goes on to describe clearly represent materialist systems, which are "sworn Foe[s] to Inspiration". Swift indicates here that materialism and 'enthusiasm' are equally undesirable "extreems of High and Low". This confirms my view that Swift is playing one off against the other in his portrayal of Aeolism, and indeed suggesting that outspoken materialism is itself an enthusiastic reaction against 'enthusiasm': "...how near the Frontiers of Height and Depth border upon each other."¹ The passage shows that Swift's irony is best thought of

¹ While hinting at the dialectic nature of his satire, Swift is still parodying the free-thinkers. The view that Manicheism is the natural religion, repeated by the persona later - Tale, pp.274 - had been controversially maintained by Bayle in his articles on the Manichees and Paulicians in the Historical and Critical Dictionary (1697). Bayle often seems to be at the back of Swift's mind in the Tale, as the free-thinker who most openly preached materialism. Compare, for instance, the following with the "Digression on Madness", pp.162-3: "There's a seed of corruption in the soul of Man, which may justly be likened to a coal applied to combustible matter. If this coal be blown by a violent wind, 'twill cause a fearful ravage; but won't fail doing a deal of mischief though assisted by no wind at all. All the difference lies here, that its action spreads farther and swifter when driven by the wind than when not. The Devil is like a wind blowing up the coal of our concupiscence, and the cause indeed of its bringing forth evil fruits sooner and in a larger crop, which yet would thrive and grow apace, purely from the rankness of the soil". Or again: "Most great events...turn often enough on some small and hidden springs, mov'd by envy, interest, love..." (Reflections on the Comet, pp.473,476) Swift possessed Bayle's continuation of his

as a dialogue, teasing the reader into searching for some compromise between the 'surface' and the 'depths'. As we have seen, the persona himself moves between extremes, only "enlightening one half of the globe" at once, and leaving knowledge of the whole to be sought through some sort of combination of his contradictory positions (see above, p.175). (Moreover, the Tale does "furnish every bright Idea with its reverse", so that one can often precisely invert the abuses it satirizes to arrive at Swift's own views, as has appeared in the case of the Aeolists themselves.) The image of the circle, echoed later when Peter and Jack are compared to a pair of compasses (Tale, p.199), implies that many abuses take the part for the whole, so that when taken together, they can lead to an understanding of the whole. Just as Martin is Sartorialist in his partial concealment of his knowledge, but Aeolist in his concern for the truth, so in the "Digression on Madness", Swift's position is reached by combining the attacks on 'unmasking' and on 'credulity'.

The world must be matter or spirit at the deepest level, so what compromise can there be in this case? Swift hints at it by providing the Aeolist god with two deadly enemies, who are to some extent contrasted: there is firstly "...the Camelion, sworn Foe to Inspiration, who in Scorn, devoured large influences of their God; without refunding the smallest Blast by Eructation;" and secondly, Moulinavent (ie. 'windmill'), "who with four strong Arms, waged eternal Battel with all their Divinities, dextrously turning to avoid their Blows, and repay them with Interest" (Tale, pp.159-60). Moulinavent is as much an enemy to 'spirit' as Camelion, but rather than simply "scorning" it, as the free-thinkers do, opts to channel it in some useful direction. The compromise involves

Reflections on the Comet, - Williams, Dean Swift's library, cat.no.124. For Bayle's strong influence in England at the time see Courtines, Bayle's Relations with England and the English (1938).

an acceptance that 'enthusiasm' is always with us, and a determination to operate within the sphere of 'credulity' rather than attempting to expose it.

The "Digression on Madness" and the "Mechanical Operation of the Spirit"

The "Digression on Madness" commences with the narrator's assertion that the authors of the "greatest Actions" ever performed were all the victims of insanity. It is not hard to see parallels with Temple's essay on heroic virtues and of poetry in the first part of the "Digression". Temple divides all great benefactors of mankind into three groups: poets, heroes and prophets (the Philosophical Essay, p. 93).¹ Swift's three types of madmen both resemble and differ from these. Where Temple proclaims his inability to discuss prophets because their greatness was entirely a matter of inspiration, Swift treats of those who "propagate New Religions", albeit in a somewhat "frivolous";² Temple's heroes, who are resistors of tyranny and "lawgivers", become Swift's "establishers of New Empires by Conquest"; while his poets become Swift's innovators in philosophy. Temple presents a secularized version of the notion of heroic fury popular among Renaissance humanists, which was inherited from Plato and Aristotle, and together created a

¹ The fact that Swift mentions religious "prophets" here but discusses it only in the "Mechanical Operation" is by justification for treating this work alongside the "Digression on Madness". Nigel Smith and Günther Schleich support my view that there are close connections between the works -- ibid., p. 111. The fact that it is appended to the main work and in part discussed by Swift can be explained by its extremely controversial character -- see Voltaire's comments, ibid., p. 125. I would agree with Clifford -- "Swift's Mechanical Operation of the Spirit" (1949) -- who sees it as the climax of the ibid.

V. "A Digression on Madness" and the "Mechanical Operation of the Spirit"

The "Digression on Madness" commences with the persona's contention that the authors of the "greatest Actions" ever performed were all the victims of melancholia. It is not hard to see parallels with Temple's essays: Of Heroic Virtue and Of Poetry in the first part of the "Digression". Temple divides all great benefactors of mankind into three groups: poets, heroes and prophets (Five Miscellaneous Essays, p.98). Swift's three types of madman both resemble and differ from these. Where Temple proclaims his inability to discuss prophets because their greatness was entirely a matter of inspiration, Swift treats of those who "propagate New Religions", albeit in a disowned 'fragment';¹ Temple's heroes, who are resisters of tyranny and 'lawgivers', become Swift's "establishers of New Empires by Conquest;" while his 'poets' become Swift's innovators in philosophy. Temple presents a secularized version of the notion of heroic fury popular among Renaissance Platonists, which was inherited from Plato and Aristotle, who together created a

¹ The fact that Swift mentions religious "phrenzy" here but discusses it only in the "Mechanical Operation" is my justification for treating this work alongside the "Digression on Madness". Nichol Smith and Guthkelch support my view that there are close connections between the works -- Tale, p.liii. The fact that it is appended to the main work and in part disowned by Swift can be explained by its extremely controversial character -- see Wotton's comments, Tale, p. 325. I would agree with Clifford -- "Swift's Mechanical Operation of the Spirit" (1949) -- who sees it as the climax of the Tale.

certain tension in the concept of melancholy: an excess of the melancholic humour was thought to produce either madness or great genius. Ficino, who reintroduced this idea, believed that the great evil of madness could be converted into a great good by study and contemplation.¹ I would suggest that Swift is using the common-sensical definition of madness as a departure from the 'common forms' against the Moderns, even though he himself disagrees with it. As we have seen, Swift believes that poetry involves a "transferring of Propriety", and that philosophy is "ever out of Hearing". Beneath the obvious satire, and in tension with it, Swift is once again pointing the way to the "bright Ideas" by furnishing them with their reverse, rather as false criticism formed a distorted reflection of the true criticism. We must be alert to discover precisely where and for what reason Swift parts company with his persona. Swift is closer to the persona, as he draws his links between madness and greatness, than would at first appear.

In the account of the various types of melancholia which follows, the satire on mechanism is closer to the surface than elsewhere in the Tale. As in the Introduction it is assumed that society can be analysed in terms of the struggle for power (see above p.115). Here again, however, there is the implication that this is an inadequate perspective: when the persona attempts to solve the problem of how a "...numerical Difference in the Brain, can produce Effects of so vast a Difference from the same Vapour, as to be the sole Point of Individuation between Alexander the Great, Jack of Leyden, and Monsieur Des Cartes," there is a 'gap' in the manuscript, and a footnote, almost certainly by Swift, in which he comments that the "author did wisely" in passing

¹ See Klibansky, Saturn and Melancholy, pp.16-7, 247-71. For Swift's use of the traditional link between madness and melancholy see Canavan, "Madness and Enthusiasm in Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy and Swift's Tale of a Tub" (1970).

over this problem since it is "...not worth a solution; and it were well if all metaphysical cobweb problems were no otherwise answered" (Tale, p. 170). Swift invites us to wonder why "individuation" cannot be explained in Hobbist terms.¹ The previous gap in the text was followed by the account of poetry as involving "climbing up by slow degrees"; the next one precedes the discussion of the need to arouse curiosity (Tale, p. 62, 200). This one is followed by the famous crux which, as we have seen, begins with an ambiguous portrayal of the life in 'common forms', which is not, as at first appeared, one of mere commonsense, since it involves a "shaping of the understanding" which can lead to 'particular, unpopular notions' (see above p. 20). I would argue that Swift is indicating a way in which the melancholic can gain control over his destiny and put his abnormality to positive use. By shaping the "Understanding by the Pattern of Human Learning" the melancholic can in some way avoid endangering society, as do others whose constitution predisposes them to adopt grandiose schemes. Swift is making the same point as in the 'Introduction' - the true philosopher does not aim for power (see above p. 115). He conforms to the 'common forms'. The persona illustrates his argument that the "greatest Actions" can stem from the smallest physiological changes with the example of Henry IV of France, whose aggressive imperialism was caused by an immoderate desire for an "absent Female". Swift's final quote from Lucretius occurs at this point: Henry IV is said to have followed in vain that poet's advice, that excessive amorous passion must be diverted to objects which can be loved in a less extreme manner if the lover is to avoid coming to harm (Tale, p. 164). There is also a method by which a melancholic can sublimate his own baser

¹ For the view that Swift reveals the limitations of the modernist paradigm while seeming to base his argument on that paradigm see Fisher, "An End to the Renaissance" (1974-5).

desires, transcending them by directing them towards higher ends. This is one of the main themes in both the Symposium and Phaedrus. In the former, Diotima propounds her famous theory of the "heavenly ladder" in which love for an individual is eventually transmuted into love of knowledge and the "Good".¹

If this is indeed Swift's meaning, then the "Digression" appears self-contradictory, for it is secretly praising philosophical thought even as it spends much time satirizing "New Schemes in Philosophy". Swift's attack on Modern free-thinkers seems to be a rejection of all independent thought in favour of the consensus of opinion at any particular moment. This ambiguity, I would argue, is typical of the Tale, and occurs also in the central crux of the "Digression", where Swift covertly gives reasons for setting a higher value on 'curiosity' than he appears to do (see above p.15). On one level Swift seems to condemn 'credulous' and 'curious' innovations in the same way. (Here, as in the previous section, 'enthusiasts' and mechanists are lumped together.²) But his criticism of Descartes and Epicurus at least, relates more to their rhetorical tactics than their philosophical systems, which Swift wittily conflates:

Epicurus modestly hoped, that one Time or another, a certain Fortuitous Concourse of all Men's Opinions, after Perpetual Justlings, the Sharp with the Smooth, the Light and the Heavy, the Round and the Square, would by certain Clinamina, unite in the Notions of Atoms and Void, as

¹ Symposium, 210-11; See Hammond, "In Praise of Wisdom", for the links between the "Digression" and the Symposium. This accords with the view of several recent critics that Swift's creative force originated in a basically subversive temperament -- Rawson, "The Character of Swift's Satire", p.66. Swift's consciousness of this fact is implied later in the description of Acamoth, who created out of negative emotions - "A cuius lacrymis humecta prodit Substantia, a risu lucida, a tristitia solida, et a timore mobilis": Tale, p.187.

² "Epicurus, Diogenes, Apollonius, Lucretius, Paracelsus, Des Cartes," Tale, p.166.

these did in the Originals of all Things. Cartesius reckoned to see before he died, the Sentiments of all Philosophers, like so many lesser Stars in his Romantick System, rapt and drawn within his own Vortex. (Tale, p.167).

Swift's attacks on philosophy turn out to be directed at the Moderns' manner of expressing their thought rather than the thought itself.¹ This is perfectly compatible with the view that contemplation in itself is good, at least for the melancholic. Swift's implication is that the Modern philosophers are driven by the desire for power and fame rather than the desire for learning. However the effectiveness of the criticism of the Moderns depends on Swift's stance of arguing from the 'common forms'. To attack the project of enlightenment more openly would be to adopt a far less popular position.

The persona proceeds to explain why all innovators gain disciples. It appears that "...there is a peculiar String in the Harmony of Human Understanding, which in several individuals is exactly of the same Tuning," and which, if plucked "among those of the same Pitch," will cause them to sound "by a secret necessary Sympathy". The skill lies in finding those of the same pitch;

for if you chance to jar the String among those who are either above or below your own height, instead of subscribing to your Doctrine, they will tie you fast, call you Mad, and feed you with Bread and Water. It is therefore a Point of the Nicest Conduct to distinguish and adapt this noble talent, with respect to the Differences of Persons and of Times. Cicero understood this very well...For, to speak a bold truth, it is a fatal Miscarriage, so ill to order Affairs, as to pass for a Fool in one company, when in another you might be treated as a philosopher. (Tale, p.167-7).

¹ Swift could be misunderstood as attacking Descartes' philosophical hubris in reducing all to his own mind --see Spiller, "The Idol of the Stove". The Background to Swift's criticism of Descartes"(1974).

The musical metaphor which dominates this paragraph reminds one of Rosicrucianism, and is calculated to allow a "bold truth" to appear as a mere satire on occultism,¹ but the reference to Cicero is significant despite the triviality of the passage Swift cites from his works, for, in a distorted way, the persona is discussing the value of that insight into the particular types of soul and the particular level of argument suited to each, which was one of the main concerns of the rhetorical tradition (see above p.23). Although for the persona, at least in his present phase, as for Protagoras, 'man is the measure of all things' -- that is, good and evil are relative to the opinions of each community-- and although his 'geometrical', Cartesian argument attempts to avoid such imponderables as the wise man's desire to communicate the truth, with the result that the universal and lowest principles in man are stressed --ie. the desire for power and the fear of shame --; despite these things, the outlines of the fundamental problem treated by the sixteenth century revivers of the Platonic tradition, Erasmus and More, are visible: for these men, as for Plato, the philosopher is dragged back into the Cave by the recognition that most men are not lovers of wisdom, which means that philosophy cannot be made the basis for political society. The return to the Cave represents, as we have seen, a determination to work within the sphere of popular opinion. If Swift is a secret supporter of 'curiosity', as I have argued, the persona is once again "enlightening one half of the Globe."

To illustrate the risks one runs when one lacks such a sense of decorum, the persona describes the tragic error of Wotton, who turned his "happy talents" to "vain philosophy" rather than "the propagation of a new Religion," where "Distortion of mind and Countenance, are of such

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For the importance of the musical analogy in Renaissance Hermeticism see Amman, "The Musical theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd" (1967).

Sovereign Use," a decision which has led to the general opinion that he is a lunatic (Tale, p.169). Swift's attack on the Moderns has been itself a manipulation of popular opinion, a fact which he seems almost to admit at this point, even as he continues the assault. The interesting thing is that Swift draws a distinction between religion and philosophy here for the first time in the digression. It seems now that there is such a thing as madness in an absolute sense, but that, paradoxically, true "distortion of mind" actually helps one to popularize one's ideas. This is Plato's and Erasmus' paradox -- what appears mad to the majority is sane to the philosopher, and vice versa. Swift only appears to lump innovators in religion and in learning together. In reality Lucretius and Descartes are certainly foolish as rhetoricians but are genuine philosophers, while the 'credulity' of Jack is conducive to his rhetorical success. The unpopularity of philosophy allows Swift to criticize the Moderns in a slightly unfair way. To most of his readers he will appear to be saying that the Moderns' views are false because they depart from common-sense. To the acute reader it will be clear that the attack is on the modern belief that philosophy can never replace common-sense, since 'credulity' (almost equated with religious belief here) attracts most people far more than 'curiosity'. Swift's point is not that many of the beliefs of the philosophers cannot be successfully taught. He would clearly have no reason to attack the Moderns if this were so. I would argue that the danger is the Moderns will destroy those illusions which protect society, which the Tale teaches us to identify with the Christian revelation, and in particular, the Anglican Church, but without putting anything positive in their place. Although there is some evidence here for the view that philosophy is of use to the melancholic (as we have seen), the person's 'curious' investigations merely lead to unhappiness in his case, and, no doubt, in the cases of many others. In the context of the whole work, the

destructive anatomies, in which the beau's "Suit of Cloaths" is stripped off, create unhappiness chiefly because they endanger the established religion.

The central crux concludes an ambiguous argument in an ambiguous fashion. Like the rest of the digression, from one point of view, all departures from the 'common forms' are condemned equally as madness. However, Swift now admits that such departures can result in genuine philosophical discoveries, and so abandons for a moment his previous, relativistic viewpoint. Suddenly, the attack on free-thinkers which has lurked beneath the surface of the Tale comes to the forefront, and Swift reveals that telling the truth can be as harmful as propagating delusions. The above interpretation of the digression, and indeed of the Tale as a whole, bears out my view that the central crux deals with rhetoric, and that it offers ambiguous support for the concealment of certain truths.

It can now be seen that Swift aims to deconstruct Modern assumptions from within.¹ Throughout the Tale the persona alternates between a grave concern with 'instruction' and a more popular outlook in which he desires to 'divert' his audience and tell them only what they want to hear. The tension between a powerful, popular rhetoric and the desire to instruct is brought home to the Moderns at this point. Swift, I believe, found this tension not only in Hobbes² but in other Moderns. While he was writing the Tale he read Fontenelle's Dialogues of the Dead (1694), which frequently criticises philosophy on the ground that pleasure can only be based on self-deception. In one of the dialogues, for instance, Queen Elizabeth is made to exclaim, "Alas! Pleasures are not solid enough to bear our plunging into 'em, we must be content to

¹ See Fisher, "An End to the Renaissance".

² See above p.116 for this tension in Hobbes' thought.

play upon their surface."¹ Reason is life-negating for Fontenelle, and the truths it discovers should be concealed: "But the same reason which helps you to think finer than others, condemns you however to act like them" (Dialogues of the Dead, p.67). Behind Fontenelle's view is the Hobbesian definition of happiness as a "continuall successe in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth"; or a "continuall progresse of the desire, from one object to another", which Swift perhaps echoes in the persona's definition of happiness as "a perpetual Possession of being well Deceived" (Leviathan, pp.129,160). Given this relativistic view, Fontenelle wonders what is the use of reason, which reveals the futility of most of these desires. However, he does not follow through this thought to its logical conclusion, and refrain from writing it down. Swift takes over Fontenelle's view and uses it against the Royal Society, the experiments of which are clearly satirized in the 'curiosity' paragraph.

On one level then, the credulity/curiosity crux is a serious argument for concealment based on the Moderns' own assumptions. The sudden shift in tone halfway through the first paragraph noticed by Leavis can be seen as the moment when Swift moves from satirizing the Nonconformists, and so defending Anglicanism in an entertaining fashion, to a criticism of the Moderns, which is all the more effective because it is abrupt and unexpected. Swift's aim is to persuade them at least to conceal their scepticism - in the terms of the allegory, to turn from Aeolism to sartorialism. The final 'fool among knaves' conclusion is a further argument - that they should imitate Martin and actually protect falsehoods. This, as we have seen, is the Tale's movement in microcosm. Swift's satire on Peter's innovations is followed by an attack on

¹ p.140; see also pp.34,67,143. For the date that Swift read the work see Tale, p.lvi. For his possession of the work in three editions see above p.131.

Modern critics who hope to remove all errors, and the satire on Aeolism is also a concealed attack on those who threaten all surfaces in a far more fundamental way than the Nonconformists. Here digressions and allegory meet in an effort to shock the free-thinkers into applying Swift's criticism to themselves.

But I have argued that Swift saw Modernism as exemplifying the way "...Reason reflecting upon the sum of Things can, like the Sun, serve only to enlighten one half of the Globe," or, in other words, as a fragmentation of a previously complete view (see above p.197). It is only within the Hobbist paradigm that there is no place for 'curiosity'. The contradiction Swift finds in Modernism can lead to a simple rejection of 'curiosity' (which Swift would surely not be averse to in the case of the irresponsible free-thinker), but I have suggested that, in the final analysis, Swift sees this "intellectual Passion" as playing a role in the "sum of Things". This means that, in Swift's view, Modernism unconsciously exhibits the tension between the love of knowledge and "what is generally understood by happiness", so that by surveying Modernism as a whole we can arrive at the Ancients' more comprehensive view. Swift's critique of Modernism reveals the considerations which prompted his support for the Ancients, although only to readers who can themselves be numbered among the 'curious'.

As we have seen, the solution to the dilemma Swift sets us is adumbrated in the concluding words of the main argument of the digression, which concerns Brutus' personation of "...the Fool and Madman, for the Good of the Publick". By such a 'personation' the wise man can avoid both passivity and the disruptive consequences of the 'curious' philosopher's grave reports. The latter resembles the Camelion, "sworn Foe to Inspiration", while Brutus resembles Moulinavent, since he adapts himself to popular illusions and uses them rather than attempting to destroy them. What this means in practice can be seen in

the persona's advice to Wotton to turn from philosophy to religion. The public-spirited philosopher will turn to religion, realizing the irremediable 'credulity' of the public. The Tale's surface itself puts into practice the theories which emerge when one examines its depths. First and foremost the Tale is a defence of the Anglican Church, to state the obvious. The satire on Catholicism and Calvinism is highly diverting, but also serves this very serious aim. Yet, as Wotton argues, there are reasons for supposing Swift thought little of Christianity as a whole, let alone Anglicanism. Wotton, however, arrived at that opinion by an act of exegesis -- he pointed out that all Christian religions become coats in the Tale. Swift, I would suggest, allows one to forget this fact amidst the dazzlingly witty treatments of Peter and Jack. The greatness of the Tale resides in the fact that it is a genuine defence of Anglicanism, while being much more than that. This amounts to saying that Swift plays the fool successfully "for the good of the Publick". He confirms his 'credulous' readers in, or disposes them towards, a support for the established Church. Wotton attempts to lay bare Swift's reservations about Christianity, but Swift himself does not encourage his readers to do so. In fact, he does precisely the opposite.

The reason for Swift's secrecy, I would argue, is best understood in the light of Plato's view that one must "...keep strictly to the laws once they have been laid down and never transgress written enactments or established national customs" (see above p.25); unless one is a philosopher who has acquired political power. To repeat: since the constitution thus produced imitates most closely the real or philosophical constitution, the paradoxical conclusion is that the philosopher, or the man who sees the flaws in the imitative constitution, can be as vigorous in its defence as those who are most enthusiastically patriotic.

If Swift's main aim is the defence of Anglicanism, why did he not simply offer arguments to prove that it was the true religion? These

would not have persuaded the free-thinkers, who were precisely the ones who formed the greatest threat to Anglicanism. On its concealed level the Tale again defends Anglicanism, although along completely different lines. On this level, as we have seen, the Tale advocates secrecy, while practising it. The form of the Tale is determined by its extremely practical aim. The advice to the free-thinkers is necessarily concealed, since it is in conflict with the parts of the Tale which are directed at the believers in Anglicanism.

Put this way it might seem that Swift was hostile to philosophy itself. One recalls his 'thought' that "the want of belief is a defect that ought to be concealed when it cannot be overcome" (Works, IX, p. 261). However, if my interpretation of the "Digression on Madness" is correct, then "shaping one's Understanding by the pattern of human learning" is the method by which the melancholic can rid himself of "any thought of subduing multitudes to his own power, his reason or his Visions." Far from rejecting 'curiosity' altogether, Swift is pointing out to the 'curious' the distinction between their own disposition and that of the majority, who are 'credulous' (see above for a similar distinction in More's Utopia). This is evident in the types of interest the Tale itself is aimed at arousing. As the persona tells us, superficial readers will laugh while the ignorant will "stare". It is precisely the curiosity of some of his readers that Swift plays on to avert the threat constituted by that passion itself in its untrained state.

The "Digression on Madness" occurs towards the centre of the Tale of a Tub volume, and the much discussed crux is at the centre of the digression. It is arguably in the least obtrusive position possible, especially as the digression as a whole could be expected to receive less attention than the main allegory. If Swift's aim is to address some of his arguments only to the 'curious' this would be the place to state them

most clearly.¹ In fact, although one and a half digressions and a section of the allegory remain, as well as a conclusion, the credulity/curiosity paradox is the real conclusion of the work. The complex discussion of the ways knowledge can be useful and harmful to society is brought to an end with the allusion to Brutus' assumed folly. The attack on modernism and nonconformism continues, but apart from the 'fragment' these 'curious' issues are not raised again, except for two moments when Swift implies that the Tale itself obeys the rules it lays down (Tale, pp.184-5, 203).

I turn now to the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit. The prefixed letter makes fun of the Royal Society's project for a universal enlightenment: Swift reduces the new idea of a world-wide scientific cooperation to absurdity by imagining that it would have to include the most savage and ignorant nations -- the "Beaux Esprits in New Holland", the "Iroquois Virtuosi" and the "Literati of Tobinambou". We can conjecture that the 'fragment', like the Tale, will discuss the modern rhetoric, and find it characterized by a lack of restraint. The persona's first words reveal his inability to control his own utterances: "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. For, to tell you a Secret, I am able to contain it no longer" (Tale, pp.261-3). Similarly, at the end of the "Digression on Madness", the persona tells us that his friends "...will never trust [him] alone, without a solemn promise, to vent [his] Speculations in this, or the like manner, for the universal Benefit of Human Kind" (Tale, p.180). The persona's own subject is also rhetoric.

¹ For the importance of the central parts of works which present "unpopular or forbidden view[s]" see Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates (1972), p.58. Note that the digression is the ninth section and that nine is the "profound Number Three" multiplied by itself.

He tells us that the 'fragment' is an enquiry into the methods by which the fanatic "...Teacher arrives at his Gifts or Spirit, or Light "; and by which the "...Intercourse between him and his Assembly ...is cultivated and supported" (Tale, p.265).

At the start of Section One, the persona informs us that many English Christians resemble Mahomet in preferring to be born to heaven by an ass, though provided with many vehicles by which they could reach their destination with more "safety and ease". Swift makes the application of his witty metaphor obvious in rather a peculiar way. The persona is made to explain:

BUT, because I am resolved, by all means, to avoid giving Offence to any Party whatever; I will leave off discoursing so closely to the Letter as I have hitherto done, and so go on for the future by way of Allegory, tho' in such a manner, that the judicious reader, may without much straining, make his Applications as often as he shall think fit. Therefore, if you please from hence forward, instead of the Term, Ass, we shall make use of Gifted, or enlightened Teacher; And the word Rider, we will exchange for that of Fanatick Auditory... (Tale, p.265)

Clearly the persona is not wrong in his belief that the 'fragment' might give offence (see above p.199). Being a Modern, however, when he tries to conceal his meaning he reverses the positions of the innocuous shell and the inflammatory kernel. But this is more than a satire on the moderns' inability to keep a secret, for Swift implies that he himself is aware that the 'fragment' will give offence, which means either that the work is deliberately controversial, or that it does indeed conceal something even more provocative than the satire on Nonconformism. Perhaps both are true.

The persona has the Neoclassical desire not to limit his work to "...particular Occasions and Circumstances of Time, of Place, or of Person; but to calculate them for universal Nature, and Mankind in General." His present topic, 'enthusiasm', is a recurrent feature of

all arts and sciences; and "...improved by certain Persons or Societies of Men, and by them practised upon the rest, has been able to produce Revolutions of the greatest Figure in History; as will soon appear to those who know anything of Arabia, Persia, India, or China, of Morocco and Peru" (Tale, pp.265-6). The persona deals with the same nations as Temple in his essay Of Heroick Virtue -- China, Peru, India -- but where Temple treats of reforms introduced according to the universal standards of reason, the persona discusses "Revolutions" in a purely objective way, regardless of whether they benefited or harmed the states he mentions. Even Temple's heroes, however, recognized the necessity to use this pervasive 'enthusiasm' by establishing exoteric, civil and civilizing forms of worship. Here again the satire on Nonconformism conceals the sense in which the persona is correct to see 'enthusiasm' as a general human characteristic, and the further implication that the greatest popular appeal is gained by appealing to it, whether this is done from public-spirited or self-interested motives.

The structure of the irony in the 'fragment' is very similar to that in the section on the Aeolists and the first part of the "digression on madness". Clearly, the satire on 'enthusiasm' is the first thing to strike one in these three sections, but running almost counter to this is the parody of Hobbism and the New Science.¹ Hobbes's mechanistic views were an extreme reaction against the numerous and disruptive personal revelations claimed by the radical Nonconformists. Swift plays off these "extreams of high and low", as he does in the central crux of the "Digression on madness". He follows earlier Anglican critics of 'zeal' in distinguishing carefully between 'enthusiasm' of supernatural, natural and 'mechanical' origins, but departs from them in creating a

¹ See Calderwood, "Structural Parody in Swift's Fragment" (1962).

persona who does not value the divine over the natural conditions, since he is writing a purely 'objective', psycho-physiological treatise. In reply to the imagined objection that divine inspiration no longer occurs, the persona makes the Hobbist point that the force of this argument "...seems to consist in the different Acceptation of the Word, Spirit: which if it be understood for a supernatural Assistance...the Objectors have Reason...But the Spirit we treat of here, proceeding entirely from within, the Argument of these Adversaries is wholly eluded" (Tale,p.271). Again, as with the account of the Aeolists, the question therefore becomes, what is there left when both mechanism and 'enthusiasm' are attacked?

It is interesting that, before embarking on his description of the "spiritual mechanism", the persona again brings the theme of secrecy to the fore: he can only reveal the mechanism "...as far as it is lawful for [him] to do; but having had the Honour to be Initiated into the Mysteries of every Society, [he] desire[s] to be excused from divulging any Rites, wherein the Profane must have no Part" (Tale,p.270). This could be interpreted as an indication that the paragraphs which follow should be read extremely carefully; however, it also directs our attention to a strange blindness on the persona's part. The "mechanical operation" depends for its success on a belief among the audience that the 'spirit' it produces is of divine origin. Despite his caution, the persona has therefore divulged too much. This explains why the 'mechanical operators', like almost everyone else in the Tale, have a sort of cabbala (Tale,pp.271-2); a fact that is otherwise puzzling. When the Moderns become cabbalists in the Tale, there is at least the appearance of a satire on Rosicrucianism: here, there is not even an overt target. In passages like this and the parallel mock cabbala in the section on the Aeolists (see above p.194), the curious reader will look beyond the overt target of the satire to try and determine whether there is a reason

for Swift's seeming irrelevance.

The persona gives a behaviourist account of the 'sages' he discusses. This leads him to conflate the aims of the Indian "Jauguis", with those of the Irish peasants. The meditation of the Brahmins becomes a mechanical operation: "They violently strain their Eye balls inward, half closing the Lids; Then, as they sit, they are in a perpetual motion of See-saw, making long Hums at proper Periods..." Here, as throughout the 'fragment', the satire is delicately balanced. We are not sure whether the attack is turned outwards against the Brahmins' 'enthusiasm' or inwards against the persona's reductive mechanism. Our confusion is increased by the fact that Swift refers us to Bernier's Suite des Memoires sur l'Empire du grand Mogol as the source of the persona's account of the Brahmins. The freethinking Bernier argues that they are scheming knaves rather than 'enthusiasts', as part of an attack on the syncretistic, symbolic interpretations of the Indian religion offered by the Jesuits. According to Bernier, Hinduism is an invention of cunning 'lawgivers'.¹ The persona is close to Bernier in his freethinking mechanism, but close also to his adversaries, the Jesuits, in that he considers himself an initiate in the Indian traditions.² He produces an untenable but richly ambiguous combination of 'curiosity' and 'credulity', as he does throughout the Tale. While directing a vigorous assault against the Nonconformists at his 'credulous' readers, Swift keeps his 'curious' readers confused. One's instinct is to search for a compromise, but how is it possible to avoid extremes in this case?

1 Suites des Memoires (1671), pp.318-38.

2 For Jesuit syncretism see Walker, The Ancient Theology, pp.197-242; Cook, "Leibniz and Chinese Thought", Cummins' introduction to The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete (1962); Le Compte, Memoirs and Observations (1696), p.320; Du Halde, The General History of China (1735), III, 14-7, 239-304; Spence, Observations, p.227-30; Klaiber, "The Posthumous Christianization of the Inca Empire" (1976).

Either the Brahmins are genuinely inspired, one would think, or they are knaves or fools. For Bernier, as, we suspect, for Swift, the question is more important than at first appears, since Hinduism can be taken as representative of religion as a whole.

It would be irrelevant to imagine that the Brahmins are fools, for the whole discourse is explicitly not concerned with that 'enthusiasm' which proceeds from natural causes. Rather, they consciously produce a state of mind which mimics divine inspiration. Only they know that the process is mechanical, although the 'enthusiasm' may have a "natural Foundation" (Tale, pp.267,269). By creating a man who exposes the frauds of 'priestcraft' along with the best freethinkers but who refuses to condemn them, in fact, is their ardent supporter, Swift makes one reflect on the circumstances under which such frauds would be allowable. One such circumstance would be that of the wise preacher whose audience "would be born to Heaven upon nothing but his Ass" (Tale, p.264). Underneath the satire on Nonconformism, Swift's parable makes the general point that most people prefer 'enthusiasm' to reason. Equally covertly, Swift goes on to draw the conclusion that the reasonable must attempt to use this 'credulity', like moulinavent, rather than destroy it like the chameleon.

The 'fragment' is structured in rather the same way as the central crux of the "Digression on Madness". The subject is inspiration, which is in the sphere of 'credulity', but the persona 'curiously' reveals it to be a mere matter of mechanics; and yet, after all, he manages to remain 'credulous'. As with the crux, some readers will be impressed only by the attack on the Nonconformists, but those who notice the concurrent parody of mechanistic philosophers will be confused. This confusion can lead to the conclusion that Swift's view is closer to his persona's than is at first obvious. The "mechanical operation" is a genuine rhetorical strategy as well as a means of satirizing the Puritans,

and the persona is attacked less for his mechanism than for rendering the 'operation' ineffectual by revealing its mechanical character. This not only accounts for the tensions in Swift's satire, by which he appears both to reveal the frauds of the Brahmins and to criticise the persona for his reductive account of their trances, but also explains why the persona constantly veers between proclamations of his inability to control his own utterances and assertions that he has withheld great secrets. Moreover the art of rhetoric was traditionally thought to involve deceiving an audience into the belief that passions worked up artificially were entirely natural (see Quintilian, VI, ii, 25-30). At the end of this section, with a supreme irony, Swift reminds us of the persona's many initiations by making him remark: "THIS is all I am allowed to discover about the progress of the Spirit..." One might wonder what there is left to hide (Tale, p. 273). The irony is similar to that used in the Argument against Abolishing Christianity. Both works seem to criticize the free-thinkers for their lack of religious belief, but on a closer examination ridicule their openness in expressing plans which require secrecy for their success.

The opening paragraph of section II displays a puzzling contradiction. The direction of the persona's argument down to "cloven Feet" is to attack the "Lines and measures of our reason", which "have discovered a gross Ignorance in the Natures of Good and Evil, and most Horribly confounded the Frontiers of both." The conclusion one expects is that we should make up our minds for once and for all whether 'enthusiasm' is from God or the Devil and then stick to that position. The persona's conclusion, however, is that the matter is of absolutely no importance to either: "...it is a Sketch of Human Vanity, for every Individual, to imagine the whole Universe is interest'd in his meanest Concern." This is heralded in the first part of the paragraph by a growing contemptuous note in the persona's discussion of religion:

After men have lifted up the Throne of their Divinity to the Coelum Empyraeum, adorned him with all such qualities and Accomplishments, as themselves seem most to value and possess; After they have sunk their Principle of Evil to the lowest Centre, bound him with Chains, loaded him with Curses, furnish'd him with viler Dispositions than any Rake-hell of the town...I laugh aloud, to see these reasoners, at the same time, engaged in wise Dispute, about certain walks and Purlieus, whether they are in the verge of God or the Devil..."
(Tale, pp.274-6).

There is a self-reflexive quality to the persona's discussion: the question is whether the credulity of the 'enthusiasts' should be viewed in a 'credulous' or a 'curious' light. The persona argues first for a 'credulous' view and attacks reason. Here he comes close to saying, since religion is entirely a matter of superstition anyway, is it not ridiculous to employ reason with any great precision in determining theological points? However, he then proceeds to employ his reason to reveal that the "mystery" of the inspired preacher is but a "trade". The passage thus exemplifies the Tale's constant movement between the poles of 'credulity' and 'curiosity'. Swift's implication is, I would argue, that if you are going to have a state religion, it should be recognized that reason has nothing to do with it since its aim must be to lay down simple moral rules for the 'credulous'. Again the satire on 'enthusiasm' also reveals why the dry mechanism of the persona is in a sense even more dangerous. Needless to say, Swift follows his own advice and directs this revelation only at the 'curious' reader. The contradiction between the persona's praise of the wild Indians for "limiting their Devotions and their Deities to their several Districts" and his denial that either possession or inspiration explains 'enthusiasm' parallels that between the earlier attack on 'credulity', and the assault on 'unmasking'. 'Credulity', 'enthusiasm' and religious belief itself seem indistinguishable in the Tale.¹ The covert way Swift makes this

¹ From a rather different perspective I would therefore agree with critics who stress Swift's fideism in matters of religion -Landa, "Introduction to the sermons"; Greene, "Augustinianism & Empiricism"; Battestin,

identification allows him to defend Anglicanism by aggressive satires on its enemies, thus avoiding "horribly confounding the Frontiers" of "Good and Evil" in the eyes of believers, while at the same time implying to the 'curious' that it is mere pride to consider God is interested in our actions. The savagery of the satire does not encourage readers to make distinctions, but there are distinctions to be made if he cares to look.

As we have seen, for the persona, the "...Mystery, of venting spiritual Gifts is nothing but a Trade..." The fourth hiatus of the Tale occurs just as the secrets of this "Trade" are about to be revealed. Swift's note tells us that it was "neither safe nor Convenient to print it" (Tale,p.276). If I am correct, the other gaps in the text have preceded some of the most important moments in the Tale. Here, as often, we can arrive at Swift's positives if we remember the Tale's strategy of treating high themes by their debased, comic parallels. I believe that the "Trade" of the enthusiast is the comic equivalent of the rhetorical skill of the wise preacher. There is the same implication here as there was in the "Digression on madness" (see above p.201), namely, that 'enthusiasm' can be controlled and channelled: the "Practice of wearing quilted caps" is used to "prevent the Spirit from evaporating any way, but at the mouth." Perspiration was earlier used as the Tale's base equivalent for intense thought (Tale,p.185). Swift's reasons for comparing politics to a cone, eloquence to a circle and poetry to a hexagon can only be speculated on (Tale,p277). This is one of the Tale's most enigmatic passages. However, the mention of the caps belies the persona's determinism, since it implies that 'enthusiastic' passions can be trained. This is in fact the persona's main position. Although a

mechanist in many ways, his stress throughout the 'fragment' is on man's ability to guide his own nature. The "Scythian Long-heads", whose heads "shot upwards, in the form of a Sugar-Loaf" through much "molding, and squeezing, and bracing" (Tale, p.268), stand as a reified analogy for a process of sublimation, which I believe Swift seriously advocates.

'Enthusiasm' widens and deepens its meaning here rather as 'real Christianity', does in the Argument. Swift is opposed only to raw 'enthusiasm', so to speak, despite the fact that he seems to apply the term solely to Nonconformist zeal. To imagine that the alternative to 'enthusiasm' is a dry rationality utterly divorced from the passions, is to bite into the worm of Swift's nut. Swift aims to train rather than eradicate the passions, both in the rhetorician and his audience, although the training may not be the same in each case.

The final section of the 'fragment' presents a history of fanaticism, which becomes yet another of the Tale's puzzling parodies of esoteric traditions (Tale, pp.283-5). The persona informs us that "THE most early Traces we meet with, of Fanaticks, in antient Story, are among the AEgyptians, who instituted those rites, known in Greece by the Names of Orgya, Panegyres, and Dionysia, whether introduced there by Orpheus or Melampus, we shall not dispute at present, nor in all likelihood, at any time for the future." Swift parodies the scholars who had been unanimous in arguing that the mystery cults originated in Egypt and were introduced to Greece by some legendary hero, usually Orpheus.¹ As we have seen, Ancients like Warburton found a "double doctrine" which they much admired in these cults (see above p.139). Swift once again appears to be satirizing those who read mysteries into the most prosaic activities, but there is an ambiguity here which is typical of his

¹ see especially Cudworth, True Intellectual System of the Universe (1676), chapter four.

treatments of the esoteric: the fact that the cults have been linked with Dionysius

...has betray'd some superficial Readers to imagine, that the whole Business was nothing more than a Set or [of?] roaring, scouring Companions, over-charg'd with Wine; but this is a scandalous Mistake foisted on the World, by a sort of Modern Authors, who have too literal an understanding, and, because Antiquity is to be traced backwards, do therefore, like Jews, begin their Books at the wrong End, as if Learning were a sort of Conjuring. These are the men, who pretend to understand a Book, by scouting thro' the Index, as if a Traveller should go about to describe a Palace, when he had seen nothing but the Privy; or like certain Fortune-tellers in Northern America, who have a Way of reading a Man's Destiny by peeping in his Breech. For, at the Time of instituting these Mysteries, there was not one Vine in all Egypt, the Natives drinking nothing but Ale...

Having refuted the view that the "fanatick Rites" can be "imputed to Intoxications by Wine," he goes on to explain their "deeper Foundation", concerning which one can "...gather large Hints from certain Circumstances in the Course of their Mysteries." The "Confusion of Sexes" in their processions; their garlands of ivy and vine, "Emblems of Cleaving and Clinging "; the goats and asses which accompanied them; and their "ensigns" carved to resemble the "Virga Genitalis with its Appurtenances", all indicate that it was the sexual act which the Dionysiacs took such care to conceal; and, sure enough, "...in a certain town of Attica, the whole Solemnity stript of all its types, was performed in puris naturalibus, the Votaries, not flying in Coveys, but sorted into Couples." The same inference is drawn from the "...Death of Orpheus, one of the Institutors of these Mysteries, who was torn in Pieces by Women, because he refused to communicate his Orgyes..." In other words, the persona rejects one trivializing interpretation in the strongest possible terms and then replaces it with another. This does not detract from the fact that the attack on superficial interpretations contains all the stock criticisms directed by the scriblerians against

the modern critic; and that the contrary position clearly involves a belief in some sort of secret wisdom. Swift calculates that the reader who suspects that there is something else here as well as an elaborate and peculiarly violent attack on the Nonconformists will be baffled and at the same time curious.

Here, as elsewhere, one can satisfy this curiosity by seeing the Tale as occasionally expressing Swift's serious views in mock form. It is interesting that, although the sexual act was performed "stript of all its Types" in the end, previous to this, sexual desire was sublimated by delaying its consummation, and transferred to the gods. This sublimation was achieved by using the sexual act as the stuff for a mysterious symbolism. Although the persona stresses the reductive aspect of this process -- religion is nothing but sex-- we are free to reverse his argument and speculate that the most noble motives known to man can very well be sublimations of base or common passions, but nevertheless remain truly noble.¹

The fault in the persona's interpretation would therefore lie not in his analysis of religion itself, but in his grave exposure of its ignoble "seed". Swift implies that there are degrees of sublimation of sexual desire. The "religion of the Votaries" is produced by diverting it into the worship of "Shadows and Emblems of the whole Mystery" (that is, the sexual act). A more radical transformation is seen in Orpheus, "one of the Institutors of these mysteries", who castrated himself "for the loss of his wife" and "refused to communicate his Orgyes" to his followers (Tale, p.285). Orpheus' celibacy resulted from the fact that his desires were not fixed on the same objects as those of his Votaries. His refusal to "communicate his orgyes" has many

¹ We can find a view of religion as the "highest Instance of self-Love", not different in kind from the lowest possible instances. in Swift's Thoughts (see above p. 100).

resonances if my reading of the Tale is correct. It denotes that "hoarding up" or "stifling" of knowledge without which it would be impossible to "institute mysteries". Swift implies that the Orphic religion was produced by a sublimation of base desires, but Orpheus himself may have been completely without these desires (not because his nature was not passionate but precisely because of his intensely loving nature). I would suggest that Swift is describing here the proper relationship between the wise man and the 'credulous' majority. Orpheus' power comes from channelling a passion which he himself does not feel. The fact that he does not feel it must remain a secret which exposes him to the danger here enigmatically conveyed in his being "torn in pieces by Women", who judge him in terms of his own "mysteries". The fate of Orpheus, in other words, reveals the need for disguise on the part of the rhetorician who is working within a sphere which is secretly abhorrent to him. The parable recalls Socrates' unwitting arousal of Alcibiades, who is dangerous because he judges Socrates by vulgar standards while dimly recognizing his uniqueness.

The 'fragment' ends with a reference to Plato. Lovers are said to be "...but another sort of Platonicks, who pretend to see Stars and Heaven in Ladies Eyes, and to look or think no lower; but the same Pit is provided for both; and they seem a perfect Moral to the Story of that Philosopher, who, while his Thoughts and Eyes were fixed upon the Constellations, found himself seduced by his lower parts into a Ditch" (Tale, p.289). This is the one reference to philosophy in the 'fragment', but it occurs at an emphatic moment, in the very last sentence. The analogy between sexual love and the love of wisdom supports my symbolic reading of Orpheus' refusal to "communicate his orgies". The editors refer us to Plato's Theaetatus for the first occurrence of the story of the philosopher and the ditch. Plato cites it as an example of the mockery which is always directed at the philosopher, who, he goes on to

say, will always appear a fool to men of the world (Theaetetus, 172-176). This passage was probably the main source for the idea of divine folly which so fascinated the sixteenth century humanists discussed in Chapter One. My argument is that the whole of the 'fragment' offers advice to the philosopher, which is based on the premise that he will be ineffectual if he expresses his ideas directly. If, Swift's argument goes, it is human nature to wish to be "born to heaven" by an ass--and the links between 'enthusiasm' and sexual desire encourage us to believe that such 'credulity' is a near universal, and in a sense natural human characteristic -- then the wise man who sees this general folly for what it is also sees the folly of an attempt to expose it. If therefore such a man wishes to put his wisdom to any practical use he must disguise it and work within the sphere of popular illusions; just as Orpheus, in his "mysteries" harnessed desires which he himself did not feel. A "mechanical operation" is necessary in this case, for Swift is advocating a simulation of 'enthusiasm' among precisely those who are not vulgarly 'enthusiastic'. The discourse itself practises a parallel simulation, for it is first and foremost a defence of the Anglican Church. The way 'enthusiasm' expands to include religious belief itself is left to be inferred. Swift further protects his meaning by the satire on Hobbist mechanism that runs throughout. It is the starting point in Swift's dialectic to recognize that Hobbism is one of the targets of the satire as well as the vehicle for a satire on 'enthusiasm'; its precise opposite.

Conclusion:

I wish to conclude with a brief summary of my argument. Swift's support for the Ancients was in essence an adherence to a classical scheme of political philosophy which was founded on the premise that philosophy cannot be made a basis for political society except in highly unusual circumstances, because most people are not philosophers, that is, they do not accept that knowledge is the highest object of human desires. This means that most people's desires are naturally in tension with the virtues required of them as citizens, which means in turn that they they must be habituated to these virtues by noble myths. The practical consequence of this view was thought to be that many beliefs which are vain and deluded in the final analysis must be defended vigorously. Swift's defence of the Anglican church is prompted by these considerations. Far from being in conflict with his classicism, as in the case of the philosophes,¹ Swift's Anglicanism was even a manifestation of his classicism, or at least his Platonism.² However, there are a few in whom the passion of curiosity is dominant. These can be enlightened without endangering their virtue as citizens. Indeed in the Platonic tradition the love of knowledge fulfils man's nature and is to be encouraged wherever possible. Where these two aims of defending benign delusions and encouraging the love of knowledge conflict, a text that works on two levels is produced, which aims to lead the 'curious' on and exclude the 'credulous'. The secrecy of such a text has the added advantage of stimulating the curiosity of the former type of reader.

¹ See Gay, The Enlightenment.

² See Bloom, "An Outline of Gulliver's Travels" for a similar view.

In the case of the Tale there is an added complexity, since the level intended for the 'curious' actually teaches the distinction between the two types of disposition and the conclusions to be drawn from it which I have just discussed. This is my justification for the dual concern of this study with Swift's philosophy and his rhetoric. Swift's rhetoric is the necessary expression of his political philosophy, and his philosophy, at least insofar as it is revealed in the Tale, deals with the necessity for adopting such a rhetoric. Very broadly, the Tale's strategy is to satirize religious abuses and so, on its most obvious level, to defend Anglicanism as the true religion. Less obviously, this level of the satire is accompanied by a parody of a fashionable reductive mechanism which might seem, at a first reading of the Tale, to form the theoretical basis of an attack on religion itself. This, I have argued, is the part of the Tale which is directed at the free-thinkers. Their confusion is intended to give way to curiosity. At this point Swift's positive beliefs can be deduced, principally by a flexible synthesis of the digressions and the allegory, or of the persona's literal meaning and its ironic inversion. In the "Digression on Madness" Swift analyses this technique - the attack on 'credulity' and on 'curiosity' are in less obtrusive conflict throughout the Tale, but the 'curious' level is a constant undercurrent in the Tale, and one which is as likely to render the contemporary reader uncomfortable as it was the Augustan free-thinkers and rationalists. The satire on religious abuses gives way to this deeper satire in the accounts of the Aeolist and Sartorialist sects, in the digressions and at periodic intervals in the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit. As in the "Digression on Madness", the only alternative to 'curiosity', once it has been recognized as one of the targets of Swift's satire, seems to be a return to 'credulity', which is his other target. In this way a dialogue is set up, which the Tale's many references to secrecy can help to a conclusion. Swift's own

defence of the 'common forms', as well as the methods by which he hints at his own scepticism regarding those 'forms', reveal by example the sort of compromise he has in mind.

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ADDENDA.

Note page 32. For a more philosophical view of the serio ludere as a method of concealment see Shaftesbury, Life, Letters and Regimen (1698-1712), p.194:

In the things within is earnest. In the things without; what is all but jest? Now the first are never meant; the latter everywhere. How talk then of the first? How be earnest or in earnest if thou wouldst ever do feign? But if the talk be never of the first but of the latter only, how talk of these and be serious? See then if the greatest seriousness be not a very jest. Therefore, be it jest or earnest with others, it can be neither to thyself. Their jest, their earnest: both in a manner a jest. But the use of this jest a serious matter and far from jest. See then to use it right within; and for without remember the medium and find the balance as becomes thee.

Note page 82. See also AMES, Citizen Thomas more and his Utopia, pp.81-5 for an explanation in terms of censorship. For an interesting contemporary reaction see Budé's comments (1517), who himself learnt from it the vanity of the world, but speaks of it as a "hagiopolis"; or "city of the saints" which could never be actualized because of the irreversible worldliness of others: in Gallagher, More's Utopia and its Critics (1964), pp.82-6.

Note page 170. It has been suggested to me that Swift's point is that "particular men" should wait until the "amendment" happens before speaking out. The "Thought" is ambiguous, but it seems to me odd to imagine Swift is advocating watching a mounting tide of corruption without taking drastic measures. Rather, there is a point of corruption beyond which violent disruption of established beliefs becomes the lesser of two evils.