Swift's Art of Allusion

Dan Sperrin
Corpus Christi College
University of Oxford

Abstract

The thesis is a study of Jonathan Swift's library and reading, and a literary-critical examination of his art of allusion. Much scholarship on eighteenth-century literature seeks to affirm its formal clarity and decorum, perceiving — particularly in Augustan poetry — a strain for order and scholarly care. The claim of this thesis is that Swift provided an alternative to, and a critique of, these standards in literature, alluding to other texts with the kinds of obliquity, parody, and playful misanthropy which were germane both to his own writing and to satire as a genre.

The introduction examines Swift's obligations at Marsh's Library, Dublin, showing how he seems to have capitalised on opportunities to steal books and re-use fragments from them. This opens up a discussion of what constitutes a literary allusion, and how satirists such as Swift are invested at once in unsettling an allusion's plausibility and expanding its possibilities. Chapter 1 immediately responds to these claims, showing how Swift subjected his scholarly editions of ancient writers to processes of breaking and remaking. It reveals his fondness for scholarly errors and distortions of mythology, and his attraction to areas of pseudo-learning which he could inhabit and parody. Chapter 2 pursues a closely-related argument in relation to Swift's reading of modern literature, looking at the ways in which Swift ignored or affected ignorance of literature written in his own time: alluding, often, to their opening lines, or to cant phrases.

Chapter 3 shows how Swift's allusions rejected any concept of literary dependance or gratitude; and depended, instead, on his own mock-tyrannical behaviour. The chapter takes special interest in Swift's reading of classic accounts of tyranny, suggesting that many of his most eccentric allusions were thinly-veiled parodies of his own unfriendly characteristics. Chapter 4, a study of Swift's allusions to the King James Bible, builds on this work, and examines the range of allusive practices to which he subjected passages of scripture, situating him in a context of clerical learning in eighteenth-century Dublin, and as a Dean in the Church of Ireland.

The thesis closes with an account of the 'hint' in eighteenth-century literature (an important word for an allusion in the period), showing how Swift related to a much wider context of allusive practice. The conclusion examines some of the ways in which Swift himself was alluded to, both in England and Ireland, and suggests that one of his legacies to satire was a species of obscurity that derived its local energies from genuinely acquired forces of erudition.

Acknowledgments

I first came to the subject of literary allusion while I was writing tutorial essays as an undergraduate, which were read patiently and attentively by Peter McCullough: his tutorials have been always forefront in my memory, as have his words of encouragement.

Without the generosity of The Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards this thesis could never have been written, and the Company's generosity is to be reciprocated —with duty, affection, and charity — for the rest of my life. In particular, I would like to thank Edward Copisarow, whose stock of eighteenth-century jokes and anecdotes is matched only by his way of telling them; but I would also like to thank Paul Bostock, Mavis Warner, David Westnedge, and Richard Wells for their support.

Recognition goes to some of the fellows of Corpus Christi College, Oxford: to those who were supportive. I would especially like to thank Kantik Ghosh, Bea Groves, Francis Leneghan, Marina Mackay, and Ollie Clarkson for their interesting, funny, and instructive thoughts about college teaching. My students often feigned interest in the 'Swift stuff' but their encouragement was always appreciated: I was lucky to have so many students who cared about literature and who suggested new ways of seeing things.

Maria O'Shea and Jason McElligott at Marsh's Library, Dublin, helped to interpret some of the tricky archival work which forms the basis of the introduction: I am grateful for their insight, humour, and help. Clive Hurst and Alex Franklin at the Bodleian Library have provided many interesting conversations about the eighteenth century which prompted some of the ideas in the thesis, and their good humour was consistently appreciated. I am thankful to Bernard for reading Chapter 4 between matters of great importance, and for bringing his vast erudition to bear on the research. The erudition and care of Mark Williams have been very important to me for many years, both in terms of this thesis and my life in Oxford. I am also lucky to know Caroline Harrison, whose even-handedness, insight, and support have been so important.

To David Womersley and Valerie Rumbold for reading the thesis and suggesting some points of information. But, especially to Abby Williams and Adam Rounce, whose interesting ideas about Swift — a restless and inscrutable writer at the best of times — were so helpful and encouraging. Their careful and generous reading of the thesis has ensured my lasting interest in the subject and the profession.

None of this would matter if it were not for my creative and gifted supervisor, Freya Johnston, who is the best reader I have ever met.

Contents

Abbreviations	5
Introduction	8
Chapter 1: Concealing the Ancients	37
Chapter 2: Ignoring the Moderns	71
Chapter 3: Depending	112
Chapter 4: Using the Bible	150
Conclusion: Hints	190
Bibliography	210

Abbreviations

Due to the range of scholarly editions used in this thesis, editions of Swift are referred to by the surname of the editor and a short title (indicated below), with a volume number in lower case roman numerals if applicable. For clarity of reading, the *Cambridge Edition of The Works of Jonathan Swift*, which is in the process of being published, will be referred to as a series of individual volumes (e.g. Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*) and not with a collective short title. The only exception to this rule is Abigail Williams, who is named in full to distinguish her from Harold Williams of the older *Journal to Stella.*

Williams, *Correspondence*	*The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift,* ed. Harold Williams, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).
Woolley, *Correspondence*	*The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.,* ed. David Woolley, 5 vols. (Frankfurt am Main and Oxford: Peter Lang, 1999-2014).
Library and Reading	*The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift: A Bio-Bibliographical Handbook,* eds. Dirk F. Passmann and Heinz J. Vienken, 5 vols. (Frankfurt am Main and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003).
Life	Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age*, 3 vols. (London: Methuen, 1962-83).
Poems	*The Poems of Jonathan Swift,* ed. Harold Williams, 3 vols., 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).
Prose	*The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift,* ed. Herbert Davis, 14 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939-68).
Word-Book	*Jonathan Swift's Word-Book: A Vocabulary Compiled for Esther Johnson and Copied in Her Own Hand*, eds. A. C. Elias, John Irwin Fisher, Panthea Reid (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2017).

Primary material is referred to by the surnames of the writers (rather than the editors), and follows the same format. Titles of individual texts will be capitalised where appropriate, and subsections indicated by roman numerals. The most recent Arden volume has been used for all quotations from Shakespeare.

Boswell, *Life*	*Boswell's Life of Johnson,* ed. George Birkbeck Hill, revised by L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971-5).
Butler, *Hudibras*	Samuel Butler, *Hudibras,* ed. John Wilders (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).
Chaucer, *Works*	Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer,* ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
Delany, *Observations*	Patrick Delany, *Observations Upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (London: W. Reeve, 1754).
Donne, *Poems*	John Donne, *The Poems of John Donne,* ed. Robin Robbins, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 2008).

Dryden, *Essays*	John Dryden, *The Essays of John Dryden,* ed. William P. Ker, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926).
Dryden, *Works*	John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden,* eds. Edward Niles Hooker and H. T. Swedenberg Jr., 20 vols. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1956-2000).
Geneva Bible	*The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition,* ed. William Whittingham (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2007).
History of Libraries	*The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland,* ed. Peter Hoare *et al.,* 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
History of The Irish Book	*The Oxford History of The Irish Book*, eds. Raymond Gillespie, Andrew Hadfield, James Murphy, Clare Hutton, Patrick Walsh *et al.*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006—).
Johnson, *Dictionary*	The first edition has been used for definitions and examples. *A Dictionary of the English Language: In Which Words Are Deduced From Their Originals, and Illustrated In Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers*, 2 vols. (London: William Strahan, 1755).
Johnson, *Lives*	Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of The Most Eminent English Poets,* ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).
Johnson, *Yale*	*The Yale Edition of The Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Robert Demaria Jr., *et al.,* 20 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958-2019).
Jonson, *Works*	Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of The Works of Ben Jonson,* eds. David Bevington, Ian Donaldson, *et al.*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
Print and Manuscript	Stephen Karian, *Jonathan Swift in Print and Manuscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
KJB	*The Bible: Authorised King James Version with Apocrypha,* ed. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
Locke, *Essay*	John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
Mandeville, *Fable*	Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of The Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).
Milton, *Paradise Lost*	John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Alistair Fowler, 2nd edition (London: Longman, 2007).
Münster	All volumes of Münster symposium papers are referred to in the thesis as *Münster*, followed by their volume number in brackets. Articles are specified by author, title, and page numbers. These volumes are filed under Hermann J. Real in the bibliography.
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
Orrery, *Remarks*	Earl of Orrery, *Remarks On The Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift*, 5th edition (London: Millar, 1752).

Parnell, *Poems*	*The Collected Poems of Thomas Parnell,* ed. Claude Rawson and F. P. Lock (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989).
Pilkington, *Memoirs*	Laetitia Pilkington, *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington, Wife to Rev. Mr Matthew Pilkington, Written by Herself* (Dublin: R. Griffiths and G. Woodfall, 1748).
Pope, *Poems*	Alexander Pope, *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, eds. John Butt, Maynard Mack, F. W. Bateson *et al.*, 11 vols. in 12 (London: Methuen, 1939-69).
Pope, Longman *Poems*	*The Poems of Alexander Pope,* Volume III: '*The Dunciad* (1728) and *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729)', ed. Valerie Rumbold (London: Longman, 2007).
Pope, *Prose*	*The Prose Works of Alexander Pope,* ed. Norman Ault (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), with vol.2 ed. Cowler (1986).
Ricks, *Allusion*	Christopher Ricks, *Allusion to the Poets* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
Rochester, *Poems*	John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, *Selected Poems,* ed. Paul Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). This edition preferred to Harold Love for its editorial approach to punctuation, which is modernised and, in many cases, reduced.
Rumbold, *Four Books*	*The Dunciad In Four Books*, ed. Valerie Rumbold (Harlow: Longman, 1999).
Spence, *Anecdotes*	Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men, Collected from Conversation*, ed. James M. Osborn, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).
Deane Swift, *Essay*	Deane Swift, *An Essay Upon the Life, Writings, and Character of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (London: Bathurst, 1755). Named in full to distinguish him from Dean Swift (Jonathan).
Temple, *Essays*	William Temple, *Sir Williams Temple's Essays: On Ancient and Modern Learning and On Poetry,* ed. J. E. Spingarn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).
Thackeray, 'Swift'	*The Oxford Thackeray,* eds. G. E .B. Saintsbury *et al.,* 17 vols. (London and New York: Oxford, 1908). Lecture on Swift referred to by the name of the lecture ('Swift') and page number of the eighth volume of this edition.

Introduction

> Next, o'er his Books his eyes began to roll,
> In pleasing memory of all he stole.[1]
> (*The Dunciad In Four Books*, i.127-8)

I

This thesis is about Jonathan Swift's practices of allusion. It examines the idiosyncrasies and the extent of his reading, and considers how he used the literary fragments he acquired. The thesis does not discern in him much geniality or gratitude towards literature of the past. Instead, it examines his continuous struggle to align the required learning of an eighteenth-century clergyman with aspects of his character which were not amiable. Swift met — and even exceeded — a high standard of learning; but as a reader, he was rarely as virtuous as he claimed to be, and his intellectual life was creatively opportunistic. Christopher Ricks argues that 'Augustan poetry is remarkable for its literary allusion' because it considers the writing of other poets to be 'a source of energy and gratitude'.[2] Swift showed, however, that knowledge acquired by theft, second-hand report, and in a spirit of irreverence makes for the best allusions, because allusion itself thrives on the concealment of its origins.

When he was appointed the Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1713, Swift immediately gained an opportunity to refine his skills of theft: this period requires careful examination because what he made of the opportunity is instructive for the rest of the thesis. All deans of St. Patrick's were automatically made a 'Guardian' of Narcissus Marsh's new 'public' library in Dublin, which had been established in 1701 and opened in 1707. Every year, on the second Thursday of October, Swift was required to attend a meeting of 'Trustees, Governors and Guardians', at which catalogues of the collection were surveyed.[3] Officially, Marsh's library was the first 'public' library of its kind. Its ornate founding documents, which were copied onto sheets of vellum and bound together at the front of a minutes book, included the 'Act of Parliament' which approved the 'settling and preserving'

---

[1] Rumbold, *Four Books*, p.117.
[2] Ricks, *Allusion*, pp.9-12.
[3] Swift's duties are recorded in the book of minutes that survives in Marsh's Library. The book is unpaginated, so reference is made to the meetings by date. Swift was not referred to by name — only as the 'Dean of St. Patrick's' — for four years, perhaps owing to his fractured relationship with Marsh. Paddy Bullard took this to mean that he did not attend any meetings until 1718, 'What Swift Did In Libraries', *Jonathan Swift and The Eighteenth Century Book*, eds. James McLaverty and Paddy Bullard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.70. On Swift's fraught relationship with Marsh and his library, see Muriel McCarthy, 'Swift and The Primate of Ireland: Marsh's Library in the Early Eighteenth-Century', *Dublin Historical Record*, 27:3 (1974), pp. 109-112.

of 'a Publick Library for ever'.[4] However, the design of the new building did not conform to this standard of philanthropy and commitment to public learning. Access could only be gained by locating an obscure path through the back of the graveyard of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Those who wished to study in the library were permitted a quick look, but only 'Graduats and Gentlemen' were to be admitted 'Provid'd / They behave Themselves well' and 'pay due respect to their betters'. Graduates and gentlemen who did not behave themselves were 'excluded'. As Marsh stated very clearly: 'no man shall be allowed to handle or take out of its place any book belonging to the said Library, unless in the presence of the Librarian or His Assistant.'[5] However, Marsh himself had free rein over the collection. He built a door at the back of the furthest wing of the building, affording himself special access to the collection from his own lodgings. The door also provided Archbishop William King 'a way thereto' to his 'palato', and the Dean of St. Patrick's his own way through 'St. Patrick's Close'. As King observed, Marsh was 'very dextrous at doing nothing' unless it served his turn.[6]

The library operated somewhere between its laudable claim to provide a public resource and Marsh's belief that the collection belonged to him alone, aligning it with the Augustan adage 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits': an often recycled tag, of dubious origin, made popular by Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of The Bees* (1714) the year after Marsh died.[7] It is unclear when the library's name changed from 'St. Sepulchre's' to 'Marsh's' (it might have slipped into common parlance by accident), but the change suited the reality of how the library worked. Swift believed that human nature was, at its root, acquisitive and competitive — 'I love my Friend as well as you, / But would not have him stop my View' — and Marsh would have been support for this belief.[8] However, Swift also believed that human nature seeks its own revenge: 'I have no Title to aspire; / Yet, when you sink, I seem the higher'.[9] Evidence shows that visitors to the library were equally self-serving: theft from the shelves became common. This might have been an embarrassing problem for Marsh's Library, because Trinity College did not suffer from theft in the same way: indeed, as Elizabethanne Boren notes, ninety-seven percent of borrowed books and manuscripts were returned to Trinity unscathed.[10] (Although, according to John Stubbs, the Trinity College collection was

---

[4] Minutes book, first page of vellum.
[5] Minutes of the meeting in 1714.
[6] For a discussion of King's comment see Muriel McCarthy, 'Narcissus Marsh and His Library', *History of Ireland*, 4:3 (1996), pp.17-22 (p.17).
[7] Mandeville, *Fable*, i.411. Kaye suggested that the line was a response to the title and argument of Montaigne, *Essays*, III.i., 'Of Profit and Honesty'.
[8] *Verses On The Death of Dr. Swift* (c.1731, printed 1739), ll.17-18, Williams, *Poems*, ii.554.
[9] Ibid., ii.555 (line 45-6).
[10] See 'Book-Borrowing in Trinity College in the Early Eighteenth Century', *The Old Library, Trinity College Dublin, 1712-2012*, ed. W. E. Vaughan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp.79-88 (p.80).

'somewhat mildewed' with neglect, having been 'dumped by order of Cromwell in a damp room in Dublin Castle' and then 'brought back to Trinity during the Restoration.')[11] At the first annual meeting of Marsh's Library, the scribe recorded the pressing need for 'chains, rods, clasps, Locks and Keys' to keep pieces of the collection and new acquisitions from wandering off.[12] This became a recurring topic of conversation at the meetings, and we know that thefts from Marsh's Library soon became serious. There is no record of Swift's opinion on the issue.

Detailed catalogues were needed to keep track of books that were going missing. The earliest example of such a catalogue to have survived was composed in 1766, but it is likely that there were several other informal documents of this kind being composed while Swift was a guardian, on which this catalogue would have been based: the title of the first catalogue was 'All the Books Stolen out of St: Sepulcher's [Marsh's] Library from the time of the Foundation to the 9th Day of October 1766'. There is one clear trend in the catalogue: that lots of the books were taken from bookcase 'K' and onwards, presumably because these are the cases that are out of sight of the entrance. It was also the only portion of the library that received no natural daylight. Important thefts from this bookcase included: 'Juvenalis Satyrs Notis Varior' (K 4|12); two editions of Longinus (K 5|22 and K 5|44); 'Plinii Epist' (K 5|29); 'Virgilii Opera' (K 5|25); two large editions of Ovid, 'Ovidii Opera Selectis varior notis' (K 4|3:4:5) and 'Ovidii opera ex Recensions Hiensii' (K 5|40:41:42); 'Martialis Epigrams Var' (K 4|6); and 'Orphei Argonautica Hymni &c' (K 5|21).[13] Effort was made by Marsh to deter acts of theft by storing large folio volumes on the lower shelves and books of descending size higher up the cases, which would have required the conspicuous use of a ladder: but, as the catalogues show, this did little to prevent the theft of items as implausible as three-volume scholarly editions of Ovid.

Swift was delighted by the rich satirical possibilities of such theft. Evidence suggests that he used the Marsh Library and played on the problems with its collection as early as *Cadenus and Vanessa* (c.1712-19), which would help to date a particularly obscure, self-contained passage of the poem which has puzzled scholars (lines 104-115). Paddy Bullard argues that Swift was 'more interested in asserting his independence as a book collector, on however ordinary a scale, than in using the libraries of others', but the following evidence suggests that this is not the whole truth.[14] Parts of *Cadenus and Vanessa* are thought to have been composed

---

[11] John Stubbs, *Jonathan Swift: The Reluctant Rebel* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), p.87.
[12] Minutes of the first meeting. For a general account of thefts from Marsh's Library see *History of Libraries*, ii. 132.
[13] 1766 catalogue, entries under 'K'.
[14] Paddy Bullard, 'What Swift Did In Libraries', p.71.

— or possibly expanded from hints — around the time that Swift moved to Dublin to take up his official duties as Dean (and therefore Guardian of Marsh's Library) in 1713/14, with Vanessa chasing him from London. Ehrenpreis believed that much of this 'panicky' poem was in fact revised over a long period of time after Swift was appointed, because of the famous anagram of 'Cadenus' and 'Decanus' in the title.[15] The poem's origins were dubious, partly because of Swift's scrambling of the evidence, but we know that he continued to revise it until approximately 1719, and that it became a pseudo-autobiographical record of his life during this time, refusing to conform to a neat genre or chronology.[16] A final version was printed in the 1727 *Miscellanies* and it announced itself as an elaborately allusive piece, exhibiting a series of playful imitations of Ovid's *Amores*, in which 'Cupid, full of Mischief' steals lines and feet.[17] Scholars have attempted to piece together the range of literary allusions contained within the poem: Peter Schakel, for example, has convincingly identified passages which allude to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and Virgil's *Aeneid,* referring to Swift's intricate play of light classical allusions as an 'allusive matrix' that 'raises the poem from mere biography to a serious statement on love.'[18]

However, the passage about Vanessa's books indicates a much deeper 'allusive matrix' than Schakel identified. At lines 104-115 Vanessa says that 'she must consult her books' to help with the case she is making against mankind (the unwilling Swift), and she claims she 'must consult' three professional legal texts:

> The *Muses* oft were seen to frown;
> The *Graces* half asham'd look'd down;
> And 'twas observ'd, there were but few
> Of either Sex, among the Crew,
> Whom she or her Assessors knew.
> The Goddess soon began to see
> Things were not ripe for a Decree,
> And said she must consult her Books,
> The *Lovers Fleta's, Bractons, Cokes*.[19]

---

[15] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.647, n.1.
[16] On the mysterious genesis of this poem, which might have been started as early as August 1712 if Swift's memory was reliable (which Ehrenpreis says it was not), see Williams, *Poems*, ii.683-6. Swift himself wanted to write another poem like *Cadenus and Vanessa* which would be composed in several stages as a record of his life: 'what would you give to have the History of [Cadenus and Vanessa] exactly written through all its steps from the beginning to this time. […] It ought to be an exact chronicle of twelve years.' Woolley, *Correspondence*, ii.343.
[17] Faulkner followed the 1727 edition because he considered it a finished text, except for the notorious omitted passage at lines 818-27.
[18] Peter J. Schakel, 'Swift's "dapper Clerk" and the Matrix of Allusions in "Cadenus and Vanessa"', *Criticism*, 17:3 (1975), pp.246-61 (p.248-50).
[19] Williams, *Poems*, ii.689.

These texts would have been the anonymous *Fleta* (1647), Henry of Bracton's *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Anglicæ* (1569), and Coke's *Institutes* (originally published from 1628-44). Records of Swift's library suggest that he did not own a copy of any of these books, but he would have seen them all on the shelves in Marsh's Library, where they were chained up so that they could not be stolen (typically, however, an unchained abridgement of Coke's *Institutes* did go missing).[20] The allusions suggest only a passing acquaintance with the titles, which he skimmed from the shelves in service of *Cadenus and Vanessa*, and nothing else that scholars have uncovered: as Swift wrote in the preface to *The Battle of The Books* (1704), knowledge is a '*sort of* Cream, *which gathers in a Night to the Top*' and may be taken by a '*skilful Hand*'.[21] Since these allusions to legal handbooks suggest a mind browsing through Marsh's Library, it is striking that in the next passage, at lines 108-11, Vanessa commands a 'dapper Clerk' to 'turn to *Ovid*, Book the Second' for advice:

> First to a dapper Clerk she beckon'd,
> To turn to *Ovid*, Book the Second;
> She then referred them to a Place
> In *Virgil* (*vide Dido's Case*:)[22]

In the book '*Case*' that contained editions of Virgil (K) — at least two of which were stolen — one can track down an important clue as to what Swift might have been referring to with '*Ovid*, Book the Second'.[23] All of Swift's own editions of Ovid were in one volume; but, strikingly, the 1767 Marsh Library catalogue recorded that its own 'V 2d of Ovid' in bookcase K had gone.[24] Since the poem satirised the hopeless search for love in library books, its drama of misdirection and futility would have been amplified for some readers by these rich references to a series of real shelves; which Swift would, ironically, have been required to preserve as an official guardian of the collection. As he wrote at lines 489-90: Vanessa, 'Searching in Books for Wisdom's Aid, / Was, in the very Search, betray'd'.[25]

---

[20] [Unknown], *Fleta*, ed. John Selden (London: Lee and Pakeman, 1647), Marsh: F. 1290; Henry de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Anglicæ* (London: Tottel, 1569), Marsh: S. T. C. 3475; and Swift might be referring to any number of Marsh's editions of Coke's *Brief Animadversions on Amendments of…the Fourth Part of the Institutes of the Lawes of England,* but perhaps especially to the four-volume seventh edition printed in London by John Strater 1670, Marsh: C. 4926. The stolen abridgement was once at Marsh: H. 7. 34. None of these texts were in Swift's library.
[21] Walsh, *Tale*, p.142.
[22] Williams, *Poems*, ii.690.
[23] The edition of Virgil was at Marsh: K 3.5.45, and stolen. Also see the 1766 theft catalogue, K 5|25.
[24] 1767 catalogue, p.30. K4|4|10. Several editions of Ovid were stolen out of Marsh's Library, but this one was unique for losing only its second volume. For Swift's one-volume editions of Ovid see Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1356.
[25] Williams, *Poems*, ii.702.

It seems highly probable, then, that this particular passage of *Cadenus and Vanessa* was written to fit with the rest of the poem after 1713, when Swift had taken up his official duties as a guardian of Marsh's Library and could browse its shelves, re-aligning it with his other satires — or 'frivolous recreations' — designed to tease an audience with learned practical jokes, even if it was also striving for larger statements about love.[26] This evidence from Marsh's Library confirms Irvin Ehrenpreis's view that the poem shows how much Swift enjoyed 'secrets and practical jokes' but it also suggests the potential errors in processes of 'list-making and orderliness', both of which Swift utilised in relation to libraries and reading.[27] As Eric Griffiths argued, 'lists can be subtle devices for querying the priorities of those who have compiled them', and Swift's reading lists in *Cadenus and Vanessa* reveal a mind wandering, quite casually, in search of things it can make its own.[28] These habits of theft, to which Swift was unusually attuned, might also have been a parodic response to Marsh's severe unwillingness to share the books he had acquired, which Ehrenpreis referred to as his 'reclusive studiousness'.[29] Swift disapproved of the fact that Marsh was secretive and inaccessible, unwilling to offer preferment or learning to those beneath him in the clerisy. He reflected on this in his 'Character of Primate Marsh':

> Marsh has the reputation of most profound and universal learning; this is the general opinion, neither can it be easily disproved. An old rusty iron-chest in a banker's shop, strongly lockt, and wonderfully heavy, is full of gold; this is the general opinion, neither can it be disproved, provided the key be lost, and what is in it be wedged so close that it will not by any motion discover the metal by the chinking.[30]

A sense that Marsh's 'profound and universal learning' (an ironic comment, perhaps, on his 'public' library) was an inaccessible treasure without a key was in direct opposition to the struggle of the library to keep hold of its books. The problems continued long after Swift died. A much fuller second catalogue of theft from Marsh's library was drawn up in 1767. However, it is unclear whether it corrected mistakes made in the first or introduced its own, thereby perpetuating a problem that was already out of control: as Margaret Connolly has argued, Irish libraries suffered from a lack of rigorous preservation in this period, and the disappearance of the older Diocesan libraries of all kinds might be attributable to this cause.[31]

---

[26] On Swift's 'taste for frivolous recreations' see Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.104.
[27] Ibid., ii.190.
[28] Eric Griffiths, *If Not Critical,* ed. Freya Johnston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.35.
[29] Ehrenpreis, *Life,* ii.99.
[30] Davis, *Prose*, v.211.
[31] Margaret Connolly, 'A Plague of Books: The Dispersal and Disappearance of the Diocesan Libraries of the Church of Ireland', *Lost Libraries: The Destruction of Great Book Collections Since Antiquity,* ed. James Raven (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.197-219.

The first recorded thefts in the first surviving catalogue (1766) were several 'Bibles in Irish' from case 'A' (near the door), but in the second catalogue (1767) it was only thought to be one copy of 'The Bible in Irish London 1690' that had gone missing, which would have been Marsh's own edition of a series of seventeenth-century translations.[32] Similarly, in 1766 the cataloguer recorded the theft of a 'Translation of Oedipus & Electra' from the favoured riches of bookcase 'K', but the second catalogue referred to this book ambiguously as 'Sophocles maimed'.[33] (The second catalogue also recorded whether the books had been found, often citing the disposal of duplicates as a reason for their presumed disappearance in the first place. For example, the three volume edition of Polybius aforementioned was 'found' in 1767, but we do not know how.)[34] Although the library was officially committed to 'settling and preserving' the collection for public benefit, its catalogues and minutes book show that it was precisely these aims of 'settling and preserving' that Marsh struggled to maintain: as Swift said himself in *A Tale of A Tub* (1704), 'Books, like Men their Authors, have no more than one Way of coming into the World, but there are ten Thousand to go out of it, and return no more.'[35]

II

Theft might have been a problem at Marsh's Library. However, in the case of *Cadenus and Vanessa*, it was a spur to Swift's creative energies. Conditioned by an environment in which the acquisition and disposal of books were relaxed, Swift's writing showed casual disrespect towards literature of the past and was full of ingenious acts of theft, which were often concealed under an official mask of decency or generosity. He described his own writing as follows, stressing its innocence: 'To steal a Hint was never known, / But what he writ was all his own.'[36] However, this line was plagiarised from John Denham's pindaric ode *On Mr. Abraham Cowley* (1667), 'To him no Author was unknown, / Yet what he wrote was all his

---

[32] Compare the catalogues in the Marsh archive: 1766, A|4|45 and 1767, A|4|45. The 1766 catalogue entry must refer to the seventeenth-century Irish Old Testament completed by William Bedel, and the Irish New Testament completed by William O'Domnhuil. Marsh revised and edited these texts and published his own single volume edition in 1690, so the catalogues might be referring to a whole shelf of Irish translations. This does not explain why the entries are different. See (from William Bedel and William O'Domhnuil), *An Biobla Naomhtha*, ed. Narcissus Marsh (London: Etheringham, 1690).
[33] 1766, K|2|34 and 1767, K|2|34.
[34] 1767, N1|5|0. Referred to in the catalogue as 'Polybii Historia Gr & Lat interprete Is Casaubono 3V: am: 1670 — '.The edition was *Polybii Lycortæ F. Megalopolitani Historiarum Libri Qui Supersunt* ed. Isaac Casaubon, 3 vols. (Amsterdam: Johannis Janssonii à Waesberge, & Johannis van Someren, 1670).
[35] Walsh, *Tale*, p.23.
[36] Williams, *Poems*, ii.565.

own.'[37] The allusion is characteristically Swiftian because it simultaneously delights in a blatant theft and has a good chance of keeping its secret: this poem was not read very often in the eighteenth century — never exceeding a first printing — so it is unlikely that the plagiarism would have been spotted by many readers (Samuel Johnson, in the *Life* of Denham, used these lines as evidence of Denham's quality, but went on to misdate the ode, saying that 'nothing is less exhilarating than the ludicrousness of Denham', and to confess that 'of John Denham very little is known').[38] Christopher Ricks distinguished between an allusion and an act of plagiarism as follows: 'the alluder hopes that the reader will recognise something, the plagiarist that the reader will not.'[39] In Swift's couplet about things 'all his own', however, these categories are tangled together in an unfriendly idiom of parodic satire, which delights in the processes by which the allusion is being made; a variation on Ricks' central argument in *Allusion to the Poets* but without the element of gratitude. As this thesis will show, the proximity between plagiarism and allusion allowed Swift to construct a style steeped in scholarly learning which, while it preyed on literature of the past, resisted objection and pedantry. As Marcus Walsh argues in his introduction to *A Tale of A Tub*, Swift playfully dealt in the 'problematics of provenance and allusion', not in expressions of gratitude.[40]

Scholarship on allusion rarely contends with the underhanded processes by which an allusion might be brought into being, assuming in the alluder a commitment to accuracy or a desire to achieve intellectual clarity, either for himself or herself or for the reader. In his famous essay 'What Is An Allusion'? (2001), William Irwin lamented that the task of defining what constitutes a literary allusion can be 'difficult and elusive' because an allusion is, by necessity, an 'indirect reference' that requires the reader to make explicit what are 'unstated associations'.[41] Building on this, Irwin also acknowledged that the central dilemma is the writer's 'intention' and its plausibility, tying the argument up in convoluted hypothetical situations — in which the issue of 'intention' might render an allusion obsolete or implausible — which are difficult to imagine: for example, 'a situation in which an allusion is present in which the author intended an allusion but was nonetheless unaware that he or she was alluding'.[42] Irwin made important contributions to the field, and reference to his ideas about accidental parallels and the desire of the reader to spot allusions will be made throughout this thesis. However, the article typifies a type of philosophical abstraction in the study of allusion

---

[37] *On Mr Abraham Cowley, His Death and Burial Amongst The Ancient Poets*, in *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham* ed. Theodore Howard Banks, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale, 1969), p.150.
[38] Johnson, *Lives*, i.237.
[39] Ricks, *Allusion*, p.1.
[40] Walsh, *Tale*, p.xxxiv.
[41] William Irwin, 'What Is An Allusion?', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59:3 (2001), pp.287-297 (pp. 288-9).
[42] Ibid., p.291.

which is not necessarily pertinent to Swift, who — as discussed in relation to *Cadenus and Vanessa* — took a practical approach to the acquisition and disposal of knowledge. Similarly to Irwin, Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* (1973) took a view on the issue of intention which does not relate to Swift (or indeed the Augustans as a whole), but for different reasons: Bloom argued that allusive texts are 'omens of resurrection', victims to psychological forces beyond the conscious study and intention of the author altogether.[43] Also disavowing the problems associated with authorial intention — but this time as part of a larger, ideological rebuttal of the idea of the canon — Carmella Perri claimed that readers often possess an intrinsic distrust of 'diachronic' reading, and that allusion is useful insofar as it 'calls into question certain of our fundamental beliefs concerning textuality.'[44]

However, usefully to the study of Swift, some studies of allusion have taken the philosophical element of the discussion away and focussed, with greater success, on the forces behind the making of allusions themselves: the most important example is Ricks' *Allusion to the Poets*, which will be cited throughout the thesis in relation to higher claims about the nature and technical accomplishment of Swift's satiric style. Swift's allusions were at once a record and a victim of the ordinary, varied, experiences of reading: experiences which are rarely uniform or robust enough to withstand scholarly enquiry. William Empson suggested, in 'Obscurity and Annotation' (c.1930), that:

> As for the latent quotation from another writer or another part of the poem, it is not interesting for a reader to know this as a separate piece of information; he will find it out for himself, at the only moment when it can be useful to him; that is, when he reads one of the poems without having forgotten the other.[45]

Like Empson, Swift believed that a collision of memorised fragments, however incomplete or reliant on chance, made allusions rich with satirical interest. For example, in *An Epistle On An Epistle* (1730), he staged his own inability to remember the source of his poem:

---

[43] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence,* 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale, 1973) p.xxiv.
[44] Carmella Perri, 'Knowing and Playing: The Literary Text and the Trope of Allusion', *American Imago*, 41:2 (1984), pp.117-128 (p.117).
[45] William Empson, 'Obscurity and Annotation' (c.1930), *Argufying,* ed. John Haffenden (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), p.73. John Haffenden titled this section of *Argufying* 'The Language Machine', an allusion to *Gulliver's Travels*.

A Passage may be found, I've heard,
In some old *Greek* or *Latian* Bard,
Which says, wou'd Crows in Silence eat
Their Offals, or their better Meat,
Their generous Feeders not provoking
By loud and unharmonious Croaking:
They might, unhurt by Envy's Claws,
Live on, and Stuff, to Boot, their Maws.[46]

Although Swift pretended to be ignorant of the 'old *Greek* or *Latian* Bard' in question, he was alluding very closely to a fragment of Horace, *Epistulae* (I.xvii.50-1): 'Sed tacitus pasci si posset corvus, haberet / Plus dapis, et rixae multo minus invidiaeque' ('But if the crow could feed in quiet, he would have more meat, and much less wrangling and envy').[47] The fable suggests that the quieter one stays the more one will be rewarded: an idea which Swift parodied here by keeping quiet about the source of his poem while gathering several lines of useful imagery from it, feeding at once on the 'better Meat' of Horace and 'Stuff'ing his own poem with 'Offal' from the original text ('Offal' also in the *OED* 1b sense of 'fragments that fall off in breaking or using anything').[48] In 'Obscurity and Annotation', Empson suggested that readers only look up allusions when they think that they might be 'useful'. This phrase might be reinterpreted, and said of the alluder who takes pieces of literary 'Offal' to suit their own ends.

Swift had a sharp eye for others exercising creative power over fragments taken from other texts, and delighted in spotting them at work. He wrote an aggressive satire on the known intellectual fraud William Whitshed, the judge who presided over the dangerous trials against his printers in Dublin. Whitshed had bandied about the unattributed phrase 'libertas & natale solum' (liberty and my native country) during the proceedings, and even inscribed it on his coach. Swift flared up, and wrote:

[46] Williams, *Poems*, ii.479.
[47] Adduced by Williams, ibid., ii.479. For translation, Loeb, p.365.
[48] *OED*: 'Offal', 1b.

Libertas & natale Solum;
Fine Words; I wonder where you stole 'um.
Could nothing but thy chief Reproach,
Serve for a Motto on thy Coach?
But, let me now the Words translate:
Natale Solum: My Estate:
My dear Estate, how well I love it;
My Tenants, if you doubt, will prove it:
They swear I am so kind and good,
I hug them till I squeeze their Blood.[49]

As Michael Seidel argues, satire often preys upon 'fraudulent and temporarily secured' possessions.[50] The conceit of wine-making and 'Estates' in this passage reaches a sinister end — hugging a man until he bleeds like a pressed grape — but it shows that Swift knew precisely where the fragment of Latin had come from (even if Whitshed did not): Ausonius' *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, xx.8, 'Burdigala est natale solum' (Bordeaux is my native soil). Ausonius was an important writer for Swift because of his *Cento Nuptialis*, an ancient example of the 'cento' which collects and versifies fragments from other writers in an elaborate display of acquired learning, from which one is openly invited to collect *sententiae* (in Ausonius' case, he versified and paraphrased passages of Virgil). Swift owned a Maittaire edition of Ausonius, and Marsh's Library had an extensive collection of continental editions printed from 1580-1654 which he could have consulted (one of which was characteristically mis-catalogued under 'Cicero' in the eighteenth century).[51] By mocking the shift from 'Burdigula' to 'Libertas' (and 'et' to '&'), Swift was drawing attention to the kinds of outrageous 'freedom' exercised on texts that are undoubtedly beyond the remit of most of the public's memory or knowledge, teasing his antagonist with the idea that it was the line's own 'natale solum' (native soil) that had been deliberately lost to provide him with a pompous, self-awarded Latin tag.[52]

In *The Full-Knowing Reader* (1998), Joseph Pucci argued that all allusions require an audience 'possessed of discrete and unique competencies' in order to spot them.[53] In principle, this could be true of any allusion which is not a direct quotation, but Swift possessed a full clerical training and was under pressure to maintain its high standards of

---

[49] *Whitshed's Motto on his Coach* (1724), Williams, *Poems*, i.348.
[50] Michael A. Seidel, *The Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), p.22.
[51] For Swift's edition see Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.118. Examples from Marsh include Ausonius, *Opera* (Amsterdam: 1669), stolen from K.4.5.40; *Omnia…Opera*, ed. Scaliger, 1st and 2nd editions (Bordeaux: 1580-1590), Marsh: Adams, A.2286 (catalogued under Cicero).
[52] Williams, *Poems*, i.347. See the letter from Swift to the Lord Chancellor, included by Harold Williams in the *Poems*: 'I observed, and I shall never forget upon what Occasion, the Device upon his Coach to be *Libertas & natale Solum*; at the very Point of Time when he was sitting in his Court, and perjuring himself to betray both.'
[53] Joseph Pucci, *The Full-Knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Literary Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p.xv.

erudition (discussed in chapter 4). This prepared — perhaps even provoked — him to annotate and allude with an unusually enlarged stock of such 'competencies', often in a mood of competitive antagonism ('antagonism' in the *OED* 1a sense of 'mutual resistance or active opposition'). For example, he owned 1601 and 1612 editions of Baronius' *Annales Ecclesiastici* (originally published in stages between 1588-1607), and acquired nine of the possible twelve volumes, the earlier of which he annotated extensively (the volumes are now in the Marsh Library).[54] According to John Hawkesworth, Swift read the text in a 'chasm' of depression, with no other occupation than writing *Gulliver's Travels*, a mood which led him to read it with unusual cynicism.[55] Swift claimed that it went hand in hand with other quotidian, ascetic activities: 'I dine alone upon half a dish of meat, mix water with my wine, walk ten miles a day, and read Baronius.'[56] In volume IV, p.727, he annotated the line 'At de Ausonio satis' with 'Optimus sanè Christicola Ausonius' (Ausonius was a most sound Christian), drawing on his aforementioned knowledge of Ausonius and his works.[57] However, in volume V, Baronius compared the production of his own fifth volume to Leah's fifth child in Genesis 30:17, and Swift wrote 'allusio impia et stolidissima' (an impious and very stupid allusion).[58] As local instances of annotation, these comments are evidence of his genuine dislike of Baronius as a stylist and a classic of Catholic historiography: the *Annales* have been described as 'mind-numbingly dull'.[59] In the front of the first volume, as further evidence of his dislike, Swift inscribed a short poem that referred to Baronius as 'pessimus inter pessimos scriptores' (the worst among the worst writers).[60] However, the pair of annotations also indicates a much deeper instinct in Swift to weigh allusions against one another for relevance and success, and to create hierarchies of achievement in competition with other writers. His allusions were not simply designed to 'add more Dignity and Light', as he joked in a poem to Patrick Delany, but also to create new avenues of contention and intellectual complexity.[61] They suggest the limitations of Irvin Ehrenpreis's argument that 'allusion as such may decorate, handsomely; it cannot deepen.'[62]

---

[54] Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici,* 12 vols. (Antwerp: Plantin Press, 1601 and second edition 1612). Swift only owned nine volumes. The marginalia has been recorded in Davis, *Prose*, ix.17-35 and Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.152-161, but with no commentary.
[55] John Hawkesworth, *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D. D., D.S.P.D.,* 14 vols. (London: C. Bathhurst, *et al.,* 1755——), i.lxxiv.
[56] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.231.
[57] Baronius, *Annales*, iv.727 (Davis, *Prose*, ix.17).
[58] Ibid., v.1.
[59] The comment on Baronius was included in Brean Hammond, 'Swift's Reading', *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.76.
[60] Ibid., i.(unpaginated flyleaf).
[61] *A Panegyric On The Reverend Dean Swift*, Williams, *Poems*, ii.497. 'To add more Dignity and Light / To an Allusion so polite, / The D—l reads stands, my *S—t,* / To help our Fancy at a Lift'.
[62] Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1974), p.11.

III

Words used to pinpoint and define an allusion are often treated as synonyms, but this can lead to confusion: the difference between an 'echo', 'parallel', 'quotation', and 'reference', for example, is potentially substantial. The *Index to the Biblical References, Parallels, and Allusions in the Poetry and Prose of John Milton* (1994) treats each of these types of intertextual matter as versions of the same thing: the presence of another writer's words in a work of John Milton, however explicit or obscure.[63] Under 'Bible' in the index volume to Herbert Davis' edition of Swift's prose, 'Quotations and Allusions' to scripture are adduced, suggesting in the choice of vocabulary that these things are similar but not enough to be synonymous.[64] Some attempts have been made to split the vocabulary more carefully, and with greater awareness of how it is being done. Hollander, in *The Figure of Echo* (1981), focussed on the 'echo' in Augustan literature as a specific type of allusion that is 'inherently poetic, rather than expository', which makes 'new metaphor rather than learned gestures'.[65] As such, Hollander deemed it unnecessary to 'take up the problems of actual or putative audience, or of the degree of self-awareness, of conscious design, in poetic response to the very words of an earlier text', an approach which has clear limitations.[66]

Such confusions of vocabulary, and attempts to split it apart, were satirised in *A Tale of A Tub*. The hack reflects on the modern habit of 'deducing Similitudes, Allusions, and Applications, very Surprizing, Agreeable, and Apposite'.[67] True to the administrative derangement of the writer, the line is in fact two ambiguously connected sequences forged into an unconvincing, superficially linear statement: the first sequence relates to types of allusion, the second to ways that an allusion can please. The word 'Allusions' is provocatively situated between 'Similitudes' (which are noticed by the reader) and 'Applications' (which suggest things set up by the writer), and matched in the second sequence by 'agreeable', suggesting that an 'allusion' is poised between the two in a playful antithesis to both: recalling the etymology of allusion from *allūdere*, 'to play'.[68] Other instances from *A Tale of A Tub* reveal that Swift neither possessed nor sought a solution to this problem of taxonomy, believing, characteristically, that slipperiness is precisely what an allusion can achieve:

---

[63] Samuel J. Rogal, *Index to the Biblical References, Parallels, and Allusions in the Poetry and Prose of John Milton* (New York: Mellen Biblical Press, 1994).
[64] Davis, *Prose*, xiv.88.
[65] John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (London and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 'Preface', p.ix.
[66] Ibid., p.ix.
[67] Walsh, *Tale*, p.97.
[68] *OED*: 'Allusion', 1a, and etymology.

A Defect indeed, for which both he and all the Ancients stand most justly censured by my worthy and ingenious Friend Mr. *W—tt—on*, Batchelor of Divinity, in his incomparable Treatise of *Ancient and Modern Learning*; A Book never to be sufficiently valued, whether we consider the happy Turns and Flowings of the Author's Wit, the great Usefulness of his sublime Discoveries upon the Subject of *Flies* and *Spittle*, or the laborious Eloquence of his Stile. And I cannot forbear doing that Author the Justice of my publick Acknowledgments, for the great *Helps* and *Liftings* I had out of his incomparable Piece, while I was penning this Treatise.[69]

The hack begins by misremembering the title of Wotton's *Reflections Upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) and calls it a 'Treatise', which reveals an indecent instinct to align other books with his own 'Treatise' called *A Tale of A Tub*. The word 'Treatise', in the eighteenth century, might equally have referred to 'a formal or methodological discussion' or simply 'a story, tale, narrative'; and this uneasy generic mixture was important to *A Tale of A Tub*, which is presented as one of many 'Treatises wrote by the same Author' such as '*A general History of Ears*' and '*A Description of the Kingdom of Absurdities*'.[70] Further evidence of the hack's opportunism lies in the way that his words of praise are simultaneously the words which suggest an instinct to plagiarise: Wotton's *Reflections*, he claims, supplied 'Turns', 'Flowings', 'Usefulness', 'Discoveries', 'Eloquence', '*Helps*', and '*Liftings*'. These words — particularly '*Helps*' and '*Liftings*' — were common to satirical pieces in this period which took plagiarism as their subject, but it was the process of coining new words and pseudo-technical terms that mattered above all. Samuel Butler's *Satyr Upon Plagiaries* (posthumously printed in 1759), for example, introduced a large number of words to advance the vocabulary of allusion, all of which were simply variations on acts of theft and types of thief. 'Why should the World be so averse / To *Plagiary* Privateers', he argued, revising the italicised word in the manuscript to spawn another term for an alluder, a 'small-wit': 'Why should the world be so severe, / To every small-wit Privateer?'.[71] As Richard Terry has argued, the *Satyr Upon Plagiaries* 'indicts plagiarism while also giving their due to certain arguments that could tend to exculpate the offence'.[72] This might also be said of *A Tale of A Tub*, which resists the urge to confine allusion within a rigid taxonomy and expands, in a form of parody, the range of the vocabulary by which it might be made possible.

Owing to this rich, sprawling taxonomy, both in Swift's writing and in modern scholarship, this thesis differentiates between types of allusion according to their function

---

[69] Walsh, *Tale*, pp.83-4.
[70] *OED*: 'Treatise', 1a, 1b.
[71] *A Satyr Upon Plagiaries*, Samuel Butler, *Satires and Miscellaneous Poetry and Prose,* ed. René Lamar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p.63.
[72] Richard Terry, *The Plagiarism Allegation in English Literature from Butler to Sterne* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.37.

(however parodic) rather than their type (the complications of vocabulary often proving difficult to untangle, and of little consequence). For example, the following passage from the opening of *A Tale of A Tub* can be referred to as a series of 'allusions' without confusion, but commentary is required on the manner in which they are presented:

> 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;
>
> *— *Evadere ad auras,*
> *Hoc opus, hic labor est.*
>
> To this End, the Philosopher's Way in all Ages has been by erecting certain *Edifices in the Air*; But, whatever Practice and Reputation these kind of Structures have formerly possessed, or may still continue in, not excepting that of *Socrates*, when he was suspended in a Basket to help Contemplation; I think, with due Submission, they seem to labour under two Inconveniences.
>
> [footnote] * But to return, and view the cheerful Skies,
> In this the Task and might Labour lies.[73]

This complex passage contains a variety of mock-scholarly allusive tactics that Swift put to service elsewhere in his writing, but which can not be accounted for if the critic presupposes 'coherence and unity' or seeks a uniform sort of 'allusion' at work: it contains scholarly footnotes, casual quotations, teasing pseudo-quotations, and unacknowledged thefts.[74] The inset quotation, as Walsh adduces, is from Virgil's *Aeneid* (vi.128-9). The footnoted translation comes from Dryden's *The Sixth Book of the Æneis*, lines 194-5; a translation which is mocked as a restrictive piece of impertinence in *The Battle of The Books*, just like an imprisoning footnote: '*Virgil* was hemm'd in with *Dryden*' (*OED*, 'hemmed', 'shut in, confined, imprisoned').[75] The phrase '*Edifices in the Air*' is a Latinate variation on a commonly recycled seventeenth-century proverb 'castles in the air' (Latin: *aedificium*, 'fort'), which invites scholarly enquiry but, true to the proverb, cannot result in a genuine attribution to a specific text even if one attempts to build a narrative of its origins.[76] Dirk Passmann, for example, has tried to prove that Swift knew the Ben Jonson play *The Fortunate Isles* (1625) which would have supplied him with a source for this line (it also appears in *Gulliver's Travels*), even though Swift's second edition of

---

[73] Walsh, *Tale*, p.34.
[74] See Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.37, 'I believe that some academic critics — in their obsession with coherence and unity — disguised as organic form — have produced a dogma as mischievous as the pseudo-Aristotelian rules.'
[75] Walsh, *Tale*, p.147.
[76] For a definition of the phrase, Walsh cites Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), C126.

the first folio of Ben Jonson's *Workes* (1640) did not contain this play.[77] The story of Socrates alludes to Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 225-9, when Socrates is said to walk on air, but Swift rendered it bathetic by putting him in a flying basket (a parody of the cleric giving a sermon in a 'tub'). The higher target of the satire, the 'inconvenience' of artificial structures and the 'mighty labour' required to understand things, are at once a parody of high philosophical prose and of the scholarly interventions by which the reader is distracted. The potential for allusions to disaggregate or otherwise unsettle the normal progress of literary language (addressed in chapter 3) is nowhere clearer than in this passage of *A Tale of A Tub*: as Ehrenpreis argued, 'too much care for apothegms or *sententiae* breaks up the continuity of any discourse.'[78]

The fragments here, which revel in their various states of incompletion and obscurity, contribute to *A Tale of A Tub*'s imitation of a hired writer's pose of pompous self-promotion, undermined by a genuine reluctance to bring himself into full disclosure: a version of Swift's own 'skittish' secrecy in relation to his own texts.[79] These examples illustrate that, especially in satire, Swift was unwilling to realise an allusion in full, balancing it on a threshold of existence beyond the grasp of immediate attribution but ready to assert its influence — however unpredictably — over the text in which it occurred. These artfully mismanaged allusions at the opening of *A Tale of A Tub* do not pay respect to their sources, but equally do not compromise the validity of the learning that went into them: we know that the wide intellectual radius of *A Tale of A Tub* derived from Swift's genuine, comprehensive reading at Moor Park, which has long attracted the admiration of biographers. Walter Scott, for example, described his reading during this time as 'desultory' but 'certainly extensive'.[80] This course of reading was recorded in the 'Moor Park reading list', a major piece of evidence addressed in each chapter of this thesis.[81] Dirk Passmann and Hermann Real have recently queried the authenticity of this list, arguing that it might have been expanded without Swift's authority by Dr. John Lyon; but it is evidence, nonetheless, that the *Tale* sprung from wide reading in antiquity, modern literature, and texts of the early Christian church.[82]

---

[77] Dirk F. Passmann's idea about the Ben Jonson allusion was put forward in 'Swift's Books in Trinity College Library', *The Old Library, Trinity College*, pp.122-133 (p.130). For Swift's edition of Jonson see Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.980-1. The book is now in Trinity College, Dublin: Press C.5.8.
[78] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.40.
[79] Claude Rawson, *Swift and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.14, 'he was skittish about having his portrait painted.'
[80] *The Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Walter Scott, 19 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable *et al.*, 1814), i.16.
[81] For the Moor Park reading list see Walsh, *Tale*, pp.273-4. Andrew Carpenter has argued that *A Tale of A Tub* was also precipitated by Dublin satire of the 1680s. Andrew Carpenter, 'A School for a Satirist: Swift's Exposure to the Wars of Words in Dublin in the 1680s', *Münster* (4), pp. 161-76.
[82] Dirk F. Passmann and Hermann J. Real, 'Annotating Swift's Reading at Moor Park in 1697/8', *Münster* (7), pp. 1-26.

One central (and often bathetic) problem, to which Swift was attuned, is that lots of allusions, rather than providing learned ornamentation or guiding the argument of a text, can also be accused of irrelevance, artifice, or even non-existence. This can lead readers into a state of inactivity: Samuel Johnson, in his attack on *Lycidas,* said that 'the passion runs not after remote allusions.'[83] In the twentieth century, this essentially sceptical form of critique was developed by scholars who sought to read Augustan literature as a stately homage to antiquity; to whom the relaxed, dubious, or playful allusion is simply a distraction or an invention of the reader looking for such allusions, especially if it did not derive from the formal disciplines of *imitatio* and paraphrase. This branch of criticism had its origins in Mark Van Doren's *The Poetry of John Dryden* (1920), in which the author coined the phrase 'poetry of statement', omitting senses of obliquity or subtlety from the creation and effects of Augustan poetry.[84] The most important development on this line of argument was E. M. W. Tillyard's *Poetry Direct and Oblique* (1945), although Tillyard conceded that 'much allusion is unconscious, but it should not on that account pass unnoticed'.[85] Like many belonging to the mid-twentieth-century generation of Augustan literature scholars, Tillyard believed that the 'poetry of statement' or 'direct poetry' fell away after the age of Dryden and Pope: 'if there has been a decline in the quality and status of direct poetry since the eighteenth century, it may be asked whether the process should not be carried further still: to a point where it exists only as supplying a minimum of intelligibility to a higher kind, not in its own right at all.'[86] This line of argument was also adopted by Reuben A. Brower in *Alexander Pope: The Poetry of Allusion* (1968), and Herbert Davis in *Jonathan Swift: Essays On His Satire And Other Studies* (1964), who pursued works 'in which Swift sometimes seems to throw off all his disguises and speak with great directness.'[87] Irvin Ehrenpreis, in *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values* (1975), took the final step and queried the endeavour of the scholar who searches for allusions in Augustan poetry at all, referring to the payoff as 'nugatory' because, if they exist, then they will be obvious:

> We are told to avoid mere source-hunting. Consequently, when a man discovers a remarkable source for a work, he often disguises the revelation, subordinates it to a supposedly fresh interpretation, and pretends that the excitement of the find belongs to the alteration in meaning — an alteration that may be nugatory.[88]

---

[83] Johnson, *Lives,* i.278.
[84] Van Doren's argument about Dryden as a maker of statements is outlined in *John Dryden: A Study of His Poetry* (New York: Holt, 1920), pp.1-15.
[85] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Poetry Direct and Oblique* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1945), p.67.
[86] Ibid., pp.108-9.
[87] Herbert Davis, *Jonathan Swift: Essays On His Satire and Other Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 'Introduction', p.3.
[88] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.2.

Ehrenpreis often queried 'mere source-hunting', and argued that any attempt to search for source material or a writer's allusive stock went against the grain of eighteenth-century poetic theory: 'the so-called Augustans seldom trusted allusion or connotation.'[89]

However, aspects of literature which were not trustworthy were part of Swift's constitution as a satirist, and his use of allusion to approximate the half-spoken or the underhand was part of his delight in alluding in the first place. As Addison suggested in his 'Dedication' to Boileau's *Lutrin*, 'nothing checks and deadens the Fancy more than a too superstitious Reverence for the Original, especially in Poetry.'[90] F. W. Bateson, in an article called 'The Poetry of Pseudo-Learning' (1972), suggested that:

> In such Augustan mock-heroics as *MacFlecknoe* and *The Rape of The Lock* the reproduction of a sordid or trivial modern incident in the magnificent phraseology of the literature of an earlier age diminishes the modern participants without in any way degrading the classic models.[91]

This is corroborated by Pat Rogers, who argues that 'Augustan heroic verse is constructed around near-recurrences, elements which seem to resemble their predecessors but do not quite.'[92] A sense that an allusion, despite registering some genuine aspect of learning, can be at variance with the strain for coherence and truth, mattered to Swift. There is a type of allusion in satirical or mock-heroic literature that is carried out in full knowledge of the accusation of irrelevance, and its parodic quality lies in the artificial embellishment of things that could equally have been left alone. This may be seen in the rich, but frivolous, allusions in *The Progress of Poetry*, another of Swift's poems with a dubious date of composition (c.1720, printed 1727 *Miscellanies*). Swift described a 'Farmer's Goose' — an allegory for the modern poet — who has grown so fat 'with Corn and sitting still' that he can 'scarce get o'er the Barn-Door Sill.'[93] The Goose is said to feed on 'stubble' without 'restraint': stubble means 'the stumps or lower parts of the stalks of wheat'; but, according to the *OED*, it was linked in this period to 'various figurative or allusive contexts' to mean remnants or leftovers, the word itself

---

[89] Ibid., p.4. Cf. Rachel Trickett, *The Honest Muse: A Study In Augustan Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p.7, 'they were themselves anxious to draw attention to what they said rather than to the way they said it; their notorious critical metaphor, that the words are the proper dress of the thought, suggests their real respect for the body beneath.'

[90] *The Works of Monsieur Boileau,* ed. Nicholas Rowe, 3 vols. (London: E. Sanger and E. Curll, 1712) , 'Dedication', [unpaginated].

[91] F. W. Bateson, 'The Poetry of Pseudo-Learning', *Essays In Critical Dissent* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 129-143 (p.139).

[92] Pat Rogers, 'Pope and the Syntax of Satire', in *Essays On Pope* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.1-27 (p.13).

[93] Williams, *Poems*, i.230.

often used as an allusion to 1 Corinthians 3:12.[94] The fat goose is eventually incapacitated by his drinking of 'Morning-Draughts' and indulgence in 'Roast Beef':

> His Morning-Draughts 'till Noon can swill,
> Among his Brethren of the Quill:
> With good Roast Beef his Belly full,
> Grown lazy, foggy, fat, and dull:
> Deep sunk in Plenty, and Delight,
> What Poet e'er could take his Flight?[95]

The gluttony on display is enriched by the 'lazy', ambiguously voiced rhyme on 'full' and 'dull', which plays on a couplet from Rochester's *An Allusion to Horace* (1680), itself implausibly stuffed with 'Brethren of the Quill': 'But does not Dryden find even Jonson dull?, /Fletcher and Beaumont, uncorrect, and full / Of lewd lines (as he calls 'em)'.[96] (Attuned to the irony of this poem, Brean Hammond referred to it as one of Rochester's 'most original contributions to English poetry' despite taking the form of an extended 'allusion').[97] Swift's 'lazy' rhyme refers back to a passage from a proverbially 'lazy' writer which was itself packed with the names of other writers, stuffing the *Progress of Poetry* — to a reader who enjoys feeding on such allusions — with 'Plenty, and Delight'. Swift's next couplet, which questions how such a fat goose rolling in 'Plenty, and Delight' could ever 'take his Flight?', teases the reader with an allusion to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), 'Here stop my Muse, here cease thy painfull flight; / No Pinions can pursue Immortal height'.[98] If this allusion exists, it refers to another incapacitated bird who can not achieve any 'height', making Dryden another one of the satirised 'Brethren of the Quill' who are too 'full' to move. The immediate juxtaposition of rhymes that evoke Rochester and Dryden, however obliquely, turns the apparently innocent goose into a subtle allegory for a discomforting rivalry in 'Modern' writing: all the while evoking, in richly unnecessary allusions, a range of writers larger than the form of the poem might, at first glance, allow. Adopting the words of F. W. Bateson, this poem is a collection of 'fragments only perfunctorily stitched together', and it is 'noticeable

---

[94] *OED*: 'Stubble', 1a, b. The *OED* adduces the following allusion to 1 Corinthians 3:12-13, 'Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, / Every man's work shall be made manifest'.
[95] Williams, *Poems*, i.231.
[96] Rochester, *Poems*, p.36. Paul Davis argues that this poem can be dated to 1675-6 because of its 'various literary allusions' (see p.99, n.34).
[97] Brean Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670-1740: 'Hackney for Bread'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.84.
[98] *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), lines 854-5, Dryden, *Works*, ii.31.

how functionless most of the allusions, quotations, and plagiarisms are'; but this implicates the poem in the same gluttonous immobility as the goose.[99]

Swift's best allusions, particularly in this high satirical mode, traded in learning and constituted an aesthetic pleasure in direct proportion to the accusation of irrelevance or dubiousness: and, in theoretical discussions of 'Genius' in the eighteenth century, Swift was cited as a writer possessed of a capacity to reconcile this dilemma between human nature and learning. Edward Young, in the *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), claimed that Swift 'stumbled' on the 'threshold' of the 'infantine' (or natural) power of mind and the 'adult' world of erudition:

> I say, sometimes, because there is Genius, which stands in need of Learning to make it shine. Of Genius there are two species, an Earlier, and a Later; or call them *Infantine,* and *Adult*. An Adult Genius comes out of Nature's hand, as *Pallas* out of *Jove's* head, at full growth, and mature: *Shakespeare's* Genius was of this kind: On the contrary, *Swift* stumbled at the threshold, and set out for Distinction on feeble knees: His was an Infantine Genius; a Genius, which, like other Infants, must be nursed, and educated, or it will come to nought: Learning is its Nurse, and Tutor; but this Nurse may overlay with an indigested Load, which smothers common sense; and this Tutor may mislead, with pedantic Prejudice, which vitiates the best understanding: [100]

Young's sense of Swift stumbling at the 'threshold' of erudite 'Genius' reveals an eighteenth-century unease about his type of pseudo-scholarly satire that never chooses to reconcile the direct and oblique, resisting the taste in higher forms of Augustan literature for 'statements' devoid of ambiguity. Tillyard discussed the role that criticism has to play in order to bring these effects to light, putting the recognition of allusion down to 'luck':

> When a sufficient number of intelligent readers test a sufficient number of oblique poems by their own responses we shall know whether the game is worth playing or not. I think that success is possible with some poems read by the right persons in the right mood. In other words, illumination is largely a matter of luck. [101]

Swift's fondness for allusions which struggle to realise themselves in the mind of the reader, despite playful hints left of their significance, encourages scholarly enquiry of the sort that Addison suggested in his 'Preface' to the *Works* of Boileau, which seeks to 'explain such an allusion' and its origins.[102] Johnson did not believe this to be entirely possible, at least in Swift's case:

---

[99] F. W. Bateson, 'The Poetry of Pseudo-Learning', p.130.
[100] Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition: In a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison* (Dublin: Andrew Millar, 1759), pp.31-2.
[101] Tillyard, *Poetry Direct and Oblique,* p.111.
[102] Addison, 'Preface', *The Works of Monsieur Boileau,* i.iv.

How he spent the rest of his time, and how he employed his hours of study, has been enquired with hopeless curiosity. For who can give an account of another's studies? Swift was not likely to admit any to his privacies, or to impart a minute account of his business or leisure.'[103]

Johnson's dislike of Swift's secrecy led him to the following conclusion:

Perhaps no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his excellences and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as an original.[104]

The test of that claim lies in the scrutiny of further evidence.

IV - Selection of Material and Chapter Summary

Appraising Swift's art of allusion involves two processes: determining the presence of an allusion in his work, the complexities of which have been explored in this introduction; and, where appropriate or possible, tracing the trajectory of that allusion from the source text to his own. This second process is often complicated by Swift's own efforts to obfuscate his learning, and by the lack of evidence that survives as to how he may or may not have been reading a given text.

Reference has been made, where possible, to the books known to have been in Swift's libraries, and to those hypothesised (by Passmann and Vienken) to have been in the libraries of William Temple and Thomas Sheridan. This referencing has been supplemented with other sources, such as the records of the library of Archbishop William King, and the theft catalogues in Marsh's Library. Local pieces of research (into, say, Swift's annotations to Francis Bacon's *Historia Regni Henrici Septimi*) supplement what we know about Swift's library and reading, and the headnotes and annotations provided in editions of Swift's works. Where appropriate, I have cited the newly annotated *CWJS*, the unannotated volumes of Herbert Davis' *Prose*, Harold Williams' edition of Swift's poetry, Frank Ellis' *Examiner*, and so on. In some cases, hypotheses have been offered — depending on available evidence or context — regarding which writers Swift might have encountered and which editions he might have read.

Selecting material for a study of Swift's allusions involves a range of problems. Firstly, Swift is perhaps uniquely enmeshed in issues of attribution, which has led to an unusually

[103] Johnson, *Lives*, iii.200.
[104] Ibid., iii.214.

large array of conflicting accounts as to what we can safely consider 'his'. This was a notoriously complex issue even while he was writing and publishing (often anonymously) in Dublin and London in the eighteenth century, and it has certainly not diminished over time. The *Letter of Advice to a Young Poet*, for example, which carried Swift's name in the eighteenth century and was included in Davis' *Prose* (with caveats), has not been included by Valerie Rumbold in the *Parodies, Hoaxes, and Mock-Treatises* volume of the *CWJS* (Rumbold suggests that 'the authorship of the *Letter* remains unclear', and that 'collaboration of some kind remains a possibility', but that it is unsafe to rely on it as Swift's).[105] In light of this recent development, past analyses of the text might now be considered redundant or problematic: even though, in Hugh Ormsby-Lennon's words, 'to trace the Dean's own hand' in the text 'remains tempting.'[106] One such example might be Ricardo Quintana's classic account of the *Letter*'s 'materialistic theory of the artistic imagination', which now has an uneasy place in Swift scholarship owing to its exploration of a text not securely deemed to be his own.[107] Forthcoming (and as yet unavailable) volumes of the *CWJS* take up the issue of attribution more concertedly in the case of Swift's poetry (where a whole section of the edition promises to be dedicated to de-attribution), and it has been established that other pieces of Swift's prose — such as *A Letter from the Grand Mistress* — will also be deattributed. In some cases, Swift's involvement in the creation of a given text (such as the *Letter*) has not been ruled out: an element of collaboration is sometimes accepted. However, for the purposes of this thesis, texts which have been de-attributed by recent editors or not included in the *CWJS* — even if they have been incorporated into past editions of Swift under some category of authorial agency or contribution — are left out.

Secondly, the material presents a structural problem. It might be argued that a chronological approach to such a study as this thesis would be appropriate, because that might illustrate how Swift's sense of what a literary allusion is (and can do) developed continuously over the course of his writing life. There are two problems with such an approach. First, dating Swift's texts has caused perhaps as much controversy as attributing them to him. Many of his compositions are undateable, either because they were published long after they were written down in manuscript, or published posthumously without a reliable date of composition, or circulated in different forms by other people with varying kinds of authorial consent or awareness, or because they have been chronologically muddled by editors who may have made mistakes. In the case of some of Swift's late poems, such as

---

[105] For Davis' account see *Prose*, ix, pp.xxiv-v. Cf. *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, pp.603-5.
[106] Hugh Ormsby-Lennon, 'Commonplace Swift', in *Papers From The Third Münster Symposium On Jonathan Swift* eds. Hermann J. Real and Helgard Stöver-Leidig (Munich: Fink, 1998), pp.13-44 (p.36).
[107] Ricardo Quintana, *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (London: Methuen, 1936, reprinted 1953), pp.64-6.

Verses On The Death of Dr. Swift and *On Poetry: A Rapsody*, parts of the text (or texts) were recognised (and even amended) at different times by different people, and dating each specific part is exceptionally difficult. As Karian argues, there is a 'complex intersection' between Swift's manuscripts and printed texts, and 'the use of both print and manuscript in the circulation of his works sometimes created patterns of textual transmission so complex as to have baffled scholars for generations.'[108] Though the texts of Swift's prose are often more stable than those of his verse, recent volumes of the *CWJS* have shown that assigning a date to some prose works has proven difficult too.

The second problem with a chronological approach is that, as the thesis shows, Swift's sense of literary allusion was often determined by local intensities of ingratitude or disagreement, perhaps even by a pragmatic consideration of a given argument, not (necessarily) by a coherent or continuous framework. Such local intensities do not allow for any convenient sense of creative progression. The relationship between Swift's learning and the presence of that learning in his writing remains a matter for discussion and speculation. In this thesis, his allusive practice is not assumed, in any straightforward sense, to map onto or reflect the chronology of the events in his life (though any such alignments have been acknowledged where they seem to be demonstrable, as in the case of the Marsh Library and Swift's knowledge of its shelves).

Instead, the thesis is designed to reflect the range of Swift's allusive behaviour as it can be observed across his writing, and to show that some patterns can be discerned in this large and contestable corpus of work even if they do not imply his 'development' or much continuity over time. As the thesis argues and shows, such a design allows for the complexity of Swift's allusive practices to be made clear while suggesting ways of understanding what he was doing within intelligible boundaries. Owing to the size of the Swift corpus, material has been selected to illustrate arguments about methods and purposes of alluding, with the contexts of Swift's statements taken into account. This allows for the variety of Swift's texts to be made apparent while suggesting the relationship between them. For example, in a subsection of Chapter 3, the thesis shows how Swift used literary allusions in much larger arguments about dismissing ancient authority (often to parody a specific target). The texts selected are: *An Argument To Prove That The Abolishing of Christianity in England May, As Things Now Stand, Be Attended With Some Inconveniences* (1711), *A Tritical Essay On The Faculties Of The Mind* (1711), *A Proposal For Correcting, Improving, And Ascertaining The English Tongue* (1712), *Mr. Collins' Discourse Of Free-Thinking: Put Into Plain English, By Way Of Abstract* (1713), and *Examiners* Nos.17

[108] Stephen Karian, *Jonathan Swift in Print and Manuscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.1.

and 18 (1710). In this case, it is a coincidence that the texts fall into a roughly chronological order by publication, with the exception of the *Examiner* papers. Undoubtedly, other texts in Swift's corpus will show similar allusive practices and might be offered alongside these examples: the texts chosen and discussed in this chapter have been selected if they illustrate a point with particular force, or suggest the range of his method. What matters, in this particular case, is the treatment of allusion which recurs throughout these selected texts, which can also be observed in others as distant in time and subject as *On A Printer's Being Sent To Newgate* (c.1735, printed by Faulkner, 1745), considered later in the chapter. Such an approach, which recognises the heterogeneity and potential lack of continuity in Swift's writing, was also taken up by Peter Steele in *Jonathan Swift: Preacher and Jester* (1978), in which he sought 'to take a number of dominant motifs in the writings, and see how they are instanced in various contexts'.[109]

This way of handling Swift's corpus, according to his behaviour and ways of alluding rather than in strict chronological sequence, conforms with the principles of those *CWJS* volumes which deal with a large range of inconsistent materials, such as Valerie Rumbold's *Parodies, Hoaxes, and Mock-Treatises*. Rumbold states that 'the volume develops along two axes, one generic and one thematic; and an associated consequence is that its contents are extremely various, spanning almost the whole of Swift's publishing career, and addressing a wide range of occasions and contexts.'[110] Even in a *CWJS* volume of material organised chronologically, such as Hayton and Rounce's *Irish Political Writings After 1725*, the sporadic mass of material supplementary to Swift's published writing is acknowledged and accounted for: '[the volume's] chronology runs from the fragmentary *Upon Giving Badges to the Poor* (1726) to the similarly themed *Proposal for Giving Badges to the Beggars* (1737)', and it includes several 'associated and ancillary materials, such as manuscript fragments, or pamphlets which generated responses from Swift in the works in the volume proper.'[111] The textual introduction to Ian Gadd and Bertrand Goldgar's *English Political Writings 1711-1714* also registers the complexities of establishing a coherent lineage of Swift's texts (owing to their revision for Faulkner's editions), even though the texts in question are arguably (and with exceptions) some of the more stable in terms of attribution and dating: 'this volume is interested in the works at the time of their most relevance and influence rather than as revised

---

[109] Peter Steele, *Jonathan Swift: Preacher and Jester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p.11.
[110] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.xxxiii.
[111] Rounce and Hayton, *Irish Political Writings After 1725*, pp.384-5. Cf. the limitations and selective nature of the chronologically organised *Major Works*, eds. Angus Ross and David Woolley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, reissued 2008), p.xi. 'The arrangement of the present selection is chronological and is meant, by fruitful juxtaposition, to offer a new and clearer awareness of the unity as well as the complexity of Swift's vision, indicating the powerful bonds between disparate pieces.'

over two decades later for inclusion in George Faulkner's collected editions.'[112] As Gadd notes in his textual introduction, several texts in this volume were 'only discovered in the twentieth century', and 'none of the works' in the volume 'bore Swift's name on the title page' when they were first published.[113] The volume is organised according to 'Swift's intention at the moment of its most topicality and relevance', but this comes with the exception of *The Conduct of the Allies*, the first three editions of which were closely revised by Swift, leaving the fourth a more reliable text in the editors' view.[114]

Hayton and Rounce distinguish between Swift's political and ecclesiastical writings in their chosen period (after 1725), and do not include his *Intelligencer* contributions.[115] This thesis draws no such distinction between Swift's roles as a writer or his choice of subject matter (because any of his texts might have been using literary allusions for a range of purposes). Owing to the size of the corpus, however, the thesis is necessarily selective. Texts have been chosen if they exhibit a particularly focussed and determined use of literary allusion, or make clear that allusion is an integral part of their objective or rhetorical strategy (with the acknowledgement that some pieces left untreated do contain allusions, which are being — or have been — identified and glossed in the *CWJS*). Since the thesis argues that Swift's allusions were frequently characterised by ingratitude and were either submitted to or constituted a form of parody, the thesis makes frequent reference to texts found in the *Parodies* volume of the *CWJS*, such as *A Tritical Essay Upon The Faculties Of The Mind*, the various Bickerstaff papers, *A Proposal For Correcting, Improving, And Ascertaining The English Tongue*, and *A History Of Poetry*. Because these are exceptionally rich texts which often support a range of interpretations, they sometimes recur in support of different (if related) arguments, and are not confined to one chapter: though their relevance to each chapter has been flagged where appropriate. Where Swift's poetry is concerned, the thesis focusses on texts which contain literary allusions as part of a larger design, rather than on formal pieces of imitation or translation. This is because the thesis is not centrally concerned with matters of genre (the extent to which a formal imitation can be defined as an allusion is open to conjecture). However, the significance of these pieces in Swift's work is acknowledged, and they have been accounted for where appropriate. Efforts have been made to gesture towards Swift's writings which are not accounted for as part of the main argument: footnotes often suggest possible points of comparison or flag the existence of counter-examples, so that the selection of

---

[112] Gadd and Goldgar, *English Political Writings 1711-1714*, p.334.
[113] Ibid., p.335.
[114] Ibid., p.337. For Gadd and Goldgar's de-attributions, see p.336. They have de-attributed one of Queen Anne's speeches thought to have been by Swift, and the *Examiner* paper for 16th January 1713.
[115] Rationale explained, ibid., p.385.

material does not become misleadingly reductive or misrepresent the range of Swift's (often complex) views on a given issue or target.

The *Journal to Stella* has been treated as an informative supplement to Swift's writings for the period in which it was written: not because it does not contain any literary allusions, but because the private nature of the communication with Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, and the lack of literary contrivance, often places any such literary allusions too ambiguously, even unintelligibly, in relation to his other writings.[116] As Abigail Williams acknowledges, the letters are playing such a complex game with their readers, and the function of a literary allusion is almost impossible to account for with any certainty.[117] *The History Of The Four Last Years Of The Queen*, though an important text, has been omitted on two grounds: its relative lack of literary allusion (though its awareness and use of classical models offers a rich area of study), and the absence of a *CWJS* volume to respond to in full (which may well suggest new evidence about possible sources and allusions).[118]

The first two chapters of the thesis examine Swift's learning and how it was acquired. Chapter 1 is a study of Swift's reading in antiquity. The chapter begins by outlining his fondness for classical allusions altered to fit his own satirical idiom (and the critical difficulty of accounting for these allusions). The opening takes three representative examples: his use of the caduceus as an emblem of the Swift family, his allusion to Aesop's *Fables* in service of *On the Words — Brother Protestants, and Fellow Christians* (1733), and his mezzotint of Aristippus, which he inscribed with quotations from Horace and Claudian. Analysis of these quite different examples provides the necessary groundwork for a new reading of *A Description of The Morning* (1709): the thesis argues that it is a characteristically Swiftian imitation of Virgil's *Aeneid.*

Chapter 1 then builds on these early assertions about Swift's interest in carefully crafted pseudo-learning and personalised quotations, and the critical difficulties associated with them, by looking closely at the processes by which he acquired and altered his material. It begins with the writers (and editions) in his library, and then looks at the marginalia and commentaries that he created around these texts (to Suetonius in particular). The thesis then

---

[116] Gadd and Goldgar approach to the *Journal* in a similar way (as an informative supplement). When accounting for Swift's relationship with Francis Barber, for example, they say 'for those works where there is no evidence in the *Journal to Stella* or the Stationer's Register to link Barber with their production, it is not clear exactly who printed or published them.' Ibid., p.329.

[117] Abigail Williams, *Journal to Stella*, pp.xxxvi-vii. Williams' new subtitle, 'Letters to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, 1710-1713', is a careful record of such a complexity: 'while the present edition has retained the traditional title by which the series of letters has become known, its subtitle draws attention to its dual readership.'

[118] Cf. Davis, *Prose*, vii.ix-x, and Ashley Marshall, *Swift and History: Politics and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp.125-7 (Marshall accounts for the text's obscure genesis).

looks at his allusions to Thucydides and Theophrastus, which bear evidence of these reading practices, and it closes with an analysis of the *Tritical Essay,* showing how he created a parodic style out of such acquired fragments and commonplaces.

The chapter then looks at the opposite process: at how Swift brought these scattered pieces of text back together in his satires, and at his mock-scholarly gestures (considering whether they redeemed or repaired the fragments he brought into play). The conclusion to this chapter reflects on Swift's concealment of what he had taken, and his fantasies — particularly in *A Tale Of A Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels* — of how learning might be acquired without scholarly diligence.

Chapter 2 takes a linear approach to Swift's reading of 'Modern' literature, tracing the nature and depth of that reading from the Middle Ages up to his own time, in chronological order. Owing to Swift's highly fragmented, inconsistent, and sporadic uses of 'Modern' literature (as shown in the chapter), the available material is diffuse and often resistant to classification. To impose order onto such material, the first section contextualises Swift in 'Grub Street' (in accordance with recent scholarship), and how he has been figured as a 'Modern' himself. It then accounts for the way in which he conceived of 'Modern' literature in time, and how it might be figured as literary history (the central piece of evidence, here, is *A History Of Poetry*, though the difficulty of reading Swift's views into that text has been acknowledged). Based on this introduction, the chapter then examines Swift's reading in 'Modern' literature chronologically: it starts with Chaucer and medieval literature, and goes on to examine his engagement with Erasmus, Cervantes, Rabelais, and Skelton.

The chapter argues that, despite a general dislike of 'Modern' literature, Swift considered some carefully chosen Renaissance texts in depth. The marginalia in his copy of Francis Bacon's *Historia Regni Henrici Septimi* are examined in detail as evidence, and his allusions to it (or various uses of its information) are tracked in a range texts: most importantly, in the *Famous Prediction Of Merlin*. The thesis argues that Swift might have revisited this book on several occasions to help formulate some of his own thoughts about Irish politics and statecraft. This section of the chapter, preoccupied with his unusually deep reading in 'Modern' literature, then suggests some reasons as to why he would have been reading Edmund Spenser as a Dean in Dublin.

The chapter then focusses on Swift's reading of literature written after the Restoration, paying particular attention to his dismissal of writers who did not meet his standard of writing, and the hostility of his allusions to writers of his period. A large number of targets could be adduced, here (especially Whig enemies), including Steele and Blackmore. Samuel Garth has been selected for two reasons. Firstly, Garth's *Dispensary* was a

groundbreaking work; and secondly, Pope's (often friendly) and parodic allusions to Garth in *The Dunciad: An Heroic Poem* and *The Dunciad Variorum* supply a methodologically sound basis of comparison for Swift's unusual hostility (as evidenced in *A Description Of A City Shower*). In contrast to these separate iterations of *The Dunciad*, the chapter shows that Swift constructed an unusually hostile idiom for his allusions to figures in 'Modern' literature, even if they were friends.

The chapter closes with an account of Swift's inattention. By its nature, this section turns on a range of very scattered and discontinuous assertions which Swift made in an unusually large range of texts. The evidence suggests that he did not always read 'Modern' books through, and had a fondness for opening lines, introductions and prefaces, and recycled phrases. In line with this argument, the chapter closes with an account of *The Life and Genuine Character*, a hoax-parody of his own *Verses On The Death Of Dr. Swift*: this poem, alongside the rest of the evidence presented in this chapter, suggests that Swift's rarely distinguished between recycled cant and ingenuity in 'Modern' literature.

Chapter 3 departs from bibliographical work, and accounts for the stylistic qualities of Swift's allusions to other writers, which were often characterised by a sense of personal aggression. The chapter begins by examining his responses to Thomas Creech, the translator of Lucretius who suffered an untimely death, perhaps with reference — however coincidentally — to Lucretius himself. The chapter proceeds to look at Swift's dismissal of (often ancient) authorities, either in his own voice or the voice of a contrived speaker (such as the 'free-thinking' target of *Mr. Collins' Discourse*), and suggests ways in which such dismissals can be accounted for in light of his fondness for imaginative violence. The chapter then looks at Swift's tyrannical behaviour and his fondness for teasing thresholds of disclosure. It assesses the kinds of text that he read about tyranny (Suetonius, Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*), and examines some of his poetry in light of this reading. The poems under particularly close examination are a late poem written in defence of George Faulkner, and the satire on Lord Godolphin, *Sid Hamet*.

Chapter 4 is a study of how Swift alluded to the King James Bible. It begins with evidence which — on the surface — appears suggestive (what little evidence survives of his private reading habits). However, after accounting for such evidence, the chapter then proceeds into the more intelligible evidence of his professional principles, and the extent to which he is best considered an 'Anglican Rationalist' (as outlined by Phillip Harth). The chapter then puts Swift's views in the context of clerical education in the eighteenth century, and the 'bibliomania' that prevailed among Swift's contemporaries such as Narcissus Marsh and Archbishop William King (with an account of his bibles). The next two sections of the

chapter examine his allusions to the Old Testament and New Testament respectively, progressing chronologically through books of the Bible, alighting on important examples that helped to shape his satire. His allusions to the New Testament are shown to have been less satirically charged, but full of the authority of his profession.

The thesis closes with a chapter about the practice of 'hinting' in Augustan literature: both in the sense of taking notes (or commonplacing), and in the sense of glancing at a source. It examines the nature of parody (as accounted for in the rest of the thesis), the extent to which Swift's writing is coherent, and the nature of commonplacing. The conclusion also gestures towards some wider contexts for allusion in the eighteenth century, looking at the way that Swift was subjected to the same kinds of allusion that he practised in his own satire. A variety of sources — including a surviving manuscript of Pope's *Essay On Man*, memory games in Swift's Dublin circle, Johnson's allusions to Swift, and Parnell's poetry — is cited to explore the ways in which eighteenth-century literature traded in instability and obscurity, seeking to conceal the origins of the knowledge it had acquired.

I
Concealing the Ancients

Festina Lente.[1]
- Roman motto

As no body can detect a great fault so well as you, no body would hide so well a small one.[2]
- Pope to Swift

Shall a Prince be rifled of his Honour by a Pedant?[3]
- Archbishop William King

Swift was scornful of the 'Augustan' tag that dominated literature towards the end of the seventeenth century: he said that the period was 'reckoned, although very absurdly, our *Augustan* Age.'[4] Other writers were claiming an intimate acquaintance with antiquity; so, Swift made his own dubious claim that antiquity was a part of his family history. He stated that his ancestral 'device' (crest) was a dolphin — insisting that 'in those days' (unspecified) a dolphin was 'called a Swift' — and that this dolphin was twisted around an anchor with the adage 'Festine lente' attached to it.[5] This played with two pieces of pseudo-learning. The adage was common parlance in the Roman world, and a motto of the emperors Augustus and Trajan. However, Swift's subtle misspelling of 'festina' as 'festine' encourages one to hail someone called 'festinus' in the vocative, 'Swift, slowly' (*festīnus*, voc. masc. sing.). His use of the word 'device' also reveals that the anchor was taken from the little books (*enchiridia*) printed by Aldus Manutius (c.1449-1515), many of which were stored in Marsh's Library, in which this image (the anchor and the dolphin) appeared as a publisher's 'device'.[6] This would have been convenient for Swift, because the Aldine 'device' was an allusion to the 'caduceus': one of his favourite symbols of Mercury, but another 'device' of Johann Froben the Dutch printer (c.

[1] 'Quickly, slowly', Suetonius, *De Vita Cæsarum,* ii.25.
[2] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.258.
[3] William King, *Dialogues of The Dead: Relating To The Present Controversy Concerning the Epistles of Phalaris* (London: A. Baldwin, 1699), p.9.
[4] Davis, *Prose*, iv.249.
[5] Ibid., v.188.
[6] Swift would have come across Aldine books in Marsh's Library, which received some as part of the Stillingfleet collection. They often attracted attention for their famous 'device'. Cf. Marsh: Adams. P. 1487, *Ex Plauti Comœdiis* ed. Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldine Press, 1572). A man referred to as 'Jo: Jones' wrote his name directly under the anchor, where Swift would have written 'festine lente'. Other devices received similar imitative attention in the eighteenth century. Cf. Marsh: Adams. G. 204, Giovanni Varisco's *Le Antichita Della Citta' di Roma* (Venice: Varisco, 1569). In one of his April Fool's jokes (1709), Swift advertised a bogus book auction at which 'several Classicks, of Aldus and Elzevir' were being sold. Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.528.

1460-1527), whose editions of classical writers he collected for his own library.[7] Swift's fondness for such autobiographical coincidences might have been sharpened by the fact that Froben's personal variation on the caduceus displayed a small bird caught between two hands grasping at the handle, which looks like a swift caught between two people taking the same image for their own 'devices'.[8] It is possible that Swift told others about this pseudo-classical concoction. Pope's translation of the Hermes passage in the *Iliad* (xxiv.421-4) says that 'swift *Hermes*' grabs the 'wand' and 'steers his airy way'. Pope added that Hermes 'seem'd, fair Offspring of some princely Line', which is not in the Homeric text.[9] The translation of the *Iliad* was carried out soon after their first meeting, and Swift audaciously claimed to have got it to the press — another attempt to interfere with antiquity: 'the author *shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him.'[10]

It is difficult to prove that Swift was intentionally bringing all of these allusions or pseudo-allusions into play. The 'device' suggests more classical allusions the more it is investigated (few of which can be authenticated with scholarly certainty), and to this extent it confirms Ehrenpreis's view that 'allusion as such may decorate, handsomely; but it cannot deepen'.[11] The remark is playing on the close proximity of an allusion to a commonplace, especially in the hands of a satirist: and Swift's 'delight in aping the commonplace' has been carefully examined by Ormsby-Lennon.[12] Studies of classical intertextuality in the eighteenth century have often assumed that writers allude in earnest or within legitimate, intelligible generic boundaries; but, as this chapter will show, Swift's use of classical learning was often designed to test the reader's credulity and unsettle generic formulae.[13] If 'a *little Learning*', according to Pope, 'is a dang'rous Thing', then Swift made himself dangerous to the reader by consistently evoking a wealth of possible allusions which may not have existed at all, a

---

[7] Cf. an allusion to the caduceus in *The Virtues of Sid Hamet The Magician's Rod* (1710), Williams, *Poems*, i.133. 'The *Rod* of *Hermes* was renown'd / For Charms above and under Ground'. Deborah Baker Wyrick has argued that Swift's pseudonym 'Cadenus' was a pun on 'Caduceus'. See *Jonathan Swift and The Vested Word* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p.101. The frame for Francis Bindon's portrait of Swift, by John Houghton (c.1735-40), had a caduceus on it. See James Peill, *Irish Furniture: Woodwork and Carving in Ireland from the Earliest Times to the Act of Union* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p.75.

[8] Cf. Walter J. Friedlander, *The Golden Wand of Medicine: A History of the Caduceus Symbol in Medicine* (CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), p.110.

[9] Pope, *Poems*, viii.553. Pope compared this passage of the *Iliad* to *Aeneid* v.238-44, in a footnote: 'it is hard to determine with is more excellent, the Copy, or the Original.' Swift was often compared to Hermes. Cf. Williams, *Poems*, ii.611.

[10] See the diary of Bishop Kennett, quoted in Williams, *Correspondence,* v.228-9. Original text printed by John Nichols, *The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift, D. D., Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin*, 19 vols. (London: J. Johnson *et al.*, 1801), xix.21-2.

[11] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.11.

[12] Ormsby-Lennon, 'Commonplace Swift', p.38.

[13] See, for example, Henry Power, *Epic Into Novel: Henry Fielding, Scriblerian Satire, and the Consumption of Classical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.96: 'direct contact with Homer is both possible and desirable' in translation. Also Reuben A. Brower, *Alexander Pope and The Poetry of Allusion,* p.165: 'nearly everything that Pope wrote shows more or less distinctly the influence of Horatian poetic modes and themes.'

strategy which Valerie Rumbold sees in his use of parody: 'what if the target is unknown because it does not exist?'.[14]

Swift also practised the opposite: he affected intellectual shallowness while concealing considerable knowledge of the texts to which he was alluding. One such example can be found in *On the Words — Brother Protestants, and Fellow Christians, so familiarly used by the Advocates for the Repeal of the Test Act in Ireland* (1733). From 1731-3, Presbyterians in Ireland were agitating for the laws which restricted their political rights (especially the Test Act) to be repealed; part of their rhetorical strategy was to manipulate the phrases 'Brother Protestants' and 'Fellow Christians' to suggest an affinity with those of the established church.[15] Swift believed that these dissenters were not to be considered brothers or fellows, and that his position in the Church of Ireland required him to defend it against them (addressed at greater length in Chapter 4).[16] Williams records that they did not prosper in 1733. This coincided with a new bill put forward in the House of Commons to encourage the growth of flax, which contained a special clause specifying that the tithes would be commuted, which was resisted by the clergy (Swift included, though Williams records that it would not have affected him).[17] The clause was dropped. *On the Words — Brother Protestants, and Fellow Christians* was composed towards the end of 1733, and, playing on the imagery of the bill, Swift stressed the need to separate Presbyterians and their so-called 'Brother Protestants' like 'Litter' from 'Wheat' (suggesting a pun on 'wheat' from 'chaff'). This 'relatively restrained' poem (in Karian's view) begins with an unspecified 'Fable', which draws these strands of context together.[18] The allusion is then dropped after the opening stanza, functioning as a piece of localised rhetorical strategy:

---

[14] *An Essay On Criticism,* Pope, *Poems*, i.264 (l.215). Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.xli.

[15] See Williams' headnote to *On The Words — Brother Protestants, and Fellow Christians* (1733), Williams, *Poems*, iii. 809-11. Swift wrote a number of texts against the Presbyterians in this period, and in defence of the Test: *The Advantages proposed by repealing the Sacramental Test impartially considered* (1732), *Queries relating to the Sacramental Test* (1732), *Reasons humbly offered to the Parliament of Ireland for repealing the Test in favour of Roman Catholics* (1733), *The Presbyterians' Plea of Merit* (1733). For an account of the catchphrase 'brother Protestants', Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.769. Cf. Ian Higgins, 'A Preface to Swift's Test Act Tracts', *Münster* (6), pp.225-43.

[16] Ian Higgins has argued that Swift was 'on active combat duty' against such violent dissenters as the Presbyterians. See Ian Higgins, *Swift's Politics: A Study In Disaffection*, p.20. Cf. *Thoughts On Religion*, 'I look upon myself, in the capacity of a clergyman, to be one appointed by providence for defending a post assigned me, and for gaining over as many enemies as I can.' Davis, *Prose*, ix.262.

[17] Williams cites Swift's *Some Reasons against the Bill for settling the Tyth of Hemp, Flax, &c. by a Modus* (1734). Cf. *Poems*, iii.810.

[18] Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, p.82.

An Inundation, says the Fable,
O'erflow'd a Farmer's Barn and Stable;
Whole Ricks of Hay and Stacks of Corn,
Were down the sudden Current born;
While Things of heterogenous Kind,
Together float with Tide and Wind;
The generous Wheat forgot its Pride,
And sail'd with Litter Side by Side;
Uniting all, to shew their Amity,
As in a general Calamity.
A Ball of new-dropt Horse's Dung,
Mingling with Apples in the Throng,
Said to the Pippin, plump, and prim,
See, Brother, how we Apples swim.[19]

The poem shows that a 'Ball of new-dropt Horse's Dung' (a Presbyterian dissenter) is not an Apple (a conforming Anglican Protestant), even if the dung insists on it: '*See, Brother, how we Apples swim*'. The 'Fable' was carefully chosen: it alludes to Aesop's 'Apples and Horse Turds', which Roger L'Estrange declined to gloss with a moral in his translation of the *Fables* (1692).[20] Swift's poem, which derides the Presbyterian claim to Protestant brotherhood, is informed and enforced by the scholarly problem of the Aesop canon, which he would have found out about in L'Estrange's 'Preface': the original fables are themselves indistinguishable from later translations and additions ('Wheat' and 'Litter' existing 'Side by Side'), and difficult to authenticate.[21] L'Estrange referred to all of the fables as 'Dark and Doubtful' because 'it is Impossible to Distinguish the *Original* from the *Copy*: and to Say, which of the Fables are Æsop's, and which are not: which are *Genuine*, and which *Spurious*.'[22] This makes the allusion to Aesop's 'Fable' a Ricksian allusion that delights in its own creation, because it comprehends

[19] Ibid., iii.811.
[20] All of L'Estrange's fables were glossed with a moral underneath, in English. See Roger L'Estrange, *Fables of Æsop and Other Eminent Mythologists* (London: R. Sare, *et al.*, 1692), p.124. The first volume, which contained this fable, was stolen from Marsh's Library. The remaining volume is shelved at Wing L. 1247. It has significant water damage, which might have influenced the sense of 'general calamity' in this poem, if it was in this state in 1733 (though it is impossible to establish when this volume was acquired by the library).
[21] Anthony Alsop (cf. Rumbold, *Four Books*, iv.224, pp.304-5, n.223-4), whose name was felicitously close to Aesop, did not include the fable in his much praised edition of the *Aesopica*, which included fables from the Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic canons, attesting to the problem of authenticity. See his *Fabularum Æsopicarum Delectus* (Oxford: [unknown printer],1698). For an example of a spurious and apparently spontaneous addition to the *Aesopica*, see H. G., *The Eagle and The Robin. An Apologue* (London: Henry Hills, 1709).
[22] L'Estrange, *Fables*, 'Preface', p.1. Swift's own works were implicated in a similar dilemma of authenticity in 1733, while he was preparing the late edition of the *Miscellanies* with Pope. This was remarked on by Pope in a very anxious letter: 'the booksellers were doing the same, in collecting your pieces, the corn with the chaff; I don't mean that anything of yours is chaff, but with other wit of Ireland which was so, and the whole in your name.' Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.594.

more problems of selection and confusion alongside those which Swift is ostensibly targeting.[23] It is a scholarly irony that we are not sure if Swift's poem was itself 'printed or reprinted' in *The Gentleman's Magazine* supplement in 1733.

The imagery insinuates that one can only tell the difference between apples and horse turds by eating them: a grotesque parody of the Test Act, of which this text was a characteristically staunch defence. This poem proved dangerous. Richard Bettesworth (MP), one target of the poem, supported the bill and the commuting of the tithe and was therefore a prominent enemy for Swift. We know that he referred to himself and (Swift's friend) Henry Singleton as 'brother serjeants', suggesting another possible target of Swift's title.[24] Bettesworth was particularly offended by his inclusion in the poem: there is a rhyme on 'Booby *Bettesworth*' and 'Sweat's Worth' (his name was not included in early editions, but it would have been quite clear who it was about). Without irony, he swore to 'stab or maim' Swift with a 'sharp knife' for the offence that it caused, and several allies came to Swift's defence.[25] Although Bettesworth's response was unusual, readers are often suspicious of or offended by poets who show '*a little Learning*' for satirical purposes (and in this poem it proved a 'dang'rous Thing'). Ehrenpreis argued that Augustan literature was characterised by 'faith in explicit meaning' and 'a desire for clarity', and that readers 'seldom trusted allusion or connotation'.[26] *On the Words — Brother Protestants, and Fellow Christians*, however, opens with a carefully worked out allusion which calculatedly brings its own untrustworthy and dangerous 'connotations'. Though it does not show that the poem itself was a unified composition (owing to its temporary appearance at the opening of the poem), it does contribute to the poem's overall strategy: to reinforce the view that 'Dung' and 'Apples' must be kept separate in Ireland.

Some scholars have praised the use of 'a *little Learning*' in eighteenth-century literature, because it holds up a resistance to (and often parodies) classical pedantry. John Dennis accused Pope of 'schoolboy' learning in *An Essay On Criticism* (1711) because he 'borrowed from the living and the dead' without due scholarly attention, and tried to claim classical prowess through the use of unspecified allusions.[27] This was also true — without Dennis' knowledge — of a fair copy manuscript of *An Essay On Criticism* (possibly composed in 1711),

---

[23] Ricks, *Allusion*, p.9. Cf. Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.58. Swift exploits 'the fable's legendary potential to protect the text's rhetorical fabric.'
[24] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.769.
[25] See Williams, *Poems*, iii.812. Swift's account: Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.719. Swift denied authorship to escape the danger. Karian suggests that Swift wanted Bettesworth to notice this poem in *Print and Manuscript*, pp.82-3.
[26] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, pp.4-5.
[27] John Dennis, *Reflections Critical and Satyrical, Upon a Late Rhapsody Call'd An Essay Upon Criticism* (London: Lintott, 1711), p.6.

which shows a series of footnotes jostling uncomfortably between allusions of varying specificity, which Pope heavily revised.[28] In *A Key To The Lock* (1715), Pope absorbed this and accused himself — with humour — of displaying educational 'Errors' which ought to be purged for the good of the 'Nation.'[29] Bateson suggested that 'perhaps one reason why we still read *An Essay on Criticism* is the "danger" that Pope ran of being exposed as a critical charlatan, the risk of it acting on him as a sort of literary stimulus.' This risk, Bateson argued, was an important part of Augustan poetry as whole:

> The appearance of sophistication and erudition, not having been honestly earned, has to be maintained in other ways — either by astonishing us momentarily and then hurrying on to something else, or by sheer verbal wit and the delightful impudence of the whole affair, or finally by an obscurity that suggests more than we are certain it can mean.[30]

As we can tell from two contrary instances in Swift — the dexterous play on the Aldine 'device' and the studied use of Aesop's *Fables* — these related strategies of pseudo-learning were crucial to his satire: he gave the 'appearance of sophistication and erudition' in classical literature, but rarely acknowledged his sources.

Because Swift deliberately played with classical pseudo-learning and frequently-commonplaced tags derived from ancient writers, it is difficult to confirm how much classical erudition can be attributed to him. On the one hand, he is considered a learned classical scholar; on the other, he is considered a satirist who used whatever classical learning he could acquire.[31] Walter Scott, for example, recorded that Swift was so saturated in classical learning that he had obscure lines of Latin on the tip of his tongue and used them in conversation to make jokes:

> He was very fond of puns. Perhaps the application of the line from Virgil to the lady who threw down with her mantua a Cremona fiddle, is the best ever was made: — "Mantua, væ miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ!"[32]

Responses to this anecdote have varied, depending on the willingness of the reader to believe it. Laetitia Pilkington claimed that the line was 'immediately cried out'.[33] However, Walter Scott carefully changed the story so that the Latin was 'applied' — or tailored — to the situation, suggesting that it was 'made' long before its utterance. These subtle differences

---

[28] Bodleian Library: MS. Eng. Poet. C. 1.
[29] Esdras Barnivelt (Alexander Pope), *A Key to The Lock* (London: James Roberts, 1715), 'Epistle Dedicatory', p.4.
[30] Bateson, *Essays In Critical Dissent*, pp.129-30.
[31] John Gay has suffered, or perhaps benefited, from the same divided reputation. See Arthur Sherbo, 'John Gay: Lightweight or Heavyweight?', *The Scriblerian*, 8:1 (1975), pp.4-8.
[32] Scott, *Works*, ii.308. Allusion to Virgil, *Eclogues,* IX.27-28. 'Mantua, alas! too near ill-fated Cremona.'
[33] Pilkington, *Jests,* p.79. This was Scott's source.

suggest a scepticism about the implausible brilliance of the pun, which drew on the etymological relationship between 'Mantua' and 'mantle', but also on 'Cremona' as a shorthand for 'fiddle' (Cremona was the location of Antonio Stradivari's workshop). Since the line was reprimanding behaviour by invoking a well-known school text (Virgil's *Eclogues*), perhaps it also mattered that Cremona was the town in which Virgil himself was educated. *Eclogues* IX is a poem about the seizure of Virgil's family estate for the benefit of veterans: which also speaks to Swift's sense of an allusion as a theft, or an expropriation of property. However, the attempt to uncover these hidden suggestions might well presume a depth of intention which Swift himself did not possess. Eighteenth-century readers were alive to this problem. Patrick Delany — a fellow at Trinity College, Dublin — tried to claim that Swift 'looked upon the study of Greek and Latin to be downright pedantry, and beneath a gentleman.'[34]

One way of accounting for the problem of intention — whether Swift could have possibly known and used such detailed classical allusions — is to situate Swift in the context of classical scholarship in the eighteenth century as it existed outside of the universities (though, as addressed in Chapter 4, Swift was required to meet high standards of classical learning as a clergyman in the Anglican Church, whether in England or Ireland). What needs assessment is the gentlemanly decorum to which Swift aspired, epitomised — according to Joseph Levine — by William Temple.[35] John Bulteel, in his *Collection of Apothegmes or Sayings of The Ancients* (1698), described a gentleman's learning as an avoidance of two extremes: 'one which is too confused' and 'the other, which smells too much of the Colledge.'[36] The 'Mob of Gentlemen' (in Pope's words), to whom Swift would have had an uneasy relationship (owing to the suggestion of unruliness), pitted itself against scholars who were deemed pedantic explorers at the 'periphery of the known world'.[37] One such pedant, whom Swift did not like, was Richard Bentley.[38] Demands were made by Bentley — and others in the period, such as Thomas Gale — to edit, categorise, and compare classical sources with due scholarly care.

---

[34] Delany, *Observations*, p.33.
[35] Cf. Joseph Levine, *The Battle of The Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.14. Cf. William Empson, 'Wit in the Essay on Criticism', *The Hudson Review*, 2:4 (1950), pp.559-577.
[36] John Bulteel, *A Collection of Apothegmes or Sayings of The Ancients* (London: William Whitwhood, 1698), 'Preface' [unpaginated].
[37] 'But for the Wits of either Charles' days, / The Mob of Gentlemen who wrote with Ease', *The First Epistle of The Second Book of Horace*, Pope, *Poems*, iv.203-4 (ll.107-8). Rumbold has explored the rich connotations of the words 'mob' and 'mobile' in Swift's writing ('mob' being shorthand for *mobile vulgus*), and the difficulty of piecing together his relationship to such an imagined group of people. See Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, and Mock-Treatises*, p.97, n.34. As Rumbold shows, Swift may have preferred the word '*Rabble*' to '*Mobb*', if his letters to Orrery are reliable, suggesting a characteristic distrust of political discord. Woolley, *Correspondence*, iv.189.
[38] Cf. Walsh, *Tale*, p.161. '*B—ntl—y* durst not reply; but half choaked with Spleen and Rage, withdrew, in full Resolution of performing some great Achievment.'

However, Swift owned scholarly editions which were full of problems or did not meet Bentley's high standards, which would have informed his distaste for pedantry. His copy of Thomas Gale's edition of Herodotus was an example of the way in which scholarship could be immolated by a printer's errors as well as intellectual complication. The edition contained a distracting number of printing errors and a cumbersome (even comic) fold-out map, which possibly implicated the book (if not the text) in the kinds of distracted learning that Swift put to use as parody.[39] Though Bentley and other professional scholars were consciously imitating the golden age of European classical scholarship, Swift seems to have been uncertain as to whether such endeavours were intrinsically valuable.[40]

However, Swift was alert to the possible uses of classical learning in relaxed or non-professional contexts, believing that there was a middle way between the inaccuracies and ignorance of a ludicrous figure such as Wagstaff (a man 'wholly illiterate', i.e. without Latin and Greek) and the professional pedantry of Richard Bentley.[41] He claimed, in December 1719, to have hung up a mezzotint of the obscure Cyrenaic philosopher Aristippus (disciple of Socrates) in his drawing room.[42] Some scholars were hostile to Aristippus because they perceived him as a hedonist close to moral nihilism. In the words of the much contested seventeenth-century historian of philosophy Thomas Stanley, his life was 'employed in Luxury.'[43] At the top of the print, Swift inscribed '*Omnis Aristippum, &*c' (a shorthand allusion to Horace, *Epistulae* I.xvii.23-4), and at the bottom '*Tantâ fœdus cum gente ferire, commissum juveni*' (Claudian, *De Consulato Stilichonis*, I.xxi.52-3). The first quotation alludes to Horace's own vignette of Aristippus, which contends that pleasure is the most important category of learning. However, the second says that 'to make a treaty with so great a people was the charge entrusted to thy youth', which draws an analogy between diplomatic relations and literary allusions: a common theme in Swift's letters to members of the Harley Ministry.[44] Swift's relegation of the second maxim to the bottom of the page suggests that it was a gloss

---

[39] The majority of the printer's mistakes in his edition of Gale's Herodotus took the form of misbound or misnumbered pages. The edition was *Herodoti Halicarnassei Historiarum Libri IX Novem Musarum Nominibus Inscripti*, ed. Thomas Gale (London: E. Horton *et al.*, 1679). See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.841. Cf. Marsh's Library: H. 1584. Swift's 'Character of Herodotus', written in a more reliable Stephanus edition of the *History*, was authenticated by Faulkner. See *The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift, D. D., Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin*, ed. John Nichols, 19 vols. (London: J. Johnson *et al.*, 1801), ix.556, which footnotes the MS inscription.

[40] On the Bentleyan ambition to match the early Humanists see Kristine Louise Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poet and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp.15-17.

[41] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.291. Cf. p.263, on Wagstaff as a parodic *tour de force* for 'the Hanoverian context of the 1730s.'

[42] Details recorded in a letter to Bolingbroke, December 19th, 1719. See Woolley, *Correspondence*, ii.315.

[43] Thomas Stanley, *The History of Philosophy* (London: Humphrey Moseley and Thomas Dring, 1655), p.2, 'The Cyrenaick Sect'. For an account of Stanley's peculiar scholarly contributions, especially to the history of Philosophy, see Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, pp.18-20.

[44] For translation, Loeb, p.369. Swift might have written to Bolingbroke about Aristippus because they looked very similar, both having long noses. Cf. a letter in which he spoke about 'my letter to Aristippus', by whom he meant Bolingbroke. Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.231.

to the first, and that his own claim to have 'grown fonder of the former motto' was not wholly true. Because these quotations were taken from their original context and carefully juxtaposed, they might have been inspired by the account of Aristippus' philosophy in Vitruvius' *De Architectura* (VI.i.), a text which was known to the Scriblerians as a manual of how to rescue dilapidated buildings: 'eiusmodi possessiones et viatica liberis oportere parari, quae etiam e naufragio una possent enare' ('men should provide for their children wealth and travelling equipment of such a kind, that, even after shipwreck, it can swim to land along with its owners').[45] The salvaging of lost equipment after a disaster reflected on both the lifted quotations and the mezzotint as a whole, which Swift almost certainly tore out of an edition of Diogenes Laertius' *Apothegms,* suggesting that his sense of antiquity did not preclude disrespectful behaviour.[46]

Swift's need to ward off accusations of pedantry while showing a comprehensive grasp of ancient literature was not only a satirical pose but part of his tendency to combine scholarly material creatively (a trait subject to extensive parody in the *Tritical Essay* and Wagstaff's introduction to *Polite Conversation*, owing to the empty recombination of classical fragments and commonplaces).[47] According to Scott, he was cautious about awarding the title of 'scholar' to those who did not meet the requirements: 'he used with great vehemence to rebuke those who bestowed the name of scholar on any one whom they could not prove to have spent most of his days in study, the character of a mere plodding student did not stand high in his estimation.'[48] However, as discussed, Swift disliked miniature — and proverbially pedantic — scholarly crises, such as that over the epistles of Phalaris (1698-1700), which not only sparked his *Battle of The Books* in 1704, but a whole sequence of responses by Atterbury, Boyle, King, and Temple, all of which sought deprive classical scholars of their exclusive right to ancient texts.[49] The dissatisfactions addressed in this debate were categorised by Pope in

---

[45] Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, VI.i. Not in Passmann and Vienken, but there were at least two copies in Marsh's Library, one of which went missing (formerly at R1.4.8.) See Pope's play on this passage in the *Epistle to Burlington* (ll.191-4): 'make falling Arts your care, / Erect new wonders, and the old repair, / Jones and Palladio to themselves restore, / And be whate'er Vitruvius was before.' Pope, *Poems*, iii.155.

[46] One of the very few mezzotints of Aristippus that could be found in the seventeenth century was a plate in Isaac Casaubon's *Diogenes Laertii De Vitis, Dogmatibus et Apophthegmatibus Clarorum Philosophorum Libri X,* ed. Marcus Meibomius, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Henricus Wetstenium, 1692), i.118. See British Museum Prints and Drawings: BM. K.68.36. We know that Swift owned this book. Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.525. The editors note that Swift would have read about Aristippus' surviving fragments in this edition. Prior wrote to Swift in May 1718 to tell him about unbinding a book to re-arrange the 'heads'. Woolley, *Correspondence*, ii.268.

[47] Cf. Gilbert Highet's assertion that Swift 'was a good classics scholar, but admired and cultivated originality', in *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences On Western Literature* (New York: Oxford, 1957), p.282. Cf. headnotes to *Tritical Essay* and *Polite Conversation* in Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, pp.18-9, 256-65.

[48] Scott, *Works*, i.17.

[49] The text in question was Richard Bentley, *A Dissertation Upon The Epistles of Phalaris, Themistocles, Socrates, Euripides, and Others; And the Fables of Æsop* (London: Peter Buck, 1697). Haugen refers to this as a 'debacle' in her account, *Richard Bentley*, pp.120-1. Cf. Phalaris' exclamation 'Shall a Prince be rifled of his Honour by a Pedant?' in William King, *Dialogues of The Dead*, p.9.

the preface to his translation of the *Iliad*, where he tried to claim for Homer a special imaginative power reinforced but not vindicated by scholarship, which responds to a provocation from Horace about respecting Homer (*Satires,* I.x.51-2):

> And perhaps the reason why common Criticks are inclin'd to prefer a judicious and methodical Genius to a great and fruitful one, is, because they find it easier for themselves to pursue their Observations through an uniform and bounded Walk of Art, than to comprehend the vast and various Extent of Nature.[50]

Some writers responded to such conflicts by competing with one another: Ricks registered an aggression among Augustan poets whose 'antagonisms' were 'inseparable from emulation' of their classical sources.[51] Some satirists (and some satires), however, tended to hide classical allusions away as a reward for those with the erudition to find them and as a rebuke to pedantry, a technique favoured by Swift in verse (with notable exceptions).[52] On the surface, some of Swift's writing appeared to be so empty of classical detail that Johnson was led to believe that 'no writer can be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his excellences and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as an original': a remark which might be offering Swift what he wanted.[53]

A Description of the Morning (1709) was Swift's earliest attempt at a classically allusive poem written in a deceptively plain English patter.[54] Scholars have offered a number of possibilities for what he was parodying in this poem, including pastoral poetry, hack writing, urban rhapsodic verse, and the heroic couplet. Schakel argued that 'one cannot identify specific works which served as a source for the poem', though one might find 'examples of the type of poem Swift was imitating.'[55] Claude Rawson, for example, has argued that it was a

---

[50] 'Preface' to *The Iliad of Homer,* Pope, *Poems,* vii.3. See Horace, *Satires,* I.x.51-2, 'Age, quaeso, / tu nihil in magno doctus reprehendis Homero?' ('Does a learned man make no criticisms of the great Homer?'). Cf. *An Essay On Criticism*, 'Be *Homer's* Works your *Study*, and *Delight*, / Read them by Day, and meditate by Night', *Poems*, i.253 (lines 124-5).

[51] Ricks, *Allusion*, p.17.

[52] Swift occasionally supplied the classical sources of his poems as part of the mock-scholarly character of the attack (addressed in the next part of this chapter). In *Toland's Invitation to Dismal* (1712), Swift adopts the voice of the deist John Toland inviting the (High Church sympathising) Earl of Nottingham to dinner at the Calves' Head Club, which implicates the Earl in Whiggish disrespect to the memory of Charles I (hence the 'dating' of the poem in the first printing to the 29th January, though it appeared in the Summer). The poem included passages of the original Horace text (from *Epistulae*, I.v.) underneath his poem in the first broadside edition (Williams' copy text), possibly to mock Toland's lack of classical knowledge, or palliate the scandalous ideas by showing a process of 'imitation'. *Toland's Invitation to Dismal* is also remarkable for its use of the word '*alluding*' to mean 'insinuating' or 'concealing' a nasty truth. See lines 12-13: 'Whilst an *alluding* Hymn some Artist sings, / We toast Confusion to the Race of Kings.' Williams, *Poems*, i.161-166. Cf. letter to Stella and Dingley, 1st July 1712, 'it is an Imitation of Horace, and perhaps Y don't understand Horace.' Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.434. Cf. William Kupersmith, *English Versions of Roman Satire in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Newark: Delaware Press, 2010), pp.32-5.

[53] Johnson, *Lives*, iii.214. Cf. Johnson on Swift's birth: 'the question may, without much regret, be left in the obscurity in which he delighted to involve it', ibid., iii.189.

[54] Williams, *Poems*, i.123.

[55] Peter Schakel, *The Poetry of Jonathan Swift: Allusion and the Development of a Poetic Style* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p.53.

parody of aubades, or 'poetical descriptions of dawn'.[56] Bateson argued that it opened with a 'straightforward parody of the heroic style', but also suggested a specific allusion to Congreve's *Pindarique Ode On The Victorious Progress of Her Majesty's Arms* (1706), which may be accurate.[57] It is also possible that it was a satire on classical imitation:

> Now hardly here and there an Hackney-Coach
> Appearing, show'd the Ruddy Morns Approach.
> Now *Betty* from her Masters Bed had flown,
> And softly stole to discompose her own.
> The Slipshod Prentice from his Masters Door,
> Had par'd the Dirt, and Sprinkled round the Floor.
> Now *Moll* had whirl'd her Mop with dex'trous Airs,
> Prepar'd to Scrub the Entry and the Stairs.[58]

This opening of the poem alludes to a scene in the fifth book of Virgil's *Aeneid* (V.104-108), which Swift 'softly stole' and 'discomposed':[59]

> Exspectata dies aderat, nonamque serena
> Auroram Phaethontis equi iam luce vehebat.
> Famaque finitimos et clari nomen Acestae
> Excierat; laeto complerant litora coetu,
> Visuri Aeneadas, pars et certare parati.[60]

The allusion to Virgil instigates the opening, but Betty and the other personae of the text (who should be the 'merry groups' of people thronging the 'shore' in Virgil) behave differently, going about their own (sometimes deceptive) business rather than coming together as a group. The allusion to Virgil, then, is a carefully crafted piece of imitation from which Swift deviates as soon as it has occurred, treating it like a commonplace which bears little (or

---

[56] Claude Rawson, 'The Nightmares of Strephon: Nymphs Of The City In The Poems of Swift, Baudelaire, Eliot' in *English Literature In The Age of Disguise* ed. Maximilian E. Novak (Los Angeles: California University Press, 1982), p.57.
[57] Bateson, *English Poetry: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edition (London: Longman, 1966), pp.123-4.
[58] Williams, *Poems*, i.123.
[59] The word 'discomposure' often connoted secrecy in Swift's writing. See Gulliver feeling 'discomposed' while hiding behind a thicket: 'their shape was very singular, and deformed, which a little discomposed me, so that I lay down behind a Thicket to observe them better.' Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.333 (IV.i). Also the Houyhnhms' discomposure of Gulliver's hat, 'the grey Steed rubbed my Hat all round with his Right Fore-hoof, and discomposed it so much, that I was forced to adjust it better, by taking it off, and settling it again', p.337 (IV.i).
[60] Virgil, *Aeneid*, v.104-108. Loeb translation: 'The looked-for day had come, and now the steeds of Phaëthon ushered in the ninth Dawn with cloudless light. The name and fame of noble Acestes had stirred the countryside; in merry groups the people thronged the shore, some to see the sons of Aeneas, and some ready to contend.'

only a notional) relation to the whole. This might be because the use of Virgil in Augustan urban-pastoral was a matter of tired convention. John Gay imitated several passages of the *Georgics* in *Trivia* (1716).[61] Swift would also have been aware that, in this passage of the *Aeneid,* Virgil himself was using a common allusion in Roman literature: the epithet for Phaëthon derived from Homer's *Iliad* (xi.735), which was adduced as an allusion in some eighteenth-century editions of *The Aeneid*.[62] Swift's decision to turn Phaëthon into a 'Hackney Coach', then, while setting in motion the machinery of mock-epic, was alert to the double entendre of 'Hackney': 'a horse for hire', like an allusion, but also something made 'too familiar' (even 'uninteresting') with overuse.[63] In the original *Tatler* issue in which this poem appeared ('Thursday April 28. to Saturday April 30. 1709'), Isaac Bickerstaff prefaces the poem by saying 'I stole out of his Manuscript the following lines', and immediately after the poem's appearance defends it against the 'Bane to all excellent Performances, the *Imitators*.' Just like *A Description of A City Shower*, which Janine Barchas reveals to have been printed on a page littered with clumsy and detritus-like pieces of text (such accumulations of rubbish being a subject of the poem), *A Description of The Morning* is uneasily intruding on a wider discussion of theft and imitation in its own paper.[64]

In the seventeenth century, Virgil's *Aeneid* (especially books I, IV, and V) was a common text for translation exercises at school. Dianne S. Ames has argued that Scriblerian urban-pastoral often relied on 'precisely those Latin set-pieces most flogged by the pens of schoolboys', which became the 'hackneyed themes and set-pieces' familiar to educated poets.[65] Virgil's *Aeneid* would have been at the centre of any school curriculum in this period because its exemplary rhetoric was thought to 'transform schoolboys into civilised English gentlemen'; but, as Andrew Wallace has suggested, the poem 'was typically encountered at a moment when the upper-form scholar was drawing ever closer to leaving the school

---

[61] Cf. Dianne S. Ames, 'Gay's "Trivia" and the Art of Allusion', *Studies in Philology,* 75:2 (1978), pp.199-222.
[62] See *The Works of Virgil Translated into English Prose,* 2 vols. (London: Joseph Davidson, 1743), i.274, 105 n. 'Phaeton here is put for the Sun, in Imitation of *Homer*'. For allusions to this Homeric epithet in Roman literature see Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* ii.150-328, *Tristia*, iv.65-70; Seneca, *Medea*, 826-7.
[63] *OED*: 1b and 2a.
[64] *Tatler* No.9, April 28-30. Cf. Janine Barchas, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.2-3.
[65] Ames, 'Gay's "Trivia" and the Art of Allusion', p.202. It is possible that in a copy of Virgil (now lost), which he reportedly annotated as a schoolboy c.1681, Swift remarked on Dido's breast-beating in a mock-heroic manner: 'a disappointed, forsaken fair one at Billingsgate would break out into much the same, furious outrageous language.' Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1918. Reported in *A Catalogue of Books Relating to Ireland*, 1953. Passmann and Vienken do not call its authenticity into question, but recognise that 'this edition does not occur in any inventory nor has it resurfaced ever since in any collection.'

behind.'[66] The Reverend Charles Hoole, a theorist of pedagogy in the period, even claimed that students 'can be left on their own for the *Aenead*.'[67]

As Claude Rawson argues, 'satire has always had a schoolboy dimension', and 'the schoolboy truant is often a mock-heroic figure.'[68] There is some evidence to suggest that it was common to steal one's copy of Virgil from one's school as a gesture of adolescent rebellion, or to sell the book for pocket money.[69] True to this experience, Swift's poem concludes with a schoolboy overshadowed by the watch of 'Bailiffs':

> The watchful Bailiffs take their silent Stands,
> And School-Boys lag with Satchels in their Hands.[70]

The word 'lag' describes the boys' dawdling, but perhaps also their fear of being caught with a suspiciously full satchel, to 'lag' meaning — in medicinal cant — to 'urinate' with anxiety (not a primary sense of the word, but available in the eighteenth century).[71] The boys were taken from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (VII.ii.146-8):

> Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like a snail
> Unwillingly to school;

The allusion to *As You Like It* not only challenges the traditional view that 'the Virgilian corpus constituted a grand curriculum' in its own right, or that it is the only standard to which English poetry should aspire; it also suggests that theft or lying inheres in the ostensibly

---

[66] Andrew Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys: The Poetics of Pedagogy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.47 and p.179. Cf. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I.xvi.12. Swift owned a copy of Servius Maurus Honoratus, the Roman grammarian and commentator, whose work was used in schools to elucidate passages of the *Aeneid*. See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1679.

[67] John R. Mulder, *The Temple of The Mind: Education and Literary Taste in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p.23. See Reverend Hoole, *New Discovery of The Old Art of Teaching Schoole, in Four Small Treatises* (London: Andrew Crook, 1661), p.180. Relying on his school-training, Swift was left to handle Temple's translation of the *Aeneid* for the *Miscellanea.* Passmann and Vienken have a particularly lucid account of his responsibilities in *Library and Reading*, iii.1919. Cf. Woolley, *Correspondence*, i.111, 'this Virgil sticks plaguily on my hands.'

[68] Rawson, *Order from Confusion Sprung*, p.195. Cf. p.196.

[69] As suggested by Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys,* pp.35-6. A well known textbook of translation exercises in this period, Maturin Cordier (Corderius), *Colloquiorum Scholasticorum Libri Quatuor* (1564), began with an anecdote of a pupil pawning his copy of Virgil, likely drawing on a familiar rite of passage. The text was still a major translation textbook as late as the nineteenth century. One edition, a reprint of Charles Hoole's 1657 English translation, was printed in 1709 — the year of Swift's 'Description'. See Maturinus Corderius, *School-Colloquies* tr. Charles Hoole (London: Stationer's Company, 1709). The vast majority of the books stolen from Marsh's Library in the eighteenth century were school texts.

[70] Williams, *Poems*, i.125.

[71] *OED*: 8 and 12. Cf. Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary* (London: Printed for Peter Parker, 1677), 'Lage' meaning to 'water' oneself.

reputable arts of imitation taught at school.[72] The allusions to the *Aeneid* and *As You Like It* might not form a coherent link to one another, but they do produce intricate pieces of contrived allusion (which might be interpreted as parodies of their source texts), suggesting that the poem should be interpreted as an assemblage of parts rather than a coherent whole (even though the poem is relatively short), and that Swift was writing a poem which uses literary allusion to set off temporary pieces of association: a technique which ties in with the poem's presentation of the urban population as a series of ambiguously related individuals rather than a unified community. As Colin Burrow argues, formal arts of imitation became 'intimately connected with arguments about literary property' in the eighteenth century, and *A Description Of The Morning* was complexly implicated in this new line of argument.[73]

I - Breaking

It was within the contradictory contexts of gentlemanly decorum, overshadowed by a clerical pressure to engage with classical scholarship, that Swift collected major scholarly editions of classical writers from all over Europe, often with parallel Latin translations of Greek texts, and he supplemented these with modern translations in English or French.[74] For example, he owned an edition of Thucydides (Paris: Estienne, 1588) which came with a parallel Latin translation, but he also knew Thomas Hobbes' English translation of the *History* which was first published in 1629.[75] Theophrastus was taken down in the Moor Park reading list as '*Theophrasti* Characteres' which indicates that Swift was reading Isaac Casaubon's Latin edition of 1592 (not necessarily the Greek text), and we know that he also owned the popular La Bruyère translation that came with *Characters; Or, The Manners of The Age* (1688).[76] A representative selection of ancient texts in Swift's library will show that his reading was polyglot and supplemented with cribs. His edition of Cassius Dio (Paris: Estienne, 1551) had a parallel Latin translation, as well as an unusual number of marginal glosses.[77] He had an edition of the Homeric texts in Greek (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1695) and Latin (Basel: Henricpetri, 1606), but also Thomas Parnell's translation of the *Batrachomyomachia* (Dublin:

---

[72] Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys*, p.48. Hoole recommended that one should read Virgil with English cribs. See *The Old Art of Teaching*, p.180.
[73] Colin Burrow, *Imitating Authors: Plato to Futurity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p.337.
[74] In the eighteenth century, it was not assumed that a Latin translation of a Greek text would suffice. Addison recorded that Boileau disapproved of Latin translations of Pindar. See the 'Life of Monsieur Boileau Despreaux', prefaced to *The Works of Monsieur Boileau* ed. Nicholas Rowe, 3 vols. (London: Curll, 1712), i.xcviii.
[75] The precise edition is not recorded in any of the surviving sale catalogues. The edition could date from 1629, 1634, 1648, or 1676. Walsh acknowledges this in *Tale*, p.469, n.16.
[76] See the 'Moor Park Reading List' in Walsh, *Tale*, p.274. Also Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii. 1016, for Swift's La Bruyère.
[77] Ibid., i.529-531.

Rhames, 1722), Joshua Barnes' translation of the complete texts in two volumes (Cambridge: Crownfield, 1711), and copies of Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[78] The same can be said of Juvenal, of whom he had two editions side by side, excluding Dryden's English translation which does not appear in the catalogue: a scholarly text (Freiburg: Helmlin, 1608) and one of Maittaire's popular editions (London: Tonson, 1715).[79] His books of Lucian, according to Passmann and Vienken, comprised a 'liberally annotated' edition in Latin (Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1687) and a French translation (Paris: la Société, 1674).[80] For Lucretius, scholarly editions of *De Rerum Natura* (Amsterdam: Janson, 1631; Cambridge: Mordon, 1675) and a Maittaire (London: Tonson, 1715).[81] He had Tertullian in a scholarly edition (Antwerp: Plantin, 1584), and Maittaire again (London: Tonson, 1715).[82] He also owned a Latin translation of Sappho.[83] Of Virgil, he had several editions with a range of commentaries, through which he would also have encountered the Appendix Virgiliana. A much underlined copy of the *Georgics* and *Eclogues* survives which he gave to Andrew Fountaine, though the underlinings are certainly not all by Fountaine or Swift (note on the title page: 'And: Fountaine / ex dono / Viri Revndi Jon: Swift S.T.P.', internal annotations probably older).[84] A copy of Stephanus' Virgil, which originally belonged to Swift's grandfather, circulated in the family and came to Swift himself on his birthday in 1736 (if his inscription in the book is to be believed).[85]

Swift also had a tendency to hoard books like a collector. There were some very strange books on his shelves, which were probably unpremeditated purchases or gifts: the two-volume Latin translation of Husain Ibn 'Abd Allah, also known as Avicenna (Venice: Valgrisius, 1564), for example, which he mocked for being nothing more than a manual for catching mice, even though it is an important and serious medical text in the tradition of Galen.[86] He also collected numerous editions of writers he found useful or enjoyed, from a striking range of continental publishers. His expensive and impressive editions of Cicero came from several different locations around Europe, all dating from the Renaissance: two from Venice (Venice: Bernadus Rizus de Novaria and Bernardinus Cellerius, 1484; and

---

[78] Ibid., ii.890-891. Passmann and Vienken do not specify which edition of Parnell. For Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, ibid., ii.1493-5.
[79] Ibid., ii.999. Swift collected Maittaire's duodecimo editions of Latin classics published by Tonson and Watts from 1713-1719. As attested by Lelièvre, Maittaire was at the centre of classical literature in this period. See F. J. Lelièvre, 'Maittaire and The Classics in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Phoenix* ,10:3 (1956), pp.103-115.
[80] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1114-5.
[81] Ibid., ii.1122.
[82] Ibid., iii.1816-7.
[83] Ibid., iii.1643.
[84] Ibid., iii.1913-8. Cf. the copy of *P. Virgilii Maronis Opera* (Leiden: Elzevier, 1636) which he gave to Anthony Henley in 1701. It passed to William Swift and Deane Swift. See (the possibly confusing annotations), ibid., iii. 1915-6.
[85] Ibid., iii.1915.
[86] Ibid., ii.933. Cf. Swift's remark to Pope, 'you may consult Avicen', Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.36.

Tridino, 1517); two editions of the same text from Lyon, from which he formed a complete set (Lyon: Gryphius, 1546–51); one edition in nine volumes from Strasbourg (Strasbourg: Dupuys and Richel, 1581); and, as usual, an Estienne (Paris: Estienne, 1555).[87] His editions of Horace were from a similarly scattered range of locations (Leiden: Elzevier, 1629; Cambridge: Tonson, 1699; Dublin: Dickson, 1731; London: Pine, 1733-37; and London: Maittaire and Tonson, 1715).[88] He had a two-volume Plutarch (Paris: Estienne, 1624), but also sought out its predecessor (Basel: Froben, 1542).[89] Strikingly, he owned seven editions of Terence, two of which he bound together (Napoli: Pareus, 1619; Leiden: Elzevier, 1635; Cambridge: Jan Minell, 1676; Amsterdam: Wolfgang, 1686; Leiden: Hack, 1684; two from Cambridge: Tonson, 1701, including Maittaire).[90]

From this eclectic but comprehensive collection of books, we can conclude that Swift constructed an unusually large and synoptic classical library. It is also clear that his scholarly editions of classical writers were to be admired as objects, or to be read as though they belonged to a public library, and not annotated. We know that Swift wanted them to be seen — but not necessarily touched — because of a letter to Pope, in 1729:

> In my own little library, I value the compilements of Grævius and Gronovius, which make thirty-one volumes in folio (and were given me by my Lord Bolingbroke) more than all my books besides; because whoever comes into my closet, casts his eyes immediately upon them, and will not vouchsafe to look upon Plato or Xenophon.[91]

The word 'vouchsafe' is ambiguous, here, meaning either to afford attention 'especially graciously' (*OED* 1) or in a 'condescending manner' (*OED* 2): an ambiguity Swift played on in *An Epistle On An Epistle* (1729), alluding to the inversions of hierarchy in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*: 'And wou'd my Lord vouchsafe to grant / This one, poor, humble Boon I want, Free Leave to play his *Secretary*, / As *Falstaff* acted old King *Harry*' (*1 Henry IV*, II.iv).[92] The use of 'vouchsafe' suggests that the books on his shelf suffered from the same hierarchies of preferment as Swift did in his political life, with the parenthesis about 'Lord Bolingbroke' working as both an aside and a central point of the letter. Slippery hierarchies of preferment on library shelves might have been the subject of parody in *The Battle of The Books*, but they

---

[87] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.407-413.
[88] Ibid., ii.905.907.
[89] Ibid., ii.1467.
[90] Ibid., iii.1811-1813. The Wolfgang and Hack editions were bound together.
[91] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.231. The Xenophon was another Estienne: *Xenophontis Quae Extant Opera.* tr. Stephanus, 2nd edition. (Geneva: Estienne (Stephanus), 1581). It is likely that Archbishop William King also kept Estienne's *Dictionarium Sive Latinae Linguae Theasaurus* (Paris: 1536) on display for visitors, as we can tell from shelf-marks in the surviving catalogue of his library. See Matteson, 'Archbishop William King's Library Catalogue', p. 307.
[92] Williams, *Poems*, ii.475.

also constituted an important part of Swift's adjudication of significance among his own books.

Not wanting to damage these objects, it is likely that Swift took extracts from the best of his scholarly editions on separate sheets of paper. There are two reasons to believe that this is true. First, most of the editions that he alluded to most thoroughly in his own library are not annotated; and secondly, some of these extracts survive. English MS. 659 at the John Rylands Library, Manchester, contains some of Swift's extracts from Suetonius and Tacitus, with short summaries of them as stylists at the end.[93] He might have learnt how to annotate and take extracts from Suetonius in this way from Isaac Casaubon's copy of his own edition of *De Vita Caesarum*, which was acquired — along with some of Casaubon's other books — by Narcissus Marsh.[94] The marginalia in this copy are not only suggestive of how one might edit and commonplace Suetonius; they also appraise the writing as they proceed, drawing attention to similarities or coincidences with scripture.[95] On p.81 (*Tiberius*, liii.1., lines 5-8), for example, Casaubon annotated the left hand margin with editorial corrections, and the right hand margin with a commentary on the story of Agrippina offering Tiberius a poisoned apple, which he compared to the 'fall'.[96] Similarly, Swift, in response to the life of Vespasian, wrote '[verisimile / de Christo interpretandum]', and bracketed it.[97] We can tell from the depth of this engagement that Swift was very careful with his expensive scholarly editions, and his friends occasionally teased him for it. Andrew Fountaine exclaimed 'may the worms eat your Plato!' in a letter, which mocked the Estienne edition of Plato's dialogues in his library: an edition which was not just an impressive object, but had an important Renaissance history.[98] Nevertheless, as Paddy Bullard has argued, Swift built a 'working library of a scholar and a public man' with these books.[99]

---

[93] Recorded in Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1763-4. For a bibliographical discussion of the Suetonius and Tacitus extracts, see Irvin Ehrenpreis and James Clifford, 'Swiftiana in Rylands English MS. 659 and Related Documents', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 37:2 (1955), pp.368-92 (pp.385-88).

[94] *C. Suetoni Tranquilli de XII Caesaribus Libri VIII*, ed. Isaac Casaubon (Lyon: Jacob Chouet, 1595). Marsh: Adams. S. 2053. Casaubon's books came with the Stillingfleet collection, so they would have been available to Swift when he moved to Dublin. This copy is heavily annotated.

[95] Swift's dislike of commonplacing among young clerics is noted by Ormsby-Lennon, 'Commonplace Swift', pp.27-9. Annotating ancient texts with Biblical parallels might have constituted a more acceptable kind of intellectual activity, to Swift.

[96] See p.81. Left hand margin indicates new vocabulary for the edition. Right hand margin: 'Hor artificio [?] / Tiberius pararess', etc. Suetonius, *Tiberius*, liii.1-2. Casaubon's hand is almost illegible, here, but it is clear he is summarising and appraising the narrative. The note: 'fallere dormerat [duo?] libet fall'.

[97] Swift's commentary on Suetonius, *Vespasian*, iv.5. Rylands English MS. 659.

[98] Woolley, *Correspondence*, ii.315. The edition was *Platonis Opera Quae Extant Omnia* tr. Serranus, 3 vols. in 2 (Geneva: Henri Estienne (Stephanus), 1578). Marsh's Library had two copies. See Marsh: P.1439. On the Renaissance context, S.K.Heninger, 'Sidney and Serranus' Plato', *English Literary Renaissance*, 13:2 (1983), pp. 146-61, and Ben Jonson's surviving edition in the Chetham Library with marginalia, 'I am Ben Jonson's'.

[99] Paddy Bullard, 'What Swift Did In Libraries', p.66.

However, this picture provides only a partial background: Swift liked to hide his references to ancient authorities by turning them into complex, inscrutable muddles; muddles which paradoxically give an impression of originality while hinting at a source. In this sense, he took what Ronald Paulson calls the 'breaking' aesthetic in Augustan literature to an extreme.[100] This complicates Pat Rogers' argument that, with an allusion, 'we are meant to identify a single source and hold on to that.'[101] Swift's uses of Theophrastus and Thucydides will serve as examples, since we know from the Moor Park Reading List that he read them in the same period (1697/8), and can observe, in other texts, that he built elaborate structures of literary allusion out of what he stole from them. First, Thucydides. It is recorded that Swift took 'several copious extracts' from Hobbes' translation of Thucydides' *History* rather than annotating his copy of the text, as he did with his editions of Tacitus and Suetonius.[102] No adequate record survives of which passages he excerpted from Thucydides, but one can piece them together by charting their appearance in his own texts. He clearly excerpted the debate between Cleon and Diodotus (III.36-49), for example, which has been a staple of Thucydides anthologies since the Renaissance: it appears in the printed anthology that went along with his Estienne edition (not recorded in Passmann and Vienken), called *Conciones side Orationes ex Graecis Latinisque Historicis Excerptae* (1570), from which he might have taken some hints if he had come across a copy in someone else's library. The 'grand debate' at the 'General Assembly of the *Houyhnhnms*' in Book IV of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) contains parts of this extract. The anonymous member of the assembly who puts forward 'several arguments of great strength and weight' closely resembles Cleon, with his genocidal vision of the world and prejudices against the 'filthy, noisome, and deformed' Yahoos.[103] Gulliver's 'Master' in turn resembles Diodotus with his argument to ease racial tensions and keep up an Athenian style of Democracy. David Womersley has suggested that this passage of *Gulliver's Travels* was also using the Melian dialogue of Thucydides' *History* (v.84-116) and that Swift took some descriptions of the plague from the second book (ii.47-54) for decorative colour too.[104]

---

[100] Ronald Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking; Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820* (London: Rutgers, 1989), pp.3-5.
[101] Pat Rogers, 'Swift and the Revival of Cliché', in *The Character of Swift's Satire* ed. Claude Rawson (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), pp.203-27 (p.204).
[102] Walsh, *Tale*, p.469, n.16. See 'The Moor Park Reading List', p.274, '*Thucydides* by *Hobbes* fol abstracted.' Classics scholars have suggested that extracts are often taken from the *History* to keep track of the chronology, because Thucydides himself emphasises the coherence of the whole timeline rather than individuals or episodes. See J. R. Ellis, 'The Structure and Argument of Thucydides' Archaeology', *Classical Antiquity*, Vol.10:2 (1991), pp. 344-376, which accounts for the ring composition of the first book. Thucydides was unpopular in this period, and did not quite survive the 'Quarrel' between ancients and moderns. See Pascal Payen, 'The Reception of Thucydides in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century France', in *A Handbook To The Reception of Thucydides*, eds. Christine Lee and Neville Morley (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), pp.158-175 (p.158), 'Thucydides' high point came between 1450-1600. […] In the seventeenth century, began a steady decline, rounded off with the defeat of the Ancients.'
[103] Cf. A.G.Woodhead, 'Thucydides' portrait of Cleon', *Mnemosyne*, 13:4 (1960), pp.289-317.
[104] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.408, n.1., and p.475, n.10.

This mixture of allusions to one text can be difficult to understand because Swift's light touch concealed the density of reference. Relatively little attention was paid to character in early eighteenth-century fiction, so it was also unusual (in relation to the period) for Swift to take character traits rather than political theory or historical facts from Thucydides.[105] Most readers of Thucydides used him as an index against which to check their information about other writers. For example, in the 'Essay On Homer' Pope stated that Homer's blindness is 'acknowledg'd in *Thucidides*'; that '*Thucydides* [has] scrupled to cite [the Homeric Hymns] as genuine'; and that the Thucydidean account of Agamemnon helped to determine the translation of the *Iliad*.[106] Swift accounted for the ways in which one might turn away from work of this kind, even if he disapproved of such a turn: ventriloquising the 'free-thinking' Collins in *Mr. Collins' Discourse Of Free-Thinking*, Thucydides is written off as an author hopelessly obscured by corrupt papyri, eliciting the conclusion that 'all […] Books are utterly useless' (Swift was hostile to Collins' 'free-thinking' and would not have concurred).[107] We know that Swift read Suetonius for his sense of character, reflecting on him as a biographer at the end of his own manuscript extracts from the *De Vita Caesarum*: 'vere biographus actiones minime describit, qua autem ad mores / et personarū notitiam pertinent minute nec infacete pingit' ('The biographer really describes actions very little, but, where they pertain to the habits and to getting to know the characters, he paints them minutely and not crudely').[108] He read Plutarch's biographies with the same attention to character, and showed particular interest in figures who also appeared in Thucydides's *History*, such as Pericles, Alcibiades, and Nicias. In *Examiner* No.34, Swift stated that some passages in Plutarch's *Lives* were 'not of Actions which make any great Noise or Figure in History, [but] give more Light into the Characters of Persons, than we could receive from an Account of their most renowned Achievements' (it is possible that he read Dryden's Plutarch, but there is no record of it in his library).[109] This not only explains why he was excerpting whole passages of Thucydides rather than annotating in the margins; it also explains why he was reading Theophrastus in the same year, in the same frame of mind.

---

[105] Cf. *OED* 14. The first use of 'character' to mean 'a person portrayed in a work of fiction' cited by the *OED* is from Dryden, and the *OED* suggests that it did not gain much attention throughout the eighteenth century. Cf. David Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character: 1726-1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp. 25-8.

[106] Pope, *Poems*, vii.49, 52, 161 n.

[107] Davis, *Prose*, iv.33. Thorough account of Collins in Chapter 3.

[108] (My translation, which is open to conjecture.) Rylands English MS. 659, 16. f4v, 'Judiciū'. For transcription see Ehrenpreis and Clifford, 'Swiftiana in Rylands English MS. 659', p.388. Johnson also read Suetonius in his old age. See John A. Vance, *Samuel Johnson and the Sense of History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), p.7. As Ehrenpreis and Clifford note, Swift's extracts of Suetonius are likely to have passed through Johnson's hands when he was writing the *Life of Swift,* but Johnson does not seem to have paid them any attention.

[109] Ellis, *Examiner*, p.334.

Swift's use of Theophrastus is much more difficult to trace. The account of his various libraries shows that he owned the two copies of the *Characters* mentioned before — and bought Eustace Budgell's new English translation in 1714 — but the catalogue says that 'no traces' of allusion 'have come to light'.[110] Swift is likely to have used Theophrastus' *Characters* in the same way that he used Thucydides: by breaking it into pieces and re-arranging the fragments. For example, this famous passage from *A Tale of A Tub* possibly drew on several parts of Theophrastus without saying so (even if the 'Bookseller To The Reader' refers to 'la Bruyere' as a writer 'fitted to the Humour of the Age'):

> Now, what a Figure would all these Acquirements amount to, if the Owner were sent into the *City* among his Brethren! Behold a Fourth, in much and deep Conversation with himself, biting his Thumbs at proper junctures; His Countenance chequered with Business and Design; sometimes walking very fast, with his Eyes nailed to a paper that he holds in his Hands: A great Saver of Time, somewhat thick of Hearing, very short of Sight, but more of Memory. A Man ever in Haste, a great Hatcher and Breeder of Business, and excellent at the Famous Art of *whispering Nothing.* A huge Idolator of Monosyllables and Procrastination; so ready to *Give* his Word to every Body, that he never *keeps* it. One that has forgot the common *Meaning* of Words, but an admirable Retainer of the *Sound*. Extreamly subject to the *Loosness*, for his *Occasions* are perpetually *calling him away*.[111]

Particularities such as nail-biting, talking to oneself, and having a face 'chequered' with business can be found in Theophrastus' sketches of 'Garrulity', 'Authoritarianism', and 'Absent-mindedness'.[112] These might not be allusions to Theophrastus; however, the figure who is a 'great Hatcher and Breeder of Business', but also 'excellent at the Famous Art of *whispering Nothing*' and 'so ready to *Give* his Word to every Body, that he never *keeps* it' corresponds very closely to the figure of 'Fraudulence' in the *Characters.*[113]

Remnants of Theophrastus might also be found in the early odes, because they were written closer to the time at which Swift was reading the text. It has been suggested that the stately classical allusions set up in the odes are 'opaque' and resist enquiry: but there are some passages in which Swift was almost certainly drawing on Theophrastus.[114] The *Ode to the Athenian Society* contains a caricature of Philosophy (IX) which is indebted to Theophrastus' figure of 'Rejuvination'. Philosophy has 'borrow'd some[…] Niceties, / From ev'ry Age through which it pass't'; Theophrastus' figure has a similar 'enthusiasm for work

---

[110] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1827.
[111] Walsh, *Tale*, p.115. For mention of La Bruyere, ibid., p.19.
[112] Theophrastus, *Characters,* p.73, p.93. (Loeb page numbers given because the division of the text into books and sections is controversial.)
[113] Ibid., p.121.
[114] David Nokes, *Jonathan Swift; A Hypocrite Reversed: A Critical Biography* (New York: Oxford, 1987), p.21. 'The conceits and allusions of the poem [*Ode to The King*], though not indecipherable are certainly opaque.' Schakel argued that the odes show Swift 'struggling toward a more purposeful handling of allusions', *The Poetry of Jonathan Swift*, p.15.

inappropriate to one's age.'[115] Philosophy is also said to affect '*Mock-habits*', a major preoccupation of the Theophrastan precedent, who deliberately acquires character traits that do not belong to him.[116] It was common to read Theophrastus as a critic of philosophy in this period: the copy of La Bruyère's translation of the *Characters* in Marsh's Library was bound together with a copy of Descartes' *Pensées* by an eighteenth-century reader.[117]

The careful fragmentation and re-organisation of Thucydides and Theophrastus suggests that Swift perceived allusion as a vehicle of ambiguity, but that it might also be an effective device for parodying commonplaces or recycled quotations. One of Swift's most concerted attempts at such a parody was *A Tritical Essay Upon The Faculties Of The Mind* (1711), which claimed at the outset not to deal with 'thread-bare Quotations' — with which Swift says he has been 'late offended' — but to present 'Observations […] entirely new' and 'Quotations untouched by others'. Valerie Rumbold, in her headnote to the text, identifies that this *Essay* was simultaneously targeting Tindal's *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted* (1707), a 'motly, inconsistent Composition, made up of various Shreds of equal Fineness, although of different Colours' in Swift's eyes; and written to please his friend Andrew Fountaine (a collector of antiquities), who is presumed to be the dedicatee by scholarly convention.[118] In line with both of these tasks, Swift assembled an unusually large store of classical tags and fragments in the manner of a trite and predictable common-placer, and arranged them into a prose style which, to read thoroughly, one 'must separate and break in Pieces' to trace the origins:

> Philosophers say, that Man is a Microcosm or little World, resembling in Miniature every Part of the great: And, in my Opinion, the Body Natural may be compared to the BodyPolitick: And if this be so, how can the *Epicureans* Opinion be true, that the Universe was formed by a fortuitous Concourse of Atoms; which I will no more believe, than the accidental Jumbling of the Letters in the Alphabet, could fall by Chance into a most ingenious and learned Treatise of Philosophy, *Risum teneatis Amici,* HOR. This false Opinion must needs create many more; it is like an Error in the first Concoction, which cannot be corrected in the second; the Foundation is weak, and whatever Superstructure you raise upon it, must of Necessity fall to the Ground. Thus Men are led from one Error to another, till with *Ixion* they embrace a Cloud instead of *Juno*; or, like the Dog in the Fable, lose the Substance in gaping at the Shadow. For such Opinions cannot cohere; but like the Iron and Clay in the Toes of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, must separate and break in Pieces. I have read in a certain Author, that *Alexander* wept because he had no more Worlds to conquer; which he need not have done, if the fortuitous Concourse of Atoms

[115] Theophrastus, *Characters*, p.129.
[116] Ibid., p.131. For example, 'When he wrestles at the baths, he often twists his hips so that he will look well-trained', or 'when women are nearby he practices a chorus dance, humming to himself.'
[117] No shelfmark given by the Marsh Library catalogue. The edition printed in Paris, 1699. The same thing happened to the Marsh's Library copy of James's Duport's edition of Theophrastus (Cambridge: 1712), which was bound with other editions of Theophrastus. Again, no shelfmark.
[118] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.18. For the theory that Fountaine is the dedicatee, see Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.191. Quotation appraising Tindal from Swift's drafted response to the text: Davis, *Prose*, ii.68.

could create one: But this is an Opinion fitter for that many-headed Beast, the Vulgar, to entertain, than for so wise a Man as *Epicurus*; the corrupt Part of his Sect only borrowed his Name, as the Monkey did the Cat's Claw, to draw the Chesnut out of the Fire.[119]

As Ormsby-Lennon acknowledges, the *Tritical Essay* is designed to show the 'quotidian' nature of commonplacing and the ways in which it undermines the value of learned allusion.[120] Commonplaces sometimes display ambiguous gradations of accuracy, leaving other readers unable to account for the real origins of words and phrases. Rumbold's annotations catch a particularly wide range of associations. For man as a 'Microcosm or little World', for example, Rumbold offers the 'ancient theory' and refers to its rehearsal in 'conventional analogical thinking about the human condition', laying particular emphasis on its uses in modern astrology.[121] For the idea about the 'BodyPolitick', Rumbold refers to Aristotle, *Politics*, I.i. (which itself has origins in Plato's *Republic*, ii.368e-369b). The annotations are particularly full for the comment about the 'fortuitous Concourse of Atoms' in Epicurean Philosophy. (For 'the Foundation is weak, and whatever Superstructure you raise upon it, must of Necessity fall to the Ground', one could also cite Quintilian, *Orator's Education*, VIII.vi.50.) The commonplaced pseudo-allusions encourage a search for their (often multiple) origins: and in the first paragraph of this essay, Swift has assembled a wide range of fragments which like the accidental collision of atoms to which the paragraph refers 'cannot cohere' and 'must separate and break in pieces': as Smollett quips in *The History and Adventures of An Atom* (1769), 'the word *atomos,* or *atime*, it signifies a scoundrel, Sir, or as it were, Sir, a thing of no estimation.'[122] The prose simultaneously suggests and rejects the importance of an argumentative sequence, alluding to texts and stories that are themselves often the product of broken sequences or rearranged arguments.[123] It is a style that might have been produced by the language machine in *Gulliver's Travels,* but without the professor's desire to restore order and coherence: 'the Professor shewed me several Volumes in large Folio already collected, of broken Sentences, which he intended to piece together, and out of those rich Materials to give the World a compleat Body of all Arts and Sciences'.[124]

---

[119] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, pp.22-4.
[120] Ormsby-Lennon, 'Commonplace Swift', p.17.
[121] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.22, n.7.
[122] Tobias Smollett, *The History and Adventures of An Atom*, ed. O M Brack (London and Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), p.7.
[123] Scholars have long contested the sequence of Alexander the Great's conquests, for example, and Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* proposes a re-ordered Epicurean narrative about the origin of the universe. Cf. Claude Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.15: 'Swift's catalogues are more often than not embedded in the headlong copiousness of the narrative itself.'
[124] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.269.

As argued by Ronald Paulson, Swift focussed on 'concealing, absorbing, containing, metamorphosing, and/or utilising' classical allusions, and hinted at these processes in *Vanbrug's House* (1703): 'Modern Rhymers strive to blast / The Poetry of Ages past' and 'from it's Ruins build their own'.[125] However, as these lines suggest, Swift also reorganised these pieces into elaborate new shapes and structures. Much like Bernard Mandeville, he began this process by turning scholarly problems — lacunae, lost information, editorial errors — into stylistic flourishes.[126] As Claude Rawson notes in *Swift and Others,* Swift relied on a series of 'mock-editorial routines' even when he indulged in the satirist's 'dismissive schoolmasterly hauteur.'[127]

One type of mock-editorial routine that Swift explored was the footnote, which can, officially, supply the source of an allusion and claim to repair misunderstanding. A famous example occurs in *On Poetry: A Rapsody* (1733), a complex and controversial poem much altered (and censored) by its first readers because of its highly inflammatory attacks on kingship.[128] This poem ostensibly examines a competitive, embittered, pseudo-learned world of modern poetry (parodying, among many other texts, Horace's *Ars Poetica*), and it proffers advice to writers who aspire to become poet laureate. However, alongside the advice about laureateship, Swift behaves as a knavish imitator of a poet laureate himself, criticising the king he would otherwise be required to praise if he held such a position.[129] Owing to its dangerous political suggestions and numerous amendments by early readers, the poem exists in various conflicting states which have needed careful editorial handling. As Karian shows, the poem was diversely copied and revised, meaning that 'no manuscript survives which contains the entire poem': Swift's lines about bishops, George II, and the nature of kingship were 'always appended to a printed text' by individuals (such as Orrery) who had access to a manuscript

---

[125] Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking*, p.7. For *Vanbrug's House*, Williams, *Poems*, i.81. See the variant on these lines, ibid., i.110: 'So *Modern* Rimers wisely *Blast* / The Poetry of Ages past, / Which after they have overthrown, / They from its Ruins build their own.'

[126] See the long history of densely intertextual doggerel rhymes produced by 'cynic' (*kynikos*, dog) philosophers in antiquity, which often claimed to have missing parts or suffer from lapses of memory. Accounted for by M.D. Usher, 'Diogenes' Doggerel: Chreia and Quotation in Cynic Performance', *The Classical Journal* 104:3 (2009), pp. 207-223 (p.208). Also, on learned *circulatores* or rhymesters in the ancient world, Alan D. Booth, 'Allusion to 'The Circulator' by Persius in Horace?', *Greece and Rome*, 27:2 (1908), pp.166-169.

[127] Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.27.

[128] Williams, *Poems*, ii.639-40. Cf. Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, p.107-20.

[129] The poem as advice for aspiring laureates is accounted for by Melanie Maria Just, *Jonathan Swift's On Poetry: A Rapsody*: *A Critical Edition With A Historical Introduction And Commentary* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003), pp.39-48.

source for them, but they were not themselves printed until 1758.[130] In modern editions, these difficult lines are either 'subordinated to footnotes, relegated to an appendix, indented and italicized, bracketed, incorporated seamlessly into the main text, or excluded altogether.'[131] The poem closes on a passage about translation, which has attracted much scholarly speculation regarding its lacunae. Mock-editorial conventions accompany this passage of the text, including '*Cætera desiderantur*', and a footnote:

> Translate me now some Lines, if you can,
> From *Virgil, Martial, Ovid, Lucan*;
> They could all Pow'r in Heaven divide,
> And do no Wrong to either Side:
> They'll teach you how to split a Hair,
> *Give - - - - - - and *Jove* an equal Share.
> Yet, why should we be lac'd so straight;
> I'll give my * * * * Butter-weight.
> And Reason good; for many a Year
> - - - - never intermeddl'd here:
> Nor, tho' his Priests be duly paid,
> Did ever we *desire* his Aid:
> We now can better do without him,
> Since *Woolston* gave us Arms to rout him.
> * * * * * *Cætera desiderantur* * * * * *
>
> * *Divisum Imperium cum* Jove Cæsar *habet*.[132]

The footnote might play a number of roles, here, despite officially supplying a piece of clarifying information. For example, the line 'could all Pow'r in Heaven divide' might suggest *Paradise Lost* (IV.110-12), 'Evil be thou my good; by thee at least / Divided empire with heaven's king I hold / by thee', but it also seems to suggest a translation of some of the footnoted line, ambiguously hovering between English and Latin sources.[133] Following on, the

---

[130] On the political suggestions (that King George is feeble and that Walpole is his regent, for example), see Williams' headnote in *Poems*, ii.639-40; and Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, pp.107-120. Williams displays the passages of the poem — brought forward by Lord Orrery in the Williams Collection copy (393), and others adduced by Walter Scott, *Works*, xiv.328 — which were suppressed because of their political insinuations. They can be found in the appendix, *Poems*, ii.658-9. Many of the suppressed lines attack Kings. See, for example, the passage which should begin at line 410 [ll.31-5]: 'Thus think on Kings, ye Name denotes / Hogs, Asses, Wolves, Baboons, & Goats / To represent in figure just / Sloth, Folly, Rapine, Mischief, Lust / O!'. Cf. George P. Mayhew, *Rage or Raillery: The Swift Manuscripts at the Huntingdon Library* (San Marino: California, 1967), p.99, for further discussion of the political sensitivities.

[131] Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, pp.103-4 (p.103). Cf. *Different Styles of Poetry: Verses by Wentworth Dillon, Fourth Earl of Roscommon, Thomas Parnell, & Jonathan Swift*, ed. Robert Mahony (Dublin: Cadenus Press, 1978), Appendix III. Ibid., p.137, 'the present edition of *On Poetry* indents and italicises certain passages containing politically sensitive references.'

[132] Williams, *Poems*, ii.657.

[133] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV.110-2, p.221. Cf. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, III.310-314.

various lacunae make this passage of the text look as though it was put together by chance or ruined by time, leaving Swift (or the version of Swift created by the printer) in the position of a parodic editor (full scholarly lacunae are simulated, not just the dashes of Restoration satire). The footnote is possibly both the source and the explanation of the deleted word in the asterisked line, an ideal scenario for Swift in which the allusion simply refers back to itself. It also suggests answers for further blanks (eg. '[Jove] never intermeddl'd here').[134] There is still only limited agreement about what some of these names might have been, such is the complexity and carefully managed ambiguity of the note and the lacuna (or lacunae) to which it refers: both Faulkner (1762) and Karian take '[Jove] never intermeddl'd here' to be the truth (drawing on the note itself), but Just suggests that 'Christ' might have been the really dangerous answer, because of the attack on Woolston in the last full line (a figure much hated by Swift because of his argument that there is no 'sanctuary' in the miracles of Christ).[135] As Just shows (by filling in the asterisked passages in her edition), Swift might also have intended 'Give *George* and *Jove* an equal Share', and 'I'll give my Monarch Butter-Weight', so that the footnote insinuates a classical precedent for the King ('Cæsar') as part of its parodic function.[136] These ambiguities may never be resolved. As Anthony Grafton has argued, the footnote serves the satirist who acts as 'his own explicator' because it forces the reader to experience the text at the same distance as that from which the poet experiences antiquity; an effect which, in satire, traps the reader into an intricate exchange of pedantries.[137] Perhaps the most vexing aspect of the footnote is that it rests on a line from Virgil which is not authentic: the tag was circulated in the eighteenth century, but it does not appear in any of the verifiable Virgilian texts, implicating it in the clumsiness and hair-splitting satirised in the poem.[138]

It was a recurring pattern of behaviour, in Swift, to make use of scholarly apparatus to give controversial or aggressively satirical texts a thin semblance of learned respectability. By

---

[134] These various readings contribute to Karian's overall argument that 'the reader is alerted to the existence of missing material and is therefore invited to supply the missing text through either inference or access to a manuscript source.' *Print and Manuscript*, p.116.

[135] For the use of 'Jove' see Rogers, *Poems*, p.535. For 'Christ' see Melanie Maria Just, *On Poetry*, p.278, and *The Major Works*, ed. Angus Ross and David Woolley (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p.548. For Woolston's texts see *Discourses On The Miracles of our Saviour* (London: 'printed for the author', 1727-9). Woolston's argument would have been deeply suspicious, to Swift: 'But to show, that there's no Sanctuary for them in the Miracles of our Saviour, I write this Discourse', (first discourse, p.2).

[136] See the filled-in names in Melanie Maria Just, *On Poetry*, p.31.

[137] Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.28.

[138] Cf. Domenico Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, tr. E. F. M. Benecke (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp.142-3. Cf. its recurrence in Boswell, *Life*, ii.176. Such a Virgilian footnote was also used in *A Beautiful Young Nymph Going To Bed* (1734), Williams, *Poems*, ii.582-3. This time, the tag is not spurious (*Aeneid*, iv.467-8), but it does not seem to account for the whole meaning of the line. Williams speculated that it 'was probably, also, accompanied by a recollection of Gay's opera *Polly*, 1729.' (*Poems*, ii.582, n.46.)

parodying scholarly conventions, he invoked an 'old way' of writing courtly satire, such as the infamous *Poems on Several Occasions, by The Right Honourable The E. of R——* (1680), in which 'allusions' to ancient writers playfully marked an absence of genuine classical sources, and in which dashes served as euphemism or did not adequately mask the target.[139] Swift's *On Dreams: An Imitation of Petronius* (1724) was ostensibly written in response to one line from the *Satyricon* — 'Somnia quæ mentes ludunt volitantibus umbris, &' ('dreams flit playfully across the mind like shadows, etc.') — but, after this epigraph, the poem immediately presents a series of sketches of contemporary vice which do not come from Petronius.[140] Swift probably took the obscure line from a disreputable Dutch variorum edition, and in his own copy of the poem filled in the last 'W——' with 'Walpole', emphasising its function as contemporary satire.[141] This habit began as early as the first version of *Baucis and Philemon* (*The Story of Baucis and Philemon*, c.1706), which was read and revised by Addison. The manuscript of the poem came with the subtitle 'Ov. Met. 1. 8', leaving the nature of the literary relationship ambiguous while acknowledging the origin of the story.[142] However, in the printed version, simply called *Baucis and Philemon*, the subtitle was amended (possibly by Swift, possibly by the printer) to '*Imitated, From the Eighth Book of* OVID', which brought genre into play but set the poem against a weaker kind of pseudo-learning.[143] Immediately after its publication the poem was pirated and absorbed into other miscellanies, but with the curious emendation in one case to '*The Metamorphosis of* Baucis *and* Philemon, *Burlesqu'd; from the* 8th *Book of* Ovid' — which sharpened the emphasis on genre.[144]

This habit of adducing classical sources as a buttress to (or recovery of) satire was also important to one of his poems to Patrick Delany. *To Doctor Delany, On The Libels Writ Against Him* (1730) was designed to make Delany feel better about the mockery he suffered in verse at

---

[139] For the argument that the Rochester collection was itself a 'commemoration' of an already faded Libertine satirical culture, see Paul Davis' introduction to Rochester, *Poems*, p.1. For Swift's comment about the 'old Way' of writing, see Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.516: 'not with A—'s and B—'s according to the old Way, which would be unknown in a few Years.'

[140] Williams, *Poems*, ii.363. First printed in the 1727 *Miscellanies.*

[141] See the restored line in Loeb, 'somnia ludunt errantes oculos effossaque protulit aurum in lucem tellus' ('As when dreams deceive our wandering eyes in the heavy slumber of night, and under the spade the earth yields gold to the light of day'), compared with Swift's quotation. Swift might have taken the older line from a range of editions, including the often reprinted *Satyricon Cum Fragmentis Albae Graecae Recuperatis Anno 1688,* ed. François Nodot (London: Churchill,1693), p.121; or *T. Petronii Arbitri Satyricon,* ed. Johannes Bielkium (Amsterdam: Bielkium, 1702), p.117. The same line also occurs in the famous Petronius, *Titi Petronii Arbitri Satyricon*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Peter Burman, 1743), suggesting that it was accepted throughout the eighteenth century. On the detail of Swift's corrected edition of his own poem see Williams, *Poems*, ii.363. Swift originally read Petronius at Moor Park, but there is no record of which edition he read. See Walsh, *Tale*, p.274.

[142] Williams, *Poems*, i.88-9. MS in the Pierpont Morgan Library, Fountaine Collection.

[143] Ibid., i.110. It is difficult to ascertain whether the subtitle is authorial. Woolley claims that Swift 'concerned himself with the preparation or publication of […] "Baucis and Philemon" and "To Mrs. Biddy Floyd" in Tonson's *Poetical Miscellanies. The Sixth Part* (2 May)'. *Correspondence*, i.228, n.5. The subtitle may have been at Addison or Tonson's suggestion.

[144] Williams, *Poems*, i.110.

the hands of Sheridan (and others), 'for several months.'[145] Swift's poem begins by comparing military and literary assault. The lines 'When at a Skirmish first he hears / The Bullets whistling round his Ears, / Will duck his Head, aside will start, / And feel a trembling at his Heart:' are followed by 'An Author thus who pants for Fame / Begins the World with Fear and Shame, / When first in Print, you see him dread / Each Pot-gun levell'd at his Head:'. Swift eventually reassures his friend by saying ''Tis Eminence makes Envy rise', but that if he wants to write poems free from criticism, he should write poems in service of the state: 'The *Irish Senate's* Praises sing'. The poem moves between the consolation of Delany and a comparison of his enemies to Grub-Street writers, leaving it unclear as to how Delany was supposed to respond. 'On me', Swift says, 'when Dunces are satyrick, / I take it for a Panegyrick.' The epigraph to this poem is difficult to understand, at first: '— Tanti tibi not sit opaci / Omnis arena Tagi' (Juvenal, *Satires*, iii.54-5, 'don't prize all the sand of rich Tagus').[146] This comes from the famously complex (though carefully constructed) speech of Umbricius in the third satire, which Juvenal sets up with a short prologue.[147] Ostensibly, Umbricius is Juvenal's friend leaving Rome for Cumae in the countryside, but his speech also carries out an invective against the many vices and corruptions of the city, most of which derive from (what he perceives as) Greek influences, modern religion, moral bankruptcy, and avarice (suggesting that he might represent some of the views of Juvenal himself). Swift might be using the epigraph to align himself with Umbricius, here, which would be apt because Umbricius has sometimes been interpreted as a critic of his own land and a 'civic hero in the mould of Virgil's Aeneas', which may have evoked Swift's activities as the Irish patriot (an established role for him by 1730). However, the line is mainly focussed on dissuading Delany from listening to money-obsessed critics or joining their ranks: they 'Must dye for Want of Food and Rayment, / If Scandal did not find them Payment.' The sand of Tagus was thought to contain gold in antiquity.[148] The allusion carries out the double purpose of consoling Delany with humour and stigmatising the pecuniary obsessions of Grub-Street critics (though, in this case, the critique was provoked by and is aimed at the activity of Sheridan and other friends).[149]

---

[145] Williams, *Poems*, ii.499 (and 486-7). Cf. Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.309.
[146] Ibid., ii.499. Modern editions have 'arena' as 'harena'. Loeb: 'Don't prize all the sand of rich Tagus and all the gold that's rolled into the sea.'
[147] Cf. S. C. Fredericks, 'The Function of the Prologue (1-20) in the Organisation of Juvenal's Third Satire', *Phoenix*, 27:1 (1973), pp.62-7.
[148] Cf. Ovid, *Amores*, I.xv.34.
[149] On the difficulty of accounting for the Umbricius episode as a sequence of Juvenal's own views, see Gregory A. Staley, 'Juvenal's Third Satire: Umbricius' Rome, Vergil's Troy', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 45 (2000), pp.85-98.

This use of ambiguous or erroneous sources to vindicate or otherwise convert unpalatable subject matter extended into Swift's private life. In a letter to Mrs. Whiteway on the 29th April 1740, he spoke about suffering from a cold, and said that 'the whole last night I was equally struck as if I had been in Phalaris' brazen bull, and roared as loud for eight or nine hours'.[150] From Diodorus Siculus, Swift would have learnt that the 'Brazen Bull' was a device employed by the Emperors Hadrian and Diocletian for the murder of Christians.[151] Victims were burnt inside a bronze sculpture of a bull which had an intricate network of pipes and tubes designed to convert the screams into the sounds of the animal, suggesting a quite different experience for onlookers. For Swift, this had special meaning because it suggested — by name — the real 'Phalaris', which might have recalled his own troubles with Richard Bentley and the contested epistles.[152] Indeed, Swift had alluded to the Brazen Bull of Phalaris in *A Tale of A Tub* with sophisticated irony.[153] The real brazen bull (a famous object in the ancient world) was looted from Phalaris' stronghold on Cape Ecnomus by the Carthaginian General Hamilcar Barca in the first Punic War. After the fall of Carthage in 146 B.C., Scipio returned all looted objects to Sicily (as recorded in Polybius, *Histories*, xii.25, corroborated by Cicero's *In Verrem*, iv.33), including the Brazen Bull (both texts were in Swift's library).[154] Christian legend in the Middle Ages held that Saints Eustace, Antipas, and Priscillian were killed by such a device in the first century A.D., but this is now discredited.[155] For Swift, the Brazen Bull would have been a suggestive piece of stolen property from the ancient world, which moved between ancient texts as well as geographical locations. His allusions to the Brazen Bull might suggest a parody of the way in which the object was stolen and moved around in antiquity, in service of different narratives.

---

[150] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iv.615. Also see his use of a classical allusion to palliate a severe case of haemorrhoids (or 'piles'), in a letter to the Earl of Pembroke: 'the Case is what Lucan expresses in the War between Cesar and Pompey; *Et Pila minantia Pilis*.' Ibid., i.253. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, i.7.

[151] On Hadrian and Diocletian see Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, ix.18-19, which was very likely to have been Swift's source for the allusion. Swift took excerpts from Diodorus Siculus in 1696/7, as we can tell from the 'Moor Park Reading List'. See Walsh, *Tale*, p.273. There was a copy of George Booth's 1700 edition of the *Bibliotheca Historica* in Marsh's Library (formerly K3. 2. 28, now D. 1512). Diocletian's eccentric, violent persecution of Christians was a fixation of eighteenth-century scholarship. See Laurence Echard, *The Roman History From The Settlement of the Empire by Augustus Caesar to the Removal of the Imperial Seat by Constantine the Great*, 2 vols. (London: Gillyflower, 1698), ii.550: 'they were Scourg'd to Death, had their Flesh torn off with Pincers, and mangled with broken Pots, were cast to Lions, Tigers, and other wild Beasts', etc.

[152] Cf. Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.28, n.55.

[153] 'Section IV' of *A Tale of A Tub*, 'the *Bulls of Colchos* are recorded to have *brazen feet;* […] However the terrible *roaring* peculiar to their Lineage, was preserved'. Walsh, *Tale*, p.71. Wotton missed the allusion. Walsh does not adduce Phalaris, but Jason's yoking of fire-breathing bulls to carts on Colchis. See p.389, n.20.

[154] For his many editions of Cicero, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.405-14. Polybius, ibid., ii. 1481-2.

[155] Cf. Adrienne Mayor, *Gods and Robots: Myths, Machines, and Ancient Dreams of Technology* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018), p.184.

From these examples, it is possible to observe that Swift's uses of mock-scholarly footnoting and lacunae informed and supplemented the parodic function of the classical allusions themselves: suggesting that Swift was at once determined to exhibit and question the relevance of classical tags and commonplaces to his compositions. Swift was aware of the argument, in the eighteenth century, that classicism was a burden on modern literature, and that modern writers had become slaves to the influence of ancient writers.[156] However, he implied and argued the opposite: that writers from antiquity had deliberately concealed themselves from him, or said everything before.[157] As recorded by Laetitia Pilkington, he once remarked that 'those anticipating Rascals the Ancients, have left nothing for us poor Moderns to say', a line with which Pilkington herself agreed.[158] From Temple, Swift also picked up the notion that books and writers long predate even the earliest of surviving poets, and that there were 'Ancients then':

> For the Fragments of *Manethon* about the Antiquities of *Egypt*, the Relations in *Justin* concerning the *Scythian* Empire, and many others in *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus,* as well as the Records of *China,* make such Excursions beyond the periods of time given us by the Holy Scriptures that we are not allowed to reason upon them. And this disagreement in it self, after so great a Part of the World became Christian, may have contributed to the loss of many Ancient Authors. For *Solomon* tells us, even in his Time, of Writing many Books there was no end; and whoever considers the Subject and the Stile of *Job*, which by many is thought more ancient than *Moses,* will hardly think it was written in an Age or Country that wanted either Books or Learning; and yet he speaks of the Ancients then, and their Wisdome, as we do now.[159]

Not only was it clear to Temple that the ancients were getting further away, but that they also had their own ancients drifting further into obscurity.[160] John Bernard, who accounted for this phenomenon in his *Lives of the Roman Emperors* (1698), claimed that the Emperor Hadrian took 'more delight in the Antient Writings than the Modern', aligning Hadrian with a stance one might take in the 'Battle of the Books'.[161] Because of this belief that antiquity was an expanding rather than a definite period of time, Swift did not seriously believe in a golden age

---

[156] See John Dennis, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (London: Richard Parker, 1701), p.6. Cf. Paul Davis, *Translation and The Poet's Life: The Ethics of Translating in English Culture, 1646-1726* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.171.
[157] Cf. a reply to Sheridan, 1718, 'I went in vain to look for Eupolis'. Williams, *Poems*, iii.988.
[158] Laetitia Pilkington, *Memoirs,* p.229. Cf. pp.50-51, 'our degen'rate Days, / Produce no mighty Souls like these'.
[159] Temple, *Essays*, p.4.
[160] This was one of the few points of agreement in the English strand of the battle of the books. See Wotton, *Defence,* p.22.
[161] John Bernard, *The Lives of the Roman Emperors from Domitian, Where Suetonius Ends, to Constantine the Great*, 2 vols. (London: Charles Harper, 1698), i, 62.

of originality, and mocked the idea in *Vanbrug's House*: 'times of old, when Time was young, / And Poets their own Verses sung'.[162]

To compensate, he constructed fantasies about bringing ancient writers up from the underworld, either to attack them or to become their best friends.[163] For example, in *The Beasts Confession to the Priest* (1732):

> I own, the Moral not exact;
> Besides, the Tale is false in Fact;
> And, so absurd, that could I raise up
> From Fields *Elyzian*, fabling *Esop*;
> I would accuse him to his Face
> For libelling the *Four-foot* Race.[164]

Encountering antiquity in such a way allowed Swift to conjecture on the way it might have worked. For example, in *Apollo: Or, A Problem Solved* (1735) Swift consults Ovid on the metal used for wheel-spokes and then consults Pliny on Apollo's singing voice, only to conclude that '*Apollo* had no Beard'.[165] His longest problem-solving was *A Discourse To Prove The Antiquity Of The English Tongue* (posthumously published, 1765). Rumbold describes this text as a 'compilation of learned puns and wordplay, supported by preposterously invented anecdotes', parodying the beliefs and rhetoric of professional philologists. The speaker in the text believes that '*Philology* hath been neglected' and that philologists are 'the greatest authors', a view which is clearly different from Swift's own. The text might be read in different ways. Kelly, for example, has seen the parody of etymologists in this text as an instrument of Swift's conservatism, because it shows how puns deviate from an established norm in absurd or perhaps dangerous ways.[166] However, and perhaps more to the point, Rumbold shows that the text was possibly intended for an *Intelligencer* paper, which might suggest a more concerted effort to show the ludicrousness of professional philologists (Bentley is mocked early on as 'our

---

[162] Williams, *Poems*, i.79. Cf. Samuel Butler, 'A Burlesque Pindarick Ode', *The Posthumous Works of Mr. Samuel Butler* (London: 1732), p.2. 'For as those Times, the *Golden Age* they call, / In which there was no Gold at all.'
[163] On writers as shelf-marks or stacked books, see Walsh, *Tale*, p.147. Orrery noted that 'Had he [Swift] lived in the same age with Horace he would have approached nearer to him, than any other poet'. Orrery, *Remarks*, p.42. However, Orrery also attempted to dissociate him from Horace, for reasons that are not clearly defined. See *Remarks*, pp.66-7. Cf. 'When I am reading a Book, whether wise or silly, it seemeth to me to be alive and talking to me', *Thoughts On Various Subjects,* Davis, *Prose*, iv.253.
[164] Williams, *Poems*, ii.607.
[165] Ibid., ii.598.
[166] A. C. Kelly, 'Swift's Satire Against Modern Etymologists in *The Antiquity of the English Tongue*', *South Atlantic Review*, 48:2 (1983), pp.21-36 (p.21).

illustrious modern star').[167] Swift's speaker suggests English origins of famous Greek and Latin words, to prove the 'Antiquity' of the language. 'Andromache', for example:

Her father was a Scotch gentleman, of a noble family still subsisting in that antient kingdom. But, being a foreigner in Troy, to which city he led some of his countrymen in the defence of Priam, as *Dictys Cretensis* learnedly observes; Hector fell in love with his daughter, and the father's name was *Andrew Mackay.* The young Lady was called by the same name, only a little softened to the Grecian accent.[168]

The speaker's reliance on Dictys Cretensis as an observer and scribe is is important, because Dictys Cretensis' account of the Trojan war was taken literally by readers in the Middle Ages, despite its inauthenticity: aligning the speaker with disreputable (though deceptive) sources of information.[169] In the next account — of how Alexander the Great got his name — Swift's speaker goes on to make the claim that all posterity has lived under a 'delusion':

Alexander the Great was very fond of eggs roasted in hot ashes. As soon as his cooks heard he was come home to dinner or supper, they called aloud to their under-officers, *All eggs under the Grate*: Which, repeated every day at noon and evening, made strangers think it was that Prince's real name, and therefore gave him no other; and posterity hath been ever since under the same delusion.

The discourse finally defines the word 'Roman', a definition which the speaker states is 'clear enough to convince the most incredulous', though it puns on '*Jesta*' (suggesting English 'jests') and '*Gesta*':

The word *Roman* itself is perfectly English, like other words ending in *man* or *men,* as Hangman, Drayman, Huntsman, and several others. It was formerly spelt *Row-man,* which is the same with *Waterman.* And therefore, when we read of *Jesta* (or, as it is corruptly spelt, *Gesta*) *Romanorum,* it is to be understood of the rough manner of *jesting* used by watermen; who, upon the sides of rivers, would *row man o' um.* This I think is clear enough to convince the most incredulous.[170]

The pedantry of the *Discourse* is not only ludicrous in itself, but built on punning misrepresentations of the languages (the supposedly corrupt spelling of '*Gesta*', for example). Though the piece is an elaborate parody of philologists and Swift can not be simply (or

---

[167] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.230, n.1. Cf. Woolley, *Intelligencer*, p.270. In the headnote to the text, Rumbold adduces Hugh MacCurtin's *A Brief Discourse in Vindication of the Antiquity of Ireland* (1717), which Swift may have had in mind (p.230).
[168] Ibid., p.234, n.25.
[169] Ibid., p.235, n.26.
[170] Ibid., p.240, n.64. Rumbold parses '*Jesta*' by referring to the *Gesta Romanorum*, 'the deeds of the Romans'. For Swift's love of English-Latin puns, see Paul Child, 'Jonathan Swift's Latin Quacks: "A Consultation of Four Physicians Upon A Lord That Was Dying"', *The Cambridge Quarterly,* 40:1 (2011), pp.21-35. The *Consultation* is in Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, Appendix J, pp.612-4.

comfortably) aligned with the speaker, there is one possible sense in which they are akin: both perceive antiquity as a remote (and therefore useful) store of contestable information, which might be marshalled in service of particular arguments which suit a personal perspective or endeavour (which, though it suits a satirist, is not appropriate to a professional philologist).

With the same opportunism of his parodied speaker who admires and constructs (in his case bogus) philology, Swift often suggested that antiquity had found him by itself, rather than the other way around: and he inflected this belief with a range of satirical voices. 'I Had last Week sent me by an unknown Hand a passage out of *Plato,* with some Hints how to apply it' (*Examiner* No.32);[171] 'upon the Cover of these Papers, I casually observed written in large Letters, the two following Words, DETUR DIGNISSIMO; which, for ought I knew, might contain some important Meaning' (dedication to Lord Somers, *Tale of A Tub*);[172] and of Lord Carteret, he said '*Greek* and *Latin* Books might be found every Day in his Dressing-Room, if it were carefully searched; and there is Reason to suspect, that some of the said Books have been privately conveyed to him by *Tory* Hands'.[173] Swift occasionally acknowledged the discomfort of receiving lines from antiquity in this way. In *It's Out At Last,* for example, ostensibly a Whig attack on the ministry (in the voice of a persona adopted by Swift for this satiric purpose) he wrote the following:

> It was pleasantly said by a *Swedish* Poet,
>
> *Timeo Danos Dona ferentes.*
>
> I am afraid of the *Danes* when they bring Presents.[174]

Ian Gadd and Bertrand Goldgar point out that this playfully manipulates Virgil, *Aeneid,* ii.49 for its own gain, while expressing a sense of unease about the nature of allusion in the process of doing so ('I am afraid [….] when they bring Presents').[175] In each case Swift deflected responsibility onto the actions of providence or an 'unknown Hand', leaving him to break

---

[171] Ellis, *Examiner*, p.283. Ellis identifies the Plato passage as *Symposium* 189-92, and the allusion is used to show how '*Parties* do not only *split* a Nation, but every Individual among them' (p.284).
[172] 'To the Right Honourable John *Lord* Somers', Walsh, *Tale*, p.16. Walsh adduces the final words of Alexander the Great, 'respondit, dignissimum', as recorded in Justinus, *Epitoma Historiarum Phillipicarum*, XII.xv.8. Swift might also be referring to the common tag *detur digniori,* 'let it be given to the more worthy'. See *Tale,* p.329, n.3. It is unclear as to whether the *Tale* writer can really read Latin ('none of the Authors I employ, understood *Latin*'), and his pursuit of the definition, here, satirises — among other things, such as cod-Latin — the confusion as to who is 'worthy' enough in modern literature.
[173] *A Vindication of His Excellency John, Lord Carteret*, Davis, *Prose*, xii.151.
[174] Gadd and Goldgar, *English Political Writings 1711-1714*, p.184.
[175] Cf. ibid., p.21 for an account of this Whig persona and the comic suggestions of this paper: not least that this fake Whig is far behind the times, because he speculates that the Ministry is conversing with the French when, in fact, this was well known. Gadd and Goldgar speculate on the 'faint' possibilities of other political suggestions, pp.21-2.

and remake his allusions without comprising the scholarly integrity or moral centre of his own work (however notional these might have been), but there is also a suggestion that he was at the centre of a constantly moving classical library that gravitated towards him by chance. The employment of hacks in the *Tale*, then, to 'furnish [the speaker] with Hints and Materials' rather than him reading for himself, was a fantasy about the reversal of time and Swift's own position as a receiver of gifts on which he thrived as a disrespectful alluder.[176] Perhaps ironically, the appearance of antiquity became a feature of Swift's legacy. Orrery suggested the following: 'FAULKNER'S edition, at least the first four volumes of it (for there are now eight) were published, by the permission and connivance, if not by the particular appointment of the Dean himself. But the several pieces are thrown together without any order or regularity whatever: so that like the antient chaos which contained an immense collection of various treasures, they remain in their state of confusion *rudis indigestaque moles*'.[177]

In Swift's (perhaps exaggerated) perception of himself as a classical scholar, then, he resembled the floating island of Laputa, which receives scraps of paper from below on 'packthreads' (*OED* 1, 'strong cord or twine […] Also *figurative*'):

> In our Journey towards *Lagado* the Capital City, his Majesty ordered that the Island should stop over certain Towns and Villages, from whence he might receive the Petitions of his Subjects. And to this Purpose, several Packthreads were let down with small Weights at the Bottom. On these Packthreads the People strung their Petitions, which mounted up directly like Scraps of Paper fastned by School-boys at the End of the String that holds their Kite. Sometimes we received Wine and Victuals from below, which were drawn up by Pullies.[178]

Edmund Curll suggested that this passage 'is certainly another sarcasm upon' *Mercury: or, The Secret and Swift Messenger,* (*Key*, iii.10), the subtitle of which might have influenced these 'packthreads' which deliver messages: 'Shewing How a Man may with *Privacy* and *Speed* communicate his *Thoughts* to a Friend at any distance.'[179] The pamphlet contains the following poem by Francis Kiniston to Mercury, which, if Swift did read it, would have vindicated his own secret allusions to classical sources:

---

[176] Walsh, *Tale*, p.17: 'In two Days, they brought me ten Sheets of Paper, fill'd up on every Side. They swore to me, that they had ransack'd whatever could be found in the Characters of *Socrates, Aristides, Epaminondas, Cato, Tully, Atticus,* and other hard Names, which I cannot now recollect.'
[177] Orrery, *Remarks*, p.48.
[178] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.233 (III.ii.). Womersley pays particular attention to 'Packthreads'.
[179] John Wilkins, *Mercury: or, The Secret and Swift Messenger* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1694), title page. For Curll's comment, see *The Flying Island, &c. Being A Key to Gulliver's Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Glubbdubdribb, Luggnagg, and Japan. In A Third Letter to Dean Swift* (London: Edmund Curll, 1726), p.10.

So proving what is said of influence,
May now be said of his intelligence,
They neither of them having such a quality
As a relation to Locality:
No places distance hindring their Commerce,
Who freely traffick through the Universe;
And in a minute can a Voyage make
Over the Oceans universal Lake.
This Son of thine, could any words or praise
His Learning, Worth, or Reputation raise,
We should'st be Suiters to him to bestow
Encomiums on *himself*, which *we* do owe
Unto his worth, and use that Eloquence,
Which as his own, must claim preheminence:
For thee, 'tis Glory enough thou hast a Son
Of Art, that hath thy self in Art out done.[180]

David Womersley adduces a further allusion in Laputa's packthreads to Lucian's *Icaromennipus* (25), 'in which Zeus receives supplications from the world below through holes in the floor of his palace.'[181] This would have been an especially apt allusion for Swift to make, because the *Icaromennipus* itself preserved scraps of ancient Greek predecessors such as Aristophanes' *Clouds, Peace*, and Aesop's *Fables,* allowing them to 'traffick' — in Kiniston's words — 'through the Universe'.[182] Laputa, then, as it draws information to itself with threads from the ground, gestures towards an ever-expanding background of ancient texts that are under threat of disappearing altogether: an image that characterises Swift's acquisition of classical allusions, and his sense of how transient they could be.

[180] Ibid., 'To Mercury the Elder' (unpaginated).
[181] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.233.
[182] David Marsh, *Lucian and The Latins: Humor and Humanism in The Early Renaissance* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp.77-83.

II
Ignoring the Moderns

No, Sir, do *you* read books *through*?[1]

- Johnson

Read thorough [2]
- Swift's annotation to his own *Works*

——————————— librum
si malus est, nequeo laudare et poscere.[3]

- Juvenal

Swift was concerned that resisting classical pedantry — especially in the oblique idiom examined in the first chapter of this thesis — might lead to the opposite 'Extream': to 'think all Politeness to consist in reading the daily Trash', and to defend one's reading of 'daily' literature as '*knowing the World*, and *reading Men and Manners*' (an idea he repeated on at least two occasions).[4] In this he echoed Temple's *Essay On The Ancient and Modern Learning* (1690), although Temple believed that modern literature could be important to the 'leisure of an idle man' if it was applied correctly.[5] Part of the speaker's derangement, in *A Tale of A Tub*, stems from his delight in 'how exceedingly our Illustrious *Moderns* have eclipsed the weak glimmering Lights of the *Ancients*, and turned them out of the Road of all fashionable Commerce, to a degree, that our choice Town-Wits of most refined Accomplishments, are in grave Dispute, whether there have been any *Ancients* or no.'[6]

This chapter examines how Swift himself was involved in 'reading the daily Trash', compared with his reading in antiquity. It accounts for his relationship to 'Modern' literature as it was delineated (with a satirical edge) in the *Battle of the Books*: from the time of Duns

---

[1] Boswell, *Life*, ii.226.
[2] An ambiguous note written by Swift on the inside cover of the fifth volume of *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D. D., D. S. P. D.,* ed. George Faulkner, 6 vols. (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1735). For comment, see Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1773.
[3] Juvenal, *Satires*, I.iii.40-41.
[4] *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*, in Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p. 142. Rumbold shows that the argument of the *Proposal* is a restatement of *Tatler* No.230, a text overlapping 'to a considerable degree.' This *Tatler*: Parodies, *Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, pp.89-103. Cf. *A Letter to A Young Gentleman Lately Entered Into Holy Orders* (1719): 'The Fear of being thought Pedants hath been of pernicious Consequence to young Divines. This hath wholly taken many of them off from their severer Studies in the University; which they have exchanged for Plays, Poems, and Pamphlets, in order to qualify them for Tea-Tables and Coffee-Houses. This they usually call *Polite Conversation, knowing the World,* and *reading Men instead of Books*.' Davis, *Prose*, ix.67.
[5] Temple, *Essays*, p.2.
[6] Walsh, *Tale*, p.82.

Scotus (c.1266-1308) to that of the Restoration playwrights Aphra Behn and John Dryden.[7] In doing so, the chapter affords significance to the breadth of Swift's reading in 'Modern' literature, and seeks to present a much more precise account of the reality of his reading practices and characteristics than has been hitherto available. Broadening the category of the 'Moderns' to include texts written in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance helps to supplement recent scholarship which has considered Swift's engagement with 'Modern' print culture and Grub Street writing. This work suggests that Swift saw 'Modern' literature as an index of decline.

The refocussing of 'Modern' literature towards texts written during Swift's lifetime (or from the Restoration onwards) has partly been a matter of bibliographical necessity: a considerable amount of evidence suggests that Swift was heavily involved in the kind of ephemeral Grub Street writing that was, officially, at odds with Scriblerian satire. This evidence has changed our sense of how Swift related to 'Modern' literature: so radically has it altered the perception of Swift as a 'Modern' writer that it has been described by Oakleaf as 'decentering the Dean'.[8] Rogers, for example, in 'The Uses of Miscellany: Swift, Curll, and Piracy' (2013), argued against the assumption that Swift was detached from 'hack' writing, and suggested that he was closely involved with the printing practices and even the printers of Grub Street, particularly in the London phase of his writing career (approximately 1704-14):

> For much of his life, Swift was known to his contemporaries as a miscellany author. In particular, his oeuvre was determined in large measure by his participation in the kind of *sub rosa* production that Curll made his own, and by his response to these appearances in print — most commonly in miscellanies — when he had authentic texts published. Sometimes his participation was willing, and sometimes it was not.[9]

This argument has been developed more recently by Karian, who argues that we should see Swift 'primarily as a manuscript based poet' who chose to print his poems (in particular) with an acute sense of financial opportunism — if he chose to print them at all — and with a playful awareness that they were as ephemeral as their 'Modern' competition.[10] Karian has also argued that one of the ways that we can date the texts implicated in Grub Street is to study their local literary allusions, because they are replete with fragments of other 'Modern'

---

[7] Duns Scotus is the earliest writer referred to as a 'Modern' in *The Battle of the Books,* Walsh, *Tale*, p.153.
[8] David Oakleaf, 'Decentering the Dean: Locating Jonathan Swift in Ireland and Grub Street', *Literature Compass,* 8:10 (2011), pp.690-99 (p.691).
[9] Pat Rogers, 'The Uses of the Miscellany: Swift, Curll, and piracy', *Jonathan Swift and the Eighteenth-Century Book,* pp.87-100 (p.87). Cf. Rogers' *Grub Street: Studies In A Subculture* (London: Methuen, 1972).
[10] Stephen Karian, 'Swift as a Manuscript Poet' in *Jonathan Swift and The Eighteenth-Century Book*, pp.31-51 (p.31). For a detailed study of Swift's printing habits in London, see Ian Gadd, 'Leaving the printer to his liberty: Swift and the London Book Trade, 1701-1714', ibid., pp.51-65.

texts that were circulating around the time that they were published, even if the allusions were unfriendly or distorted by satire.[11]

The narrowing of Swift's horizon of modernity has taken away the character of his numerous satires on 'Modern' literature, because it has diminished his view that writing in English had been degenerating since the Middle Ages (itself figured as a period of decline), a degeneration which he attributed to a small number of individuals and their various claims to innovation.[12] The blame laid on individuals can be seen most clearly in the *History of Poetry*. Rumbold suggests that this text was probably contrived as an April Fool's Day joke for Sheridan in 1722, suggesting limitations as to how far we can discern Swift's real views from this text. To compose the piece, Swift might have drawn on Ozell's translation of Boileau's *L'Art Poetique*, suggesting that poetic lineages are a target of the parody. The 'history of poetry' was not an established genre in this period, so Swift's composition seems more of an attempt to clarify or preserve some of his opinions rather than conform to generic expectations.[13] As Rumbold suggests, Swift 'sets himself the challenge of punning his way through' an 'extensive' survey of English poetry, ending with his friends. Overall, the *History* presents a view of literary history in which the 'Modern' is treated with distaste. The piece marks each change of historical period with a comment on its failures, with the exception of the reign of Charles I (of which Swift was defensive), which simply introduces a new generation of poets: 'At first it was a *Science* we only began to *CHAW Sr*'; 'A hundred Years after we attempted to Translate out of the Psalms'; 'In Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign I think there was but one *DI-SPENCER* of good Verses'; 'In the Reign of King *Charles* the First there was a new succession of Poets'; 'During the *Usurpation* we fell into Burlesque'; 'After the Restoration Poets became very Numerous'; 'Upon the Revolution Poetry seem'd to decline'; 'To mention those who are now alive, would be endless.'[14]

This belief in the declining standard of literary 'succession' and wariness about the increasingly large cohort of 'Modern' writers was so deeply held by Swift that it shaped the

---

[11] Ibid., p.38. Cf. Damrosch, *Life*, p.387: 'Swift, who often made use of Grub Street himself', was 'more sympathetic' than Pope, and 'saw the so-called dunces not as villains, but as victims'.

[12] It was also a commonplace to remark that the Middle Ages was itself a period of decline, which debased or misused the Latin tongue. See Temple, *Essays*, p.24. 'The *Monkish* Latin, upon this Return, was laughed out of doors, and remains only in the Inns of *Germany* or *Poland*.'

[13] *A History of Poetry* (published 1726), Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, headnote p.220.

[14] There is reason to believe that Swift saw the end of the reign of Charles I as the end of civilised language (and perhaps behaviour). In the *Proposal for Correcting*, Swift claimed that the 'Great Rebellion in Forty Two' marked the end of a flourishing of the English Language, and also said that 'from the Civil War to the present Time, I am apt to doubt whether the Corruptions in our Language have not at least equalled the Refinements of it; and these Corruptions very few of the best Authors in our Age have wholly escaped', ibid., p.138. Cf. Wagstaff's suspicion of 'free-thinking' carried by 'converted Rumpers' into the courts of '*Charles* the Second', ibid., p.280, n. 68-70. Swift also mocks Cromwell's crass conversation in *Hints Towards An Essay On Conversation* (possibly c.1710): 'It [crass language] seemeth to have been introduced among us by *Cromwell*, who, by preferring the Scum of the People, made it a Court Entertainment, of which I have heard many Particulars.' Ibid., p.179, n.20.

vocabulary he chose to condemn 'Modern' authors and their unreliable methods of composition. He marshalled a range of fractured pseudo-allusions and recycled epithets of ambiguous origin, which Rawson would attribute to a typically 'Modern' characteristic of 'scattered discontinuity'.[15] In *A Tale of A Tub*, the hack exclaims that '*Modern Authors*' are all struggling for 'everlasting Remembrance', and that 'This, *O Universe,* is the Adventurous Attempt of me thy Secretary.'[16] As Marcus Walsh has recorded, the self-awarded epithet 'Secretary of Nature' was a piece of modern cant officially derived from Aristotle via the Byzantine *Suidae Lexicon*, but it was recycled without attribution through a large number of early modern texts as varied as John Evelyn's edition of Lucretius, Izaak Walton's life of George Herbert, and Joseph Glanvill's discussion of Descartes in the *Scepsis Scientifica* (1665).[17] The phrase itself might have been 'everlastingly remembered', but the inaccurate process by which it was preserved (recycled in dubious forms) was uncomfortably close to that by which texts might be forgotten or misconstrued. As Rawson has argued, Swift's sense of 'Modern' writing and its 'random' election of significance was governed by 'whim, affectation, and vulnerability'.[18]

It was clear to Swift that as far as a 'Modern' canon existed it promoted a sequence of figures who had brought their own corruptions to the language, such that alluding to them — with ostensible grace — was really a polite or gentlemanly form of satirical attack. Swift's perception of literary history as a sequence of individuals has been noted by Ashley Marshall, and it was shared by Pope, who asserted that ''Tis easy to mark out the general course of our poetry. Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and Dryden are the great landmarks for it.'[19] Swift's *History of England to William the Conqueror* (unknown date of composition), another of his unfinished attempts to compose a linear historical record, presented English history as an interlocking series of rulers and biographical curiosities. The text examines the major Roman emperors in preference to 'important affairs and events.'[20] In line with this particular perception of history, this chapter tracks Swift's reading from medieval literature up to the 'daily Trash' of the eighteenth century in chronological sequence, alighting on figures of vital importance to his critique of 'Modern' literature, exposing the kinds of literary allusion through which he expressed vexation about low standards of writing.

---

[15] Claude Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.15.
[16] Walsh, *Tale*, p.81.
[17] Ibid., p.396, n.1.
[18] Claude Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.15.
[19] See Ashley Marshall, *Swift and History: Politics and The English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.21: '[for Swift] the story of the past was the story of individuals.' For Pope's comment, Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.178.
[20] 'An Abstract of the History of England; from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to William the Conqueror' (provisional title), Davis, *Prose,* v.3. Also see the letter to Count De Gyllenborg, prefaced to 'A Fragment of The History from William Rufus' (provisional title), ibid., v.11.

Evidence of Swift's engagement with medieval literature is scattered and it is very difficult to ascertain what he read and believed about it.[21] Unsuccessful attempts have been made to attribute a couple of short pieces written in pseudo-'medieval' hands (not easily related to any authentic scribal practices) to Swift, and they have not been attributed to him. (Walter Scott, a notable exception, was in favour of attributing them to Swift).[22] More certainly, we know that Swift shared the prevailing Augustan distrust of Middle English, and he made no substantial use of Chaucer's works. He put forward an argument for the inferiority of English (owing to the absence of a pure Latin influence) in *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*: 'our Language is less Refined than those of *Italy, Spain,* or *France*' because 'the *Latin* tongue, in its Purity, was never in this Island'. He then blamed the inferiority of Middle English (or perhaps Anglo-Norman) on various French influences, including '*William* the *Conqueror*', who endeavoured to make it 'universal in the Kingdom' (Swift describes the language at this stage as 'the *French* Tongue with the *Saxon*', a mixture first introduced by '*Edward* the *Confessor*', spread and enforced by '*William* the *Conqueror*', helped by the reign of '*Harry* the *Second*', and then by the 'constant Intercourse between *France* and *England*').[23] In Swift's account, the language 'received most Improvement' from 'the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* reign' to 'the Great Rebellion in Forty Two.'[24] Swift's accounts of the language in this text have been much suspected.[25] Samuel Johnson suggested that Swift's ideas bore no relationship to any other linguistic work of the early eighteenth century, and that it was an eccentric view engendered by Swift's lack of education in the 'general nature of language': an ironic statement, since the proposal is often taken to be a rare example of Swift's sincerity. If it was not sincere, then Swift's satirical remarks were lost on some eighteenth-century readers.[26]

---

[21] Pope's engagement is more in evidence. It has been analysed by Valerie Rumbold, in 'Pope and The Gothic Past', PhD Dissertation (University of Cambridge, 1989).

[22] See the undated poem in the V&A Forster Collection (574), which is an imitation of Chaucer. Walter Scott thought it might have been Swift's, but Harold Williams — claiming that Scott was not a good judge of Swift's hand — dismissed it. See Williams, *Poems*, iii.1144. There is also a poem written in an imitation medieval hand in the Pierpont Morgan Library: MA. 457. 22. The editors of the poetry volumes of the *CWJS* plan to dismiss it.

[23] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises,* pp.133-4. Such political suggestions about the language and its development probably came from Robert Harley. Rumbold refers to the piece as a 'compliment to Harley's judgment'. Cf. his account of Welsh, p.133, n.15.

[24] Ibid., p.138.

[25] Cf. Ibid., p.133-4, n.12, n.16.

[26] Johnson, *Lives*, iii.195. '[the proposal was] written without much knowledge of the general nature of language, and without any accurate enquiry into the history of other tongues.' On Swift's possible sincerity, see Anne Cline Kelly, 'Why Did Swift Sign His Name to "A Proposal for Correcting… The English Tongue"?', *Neophilologus,* 63:3 (1979), pp.469-80. The eighteenth century seems to have taken the proposal as sincere, as we can tell from John Oldmixon, *Reflections on Dr. Swift's Letter To The Earl of Oxford, About The English Tongue* (London: A. Baldwin, 1712).

Swift was also unusual for dismissing Chaucer's poems, with which, in Dryden's words, 'the purity of the English tongue began'.[27] We know that copies of Speght's 1602 edition of *The Workes of Our Ancient & Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer* circulated among bibliophiles and antiquaries both in Dublin and London throughout Swift's period. Bishop Stearne, Swift's predecessor at St. Patrick's Cathedral, owned a copy which was eventually stored in Marsh's Library.[28] In contrast to Swift, Pope left marginalia in a previous edition (1598) given to him by Gabriel Young, though he also acquired a 1602 (which contains no marginalia).[29] Among other things, according to Valerie Rumbold, Pope's marginalia in Speght's Chaucer is rich enough to show 'his difficulty in grasping the structure of Gothic poetry', and his reading of the *Romaunt of the Rose*.[30] Maynard Mack records that Pope did not otherwise 'mark his books either extensively or consistently.'[31] However, Pope's opinion that Chaucer was 'a master of manners and of description, and the first tale-teller in the true enlivened natural way' does not seem to have influenced Swift.[32] Since Dryden's popular *Fables Ancient and Modern* had come out in 1700, Swift could have read Chaucer in his cousin's popular translation if he did not want to encounter Middle English (though the Middle English was printed at the end of the book, in Roman type), but no allusions to this particular Dryden text have come to light: it was also stolen from Marsh's Library and never recovered, suggesting that he might not have come across it there.[33] Most of the medieval texts in Swift's library were saints' lives and theological documents collected and circulated among the Dublin clerisy (of the sort discussed in chapter 4). Swift would have read them as reference books on theological subjects which were not categorised by author: this can be ascertained from shelving marks in Marsh's library and the notes to the manuscript of the sale catalogue of Swift's own. Examples of Swift's texts, to which he did not allude, include a life of St. Ældred, Abbot of Rievaulx; the letters of St. Anselm of Canterbury; Ricardus' *Canonicus Sanctae*

---

[27] 'Preface' to *Fables Ancient and Modern,* Dryden, *Works*, vii.30.
[28] Marsh: S. T. C. 5080.
[29] See Rumbold, 'Pope and The Gothic Past', pp.46-8, especially p.47, n.2.
[30] Ibid., p.48.
[31] Ibid., p.48, and Maynard Mack, 'Pope's Copy of Chaucer', *Evidence in Literary Scholarship: Essays In Memory of James Marshall Osborne*, ed. René Wellek and Alavaro Ribeiro (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp.105-123 (p. 106). Although he did not annotate extensively, Mack records that Pope did make an index for Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*. Also see David Nokes, 'Pope's Chaucer', *Review of English Studies* 27:106 (1976), pp.180-2.
[32] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.179.
[33] See 1767 theft catalogue, K4|4|12.

Trinitatis Londoniensis (1191); and a collected works of Thomas Aquinas, which Swift could also have read in several editions in Marsh.[34]

It was typical of eighteenth-century clergymen, gentlemen, and scholars in this period not just to declare a prejudice against the Middle Ages, but also to collect histories of England which focussed almost exclusively on political or religious non-conformity under the Plantagenets.[35] As Pope wrote in the *Dunciad*, a bookshelf of medieval texts would have comprised, to the Augustan gentleman (here attributed to Theobald), 'The *Classicks* of an Age that heard of none', improbably preserved 'by spice, like mummies', a line based on a prejudice about a perceived lack of learning in the medieval world (Caxton is wrongly said to have been ignorant of Latin).[36] Beyond Chaucer, most medieval poets were generally dismissed: 'there is but little that is worth reading in Gower.'[37] It is not unexpected, then, that Swift looked to the early Tudor writers as a more stable beginning of literature in England, even though (or perhaps because) they were often writing in Latin: to this end, he read Erasmus, especially the *Moriae Encomium* or *Praise of Folly* (1509), which was a major influence on *A Tale of A Tub* — an influence which has received substantial critical attention.[38] Swift owned a range of Erasmus editions which might have been purchased during his time with William Temple (perhaps owing to Temple's own interest in Erasmus).[39] He gave his copy of Erasmus' controversial New Testament to Pope in 1714 when he left for Dublin, and inscribed it with 'Intellectum da mihi et viam' ('give me understanding and the way') next to the mid-title, a slight alteration of the Vulgate Psalm 118:144, which might have been

---

[34] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading,* i.17; i.65; iii.1593; iii.1828. There were at least six editions of Aquinas in Marsh's library, catalogued under theological headings (i.e. not under 'Aquinas') such as 'St. Paul' (the commentaries on the Pauline epistles (Antwerp: Keerbergium, 1620)), 'Political Science', and 'Nature' (in this case the 18 vol. Venice edition of the complete Aquinas, 1593-4. Marsh: Adams. A. 1397). The letters of Anselm were also catalogued under 'Soul', 'Virginity', etc. The sale catalogue of Swift's library is catalogued by size, but it occasionally indicates thematic headings they might once have been stored under. For example, Swift's re-shelving of Boethius from 'Libri Philologici' in Folio to 'Libri Classici' in Quarto, may have been related to size or subject. See Le Fanu, *Facsimile*, p.67.

[35] See, for example, Robert Brady's sharply critical *A Continuation of the Complete History of England: Containing the Lives and Reigns of Edward I, II & III and Richard the Second* (London: Edward Jones, *et al.,* 1700), p.384. See also the anthology of Renaissance historians by John Hughes, *A Complete History of England,* 3 vols. (London: R. Bonwicke, *et al.*, 1706). This selected passages which were critical of the Plantagenets.

[36] These lines occurred in the 1728 *Dunciad* which Swift would have known, *The Dunciad: An Heroic Poem*, i.117-22. Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.31-2, n.119. Cf. Rumbold, *Four Books*, p.120, n.149-50, where the library is awarded to 'Bays'. For Swift's *Dunciad*, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1496. Pope sent him the 'Ass and Owl' edition.

[37] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.179. Swift would have known, however, that episodes from medieval romances were sometimes recycled in popular culture, especially periodical papers. See his own *Harrison's Tatler* No.5, and the account of the Lion and the Virgin (derived from the story of Una and her lion in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, I.iii. 5-6). Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.110. See also *Discourse to Prove*, ibid., p.234, 'Guy of Warwick was called a Kill-cow', n.18, and p.235, n.26.

[38] See Eugene Hammond, 'In Praise of Wisdom and the Will of God: Erasmus' "Praise of Folly" and Swift's "A Tale of A Tub"', *Studies in Philology,* 80:3 (1983), pp.253-76. Others have drawn a line between Erasmus and Swift in political thought of the seventeenth century. See Alan S. Fisher, 'An End to the Renaissance: Erasmus, Hobbes, and "A Tale of A Tub"', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 38:1 (1974), pp.1-20. Ehrenpreis described the influence of the *Praise of Folly* on Swift in the *Life*, i.222.

[39] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.573-5.

wrongly transcribed and translated by Maynard Mack.[40] This might have been a gift, but he might also have given the text to Pope to spare it from the threat of being lost on the journey across the Irish Sea which, in Toby Barnard's words, was both 'awkward and risky.'[41] One of Swift's Erasmus volumes deserves special attention because it reveals his sense of how Erasmus' aphorisms could be recycled without having to look for them himself: he purchased a Dutch edition of the *Parabolæ* (1534) second-hand (it is unclear when), which contained some old — possibly Elizabethan — underlinings.[42] The line 'fumus gloriæ invidia est' (envy is the smoke of glory), underlined by the previous owner, was transformed into a line about envy obscuring the glory of an admiral's victory in *Gulliver's Travels* (I.vii): 'his Hatred is much increased since your great Success against *Blefuscu*, which by his Glory, as Admiral, is obscured.'[43]

Swift branched out from Erasmus and looked, inconsistently, at other writers from this period. It has been shown by David Womersley in the Cambridge edition of *Gulliver's Travels* that Swift picked up lots of detail from Thomas More's *Utopia*, alluding to the text in the 'Letter to Sympson' ('*Yahoos* have no more Existence than the Inhabitants of *Utopia*') and More himself in 'The Voyage to Laputa' (III.vii), in which he was included in a Sextumvirate of great men 'to which all Ages of the World cannot add a Seventh.'[44] The influence of Thomas More on Swift has received substantial critical attention from scholars tracing the lineage of Utopian writing.[45] However, this work on Thomas More paints a slightly exaggerated picture of how thorough Swift's engagement was with literature of this period as a whole, which is clouded by a lack of evidence. John Skelton was mysteriously absent from Swift's library, for example, which presents one of the most difficult problems for the remit of

---

[40] If 'vivam', then it could be translated (as in Book of Common Prayer, Psalm 119): 'O grant me understanding and I shall live'. Cf. Mack, 'Pope's Books', p.238. Mack thought that it said 'intellectum da mihi avidum'. However, after consulting this inscription at the Hurd Library archive, I believe it is possible to conclude otherwise. Pope recorded that it came from Swift on the title page: 'ex dono Amicissimi, Ionath: / Swift, Decani Sti Patricii. 1714.'

[41] Toby Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure: Lives and Possessions in Ireland: 1641-1770* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), p.124. The Irish comedian Charles Macklin lost much of his library in the Irish Sea in 1771. Cf. Paul Goring, 'The Sinking of Charles Macklin's Scholarship', *Notes and Queries*, 66:4 (2019), pp. 577-581.

[42] Swift would have known that Erasmus was mined for allusions in the Elizabethan period. Robert Burton's surviving copy of Erasmus, in the words of Rosalie Colie, displays 'a great deal of underlining', and Burton drew much attention to Erasmus' own recycling from other writers. See Rosalie L. Colie, 'Some Notes On Burton's Erasmus', *Renaissance Quarterly,* 20:3 (1967), pp.335-41 (p.337).

[43] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.97. It is unclear whether this means that Swift was reading the Erasmus text during the composition of *Gulliver*, or whether the tag had remained with him over a longer period of time.

[44] Ibid., p.13; p.292.

[45] On More's *Utopia* and *Gulliver's Travels,* see John Traugott, 'A Voyage to Nowhere with Thomas More and Jonathan Swift: "Utopia" and "The Voyage to the Houyhnhnms"', *The Sewanne Review,* 69:4 (1961), pp.534-565; and Chlöe Houston, 'Utopia, Dystopia, or Anti-utopia? Gulliver's Travels and the Utopian Mode of Discourse', *Utopian Studies*, 18:3 (2007), pp.425-442. Also see Edward J. Reilly, 'Irony in *Gulliver's Travels* and *Utopia*', *Utopian Studies,* 3:1 (1992), pp.70-83. Swift claimed that More was the 'person of Greatest virtue this kingdom ever produced' in *Concerning that Universal Hatred which Prevails against the Clergy,* Davis, *Prose*, v.85.

this thesis: there is no evidence for how he might have read him, but it has become an unsubstantiated critical assumption (often expressed in handbooks and guides to literary history) that he was an influence on Swift's poetry due to his use of tetrameter doggerel, or 'Skeltonics'.[46] The entry for 'Doggerel' in the *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* (2012) claims that 'John Skelton, Samuel Butler, and Jonathan Swift are all masters of artistic doggerel', suggesting a lineage Swift might not have recognised.[47] There are more proximate instances of tetrameter doggerel that Swift knew well — Butler's *Hudibras* (1663-1678), for example, the first part of which Swift is said to have memorised, and Cotton's burlesques on antiquity: *Scarronnides, or, Virgill Travestie* (1664-5) and *Burlesque upon Burlesque: Or, The Scoffer Scoft. Being Some of Lucian's Dialogues Newly put into English Fustian* (1675).[48]

Swift is likely to have noticed that Skelton attracted interest in the eighteenth century as part of a renewed assessment of the history of the English court (and its poets) before the Restoration, which Temple might have studied. One particular poem, *The Tunning of Elinor Rumming* (which, though labelled '*A Poem. By Skelton Laureat*' in 1718 is now not considered to have been by Skelton), circulated in several printed editions at the beginning of the eighteenth century and was reprinted on several occasions in Swift's lifetime (1718–44), but there are no allusions to it in Swift's writing.[49] Many of the post-Restoration historians tended to denigrate Skelton as a controversial figure on the fringe of Royal courts. James Howell, historiographer to Charles II, said that the former poet laureate Skelton had taken to 'skulking in *Duck-Lane*, pitifully totter'd and torn', but conceded that some of his rhymes would 'never be out of date'.[50] Swift confessed to 'rummaging for old Books in *Little Britain* and *Duck Lane*', and joked that his own books would end up there, which means that he might have come across second-hand copies of Skelton among the stalls.[51] In Fuller's *Worthies of England* (1662) it is said that Skelton was a friend of Erasmus and his attacks on Cardinal Wolsey were acknowledged, but

---

[46] The *Critical Heritage* volume for Skelton refers to Swift's 'Skeltonic imitation 'Musa Clonshoghiana'', but the poem is not in Skeltonics and was written by George Rochfort. See Williams, *Poems*, iii.965-6. The volume also cites 'A Copy of A Copy of Verses', iii.1019-20, but this is not in Skeltonics either. See *John Skelton: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Anthony Edwards (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 'Introduction', n.47.

[47] *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics: Fourth Edition*, eds. Stephen Cushman *et al.,* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2012), p.375.

[48] Both of these texts were in *The Genuine Poetical Works of Charles Cotton, Esq.* (London: R. and J. Bonwicke and R. Wilkin, *et al.*, 1725). Swift certainly owned a Dublin edition of *Scarronnides or Virgill Travestie* (Dublin: J. Watts, 1728). See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.473. Cf. *A History of Poetry,* in Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.224: 'I have COT ONE more, who Travesty'd *Virgil*, though not equal to the Former.'

[49] Cf. John Skelton (?), *The Tunning of Elinor Rumming* (London: Isaac Dalton, 1718). The poem does not appear in Scattergood's *Complete English Poems* of Skelton, and he says that 'no editor can be completely certain about what Skelton wrote', suggesting that *Elinor* was a misattribution. See John Skelton, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. John Scattergood (London: Penguin Books, 1983), p.7.

[50] James Howell, *Epistulae Ho-Elianae: Familiar Letters, Domestic and Foreign*, 4th. edition. (London: S. Crouch, 1705), iv.471. Howell also said that 'I do not think it worth the labor and cost to put him in better cloaths.'

[51] Davis, *Prose*, xii. 264. Cf. Williams, *Poems*, ii.563. 'Sir you may find them [his own works] in *Duck-Lane:* / I sent them with a Load of Books, / Last *Monday* to the Pastry-Cooks.'

little was said of his poetry.[52] Despite his obscurity, Skelton was certainly known to Pope. In the *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace* (1737), which laments the state of modern writing under George II (suggesting that the poem was written against the king), Pope included him among a large cohort of names (not found in the original Latin poem), as a 'beastly' relic of older English poetry being re-used because there was nothing new. 'Heads of Houses' had apparently started to quote from him all the time.[53] Skelton was glossed as: 'Poet Laureat to Hen.8. a Volume of whose Verses has been lately reprinted, consisting almost wholly of Ribaldry, Obscenity, and Billingsgate language.'[54] Swift's sense that Skelton was part of the earliest English literature might also have been complicated by the fact that he was associated with Henry VIII. As Richard Terry argues, the reign of Henry VIII was often used as a shorthand marker for the earliest period of England's literary history by Augustan gentlemen, but Swift's hatred of Henry VIII is well known.[55] Few conclusions can be drawn about Swift's knowledge of Skelton from these contexts.

Perhaps owing to the incomplete record of his libraries, it appears that Swift's real engagement with 'Modern' literature picked up during the later Tudor and Jacobean periods: not with literature written in English, but with his two favourite comedians Cervantes and Rabelais, who he believed held the secret to 'true humour'.[56] Pope acknowledged this preference in *The Dunciad Variorum* (i.17-26), in a dedication to Swift which he sent in draft for approval:

---

[52] Thomas Fuller, *Worthies of England* (London: J. G. W. L. and W. G. for Thomas Williams, 1662), pp.257-8.

[53] *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace*, ll.37-9. 'Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learn'd by rote, / And beastly Skelton Heads of Houses quote: / One likes no language but the Faery Queen'. Pope, *Poems*, iv.196-7. Pope suggests that writers of the earliest English literature are being quoted again because of the paucity of modern writing under the Hanoverians (perhaps owing to censorship). As Pope says in the 'Advertisement', '*This Epistle will show the learned World to have fallen into two mistakes; one, that* Augustus was a Patron of Poets in general; *whereas he not only prohibited all but the Best Writers to name him, but recommended that Care even to the Civil Magistrate*: Admonebat Prætores, ne paterentur Nomen suum obsolefieri, &c. *The other, that this Piece was only a* general Discourse of Poetry; *whereas it was an* Apology for the Poets, *in order to render* Augustus *more their Patron*.' Ibid., p.191.

[54] See also Pope's remark that 'Skelton's poems are all low and bad; there's nothing in them that is worth reading.' Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.180. Note in Twickenham says that 'Skelton's works were reprinted in 1736 for the first time since 1568', p.196, n.38. This excludes *The Tunning of Elinor Rumming*.

[55] Richard Terry has shown that Henry VIII's reign was frequently chosen to mark birth of English Literature. See Richard Terry, *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past: 1660-1781* (New York: Oxford, 2001), p.94. Thomas Sprat says in *The History of The Royal Society* (1667) that 'Till the time of *King Henry* the *Eighth,* there was scarce any man regarded [in the English language]… but *Chaucer.'* On Swift's hatred of the king, see his annotations to Herbert's *Life of Henry VIII*, which include outbursts such as 'Dog, Villain, King, Viper, Devil Monster'. Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.824-30.

[56] Woolley, *Intelligencer*, p.61.

O thou! whatever Title please thine ear,
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver!
Whether thou chuse Cervantes' serious air,
Or laugh and shake in Rab'lais easy Chair,
Or praise the Court, or magnify Mankind,
Or thy griev'd Country's copper chains unbind;
From thy Baeotia tho' Her Pow'r retires,
Grieve not at ought our sister realm acquires:
Here pleas'd behold her mighty wings out-spread,
To hatch a new Saturnian age of Lead.[57]

It was known both to Swift's friends and enemies that he liked Cervantes. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is reported to have said that 'Swift has stolen all his humour from Cervantes and Rabelais'.[58] Bathurst once joked that he was 'lineally descended from Miguel de Cervantes, by a daughter of Quevedo's', which would have played to Swift's interest in implausible literary lineages.[59]

In English literature of the Renaissance, Swift read his favourites carefully but often pretended to have ignored them. Because the evidence is distorted by Swift's often abrasive rhetoric on this subject, an examination of his reading and marginalia is needed to clarify the principles behind his allusions to 'Modern' writers. Two major examples, Francis Bacon and Edmund Spenser, illustrate the kinds of reading that Swift brought to work of this period if he was prepared to read carefully and in depth.

In part, Swift's dismissal of the Renaissance was a conventional gesture towards a period that was perceived — impressionistically, by eighteenth-century historians — as theologically controversial and politically turbulent.[60] In terms of literary style, the Augustans did not approve of the taste for paradox and complex, artificial rhetoric in Renaissance literature, often 'versifying' it into smoother couplets: the famous example has become Pope's versification of Donne, published in 1735. The marginal commentaries in Pope's copy of Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* attest to his distaste for rhetorical obscurity: he deflated the line 'As smooth as Pan, as Iuno mild, like goddess Iris faste' into 'constant, always the same' (perhaps itself an allusion to the Latin tag 'semper eadem', motto of Elizabeth I and Queen Anne).[61] Pope also said that 'Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a pretty good one, considering the time when it was written.'[62] Swift read his Bacon with the same instinctive

---

[57] Rumbold, Longman *Poems,* iii.177-9. For the draft of this dedication see Pope, *Correspondence*, ii.469.
[58] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.308.
[59] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iv.390.
[60] Reception of this period has often been uneasy. See Diarmaid McCullough, 'Forging Reformation History: A Cautionary Tale' in *All Things Made New: Writings On The Reformation* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), pp.321-58.
[61] See Maynard Mack, 'Pope's Books', p.222.
[62] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.181.

distaste for florid Renaissance rhetoric. We know that he thought Bacon was difficult and evasive, despite his reputation as 'the greatest genius in England': Aristotle tries to kill him in the *Battle of The Books* and accidentally hits Descartes.[63] (Bacon and Descartes represent two different, but negative, reactions to Aristotle: Bacon was suspicious of the dogmatism that had become important to Aristotelianism in the Middle Ages, and Descartes rejected Aristotelian materialism).[64] Swift combined 'wise Lord Bacon' with eggs in one of the *Drapier's Letters,* in a line that staged the kinds of inconvenient subordinate clauses and parentheses (or euphuism) he would have disliked in the original source:

> And yet, the wise Lord Bacon mentions a Sort of People, (I doubt the Race is not yet extinct) who would set a House on Fire, for the Convenience of roasting their own Eggs at the Flame.[65]

As Peter Briggs has argued, Swift was suspicious of writers in his own period who imitated Bacon's prose, including John Graunt and William Petty, both sources for the winding, periphrastic argumentation of *A Modest Proposal*.[66]

In spite of this reaction to Bacon's syntax, Swift knew some of his texts very well, and this provides an uncharacteristic contrast to his dismissal of the majority of writers in 'Modern' literature.[67] He studied Bacon's *Historia Regni Henrici Septimi* (1621) in great depth: a full account of his reading will follow here, because it has not yet been addressed. The *Historia* was a carefully managed account of the rise and success of Henry VII, written in the cold, objective, Polybian style Swift admired.[68] Swift's annotated copy survives in the Forster Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Forster S. Fol. 361): it is the *Francisci Baconi, Baronis de Verulamio, Vice-comitis Sancti Albani, Operum Moralium et Civilium Tomus* edited by

---

[63] 'Greatest genius in England', ibid., i.186. Episode in the *Battle,* Walsh, *Tale,* p.156. On Swift's hatred of Descartes, see Michael Spiller, 'The Idol of the Stove: The Background to Swift's Criticism of Descartes', *Review of English Studies,* 25:97 (1974), pp.15-25.

[64] Peter R. Anstey has suggested that a full blown opposition between Descartes and Aristotle is limited and inaccurate, though Swift may have seen it that way. See '"De Anima" and Descartes: Making up Aristotle's Mind', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 17:3 (2000), pp.237-60.

[65] 'Drapier's Letters' (VII), Davis, *Prose*, x.273.

[66] Peter M. Briggs, 'John Graunt, Sir William Petty, and Swift's *Modest Proposal*', *Eighteenth-Century Life,* 29:2 (2005), pp.3-24. Cf. Rounce and Hayton, *Irish Political Writings After 1725*, p.223, n.15. The editors suggest other sources for such politicised proposal writing, including 'David Bindon, John Browne, Arthur Hobbs, William Maple (*d.* 1762) and Thomas Prior' (ibid., p.xli). The proposer's computation of 'profitable Land' in Ireland is shown here to be 'a long way out of step with other contemporary writers', Petty included. For Petty's peculiar 'political arithmetic', see ibid., p.xli-ii, and George Wittowsky, 'Swift's *Modest Proposal*: The Biography of an Early Georgian Pamphlet', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 4 (1943), pp.75-104.

[67] Swift consulted the *New Atlantis* (1627) in preparation for *Gulliver's Travels*. For comment on the *New Atlantis* link see Denis Donoghue, 'Swift's Perspective', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review,* 56:223 (1967), pp.248-265 (p.249-50).

[68] On Bacon's 'Polybian or Florentine' style, see Edward D. Benjamin, 'Bacon and Tacitus', *Classical Philology,* 60 (1965), p.105. On Swift's interest in Polybius' *History* and his praise of its style see Ashley Marshall, *Swift and History*, p.89.

William Rawley (London: Edward Griffin, 1638), written in Latin.[69] The edition was bound together (possibly not by Swift) with several later editions of Bacon's aphorisms in English, none of which he annotated. In terms of the origin of the *Historia*, Swift was aware of the peculiar context of its composition and the way it had survived through the seventeenth century: he knew, for example, that it was written in a state of political disgrace, and he alluded to that disgrace in the *Mean and Great Figures Made by Several Persons* (printed posthumously, 1765).[70]

Herbert Davis recognised that Swift alluded to some of its details about 'earthly Princes' in the *Drapier's Letters* (IV) and in *Intelligencer* No.9.[71] However, consulting the full range of marginal annotations means that we can piece together the reality of his engagement with the text. The surviving verbal annotations in the margins are cryptic and often unclear, owing to an untidy attempt to preserve the pencil marks by re-tracing them in ink: this was possibly the work of John Forster.[72] However, Swift also annotated the text with a range of non-verbal marks — 'x', 'x x', '/', '//', and curved brackets — which suggests a hierarchy of significance, and these are scattered throughout the text. There are some simple, practical annotations, such as the glossing of the word 'Erro' with 'Wanderer' (p.67). Others are more revealing. He highlighted Bacon's account of the Star Chamber with '/ /' (p.38) — a mark likely to have indicated special significance, owing to its infrequent use and double emphasis — in which Bacon described it as 'one of the sagest and noblest institutions of this Kingdome.'[73] Gulliver's description of the English 'Courts of Justice' populated by 'venerable Sages and Interpreters of the Law' (*Gulliver's Travels,* II.vi) might derive from this account of the Star Chamber; if so, it would have been appropriate, because in this passage Gulliver says that he is describing the history of political life from 'about an hundred Years past', which Womersley pinpoints to the reign of James I, and the lifetime of Bacon.[74]

We can also tell from the marginalia that Swift was interested in the story of Lambert Simnel, the Pretender to the Tudor throne who was forgiven and then employed as a falconer. The wording in the margin is illegible, so it is difficult to assess his precise thoughts, but Swift

---

[69] Referred to henceforth as *Historia*. It is impossible to recover precisely when Swift acquired this copy of Bacon, but Passmann and Vienken hypothesise that William Temple had a copy of the *Historia*. See *Library and Reading*, iv.187. As the following argument will show, Swift knew about Bacon's *Historia* at least as early as 1709.
[70] Davis, *Prose*, ii.85. 'The Lord Chancellor Bacon, when he was convicted of Bribery.'
[71] Ibid., v.85; x.5. Cf. *Intelligencer* No.6 in Woolley, *Intelligencer*, pp.84-92.
[72] See brief commentary on the annotations and their poor standard of preservation in Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.127.
[73] English translation taken from 'Historie of the raigne of King Henry the seventh and other works of the 1620's', tr. and ed. Michael Kiernan, the eighth volume of *The Oxford Francis Bacon,* eds. Graham Rees, Michael Kiernan *et al.*, 15 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996 —). This translation referred to hereafter.
[74] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, pp.181-2, and n.28.

alluded to Simnel in *A Famous Prediction of Merlin, The British Wizard* (1709).[75] The poem (a series of mock-predictions supposedly by Merlin) was presented on a single half-sheet, with the imprint of an altered woodblock which Rumbold shows to have been used in the past for attacks on the high-church Tory astrologer John Gadbury (one of Partridge's enemies).[76] Spurious commentary is offered by a man referred to as 'T. N. Philomath' (supposedly an ally of Partridge).[77] It was printed in gothic type, affecting the appearance of a pseudo-Tudor text 'written near the End of *Henry* the Seventh's reign':

> Nor shal grin Berrys make up the Losse.
> Yonge Symnele shall again miscarrye:
> And Norways Pryd again shall marrey.
> And from the Tree where Blosums fele,
> Ripe Fruit shall come, and all is wele.
> Reaums shall daunce honde in honde,
> And it shall be merye in old Inglonde.
> Then old Inglonde shall be no more,
> And no Man shall be sorie therefore.
> Geryon shall have three Hedes agayne,
> Till Hapsburge makyth them but twayne.[78]

The comic effects of this poetic prophecy, as Rumbold suggests, gather force from Swift's concentrated reading in astrological and prophetic literature, not just from printing gimmicks such as the woodblock: his annotations in a copy of Nostradamus, for example, might have been instrumental to the construction of such untrustworthy statements (they are now lost).[79] Other allusions in the poem make clear that it is a genuinely learned text, as well as a hoax. '*Geryon*', for example, could derive from several learned sources, though they are not named: the Philomath commentary says that the prediction is 'somewhat obscure', but that '*Geryon* is said to have been a King of *Spain*, whom *Hercules* slew.'[80] One account of Geryon (a deceptive, often three-headed creature, with human faces and a monstrous body) can be found in Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, X.xvii.4, for example; but Swift is more likely to have been thinking of Geryon's occurrences in Virgil's *Aeneid*, vii.662 and viii.200-4, owing to his

---

[75] *Historia,* p.67. 'out of his [?]': possibly 'flesh' (the passage discusses ghosts), or 'reach'.
[76] Rumbold has accounted for the rather complex life of the woodblock and its altered states in 'Merlinus Verax, T. N. Philomath, and the Merlin Tradition: Print Contexts for Swift's *A Famous Prediction of Merlin* (1709)', *The Library*, 12:4 (2011), pp.392-412.
[77] 'Philomath' was a name associated with astrological expertise and occurred in different publications as a mobile pseudonym shared among several writers. See headnote in Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, pp. 78-9.
[78] Ibid., p.84. Gothic type not used for clarity of reading.
[79] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.81. Cf. Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1333-5.
[80] Ibid., p.86, and n.23.

repeatedly acknowledged familiarity with the poem (and the explicit link there with Hercules' labours).[81] Such an allusion to Virgil, though small, would suggest that Swift's eighteenth-century Merlin, though a fictional creation, knows of (and is capable of alluding to) other prophets: one popular (if anachronistic) conception of Virgil in the Middle Ages was that he was a magician or a prophet, largely on the basis of the 'messianic' *Eclogues* IV.[82] It is possible — but only faintly so — that Swift might also have known about the account of the fraudulent Geryon in Dante's *Inferno* (XVII, but also the end of XVI). Geryon is (quite differently) a 'personification of Fraud', there, and because he answers Virgil's call, 'the symbol of Fraud' is also 'defrauded'.[83] This would feed into — and contribute to — the different strands of fraudulence on display in Swift's hoax (and could also supply some key information about the extent to which Swift knew Dante, not a given possibility in the eighteenth century).[84] The predictions clearly precipitate from extensive reading, however difficult that reading might be to pinpoint. This means that Swift is certainly — even in the voice of his eager annotator, Philomath — insincere when he footnotes this line in the poem about Lambert Simnel with an account of his historical significance, and yet does not acknowledge Bacon (referring obliquely to 'our histories'): 'by *Symnele* is meant the pretended Prince of Wales; who, if he offers to attempt any thing against England, shall miscarry as he did before. Lambert Symnel is the name of a young man noted in our histories for personating the son (as I remember) of Edward the Fourth.' As Rumbold acknowledges, this is a thinly veiled attack on James Stuart, 'The Pretender': and as we can tell from Swift's marginalia in his copy of Bacon's *Historia*, the parenthesis about struggling to remember 'our histories', though perhaps true of the persona of Philomath, was certainly not true of Swift. The allusion to 'our histories' was, read in light of the *Historia*, at once a part of the spurious

---

[81] For Swift's copy of Pausanias, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1394. For his editions of (and engagement with) Virgil, see Chapter 1.

[82] Cf. Christopher Baswell, *Virgil In Medieval England: Figuring The Aeneid From The Twelfth Century To Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.16.

[83] Dante, *Commedia*, i.227-8. Cf. headnote, p.223.

[84] Swift's knowledge of Dante can not be assumed, which is why the allusion has been adduced very tentatively. Passmann and Vienken suggest that Sheridan had a copy of *Dante, con l'espositioni di Christofori Landini, et d'Alessandro Vellutello* (Venice: 1596), *Library and Reading*, iv.237. There were a wide range of texts which Swift would have known from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries which mention Dante. See Paget Toynbee, *Dante In English Literature*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen, 1909), i.101-213 (Spenser to Voltaire). Also, Toynbee's (now old but still important) 'English Translations of Dante in the Eighteenth Century', *The Modern Language Review*, 1:1 (1905), pp.9-24. Toynbee pays particular attention to the episode of Ugolino included by Richardson in the second of his *Two Discourses*. Cf. 'A Discourse On The Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure, and Advantage of the Science of a Connoisseur' in *Two Discourses* (London: Churchill, 1719), ii.29-30. There was at least one translation of Dante into heroic couplets by Pierre Des Maiseaux (an associate of Addison's), who published these couplets in Bayle's popular *Dictionary*, but there is no evidence of the book in Swift's library. Sheridan had a copy of *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, ed. Pierre Des Maiseaux, 2nd edition (London: Knapton, *et al.*, 1735), *Library and Reading*, iv.223. Eric Griffiths and Matthew Reynolds include one other thing that Swift might have known in *Dante in English* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), pp.38-40: Andrew Marvell's *Tom May's Death*. It seems almost certain that Swift would have heard of Dante, but it remains unclear as to whether he would have known the *Inferno* well enough to spot Geryon.

— or dubiously acquired — knowledge on display in the hoax, and part of the larger illusion of inaccuracy or ignorance Swift constructed around the moderns.[85] In the story of Perkin Warbeck following on from the same page of the *Historia* — next to which Swift put vertical dashes at almost every sentence that carried narrative significance (p.67-70) — Bacon discussed how historical narratives fold into one another across time and are 'impossible to be traced' like weeds. This compares with Swift's own practice of folding pieces of information together to create the comic effects of the hoax.[86]

Lambert Simnel was crowned in Dublin and Perkin Warbeck tried to use Ireland as a base for his military campaigns.[87] These and other Irish connections informed Bacon's *Historia*. The story of Clifford's involvement in the Warbeck conspiracy against Henry VII, for example, caught Swift's attention. Bacon recorded that Clifford was reduced by £3000 per year as a punishment for his crimes, described in the text as 'a great matter in those tymes'; but Bacon then used the story to branch out into a discussion of the 'condition of the Irish under the English', in which he recorded that the Irish government still received its own tax. In the margin of this passage, Swift wrote 'quantum tempora mutantur'.[88] Although this was clearly a resentful jeer, the tag carried special significance for Swift: it is a proverb that bears some reference to Ovid's *Fasti* (VI.771-2, 24.), 'tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis, et fuguint freno non remorante dies' ('time slips away, and we grow old with the silent lapse of years; there is no bridle that can curb the flying days').[89] The line encapsulated a specific mixture of political anxiety and aggression Swift felt about the English subjugation of Irish interests (not least because Ovid was an exile from Rome as Swift felt he was from England), which is why he also wrote the same tag in his copy of Robert Parsons, *A Conference About The Next Succession To The Crown Of England* (1681), on p.162.[90] Not only did the recycling of this line in his marginalia ironically counterpoint the transience it describes; for Swift, it also helped to express a resentment about Irish colonial life which — as he read in Bacon — had been developing over centuries, and had been described by English statesmen.

On p.45 of Bacon's *Historia*, Swift found a long passage about the essential role that Irish commodities played in the success of the Irish economy and national pride of the Irish people (annotated with a curved line in the left hand margin).[91] Swift's heated satirical defence

---

[85] Cf. Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.85, n.17.
[86] Kiernan, *Oxford Francis Bacon*, viii.86 (24-7).
[87] Steven Gunn, *Henry VII's New Men and The Making of Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 87.
[88] *Historia*, p.74. Kiernan, *Oxford Francis Bacon*, viii.89 (10-12).
[89] The proverbial use of 'tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis' is in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, revised F. P. Wilson, 3rd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.825, 'times change and we with them' (with the Latin). Dated to the end of the sixteenth century.
[90] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1380.
[91] *Historia*, p.45. Kiernan, *Oxford Francis Bacon*, viii.55-6 (31-2).

of Irish manufactures, *A Proposal For The Universal Use Of Irish Manufacture, In Cloathes And Furniture Of Houses* (1720), his first serious publication after the appointment to St. Patrick's Cathedral, derived much of its insight about English colonial power from this passage in Bacon's *Historia*, despite the fact that the pamphlet was a thoroughgoing defence of Irish sovereignty.[92] Swift's use of an English text (written in Latin) to create such an aggressively Irish pamphlet supplements Robert Mahony's claim that 'Swift's principles have tended to become compounded with his Irishness', or that he developed arguments about Irish problems by relying on contemporary Irish sources: a narrative that excludes the deep divisions he felt about his own English political life, and affinity with English writers.[93]

Indeed, the suggestion that Swift only referred to Irish sources in service of Irish problems is further compromised by his illuminating annotations on the next page (p.46): Bacon's description of drapery and drapers, which would have been a piece of source-work for the *Drapier's Letters,* as we know from the fact that Bacon was alluded to several times in those texts.[94] The passage on drapers is preceded by an account of the 'Counterfeiting of foreine Coyne', and goes on to describe 'Statutes for the maintenance of Drapery and the keeping of Wooles within the Realme', which might also have been important to Swift's *Proposal For The Universal Use Of Irish Manufacture*.[95] From these concentrated marginal annotations to the Perkin Warbeck conspiracy, the counterfeiting of coins, the use of Irish manufactures, and the account of drapers, it is possible to suggest that Swift returned to the *Historia* at different times throughout his life, and that this volume bears evidence of a series of fluctuating political revisions rather than one linear course of reading.[96] Unusually in this case, Swift seems to have read Bacon's *Historia* as an evolving source of reference, and this under-examined marginalia is a corrective to existing scholarly narratives about how Swift contended with his notoriously complex role as both a colonial authority representing the Anglican Church in Ireland and a native Irish patriot (of sorts). It might also support Patrick Delany's argument about the similarity between Swift and Bacon as writers: '[Swift's] wit was, for the most part, founded upon good sense; which intitled him to the character of my LORD BACON, strong in the chace and nimble in the turn.'[97]

---

[92] Eugene Hammond accounts for this 'anti-colonial satire' in *Jonathan Swift: Irish Blow-In* (London: University of Delaware Press, 2016), xvii. Sean D. Moore sees it as the 'first major Irish-published political work' Swift composed after returning to Dublin in 1714. See *Swift, the Book, and the Irish Financial Revolution: Satire and Sovereignty in Colonial Ireland* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), p.26.
[93] Robert Mahony, *Jonathan Swift: The Irish Identity* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.xiv.
[94] *Regni Henrici Septimi*, p.46. Kiernan, *Oxford Francis Bacon*, viii.56 (23-30).
[95] Davis, *Prose*, ix.14-22.
[96] Cf. *My Lady's Lamentation and Complaint Against the Dean* (1728), which records reading Bacon's *Essays*: 'No book for delight / Must come in my sight; /But, instead of new plays, / Dull Bacon's Essays', Williams, *Poems*, iii. 855-6.
[97] Delany, *Observations*, p.148.

A sense that Renaissance statesmen could elucidate modern political problems would also have influenced Swift's reading of Edmund Spenser. Spenser was another representative of the English monarchy in Ireland (though Spenser's position was not complicated by working as a cleric in the Church of Ireland): and, to this end, some of the Spenser corpus appears to have been required reading among eighteenth-century diplomats, secretaries, and clergymen, and the editions are likely to have circulated between them.[98] Histories of Ireland (often printed in Ireland) for the use of English colonial statesmen took Spenser's aggressive *A View Of The Present State Of Ireland* (1596) and 'Irish' passages of *The Faerie Queene* (such as IV.v and VII.v) as key sources of information. For example, the English *History Of Ireland* printed in Dublin in 1633 by the 'Printers to the Kings most Excellent Majestie', included these texts of 'Edmund Spenser, Esq', and made sure to remind the reader that '*Historie* is a Charte and Mappe of government'.[99] These texts circulated in a context of professional secrecy and hidden identity: the copy of this *History Of Ireland* in Marsh's Library contains no annotations whatsoever, and — as to be expected of a text read in such a context — the name of the owner was scratched out.[100]

Spenser's poems were printed and circulated in this context: as suggested reading for colonial authorities. Swift owned the same edition of Spenser as Matthew Prior, the Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1697-99.[101] This edition, which was licensed by Roger L'Estrange, included 'An Account of his [Spenser's] Life' as no others had done before. If this was a standard edition of Spenser for professional representatives of the English government and Anglican church, it would explain why the word 'Calendar' was highlighted in red on the title page among all of the titles of Spenser's texts: the *Shepheardes Calendar* (1579) has often been considered a political toolkit, especially for statesmen implicated in complex public roles, as a Dean representing the Anglican Church of Ireland would have been in eighteenth-century Dublin.[102] While there is little evidence to suggest that Swift read the *Faerie Queene*, and we know that he disapproved of artificial archaism from the *Proposal for Correcting* (…) *The English*

---

[98] Hazel Wilkinson pays special attention to the circulation of Spenser second-hand in this period in *Edmund Spenser and the Eighteenth-Century Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp.67-9.

[99] *The Historie of Ireland, Collected by Three Learned Authors Viz. Meredith Hanmer, Doctor in Divinitie; Edmund Campion sometime Fellow of St. John's College in Oxford: and Edmund Spenser Esq.* (Dublin: Society of Stationers, 1633), [unpaginated]. The icon selected for the first letter of the dedication, 'D', was an alarmingly vivid image of colonial authority, with a King writing on the back on a human scribe.

[100] See p.1 of the Spenser text. Marsh: S. T. C. 25067a. Since the book came with the Stillingfleet collection, it is very difficult to ascertain when the name was scratched out — but this might be important.

[101] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1720-2. The edition was *The Works of that Famous English Poet, Mr. Edmond Spenser* (London: Henry Hills for Jonathan Edwin, 1679). Marsh copy: S. 4965.

[102] See Paul E. McLane, 'Spenser's Political and Religious Position in the "Shepheardes Calendar"', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 49:3 (1950), pp.324-32 (particularly the opening sketch, p.324). Also, Gregory Kneidel, '"Mightie Simplenesse": Protestant Pastoral Rhetoric and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calendar*', *Studies in Philology*, 96:3 (1999), pp.275-312.

Tongue, it is worth noting that Swift put Spenser's name to use as an official synecdoche for the whole Elizabethan period. For example, in this *Proposal,* Swift contended that 'our Language, between two and three hundred Years ago, seems to have had a greater mixture with *French*, than at present; many Words having been afterwards rejected, and some since the time of *Spencer*.'[103] His *A Short View Of The Present State Of Ireland* (1728), a pamphlet addressing the ways in which the Irish economy was suffering under the English, drew on Spenser's *A View Of The Present State Of Ireland* (the title perhaps suggesting a closer affinity than Rounce and Hayton suggest in their edition).[104] It might be important that Swift referred to Spenser as a '*DI-SPENCER*' of verses in his mock-history of poetry, not just because 'dispense' is a prominent word in the introduction to his edition of Spenser, but because of Spenser's involvement in genocide, as outlined in *A View Of The Present State of Ireland*. This would make it a nasty pun disguised among others which are frivolous, such as 'FLAT-CHEER' and 'SHAKE-SPEARS'.[105] Swift would have been wary of Spenser's involvement in genocide, and might have anticipated the question posed by Empson, whether Spenser's influence on the eighteenth century 'was a good one' in either poetic or ethical terms.[106]

In the cases of both Bacon and Spenser, then, it is possible to trace the way that Swift would have read 'Modern' writers alongside the demands of his professional life as a Dean, and his work as a public writer. This was not true, however, for much of his engagement with the Renaissance, which was generally superficial. Swift took some interest in the Elizabethan poets, although critics have frequently been dismayed by his ignorance of most poetry from that period up to his own lifetime. Herbert Davis argued that 'Swift was easily bored by the songs and lyrics of the seventeenth century, which must have been very popular during his early days.'[107] Of Phillip Sidney, for example, there is hardly any mention in Swift.[108] There

---

[103] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.134.

[104] See Lucile G. Appert, 'The Pen is Mightier Than The Whore: Imperialism and Cultural Authority in Spenser and Swift', *South Central Review,* 17:2 (2000), pp.47-60. Cf. Rounce and Hayton, *Irish Political Writings After 1725*, pp.14-26 (p.19, n.15). Cf. p.lxxix.

[105] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.223. Rumbold also suggests a pun on the aristocratic name and title 'Despenser'. The introduction to Swift's edition of Spenser included a letter from Gabriel Harvey, in which the following sentence appears: 'May it please you to dispense with a poor Oratour of yours for breaking one principle Rule of those we count inviolable in Rhetorique, in shewing himself somewhat too pleasantly disposed in a sad matter'. See Spenser, *Works*, 'Letter of Mr. *Harvey*' [unpaginated]. Cf. the nasty mingling, in the word 'Dispense' of 'bestows', 'an administrator of the law', and 'one who dispenses *with*', as recorded in seventeenth and eighteenth-century senses. *OED*: 'Dispense', 1a, 2b, 4.

[106] See William Empson, 'Edmund Spenser: Is He The "Poet's Poet"?', *Argufying,* ed. John Haffenden (London: Hogarth Press, 1988), p.245.

[107] Herbert Davis, *Stella: An Eighteenth Century Gentlewoman* (New York: Macmillan, 1942), p.28.

[108] There is a joke about Sidney in the *Letter of Advice to A Young Poet,* no longer attributed to Swift and therefore not admissible as evidence. '[Sidney] argues there as if he really believed himself', Davis, *Prose*, ix.327. For Astrophel and 'Stella', see Davis, *Stella,* p.12. Swift mentions Sidney in the *History of Poetry*, 'IS HID NIGH by the length of Time', Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.223. Rumbold suggests that Temple recommended Sidney, drawing on Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1686-7. This account based on Temple's *Of Poetry.* Perhaps surprisingly, there is no record of anything about Sidney or the name 'Astrophel' in the *Journal to Stella*.

has been a long tradition of claiming that Swift did not pay attention to Shakespeare despite some scattered evidence to the contrary. For example, a letter survives in which Swift asked Robert Harley for a folio of Shakespeare on September 8th, 1711.[109] There is no record of a Shakespeare edition in any surviving records of his library, but Laetitia Pilkington recalls him taking a copy off his shelf, suggesting that it was certainly there once.[110] He did allude to *Macbeth* in *Cassinus and Peter* (1734), and footnoted the source, but this was not a simple case of genial allusion:

> I come, I come, — *Medusa*, see,
> Her Serpents hiss direct at me.
> Begone; unhand me, hellish Fry;
> Avaunt — ye cannot say 'twas I.[111]

The allusion is a misquotation and conflation of the two exclamations made by Macbeth when he encounters Banquo's ghost: 'Thou canst not say I did it' and 'Avaunt! and quit my sight!'. The new line delights in its own slippery evasion of direct attribution — 'ye cannot say 'twas I' — and Swift footnoted it with 'see *Mackbeth*', which played on the fact that he had kept the original text out of 'sight'. Pope argued that Shakespeare embodied the 'style of a bad age', and Swift's tangled allusion suggests a similar opinion.[112]

In the *Battle Of The Books*, Swift presented the rest of the Renaissance canon — to which he rarely alluded — as a motley hoard of soldiers 'without either Arms, Courage, or Discipline'.[113] To bring this delinquency into line, he ordered them into rank and file according to a range of obscure principles. The Historians, '*Guicciardini, Davila, Polydore Virgil, Buchanan, Mariana, Cambden*, and others' get closer to England by birthplace as the list progresses, suggesting that the historians had closed in on English culture in a kind of siege. The shortlist of epic poets and translators, '*Tasso* and *Milton*, to *Dryden*' advances chronologically until the sequence is interrupted by George Withers, who is both outside the sequence and leading it, epitomising the entitlement to prestige Swift attributed to historians.[114] The rest of the 'confused multitude' are led by '*Scotus*, *Aquinas*, and *Bellarmine*', a trinity of Catholic theologians going from England back to Rome.[115] These sporadic attempts to co-ordinate a highly selective early modern canon speak of a typically Swiftian disrespect

---

[109] See Harold Williams, *Correspondence*, v.229 (Appendix X), not included in Woolley, *Correspondence.*
[110] Pilkington, *Memoirs*, i.136.
[111] Williams, *Poems*, ii.596. Williams says that this is 'an interesting piece of evidence that Swift's knowledge of Shakespeare was more intimate than is generally supposed.'
[112] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.183.
[113] Walsh, *Tale*, p.153.
[114] Swift's Tasso: Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.600.
[115] Walsh, *Tale*, pp.358-9, n.69.

for reputation, but also a sense that as literature becomes more modern it becomes increasingly susceptible to disagreement and objection, and needs to be controlled by taxonomy.

II - Modern Moderns

The struggle to define what constitutes 'Modern' literature and how to categorise it have been part of epistolary satire since Horace:

> scriptor abhinc annos centum qui decidit, inter
> perfectos veteresque referri debet an inter
> vilis atque novos?
>
> (*Epistulae,* II.i.37-40)[116]

The issue is often framed as an ongoing competition with the ancients for approval, against whom the 'Moderns' are unable to hold their place; but the original question as to where modernity begins is often left ambiguous or unresolved. Satires of this kind usually place the responsibility on the audience to make up their own minds, though they are frequently a target themselves: Horace, at lines 63-4 of the same letter, suggested that 'interdum volgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat' ('at times the public see straight, sometimes they make mistakes'). Pope translated this line 'the People's Voice is odd, / It is, and it is not, the voice of God.'[117]

Swift referred to many texts written in English as 'Modern', suggesting that, for him, 'Modern' simply meant those with affinities he did not share. However, his pejorative use of the term most often referred to writers alive and publishing after the Restoration. He claimed that poets 'became very Numerous' during these years, and also identified this as the moment when education started to decline and the language started to degrade.[118] As discussed in chapter 4, Swift himself had to meet the stringent intellectual demands of the church in relation to biblical and ancient scholarship, which might have sharpened his sense that 'Modern' writing was inferior, although 'Modern' was not always synonymous with 'secular'. In the *History Of Poetry*, he gave some criteria for good modern writing (though the ideology is enmeshed the — aforementioned — network of puns, suggesting a potentially unstable basis

---

[116] Loeb: 'A writer who dropped off a hundred years ago, is he to be reckoned among the perfect and ancient, or among the worthless and modern?'. Pope's translation in *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace* ll.52-4, *Poems*, iv.199: 'Who dy'd, perhaps, an hundred years ago? / End all dispute; and fix the year precise / When British bards begin t'Immortalize?'.
[117] Ibid., pp.201-2.
[118] *Intelligencer* No.9, Woolley, *Intelligencer,* p.118. 'I Date from this Æra [when the King was Restored], the Corrupt Method of Education among us, and the consequence thereof', etc.

for assessing Swift's beliefs), prefacing the remarks with a conventional acknowledgment that modern writers have become innumerable:

> To mention those who are now alive, would be endless; I will therefore only venture to lay down one Maxim, That, a good Poet, if he designs to *TICKLE* the World, must be *GAY* and *YOUNG*; but if he proposes to give us rational Pleasure, he must be as grave as a *POPE*.[119]

The 'Maxim' is a typically 'Modern' invention because it is at once full of confidence and lacking in effort ('venture to lay down').[120] It also alternates indiscriminately between Swift's friends in service of the unconvincing puns, showing an unusual indifference to preferment. The refusal, in this statement, to 'mention those who are now alive' bespeaks Swift's genuine hesitation to read the 'Moderns' in depth, and his tendency to leave his subjects on an ambiguous threshold of existence from which he could extract information without apology (see Introduction). In this passage of the *History of Poetry,* Swift's friends are used. However, his enemies — or writers of whom he did not approve — were more likely to be subjected to his crueller literary allusions. It would be possible to select any number of Swift's rivals (particularly Whig enemies) from this period to show how such allusions worked: Richard Steele, for example, who had a vexed relationship with Swift; Richard Blackmore, a major Scriblerian target; or figures such as Oldmixon, Smedley, or Joseph Addison.[121] However, clarity can be gained by comparing allusions to (Blackmore's enemy) Samuel Garth and *The Dispensary* (1699) carried out by Pope and Swift. This is because Pope's allusions to Garth in the various iterations of *The Dunciad* were often friendly (or bantering in a friendly way), though they targeted passages of *The Dispensary* for parody (calling into question whether parody is by definition unfriendly, contested by Rumbold).[122] Swift's allusions to Garth, by way of contrast, changed over time, and did not show the same restraint.

Garth was a Whig, a supporter of William III, a Kit-Kat, and patronised by Lord Somers (dedicatee of *A Tale of A Tub*), meaning that he shared little ground with Swift other than their patron, with whom Swift broke after his shift to the Harley Ministry and its cause. It might be argued that Swift would have found common ground in Garth's support of William III, but, as Ashley Marshall has recorded, scholars now believe that Swift — in

---

[119] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.227. Rumbold suggests that evidence of Tickell in Swift's library is evidence of their friendship ('for their friendship, see *Library and Reading*, Vol.III, pp.1857-8').
[120] Johnson, *Dictionary*, 'MAXIM. *n. s.* [maxime, Fr; *maximum*, Lat.] An axiom; a general principle; a leading truth.'
[121] Cf. Ashley Marshall, 'Steele's Rhetorical Duel With The Authors Of *The Examiner* (1710-14)', *Swift Studies*, 34 (2019), pp.67-89; Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.111; Oakleaf, *A Political Biography of Jonathan Swift* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), p.100.
[122] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.xxxix. 'is parody essentially critical of what it echoes, or can it be neutral or supportive?'

however contradictory a way — was cold about William III, if not critical of him.[123] Praise of Garth at the Hanoverian court was inflated. In 1714, Garth was knighted by George I with Marlborough's sword and appointed Physician-in-Ordinary to the King and Physician-General to the army. He was intimate with Godolphin and Marlborough, and dedicated a panegyric to the former.[124] Garth was also known in the eighteenth century for having arranged Dryden's burial at Westminster Abbey, a subject on which Swift would have been divided owing to his cousin's conversion to Catholicism. Rumours circulated about Garth converting too. Pope was, characteristically, unwilling to believe them.[125] After Garth's death, however, the praise for his verse calmed down and he fell into obscurity. Johnson said that Garth's other biographers mentioned the Harveian oration 'with more praise than the passage quoted in their notes will fully justify'; and, of his poetry (but perhaps also gesturing towards his professional skills), he said that 'no passages fall below mediocrity, and few rise much above it.'[126]

For his dispensary of medicine (set up in 1696), Garth met with professional opposition, which supplied him with the subject of *The Dispensary*: a satirical war between physicians and apothecaries, the poet arguing for the right of the poor to medical advice while mocking the profession.[127] Even if they agreed with the original proposition, some eighteenth-century readers noticed that the poem was so close an imitation of Boileau's *Le Lutrin* (1667) that it received numerous accusations that it had been plagiarised, and this might have been attributed to Garth's licentious and carefree constitution (when Garth died, John Barber said to Swift that 'our friend the Dr. I am afraid did not take the care he ought to have

---

[123] Ashley Marshall, *Swift and History*, pp.162-3. Garth's support of William III was evident in his Harveian Oration at the Royal College of Physicians, *Oratio Laudatoria, in Ædibus Collegii Regalis Med.* (London: Roper, 1697). Swift's views on William III are ambiguous. Swift referred to the King as Mercury putting the populace to sleep, which Ian Higgins sees as ambivalent, if not disapproving (see Higgins, *Swift's Politics*, p.52). Swift dedicated Temple's *Letters* to the King, but the dedication does not necessarily indicate Swift's authentic beliefs. Cf. Walsh, *Tale*, p.193. (Cf. Williams, *Poems*, i.4-6 for a poem which can not safely be attributed to Swift which praises the King.) Swift mocked Hercules in the *Tale*'s 'Digression Concerning Criticks' (Hercules was a common epithet for William III). See Walsh, *Tale*, p.61, and p.380, n.11. As Higgins says, 'the fact that Swift chose to write a cold-blooded satire of a militaristic prince cured by an assassin when the Assassination Plot of 1696 was the sensational topic of public discourse is interesting.' *Swift's Politics*, p.71. This is difficult to reconcile with early remarks such as that to Stella, while at Moor Park, 'Mr. Mose and I desire you will remember our love to the king, and let us know how he looks', Woolley, *Correspondence*, i.129. As Ashley Marshall remarks, 'his earliest comments' on William III 'are among the most problematic', *Swift and History*, p.162.

[124] Samuel Garth, *A Poem To The Earl of Godolphin* (London: 1710).

[125] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.208-9. Cf. Pope's letter to Jervas, 12th December 1718, *Correspondence*, ii.25, 'the best natur'd of Men, Sir *Samuel Garth*, has left me in the truest concern for his loss. His death was very Heroical', etc. Pope says that 'ill Tongues, and worse Hearts have branded even his last Moments, as wrongfully as they did his Life, with Irreligion.' The letter to Jervas ends: 'but if ever there was a good Christian, without knowing himself to be so, it was *Dr. Garth*.' The conversion seems to have settled into Garth's legacy, whether it was true or not, since it is recorded in Johnson, *Lives*, ii.197.

[126] Ibid., ii.197.

[127] Ibid., ii.195. For an account of its publication history, see John. F. Sena, 'Samuel Garth's *The Dispensary*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 15:4 (1974), pp.639-648.

done' with his health because he 'denied himself nothing').[128] In *An Essay On Criticism*, Pope acknowledged that '*Garth* did not write his own *Dispensary*', though such a view is attributed to 'mad, abandon'd Criticks' who are preoccupied with exposing theft, suggesting a defence of Garth and the *Dispensary*.[129]

In *The Dunciad: An Heroic Poem* (1728), i.43-54, Pope parodied *The Dispensary* — among a complex tissue of other allusions — in a friendly, if comic, way. He paid particular attention to Garth's 'ductile' matter (a typical pseudo-scientific word from *The Dispensary*), and moulded it into new things for his own gain:

> Here she beholds the Chaos dark and deep,
> Where nameless *somethings* in their causes sleep,
> 'Till genial *Jacob*, or a warm *third-day*
> Calls forth each mass, a poem or a play.
> How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie;
> How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry;
> Maggots half-form'd, in rhyme exactly meet,
> And learn to crawl upon poetic feet.
> Here one poor *Word* a hundred clenches makes,
> And ductile dulness new meanders takes;
> There motley *Images* her fancy strike,
> *Figures* ill-pair'd, and *Similes* unlike.[130]

Rumbold suggests *Paradise Lost*, II.890-920, here, evoking 'the biblical and Miltonic creation stories'; and, for the first line in particular, III.9-11, 'the rising world of waters dark and deep'.[131] Rumbold also adduces the target passage in Garth's *Dispensary* (VI.40-3):

> Within the Chambers of the Globe they spy
> The Beds where sleeping Vegetables lie,
> Till the glad Summons of a Genial Ray
> Unbinds the Glebe, and calls them out to Day.[132]

The poem goes on to use another piece of *The Dispensary* (VI.96-7), suggesting at once a scattered knowledge of this particular canto and an interest in re-used lines, since this

---

[128] Woolley, *Correspondence,* iv.93. Cf. *The Works of Monsieur Boileau,* ed. Nicholas Rowe, 3 vols. (London: Curll, 1712), i.'Some Account' [unpaginated]. Also Richard Blackmore, *A Satyr Against Wit* (London: Samuel Crouch, 1699), p.13, 'Felonious G — pursuing this Design, / Smuggles *French* Wit, as others Silks and Wine.' Cf. Richard Terry, *The Plagiarism Allegation*, p.81.
[129] Pope, *Poems*, i.264 (l.215). Cf. Terry, *The Plagiarism Allegation*, p.82.
[130] Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.23-5.
[131] Cf. Ibid., pp.23-4, n.43-66. Also a possible allusion to Virgil, *Georgics*, IV.281-314, 548-58.
[132] Ibid., iii.24, n.42.

particular line from the *Dispensary* is itself parodying Cowley (which was also parodied by Dryden in *MacFlecknoe*, ll.72-3).[133] The rationale behind the parody of Garth, which might otherwise be difficult to gauge (especially because Garth was ostensibly a friend of Pope's, and a predecessor in mock-epic), was explained in a note to *The Dunciad Variorum* i.53-6, n., which would also have been available to Swift:

> Here she beholds the Chaos dark and deep,
> Where nameless somethings in their causes sleep,
> 'Till genial Jacob, or a warm Third-day,
> Call forth each mass, a poem or a play.
>
> [Footnote:] That is to say, unformed things, which are either made into Poems or Plays, as the Booksellers or the Players bid most. These lines allude to the following in *Garth's Dispensary*, *Cant.* 6: 'Within the chambers of the Globe they spy / The beds where sleeping Vegetables lie, / 'Till the glad summons of a genial ray / Unbinds the Glebe, and calls them out to day.'[134]

Here, Pope's footnote explicitly 'calls' the parodied Garth out from obscurity by showing to what 'these lines allude': otherwise he would have remained like a 'sleeping vegetable'. Though Garth was a friend, this passage still goes against the official ideology of *The Dunciad,* like much of the poem, by bestowing renown on its target, calling into question — in the words of Samuel Richardson — why Pope spent so much time 'exposing' these 'Insects' (even if Garth was not truly one of the 'Insects' in Pope's view).[135] However one is to interpret Pope's intention, the note on Garth certainly suggests that few would have recognised the source of the allusion without it — the sixth canto of *The Dispensary* — perhaps because they would not have read that far; and that Jacob Tonson, who published Garth's famously unskilled work on Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* was the only other person who had brought Garth to life like a 'genial ray' of light.[136] Pope as an editor and note-maker, here, shines light on Garth's penumbral obscurity, at once satirising his status as cant and alerting the reader to the

---

[133] Ibid., iii.24, n.44.
[134] Ibid., iii.182, [Pope] n.53-6.
[135] This remark is transcribed and discussed by John Carroll, 'Richardson On Pope and Swift', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 33:1 (1963), pp.19-29 (p.21). Swift claimed to have given Pope the idea of exposing other writers in such a way: 'I had reason to put Mr Pope on writing the Poem, called the *Dunciad;* and to hale those Scoundrels out of their Obscurity, by telling their Names at length, their Works, their Adventures, sometimes their Lodgings, and their Lineage; not with A—'s and B—'s according to the old Way, which would be unknown in a few Years'. Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.516.
[136] *Ovid's Metamorphoses, in Fifteen Books, Translated by the Most Eminent Hands* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1711). Cf. David Hopkins, 'Dryden and the Garth-Tonson Metamorphoses', *The Review of English Studies,* 39:153 (1988), pp. 64-74. On Garth's incompetence, Johnson, *Lives*, ii.197, 'he then undertook an edition of Ovid's Metamorphoses, translated by several hands; which he recommended by a Preface, written with more ostentation than ability: his notions are half-formed, and his materials immethodically confused. This was his last work.'

rapid decline of *The Dispensary*'s visibility after a brief of period of high favour: whether or not that story was true, or if Garth suffered from such extreme obscurity.

The line 'ductile dulness new meanders takes' carries much of the parody (the line is unchanged in both the *Heroic Poem* and the *Variorum*): the nature of such a parody might not have been entirely unfriendly, but the form at least gives a sense of bantering mockery. For this line, Rumbold adduces Garth's *Dispensary*, I.25, 'How ductile matter new meanders takes'.[137] Pope acknowledged this target in *The Dunciad Variorum*, but Pope's wording requires attention: 'A Parody on another in *Garth. Cant.* I: 'How ductile matter new maeanders takes.''[138] Christopher Ricks argues that 'there are many ways in which allusion can be self-delightingly about allusion'; and in this case, Pope played on an allusion's capacity to meander through new territory with a dull resilience to inflection or revision.[139] The word 'meanders' would also have been charged with medical associations, in this period. Johnson glossed the plural noun 'meanders' in medical terms: 'Physicians, by the help of anatomical dissections, have searched into those *meanders* of the veins, arteries, and integrals of the body' (from Matthew Hale's *Primitive Origination of Mankind*).[140] Pope's language, then, while referring to the nature of allusion, also comprehends the full significance of its medical jargon. In a note to *The Dunciad Variorum* (II.132, n.), the annotator says of the poet: 'it must have been particularly agreeable to him to celebrate Dr. *Garth*; both as his constant friend thro' life, and as he was his predecessor in this kind of Satire.'[141] However, in the editions 1729f-1742, this passage was followed by a reassertion of the old theme in an added note: 'but certainly next to commending good Writers, the greatest service to Learning is to expose the bad, who can only that one way be made of any use to it', which juxtaposes (uncomfortably) the note on Garth's friendship.[142] Rumbold argues that Pope saw himself as part of a mock-epic tradition also inhabited by his friend (and target), so the *Variorum* note is perhaps uneasily related to this affinity.[143]

---

[137] Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.25, n.52.
[138] Ibid., iii.182, [Pope] n.62. Cf. Garth, *The Dispensary; a Poem* (London: John Nutt, 1699), p.2.
[139] Ricks, *Allusion*, p.9. Physicians presented as stubborn in Johnson, *Lives*, ii.196: 'the physicians still persisted.'
[140] Matthew Hale, *The Primitive Origination of Mankind Considered and Examined According to The Light of Nature* (London: 1677), p.155.
[141] Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.225-6, [Pope] n.132. Garth's attack on Blackmore would have suited the Scriblerians. Cf. Ashley Marshall, *The Practice of Satire*, pp.133-6.
[142] Ibid., iii.226, line 132, n.
[143] Rumbold refers to Pope's mock-epic predecessors — Boileau's *Le Lutrin* and *The Dispensary* (which derives from it) — on p.8: 'The 1728 *Dunciad* also stands in a mock-epic tradition of ascribing the behaviour to be satirised to the machinations of perverse divinities: two of the most influential examples were Boileau's *Le lutrin* and Garth's *Dispensary.*' Rumbold sees a close affinity between what Pope and Garth were doing. On p.18, Rumbold suggests that *The Dispensary* is related to *The Dunciad* because it contains 'allegorised perversities imaged as divinities surrounded by human devotees.' She notices a possible allusion to Garth (not acknowledged by Pope in the *Variorum*) at I.16 (p.20, n.16), suggesting that Pope was particularly familiar with the poem beyond his acknowledgments.

Swift's allusions to Garth were less genial or bantering than Pope's.[144] Until the Whig ascendancy and Swift's move to Ireland in 1713/14, Swift was friends with Garth and they often socialised in local taverns (as recorded in the *Journal to Stella*).[145] Even when Swift was friends with Garth, he often capitalised on his generosity: he once reported to Stella 'I dined to-day with Dr. Garth and Mr. Addison, at the Devil tavern by Temple-bar, and Garth treated', but from his account books we know that Swift tried to get away with 'treating' Garth in return to something a bit cheaper.[146] On Garth's small reputation and slight output, Swift said — in a phrase at once denigrating and alert to the potential value of *The Dispensary* for his own gain — 'The Author of the *Dispensary* has Writ nothing else valuable, and therefore is too small in the *GARTH*' (suggesting his small output with the pun on 'girth').[147] Arbuthnot said to Swift that 'The ridicule of Medicin is so copious a subject that I must only here & ther touch it', and Swift was similarly reluctant to 'touch' the subject or *The Dispensary* itself (evoking his own obsessive cleanliness).[148] In the *City Shower* (first printed 1710) Swift used Garth to 'stain' his poem with cant, and prefaces the allusion playfully with the 'vi'lent' influence of a 'Foe'. The poem which appeared in Faulkner's *Works* of 1735 came with a footnote to bring the allusion to light, much like *The Dunciad Variorum*. The note is likely to have been proposed and constructed by Faulkner, but it also possible that Swift (or friends acting on his behalf) would have licensed its insertion, and perhaps even supplied the detail it included:

---

[144] For Swift's Garth, see Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.672-3. He had the second and sixth editions. He also owned one of Garth's anacreontics to Gay.
[145] Cf. Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.52, 62.
[146] Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.35. When Swift paid, he took Garth to a 'hedge tavern' (of low cost): ibid., p.52. Williams cites *Account Books*, p.114.
[147] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises,* p.226. Cf. *OED* 1a, 1c, and 3.
[148] Woolley, *Correspondence,* i.624. For Swift's interest in and acquaintance with doctors, see the (apparently) unfinished Latino-Anglicus *Consultation Of Four Physicians Upon A Lord That Was Dying*, Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, Appendix J, pp.611-4.

Nor yet the Dust had shun'd the unequal Strife,
But aided by the Wind, fought still for Life;
And wafted with its Foe by vi'lent Gust,
*'Twas doubtful which was Rain, and which was Dust.
Ah! where must needy Poet seek for Aid,
When Dust and Rain at once his Coat invade?
Sole Coat, where Dust, cemented, by the Rain
Erects the Nap, and leaves a cloudy Stain.

[Footnote:] * Twas doubtful which was Sea, and which was Sky.
Garth Disp.[149]

The lines surrounding the Garth allusion are very close to a passage from John Phillips' *Cyder* (1708) — a poem containing several showers — which had established Phillips' fame ('Where shou'd they turn / Distress'd? Whence seek for Aid?'), staining the poem with another faintly recognisable allusion of dubious authenticity, which might be contested.[150] The footnote itself is implicated in this joke about dubious attribution: the mock-scholarly shortening of the word *Dispensary* to 'disp' accords with the conventional shorthand for both 'displayed' and 'disputed', two of the integral forces behind the making of a scholarly footnote, neither of which reflects well on Garth.[151] Faulkner included this note but removed the subtitle which occurred in the 1727 *Miscellanies*, '*In Imitation of* VIRGIL's Georg.', suggesting that he wanted the reader to experience a piece of modern parody, not a classical imitation.[152] This footnote embodied a typically 'Modern' paradox, then, because it cleared up any doubt of where the allusion had come from while dirtying the appearance of the poem on the page: just like a

[149] Faulkner, *Works* (1735), ii.32. Cf. Williams, *Poems*, i.137-8 (with corrected quotation from Garth). For the long and complex debate about the 1735 *Works*, see Marshal's summary in 'The '1735' Faulkner Edition of Swift's *Works*', *The Library*, 14:2 (2013), pp.154-198. Swift's own remarks about it are not entirely trustworthy. Eg: 'since it was an evil I could not avoyd, I had rather they should be printed correctly than otherwise', Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.693. He was certainly annoyed by his relative lack of control in the making of the most recent *Miscellanies* (and by Pope's selections and omissions). Cf. Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, pp.23-5. Karian's discussion of the poetry volume is inconclusive, pp.34-5. However, his comment on p.39 (in light of Faulkner's own remarks) leaves the possibility of Swift's agency open: 'that Faulkner had understandable motives for exaggerating Swift's involvement with the 1735 edition does not necessarily mean that he did exaggerate.' Faulkner claimed that Swift wanted 'the Editor to write Notes', which may or may not include the footnote to the *City Shower* (cf. Davis, *Prose*, xiii.203). Karian's account allows for the conclusion, here, that the construction of the note was Faulkner's responsibility (perhaps even his idea), but that Swift (or Swift's friends) are unlikely to have allowed it through without consulting it. Karian: 'There is probably no way to isolate and distinguish the revisions by these various persons', *Print and Manuscript,* p.43.

[150] John Phillips, *Cyder: A Poem, In Two Books* (London: Henry Hills, 1708), p.7.

[151] Cf. Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History*, p.22: 'Footnotes exist, rather, to perform two other functions. First, they persuade: they convince the reader that the historian has done an acceptable amount of work, enough to lie within the tolerances of the field. […] Second, they indicate the chief sources that the historian has actually used.'

[152] See headnote in Williams, *Poems*, i.136. Subtitle was included again by Bathurst and Hawkesworth.

broomstick, which Swift said is 'destined to make other Things clean, and be nasty it self'.[153] It might also have been an imitation of one of the many keys to *The Dispensary* published in the 1720s, which were some of the most cluttered and disorganised pages of the genre printed in this period.[154]

However, the invading allusion had not always been so malicious. In early periodical editions of the *City Shower,* Swift's couplet had suggested that the two writers were actually much closer, evoking their 'mingled' friendship at the time of the poem's composition (c. 1710). Walter Scott picked up on this curiosity, and showed that the lines were originally:

> His only coat, where dust confus'd with rain,
> Roughens the nap, and leaves a mingled stain.[155]

The allusion, then, over the course of its life in successive versions of the *City Shower*, simultaneously perpetuated Garth's 'dust' in modern literature and registered a real shift in the relationship, turning it from something 'mingled' to the invasion of a 'Foe' as their allegiances split apart. Swift's 'confus'd' allusion to Garth, rather than providing a fixed point of reference to a poem about disorganisation and the breaking down of social decorum, was implicated in precisely these phenomena, unsettling Ricks' argument that Augustan allusions were 'gratefully drawing light from an even greater source of energy and illumination.'[156]

Contrary to 'Modern' theorists (and, to Swift, enemies) of poetry such as Blackmore, who believed that an allusion shows respect to antiquity in English literature, Swift indulged in the kinds of errors that made allusion rich with satirical or parodic interest, especially if that meant contending with an error or an inconsistency.[157] This was not unique to Swift, but often occurred in texts which questioned the relative value of 'Modern' literature, or proscribed rules of 'Modern' writing. Lansdowne, for example, in *Unnatural Flights in Poetry* (1701), claimed to have 'taken' the following couplet from the Harington translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516):

---

[153] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, pp.13-14. Rumbold adduces an allusion to George Herbert for this line (n.5). Swift referred to Boyle as a 'very silly writer' in the margin of Gilbert Burnet's *History of His Own Times* (1724-34). For marginalia, Davis, *Prose*, v.271.
[154] See *A Compleat Key to The Dispensary* (London: 1726), p.11, for a representative example of the clumsiness and fragmented appearance.
[155] Scott, *Works*, xiv.95. Cf. Williams, *Poems*, i.138, n.29-30.
[156] Ricks, *Allusion*, p.11.
[157] On the durability of allusions (and advocacy of writing in English) see Richard Blackmore, *Advice to The Poets: A Poem* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1706), p.17 (ll.370-1): 'As Epic Laws demand, should be express'd / In proper Types, and in Allusion dress'd.'

In the heat of Action, combats being slain,
*And after death, still do's the fight maintain.**

* *Taken from* Ariosto [158]

The couplet was a record of its own life as something that had survived its author — it 'maintains' the fight 'after death' — but it was also mistaken in the 'heat of Action'. It has been observed on at least two occasions that the couplet was not from Ariosto at all, but from Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (liii.60).[159] It is possible that this kind of error was common among those alluding to *Orlando Furioso*, which was often put on the shelf as a signal of social status and was rarely taught at school: even the original story of its composition, which involved Harington's use of carefully selected — perhaps even mistranslated — parts of the text to impress Elizabeth I's ladies in waiting, is thought to have been an eighteenth-century invention.[160] Pope committed similar errors with his Ariosto: we know that he owned the Harington translation, but misattributed quotations from it even though he composed a thorough manuscript index and bound it together with his copy.[161] Lansdowne's attempt to correct the error perpetuated — perhaps accidentally — the playful irony of the couplet's awareness of itself as an allusion. As David Womersley has shown, Lansdowne amended the couplet in a later edition of *Unnatural Flights* (1732) to express the resentment of having to 'yield' to correction:

Kill'd as he was, insensible of Death,
He still fights on, and scorns to yield his Breath.[162]

Such allusions and their revised versions, which preserved errors against the forces of scholarly emendation or learned objection, mattered to eighteenth-century poets, because, as Empson argued, it allowed them to 'speak through a veil of decency' even if that decency was not genuine.[163]

---

[158] George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, *Concerning Unnatural Flights in Poetry*, in Charles Gildon, *A New Miscellany of Original Poems on Several Occasions* (London: Peter Buck, 1701), p.315.
[159] First noticed by J. E. Spingarn, *Critical Essays of The Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908-9), iii.337. Discussed by David Womersley, *Augustan Critical Writing* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p.372, n.6.
[160] The anecdote was created at some point in the century, but was first published in Thomas Parke, *Nugae Antiquae*, 3 vols. (London: 1804). For discussion of this anecdote in relation to the *Orlando Furioso* and its composition, see Miranda Johnson-Haddad, 'Englishing Ariosto: "Orlando Furioso" at the Court of Elizabeth I', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 31:4 (1994), pp.323-50 (p.324).
[161] See Maynard Mack, 'Pope's Books', pp.209-305 (p.221). Pope's index was extremely precise. Ibid., p.222.
[162] Womersley, *Augustan Critical Writing*, p.372.
[163] Empson, 'Obscurity and Annotation', *Argufying*, p.82.

Swift's sense that rescued or corrected texts were rich sources of allusion was sharpened by his direct contact with books which were physically damaged or fragmented: as David McKitterick argues, 'books, like the words, images and other signs of which they are partially composed, are endlessly malleable, often transient, and always mutable.'[164] Swift carried out his own editorial work in his copy of Ben Jonson's *Works,* but what appeared to be restorative judgments changed Jonson's language. He owned a copy of the 1640 second folio, which was famous for its printing errors.[165] In *Epicœne* he changed the line 'That difference makes thee worthy it should beo so' to 'That diffidence makes thee worthy it should be so'. In *Poetaster* (IV.iii), he made the following change, which corrects the rhyme:

> Love is blind, and a wanton;
> In the whole world, there is a scant *one*
> ~~*One*~~ such another:
> No, not his mother.[166]

He might have been interested in similar editorial activity carried out by Narcissus Marsh, who occasionally corrected his own texts if pieces of them had gone missing or had been damaged. For example, Marsh had a nicely printed 1607 quarto of Ben Jonson's *Volpone,* which found its way into a miscellany bound with other plays owned by Gowin Knight the Physician (Marsh: S. T. C. 14783). The other texts belonging to Marsh in this volume were Royalist plays performed in London between 1607 and c.1663 which he probably purchased as a group at the New Exchange in London, and they were bound together much later without any particular rationale or sense of sequence.[167] One of his texts, a badly damaged edition of John Fletcher's *The Night-Walker*: *or, The Little Thief*, had lost some of its first page, so Marsh patched it together with new squares of paper and filled in the lost words, probably by consulting an intact edition (all of his corrections correlate with other surviving editions, except for a lost comma after 'gone'):

---

[164] David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order: 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2003), p.224.
[165] For bibliographical discussion see Herford and Simpson, *Ben Jonson*, viii.15.
[166] Correction recorded in Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading,* ii.982.
[167] Marsh's edition of *Volpone* was *Ben: Ionson his Volpone or The Foxe* (London: Thomas Thorpe, 1607), which he stamped with his Greek motto.

Wild. What plow? Thou hast no Land / Stealing is thy own purchase.
Lur. The [best inheritance]
Wild. Not in my opinion, / Thou hadst five hundred pound a year.
Lur. 'Tis gon[e][168]

It was richly ironic that the lost lines of this particular printed text were implicated in the issue of omission addressed at the opening of the play. It is possible that Swift looked at this piece of restorative editorial work and re-used it. In the preliminary essay 'To All Servants in General' that came with the *Directions to Servants* — a text that we know to have been closely modelled on early modern dramatic literature — the speaker argues 'that Service is no Inheritance, that your Work is great, and your Wages very small', a line which is very close in meaning and wording to this fractured introduction to *The Night-Walker,* and laments the same uneven rewards of theft.[169] It might also have been an allusion that, like those to Garth's *Dispensary*, registered real dissatisfactions in the relationship between Swift and Marsh, because Marsh had denied Swift promotion in the church and given him poor reward for his work, changing how one hears 'your Work is great, and your Wages very small'.

IV - Modern 'isms'

Like many readers who acquire books without a continuous or consistent direction of reading, Swift may not have ventured beyond the first pages of some of the 'Modern' books he bought, or have read them at all. As Eleanor Cook has argued, allusion is sometimes a matter of 'what we choose to remember from the past'.[170] Records that survive of Swift's books do not necessarily indicate his habits of reading, even if they do indicate his habits of collecting. Paddy Bullard has acknowledged this problem:

---

[168] John Fletcher, *The Night-Walker: Or, The Little Thief* (London: Andrew Crook, 1661), Sig. A2r. Pencil mark indicating order by another owner in Marsh's copy (4).
[169] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.450. Rumbold suggests that 'Service is no Inheritance' is a common proverb about servants and their lack of 'long-term security'. Rumbold also argues that the text has contexts in Restoration drama. Cf. p.436, 'the cunning of servants as represented in Restoration Comedy', withThomas Southerne's *The Wives' Excuse* (1669) as a possible source.
[170] Cook, *Against Coercion: Games Poets Play*, p.99.

From a variety of sources, including a second shelf-list made by John Lyon in 1742, we know of approximately 165 titles that passed through Swift's study, or through his hands, without ending up in the 1745 sale catalogue. There are therefore some 615 titles that we can associate more or less closely with Swift's library, although only half of that number belong to the core of the collection, present in 1715 and 1742.[171]

Bullard's distinction between titles that 'passed through Swift's study' and passed 'through his hands' is important to a study of his allusions: it was a distinction that Swift acknowledged in the 'Preface' to *A Tale of A Tub*, referring in playful terms to 'the *Art of being Deep-learned and Shallow-read*', a line which also reflects on the conflict between his own densely allusive compositions and readers who only caught a superficial or 'shallow' sense of their allusive range.[172] Approximately one sixth of the books known to have been in Swift's libraries contain annotations — which Bullard goes on to suggest is an unusually high number to have survived from this period — but the rest show no concrete evidence of having been read in depth, even if his name was inscribed on the fly-leaf or the title page.[173] This evidence (or lack of evidence) might explain why so many of Swift's allusions to modern literature suggested only a cursory glance at the texts they alluded to, not venturing past the kinds of 'Prefaces, Epistles, Advertisements, Introductions, Prolegomenas, Apparatuses, [and] To the Reader's' enjoyed by the *Tub* writer.[174] For example, the idea of Houyhnhnms riding on a sledge drawn by four Yahoos — 'At Noon I saw coming towards the House a Kind of Vehicle, drawn like a Sledge by four *Yahoos*' — was an allusion to Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), which had four prefatory texts drawing it along.[175] The idea came from 'Democritus to The Reader', not from the text of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which aligns Swift's own reading of things that came before Burton's text with the golden age of prelapsarian Houyhnhnm life to which it referred. It might have been important to Swift that 'Democritus to The Reader' also openly and playfully discussed the kind of writer that 'rake[s] over all *Indexes* & Pamphlets for notes, as our Merchants do strange Havens for traffique.'[176]

Swift acknowledged his own inattention on several occasions. One of the *Thoughts On Various Subjects* recalls picking up a miscellany of John Pomfret's minor poems, which he put straight back down again after a dozen lines: 'At a Bookseller's Shop, some Time ago, I saw a Book with this Title; *Poems by the Author of the Choice*. Not enduring to read a dozen Lines, I

---

[171] Paddy Bullard, 'What Swift Did In Libraries', p.72.
[172] Walsh, *Tale,* p.84.
[173] Paddy Bullard, 'What Swift Did In Libraries', p.72.
[174] Walsh, *Tale,* p.85.
[175] See 'Democritus Junior to The Reader', Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, i.54: 'to see horses ride in a Coach, men draw it.' The allusion was first acknowledged by David Womersley. See *Gulliver's Travels*, p.344, n.10. The four paratexts were 'The Argument of The Frontispiece', 'Dedication', 'The Author's Abstract of Melancholy', 'Democritus Junior to The Reader'.
[176] Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, i.9.

asked the Company with me, whether they had ever seen the Book, or heard of the Poem from whence the Author denominated himself?'[177] The book in question was the *Miscellany Poems On Several Occasions by The Author of The Choice* (1702), a collection of poems on urban subjects crowned by Pomfret's Ciceronian essay in blank verse — *The Choice* (1700) — on the 'Method how to live' as a country gentleman. The poem was unprecedentedly popular. Johnson recorded that 'perhaps no composition in our language has been oftener perused than Pomfret's *Choice*'.[178] *The Choice* became famous for one of its arguments that spiralled out of control, in which Pomfret inadvertently supported the habit of keeping a mistress rather than a wife: Swift's affectation of casually throwing the text away might well be a parody of Pomfret's famous argument, or a dismissal of a writer deemed to be immoral.[179] With a characteristic determination to allude to this modern figure, however, despite 'not enduring to read a dozen lines', Swift did respond to one in the preface: Pomfret said that 'It will be to little Purpose, the Author presumes, to offer any Reasons, why the following Poems appear in Public', and Swift parodied it in the *Thoughts On Various Subjects* by asking if anyone had 'seen the book' since.[180]

This might suggest a link between Swift and his *Tale* writer, who collects some modern titles for the Prince of Posterity, only to lose them and claim to have 'enquired after them among readers and booksellers' in vain, concluding that 'the memorial of them was lost among men, their place was no more to be found.'[181] Throughout the *Tale,* Swift's speaker insistently refers to his 'short Memory': 'the severe Reader may justly tax me as a Writer of short Memory, a Deficiency to which a true *Modern* cannot but of Necessity be a little subject'.[182] The complexly parodic 1710 Apology (discussed at length in Chapter 4) tried to fend off accusations that the *Battle of The Books* had been plagiarised by asserting ignorance of François de Callières' '*Combat des livres*', which can not have been true of Swift himself because this was a commonly read and collected text in the period (there were several

[177] Davis, *Prose*, iv.251.
[178] Johnson, *Lives,* ii.60. Johnson argued that Pomfret should be included in the *Lives*, and praised *The Choice* for presenting 'a system of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations'. Lonsdale notes, however, that Johnson did not quote him in the *Dictionary*. Ibid., ii.288.
[179] Ibid., ii.60.
[180] 'The Preface' to John Pomfret, *Miscellany Poems On Several Occasions by The Author of The Choice* (London: 1702), p.1.
[181] A parody of Deuteronomy 22:26 and Psalm 9:6. Experiencing boredom in the bookseller's shop was a common trope of Augustan satire. See Bernard Mandeville, *The Virgin Unmask'd; Or, Female Dialogues Betwixt and Elderly Maiden Lady and Her Niece* (London: J. Morphew, 1709), p.1.
[182] Walsh, *Tale*, p.88.

Callières texts in Sheridan's library, for example).[183] The argument turns on a politeness, 'if I misremember not', which hovers between innocence and cynical evasion:

I have been assured, that the Battel in St. *James's* Library, is *mutatis mutandis,* taken out of a *French* Book, entituled, *Combat des livres*, if I misremember not. *In which Passage there are two Clauses observable:* I have been assured; *and,* if I misremember not. *I desire first to know, whether if that Conjecture proves an utter falshood, those two Clauses will be a sufficient Excuse for this worthy Critick.*[184]

This passage is typical of the *Tale* writer, who frequently deals in 'misdirected intensities' in lieu of his own defences.[185] Expressions of humility always struck Swift as insincere: the *Tale* writer claims, for example, that his text is written for the 'Universal Improvement of Mankind', and is '*calculated to live at least as long as our Language.*'[186] Swift was observing and parodying such expressions in prefaces written by other writers. For example, in the disgruntled 'Letter from Capt. GULLIVER, to his Cousin SYMPSON' (1735), hired students are blamed for inconsistencies in the text:

I hope you will be ready to own publickly, whenever you shall be called to it, that by your great and frequent Urgency you prevailed on me to publish a very loose and incorrect Account of my Travels; with Direction to hire some young Gentlemen of either University to put them in Order, and correct the Style, as my Cousin *Dampier* did by my Advice, in his Book called, *A Voyage round the World*.[187]

The allusion to Dampier matters because *A New Voyage Round The World* (1697) — which Swift, by omitting the word 'new', suggested was conventional — had one of the most eccentrically 'humble' prefaces of any text in the period, asserting all kinds of literary accomplishment it did not really achieve:

As to my Stile, it cannot be expected, that a Seaman should affect Politeness; for were I able to do it, yet I think I should be little Sollicitous about it, in a work of this Nature. I have frequently indeed, devested my Self of Sea Phrases, to gratify the Land Reader; for which the Seamen will hardly forgive me: And yet, possibly, I shall not seem Complaisant enough to the other; because I still retain the use of so many Sea-terms. I confess I have not been at all scrupulous in this matter, either as to the one or the other of these; for I am perswaded, that if what I say be intelligible, it matters not greatly in what word it is express'd.

---

[183] The text in question was François de Callières, *Histoire Poëtique de la Guerre Nouvellement Déclareé Entre Les Anciens et Les Modernes* (Paris: 1688). Cf. Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iv.229. Wotton noticed the theft from Callières (Walsh, *Tale*, p.230).
[184] Walsh, *Tale*, p.11.
[185] Claude Rawson, *Order from Confusion Sprung*, p.41.
[186] Ibid., p.1. Cf. the advertisement to *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729), suggesting that it was a satirical trope. The advertisement says, of the poem's victims, 'that they must expect to survive, (and here survive they will, as long as the English tongue shall remain such as it was in the reigns of Queen Anne and King George)'. Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.122-3.
[187] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.7.

For the same reason I have not been curious as to the spelling of the Names of Places, Plants, Fruits, Animals &c. which in many of these remoter parts are given at the pleasure of the Travellers, and vary according to their different Humours: Neither have I confined my Self to such Names as are given by Learned Authors, or so much as enquired after many of them. I write for my Countrymen; and have therefore, for the most part, used such Names as are familiar to our English Seamen, and those of our Colonies abroad, yet without neglecting others that occur'd.[188]

Swift would have been interested in Dampier's repeated admissions of incompetence: he had no 'Politeness', no specific 'Sea phrases' but lots of 'Sea-terms' (difference unspecified), he was not 'scrupulous', his expressions did not 'matter', he was not 'curious as to the spelling' of anything, and had no knowledge of 'Learned Authors'. It might be telling that the first and second volumes of Marsh's copy of Dampier went missing, and that no record of an effort to locate them again or replace them survives: their real value, in other words, was not particularly high in that library.[189]

Swift thought little of dedicatory epistles, prefaces, and commendatory verses, which he treated as 'satire' on the author who wrote them.[190] Indeed, the *Tale* writer laments that 'a very considerable Number is known to proceed *Criticks* and *Wits*, by reading nothing else' ('proceed' meaning 'become', *OED* 4b).[191] This train of thought was fully worked out in the *Tale*, and the writer tells the following story:

This Expedient [writing prefaces] was admirable at first; Our Great *Dryden* has long carried it as far as I would go, and with incredible Success. He has often said to me in Confidence, that the World would have never suspected him to be so great a Poet, if he had not assured them so frequently in his Prefaces, that it was impossible they could either doubt or forget it.[192]

As Rawson argues, Swift saw Dryden as a 'toadying and confessional multiplier of dedications and prefaces.'[193] As late as *On Poetry: A Rapsody* (1733) Swift advised aspiring Poet Laureates to 'read' Dryden's prefaces, even if they were written for 'filling' up space and raising a 'Volume's Price': 'Read all the *Prefaces* of *Dryden*, / For these our Criticks much confide in, / (Tho' meerly writ at first for filling / To raise the Volume's Price, a Shilling.'[194]

---

[188] 'The Preface' to William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round The World* (London: James Knapton, 1697), pp.ii-iii.
[189] Formerly at L3.3.24. See 1767 catalogue of thefts, L3|3|26-27. The edition was the four volume 8vo. Swift's library, at the end of his life, contained a vast number of travel books, which were probably acquired during his preparation for *Gulliver's Travels*, c.1723-5. However, as we can tell from the Moor Park reading list, he started looking at travel books as early as the 1690s. We know that he read travels to Siam and Morocco and a history of Ethiopia in 1696/7. See the 'Moor Park Reading List', Walsh, *Tale*, pp.273-4.
[190] See *On Poetry: A Rapsody*, in which a 'Prologue sent from Hand unknown' will always resemble a 'Satire' or 'hum'rous lines', Williams, *Poems*, ii.643.
[191] Walsh, *Tale*, p.85.
[192] Ibid., p.85.
[193] Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.23.
[194] Williams, *Poems*, ii.648.

Swift was also preoccupied with famous cant phrases and recycled lines in 'Modern' literature. Swift's sense of modern cant was refined: the *OED* credits him with coining the word 'Modernism' in a letter to Pope, to mean a cant phrase or irritating fragment of popular terminology, which has been attributed to the wrong date on several occasions.[195]For example, Denham's *Cooper's Hill* (1642) was frequently recycled in the form of dubious or half-remembered quotations in this period: rendering it, in Claude Rawson's phrase, 'shop-soiled' with overuse.[196] The phrase 'deep yet clear', a Denhamism, had become particularly popular, partly because Dryden had championed its 'sweetness' in his *Dedication of the Aeneid*, but also because of its flexibility: Sedley, for example, used it in his *Pastoral Dialogue*, 'tho' gentle yet not soft'.[197] (The Oxford edition of Denham's *Works* has an appendix dedicated to the many reuses of this line from *Cooper's Hill*, one of which comes from Swift.)[198] In *Apollo's Edict*, Swift acknowledged that this 'Mimickry of *deep yet clear*' was no longer bearable:

> Nor let my Votaries show their Skill
> In apeing Lines from *Cooper's Hill*;
> For know I cannot bear to hear,
> The Mimickry of *deep yet clear*.[199]

Pope was recorded as saying that 'there is no one of our poets of that class that was more judicious than Sir John Denham', but Swift would not have agreed.[200]

IV - Modern Writers

Margaret Anne Doody, Paula Backscheider, and Christine Gerrard have recently uncovered the extent to which Swift contributed to and supported the creative endeavours of women such as Laetitia Pilkington, Mary Barber, and Anne Finch, suggesting that his distrust of 'Modern' literature was uneven, or selective. This work has supplemented existing scholarship with an account of how he contributed to the works of other 'Modern' writers, not just

---

[195] *OED*: 'Modernism', 1. *OED* wrongly attributes the source to a letter from Swift to Pope, dated 23/7/1741, which was also wrongly attributed to 23/7/1737 by Scott. In fact, it was written on 23/6/1737, Woolley, *Correspondence*, iv.445. 'The corruption of English by those Scribblers who send us over their trash in Prose and Verse, with abominable curtailings and quaint modernisms.'
[196] On this poem's disproportionate longevity in Augustan literature, see *Swift and Others*, p.190.
[197] 'Cooper's Hill' (line 207), Denham, *Works*, p.79.
[198] See Appendix E to Denham, *Works*, pp.343-51.
[199] Williams, *Poems*, ii.585; i.271.
[200] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.194.

members of the Scriblerus Club.[201] Such research has suggested that he partially believed in the potential of 'Modern' literature to be successful, but that he should preside over or dictate it. His self-appointed position of authority induced a feeling of paranoia over the secrecy and protected status of his own work, about which he was aggressively demanding. For example, he made a deal with Laetitia Pilkington, to whom he lent a manuscript copy of *Verses On The Death of Dr. Swift*: his 'Conditions' were that it was to be back by 'Eight o'Clock' the next morning and not copied.[202] Pilkington frustrated him by memorising it accurately (discussed at further length in the conclusion).

There were others, however, who did not receive his support, and were excluded from his circle of influence: Swift showed the same kinds of dismissiveness to writers both living and dead, as Pope continued to do in successive editions of *The Dunciad,* in which the targets were altered or submitted to various kinds of parody. For example, Swift said of Parson Joseph Trapp (the first Oxford Professor of Poetry) that he looked at 'his Poem', called *Peace*, '& correct it, but was good for nothing.'[203] Charles Wogan, the Governor of La Mancha, a Jacobite diplomat and soldier, wrote to Swift to ask for corrections to his poems. Swift returned superficial notes by letter in 1732, but Wogan responded to him with what David Woolley refers to as a 'screed' of thanks, amounting to fifty manuscript pages, in which Wogan claimed that he 'never had a more earnest desire for any man's acquaintance and friendship', and admitted that he was a 'little mad' with admiration. He referred to Swift as 'Mentor' throughout the letter, before finally admitting that he must have bored his 'Mentor' by accident: 'so Mentor must take nothing ill that I say to him. My patience is exhausted, and I have done all I could to tire his.'[204] Swift took three years to reply (possibly because he was uneasy about Wogan's Jacobite affiliations), and he was ultimately unable to find a printer for

---

[201] In particular, see Margaret Anne Doody's famous article 'Swift Among the Women', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 18 (1988), pp.68-92; Paula Backscheider, 'Inverting the Image of Swift's "Triumfeminate"', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14:1 (2004), pp.37-71; Christine Gerrard, 'Laetitia Pilkington and the Mnemonic Self', *Review of English Studies,* 70:295 (2018), pp.489-508. Also see Bernard Tucker, 'Our Chief Poetess': Mary Barber and Swift's Circle', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland,* 7 (1992), pp.43-56.

[202] Pilkington, *Memoirs*, i.133-4. Cf. Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, p.76.

[203] Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.522. Joseph Trapp was a clergyman (supported by Swift) in the Church of England, and appointed Oxford Professor of Poetry in 1708. He was famous for ludicrous poetic habits such as reciting Shakespeare in Latin. Swift was summoned, on the 31st of March, to 'look over' a poem called *Peace* which was to be dedicated to Bolingbroke (Bolingbroke was looking at this poem over a dinner which Swift avoided). See *Journal*, p.521. The poem was *Peace: A Poem, Inscribed to the Right Honourable The Lord Viscount Bolingbroke* (London: John Barber, 1713). He owned Trapp's two-volume *Aeneid,* Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading,* iii.1917. Swift seems to have seen a number of unfinished works in March-April 1713. He mentions the opening night of Addison's *Cato* ('I saw it unfinished some Years ago') and Steele's *Guardian* ('Steel has begun a new daily paper'). Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.522.

[204] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.591. James Woolley refers to the letter as a 'screed' in a note to the previous letter, ibid., iii.518. Wogan was an Irish exile, suggesting that Swift might have felt some affinity with him. He praised Wogan in a letter of the Summer of 1732, 'we all allowed that the Writer was a Scholar, a Man of Genius, and of Honour.' Swift was also surprised that such a mixture of poems, 'a History, a Dedication, a poetical Translation of the Penitential Psalms, Latin Poems, and the like', could have been written by 'a Soldier'. Ibid., iii. 514.

Wogan in Britain.[205] Though Wogan was eccentric, Swift's response was representative in one respect: reading, editing, or commenting on the poems of other writers often allowed (or encouraged) him to dismiss them. Swift recounted the following incident in the *Thoughts On Various Subjects,* which at once revealed his dislike of poems being copied (even by accident) and his sense that 'Modern' literature could be dispensed with:

A PERSON reading to me a dull Poem of his own making, I prevailed on him to scratch out six Lines together: In turning over the Leaf, the Ink being wet, marked as many Lines on the other Side; whereof the Poet complaining, I bid him to be easy, for it would be better if those were out too.[206]

Resisting amateur poetry might, in a characteristic gesture of Augustan pseudo-learning, have been informed by Juvenal, *Satires* (I.i.1-4) — 'semper ego auditor tantum?' — famously imitated in Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (1735), which began with the command to 'Shut, shut the door, good *John*!'.[207] Dryden's translation of the Juvenal satire was well known:

> No Man can take a more familiar note
> Of his own Home, than I of *Vulcan's* Grott,
> Or *Mars* his Grove, or hollow winds that blow
> From *Aetna's* top, or tortur'd Ghosts below.[208]

Pope re-used the image of 'hollow winds that blow' in both serious and satirical contexts, re-thinking the image of hollow wind reinvigorating old matter, much like his poems breathing life into over-worn allusions:

> The levell'd Towns with Weeds lie cover'd o'er,
> The hollow Winds thro' naked Temples roar;
> Round broken Columns clasping Ivy twin'd;[209]

> Keen, hollow winds howl thro' the bleak recess,
> Emblem of the music caus'd by emptiness:[210]

> Or call the winds thro' long Arcades to roar,
> Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door;[211]

---

[205] Ibid., iv.272.
[206] Davis, *Prose*, iv.253-254.
[207] Pope, *Poems*, iv.96.
[208] *First Satyr of Juvenal* (1692) , Dryden, *Works*, iv.93.
[209] *Windsor Forest* (1713), Pope, *Poems*, i.156.
[210] *The Dunciad: An Heroic Poem,* i.19-20 (1728), Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.21.
[211] *Epistle to Burlington* (1731), Pope, *Poems*, iii.(2),141.

Swift's reading of Dryden's translation can be traced to some of his earliest poetry. In *To Mr. Congreve* (c.1693), Swift took some words from slightly further on in Dryden's translation, '*Orestes'* bulky rage / Unsatisfy'd with Margins closely writ' (I.i.vi), and jumbled them into an allusion: 'some large bulky writ / Shews in the front the ambition of my wit'.[212] (The conceit of 'hollow' writing recurs in *On Poetry: A Rapsody,* as part of an attack on Grimston.)[213] Swift's resistance to modern poets, then, was not simply instinctive, but built on complex rehearsals of cant in contexts of inattention and disapproval.

In *The Life and Genuine Character of Doctor Swift* (1733), an elaborate and secretive hoax-parody of his own *Verses On The Death of Dr. Swift,* the following lines appraise the nature of 'Modern' literary success:

> Let me suppose, two special Friends,
> And, each to *Poetry* pretends:
> Wou'd either Poet take it well,
> To hear, the other *bore the Bell* —?[214]

As an 'elaborate hoax on his own unpublished poem', this text puts forward a characteristically disappointed vision of 'Modern' literature: Swift is affecting the opinions and strategy of 'some very low writer', here, claiming to have seen *Verses On The Death Of Dr. Swift* and attempting to parody its style. As Pat Rogers argues, 'parody, paraphrase, burlesque, mock-encomia, tongue-in-cheek 'answers'' were common to Scriblerian satire, but these forms could be seen as a 'devious tribute to Grub Street', aping the forms and preoccupations of 'Modern' writing they notionally kept a distance from.[215] Swift's composition is full of triplets, dashes, and breaks which, as Karian notes, should have revealed that Swift was not the author.[216] Faulkner accounted for this in a posthumous edition of the *Works*: 'published with Breaks, Dashes, and Triplets, (which the Author never made use of) to disguise his Manner of Writing.'[217] (Rumbold's sense of Swift's parody as 'intolerable — if not entirely consistent — self-satisfaction' is apt, here, owing to its deceptiveness and intimacy of the self-

---

[212] Williams, *Poems*, i.44.
[213] 'Great poet of the Hollow Tree', Williams, *Poems,* iii. Grimston is the heir to '*Blackmore's* Reign' with its '*leaden Crown*', playing on the Shadwell lineage of *MacFlecknoe*. The line is clearly designed to rhyme with Dryden's 'Thou last great Prophet of Tautology', Dryden, *Works*, ii.54. Williams adduces Grimston's *The Lawyer's Fortune, or Love in a Hollow Tree*, and its various reprintings in the eighteenth century, which Grimston himself tried to suppress.
[214] Ibid., ii.545. For the 'depth of Swift's maneuvres [sic]' with this poem, see Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, pp. 176-9.
[215] Pat Rogers, *Grub Street*, p.218.
[216] Ibid., p.178. Cf. Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.633.
[217] Faulkner, *Works* (1746), viii.138.

reference.)[218] The last line alters the cant phrase 'bear the bell', which, according to the second edition of Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1736), means to 'rule, govern, or lead, as the bell-weather does the whole Flock.'[219] Swift's change to the line presents 'Modern' literature as a competition between 'special Friends' (a recurring theme in *Verses On The Death*) who would not enjoy watching the other succeed, or lead the 'flock' (simultaneously an achievement and a failure). As this passage — and indeed the nature of this poem as a hoax — show, Swift believed 'Modern' literature to be untrustworthy, and uneasily situated between recycled cant and ingenuity.

[218] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.xl.
[219] Nathan Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum, or a More Compleat Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, 2nd edition (London: T. Cox, 1736), 'BE' [unpaginated].

III
Depending

> Would you have liked to be a friend of the great Dean?[1]
>
> - Thackeray

> It is an ingenious Poet, who, soliciting his brain for something new, compare[s] himself to the hangman.[2]
>
> - Swift

As chapters 1 and 2 have shown, Swift's reading was unusually destructive and energised by the threat of fragmentation, which meant that he often deliberately implicated his allusions in various states of playful disrepair. He was also unusually destructive when it came to his own writing. Pope recorded his habit of burning holes in printed texts with an 'Orbicular Glass' that focussed 'Solar Beams' onto the page, singeing it to create 'curious' lacunae:

> He has in his window an Orbicular Glass, which by the Contraction of the Solar Beams into a proper Focus, doth burn, singe, or speckle white on printed Paper, in curious little Holes, or various Figures. […] I doubt not but these marks of his are mysticall, and that the Figures he makes this way are a significant Cypher to those who have the skill to explain 'em.[3]

Pope's comment adopts a characteristic mock-scholarly hauteur, in which he both exalts and condescends to those who might explain the 'mysticall' marks of this destructive behaviour. The habit that Pope records, however, was important to Swift. His fascination with magnifying glasses and their distortion of damaged objects was incorporated into *Gulliver's Travels* (II.i.): 'This made me reflect upon the fair Skins of our *English* Ladies, who appear so beautiful to us, only because they are of our own size, and their Defects not to be seen but through a magnifying Glass, where we find by Experiment that the smoothest and whitest Skins look rough and coarse, and ill coloured.'[4] Claude Rawson has explored the range of typographical immolations that Swift visited on the printed texts of *A Tale of A Tub* and its companion pieces *The Battle of The Books* and *The Mechanical Operation of The Spirit*, suggesting that they served their satire in two ways: to create intricate kinds of illegibility, and to affect a parodic appearance of ancient manuscript.[5] Scholars of ancient literature have often

---

[1] Thackeray, 'Swift', p.473.
[2] Walsh, *Tale of A Tub*, p.26.
[3] Pope, *Correspondence*, i.234-5.
[4] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, pp.130-1, n.81. Cf. the execution of the monkey, pp.172-3. Also, Naboth's Vineyard and Swift's problems with its destruction. Davis, *Prose*, viii.156, and Joseph McMinn, *Jonathan Swift and The Arts* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2010), p.63.
[5] Rawson, *Swift and Others*, pp.12-14.

developed complex theoretical arguments about the literary significance of such damage in real fragments of text: according to Aaron Pelttari, for example, damage can misalign a fragment with 'its new context' in a 'continuing play of interpretation'.[6] In Swift's writing, however, any such aesthetic pleasure was at odds with the fact that he was temperamentally 'more disposed to destroy than to keep' the things he wrote, and attributed value to the damage rather than to the remains.[7]

This chapter explores some further ways in which Swift implicated literary texts in various states of fragmentation, and why so many of his allusions were characterised by incompletion and lost contexts. His aforementioned reluctance to bring acquired learning into full disclosure can be corroborated by looking at the allusions which he used to disaggregate the texts in which they occurred, a practice which gives proper place to a stylistic effect at the centre of his writing. This aligns with an eccentric, but persistent, line of argument in Swift scholarship, which has its origins in biographies of the nineteenth century. Walter Scott described Swift as a writer chequered by 'good and evil', with a 'haughty temper', whose mind was like 'a conjured spirit, that would do mischief if not supplied with constant employment.'[8] His playful fondness for violence was also acknowledged by Thackeray, who thought him 'as fierce a beak and talon as ever struck'.[9] Modern scholars have attempted to clarify the truth behind these assertions. Rawson argues in *Order from Confusion Sprung* (1985) that pure 'luxuries of self-immolation' were 'un-Swiftian', because they would not have sat well with the official diligence and responsible demeanour of a dean;[10] but Rawson also accounts for Swift's genocidal fantasies in *God, Gulliver, and Genocide* (2001), and argues that the 'mercurial opportunism of Swift's irony' was put to the 'service of local aggression.'[11] Some critics have set Swift's fondness for destruction against a background of Irish dispositions and characteristics, referring to his inherited fondness for uncompromising humour: in *The Irish Comic Tradition* (1962), Vivian Mercier argues that there was a 'persistent belief, still alive in the nineteenth century, that satire had the power to inflict actual physical harm on its victim', and that Swift believed this too.[12] (This might not have been limited to Ireland: James Douglas' family thought that his life was 'shortened' because of his appearance in *The Dunciad*.)[13]

---

[6] Aaron Pelttari, *The Space That Remains: Reading of Latin Poetry in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014), p.115.
[7] Claude Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.14.
[8] Scott, *Works*, i.3-19.
[9] Thackeray, 'Swift', p.478.
[10] Rawson, *Order from Confusion Sprung*, p.173.
[11] Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide*, p.266.
[12] Vivian Mercier, *The Irish Comic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p.145. Cf. Rawson, *Order from Confusion Sprung*, p.193, 'You wouldn't have guessed it from *The Oxford Book of Satirical Verse*, but satire was once a deadly activity.'
[13] Rumbold, *The Dunciad In Four Books*, iv.394, n., p.324.

Others have placed Swift in a wider context of iconoclasm in the eighteenth century, paying attention to the kinds of cultural narrative that he was trying to collapse. Ronald Paulson, for example, suggests that Swift 'breaks and empties the idol and then climbs (or suspects that he climbs) inside the shell himself'.[14]

As these comments suggest, Swift's destructive instinct was a combination of temperamental delinquency and a genuine fondness for carefully designed effects of textual damage. He was very concerned, for example, that Pope should publish *The Dunciad* as soon as possible: 'Why does not Mr Pope publish his dullness, the rogues he mawles will dy of themselves in peace, and so will his friends, and so there will be neither punishment nor reward.'[15] His love of mauling targets, and investigating unpalatable figures, can be seen in the range of allusions he made to the controversial figure Thomas Creech, whose suicide was publicised in the eighteenth century. This particular example is representative of how Swift approached other writers, because it shows him picking up on the full detail of a writer's life and work before making an attempt to destroy him (though, in this case, Creech destroyed himself), and it is an instructive case study for the rest of the chapter.

In 1700, Creech hanged himself in All Souls College, Oxford. According to eighteenth-century sources, this was a response to a rejection by Miss Playdell of St. Giles. In *A Step to Oxford: Or, A Mad Essay on the Revered Mr. Tho. Creech Hanging Himself (as 'tis said) for Love* (1700), an anonymous reporter portrayed the event thus: 'Dr. *Creech*, one of the Fellows of *All-Souls* in *Oxford*, has *Hang'd himself* there: He was observ'd to have been *melancholy* for some time. —'.[16] The controversy of the event meant that the reporter had to conceal his identity, and describe his own essay as 'mad' to show distance from the subject. Creech's death was of public concern. His translation of *De Rerum Natura* (1682) had earned him the reputation of a major Augustan poet, and for the rest of the eighteenth century this work was read alongside Dryden's *Aeneid* and Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as a standard translation. However, as Swift would have known, Creech was not a popular figure, and sympathy for his suicide was not forthcoming. His translation of the *Odes, Satyrs, and Epistles of Horace* (1684) was cited by critics as evidence of a waning talent, and *De Rerum Natura* faded away behind unfriendly reviews of this later project.[17] Shiells and Cibber, for example, whose life of Creech was consistently unsympathetic, suggested that the Horace translation had 'obscured' his reputation and turned him into a 'recluse', which may have been a secondary cause of his suicide.[18] There

---

[14] Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking*, p.38.
[15] Woolley *Correspondence*, iii.162.
[16] [Anonymous], *A Step to Oxford: Or, A Mad Essay on the Revered Mr. Tho. Creech Hanging Himself (as 'tis said) for Love* (London: [unidentified publisher], 1700), sig. A2r.
[17] Thomas Creech, *The Odes, Satyrs, and Epistles of Horace* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1684).
[18] Robert Shiells and Theophilus Cibber, *Lives*, iii.188.

was another anecdote circulating in the eighteenth century: that the Horace commission was set up by Dryden, who did not approve of the success of *De Rerum Natura* and wanted to bring Creech into disrepute. Johnson discredited this 'Tradition':

> Tradition, however, has not allowed that [Dryden's] confidence in himself exempted him from jealousy of others. He is accused of envy and insidiousness; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to translate Horace, that he might lose the reputation which Lucretius had given him.[19]

This might seem unlikely, because Creech's Horace was dedicated to Dryden. David Hopkins, however, noticed that some of Tonson's poems record their unfriendly relationship, which suggests that it might have been real.[20] Other responses to Creech's suicide were ambiguous, seemingly both sympathetic and satirical. The anonymous *Daphnis: OR, A Pastoral Upon The Unfortunate Death of Mr. Thomas Creech* (1709) portrayed Creech as a 'despairing shepherd' longing for his equally 'despairing lover' (the tone of which us ambiguous).[21]

If the audience had read Creech's 'The Life of Titus Lucretius Carus', prefaced to the translation, then it would have been clear that Creech's suicide resembled a literary allusion: according to Creech, Lucretius 'dyed by his own hands in the Fourty Fourth year of his Age, being dementated by a Philtrum given by his Mistress.'[22] Swift's response to Creech's suicide mocked the fact that it was a parallel of this story, even if the parallel was an accident or a coincidence: as William Irwin argues, 'accidental associations' are as important to the consideration of an allusion — and indeed to formal imitation — as a reference made intentionally, even if that parallel refuses full scholarly attribution.[23] Swift would certainly have come into contact with this biography: the 'Life' of Lucretius was the only work of Creech that he owned. It was not just a part of the translation of *De Rerum Natura*; it was also attached to Maittaire editions in this period, which Swift collected.[24] Swift's response was to treat the suicide as an allusion whether it was one or not: to play on pieces of text — from Lucretius, Horace, and Creech — which had been reduced to fragments and could be muddled together with playful irony. He referred to Creech in the *Battle of The Books*, where the name was dangled at the bottom of the page after one of Swift's favoured artificial

---

[19] Johnson, *Lives*, iii.111.
[20] David Hopkins, 'Thomas Creech's Preface to Lucretius and John Dryden', *Studies in Philology*, 109:5 (2012), pp. 702-707 (p.704).
[21] [Anonymous] *Daphnis: OR, A Pastoral Upon the Unfortunate Death of Mr. Thomas Creech; With a Poem On The Despairing Lover, and The Despairing Shepherd* (London: Henry Hills, 1709), p.10.
[22] Thomas Creech, *T. Lucretius Carus the Epicurean Philosopher, His Six Books "De Rerum Natura," Done into English Verses, with Notes* (Oxford: 1682), 'Preface', [unpaginated]. This version of Lucretius' life — ultimately derived from St. Jerome — is now discredited.
[23] William Irwin, 'What Is An Allusion?', p.291. Cf. Swift's use of 'allusion' to mean a playful parallel or similarity, Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.163.
[24] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.478.

lacunae, implicating it — like many names in the *Battle* — in processes of scholarly distortion which approximate the loss of life:

> *
> *
>
> *Pauca desunt.*
> *Creech*; But, the Goddess *Dulness* took a Cloud, formed into the Shape of *Horace*, armed and mounted, and placed it in a flying Posture before Him. Glad was the Cavalier, to begin a Combat with a flying Foe, and pursued the Image, threatning loud.[25]

Swift says that it was only a few things — 'pauca' — that went missing, but the paucity of the death is parodied by the wide range of references to Creech's work: he is teased, even in the afterlife, with a cloud shaped like Horace, who is 'flying' (perhaps in the *OED* 1b sense of achieving 'fame', which would mock Creech's famously unsuccessful translation).

Swift made a crueller joke about Creech in *A Tale of A Tub*, saying that 'bodies of much weight and gravity' must be dropped from a great height if they are to be destroyed:

> The deepest Account, and the most fairly digested of any I have yet met with, is this, That Air being a heavy Body, and therefore (according to the System of *Epicurus*) continually descending, must needs be more so, when loaded and press'd down by Words; which are also Bodies of much Weight and Gravity, as it is manifest from those deep *Impressions* they make and leave upon us; and therefore must be delivered from a due Altitude, or else they will neither carry a good Aim, nor fall down with a sufficient Force.
>
> *Corpoream quoque enim vocem constare fatendum est,*
> *Et sonitum, quoniam possunt impellere Sensus.* Lucr. *Lib. 4.*[26]

The extended conceit of suicide is embellished by the word '*Impressions*', which, in this period, carried associations of 'the impact or shock of any atmospheric or physical force' (*OED*, 1d). The quotation from Lucretius is also implicated in the parody, because Creech translated those lines in an unusual way that put emphasis on its 'wound': '*'Tis certain then, that* Voice *that thus can wound / Is all* Material; Body *every* Sound', and Swift included this couplet in a footnote in 1710, which would have satisfied most readers looking for the source.[27] The marginal reference, however, is to 'Lucret. Lib. 2', which does not match 'Lucr. Lib. 4' in the text (the quotation is from *De Rerum Natura,* iv.525-6). This is a considerable puzzle, and opens up problems to do with intention. The equivalent lines (c.525-6) in the second book of

[25] Walsh, *Tale*, p.158-9.
[26] Ibid., p.38.
[27] As it appears in the *Tale*, ibid., p.38.

Creech's translation suggest a carefully managed scholarly fault on Swift's part, because they are about 'Confus'dly scatter'd' wreckage, and the temptation to engage in 'further toyl':

> But as in Wrecks the Seats, the Masts, the Oars,
> Confus'dly scatter'd, fill the neighbouring shores,
> That men might learn by such sad sights as these,
> The force and *cruel treacheries* of the Seas,
> And still distrust, tho with *perfidious* smile
> Becalm'd, it tempts them on to further toyl:[28]

Washed up on a 'neighbouring shores' of *De Rerum Natura*, the reader would encounter lines which reflect on the confused scattering of Swift's allusion (as Marcus Walsh argues, 'Swift's allusions or "personations" aim at multiple targets'), and the 'toyl' involved in working it out.[29] It is difficult to assess precisely what kind of reading (or reader) Swift would like, here, if one assumes that the marginal note is not the result of a printer's error or interference (which is not a safe assumption): editions of Creech's Lucretius did not come with line numbers, suggesting that it might have been difficult for a reader to investigate the text and realise the felicitous literary effects of the 'error' (if it is treated as such). Perhaps it is intended simultaneously to reward and condescend to the type of reader who would carry out such an investigation, by simply offering them a piece of poetry about treachery and a 'sad sight': 'that men might learn by such sad sights as these, / The force and *cruel treacheries* of the Seas.' Perhaps it is an allusion so complexly determined by the reader's engagement that it simply does not work to anyone other than Swift and the few who investigate it.

There is another felicity to this misdirection, because it does not just send the reader to a passage about '*treacheries*' and things 'Confus'dly scatter'd'; it also 'self-delightingly' sends the reader to a much-imitated passage they might have seen elsewhere.[30] One scholarly edition of Creech, published long after the *Tale*, flagged Cowley. 'Cowley in his Davideis seems to have imitated this Passage of Lucretius':

---

[28] *T. Lucretius Carus. The Epicurean Philosopher, His Six Books De Natura Rerum Done into English Verse, With Notes*, tr. Thomas Creech, 2nd edition (Oxford: L. Lichfield, for Anthony Stevens, 1683), p.50. This edition is cited because it was 'Corrected and Enlarged' by Creech, and may well have been the more reputable edition that Swift had read. The long S on 'shores', 'sights', and 'smile' taken to be lower caps — the typesetter used capital 'S' when necessary elsewhere on the page ('*Seeds*', 'Space', 'Seats', 'Seas', '*Space*', etc).
[29] Walsh, *Tale*, p.lxxxi.
[30] Ricks, *Allusion*, p.9.

> The Sea it self smooths her rough Looks awhile,
> Flatt'ring the greedy Merchant with a Smile:
> But he, whose Shipwreckt Bark she drank before,
> Sees the Deceit, and knows she would have more.[31]

There are several felicities in the wording of Cowley's imitation, and what the passage describes, which would have suited Swift's attack. Though it is unlikely that Swift is consciously bringing Cowley into play, a sense that the passage was much-imitated might have suited the attack on Creech. On the one hand, this kind of complex and suggestive allusion would suit Swift's art very well: in Rumbold's words, 'even when Swift's parodies come to us clearly labelled with the identification of a pre-text, we cannot trust the label to tell us everything that we need to know'.[32] However, the depth and achievement of this allusion depends entirely on the extent to which scholars can credit the marginal note of 'Lucret. Lib. 2.' — either an unusually felicitous and comic piece of misdirection, or an irrelevance — with authorial intention, and whether Swift would have appreciated the full range of its associations. According to John R. Clark, it is Swift's 'great chain of commentary' that defines the *Tale*, and its ludicrous modern 'annotator' is 'regularly apparent' throughout.[33] However, in practical terms, Swift's involvement in the typesetting and proofing of the *Tale* has attracted speculation. Contextual evidence only suggests that he may have contributed. David Woolley argued that he is very likely to have examined the first printed edition in 1704 'with a view to corrections'.[34] Marcus Walsh accounts for Swift's interest in 'marginal glosses' in the context of the later fifth edition, where such apparatus is evidently authorial:

> Most significantly, to the marginal glosses already provided in the first four editions of the *Tale* were added extensive footnotes. It is in these additions that we see most elaborately developed Swift's keen interest in commentary and its status, in the world of books and reading, in the problematics of provenance and allusion, in page layout and the functions and operations of the book as hypertext.

---

[31] Thomas Creech, *T. Lucretius Carus, Of The Nature Of Things, In Six Books*, 2 vols. (London: J. Matthews and G. Sawbridge, 1715), i.136, n.525. Transcription of Cowley as it occurs in the edition, not in the *Davideis*. This edition clearly printed after *Tale* (1704 or 1710). The *Davideis* passage might have been recognised by some earlier readers without the apparatus (owing to the fame of the poem). See Cowley's *Davideis* in Swift's library, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.475-8. Passmann and Vienken show that Swift's knowledge of Cowley was extensive. Cf. the allusion to Cowley's *The Mistress* in *Clad all in Brown* (printed in 1745), Williams, *Poems*, iii.786-7. Rumbold notes the presence of Cowley in *A History Of Poetry*, in *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p. 224, n.11.

[32] Ibid., p.xliii.

[33] John R. Clark, *Form and Frenzy in Swift's A Tale Of A Tub* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), p.163.

[34] David Woolley, 'The Textual History of *A Tale of A Tub*', *Swift Studies*, 21 (2006), pp.7-26 (p.15). Cf. Walsh, *Tale*, p.275, n.1. Walsh only says that he 'may' have done.

Walsh also argues that:

> Their identifications and translations of references, their explanations of meanings (in particular, directing the reader to the particular rather than the general targets of the religious satire), their personations […] and their disingenuous protestations of puzzlement ('I do not well understand what the Author aims at here', p.103), are evidently authorial.

In the context of the later edition, Walsh presents Swift as a careful manipulator of the commentary and annotation in the *Tale*, though perhaps not as a typesetter or a proof-reader. The 1710 'Apology', uneasily related to the *Tale*, argues that we should not overlook '*the Author's Intention*', though we might deem such an intention — in a later piece of parody which is unstably ironic — to have been deliberately obfuscated.[35] The achievement of this use of 'Lucret. Lib. 2.' in the *Tale* would be that it both scatters the evidence of the allusion to Creech and expands the radius of its irony across several other texts (and it arguably does so whether Swift intended it to or not). Empson might have been right to say that 'everybody's reading is miscellaneous and scrappy', but Swift's satire tends to distort whatever learning has been genuinely acquired, turning it into something 'scrappy' even if it was once coherent or focussed.[36]

Swift's attacks on Creech, then, whether this particular marginal note is authorial or not (and whether it works even if it is authorial), represent a type of allusion in the eighteenth century which did not trade in erudition or pieces of learning acquired within a coherent framework of understanding, but in pieces of text and association which were acquired in service of an attack on an individual. Ehrenpreis referred to Swift as a 'thick-skinned sadist' precisely because of these convoluted and cruelly insensitive personal attacks.[37] Thackeray claimed that Swift would have 'watched for you in a sewer, and come out to assail you with a coward's blow and a dirty bludgeon'.[38] Creech became a fixed point of reference in Swift's misanthropic allusive repertoire. He went on to attack Creech for being an atheist — though, in the voice of his parodied 'free-thinker' — in *Mr. Collins' Discourse of Free-Thinking* (1713), which, despite its mockery of Collins' 'free-thinking' rhetoric and reasoning, would have been an acceptable response to suicide in the period (a full account of this text and its complex parodic function follows later in this chapter).[39] Swift alluded to Creech again, much later, while attacking the translator Charles Carthy, whose Horace was also (in Swift's view)

---

[35] 'Apology', Walsh, *Tale*, p.7.
[36] Empson, 'Obscurity and Annotation', p.71.
[37] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.607.
[38] Thackeray, 'Swift', p.474.
[39] Davis, *Prose*, iv.37. Cf. George Berkeley, *Alciphron: Or, the Minute Philosopher* (London: G. Risk, G. Ewing, and W. Smith, 1732), p.72, 'as the Minute Philosophy [Atheism] prevails, we daily see more examples of Suicide.'

unsuccessful. Swift translated some of the Horace texts which Carthy attempted, and dedicated them to important figures in his life such as Robert Harley, Richard Steele, and Archbishop William King, so his disapproval was sharpened by experience.[40] In the attack, Swift made another reference to Creech's suicide, suggesting that his enemy should imitate it:

> *Creech* murder'd *Horace* in his senseless Rhymes,
> But hung himself to expiate his Crimes.
> What then must *Carthy* do in proper Season,
> Who murder'd *Horace* without Rhyme or Reason?[41]

The title of this poem was *On Creech's Hanging Himself, For Having Translated Horace* (1734), suggesting that Creech was as much the target as Carthy. In another series of rhymes written that year, Swift wrote variations on the theme of hanging translators, each suggesting that they could commit suicide as a payment for their poor work:

> Thou hast slain *Horace,* what shou'd hinder
> Thy Muse from falling upon *Pindar*?
> But e'er you mount his mettled Steed,
> Beware, O *Bard*, how you proceed.
> If you shou'd give him once the Reins,
> High up in the Air he'll turn your Brains;
> And if you shou'd his Fury check,
> 'Tis ten to one, he breaks your Neck.[42]

In the introduction to *Polite Conversation*, the vainglorious Wagstaff (who desires his 'Pupils' to toast his '*not inglorious Memory*' in imitation of toasts to William III) claims to have read 'Mr. *Creech's* admirable Translation' of Horace, suggesting that only figures such as Wagstaff — ignorant of classical languages — would consult him.[43] The view expressed by Wagstaff might also indicate Swift's genuine distrust of Creech as a crib for more serious work in Latin.

Situating these attacks in a wider cultural context is difficult, owing to the personal nature of the texts and the narrow kinds of allusion that were being manipulated in service of

---

[40] Charles Carthy, *A Translation of the Second Book of Horace's Epistles, Together With Some of the Most Select In The First* (Dublin: Christopher Dickson, 1731). For Swift's Horaces see Williams, *Poems*, i.169-75 ('Part of the Seventh Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated'); i.179-84 ('The First Ode of The Second Book of Horace Paraphras'd'); i.197-202 ('Horace, Lib.2. Sat.6'); i.241-3 ('Part of the 9th Ode of the 4th Book of Horace').
[41] Williams, *Poems*, ii.666.
[42] 'On The Same, For Threatening the World With A Translation of Pindar' (provisional title), ibid., ii.666. Also, 'To the same' (provisional title), ibid., ii.667, which compares a 'garret' to a 'tomb'.
[43] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, pp.268-9 (quotation about his toast from p.301). Cf. n.8. Swift might also have been enraged by a letter he received from William Flower: 'Not having *Creech's Horace*, a gentleman prevailed on me to attempt translating of it [*Carmina*, III.iv.21) in a couple of distichs', Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii. 218.

their aggressions. However, there was a classical sense in which Creech's hanging would have signalled an allusion, to Swift, aside from the biographical coincidence with Lucretius. It has been argued that the vocabulary for allusion in (particularly, Roman) antiquity was often limited to formal practices and modes such as *imitatio*: Joseph Pucci argues that there 'was no word for allusion' in the ancient world, the practice — and observation — of allusion being an invention of late-antique Christianity, which imagined a 'powerful reader' capable of eliciting echoes within scripture.[44] Pucci's argument does register something of a peculiarity in the way that antiquity seems to have assumed the significance of allusive practices without erecting a structure of interpretation to support them. However, this argument could be read as impressionistic. In the (ancient) Augustan period, evidence suggests that the vocabulary of allusion started to expand alongside the growing relevance (and functions) of satire, which consistently acknowledged the satirist's use of conventions from other forms such epic, pastoral, and elegy. Horace's word for literary dependence was *pendēre* (to hang). The word occurs in the famous section of *Satires* (I.iv.6-8) in which he complains that Lucilius hung on to the masters of Old Comedy:

> hinc omnis pendet Lucilius, hosce secutus
> mutatis tantum pedibus numerisque; facetus,
> emunctae naris, durus componere versus.[45]

Scholars have recently contended that Horace 'hung' on the Attic comedians as much as Lucilius, especially on Aristophanes' *Frogs,* which suggests that this critique was probably a piece of bantering pedantry.[46] In Roman literature of the Augustan period, the verb *pendēre* became a tag for literary influence, particularly in poetry that grappled with the roots of inspiration and poetic craft. Propertius, in the *Elegies* (II.xxx(b).39), referred to laurel garlands 'hanging' on his head, and said to his Muse that without her, he would not be a great poet: 'tum capiti sacros patiar pendere corymbos: / nam sine te nostrum non valet ingenium' ('I suffer the sacred ivy to be placed [hung] upon my brow: for without you my genius is naught').[47]

However, Swift would also have learned that, in Roman literature, the verb *pendēre* threatened the idea of literary dependence with connotations of capital punishment, as in the

---

[44] Pucci, *The Full-Knowing Reader*, 'Introduction', p.xvii.
[45] Horace, *Satires*, I.iv.6-8. 'It is on these that Lucilius wholly hangs; these he has followed, changing only metre and rhythm.'
[46] Cf. Alan Sommerstein, 'Hinc Omnis Pendet? Old Comedy and Roman Satire', *The Classical World,* 105:1 (2011), pp.25-38.
[47] Propertius, *Elegies*, II.xxx(b).39. Loeb does not translate 'pendere' as 'to hang'.

case of Creech's richly allusive 'hanging'. Propertius punned on the word 'pendet' when he recounted the murder of young girls in Crete by tying them to moving ships. In the *Elegies* (II.xix.20-6), Propertius alludes to a series of mythological stories that depict various kinds of violent metamorphosis: Pasiphae and the bull, Myrrha and her metamorphosis into a tree, Medea, and Clytemnestra. The catalogue ends with Scylla, the victim of the hanging, evoking the nomenclature of Homer's *Odyssey* (xii.220-59), in a line that simultaneously draws on the forces of erudition behind it while it records a real execution practice: 'pendet Cretaea tracta puella rate' ('the girl is suspended [or hung] from the Cretan ship and dragged through the sea').[48] A similar combination of literary influence and violence was used by Virgil in the *Aeneid* (x.303-5), when Tarchon's ship is said to hang upon the water before crashing on the rocks, which balances references to the *Argonautica* and to Scylla and Charybdis in Homer's *Odyssey*: 'dorso dum pendet iniquo / anceps sustentata diu fluctusque fatigat' ('for while, dashing against the shallows, she hangs upon an uneven ridge, long poised in doubtful balance').[49] As Stephen Hind has observed, these sorts of allusion in Roman poetry often carried a 'negative force' even while they drew on genuine erudition, and the word *pendēre* was a common tag for this uneasy mixture of violence and literary influence.[50]

In *The Force of Poetry,* Ricks suggests that neo-classical or Augustan writers in eighteenth-century Britain (evidenced in his case by Johnson) also put special pressure on the word *pendet*, using it to comprehend — and pun on — a range of literary practices in service of 'metaphorical expansion.'[51] In Swift's case, his sense of the word 'hanging' might have been conditioned by an increasingly severe legal response to plagiarism in his period, and a fraught relationship between English colonial authorities and Irish printers, which Thomas Keymer has identified as a major influence on eighteenth-century satire in Ireland.[52] Such a friction between literary dependence and punishment was represented throughout Scriblerian satire, especially *The Dunciad*, in which elected satirical targets were deemed dead or ineffectual at the moment they appeared. The Scriblerians often selected modern hack writers who specialised in intrinsically transient forms, such as astrological predictions, which became irrelevant shortly after their publication: Swift wrote that John Partridge died without

---

[48] Ibid., III.xix.26.
[49] Virgil, *Aeneid*, x.303-5.
[50] Stephen Hind, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.23.
[51] Christopher Ricks, *The Force of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.86-7.
[52] Cf. Thomas Keymer, 'Fictions, Libels, and Unions in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Literature and The Union: Scottish Texts, British Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp.97-122 (p.99). Also Keymer, 'Seditious Libel in Eighteenth-Century Dublin', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland,* 31 (2016), pp.168-76. For a thorough study of the punishment for literary infractions (such as theft), see Jody Greene, 'The Trials of Ownership: Finding The Author In Court', in *The Trouble With Ownership: Literary Property and Authorial Liability in England: 1660-1730* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp.63-107.

ceremony — 'Strange, an Astrologer should Die, / Without one Wonder in the Sky' — but Partridge was, in fact, alive and publishing his almanack *Merlinus Liberatus* in the year of this poem, 1708.[53] This openly — even aggressively — diminishes their significance in relation to more permanent forms such as epic or pastoral. Swift's unwillingness to respect the detail even of Partridge's name — often spelling it 'Patridge' — came from a tendency to truncate his targets into pleasing states of disrepair (punning in this case on *OED* 'Pat' B1a, 'fitting to a purpose', especially in Irish English).[54] Imagery associated with hanging recurs throughout Augustan literature as a simultaneous expression of dependence and dislike. Gulliver complacently reports that, in England, a judge can 'easily hang or save the Criminal, strictly preserving all the Forms of Law': and this critical comment hangs on a similarly controversial idea from Thomas More's *Utopia.*[55]

I - Dependence

Such aggressive literary stock was essential to Swift's satirical humour, which often indulged in its erratic fantasies of destruction while maintaining an elegant, administrative poise. An important example of this can be found in *An Epistle to A Lady* (printed 1734, after long gestation in manuscript). This was a highly controversial poem addressed to Lady Acheson — for which Gilliver, Barber, Pilkington, and Motte are said to have been arrested (with Wilford also taken into custody) — in which Swift confessed a love of such torture in grimly bantering, but genuinely dangerous, terms.[56] As Williams records, the second part of the poem, which is very likely to have been written at a different time (beginning at line 133, 'To conclude this long Essay; / Pardon, if I disobey:') targets Walpole and 'authorities of the day'.[57] Swift suggests that 'Like the ever-laughing Sage, / In a Jest I spend my Rage:', but confesses in parenthesis '(Tho' it must be understood, / I would hang them if I cou'd:)'. Other lines maintain the same uneasy mixture of decorum and violence. In imaginative collusion with other critics of Walpole, he writes:

---

[53] Williams, *Poems*, i.98. Cf. Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.183, '*See also* Eusden's *whole Works (if to be found.)*', *Dunciad Variorum*, i.71, n.
[54] As Rumbold adduces, the name was also 'Partrige' in later editions: this was 'probably satirically intended'. It may be a pun on 'try' (par-try-ge), or a pun on a cant word for gold coins (see *OED*, 'rige' 2). Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises,* p.642.
[55] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.371, n.49.
[56] *An Epistle to A Lady* (likely begun 1728-30, revised 1732-3), Williams, *Poems*, ii.628-9. See Williams' headnote for the extreme reaction to this poem by Walpole. Swift was protected from legal consequences because of his popularity in Ireland.
[57] Ibid., pp.634-5.

Leave to D'ANVERS and his Mate,
Maxims wise, to rule the State.
POULTNEY deep, accomplish'd ST. JOHNS,
Scourge the Villains with a Vengeance.
Let me, tho' the Smell be Noisom,
Strip their Bums; let CALEB hoyse 'em;
Then, apply ALECTO'S Whip,
Till they wriggle, howl, and skip.

Swift alludes to 'Caleb D'Anvers', the editorial pseudonym used by Bolingbroke and Pulteney in *The Craftsman*, which was openly critical of Walpole.[58] This poem suggests that Swift would allow these editors of *The Craftsman* to 'hoyse' (*OED* 1, 'to raise aloft by means of a rope or pulley or tackle', later 'hoist') up the victim and then he would apply 'Alecto's Whip' in scornful rage. The classical allusion is to the Fury who reprimands mortal injustice. Dustin Griffin sees this passage as evidence of Swift's 'sadistic glee'.[59]

However, despite the misbehaviour suggested in such a dangerous poem, Swift's reliance on the victims themselves for new material is part of the account: 'All the Vices of a Court, / Do but serve to make me Sport' (ll.147-8). As Claude Rawson says, 'he seldom went in for grand unguarded denunciations, perpetrating his aggressions on his victims as well as his readers in a more intimately needling way.'[60] To 'hang' on someone, as attested by Swift's allusions to Creech, could mean 'to depend' or 'to rely on' them: 'dependant' was a common synonym for servant — or indeed impoverished relatives — in the eighteenth century.[61] In the *Directions to Servants* (published 1745), Swift evoked a comic series of mutual dependencies in which the servants rely on one another as much as on their master, or as much as their master relies on them. His speaker advises the house-keeper, for example, to make friends with the footman: 'you must always have a favourite Footman whom you can depend upon; and order him to be very watchful when the Second Course is taken off, that it be brought safely to your Office, that you and the Steward may have a Tit-bit together'.[62] The grimly comic directions to a doomed footman — 'Mount the Cart with Courage: Fall on your Knees: Lift up your Eyes: Hold a Book in your Hands although you cannot read a Word: Deny the Fact at the

[58] Cf. *Verses On The Death Of Dr. Swift*, ll.273-6. Ibid., ii.563, n.274.
[59] Griffin, *Satire*, p.174.
[60] Rawson, *Swift's Angers*, p.2.
[61] Johnson, *Dictionary*, p.185.
[62] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.523.

Gallows: Kiss and forgive the Hangman: and so farewell' — suggest his love of combining dependants and punishment (and love of hanging imagery).[63]

Swift himself had a 'lifelong resentment of any kind of dependence', which David Nokes attributes to the death of several family members early in his life.[64] He wrote to Pope: 'I wonder whether you begin to tast the pleasure of independancy, or whether you do not sometimes leer upon the Court oculo ret[o]rto' ('with a sideways glance').[65] According to eighteenth-century sources, the resistance to depending on others became a noticeable pattern of Swift's behaviour. Laetitia Pilkington remembered that he 'repulsed every attempt to hold him in dependance.'[66] Patrick Delany remembered a time when Swift was 'in debt to Mrs. Johnston', and this meant that he could not 'live up to the dignity of his station.'[67] Thackeray even saw his service to his superiors as a contradiction: 'his servility was so boisterous that it looked like independence.'[68] Recent studies of collaboration in the eighteenth century have struggled to reconcile such rebarbative behaviour with the notional unity of the Scriblerus club. Ehrenpreis, for example, expressed scepticism about the extent to which the members really collaborated: with regard to their *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus,* he said 'neither he [Swift] nor anyone else in the group possessed the staying power and narrative skill requisite to making the story coherent or compelling'.[69] Marshall has referred to the Scriblerus Club as a 'myth'.[70] Womersley has noted that Swift supplied most of the material, and did not take much in return: 'Swift was the main creative force behind the various *jeux d'esprit* created by the club.'[71]

Unwilling to depend on others, Swift alluded to some writers simply to claim that they were not useful: as Rawson argues, Swift delighted in dismissing others as 'excessive or insane' in order to escape their radius of influence.[72] This can be seen in the complexly parodic *An Argument to prove that the Abolishing of Christianity in England may, as things now stand, be attended with some Inconveniences, and perhaps not produce those many good Effects proposed thereby* ('written in the YEAR 1708'), a rebuke to quarrelsome free-thinkers (especially deists) antagonising the

---

[63] Ibid., p.497. For Swift's love of morbid documents associated with the condemned, which he parodied, see *The Last Speech and Dying Words of Ebenezor Ellison*, pp.200-10, and *Last Farewell* (Appendix I), pp.607-9.
[64] 'Swift's lifelong resentment of any kind of dependence dates from these earliest years', David Nokes, *Jonathan Swift: A Hypocrite Reversed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.7.
[65] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.162.
[66] Pilkington, *Jests,* p.71.
[67] Delany, *Observations*, p.38.
[68] Thackeray, 'Swift', p.474.
[69] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.726. Cf. Peter Elfed Lewis, *John Gay and The Scriblerians* (London: Vision, 1988); Moyra Haslett, *Pope to Burney, 1714-1779: Scriblerians to Bluestockings* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), particularly pp.33-4.
[70] Ashley Marshall, 'The Myth of Scriblerus', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 31:1 (2008), pp.77-99.
[71] Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.xlvii.
[72] Rawson, *Swift's Angers,* p.112.

established Anglican church and agitating to repeal the Test (his antagonists are named in the text as '*Asgill, Tindall, Toland, Coward*, and Forty more').[73] The text works, in Ehrenpreis' judgement, with a characteristically Swiftian 'synecdoche by which Christianity means Anglicanism'.[74] Davis sees 'Bickerstaffian gaiety and wit' in this text, but on top of a 'firm foundation of scepticism and common sense', aligned with the established Anglican church (and in characteristically fervent defence of the Test Act, discussed in Chapter 4).[75] (Claude Rawson has suggested that one of the targets of this text is Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable Of The Bees*, which Swift would probably have read after composing the *Tale*.)[76] The text begins with straightforward, comic litotes: 'I do not yet see the absolute Necessity of extirpating the Christian Religion from among us'. However, as the text proceeds, layers of parody and deception start to enmesh and cause argumentative difficulty (because of what the speaker refers to as the 'Tenderness' of his handling), and some critics have suggested that it is too complexly 'Bickerstaffian' to be taken as a whole, or even analysed completely.[77] The wavering speaker puts forward the suggestion that the restoration of Christianity as it was 'in Primitive Times' would be a 'wild Project' fated to 'to destroy at one Blow *all* Wit, and *half* the Learning of the Kingdom; to break the entire Frame and Constitution of things'. The highly Bickerstaffian speaker goes on to say that it 'would be full 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 a Cure for the Corruption of their Manners.'[78] The argument about Horace's absurdity is brought together in two rhetorical techniques. The first is to situate the joke in a 'remote Part of the World', which anticipates the absurd geographical range (and full title) of *Gulliver's Travels*, thrusting unpalatable matter away to places that are so 'remote' as to be, usefully, unverifiable. The second is that it mislabels the 'remote' allusion to Horace, which few readers would realise is actually to Juvenal, *Satires,* iii. 21-25, and the famous speech of Umbricius (who laments the vulgar modernising of temples in Rome, suiting Swift's dislike of theological modernism). Such a disposal of ancient authority is important to the complexly parodic function of the *Argument*, because it

---

[73] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.280-1.
[74] Ibid., ii.284.
[75] Davis, *Prose,* ii.xix.
[76] Rawson, *Swift and Others*, pp.51-2. Cf. Davis, *Prose*, ii.xix, 'with a skepticism rather like Mandeville's', etc.
[77] On the proverbial difficulty of this *Argument*, see Mary F. Roberston, 'Swift's "Argument": The Fact and the Fiction of Fighting with Beasts', *Modern Philology*, 74:2 (1976), pp.124-141. Also, see Ricardo Quintana's famous statement that this *Argument* is 'not to be analysed' because of its complex ironies, in *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift*, p.145. Robert Phiddian devotes a chapter to it in *Swift's Parody* (pp.76-95), referring to the 'disturbingly anonymous' speaker who 'projects a grotesquely distorted version of the recent past' (p.76), for whom the difference between Whigs, nonconformists, dissenters, and theological eccentrics is barely maintained. Cf. p.96.
[78] Davis, *Prose*, ii.27-8.

simultaneously suits the Bickerstaffian energies of the text and mockingly disavows the value of tradition to mimic both the ignorance and disrespect of the 'free-thinkers' it targets.

It was common for Swift to jumble up Horace and Juvenal in service of mock-scholarly claims, especially if it was unlikely that a reader would notice the error. He repeated the tactic in *A Tritical Essay On The Faculties Of The Mind*, in which one particular quotation is said to have derived from Juvenal, but it is actually from Horace (*Epistulae*, I.ii.58-9):

> They must pardon me, if I venture to give them this Advice, not to rail at what they cannot understand; it does but discover that self-tormenting Passion of Envy; than which, the greatest Tyrant never invented a more cruel Torment.
>
> *Invidia Siculi non invenere Tyranni*
> *Tormentum majus.* ———— [79]

As Rumbold identifies, the line is strictly incorrect (the last two words are in reverse order in the original text), but this would have been a common form for the quotation in the commonplace tradition (a target of the *Tritical Essay*), as would the occasional mistaking of one writer for another, should the commonplaces have been grouped by subject.[80] Set in the contexts of this chapter, however, it can be seen as part of a larger pattern of behaviour in Swift's writing that forges literary allusions in service of his own instincts for power (not only is the quotation itself about tyranny, but this passage of the essay discusses the way in which envy is worse than the greatest tyrant's 'Torments'). As argued in Chapter 1, this particular kind of classical mishap might also been seen as a part of Swift's parody of Bentleyan pedantry, because it suggests a fondness for muddles which might only be spotted by those engaged in the kinds of pedantic search it satirised. The (playfully) misremembered and yet strident dismissal of Horace (or Juvenal) was part of a general tendency in Swift to dismiss other writers while co-opting them into the trajectory of his own argumentation (even if that argument was contrived for a speaker with whom he does not or only partially agrees), contradicting the central premise of Ricks' *Allusion to the Poets*, that allusion is a form of 'gratitude' or a register of affinity.[81]

---

[79] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.28, and n.55. Cf. Swift thinking about Horace and Juvenal as a pair in *Intelligencer* No.3, 'instead of lashing, laughs Men out of their Follies and Vices, and is the Character which gives Horace the Preference to Juvenal.' Woolley, *Intelligencer*, p.62.

[80] Cf. Ormsby-Lennon's remark about the 'peculiar juxtapositions and collisions' in the commonplace tradition, 'Commonplace Swift', p.33.

[81] Cf. Ricks, *Allusion*, p.12, 'the great instances of allusion are often those where that to which allusion is liable cease to be any kind of liability and becomes a source of energy and gratitude.'

As argued in Chapter 1, Swift also disavowed his dependence on other writers by openly disagreeing with them. For example, he disagreed with Horace in the *Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue:*

> What Horace says of *Words going off and perishing like Leaves, and new ones coming in their Place*, is a Misfortune he laments, rather than a Thing he approves: But I can not see why this should be absolutely necessary, or if it were, what would have become of his *Monumentum ære perennius*.[82]

In the context of this *Proposal,* which explores the idea of a project to correct, improve, and ascertain the English language as it exists at the time of Queen Anne (much like the Académie Française), the allusions are simultaneously playing on commonly known words which have survived from antiquity, and registering the way in which such words can be mistaken or contradict one another.[83] The proverbial phrase about '*Words going off and perishing like Leaves*' is originally Homeric — derived from *Iliad,* vi.145-50 — but, more proximately to Swift, it recurred in a slightly different form in Pope's *An Essay On Criticism*: '*Words* are like *Leaves;* and where they most abound, / Much *Fruit* of *Sense* beneath is rarely found.'[84] Since the passage is ostensibly about Horace, the often-rehearsed imagery should be attributed — as Rumbold acknowledges — to *Ars Poetica* 46-72, but the recurrence of these words in a range of instances that would have been familiar to Swift threatens several texts with 'going off', being mistaken, or surviving in a different form. The characteristic irony, here, is that Swift preserves some of Horace's most famous words (*Odes*, III.xxx.1-2) and uses them against him to query the issue of transience, showing, in the act of alluding to him, that Horace was not exempt from query simply because he had survived antiquity (unsettling the word 'perennius' in the quotation).[85]

Such uses of Horace (or Horatian adages recycled in various contexts) suggest that, to Swift, an allusion can be realised as a component of a larger argument, which can be reshuffled or revised in service of its particular claims, rather than an aesthetic achievement (necessarily) or an expression of gratitude to the literary past. This is why such an allusion, which could be slotted into the structure of the argument even if the argument was ventriloquising a target, can be found in *Mr. Collins's Discourse of Free-Thinking: Put into Plain English, by way of Abstract, for the Use of the Poor*. This text is a closely observed — and

---

[82] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.148.
[83] For Swift's reference to the French academy, ibid., p.145. The 1735 headnote (reproduced ibid., p.131) suggests that it might have succeeded if Queen Anne had lived longer. For the origins of the text in letter form (later revised), cf. p.669.
[84] *An Essay On Criticism*, ll.309-10. Pope, *Poems*, i.274.
[85] Cf. Oldmixon's appraisal of Chaucer, which also recycles Horace's *Odes*, III.xxx.1-2 in relation to the English language, just like Swift. *Reflections on Dr. Swift's letter to the Earl of Oxford* (London: A. Baldwin, 1712), pp.24-5.

thoroughly ludicrous — parodic abstract of Anthony Collins' *A Discourse of Free-Thinking, Occasion'd by the Rise and Growth of a Sect Call'd Free-Thinkers* (1713): a deist text which argues that the human faculty of reason has a 'right' to be applied to any '*Proposition*', sacred or secular: 'we have a *right* to know any Truth whatsoever, we have a *right to think freely,* or (according to my Definition) *to use our Understandings, in endeavouring to find out the Meaning of any Proposition whatsoever.*'[86] This leads to Collins' famous arguments in favour of 'free-thinking', which Swift disagreed with and subjected to parody.[87] Frank Ellis argues that Collins 'was not a dunce', but Swift thought differently, perhaps especially because of Collins' conjectures on the role of scripture.[88] Collins argues that 'books' are especially vulnerable to interpretation and free-thinking (which, on several occasions, Collins justifies in reference to the 'Law of Nature'), and even contends that '*moral Duty*' contained in the Bible is open to question: 'no *moral Duty* whatsoever contain'd in Scripture can be precisely and with certainty understood, without a knowledg [sic] of the *Law of Nature*.'[89] As shown in Chapter 4, Swift would have been deeply troubled by such arguments. His expertly satirical response was modelled on real lines of Collins' *Discourse*, but he also marshalled allusions to other writers in service of the bogus display of 'free-thinking'.[90] In the words of Michael DePorte, he made Collins look 'stunningly dumb'.[91] An argument is carried out about the uselessness of the ancients (and, by implication, '*Scripture*' too). In the mind of the 'free-thinking' speaker, the ancients are not useful because one can sustain 'various readings' of them: a pseudo-scholarly idea which is explored in sprawling, disaggregated parataxis, only carrying off a semblance of argumentative structure, which was typical of Collins:

> For what Authority can a Book pretend to, where there are various Readings? And for this Reason, it is manifest that no Man can know the Opinions of *Aristotle* or *Plato*, or believe the Facts related by *Thucidydes* or *Livy,* or be pleased with the Poetry of *Homer* and *Virgil,* all which Books are utterly useless, upon account of their various Readings. Some Books of *Scripture* are said to be lost, and this utterly destroys the Credit of those that are left: Some we reject, which the *Africans* and *Copticks* receive; and why may we not *think freely*, and reject the rest?[92]

---

[86] Anthony Collins, *A Discourse of Free-Thinking, Occasion'd by the Rise and Growth of a Sect Call'd Free-Thinkers* (London: 1713), p.6.
[87] Bentley disagreed too, but wrote a more serious reply. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.587.
[88] Frank Ellis, 'What Swift Did To Collins' *Discourse of Free-Thinking*', in *Eighteenth-Century Contexts: Essays in Honour of Phillip Harth*, ed. Howard Weinbrot, Peter Schakel, and Stephen Karian (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), pp.81-96 (pp.90-3). Ellis also notes that Collins was a major proponent of Determinism in the eighteenth century, suggesting that the original *Discourse* was uneasily placed even within Collins' work (or not entirely representative of his views). Cf. Diego Lucci, *Scripture and Deism: The Biblical Criticism of the Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), pp.146-8.
[89] Collins, *Discourse,* p.12.
[90] For the actual quantity of Collins' words in Swift's parody (37%, 'just enough to recall the original'), see n.5 to Ellis, 'What Swift Did To Collins' *Discourse of Free-Thinking*', pp.92-3.
[91] Michael DePorte, 'Contemplating Collins: Freethinking in Swift', *Münster* (3), pp.103-115 (p.106).
[92] Davis, *Prose*, iv.33.

The sequence of literary offcuts deemed useless to the reader — 'Opinions', 'Facts', 'Poetry' — follows no rationale, parodying the desultory reading of a free-thinker who simply acquires wisdom by 'free-thinking' and interpreting how they like. However, the trajectory of writers — '*Aristotle* and *Plato*', '*Thucidydes* and *Livy*', '*Homer* and *Virgil*' — declines from the highest ancient philosophy to poetry (via the speaker's interpolation, history) in the manner stigmatised by Plato in the *Republic* (607b-608b). This drags the apparently innocent list of examples inexorably towards the conclusion of being 'utterly useless' while it seeks to pass through a canon of important writers with care. The free-thinking speaker's allusions force a fundamentally damaging distinction — perhaps unknown to that speaker — between the desired achievements of his free-thinking reason and the processes of his reasoning, suggesting that Swift perceived free-thinking as a conceptual and moral muddle (beyond its religious nonconformity).

A similar argument was rehearsed about the ancients and their value in *Examiner* No. 17 (November 30th, 1710), but this time not in a satiric context: the paper is similar to *Mr. Collins's Discourse* insofar as it accounts for the immorality and poor conduct of a targeted individual (in this case Marlborough); however, contrary to *Mr. Collins's Discourse,* Swift's contributions to *The Examiner* have been deemed models of objective detachment, relatively empty of his playful satirical instincts. As Frank Ellis notes in the Oxford edition of the *Examiner* texts, they were written in a short period of relative stability in Swift's political life (at the beginning of his shift to the Tory cause, 1710-11), and they functioned as a 'showpiece' of 'Harley's total propaganda programme'.[93] Swift's success with Queen Anne on the First Fruits payments in October 1710 had left him with an uncharacteristic sense of professional success: the persona adopted for the first *Examiner* papers was, in Ellis' words, a 'justice of the peace' without party commitments (though, of course, this obscured the real commitments to Harley and his ministry), and Swift dropped the persona altogether in the new year (just after No. 17).[94] Without an intermediary voice between Swift and his audience, the style of *The Examiner* is unusually lacking in tonal complexity: in fact, its rather straight and imperious tone of voice was remarked on by Mainwaring.[95]

In *Examiner* No.17 (23rd November 1710), which attempts to damage the public reputation of Marlborough by comparing his avarice to that of a Roman general, Swift argued that 'while we live under a Queen who engrosses all our Love, and all our Veneration', the public should be critical of great figures: 'no pretence of great Services, either in the Field

---

[93] *Swift vs Mainwaring: The Examiner and The Medley*, ed. Frank Ellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.i, and p.xxi.
[94] Ibid., p.xxxiv.
[95] Mainwaring, *Reflections Upon The Examiner's Scandalous Peace* (London: A. Baldwin, 1711), p.3.

or the Cabinet, will be able to screen them from universal Hatred' under this Queen.[96] Swift draws on two classical texts in this paper. The first of which, the epigraph, comes from Cicero's *Pro Plancio* (80), which begins 'Qui sunt boni cives?' ('who is the good citizen?') before suggesting that the good citizen remembers the benefits they have received. The second, which occurs later in the paper, is about the giving and receiving of gifts, which buttresses the case against Marlborough and also comprehends the problem of allusion as an act of gratitude or ingratitude: Seneca the Younger's *De Beneficiis* (i.4), '*Multos experimur ingratos, plures facimus*' (many men we find ungrateful, but more we make so).[97] The epigraph and the quotation from Seneca about benefits set Marlborough against a noble background of classical morality, against which his reputation is made to dwindle. This use of allusion recurred in *Examiner* No.18 (30th November, 1710). In this case, Swift conveys the struggle to find a truly edifying ancient parallel to the avaricious Thomas Wharton (the paper also gestures towards Lord Somers, Godolphin, and possibly Marlborough again, comprehending a range of disreputable public figures):

> I have been for some time consulting *Livy* and *Tacitus,* to find out the Character of a *Princeps Senatus,* a *Prætor Urbanus,* a *Quæstor Erarius,* a *Cæsari ab Epistolis,* and a *Proconsul;* but among the worst of them, I cannot discover One from whence to draw a Parallel, without doing Injury to a *Roman* Memory: So that I am compel'd to have Recourse to *Tully.*[98]

However, even this 'Recourse to *Tully*' is only deemed useful under certain conditions, which Swift details:

> But this Author relating Facts only as an Orator, I thought it would be best to observe his Method, and make an Extract from six Harangues of his against *Verres,* only still preserving the Form of an Oration.

From the Rylands manuscript, we know that Swift was used to extracting passages from his ancient texts (as discussed in Chapter 1). This *Examiner* paper came with an epigraph from Cicero's *Pro Caecilium* about avarice, before proceeding into an oration of Swift's own concoction which is labelled as a piece 'faithfully Translated and Abstracted' from *In Verrem* (I. 1-4), which would have been a particularly effective text (and target) because Verres profited

---

[96] Ellis, *Examiner*, p. 51. As Ellis shows (by comparison with the *Journal to Stella*), Swift's relationship with the Queen was in fact not particularly intimate, suggesting that his praise of her was overstated. Ibid., p.xliv-v.
[97] Ibid., p.56. *De Beneficiis* as a whole is a complex statement about benefits. The line 'Gratiam omnem corrumpimus non tantum postquam dedimus beneficia, sed dum damus' would have been particularly relevant to Swift as both a political writer and an ungrateful alluder ('Thus we destroy all sense of gratitude, not only after we have given our benefits, but even while we are in the act of giving them'), *De Beneficiis*, 4-5.
[98] Ellis, *Examiner*, p.68. See n.16 for confusion as to who is meant by '*John*' early on (either Marlborough or Somers), introduced by Walter Scott.

from war by extortion of public finances. As Ellis notes, 'the oration is Swift's, not Cicero's', but it clearly derives from its carefully chosen source:

My Lords,

'A Pernicious Opinion hath for some time prevail'd, not only at *Rome*, but among our neighbouring Nations, that a Man who has Money enough, tho' he be ever so guilty, cannot be condemn'd in this Place. But however industriously this Opinion be spread, to cast an Odium on the Senate, we have brought before your Lordships *Caius Verres*, a Person, for his Life and Actions, already condemn'd by all Men; but as he hopes, and gives out, by the Influence of his Wealth, to be here absolved.[99]

The majority of this address is stitched together from pieces of Cicero's *In Verrem*, but it also suggests knowledge of Sallust's heavily fragmented *Historiae* (an eye-witness record of the oration against Verres) about the misuse of riches to bribe or make deals with robbers.[100] Swift annotated his edition of Sallust extensively, paying particular attention to the account of Catiline (who conspired to bring down the Roman Republic): as modern scholars have shown, Sallust was put to a (wide) range of political purposes in the eighteenth century, owing to his accounts of the Catiline conspiracy.[101] The carefully arranged allusions to antiquity, in these *Examiner* papers, draw on ancient abuses of money and public reputation, suggesting that there might be classical precedents for Marlborough and Wharton's characters, while (ironically) struggling to find ones which are appropriately malicious. As Ashley Marshall notes, the allusion in No.18 damns Wharton twice: 'once by comparison with an earlier villain, and again by the subsequent dismissal of that analogue as not bad enough to serve the model.'[102]

In the *Argument*, the *Tritical Essay*, *A Proposal for Correcting*, *Mr. Collins's Discourse*, and *Examiner* Nos.17 and 18, then, persistent behaviour can be observed in Swift's use of allusion. In these texts, Swift brought fragments of learning into play as components of much larger arguments: either as evidence for the arguments themselves, or as pieces which carry out

---

[99] Ibid., p.69.
[100] Ibid., p.70: 'the Morning was spent in taking Bribes, and selling Employments'. Cf. Sallust, *Historiae,* frag. iv. 50, 'suspectusque fuit, incertum vere an per neglegentiam, societatem praedarum cum latronibus conposuisse' ('and he was under the suspicion of having formed — it being doubtful whether in actual fact or through neglect of his duties — a compact with robbers for sharing booty'). On the power of wealth to excuse one from justice or military service — a major trope of Swift's favourite Roman historians, especially Livy — see *Ab Urbe Condita* I.ix, I.xxxiv, VII.vii; and Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV.cvi, which explores this subject in the lifetime of Seneca.
[101] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1635. Sallust's accounts of the Catiline (sometimes Catilinarian) conspiracy and Jugurthine War were read to suit a range of political purposes throughout the century. Cf. Peter Culhane 'Sallust, *Jugurtha* 31 in a Pamphlet War of 1708-09', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 14:1/2 (2007), pp.74-99. For uses of Sallust later in the century, see Rob Hardy, '"A Mirror of the Times": The Catilinarian Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century British and American Political Thought', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 14:3/4 (2007), pp.431-454.
[102] Ashley Marshall, *Swift and History*, p.93.

argumentative work in his (or his parodied persona's) stead. The tendency, in each case, is for the allusion to energise a locale without either undermining or progressing the whole, suggesting a type of allusion that is usefully disposable even if it brings suggestive or learned contexts into play. The power of such an allusion lies in its capacity to evoke the concentrated intellectual work that has created the argument in the first place, while suggesting that such arguments can be collapsed by their creator (or spokespeople) according to the demands of the form or a shift in the chosen target.

II - Tyranny

Behind these patterns of behaviour with allusion was Swift's active interest in tyrants who had power over the lives and deaths of their subjects. Officially, he resisted tyranny as a political force, claiming to have written the *Drapier's Letters* because of his 'perfect Hatred of Tyrany and Oppression'.[103] However, Ehrenpreis argued that a vexed relationship with the ideals of democracy and 'liberty' undermined — even if it did not relieve him of — this view.[104] Swift thought that parliamentary democracy gave rise to failures in human behaviour: as he said to Francis Grant, who put forward a proposal to improve trade relations between England and Ireland, 'Party and Faction will intermingle, and defeat the most essential Parts of the whole Design; Standing-Armies in Time of Peace, Projects of Excise, and Bribing-Elections, are all you are likely to be employed in.'[105] As a Tory Anglican Dean, Swift was supportive of (legitimate) authoritarianism (though certainly not of tyranny) as a force of law and order, but he was concerned that Kings might enjoy arbitrary power too much: in his copy of Clarendon's *History of The Rebellion and Civil Wars in England,* he annotated the phrase 'arbitrary power' with 'what king doth not love, and endeavour at it?'.[106] He believed that George I behaved tyrannically. His annotations in a copy of Addison's *The Freeholder* (1715-16) constitute evidence of such a belief. Swift thought George I's clemency to be fake, and that his hanging of the Scottish Lords after the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion was tyrannical.[107] Where

---

[103] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.730. 'What I did for this Country was from perfect Hatred of Tyrany and Oppression, for which I had a Proclamation against me for 300 *l.*'
[104] Irvin Ehrenpreis, 'Swift On Liberty', *Journal of The History of Ideas,* 13:2 (1952), pp.131-146.
[105] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.731.
[106] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.940. Swift's copy of Clarendon was *The History of The Rebellion and Civil Wars in England,* 3 vols. (Oxford: New Theatre, 1707). It is held at Marsh: Z. 1.1.1-3. This annotation to the 'Preface', p.xxi.
[107] On his dislike of what he perceived to be George I's tyranny, see Ian Higgins, *Swift's Politics: A Study In Disaffection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.29. Cf. Davis, *Prose*, v.254, annotations to *Freeholder* p.253, l.20. Also, to *Freeholder,* p.398, 'so many Instances of Royal Clemency'. Swift: 'Not one Instance produced'. On Swift's political disagreements with Addison, see Donald Kay, 'To The Very Hour of Death: the Friendship of Addison and Swift', *Aevum,* 47:3 (1973), pp.332-5 (p.333). Swift attended a rehearsal of Addison's *Cato* (performed 1712, printed 1713).

Addison suggests that George I 'has not been charged with one illegal proceeding', Swift asks 'are you serious?'.[108] Next to Addison's remark 'God be thanked we have a King who punishes with reluctancy', Swift wrote 'a great Comfort to the Sufferers!'.[109]

There is a possible contradiction, however, because Swift's imaginative interest in tyranny was ultimately determined by an affinity with some of the personalities who acquired such power (Johnson said that after the publication of the *Drapier's Letters*, Swift acquired a 'power almost despotick' over Ireland, which would have provided some consolation for his sense of exile.)[110] Ian Higgins has suggested that there was much literary potential for Swift in the behaviour of a tyrant: 'Swift though an ideological conservative is an imaginative extremist. There is flirtation with proscribed, extremist political ideas in his work.'[111] Peter Steele also argued that 'he always had about him a touch of the imperial.'[112] In some cases Swift expressed sympathy for unseemly political behaviour. In the margin of Clarendon's hostile portrait of the deeply antagonistic and proud Bishop Williams (Keeper of the Great Seal under James I), 'a man of very corrupt nature, whose passions could have transported him into the most unjustifiable actions', Swift wrote 'this character I think too severe'.[113]

According to Womersley, Swift's satire 'on the feigned clemency of the Emperor of Lilliput' — a thinly disguised portrait of George I — might have derived from the following anecdote about the Emperor Domitian in Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum* (VIII.xii.2):

Et quo contemptius abuteretur patientia hominum, numquam tristiorem sententiam sine praefatione clementiae pronuntiavit, ut non illud iam certius atrocis exitus signum esset quam principii lenitas.[114]

Domitian and other Roman Emperors were points of reference in the formation of English colonial identity before the Hanoverians: John Bernard's life of Domitian, for example, which was dedicated to William III, said 'Your Majesty is the *Constantine* of This Age' (Constantine having established Christianity in the Roman world, William III having re-established the

---

[108] Davis, *Prose*, v.252.
[109] Ibid., p.252 (*Freeholder* p.244, l.12). Cf. the 'trite' remark of the speaker (in a passage just before a discussion of anger and madness) in the *Tritical Essay* that 'one Tyrant is better than an Hundred' (indicating the speaker's dislike of Republicanism), Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.31. Rumbold adduces Tyndale as a possible source for this line, n.75.
[110] Johnson, *Lives*, iii.205.
[111] Ian Higgins, *Swift's Politics*, p.67.
[112] Peter Steele, *Preacher and Jester*, p.3.
[113] Swift's copy of Clarendon, *History*, iv.271. Cf. Clarendon's remark about him, 'a man of very imperious and fiery temper.'
[114] 'To abuse men's patience the more insolently, he never pronounced an unusually dreadful sentence without a preliminary declaration of clemency, so that there came to be no more certain indication of a cruel death than the leniency of his preamble.' Suetonius, 'Domitian', VIII.xii.2. Adduced in Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.504. See Chapter 1 for Swift's notes on Suetonius.

Protestant supremacy of the Anglican Church in England and Ireland).[115] Swift had his own opinions on this subject: in the margin of Clarendon's *History,* next to the line 'Nerva was deified for uniting, *Imperium et Libertas*', Swift underlined 'Libertas' and wrote 'nego' (I deny) in the margin.[116] The writing of parallel lives in imitation of Plutarch — characteristic of Augustan statesmen trying to formulate modern political life along the lines of classical precedents — would have been of professional interest to Swift when he became a colonial authority in the Church of Ireland; but the anecdote about Domitian's lenient 'preamble' also reflected his personal fondness for teasing thresholds of disclosure, which mattered to his construction of satirical personae and the behaviour of his literary allusions. Womersley also suggests that Gulliver's killing of flies in Brobdignag derives from the following passage in the same text:

Inter initia principatus cotidie secretum sibi horarum sumere solebat nec quicquam amplius quam muscas captare ac stilo praeacuto configere.[117]

Swift's own love of killing flies was recorded in Orrery's *Remarks,* suggesting that he would have seen himself in the anecdote.[118] Gloucester's lines from *King Lear* might also have been on his mind: 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, / They kill us for their sport.'[119] (Womersley adduces several allusions to Shakespeare in *Gulliver's Travels*: an argument for Swift's knowledge of Shakespeare has been outlined in Chapter 2).

Womersley's notes on Suetonius suggest Swift's tendency to align his own tyrannical mannerisms with notable precedents in history, affording them a temporary moral exception while indulging in their various energies. He openly alluded to the story about Domitian killing flies, for example, in a poem which was occasioned by a serious scandal in Dublin, 'On a Printer's Being Sent To Newgate' (c.1735, printed by Faulkner in 1745). The poem expressed indignation at George Faulkner's imprisonment in Dublin Newgate prison (1735-6) for publishing seditious material:

---

[115] John Bernard, *The Lives of The Roman Emperors* (London: Charles Harper, 1698), A2v.
[116] Swift's copy of Clarendon, *History*, ii.60.
[117] 'At the beginning of his reign he used to spend hours in seclusion every day, doing nothing but catch flies and stab them with a keenly-sharpened stylus.' Suetonius, 'Domitian', VIII.xii.3.
[118] Orrery, *Remarks*, p.78
[119] *King Lear*, IV.i.37-8.

Better we all were in our Graves
Than live in Slavery to Slaves,
Worse than the Anarchy at Sea,
Where Fishes on each other prey;
Where ev'ry Trout can make as high Rants
O'er his Inferiors as our Tyrants;
And swagger while the Coast is clear:
But should a lordly Pike appear,
Away you see the Varlet scud,
Or hide his coward Snout in Mud.
Thus, if a Gudgeon meet a Roach
He dare not venture to approach;
Yet still has Impudence to rise,
And, like *Domitian*, leap at Flyes.[120]

This is an experimental piece, insofar as it resembles a miniature 'piscatory' eclogue (a formal eclogue would be much longer), which Richard F. Jones suggests was occasionally chosen to explore politically sensitive issues in the eighteenth century.[121] (This form was used by Pope, for example, in *Windsor Forest,* lines 137-146.)[122] Moses Browne, in his *Essay In Defence Of Piscatory Eclogues* (1739), refers to the genre's 'Clownish and low Expressions' which disguise 'improper sentiment'.[123] Swift's poem immediately responds to a line about 'Slavery', which plays on a conventional gesture for a formal eclogue in this period (responding to sententiae), before proceeding with its allegory.[124] Swift was unusual, however, for ending with an allusion too (in this case the allusion to Domitian), suggesting an attraction to habits of commonplacing. The poem is a political 'rant', but it is also a studied piece of work. The details about the fish, despite Swift's awareness of other piscatory eclogues such as Ausonius' *Mosella*, appear to have been taken from Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653-76) — or knowledge gathered and commonplaced by someone else from the expanded edition of 1676 — which was licensed by Swift's enemy in the London censorship offices, Roger L'Estrange.[125] There is no evidence that Swift owned *The Compleat Angler*, despite it being one

[120] Williams, *Poems*, iii.824.
[121] Richard F. Jones, 'Eclogue Types in English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology,* 24:1 (1925), pp.33-60. (Scholarship on the piscatory eclogue is extremely scarce.) Swift owned William Diaper, *Nereides: Or, sea-eclogues* (London: J. H. for E. Sanger, 1712), which claimed to revive a fashion for submarine poetry.
[122] *Windsor Forest*, ll.137-146, Pope, *Poems*, i.163.
[123] Moses Browne, *Poems On Various Subjects* (London: Edward Cave, 1739), 'An Essay in Defence of Piscatory Eclogues', p.2.
[124] The opening lines, 'Better we all were in our Graves / Than live in Slavery to Slaves', may be revising the famous Miltonic tag 'Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.'
[125] The edition would have been Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler,* 3rd edition (London: Richard Marriott, 1676).

of the most popular texts of the period among learned gentlemen (it has been hypothesised to have been in William Temple's library), but he did own another text by Walton: the felicitously titled *Life of Mr. Richard Hooker* (1665).[126] According to A. J. E. Went, angling was a strikingly uncommon pursuit in eighteenth-century Dublin, which means that Swift must have acquired the information from a specialist text.[127]

According to Walton, the trout — an common fish in Ireland, not of 'high' status — swims (conveniently for Swift) in the 'swiftest streams', and is reckoned 'about the size of a *Gudgeon*': which might have supplied the point of formal *comparatio* between the stature of these two fish in the poem.[128] Walton also says that some trout 'miraculously' evade capture in 'such high and swift places as is almost incredible', like the trout in the poem who scuds away to hide his 'coward snout in Mud' (perhaps 'Mud' in the political sense, *OED* 6, 'cause of frustration, delay').[129] Equivalence drawn between pikes and 'Tyrants' was proverbial, but Walton says that 'The mighty *Luce* or *Pike* is taken to be the Tyrant (as the *Salmon* is the King) of the fresh waters', which matches with the trout who pretends to high office in the poem (the words 'salmon' and 'trout' being synonymous in the eighteenth century).[130] If Swift read Walton's account of the pike while in search of anecdotes about tyranny — in the same way that he read Suetonius' life of Domitian — he would have come across the following passage:

> The *Pike* is also observed to be a solitary, melancholy and a bold Fish: Melancholy, because he always swims or rests himself alone, and never swims in sholes or with company, as *Roach* and *Dace*, and most other Fish do: And bold, because he fears not a shadow, or to see or be seen of any body, as the *Trout* and *Chub,* and all other Fish do.[131]

This anecdote about other fish hiding from the pike probably supplied Swift with the line 'should a lordly Pike appear, / Away you see the Varlet scud', in this case the derogatory word 'Varlet' (*OED* 2a, 'a knave, rogue, rascal') standing in for 'trout'.[132] Whether Swift took these details from Walton or drew on proverbial lore about each fish is characteristically unclear, but the proximity of these observations to those in the poem indicates, at least, the alert consultation of an encyclopaedic source.

Swift finishes the poem with this explicit allusion to Domitian's killing of flies, which weaves elegantly into the conceit of angling at work in the rest of the poem. It is a Ricksian

---

[126] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1953. For Walton in Temple's Library, iv.215.
[127] A. E. J. Went, 'Angling in Ireland', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland,* 108 (1978), pp.104-7.
[128] Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler,* ed. Jonquil Bevan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.224.
[129] Ibid., p.228.
[130] Ibid., p.283. (cf. Drayton, *Poly-Olbion,* xxvi.240, 'the Tyrant *Pyke*'.)
[131] Ibid., p.283.
[132] *OED* cites *Gulliver's Travels* (I.ii.5) for 'Varlet': 'a little contemptible Varlet'.

allusion that delights in its own creation, because the line itself hovered between two versions in manuscript and print, just like Domitian's clemency. In the manuscript, the line first appeared as 'And, like *Domitian*, catches Flyes'; however, it was changed in Faulkner's edition to 'And, like *Domitian,* leap at Flyes'.[133] The new ending suggests something unfinished: in the printed text we are only told that Domitian and the fish 'leap' at flies, and do not know if they catch them. Swift's sense that fish (like allusions, and the end of this poem) fall off the hook at the last moment and disappear, generating mixed feelings of elation and disappointment, would have been sharpened by his vivid childhood memory of losing a fish off a rod, the 'type' — he admitted — 'of all my future disappointments': 'I remember when I was a little boy, I felt a great fish at the end of my line which I drew up almost on the ground, but it dropt in, and the disappointment vexeth me to this very day.'[134]

In the context of the *Works* of 1745-6, it might have been Faulkner who changed the line to reflect his own anxieties about being caught by censorship authorities (though Williams believes it to have been authorised or suggested by Swift himself). However, the slippery presence of Suetonius and Walton's *Compleat Angler* in this poem support the claim that Swift's allusions were marked by a tyrannical unwillingness to realise or reveal themselves in full, resisting, with the varying levels of satisfaction germane to satire, attempts to pin them down. As Swift could have read in his copy of Herodian, this sort of resistance to disclosure (often relying on double negative) was a fundamental characteristic of tyrannical behaviour: 'the tyrants have a habit, when they order someone to be killed without trial, of instructing about this in writing so that the action is not unconfirmed.'[135] Tyrannical behaviour crept into lots of Swift's statements about literature: he once said that 'Oppression would in time teach a little Wisdom to Fools'.[136] He wrote to Pope to commiserate with him on losing two of his fingers: but he also presented a poem for a new miscellany, and said 'I give you despotick Power to tear as many as you please.'[137] He boasted to Stella that he had managed '200 Pages of Arrian' one idle afternoon, reaching the moment when 'Alexandr th great is just dead', but hastily concluded that 'I do not think he was poisoned' and 'those are but idle Storyes' anyway.[138] He also said to Stella that he had paid too much for a copy of Plutarch at the auction of John Barnard's library — 'thirty shillings' — but cut off the statement by saying

---

[133] Williams, *Poems*, ii.824. Williams' collation: 14 leap at] catches MS.
[134] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.230.
[135] Herodian, *Roman History,* III.xi.9. For Swift's copy of Herodian, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii. 838.
[136] Davis, *Prose*, ix.271.
[137] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.36.
[138] Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.398.

'I'll tell y no more; oo don't understand Greek: We have no news and I have nothing more to say to day.'[139]

Scholars have suggested that allusions bring with them a unique kind of conceptual muddle, resisting taxonomy in the process of making themselves known: according to Gregory Machacek, 'the phenomenon is beset by limiting assumptions, conceptual murkiness, and terminological imprecision.'[140] One of the reasons why Swift's tyrannical allusions — in the sense of being both hostile and teasing — mattered to his satiric style is that they manipulated such imprecisions, and mocked the reader's desire for precision and explicitness. In *An Elegy On Mr. Partridge* (1708), Swift alluded to the tyrannical Philip II of Macedon (382-336 B.C.), whose elaborate assassination was recorded in Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca Historica*, XVI.94-5):

> Great Scholars have in *Lucian* Read,
> When *Phillip* King of *Greece* was Dead,
> His *Soul* and *Spirit* did divide,
> And each Part took a diff'rent Side;
> *One* rose a Star, the *other fell*
> Beneath, and mended Shoes in Hell.[141]

Philip II is presented as a satirical parallel to Partridge (who also 'mended shoes'). However, the problem with this allusion is that while Philip II does appear in Lucian's *Dialogues*, this story about the division of his soul and body does not. The division of Philip's soul is closer to Homer's murder of Denham from Swift's own *Battle of The Books*:

> Then, with a long Spear, he slew *Denham*, a stout *Modern*, who from his Father's side, derived his Lineage from *Apollo*, but his Mother was of Mortal Race. He fell, and bit the Earth. The Celestiall Part *Apollo* took, and made it a Star, but the Terrestrial lay wallowing upon the Ground.[142]

Swift's fake allusion to 'Lucian' parodies the determination of astrologers to see a causal relationship between dubious astrological events, and to claim intimate knowledge of the workings of what they observe. The misalignment of the allusive trail — wrongly flagged as Lucian — splits the allusion between something 'celestiall' and 'terrestrial': it is a display of erudition built on a lie, which only those in search of something 'celestiall' might attribute

---

[139] Ibid., p.482.
[140] Gregory Machacek, 'Allusion', *PMLA*, 122:2 (2007), pp.522-536.
[141] Williams, *Poems*, i.99.
[142] Walsh, *Tale*, p.157.

with success. As Michael Leddy argues, 'allusion […] is predicated upon the possibility that some will catch the point while others will (or would) miss it', but this also works the other way around: some believe they 'catch the point' where there is none to catch.[143]

Swift's attack on Partridge continues to test the limits of the reader's erudition, mixing up astrological signs and mythological personae in broken allusions with no apparent rationale:

> To thee the *Bull* will lend his *Hide,*
> By *Phœbus* newly Tann'd and Dry'd.
> For thee thy *Argo's* Hulk will Tax,
> And scrape her Pitchy Sides for *Wax*.
> Then *Ariadne* kindly Lends
> Her Braided Hair to make thee *Ends*;
> The Point of *Sagittarius* Dart,
> Turns to an *Awl* by Heav'nly Art;
> And *Vulcan* wheedled by his Wife,
> Will Forge for thee a *Paring-Knife*,
> For want of Room by *Virgo's* Side,
> She'll strain a Point, and sit *astride,
> To take thee kindly in *between*,
> And then the *Signs* will be *Thirteen.*
>
> * *Tibi brachia contrahet Ingens Scorpius, &c. Sedem tibi legeris Orbe, &c.*[144]

Swift accused Partridge of dealing in 'Stolen Goods', so the sequence of allusions is, centrally, a parody of hack writers who accumulate portions of learning at speed without any commitment to the truth, or knowledge of the contexts from which such fragments have been acquired: a habit of the *Tale* writer, who complains that his commonplace book fills 'much slower than [he] had reason to expect'.[145] Most of these allusions contain a playful joke or a scholarly error, under the ostensible generosity of 'lending' information about the aetiology of a medieval manuscript: Eleanor Cook argues that 'source-hunting' is 'different from the study of allusion', but in this poem the two processes are inextricable from one another.[146] The sun 'newly' passing through the '*Bull*', or the constellation of Taurus, carries associations of bad luck in English poetry (cf. Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde,* ii.50-63).[147] The 'Argo' is referred to

---

[143] Michael Leddy, 'The Limits of Allusion', *British Journal of Aesthetics,* 32:2 (1992), pp.110-122 (p.111).
[144] Williams, *Poems*, i.100.
[145] *The Epitaph*, Williams, *Poems*, i.101. Walsh, *Tale*, p.32.
[146] Cook, *Against Coercion: Games Poets Play*, 100.
[147] Chaucer, *Works*, 'Troilus and Criseyde', ii.50-63. For an explanation of this day as bad luck, see Jacqueline Weever, *Chaucer Name Dictionary* (New York and London: Garland, 1996), p.284.

as 'she' after the myth of its female creator, Argus (as well as the convention of referring to ships by female names), but it is also recorded in Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica* (IV.xli.3) that the Greek word '*argos*' originally meant 'swift': 'the ancients called what is swift *argos*.'[148] Playful puns and misreadings continue to disaggregate the rest of the poem. It was in fact Arachne not Ariadne whose hair fell out, and the word '*Ends*' plays on the fact that this is the end of her story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[149] Sagittarius, the astrological sign under which Swift was born, turns his 'Dart' into an 'awl' — a tool 'used by shoemakers for piercing holes in leather' (*OED* 2a) — toying, in miniature, with the hostile relationship between Swift and Partridge, whose reading of 'Heavn'ly Art' is the subject of this parody. Vulcan was not 'wheedled by his Wife', Venus, but was said to explode Etna whenever she was unfaithful ('wheedled', *OED* 1a, 'persuade by soft flattering words').[150] Venus' famous adultery is mocked here by her inability to get by Virgo's 'side' (the astrological sign of virginity), and her taking of Partridge 'kindly in *between*' her legs to produce another sign for the zodiac. The learning throughout this passage of the poem, which is at once wide-ranging and thoroughly out of control, suggests a characteristically Swiftian urge to confront other domains of pseudo-learning with a force more capaciously deranged than the target.[151] Partridge himself said that whoever wrote this poem 'knows nothing of Astrology, but hath a good stock of Impudence and Lying.'[152]

Swift's footnote deserves special attention for its rich allusive play, which — like Domitian's teasing — is poised between two unresolved options. The footnote sits cropped lines from the openings of Virgil's *Georgics* and Lucan's *Pharsalia* side by side, perhaps for 'want of Room' in the poem (the words 'sit' and 'astride' are sitting astride the oddly placed asterisk).[153] The line from Virgil brings in the astrological sign of Scorpio, 'for you even now the blazing Scorpion draws in his arms, and has left more than a due portion of the heaven'; but the line is, ironically, not given its 'due portion' because it is cropped with '*&c*'. The original passage of the *Georgics* might have supplied him with the conceit of this portion of the poem, even though he only took a fragment from it: 'qua locus Erigonen inter Chelasque sequentis panditur' ('between the Virgin and the grasping Claws, a space is opening'). As

---

[148] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica,* IV.xli.3. 'The vessel was called Argo after Argus […] but, as some say, after its exceeding great swiftness, since the ancients called what is swift *argos.*'
[149] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vi.129-145.
[150] For the marriage of Vulcan and Venus, and the making of the shield — another 'wheedling' — see Virgil, *Aeneid*, viii.370-407.
[151] Cf. Frances Deutsch Louis, *Swift's Anatomy of Misunderstanding: A Study of Swift's Epistemological Imagination in A Tale of A Tub and Gulliver's Travels* (London: George Prior, 1981), p.3: 'we wonder if Swift is wasting his wit on us merely because we were born too late to read what he read in the way he read it.' See also Swift's definition of 'Zodiack' and its mobility in the *Word-Book*, p.142. 'the Circle wherein the 12 Signs move'.
[152] Woolley, *Correspondence*, i.190.
[153] Virgil, *Georgics,* i.34-5 and Lucan, *De Bellum Civile*, i.53-4.

Eleanor Cook argues, 'good allusive practice often brings a weight of context to bear', but in this case the sophisticated astrological source is rendered dubious by the damaging effects of scholarly fragmentation.[154] It might also have been important to Swift that in Creech's translation of Manilius's *Astronomica*, the constellation of Scorpio is a sign characterised by several types of division:

> *Fish, Crab*, and *Scorpio* with his venom'd Flame
> Or near in Site, or in an equal space
> By two alike divided, are the *Day's:*
> The rest the *Night's.* But who can hope to see
> Opinion's join, or find the World agree![155]

The second line in the footnote, from Lucan, treats the poem and its apparatus as the 'Northern' and 'South' parts of the page: 'But choose not your seat either in the Northern region or where the sultry sky of the opposing South sinks down'. As with the faulty allusions to Lucian and Philip II, Swift's astrological work in this footnote creates such a muddle of misdirected pseudo-learning that, without annotation, the reader is left to make up his or her mind about what is really going on: a species of guess-work that Swift thought to be at the centre of astrology, and its unconvincing claims to knowledge about the universe (and its predictions). Luck, good or bad, is a target of this densely intertextual poem, which might explain why it not only begins with an unlucky sign, but ends on an unlucky number: 'and then the *Signs* will be *Thirteen*', matching the thirteen figures in the poem (cf. *The Fable of Midas* (1712), 'This *Fool* had got a *lucky Hit,* / And People fancy'd he had *Wit*').[156] As E. M. W. Tillyard argued, allusions themselves often depend on the luck of being parsed by an attentive reader, but Swift was also parodying the luck of not being investigated by one.[157]

Another characteristic of tyranny is the malicious disposal of objects which are precious to the population, according to fluctuations of personal taste or whim: according to Suetonius, Nero 'gave orders' that all 'statues and images should be overturned and dragged by a hook to the lavatories where they would be disposed of'.[158] We know that Swift responded to this kind of behaviour: while commonplacing Suetonius's life of Tiberius (*De Vita Caesarum,* iii.35), he noticed the line 'jurisjurandi gratiam facere' and translated the

---

[154] Cook, *Against Coercion: Games Poets Play*, p.100.
[155] *The Five Books of M. Manilius, Containing a System of the Ancient Astronomy and Astrology*, tr. Thomas Creech (London: Tonson, 1697), p.58.
[156] Williams, *Poems*, i.156.
[157] Tillyard, *Poetry Direct and Oblique,* p.111.
[158] Suetonius, 'Nero', VI.xxiv.

phrase, 'to dispense with it'.[159] (He also spotted this kind of behaviour in 'Eastern' tyrants.)[160] In *The Virtues of Sid Hamet the Magician's Rod* (1710), a satire on the Lord High Treasurer Sidney Godolphin's demise — presented as an allegory of genitalia — Swift drew on a wide range of literary allusions which, like Godolphin's ineffectual seed, become waste matter as soon as they are released:[161]

> SID's Rod was slender, white, and tall,
> Which oft he us'd to *fish* withal:
> A *PLACE* was fastned to the Hook,
> And many Score of *Gudgeons* took;
> Yet still so happy was his Fate,
> He caught his *Fish,* and sav'd his *Bait.*[162]

This poem uses fish as vehicle of political critique, much like 'On a Printer's Being Sent to Newgate'. The passage baits the reader with an allusion to Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice:* of Shylock's 'pound of flesh' Salarino asks 'what's that good for?', and Shylock replies 'to bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge' (III.i.48-9). After an unsuccessful meeting with Godolphin to sort out the First Fruits problem in the Church of Ireland, Swift wrote to Stella to say 'I am almost vowing revenge', so the allusion to Shylock's pound of flesh hooked together a genuine hatred of Godolphin and a vengeful fantasy about his resemblance to a figure in exile.[163] The passage trades in allusive stock, raising the value of Shylock's line to dwindle the significance of Godolphin, while diminishing a line of Shakespeare into a vindictive joke: a disorder of value characteristic of Swift's rage, which often revels in a malicious enjoyment of the 'sheer determined "lowness" of its enterprise.'[164] One of Godolphin's greatest personal successes was the acquisition of an exclusive right to the tin mines in his homeland of 'Rialton' in Cornwall (1668), which would have delighted Swift for its cheap verbal proximity to the 'Rialto', the commercial centre of Shylock's Venice: 'Now, what news on the Rialto?' (III.i.1). The allusion to Shylock's 'fish', like those to Walton's

---

[159] Rylands English MS. 659, item 16.
[160] Swift wrote about the phenomenon of the 'Eastern Prince', 'Eastern King', and 'Eastern Tyrant' in the thinly veiled satire on George I, *An Account of the Court and Empire of Japan* (printed 1765) and in *Drapier's Letters* (V): 'I have read somewhere of an Eastern King who put a Judge to Death for an iniquitous Sentence.' He would have known about Kublai Khan from his reading of Samuel Purchas, *Purchas, his Pilgrimes* (1613) which he owned in a four volume edition, *Hakluytus Posthumous, or Purchas his Pilgrimes*, 4 vols. (London: W. Stanbsy [sic] for H. Fetherstone, 1625). See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1546.
[161] On Godolphin's wasting of public money, see David Ogg, *England In The Reigns of James II and William III* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.158.
[162] Williams, *Poems*, i.134.
[163] Cf. Abigail Williams, *Journal to Stella*, p.25. 'I have almost finished my lampoon, and will print it for revenge on a certain great person.'
[164] Claude Rawson, *Swift's Angers*, 235.

Compleat Angler, evades attribution at the moment that it parodies Godolphin's miserliness and dictates the aggressions of the satire, retaining its words while catching on a series of indecent connotations, like Godolphin's political '*Bait*' which survives intact while it lures.

Godolphin's reputation as a minister was mixed. With a Domitian-like reluctance to award clemency to his minister, Charles II described him as 'never in the way and never out of the way': a line which Swift would have come across in Clarendon's *History of The Rebellion*. Swift's epithet for Godolphin drew on this ambiguous reputation: 'Sid Hamet' merged together the name 'Sidney' and the supposed original author of *Don Quixote*, 'Sid Hamet Benengeli'.[165] Pat Rogers has drawn attention to the fact that *Sid Hamet* was precipitated by a series of periodical papers about the generation of older 'flashy magicians' in Stuart statecraft, who had a 'get rich quick mentality' inappropriate to the business of the Treasury.[166] As such, the allusions display a 'flashy' entourage of knowledge while cheapening the poem with crass jokes about Godolphin's genitalia:

> ACHILLES's Scepter was of Wood,
> Like *Sid's*, but nothing near so good;
> Tho' down from Ancestors Divine
> Transmitted to the Heroes Line,
> Thence, thro' a long Descent of Kings,
> Came an heir-loom, as *Homer* sings,
> Tho' this Description looks so big,
> That *Scepter* was a sapless Twig:
> Which, from the fatal Day when first
> It left the Forest where 'twas nurst,
> As *Homer* tells us o'er and o'er,
> Nor Leaf, nor Fruit, nor Blossom bore.
> Sid's Scepter, full of Juice, did shoot
> In Golden Boughs, and Golden Fruit,
> And He, the *Dragon* never sleeping,
> Guarded each fair *Hesperian* Pippin.[167]

Godolphin's 'rod' — both his penis and the famous white staff of the Treasury — is compared to Achilles' 'Scepter'. In the *Iliad*, however, this 'Sceptre' does not belong to Achilles but to Agamemnon (Swift's reference to the 'Sceptre' as an 'heir-loom' alludes to the myth of Hephaestos forging it for him). In the *Iliad,* Achilles casts the object away as a 'symbolic act of dissent' (i.245-6), suggesting that Godolphin's 'Scepter' of the Treasury is at

---

[165] James Anderson Winn, *Queen Anne: Patroness Of Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.536.
[166] Pat Rogers, 'The Origins of Swift's Poem on "Sid Hamet"', *Modern Philology,* 79:3 (1982), pp.304-308.
[167] Williams, *Poems*, i.134.

the mercy of non-conforming instincts: instincts which Swift might have learned about from a number of suspicious activities, including Godolphin's voting record in favour of the Exclusion Bill in 1680: a serious mistake which was hushed as he ascended in the Tory government.[168] The sense of well-ordered repetition in this poem — precious objects 'transmitted' through time, Homer telling stories 'o'er and o'er' — parodies at once the mundane administration of parliamentary matters (of which Godolphin was considered a master) and the perversely organised activity of a court gossip, giving the jokes about Godolphin's genitalia an unsettling air of having been both studied and meticulously organised by an insider. According to Rawson, Swift's parodic taxonomies often obey no law other than those of its 'creator's anarchic inventiveness': in this poem, the organisation of the literary allusions is less anarchic, but in their semblance of order they create various states of unease and displeasure in spite of the decent affectation of control.[169] Godolphin's urine shooting out in 'Golden Boughs' (possibly a parody of Thomas Parnell's epithet 'Golden Streams' for good poetry) wastes yet another allusion to a precious source (Virgil, *Aeneid,* VI. 136-9), but the joke is also morbid because Virgil's golden bough is a gift to Proserpine which allows Aeneas into the underworld.[170] Godolphin died only two years after this poem was written and printed (September 1712) of complications related to gall-stones, from which he suffered throughout his life: a fact to which Swift was clearly privy, owing to the 'Golden Fruit' mixed in with his urine, and the mention of '*Hesperian* Pippin[s]'.[171] The poem would have been incomprehensible to its audience without an intimate knowledge of Godolphin's political life, medical problems, and precise knowledge of these literary sources. Contrary to Rogers' assertion that 'his first readers simply knew too much about the subject' and that this lampoon would have caught on immediately, it seems more likely that, against the grain of formal Augustan parody, Swift would have delighted in its nasty, manipulative obscurity.[172] It confused its immediate audience (in relation to authorship), although its 'beauties' were

---

[168] Elton T. E. Barker, *Entering The Agon: Dissent and Authority in Homer, Historiography, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.102.
[169] Claude Rawson, *Gulliver and The Gentle Reader*, p.40.
[170] Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI.136-9, 'latet arbore opaca / aureus et foliis et lento vimine ramus, / Iunoni infernae dictus sacer.' Cf. Thomas Parnell, *An Essay On The Different Stiles of Poetry* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1713), p.30.
[171] On the garden of the Hesperides see Hesiod, *Theogony*, 275; Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*, iv.1396-1449.
[172] In opposition to this evidence, Howard Weinbrot argues that 'recognition' of the original is fundamental to Augustan satire. See Howard Weinbrot, *The Formal Strain: Studies in Augustan Imitation and Satire* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p.26.

admired.[173] Stella, however, does not seem to have understood the entirety of its detail: 'Do you like *Sid Hamet's Rod*? Do you understand it all?'.[174]

Ehrenpreis, taking on this poem's eccentric jumble of items which are both highly valuable and immediately disposable, said that it has 'the least claim to literary merit, much though its author valued it.'[175] Ehrenpreis considered, among other things, the 'wit' of the poem to be one of its major failures: 'most of the rhythms are doggerel; the language is generally clumsy; the tone, erratic. The images are more mean than homely, and the wit is palpably forced. Almost inevitably the end limps and sounds awkward, though Swift tries as usual for a hammerblow.'[176] However, set against Swift's delight in allusions that failed in carefully constructed ways — either because they were inaccurate, disorganised his own work, or parodied other allusions to serious literature — the '*Hesperian* Pippins' were a striking success (as with other instances of bathos germane to mock-heroic satire). The poem is legible and successful if one prioritises its sense of waste.[177]

In a comprehensive reading of the poem in *Documenting Eighteenth-Century Satire*, Pat Rogers argues that Swift was aware of Godolphin's recruitment of disposable flatterers who fell away when they were no longer needed: satirised in *Sid Hamet*, 'But, when th' enchanted *Rod* was *broke*; / They vanish'd in a stinking Smoak.'[178] Swift told Stella about the fate of such exiled colleagues, and said 'I am almost shocked at it, though I did not care if they were all hanged.'[179] Swift's fondness for the 'irrelevance, rather than the truth or untruth' of an allusion, led him to use them as final 'hammerblows' on several occasions.[180] In *An Epistle on an Epistle*, a mockery of Delany's new Irish villa, one stanza concludes with an allusion to *Don Quixote* and then moves on to a thought about dried up streams, as though Swift's own inspiration has dried up and needs to be revived:

---

[173] Abigail Williams, *Journal to Stella*, pp.40-1. 'lord Peterborow would let nobody read them [the lines of *Sid Hamet*] but himself: so he did; and Mr. Harley bobbed me at every line to take notice of the beauties. Prior rallied Lord Peterborow for author of them; and lord Peterborow said, he knew them to be his; and Prior then turned it upon me, and I on him. I am not guessed at all in town to be the author.'
[174] Ibid., p.79. Cf. Pat Rogers, *Documenting Eighteenth Century Satire: Pope, Swift, Gay, and Arbuthnot in Historical Context* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), p.12.
[175] Ehrenpreis, *Life,* ii.388.
[176] Ibid., ii.388.
[177] Cf. Sophie Gee, *Making Waste: Leftovers and The Eighteenth Century Imagination* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), p.91: 'Nobody relished leftovers like Jonathan Swift.'
[178] Williams, *Poems*, i.134.
[179] Abigail Williams, *Journal to Stella*, p.15.
[180] Claude Rawson, *Gulliver and The Gentle Reader,* p.40.

These Stories were, of old, design'd
As Fables: But you have refin'd
The Poets Mythologick Dreams,
To real Muses, Gods, and Streams.
Who wou'd not swear, when you contrive thus,
That you're *Don Quixote Redivivus*?

Beneath a dry Canal there lies,
Which only *Winter's* Rain supplies.[181]

The weary predictability of the opening, 'These Stories were, of old, design'd / As Fables' gives way to a typically unhinged appreciation of Delany's villa according to a new metric of allusive interest, 'Mythologick Dreams', which wastes itself all too quickly on an allusion to *Don Quixote.* According to Claude Rawson, this is characteristic of Swift's most refined satiric style, because it is at once hostile and coloured by courtly decency, 'which both includes such formulas and is given to breaking them.'[182]

III - Destruction

Swift's allusions were often most destructive when they came at the end of a text. This might have been part of his constitutional dislike of endings: he did not like departing from people in any way that he was not able to control.[183] However, he also asserted the need to perpetuate a text without an ending in mind: in *Examiner* No. 18, he argued that we are 'often forc'd to make use of any Materials we can find, that the Work may be kept agoing'.[184] Some scholars of classical literature have suggested that incoherence is germane to catalogue literature written in a densely learned idiom with no theoretical end, as in the case of Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis* or Callimachus's *Aetia.*[185] Montaigne defended his own use of such perpetuation as a talent: 'Je m'esgare, mais plustot par licence que par mesgarde' ('I go out of my way, but rather by license than carelessness').[186] Abigail Williams has described this phenomenon in Swift's writing, and said that we are forced to see him 'thinking while he

[181] Williams, *Poems*, ii.478.
[182] Claude Rawson, *Gulliver and The Gentle Reader*, p.41.
[183] Unintentionally, he was entertaining guests at the moment he was notified of the deaths of both his mother and Stella. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.546-8.
[184] Ellis, *Examiner*, p.66.
[185] Cf. Alan Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics* (New York: Princeton, 2017), p.448.
[186] 'On Vanity', Montaigne, *Essays*, III.ix.994 (B), 'Je m'esgare, mais plustot par licence que par mesgarde. Mes fantasies se suyvent, mais par fois c'est de loing, et se regardent, mais d'une veuë oblique.' ('This stuffing is a little out of my subject. I go out of my way, but rather by licence than carelessness. My ideas follow one another, but sometimes it is from a distance, and look at each other, but with a sidelong glance.')

writes'.[187] Thackeray rounded off his lecture on Swift by drawing attention to the 'falling' greatness of his mind, a remark which simultaneously acknowledges its tyrannical impulses (with 'empire') and its unresolved movement (with 'falling'): 'So great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling. We have other great names to mention — none I think, however, so great or so gloomy'.[188]

In practice, Swift's endings often took on a violent or apocalyptic character, like the end of *The Dunciad*. He wrote to Pope in 1730 to confess his own irresponsible destruction of the texts he wanted to end:

> I am in my Chamber at five, there sit alone till eleven, and then to bed. I write Pamphlets and follys merely for amusement, and when they are finished, or I grow weary in the middle, I cast them into the fire, partly out of dislike, and chiefly because I know they will signify nothing.[189]

Laetitia Pilkington also recorded the following:

> Another time Dean *Swift* had a Present made him, by the Author, of a Translation of *Horace's Epistles*, very curiously bound. Soon after perusing Part of it, he said to Mrs. Pilkington, *This Book has a Special good Cover; but I have a mind there should be Something valuable in the Inside*; so taking out his Penknife, he cut out all the Leaves close to the Margin, and ordered Mrs. *Pilkington* to paste some Letters of his Friend *Pope, Bolingbroke, &c.* which he gave her, into the Cover. *And now*, says he, *as to these Leaves which I have cut out, I will give them what they greatly want*; and immediately threw them all into the *Fire*.[190]

Northrop Frye argued that 'what we have found to be true of the writer's intention is also true of the audience's attention'.[191] The 'falling' empire of Swift's mind, which — as Thackeray's wording implies — took the property of other writers by force and made them conform to personal characteristics, often took delight in implicating the reader in his own states of disappointment at the end. In his unprinted (and supposedly unfinished) 'On The Irish-Club' (1729-30?), for example, Swift ended with a printer's hiatus of the kind we find in *The Battle of The Books* and *On Poetry: A Rapsody*, pitted 'against poetic rules' and inspired by a 'satyric muse', like the lacunae he burnt into his own manuscripts with an 'Orbicular Glass':

---

[187] Abigail Williams, '"I Hope to Write as Bad as Ever": Swift's *Journal to Stella* and the Intimacy of Correspondence', *Eighteenth Century Life*, 35:1 (2011), p.103.
[188] Thackeray, 'Swift', p.505. Cf. Rawson's discussion of T. S. Eliot's response to this line in 'T. S. Eliot and Swift', *Essays In Criticism*, 67:4 (2017), pp.355-66.
[189] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.355.
[190] Laetitia Pilkington, *Jests*, p.5.
[191] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p.112.

Ne'er did a true satyric muse
Virtue or innocence abuse;
And 'tis against poetic rules
To rail at men by nature fools:
But * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * [192]

There is little precedent for the idea that the truly virtuous or thoroughly foolish are not fit for satire. Horace explored the morality of choosing satirical victims in a series of the *Epistulae*, I.xvi-xviii, and Dryden argued that fools are naturally ignorant of such attacks; but Swift does not seem to have alluded to anything here, even though the first two couplets imitate, syntactically, pieces of sententiae.[193]

The violent energies which characterised Swift's literary allusions were linked to his naturally competitive erudition, and brought some of his texts into rich, satirical states of disrepair. These allusions were created by — and reflected on — his own tyrannical behaviour, refusing to give way to scholarly demands of correctness or decency. Others were fragmented or inaccurate on account of their extraction from texts too remote to be in the radius of the reader's awareness. Such a destructive and chaotic practice of allusion helped to shape a literary style poised between rigid Augustan conventions and personal idiosyncrasies. Swift's delight in such writing was registered by Thackeray with a characteristically eccentric image, which holds out the threat of violence and shows Swift departing on his own terms: 'so he fires his pistols into the air with a curse, and rides away into his own country'.[194]

[192] Williams, *Poems*, ii.488.
[193] See Dryden, *Essays,* ii.93, 'a fool feels its not'.
[194] Thackeray, 'Swift', p.475.

IV
Using the Bible

> Let Sir *T*—, that rampant Ass,
> Stuff his Guts with Flax and Grass;
> But before the Priest he fleeces
> Tear the Bible all to Pieces.[1]
>
> - Swift

> *The Bible*, 'tis so very *miscellaneous.*[2]
>
> - Richard Bentley

> So great a delight has this Unhappy Writer, to play with what some part or other of Mankind have always esteemed as sacred![3]
>
> - William Wotton

Swift's careful arrangement of acquired fragments from other writers, deployed either to insinuate the restless energies of his anger or to affect a parodic semblance of neatness and order, rarely welcomes or flatters the reader: as Claude Rawson says, 'there is very little sense of refuge to be derived from the stylised ordering itself, which tends to imply closed prisons rather than happy havens.'[4] The reader's disorientation in such intimately manufactured difficulty was necessary to Swift's satire, which was largely anonymous and written under an immediate threat of compromising exposure: 'attention', as George Steiner argues, is 'neither uniform nor stable' amid such contrived difficulty, and another target of Swift's parodic use of allusion is the failure of attention or vigilance to maintain itself in situations which appear to be familiar or welcoming.[5] Empson argued that 'it is both entirely innocuous to write, and positively impertinent not to write, the note which would save further trouble', and Swift dealt in such impertinence, often withholding the information that would supply his sources and

---

[1] *The Legion Club* (composed 1736), Williams, *Poems*, iii.831. This controversial and aggressive poem was written at a complex moment in Swift's late career as Dean, when the powers (financial and political) of the clergy of the Church of Ireland were being lost to (often anti-clerical) opposition in the House of Commons (c.1736). As Williams notes, one issue that Swift was particularly enraged by here was that landowners were trying to claim the tithe on pasturage from the clergy (linked with that on hemp and flax), and they succeeded. See Williams' headnote, pp.827-9: 'this roused Swift to the last and bitterest of his satires'. More recently, Karian has argued that the poem has been contextualised 'too narrowly' in this local debate over the tithe of agistment, emphasising parts of the poem which attack individuals as mad (namely Richard Tighe, Richard Bettesworth, and Joshua, Lord Allen, targets in several of Swift's poems from this period). Cf. Karian, *Print and Manuscript,* pp. 134-5. The lines here suggest that Sir Thomas Prendergast (Sir *T*—), MP, is an irreligious and avaricious man who, in acquiring this tithe on 'Flax and Grass', commits an offence against the clergy and the Bible. The wider context of this passage plays on the fact that Prendergast's father had 'conspired to assassinate William III' and turned informer. Acknowledged by Karian, ibid., p.141. Cf. Swift's attack on Prendergast in *On Noisy Tom*, 'the Spawn of him who sham'd our Isle, / That Traitor, Assassin, Informer Vile', *Poems,* iii.826, ll.7-8. This poem said to be a translation of Horace, *Satires*, I.vi.34-9.

[2] Richard Bentley, *Remarks Upon a Late Discourse of Free-Thinking* (London: 1713), p.8.

[3] Walsh, *Tale*, p.225.

[4] Rawson, *Gulliver and The Gentle Reader,* p.87.

[5] George Steiner, *On Difficulty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.2.

their suggestions.[6] The scattering of unpalatable ideas from other books among his writings often allowed him to pursue their ideas in various satiric voices without breaking the decorum or moral responsibility of his profession.

However, his allusions to the Bible could not indulge in quite the same satiric impertinences: Peter Steele refers to 'the interplay between the judicial or homiletic side of his mind, and the comic or sportive side' as 'more inevitable than one might have supposed', but its inevitability would not have made it clearly defined or ethical.[7] Part of the problem was that it was in and with the professional hierarchies of the church that he was most dissatisfied. Swift was anxious about preferment and associated clerical life with injury: on hearing that one of his Dublin choir boys had shot himself with a gun, he teased the boy by saying that he would 'make him a Vicar'.[8] From the earliest years at Moor Park, Swift had 'hoped to become a bishop', like Gilbert Burnet, Narcissus Marsh, or William King (preferably in England, unlike Marsh and King). When his hopes for promotion were disappointed, and he was made Dean of St.Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, he considered his Irish career 'a form of exile'.[9] Initially, he blamed the theological controversies generated by *A Tale of A Tub* for his professional disappointments, regretting what Claude Rawson calls its 'blasphemous unruliness'.[10] However, after the dispersal of the Tory ministry and the promotion of his Whig enemies, which led to a period of relative toleration in the Anglican Church (in England and Ireland), Swift increasingly saw his impediments as professional and rivalrous. After 1723, when it had become clear to him that bishops in the Church of Ireland were protecting their own financial interests by manipulating land fees, and (as explained in this chapter), exploiting the lower clergy to protect their pockets, Swift believed that even figures of authority within the church were criticised 'with great reason'.[11] An enduring concern in his clerical life was that both the Church of Ireland and his own standing in that church were under an imminent threat of either violence, impoverishment, or subordination. At various times he perceived his enemies to be Catholics, Protestant dissenters (Presbyterians in particular), deists, 'free-thinkers', non-trinitarians, the English government, the Irish

---

[6] Empson, *Argufying*, p.71.
[7] Steele, *Preacher and Jester*, p.8.
[8] Pilkington, *Jests*, p.76. Swift's grandfather struggled with preferment. See Stubbs, *Reluctant Rebel*, p.43.
[9] Swift's discomfort in Irish exile was made worse by unwelcoming clerics, who saw the appointment as a political ploy by the English government. See Stubbs, *Reluctant Rebel*, p.378. Cf. Pat Rogers, *The Augustan Vision* (London: Methuen, 1974), p.183. Cf. J. A. Downie, 'Disappointed Swift', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 26 (2011), pp. 11-23 (p.15).
[10] Rawson, *Swift's Angers*, p.96.
[11] Ibid. p.96. One text that reveals the intricacies of Swift's change of mind about bishops in the Church of Ireland is *Some Arguments Against Enlarging the Power of Bishops, &c*, Davis, *Prose*, ix.45 (discussed in this chapter). For an account of this text's footnote, which backdates the corruption of bishops, see Eugene Hammond, *Jonathan Swift: Our Dean* (London: University of Delaware Press, 2001), pp.249-251.

government, and even some members of his own Anglican clergy. As Ehrenpreis argued, 'he did not invent a set of values to defend, or objects to attack; he started from human embodiments of those values or vices, and he addressed himself to people whom he wished to encourage, refute, or annihilate.'[12]

I - Private Reading

Little evidence survives of Swift's private relationship with scripture or religious poetry. The scattered pieces of evidence which do survive are difficult to account for. One anecdote, for example, has survived about how he read the Bible: every year, he read the third chapter of Job on his birthday.[13] To Thackeray, this indicated such melancholy that, in a footnote to his lecture on Swift, he described it as the Dean's 'day of mourning'.[14] The routine itself was not remarkable, because reading the Bible on one's birthday was a common practice. As Abigail Williams has noted, eighteenth-century readers adhered to a range of scriptural routines, some of which were personal.[15] For example, it was recorded in Boswell's *Life* that Johnson contemplated religion on 'New-year's-day, the day of his wife's death, Good Friday, Easter-day, and his own birthday'.[16] However, Swift chose an unusual text:

> 1 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. 2 And Job spake, and said 3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. 4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. (Job 3:3-5)

Other writers of Swift's period found this passage useful, albeit peculiar. Worried by new fossil discoveries, which might indicate faults in the story about the creation, clerics cited the passage as evidence of the 'ordinary process' of birth.[17] Richard Blackmore and his school of translators considered it a model of style.[18]

---

[12] Irvin Ehrenpreis, *The Personality of Jonathan Swift* (London: Methuen, 1958), p.115.
[13] Deane Swift, *Essay*, p.35. Also mentioned by Jonathan Swift in a short letter to Mrs. Whiteway in 1738, Woolley, *Correspondence*, iv.548. Woolley contests the report that it was a long-standing annual tradition, and suggests that Swift only took it up in old age when he was unwell.
[14] Thackeray, 'Swift', p.477.
[15] Abigail Williams, *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), pp.107-8.
[16] Boswell, *Life*, i.483.
[17] [Anonymous], *An Account of the Origin and Formation of Fossil-Shells* (London: W. Botham for James Knapton, 1705), p.71.
[18] See *A Paraphrase on the Book of Job* (London: Tonson, 1716). Theoretical discussion, 'Preface', lxxix; translation, p.13. Arguments for the Bible's plain style were often connected with 1 Corinthians 2:1-4. Cf. Swift's belief in its plain style (part of his tribute to Harley), Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.147 (discussed later in the chapter). See also the argument that 'if it were not for the *Bible* and *Common Prayer Book* in the vulgar Tongue, we should hardly be able to understand any Thing that was written among us an hundred Years ago' (attributed to Harley), ibid., p.146. Cf. Thomas De Laune and Benjamin Keach, *Tropologia: a Key to Open Scripture-Metaphors* (London: 1682), (fol. A2 r), '[it] is plain and savours of no human blandishment or artificial beauty'.

For Swift, however, this passage seems to have been about the 'darkness' of being born. Suggestively, the Geneva commentary for this passage argues that it is not about those suffering from mortal 'infirmities' but those caught in a 'rebellion against God': an interpretation that Swift would certainly not have admired for its suggestions of political dissent (like much in the anti-monarchical commentary of the Geneva Bible), even if the tone is felicitously melancholy.[19] What principles can be inferred from this anecdote about reading Job 3:3-5 is not clear. Indeed, it is a recurring problem when reading for Swift's private beliefs that the evidence does not reveal enough to make a case about them. We know from Dr. John Lyon that Swift's (now lost) Book of Common Prayer (BCP) displayed grotesque smears of snuff in the margins, indicating where he had gripped them most frequently, but it is difficult to locate any substantial references to this text in his writing.[20] He would have known the BCP in great detail, and upheld it as a fundamental part of the Anglican Church. It was used in the English subordination of the Irish after the Reformation (it was abolished during the reign of the Catholic Mary I but fervently defended by the Protestant Edward VI and Elizabeth I); and it had also been reinstated by the Church of Ireland as part of both the Restoration and Williamite settlements.[21] The relative lack of allusion to the BCP in Swift's writings may well be evidence for the fact that it was unsuitable for quotation in secular literature (especially in satire).

---

[19] Job 3:5, *Geneva Bible*, p.223. Geneva commentary compares Romans 7:18: 'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.' The Geneva Bible was controversial because of its politically charged annotations and system of internal cross-reference. Swift would have been deeply suspicious of the Protestant Rebels who fled to Geneva to compose the text, and their Puritan creation. See Michael Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, pp.20-22. Cf. Maurice C. Betteridge, 'The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and Its Annotations', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 14:1 (1983), pp.41-62 (p.48).

[20] Dr. John Lyon says it 'shew[ed] the prayers he most used' because it was 'fouled with the snuff of his fingers' showing 'the parts thereof he most approved of'. See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.448. One of Swift's BCPs (at St. Patrick's) would likely have been *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to Use of the Church of Ireland* (Dublin: A. Rhames, *et al.*, 1716). Perhaps surprisingly, there is nothing about the BCP (or liturgy) in *A Tale Of A Tub* — Walsh's index suggests nothing by way of allusion. Cf. Rounce and Hayton, *Irish Political Writings After 1725*, p.54, n.24, for a possible allusion to 'The Form and Manner of Ordaining Priests' in the BCP, but which might instead be using 1 Thessalonians 5:22. Cf. possible allusion in *A Proposal for Giving Badges to the Beggars in Dublin*, ibid., p.313, n.26. On Irish overpopulation, Swift says 'so, the Blessing of Increase and Multiply is by us converted into a Curse', and the phrase 'Increase and Multiply' is from the BCP. Cf. *Tatler* No.230, in which Swift shows how young people inflect phrases from the BCP with cant, Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.101. Swift refers to the BCP commonplace that 'the great end of marriage is propagation' in *Of the Education of Ladies* ('particularly hard to date'), ibid., p.214. The phrase 'thought, word, and deed' (from the general confession at Holy Communion) crops up in *Polite Conversation* (ibid., p.313) and *Strephon and Chloe*, Williams, *Poems*, ii.558. However, it is difficult to account for these as allusions, because they are manipulations of commonplaces in service of little jokes about everyday religion.

[21] For a history of the BCP as a political and theological text in the English subordination of Ireland, see Kenneth Milne, *A Short History Of The Church of Ireland* (Dublin: Columbia Books, 1966, reprinted 2004), pp.34-6, and pp.46-7. In living memory, for Swift, there had been a resurgence of Catholic power during the reign of James II (1685-8), the fall of which had left the Catholic population of Ireland (to whom the BCP was a Protestant imposition) with lasting resentments. On the suppression of Catholic interests and power after the Williamite Settlement, see Eoin Kinsella, 'In Pursuit of a Positive Construction: Irish Catholics and the Williamite Articles of Surrender, 1690-1701', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 24 (2009), pp.11-35.

Little else can be gathered from Swift's marginalia in translations or religious poems of his period. He seems to have instinctively disliked religious poetry, especially if it had become popular. His annotations to James Gibbs' metrical translation of David's Psalms, *The First Fifteen Psalms of David* (1701), are evidence of this dislike.[22] The standard text of metrical psalms had once been Sternhold and Hopkins (*The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, 1562) which, as Hannibal Hamlin notes, came out in over 700 editions before 1696.[23] However, in both the Churches of England and Ireland, a newer standard text would have been 'Tate and Brady' (Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, *A New Version of The Psalms of David*, 1696, supplement 1700), which William III had commissioned to supersede Sternhold and Hopkins.[24] Swift expressed dislike of Nahum Tate in the *Tale* for his popular success, though it is unclear whether the 'Rheams' of verse for which he is attacked mean his collaboration with Dryden on *Absalom and Achitophel*, his Shakespeare adaptions, or his *New Version of The Psalms*, all of which could have advanced his finances and popularity (he is mocked in the 1728 *The Dunciad: An Heroic Poem* and the 1729 Variorum for having a 'poor' page):

> There is another called *Nahum Tate*, who is ready to make an Oath that he has caused many Rheams of Verse to be published, whereof both himself and his Bookseller (if lawfully required) can still produce authentick Copies, and therefore wonders why the World is pleased to make such a Secret of it.[25]

Deviations from the standard cohort of Tate and Brady's (or, perhaps Sternhold and Hopkins') metrical psalms would have been suspicious, to Swift, perhaps because such a deviation would have appeared a grasp for popularity rather than a statement about or contribution to the faith.

Swift's exacting criticism of Gibbs reveals his distaste. Gibbs' book had a confusing title, referring to itself both as a 'translation' and an 'essay', apparently 'not known to have been attempted before in any language' — in pompous imitation of the line in *Paradise Lost* (i. 16) about 'things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme'. The title also promises to supply 'perspicuity and coherence according to the modern art of poetry', a promise which Swift

---

[22] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.699.
[23] Hannibal Hamlin, '"Very mete to be used of all sortes of people": The Remarkable Popularity of the "Sternhold and Hopkins" Psalter', *The Yale University Library Gazette*, 75:1/2 (2000), pp.37-51.
[24] Swift also owned a copy of Brady's Virgil, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.282. Cf. Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.417-8. Cf. *A History Of Poetry*: 'A hundred Years after we attempted to Translate out of the Psalms, but could not our *STERN HOLD*', Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.223. Rumbold (n.2) refers to Sternhold as 'one of the translators of the metrical psalms sung at Church of England services in Swift's time'. Part of the joke seems to be that Sternhold had become — comically — a part of the oldest English poetry (he appears just after Chaucer), perhaps because he had been superseded by Tate and Brady, but also because the liturgy was designed in this period (between Chaucer and 'Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign').
[25] Walsh, *Tale*, p.23. As Walsh notes, p.335, the word 'Rheams' can be found in *The Dispensary*. Cf. *The Dunciad: An Heroic Poem*, i.93, '*T—te's poor page*'. Rumbold, Longman *Poems*, iii.28. Cf. the note in the 1729 Variorum, 'a cold writer, of no *invention*', etc., p.187.

would not have warmed to. Gibbs, in Swift's view, 'lays violent hands on certain particles, (such as *and, when, since, for, but, thus, so* &c.) and presses them to his service on all occasions sore against their wills'.[26] Next to where Gibbs wrote 'Like chaff with every wind disperts' Swift wrote '"Disp*ur*st", Pronounce this like a blockhead'. He argued, too, with this piece of the second psalm:

> But those, that do thy laws refuse,
> In pieces thou shalt break;
> And with an iron sceptre bruise
> Their disobedient *neck*.

'After a man is broken in pieces', Swift wrote, ''tis no great matter to have his neck bruised'. When Gibbs showed naivety, 'As thou [God] hast always taken care / My sufferings to remove', Swift wrote in astonishment, 'A pretty phrase!'. And when Gibbs wasted words to complete the line, Swift immediately picked him up on it: 'They on they favour can't rely, / That practice such iniquity' (Swift's comment: 'such vile poetry. What is the meaning of that word, *such*, in this place?'). Of Denham's translation of David's Psalms, Johnson remarked 'he has failed', but conceded that 'in sacred poetry, who has succeeded?'[27] Swift provided no such defence for Gibbs. These fragments of evidence which seem to indicate Swift's private relationship with the texts — the anecdote about his reading of Job, his lost Book of Common Prayer, his marginalia in Gibbs — are not reliable or substantial enough as evidence of what principles lay behind his Biblical allusions.

---

[26] See a similar note: 'The doctor hath a mighty affection for the particle *thus*: he uses it four times in this Psalm, and 100 times in other places, and always wrong.' Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, i.701.
[27] Johnson, *Lives*, i.236-7. For Johnson's rationale as to why religious poetry rarely succeeds, see 'Edmund Waller', *Lives*, ii.52-3, and David Nichol Smith, 'Samuel Johnson's Poems', *Review of English Studies*, 19:73 (1943), pp.44-50 (p.48 in particular).

II - Professional Principles

It is safer to begin with Swift's professional principles: principles which, as Swift's biographers have observed, changed very little over the course of his life, even in particularly complex and sometimes violent circumstances. Swift believed that the (high) Anglican Church and its practices must be defended and maintained at all costs in England and Ireland: it was also essential to him that Anglican clerics should imitate Luther's moderation, and not indulge in 'enthusiasm' (which might lead to nonconformity or a conviction in one's private knowledge about God, which he perceived as Puritan arrogance or delusion).[28] As Robert Mahony has said, Swift's 'Ireland was a Protestant kingdom' and an 'Anglican polity' on behalf of which he worked as an official figure of authority.[29] In Damrosch's words, 'whatever Swift's private views might have been', he saw the church's authority as 'essentially legal rather than spiritual'.[30] Swift saw himself as a defender against dissenting sects and fanaticism outside its walls, and as a protector of fair and equal treatment within them. His commitment to the Test Act is a representative example of his unwavering conservatism on matters of conformity despite the many complexities of his clerical life: he was especially hostile to Presbyterians (the Anglican establishment gave ground to them in the 1719 Toleration Act), who repeatedly agitated for the Test Act to be repealed — especially in the 1730s, at which time Swift grew miserable about the prospect of the dissenters' success.[31] As Higgins argues, 'Swift's Test Act tracts are polemical performances, defending public conformity to the established religion on civil grounds': although these texts were not in themselves 'confessions of his own faith' they were certainly 'not inconsistent' with it.[32] Ehrenpreis summarised Swift's stance: 'so long as a particular church is established, a Test of some sort is necessary to keep order in the

---

[28] Evidence suggests that Swift knew and understood the early history of the Protestant faith. See his copies of Phillip Melanchthon, *Liber de Anima* (Wittenberg: Crato, 1569) and *Initia Doctrinae Physicae* (Wittenberg: Johann Luft, 1549). Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1224. There is no entry for Luther, though Swift may have leant copies of Luther to any number of clerics over the course of his life. Cf. '*MARTIN*' in the *Tale*, deemed calm and moderate. First appearance: Walsh, *Tale*, p.88. Cf. Phillip Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background Of A Tale Of A Tub* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p.16: 'Martin brings reason and moderation to the task of fulfilling his father's directions and restoring his coat to its original simplicity.' Ian Higgins attributes this view of moderate Luther to Swift's knowledge of a series of pamphlets speculating on Luther's 'Spirit' in the 1687-8, to which Francis Atterbury replied with *Answer to Some Considerations on the Spirit of Martin Luther and the Original Reformation* (Oxford: 1687). This debate is flagged by Ian Higgins, *Swift's Politics*, pp.136-42. (Marcus Walsh accounts for this debate (and Higgins) in *Tale*, p.407, n.12.) Cf. *Swift's Politics*, p.103: 'the project of contemporary High Church and Tory polemic was to collocate modern dissent with antinomian fanaticism.'

[29] Robert Mahony, *Jonathan Swift: The Irish Identity*, p.xiv.

[30] Damrosch, *Life*, p.208. Cf. Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.52.

[31] Cf. *Some Thoughts Concerning The Repeal of the Test*, Davis, *Prose*, xii.299. 'If nothing but profit were in the case, it would hardly cost me one sigh when I should see those few scraps thrown among every species of Fanaticks, to scuffle for among themselves.' Herbert Davis records that, in *The Presbyterians' Plea of Merit*, Swift 'must have felt when he began to write again this time that it was too late', ibid., p.xliv. The 1730s, in Swift's view, was a period of Whiggish toleration among bishops and the secular government alike. Cf. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.724-6.

[32] Higgins, 'A Preface to Swift's Test Act Tracts', *Münster* (6), p.243. Cf. pp.227-9.

government', because 'otherwise, there would be endless strife among the various religious interests of the officers of state.'[33]

Swift's Anglican conservatism has attracted little praise, not least because, underneath a principled struggle for the establishment of an unquestionable orthodoxy, it was a position he used to protect himself in the church. As David Oakleaf has said, it 'reveals Swift at his most unappealing': 'protective of his own clerical privileges, and intolerant of any deviation from orthodoxy.'[34] The opening statements of *Some Arguments against Enlarging the Power of Bishops, in Letting of Leases* (1723) are instructive about his beliefs concerning conformity to the established church. As a whole, the text is not straightforwardly representative of his views: it was written at once to defend the moral and structural integrity of the Irish economy in light of English interference (though Swift had 'not yet been drawn into the volcanic controversy over Wood's copper coins'), and, locally, to contest the power of the Irish bishops who leased their land in extortionate ways, 'enrich[ing] themselves at the expense of the church'. Though clearly immoral for him, their behaviour brought out 'the darkest polarities' in his 'feelings towards the church and state.'[35] The bind was that 'if he sided with the Irish bishops, he gave up his economic principles', but 'if he sided with the English bishops, he weakened his national loyalties', according to Ehrenpreis.[36] In this difficult text, Swift is wearing 'a mask of Whiggery' and trying to speak as a 'Whig appealing to Whigs', but in a rhetorically strategic way which plays to a carefully defined branch of Whigs who are 'faithful members of the Established Church and not over-tolerant of dissent.' The rhetoric is complex but successful: for example, Swift traces the 'bishops who enrich themselves at the expense of the church' to 'Roman Catholics of the Middle Ages, whom Whigs above all would repudiate'. What matters is that, despite the complexity of the Whiggish mask held up by a Tory dean chosen for a very particular audience, the text derived from (and argues on behalf of) his own genuine and resilient principles about conformity to the Anglican establishment:

---

[33] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.725.
[34] David Oakleaf, *A Political Biography of Jonathan Swift* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), p.65.
[35] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.180-6. Cf. Hammond, *Our Dean*, pp.248-9.
[36] Ehrenpreis has been followed very closely, here, because the text is extremely difficult to unravel, and has been much misinterpreted. Davis has little to say about this piece. See *Prose*, p.xxii. Ehrenpreis remarks on the pamphlet's 'misleading title' (*Life*, iii.723), and refers to a history of 'gross misinterpretation'. Ibid., iii.181, n.

In handling this Subject, I shall proceed wholly upon the Supposition, that those of *our Party*, who profess themselves Members of the Church established, and under the Apostolic Government of Bishops, do desire the Continuance and Transmission of it to Posterity, at least, in as good a Condition as it is at present. Because, as this Discourse is not calculated for Dissenters of any Kind: so neither will it suit the Talk or Sentiments of those Persons, who, with the Denomination of the Churchmen, are Oppressors of the inferiour Clergy, and perpetually quarrelling at the great Incomes of the Bishops; which is a traditional Cant delivered down from former Times, and continued with great Reason, although it be now 200 Years since almost three Parts in four of the Church Revenues have been taken from the Clergy: Besides the Spoils that have been gradually made ever since, of Glebes and other Lands, by the Confusion of Times, the Fraud of encroaching Neighbours, or the Power of Oppressors, too great to be encountred.[37]

The opening of this text, though complexly determined by its mask and audience, reveals his intolerance for dissent against the established church (it is 'not calculated for Dissenters of any Kind'); his commitment to its endurance ('the Continuance and Transmission of it to Posterity', a belief he supposes in his chosen audience); and his dislike of injustice (those who are 'Oppressors of the inferior Clergy'). As Hammond says of the text as a whole, Swift is writing 'intelligently' here on 'an economic subject that few people understood', for which he carried out 'meticulous research';[38] it derived from resilient professional principles about the way the Anglican church might carry out an essentially unified and coherent vision of the world, while maintaining fair treatment within itself. (Ehrenpreis accounts for the sympathy in this text, as in the *Drapier's Letters*, with 'humbler, industrious farmers, manufacturers, and merchants', who might not have realised the wider implications of the issue).[39] Swift's publicised hatred of the bad behaviour of Irish bishops was not heretical, politically radical, or crassly materialistic (as it might appear), because it stemmed from a deeper commitment to justice for the lower orders of the clergy, and an unquestioning commitment to the Anglican establishment as constructed in the recent past: by Charles I, who protected the Church of Ireland against financial ruin, and by the Williamite Settlement, which established a strong Anglican polity in Ireland. To Swift, the avarice of bishops would have been a dangerous break with Anglican ethics (and suspicious behaviour for those whose position linked them with the Catholic past).[40]

Throughout the 1730s, when the Irish clergy often came into conflict with the secular government on matters of finance and political authority, Swift saw much avarice on the part of the Irish bishops who could otherwise have defended the lower clergy against financial

---

[37] Davis, *Prose*, ix.45.
[38] Hammond, *Our Dean*, p.250.
[39] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.182-3.
[40] *Some Arguments* is explicit about their Catholic past: 'About the time of the Reformation, many *Popish* Bishops of this Kingdom, knowing they must have been soon ejected, if they would not change their Religion', etc. Davis, *Prose*, ix.45.

injustice. *On The Irish Bishops* (1732) was written when the Irish bishops were trying to exercise power over the lower clergy with the Bills of Residence and Division, 1731-2 (the first of which, among other financial hardships, asked for the lower clergy to build their own houses if there were none available; unless they were too poor, in which case they would be helped with contributions derived from the first-fruits).[41] Ehrenpreis suggests that Swift's prose was especially fine, in this period, owing to the anger which induced him to write: and that this poem is also characterised by its 'vitality'.[42] The poem was originally called '*A Poor Ir—sh Parson's* Prayer' when it was printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine,* which Williams deems 'inappropriate'. Swift presented the bishops as 'puft up' masters: 'Our B[ishops] puft up with Wealth and with Pride. / To Hell on the Backs of the Clergy wou'd ride'.[43] (Faulkner's note to this poem, in 1735, reveals not just that this poem was Swift's, but that Swift's '*Zeal*' against the avarice of the bishops was well known.) One other poem from this period was called *Judas* (first printed 1735, but written 1731-2), and Swift's '*Zeal*' was equally explicit here: 'As antient *Judas by Transgression fell*, / And *burst asunder* e'er he went to Hell; / So, could we see a Set of new *Iscariots*, / Come headlong tumbling from their mitred Chariots.'[44] Swift's unwavering commitment to the Anglican church (in England and Ireland), and his hatred of financial injustice at the hands of bishops, can be seen most vividly at moments of such heated disagreement.

However, despite the conservative stability of his beliefs about the Anglican Church and its theological and political functions, the status of the King James Bible in Swift's professional life might not have been quite as straightforward. The eighteenth-century Anglican clergy could be uneasy about (though not necessarily critical of) the Authorised Version because, although it carried the positive reputation of a carefully translated, largely reliable, and authorised Protestant Bible in English (without the anti-monarchical, Puritan strain of the Geneva or the Catholic connotations of Jerome's Latin Vulgate, for example), it was at once a record of Renaissance English and its 'Teutonic' roots, leaving it 'doubly disadvantaged'.[45] David Norton refers to a 'curious combination of praise and dispraise' in

---

[41] Williams, *Poems*, iii.801. Cf. *On the Bill for the Clergy's Residing on their Livings*, Davis, *Prose*, xii.181-186, and *Considerations Upon Two Bills*, ibid., xii.189-202. Cf. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.716-7.
[42] Ibid., iii.719.
[43] Williams, *Poems*, iii. 804, ll.17-8.
[44] Ibid., iii.806. Cf. *On The Irish Bishops*, ll.41-52, ibid., p.805, and its pejorative use of the word 'mitre'. 'Now hear an Allusion! — A Mitre, you know, / Is divided above, but united below. / If this you consider, our Emblem is right; / The B—s *divide*, but the Clergy *unite*.' An allusion follows to Machiavelli, the suggestions of which need little explanation: 'And *Machiavel* taught 'em; *divide and ye govern*.' The phrase 'divide et impera' is a common ancient tag, but Swift is probably referring to its occurrence in Book VI of Machiavelli's *Art of War.* Swift owned *The Works of The Famous Nicolas Machiavel* (London: A. and J. Churchill, *et al.*, 1695), which contained 'The art of war, in seven books' translated in 1694. See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.1141-2.
[45] David Norton, *A History of the English Bible As Literature*, ii.3.

biblical commentaries of Swift's period, born of a perceived incompatibility between the King James Bible's limited, archaic vocabulary and the eighteenth century's 'exact standard of writing and of speaking'.[46] Since the purpose of an Anglican preacher in the eighteenth century was to elucidate the common sense of scripture rather than pursue complex or ornate analogical interpretations, the like of which are mocked and explored in the *Tale* (about which more will be said in this chapter), the language of the King James Bible was occasionally perceived as a stumbling block, rich with unwanted ambiguity.[47]

However, as David Norton says, this argument against a 'Renaissance' Bible in English could be turned around by Anglican clergymen, who often argued that the King James Bible (based on the same evidence of its language) had noble origins in authentic early modern English, which made it a model of a natural and native style. It is this which Swift engages with in *A Proposal for Correcting,* without evident irony or satire (the remark is even said to have been a tribute to Robert Harley's opinion on the subject): 'I am persuaded that the Translators of the Bible were Masters of an *English Style* much fitter for that Work, than any we see in our present Writings, which I take to be owing to the *Simplicity* that runs through the whole.'[48] The fact that the liturgy (BCP) was compiled before the King James Bible did not mean, in Swift's view, that it was archaic, but that it was full of 'sublime Eloquence' (a phrase in which one might detect, in light of the research explored in Chapter 2, an uncharacteristic defence of something which derived from this earlier period): 'Then, as the greatest part of our *Liturgy*, compiled long before the Translation of the *Bible* now in use, and little altered since; there seem to be in it as great strains of true sublime Eloquence, as are any where to be found in our Language.'[49] Rumbold (n.91) explains that Swift is referring here to the lack of alteration in the BCP text from Tudor prayerbooks. There might also be a pun on 'little *altared*' [italics and spelling mine], here, registering its resistance to the Catholic monarchies of Mary I and James II (the 'altar' is referred to as 'the Lord's table' in the text).[50]

---

[46] Ibid., ii.1. Cf. Dryden, *Works*, viii.225.

[47] On the essentially non-analogical Anglican approach to the KJB, see Gerard Reedy, 'A Preface to Anglican Rationalism', in *Eighteenth-Century Contexts: Historical Inquiries in Honour of Phillip Harth*, p.51. On some occasions, an Irish cleric might object to the text as an English imposition (though this was rare and does not seem to have been not widely accepted): see Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.123.

[48] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.147. Cf. the comment above in the text, '*Simplicity*, which is one of the greatest Perfections in any Language.' Harley's judgment: n.89-90.

[49] Ibid., p.147, and n.91.

[50] For suspicion about Swift's knowledge of linguistics, see Rumbold's headnote, pp.127-8. Rumbold adduces Elstob's *Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue* (1715) for contemporary suspicion, and Elstob's 'defence of her scholarly community'.

Implicit and explicit statements about the King James Bible can be found in the following texts: *Sentiments of a Church of England Man* (1711), *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712), *Mr. Collins' Discourse of Free-Thinking* (1713), *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately Entered into Holy Orders* (1721), and the posthumously printed *Thoughts on Religion* (1765). *A Tale of A Tub* and *The Mechanical Operation of The Spirit* (1704) also engaged with the King James Bible as a repository of literary allusions, though their status in Swift's corpus is neither straightforward nor necessarily representative.

The first issue raised by these texts is whether the Bible can be treated as a resource for other compositions. There need not have been a serious problem, here (though, like Wotton in response to the *Tale*, some were prone to saying so): John Donne, for example, had preached that 'the books of Scripture are the eloquentest books in the world' and that 'every word in them hath his weight and value', implying so even if they were taken out of their scriptural context.[51] More proximately to Swift, the tradition of 'Anglican Rationalism' (as defined by Phillip Harth) which persisted from the late-sixteenth century into the eighteenth century — important texts include Richard Hooker's *Of The Laws Of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593-7), William Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants* (1638), and Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System of The Universe* (1678) — established that, since scripture was rightly the spiritual and verbal property of the individual and not to be extensively interpreted by intermediary church authorities (a belief derived from the principle of *sola scriptura*), it might be used out of its clerical context so long as due care was taken to retain its sense and keep it from 'enthusiasm' or fanaticism.[52] 'Anglican Rationalism' is a difficult term, partly because a purely rational approach to scripture (which could deny the spiritual authority of revelation) was taken by 'free-thinkers' (especially deists and non-trinitarians) in Swift's period, with

---

[51] Donne, *Sermons*, ix.226. David Norton, however, questions the extent to which Donne thought this argument through. See *The Bible As Literature*, i.243. Strangely, there is no record of Donne in Swift's library, but Passmann and Vienken hypothesise that he was in the Temple's. See *Library and* Reading, v.194. Also see Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living* (1650), 'the Holy Ghost is certainly the best Preacher in the World', *The Whole Works of Jeremy Taylor*, 10 vols. (London: 1859-62), iii.165.

[52] Swift owned two *Works* of Hooker, both of which included *Ecclesiastical Polity*: Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.899-902. For Chillingworth's *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, etc. (London: Mary Clark for William Crook and Charles Harper, 1684), which contained a number of Chillingworth's texts, ibid., i. 402. For Cudworth, ibid., i.482-3. The tag 'Anglican Rationalism' has been used in the thesis as a useful shorthand for Swift's views (as is convention in texts which situate him in this particular theological context). For Harth's definition, see *Swift and Anglican Rationalism*, p.20. For his defence, p.21: 'the popular conception of Swift and the Anglican rationalists which sees an opposition between their religious views depends upon a false dichotomy between "orthodoxy" and "rationalism" which misinterprets the religious situation in Restoration England.'

whom Swift would never have sided.[53] As Haadkonssen has suggested, 'rational religion was […] a *modus vivendi* in the broad field between High-Church Anglicanism, orthodox or evangelical Dissent and deism.'[54] However, as Harth argues, Swift was part of a 'minority group of highly articulate Anglican divines' for whom a rational reading and interpretation of the Bible was not just comfortable with revelation, but supplementary to and congruent with it (the origins of such a view, in Harth's account, might be traced to the Cambridge Platonists, and seen in elsewhere in modern Latitudinarianism, which stemmed from Hooker).[55] Harth asserts that this tradition of 'Anglican Rationalism' would have led Swift to view the Bible as 'sufficiently plain to be literally and exactly interpreted by the reason of every individual.'[56] As Gerard Reedy argues (in agreement with Phillip Harth), such principles of 'Anglican Rationalism' were the 'undergirding ethic' of Swift's learning and beliefs about the role of the church in everyday life.[57] To this end, Swift owned texts by other major members of this tradition, even if — as in the case of Burnet — Swift had local disagreements with them: Isaac Barrow, Gilbert Burnet, Edward Stillingfleet, and John Tillotson.[58]

Alongside his defensive Anglican orthodoxy and 'rational' (but certainly not deist) approach to scripture, Swift's attitude to Biblical allusion would have been shaped by the controversies he experienced in response to *A Tale of A Tub* and *The Mechanical Operation of The Spirit* in 1704, after which he was more careful (though his speaker defended himself in the parodic 1710 'Apology' against '*the ill-placed Cavils of the Sour; the Envious, the Stupid, and the Tastless*').[59] In the digressions, the *Tale* is a persecution of modern writing and Grub Street, but the *Tale*'s parable was a piece of High-Church Anglican polemic, attacking both Catholicism and a wide range of dissenting reformed sects as deluded and heretical (cast in the figures of Peter and Jack respectively). For Swift, the Protestant dissenters (for which 'Jack' becomes a mobile label) largely consisted of Scottish Presbyterians, but as Walsh notes the targets also included 'Anabaptists, Ranters, Muggletonians, Familists, Independents and, of most

---

[53] Ibid., p.51: 'the Anglican rationalists […] have been remembered only to be misunderstood and to be recast, ironically enough, in the same mould with the deists whom they detested.' Cf. Kathleen Williams, *Jonathan Swift And The Age Of Compromise* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1958), p.35.
[54] Knud Haakonssen, *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.5.
[55] Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism*, p.20.
[56] Ibid., p.14.
[57] Gerard Reedy, 'A Preface to Anglican Rationalism', *Historical Enquiries in Honour of Phillip Harth*, p.44.
[58] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*: Barrow, i.162-3; Burnet, i.302-5; Stillingfleet, iii.1752; Tillotson, iii.1858-61. Walsh cites the predictable presence of these texts in Swift's library, *Tale*, p.lix. Swift asked for his copy of 'Stillingfleet's Grounds, &c.' (a deeply critical account of Catholicism which was important to the *Tale*) to be sent from Kilroot after he had returned to Temple in 1696. Woolley, *Correspondence*, i.137, and n.1. For his hatred of Burnet, see Deborah Baker Wyrick, *Jonathan Swift and The Vested Word*, p.13.
[59] Walsh, *Tale*, p.6.

immediate and contemporary consequence, the Quakers'.[60] Walsh states that the recently (1695) ordained Swift, likely to have been composing the allegorical parts of the *Tale* in the remote diocese of Kilroot, in Ulster, surrounded by violent Scottish Presbyterians, was keen to show the 'wide range of fanatic characteristics' which could be found in nonconformists both in England and Ireland, whose nonconformity was not just locally but historically intolerable: he blamed them for the political turbulence of the Civil War and Protectorate years (1642-c. 60).[61] Unfortunately, some readers missed the *Tale*'s official stance, and found in it an erratic assemblage of 'enthusiastic' dissenting voices rather than ironic inflations of them. Its sheer heterodoxy and range of satiric play led to misinterpretation.[62] For example, the *Tale* writer, in the particularly complex 1710 apology, proclaims an affinity with Andrew Marvell's *Rehearsal Transpos'd* — '*we still read* Marvell's *Answer to* Parker *with Pleasure*' — but, as Walsh explains, 'it would be hard to imagine a work more opposite to Swift's, in its support of religious toleration and nonconformity and mockery of the Anglican clergy in general'.[63] The ornate ironies and parodic voicing of the 'Apology' did not provide an adequate defence for original *Tale* (if that was the reason it was written). The speaker of the apology blames the *Tale*'s accusers for seeing analogical complexity in nothing: '*there are three or four other Passages which prejudiced or ignorant Readers have drawn by Great Force to hint at ill Meanings*'. Rehearsing the stance of a good Anglican rationalist, he does not entertain 'such Interpretations'.[64] This defence was thin, owing to its strands of parody, and not easily matched with the original text.

Though protected in part by anonymity, Swift faced criticism for alluding to the Bible among such contradictions and in parodic voices. William Wotton criticised all of the 'Idle Allusions to Scripture' in the *Tale,* suggesting with 'idle' that they were both intellectually lazy and morally dubious:

> It is of the Essence of Religion, that the utmost Regard should be paid to the *Name* and *Words of God*, both which upon the slightest, and the most ridiculous Occasions, are play'd upon by Common Oaths, and Idle Allusions to Scripture Expressions in this whole Book. I do not carry my Charge too far.[65]

---

[60] Ibid., p.lxv.
[61] Ibid., p.lxv. Swift's predecessor in Kilroot was a popular Presbyterian minster who, although he accepted the 39 Articles of the Anglican Church, was removed for drunkenness. Cf. Damrosch on the Kilroot period of Swift's life in *Life*, pp.73-5. For Swift's difficulties living with Presbyterians in Kilroot, see Hammond, *Irish Blow-In*, pp.77-8.
[62] Cf. Miriam Kosh Starkman, *Swift's Satire On Learning In A Tale Of A Tub* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), p.106: 'the structure of *A Tale of a Tub* […] not only fails to clarify Swift's theme but goes far to obfuscate it.'
[63] Walsh, *Tale*, p.lv.
[64] Ibid., p.7.
[65] Ibid., p.229.

Wotton was serious about Swift's dangerous work: 'The Injury done to the *Religion*, that any of its Ministers should lie under the Imputation of writing such a *Burlesque* upon it, will be irreparable, if the Person so charged does not do *it* and *himself* Justice.'[66] And, Wotton was pedantic in seeking out the sources of Swift's allusions, both to scripture and to secular literature, to affirm his point about Swift's recycling of controversial views and ideas: 'his *Wit* is *not his own,* in many places.'[67] The irony was that the *Tale* writer's official stance did derive from Swift's sincere beliefs about the Anglican Church and its texts. As the 1710 'Apology' states (at a moment when Swift's real voice seems to be discernible), the *Tale* 'celebrates the Church of England as the most perfect of all others in Discipline and Doctrine'. The *Tale* proper and its later 'Apology' could be interpreted as an unusual exercise among Swift's theological writings: not because it takes nonconformity, dissent, and 'enthusiasm' for its targets, or manipulates commonplaces of clerical learning, but because Swift did not make more clear his distance from the speaker (or possibly speakers) parading the views in question, or quite what the intention of the text really was (as contrasted with the Partridge hoaxes or *Mr. Collins' Discourse*, for example, where the speaker is constructed as part of a clearly-defined parodic strategy, though it might have passed as a hoax at first). In this sense, it conforms to Phiddian's view of parody as a form dealing in the 'implication, inference, construction, confusion, and complication of origins.'[68] Among the many hostile responses to the *Tale* in the eighteenth century, Jean le Clerc (a dissenter from Calvinism and Biblical scholar) in 1721 best described this problem: 'we often do not know whether the author is making fun or not, nor of whom, nor what his intention is.'[69] As Rawson argues, the *Tale* shows an 'extraordinary absence of 'positive' ideological bearings or resting-points'.[70]

Assessing whether Wotton was unusually strict on alluding to the Bible in such a way is difficult, especially because the *Tale* provides little reliable defence for itself, manipulating analogical interpretation in dangerous and often conflicting ways: the writer plays with '*Metaphysical* conjectures' and 'lucky Adaption' like the various dissenters that Swift sought to ridicule ('it is of no import, where the Fire was kindled, if the Vapor has once got up into the Brain').[71] Swift's friend Patrick Delany, who openly resisted the 'cold, dry, didactic' style of traditional sermons and emphasised the careful study of original quotations, hesitated to treat

---

[66] Ibid., p.229.
[67] Ibid., p.230.
[68] Phiddian, *Swift's Parody*, p.140-1.
[69] Jean le Clerc, *Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne* (1721), in *Swift: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Kathleen Williams (London: Routledge, 1970), p.59.
[70] Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.52.
[71] Walsh, *Tale*, p.103 and 105.

scripture as a repository of tags in anything other than his sermons.[72] Eighteenth-century readers and writers remained uneasy about quoting from scripture in secular contexts. As late as 1773, Boswell recorded that Johnson 'disapproved of introducing scripture phrases into secular discourse', but Boswell himself was more lenient:

> This seemed to me a question of some difficulty. A scripture expression may be used, like a highly classical phrase, to produce an instantaneous strong impression; and it may be done without being at all improper. Yet I own there is a danger, that applying the language of our sacred book to ordinary subjects may tend to lesson our reverence for it. If therefore it be introduced at all, it should be with very great caution.[73]

For Boswell, involving biblical quotations in a drama of allusion, whether to 'produce a strong impression' or simply draw on tenets of the faith without entering into homily, was dangerous insofar as the process resembled mock-epic — 'applying the language of our sacred book to ordinary subjects'.

Swift would have been aware that there was a tradition of clerical satire in which the Bible was alluded to with learned dexterity (but without blasphemy). Barnard has shown that satire was composed and translated in the highly sophisticated clerical culture of Swift's Dublin, especially by those who engaged in other kinds of 'verse, fiction, satire, [and] polemical and topical pamphleteering', which Barnard suggests might have been 'intrinsic' to — or expected of — those trained in ancient authorities and scripture for their role in the high Anglican clerisy (in England or Ireland).[74] As Barnard says, there was a 'puzzling propensity of clerics to write and publish on profane topics' in this period, perhaps engendered by their erudition.[75] The older tradition on which Swift relied would have comprised figures such as Erasmus, Rabelais, and possibly John Donne.[76] As Michael Screech argued in *Laughter at The Foot of The Cross* (1997), Rabelais was a particularly vivid 'exemplar of Christian comedy' because of his relaxed attitude to the quotation of Biblical texts, and the Protestant clergy of Reformation Europe seems to have enjoyed him without worrying about blasphemy: 'copies of Rabelais could be found in the libraries of many a convent and

---

[72] On Delany's allusive style see Toby Barnard, 'Almoners of Providence, the Clergy, 1647 to c.1780' in *The Clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: Messengers, Watchers, and Stewards* eds. Toby Barnard and W. G. Neely (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), p.90. For Delany's remarks on this style, see *Eighteen Discourses and Dissertations* (London: Johnson, 1766), pp.xii-xiv. The epigraph to the text, a quotation from Psalms 90:13-14, captured his intention: 'I have not kept back thy loving Mercy and Truth from the great congregation'.

[73] Boswell, *Life*, ii.212-3.

[74] Toby Barnard, 'Outlooks and Activities of the Church of Ireland Clergy in the Time of Swift', *Münster* (6), pp. 305-23 (pp.315-6). Barnard cites Edward Wettenhall, *The Wish, Being the Tenth Satyr of Juvenal, Periphrastically Rendered in Pindarick Verse* (Dublin: Benjamin Tooke, 1675) as an example.

[75] Barnard, 'Outlooks and Activities', *Münster* (6), p.315.

[76] The depth of Swift's interest in John Donne is difficult to discern from what little evidence survives, but the second *Satire* may have supplied him with the 'sin of wit' conceit: 'Though poetry indeed be such a sin / As I think that brings dearths, and Spaniards in'. Donne, *Poems*, i.376.

cathedral'.[77] Around the time of his taking up the Deanship at St. Patrick's, Swift was assembling his own library for a Cathedral — which contained Rabelais — and in *The Author Upon Himself* (1713), he claimed to have 'reconciled Divinity and Wit':

> Swift had the Sin of wit, no venial Crime;
> Nay, 'twas affirm'd, he sometimes dealt in Rhime;
> Humour, and Mirth, had Place in all he writ:
> He reconcil'd Divinity and Wit.
> He mov'd, and bow'd, and talk't with too much Grace;
> Nor shew'd the Parson in his Gait or Face; [78]

Whether Swift's reconciliation of 'Divinity' and 'the Sin of Wit' was successful is not clear (though it would have been possible among such a highly educated and literary clerisy). This poem, despite its conviction, is full of ambiguities.[79] If 'venial' is to fit the line it must be pronounced 'venal', suggesting that the sin of wit is not financially rewarding.[80] The coupling of 'crime' and 'rhyme' is a joke, but the rhyme on 'wit' and 'writ' — evoking Holy Writ — is uncomfortable, using rhyme to give an illusion of reconciliation. 'Talk'd with too much grace' may refer to Swift's frequent attendance at levees, but may equally refer to his overuse of scripture in conversation. Such contradictions are the substance of this poem: 'Despis'd luxurious Wines, and costly Meat; / Yet, still was at the Tables of the Great.' This poem contributes to the argument that quoting from scripture in secular literature might have been permissible in some senses (so long as it conformed to the essentially rational Anglican project) but that it would have been difficult to accept 'idle' allusions to scripture in explicitly satirical or 'witty' texts (such as the *Tale*), because it might suggest blasphemy or nonconformity.

The second problem concerns the relationship between scripture and learning in the 'ancients'. As Ehrenpreis records, the boys at Kilkenny School (now College) were trained in translating texts from Latin-English or English-Latin from a wide range of ancient writers: it seems at least possible that this might have been done in conjunction with their knowledge of the New Testament in English (and just possibly in Greek).[81] Swift is very likely to have

---

[77] Michael Screech, *Laughter at the Foot of the Cross* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), p.218. For Swift's Rabelais, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1559-60.
[78] Williams, *Poems*, i.193-4.
[79] The poem's ambiguities are also acknowledged by George Falle, 'Divinity and Wit: Swift's Attempted Reconciliation', *University Of Toronto Quarterly*, 46:1 (1976), pp.14-30.
[80] 'Venal' from Latin vēnum. *OED*: 'Venal' 1 and 2. See Stella's definition of 'venal' in the *Word-Book*, 'to be sold. Mercenary.' (Swift added the last word). Both 'venial' and 'venal' are defined in close proximity to one another. See *Word-Book*, 'VE', p.37.
[81] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, i.38. This would have bolstered the central aim of Kilkenny's education: the 'inculcation of Anglican doctrine and morality', ibid., i.38.

encountered the school's *Sacri Lusus* (1675), which contains neo-Latin epigrams based on Gospel stories and morals (especially from Luke), suggesting that the boys' dexterity with Latin translation and composition were intimately connected to their theological upbringing, and that a polyglot handling of the Gospel stories and morality was important to their education.[82] It is difficult to assess the nature of the play, here, owing to a lack of contextual information about what the book was actually for. More certainly, such exercises in language (however playful) would also have been an essential part of Swift's education at Trinity, especially under the provostship of Narcissus Marsh.[83] There is also evidence in the wider culture that the boundary between classical learning and one's faith (particularly texts in the Old Testament) was porous. Barnard sees the combination of classical and biblical learning among clerical writing of this period as an inevitability: 'familiarity and facility with the ancient conventions tempted the ambitious [clerics] into translations, pastiches, and improvisations on earlier themes.'[84] After the Restoration, some scholarly editions of ancient texts included Biblical quotations as part of their apparatus: James Duport's *Homeri Gnomologia* (1660), for example, put passages of Biblical poetry alongside Homer to demonstrate 'the literary quality of the Scriptures'.[85] As we can see from the *Tale*, part of Swift's satire certainly involved comparing Biblical texts with corresponding evidence from pagan antiquity, which he often turned into a parody of Bentleyan pedantry while playing with genuine scholarly depth, and an authentic training in such mixtures of ancient languages and texts.[86] Swift

---

[82] See *Sacri Lusus. In Usum Scholæ Kilkenniensis* (Dublin: Joseph Wilde, 1675). Account in *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis* (V), 6 vols. (Dublin: Luke White, 1781), ii.524. 'In Marsh's library, Dublin, was a book of poems, entitled *Sacri Lusus*, by the young gentlemen of Kilkenny: but not now to be found there.' It had still not been located in the nineteenth century. See John Browne, 'Kilkenny College', *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 1:2 (1850), pp.221-9 (p.229). The book is back in Marsh, and the copy has been uploaded to EEBO (consultation of the book in the Marsh Library reveals its surprisingly small stature and damage). There is no verification for the fact that the boys wrote the poems (the claim of these accounts), but it is possible. It is especially difficult to ascertain what this book was actually for. (The subtitle 'in usum' suggests that it might have been a reference book for the pupils in one way or another, or perhaps a record of particularly good exercises from the boys in a given year). It is also very difficult to assess what role Wilde played in connection with the school (i.e. why it was printed). For Wilde's involvement in royal printing see Raymond Gillespie, *Reading Ireland: Print, Reading, and Social Change in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.105. In 1670, Wilde sold Tooke's *English Introduction to the Latine Tongue*, suggesting an interest in education. See M. Pollard, *A Dictionary of the Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, *1550-1800* (London Bibliographical Society: Cambridge University Press (for the London Bibliographical Society), 2000), p.614. This Tooke was the father of the Benjamin Tooke who would later associate with Swift (although there is no evidence that these connections were helpful to Swift). For the tangle of family and friendship connections, see Sean D. Moore, *Swift, the Book, and the Irish Financial Revolution: Satire and Sovereignty in Colonial Ireland* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), p.91. I am grateful to Jason McElligott and Maria O'Shea at Marsh's Library for their thoughts about this book, which remains very difficult to contextualise.

[83] For an account of translation exercises at Trinity, see Ehrenpreis, *Life*, i.57-9.

[84] Barnard, 'Outlooks and Activities', *Münster* (6), p.316.

[85] James Duport, *Homeri Poetarum Omnium Seculorum Facilè Principis Gnomologia* (Canterbury: Johannes Field, 1660). For commentary see David Norton, *A History of the English Bible As Literature*, i.246.

[86] See Kristine Louise Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poet and Enlightenment*, p.10. 'Every question of interpretation or aesthetics was transformed in his hands into a question of textual correctness, or rather wrongness'. For an example, see Bentley, *Remarks*, p.8, '*all* Arts and Sciences must be known, to know any *One* thorowly; that not *one* of them can be omitted, if you pretend to be a judge in *one single* Book, *the Bible*, 'tis so very *miscellaneous*'.

alluded with numerical precision, for example, to the origin of the Septuagint, 'take seven of the *deepest scholars* […] shut them up close for *seven* Years, in *seven* Chambers, with a Command to write *seven* ample Commentaries', and inflected it with detail from Josephus' *De Antiquitatibus Iudaicis* (XII.ii) and Irenæus' *Adversus Hereses* (III.xxi.2).[87]

However, the *Tale*'s aforementioned confusion as a parody of enthusiasm was made worse by such combinations of Biblical and classical allusions, because the scattering of various learned analogies and combinations throughout the text was thought to have been evidence of a dissenting or even blasphemous mind (in the 1710 'Apology' the writer outlines the structure of the *Tale*, and inadvertently suggests a close proximity between the two subjects of his attention: '*The Abuses in Religion he proposed to set forth in the Allegory of the Coats*', and '*Those in Learning he chose to introduce by way of Digressions*').[88] As discussed, Wotton disapproved of the *Tale*'s 'Ludicrous Similes', and Curll — in the *Key* — was left unsure whether Swift thought divine inspiration '*was originally from the* Fanaticks, *or borrow'd from the Heathens*'.[89] The *Tale* attracted such criticisms precisely because of its erratic pursuit of controversial ideas, but Swift would have known that there was a genuine concern in the eighteenth century that complications in the Biblical texts, without a similar kind of polyglot processing, could lead to the personalist fanaticism or misinterpretation he was parodying. As Jonathan Sheehan has outlined in *The Enlightenment Bible*, clerics in the eighteenth century made several attempts to clean the Biblical texts of their corrupted passages and etymological ambiguities to protect them from the wrong kinds of scholarly enquiry or misinterpretation, and this demanded comparison with pagan literature from antiquity.[90] This is why Anglican rationalists were uneasily situated in a centre-ground between polyglot depth and sophistication in relation to Biblical texts (which might, to some, have carried Catholic associations), and the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* (which, taken to an extreme, could lead to Puritanism).

A Letter To A Young Gentleman, *Lately Entered Into Holy Orders* was a major statement on this point. Swift's persona is erratically satirical and earnest in this text (the persona is an unspecified and secular '*Person of* QUALITY'), so it it difficult to know how one should take the rhetorical disparagements of the higher clergy and corruptions of learning among young clergymen. For example, Swift's speaker reassures the '*Young Gentleman*' that a bishop will

---

[87] Walsh, *Tale*, p.119. n.18.
[88] Ibid., p.5. Harth emphasises the need for critics to keep the two sections separate: '*A Tale of A Tub*, then, is a satire which deals with two separate subjects, in two separate groups of sections, by means of two separate satirical methods. In addition, the two parts of the book were written at two separate periods of time.' *Swift and Anglican Rationalism*, p.6.
[89] Walsh, *Tale*, p.225 and p.244.
[90] Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible,* p.94. Sheehan cites Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (1755) as a later but important example of this phenomenon.

afford him a benefice (thereby helping them out of rural impoverishment) so long as that bishop 'happens to be not over-stocked with Relations, or attached to Favourites, or is content to supply his Diocese without Colonies from *England*': perhaps an unlikely scenario, in Swift's view.[91] Owing to such lines, it is difficult to read the *Letter* as a straightforward assessment of Swift's views on learning in the church (Ehrenpreis refers to it as a series of 'general observations' which takes a 'worldly point of view on ecclesiastic subjects', not a coherent statement).[92] The *Letter* also generates its humour by condescending to college students and their books: 'the Library they brought with them from their College being usually not the most numerous, or judiciously chosen.'[93] However, Harth clarifies that one of the text's major (and more serious) targets is 'the habit of disparaging pagan morality in order to enhance the morality taught by the Christian religion', a trope of fideism in both 'Anglican and Puritan pulpits'.[94] Swift believed that the 'System of Morality to be gathered out of the Writings, or Sayings of those antient Sages, falls undoubtedly very short of that delivered in the Gospel', but basic moral precepts which were taken down before the birth of Christ (of which many of the ancients were reasonably 'ignorant' because it occurred 'long after their Death') carry their own weight, especially if they accord with the Gospel: 'even that divine Precept of loving our Enemies, is at large insisted on by *Plato*; who puts it, as I remember, into the Mouth of *Socrates*.'[95] In light of such views, Swift advises the young gentleman who has entered holy orders to read in ancient philosophy with care:

> By the reading of which [the heathen Philosophers], you will soon discover your Mind and Thoughts to be enlarged, your Imagination extended and refined, your Judgment directed, your Admiration lessened, and your Fortitude increased. All which Advantages must needs be of excellent Use to a Divine, whose Duty it is to preach and practise the Contempt of human Things.[96]

Characteristically, Swift falters halfway through the sequence of improvements: 'enlarged', 'refined', 'directed', 'lessened' — and recovers — 'increased'. The slip is worthy of notice, because it highlights a central point: that although one's 'Admiration' for ancient philosophy

---

[91] The audience is presumably Irish, given the text's publication in Dublin. Cf. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.84.
[92] Ibid., iii.82.
[93] Davis, *Prose*, ix.64. Ormsby-Lennon also sees Swift's distrust of modern commonplacing in this text. See 'Commonplace Swift', pp.27-9.
[94] Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism*, p.32.
[95] Davis, *Prose*, ix.73-4. Cf. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.85, he 'defends the natural religion of the ancient philosophers'.
[96] Davis, *Prose*, ix.74.

should be secondary to that of scripture, 'reading' of it will enlarge one's 'Mind and Thoughts'.[97]

The justifications for quoting from scripture in secular literature — or relating scripture to the ancients — in the eighteenth century were difficult to negotiate for an Anglican rationalist such as Swift, striving against the prejudices and intellectual territory of rival sects, and it is difficult to set Swift among the contradictions of such a position with certainty or in a way that does not admit a series of complications. As Walsh acknowledges about the *Tale* and its 'companion texts', they 'take on and include a bewildering variety of generic and formal characters', rehearsing but not adhering to various convictions about the role of scripture and the limits of interpretation.[98] Swift openly addressed the problem of quoting from scripture in the *Letter*, but spoke of a much safer issue (misquotation), which informed his allusions:

> I would say something concerning Quotations; wherein I think you cannot be too sparing, except from Scripture, and the primitive Writers of the Church. As to the former, when you offer a Text as a Proof or an Illustration, we your Hearers expect to be fairly used; and sometimes think we have Reason to complain, especially of you younger Divines; which makes us fear, that some of you conceive you have no more to do than to turn over a Concordance, and there having found the principal Word, introduce as much of the Verse as will serve your Turn, although in Reality it makes nothing for you. I do not altogether disapprove the Manner of interweaving Texts of Scripture through the Style of your Sermon; wherein, however, I have sometimes observed great Instances of Indiscretion and Impropriety, against which I therefore venture to give you a Caution.[99]

Swift associated selective quotation with quack doctors and other frauds: '[a doctor] Quotes from the Bible many a Sentence / That moves his Patients to Repentance' ('sentence', here, meaning 'a quoted saying of some eminent person, an apophthegm', *OED* 4a).[100] The passage in the *Letter* draws attention to the problems of locating words in concordances and handbooks without considering the contexts from which such passages are derived: 'in Reality it makes nothing for you.' Swift instructs the young gentleman in the honest acquisition and dispersal of Biblical texts, especially in 'Proof or an Illustration' of something, without 'Indiscretion and Impropriety'. However, there is a contradiction here, because Swift often quoted other writers to serve his 'Turn' (it suited this often ironic *Letter*). Swift goes on to cite St. Augustine as an authority on taking a 'Sentence for your own':

---

[97] It is possible that Swift might also mean 'admiration', here, as in *OED* 1a, 'wonder, astonishment, surprise' (i.e. one's uncritical wonderment at antiquity will lessen). Cf. *The Sixth Epistle of the First Book of Horace*, Pope, *Poems*, iv. 236-7. 'Nil Admirari, *prope res est una, Numici!*' translated as 'Not to Admire, is all the Art I know, / To make men happy, and to keep them so' (followed by an interpolated jibe at Creech lacking in admiration and not in Horace, ll.3-4).
[98] Walsh, *Tale*, p.lv.
[99] Davis, *Prose*, ix.75.
[100] Williams, *Poems*, ii.605. Cf. *OED* 1, 'way of thinking, opinion' in Biblical contexts, and possibly 2b and 2c.

As to Quotations from antient Fathers, I think they are best brought in, to confirm some Opinion controverted by those who differ from us: In other Cases we give you full Power to adopt the Sentence for your own, rather than tell us, *as St.* Austin *excellently observes.*[101]

The turns of negation, here ('controverted', 'differ from us', 'rather than'), distract from the fact that Swift's persona takes his own advice, taking this 'sentence' from *City of God* for his own:

Thus much out of *Cicero* in his fourth booke of the *Common-wealth*: (which I thought good to rehearse word for word, onely I was forced to leave out somewhat, and somewhat to transpose it, for the easier understanding. For it gives great light unto the proposition which I (if so be I can) must prove and make apparent.)[102]

Swift has used Augustine's 'excellent observation', here, not in the legitimate mode Augustine prescribes to 'assist comprehension', but in the way Swift attributes to medical doctors who want to 'move [their] Patients'. This allusion is part of the rhetorical strategy of the text, which is designed to educate the young gentleman about the legitimate applications of different authorities. With 'antient Fathers', the speaker is drawing a distinction between the texts of scripture (which should be protected from misrepresentation) and Christian writers (or 'Fathers') of antiquity, who can be used in service of one's arguments without compromising their integrity (as Swift has done with Augustine): 'to confirm some Opinion controverted by those who differ from us.' Of the 'antient Fathers', Swift knew Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian and Iranæus; and, in the case of Cyprian and Iranæus, read them at Moor Park when he was himself a young man and taking holy orders.[103] The speaker's belief that such authorities can 'confirm some Opinion controverted by those who differ from us' also matches Swift's own: his argumentative style was not dampened by his conservative Anglican beliefs and rhetorical strategies, but strengthened by them. Accurate allusions to scripture and subtle uses of antiquity could bring learned currency to the fight against enthusiasm and nonconformity.

---

[101] Davis, *Prose*, ix.75.

[102] St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei,* ed. Juan Luis Vives and tr. John Healey, 2nd edition (London: G. Eld and M. Flesher, 1620), p.60 (II.ix.o). For a modern English translation see *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, ed. G. R. Evans and tr. Henry Bettenson, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.57, 'I have thought it best to quote these extracts from the fourth book of Cicero's *On the Commonwealth,* word for word (save for certain omissions and transpositions, made to assist comprehension), for they are very relevant to the point which I shall do my utmost to establish.' There is no record of which edition of St. Augustine Swift would have read. Passmann and Vienken hypothesise that Sheridan owned an edition of the *Confessions* printed in Cologne, 1624. See *Library and Reading*, v.221.

[103] For Swift's Tertullian, Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1816; fragments of Origen (which were contained in his edition of Gronovius' *Thesaurus*), ii.1342-3. For Cyprian and Iranæus, see the Moor Park reading list in Walsh, *Tale*, p.273.

IV - Collecting Bibles in Dublin

We know from the 1715 sale catalogue that Swift owned twenty-two bibles, 'not only in Greek and Latin, but also in English, French, Italian and other languages', which included Froben's *Biblia Integra* (1495) and Walton's *Polyglott Bible* in six folio volumes (1653-1657), an important text to the 'Anglican rationalist' for its extraordinary range of learned languages (though its status as a Cromwellian text may not have sat comfortably with Swift). He lost a few: his 1607 Italian bible, for example, was 'stollen out of the church' by a thief (a common fate for books in Dublin libraries, as explored in the introduction).[104] However, he maintained this extensive collection during his time as Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, only giving his 'best' away in his will, and was interested in everything about them as books — their origins, the accuracy of the translation, and their scholarly integrity.

It is unclear whether this was an unusual number of Bibles for Swift to have acquired as the Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, or whether it was expected of him.[105] Many records of diocesan libraries have been lost and the collections dispersed, as acknowledged by Margaret Conolly in 'A Plague of Books: The Dispersal and Disappearance of the Diocesan Libraries of the Church of Ireland' (2004).[106] Barnard suggests that 'the conscientious equipped themselves with the essentials' of the profession, but that 'the ambitious, enthusiastic, or affluent went further, assembling large and varied libraries' either for private study or the use of their diocese.[107] During his time at Trinity College, Swift would have learned that an acquaintance with secular and biblical scholarship was fundamental to clerical life. As Barnard has shown, Trinity was redesigned as an intellectually rigorous 'finishing school' for aspiring Protestant clerics by the English parliament after the Restoration, at once to aid the suppression of the Catholic and Presbyterian populations and to maintain higher standards within its own system.[108] Swift would have known that Trinity's heterogenous library was stocked with books from a variety of sources: those which Cromwell had intended for a new college in Dublin, and others donated by well-known figures such as James Ussher (Archbishop of Armagh, 1625 ––), who had famously concocted a date on which God had created the earth.[109] Ussher would have been known to Swift as an important figure of the

---

[104] LeFanu, *Facsimile*, p.34.
[105] Haugen has argued that we should not 'forget how broad were the intellectual privileges of a churchman during the eighteenth century', *Richard Bentley*, p.6.
[106] Margaret Conolly, 'A Plague of Books: The Dispersal and Disappearance of the Diocesan Libraries of the Church of Ireland', in *Lost Libraries*: *The Destruction of Great Book Collections since Antiquity*, ed James Raven (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.197-219.
[107] Barnard, 'Outlooks and Activities', *Münster* (6), p.314.
[108] *History of Libraries*, ii.130.
[109] Stubbs, *Reluctant Rebel,* p.87. Unclear when Ussher stopped carrying out the duties of an archbishop, possibly in the 1650s. See *ODNB.*

established Church of Ireland who was intolerant of dissenters: to this end, he owned Ussher's *Veterum Epistolarum Hibernicarum Sylloge* (1632), a history of Ireland (in medieval documents) which attended, among other things, to the disagreements of the early Church of Ireland with Papal doctrine.[110] However, aside from these rich college collections we also know that students were encouraged to exchange books with one another: Archbishop William King treasured the books on religion that were given to him by friends while studying at Trinity.[111]

Swift, then, was a conventional Trinity bibliophile, just like Narcissus Marsh, William King, and Patrick Delany, and collecting bibles would have been an important part of their shared intellectual life.[112] However, clerical bibliophilia was not just an important matter of social prestige. Swift would have noticed that displays of scholarship were becoming an increasingly important part of one's expression of faith and cultural affiliation in eighteenth-century Dublin, especially in the upper reaches of the Protestant clerisy. As Michael Brown notes, 'In King's view, Catholics were intrinsically barbaric and the Protestant community was cultivated.'[113] There was a touch of irony, here, because polyglot learning traditionally had been Catholic intellectual territory, and Catholicism retained 'alarming vitality' among the Irish population.[114] In Swift's time, Trinity's undergraduate syllabus was still a training in Aristotelian logic, which John Stubbs has suggested 'smelled […] of downright Popery' even if the Trinity fellows were relaxed about teaching it.[115] Nonetheless, Narcissus Marsh, one of Swift's first contacts in the Church of Ireland — and a major proponent of the renovation of clerical standards — demanded polyglot learning from those aspiring to the profession: as one historian has noted, 'Archbishop Marsh always enquired into candidates' learning' because he was 'concerned about the good reputation of his clergy'.[116] In a reference letter to Marsh, William Temple declared Swift's knowledge of both ancient languages and contemporary theological debates to convey his fitness for employment.[117] The Dublin Philosophical Society

---

[110] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1880-1.
[111] See Robert S. Matteson, 'The Early Library of Archbishop William King', *The Library,* 30:4 (1975), p.307.
[112] The college had succeeded in producing so many bibliophiles of this kind that Swift's appointments to remote dioceses — Kilroot and Laracor — were typical. Toby Barnard, 'Almoners of Providence, the clergy, 1647 to c. 1780' in *The Clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: Messengers, Watchmen and Stewards* eds. Toby Barnard and W. G. Neely (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), p.87.
[113] Michael Brown, *The Irish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), p.76.
[114] Toby Barnard, 'Almoners of Providence', p.81. Also, 'Irish Catholics when educated overseas acquired facility in Latin and other modern European languages', *History of The Irish Book*, iii.47-48.
[115] Stubbs, *Reluctant Rebel*, p.87. Stubbs also notes that, amid calls for a new syllabus, George Ashe — Provost of Trinity in Swift's time — refused to change it.
[116] Marie-Louise Legg, 'The Parish Clergy of the Church of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century', *The Clergy of The Church of Ireland*, p.129.
[117] Ibid., p.130. In his copy of Baronius, Swift highlighted the following line with a cross in the margin: 'Clericus quantumlibet verbo Dei eruditius, artificio victum quærat' ('a cleric, no matter the degree of his learning in the word of God, may seek to make a living via a trade/profession'), iv.63.

(founded 1683) owed its existence to this generation of 'clerical dons': while professing a commitment to Protestant values of the Church of Ireland, the society was also characterised by 'obsessive and aggressive bibliomania'.[118]

For his public library, which opened in 1707, Marsh acquired an extraordinary quantity of translations and commentaries related to the Bible, but his own editions of it were stolen out of the library. Archbishop William King, Swift's father-figure and mentor in Dublin, collected bibles because he had ambitions to construct a resource for clerical education.[119] We also know that King attempted to acquire the libraries of other clerics to preserve their contents from being lost or destroyed, especially if there was a threat that they might be sold to English collectors. He bought and preserved the library of his predecessor Ezekiel Hopkins, for example, while he was the Bishop of Derry, for the benefit of the diocese. He also travelled to Amsterdam in 1725 to attend the auction of Cardinal Dubois's library, at which we know he bought some volumes for his Dublin collection.[120] From surviving catalogues we know that King eventually collected at least eighty-two Bibles — compared with Swift's twenty-two — which rivalled even Trinity's resources.[121] King was less fastidious about biblical commentaries and glossaries, and occasionally mixed them up with legal literature or other miscellaneous items (some volumes, for example, were stored in a box with Willughby's *Ornithology*, Kepler's *Harmonices Mundi*, and Drayton's *Poli-Olbion*), but his large collection of theological literature attests to genuine scholarly learning and expertise. From the records kept by his many cataloguers, we know that King's collection was large enough to have sections of the library dedicated to specialist scholarship on the 'Book of Psalms', 'mythology', and 'Deism'.[122] Swift's contemporaries out-collected him, then, but their financial resources and public ambitions were much larger. His collection would have been conventional for its miscellaneous nature.

---

[118] Toby Barnard, 'Scholars and Antiquarians: the Clergy and Learning, 1600-2000', ibid., p.237.

[119] King's scholarly interests were also connected with the project to revitalise the political organisation of the Church of Ireland, which meant ousting old-guard clerics from their safe seats and country residences. See a letter from King to Francis Annesley, 24/3/1713: 'on recollection I remember I have degraded four from their orders. I have laid in jail two excommunicated clergymen who died there. I have writs or warrants out against three more. I have discovered six or seven with counterfeit letters of orders and some in good places turned out on that account. I have deprived of their living six or seven and have suspended or otherwise censured about 30'. Quotation from the archive at Trinity College Dublin, T.C.D. MS. 750/4/1. The letter is included in the ODNB entry for King.

[120] For King's trip to Amsterdam, see Robert S. Matteson, 'Archbishop William King and the Conception of His Library', *The Library*, 13:3 (1991), p.238.

[121] *A Large and Private Park: The Collection of Archbishop William King, 1650-1729* eds. Robert S. Matteson and Gayle Barton, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Palladian Press, 2003), i.104-117.

[122] Robert S. Matteson, 'Archbishop William King's Library Catalogue', *The Library*, 6:4 (1981), p.307. A curiosity of King's taxonomy is that he grouped Swift's *Battle of The Books* with other books about libraries, as 'A full Acct. of the Battel between ye Ancient and Modern Books of St. James', although there is a chance that this was an error of his cataloguers. See Matteson, 'Conception', p.242. He seems to have been unusually interested in books about bibliography and library history: he owned 130 volumes on the subject, compared with Swift's two. Ibid., p.245.

V - The Old Testament

Drawing these strands of context together, it is possible to predict that Swift's allusions to the Old Testament would be scholarly (often polyglot), arranged carefully in relation to his satiric personae, ornamented with high clerical sophistication, but designed to project an image of conservative Anglican moderation which was hostile to dissent or nonconformity. This is precisely what they show. C. P. Daw published an article in 1980 called 'Swift's Favourite Books of The Bible' which was full of insights about what caught the Dean's attention in the New Testament: Daw's conclusion was that Swift returned most frequently to Matthew and 1 Corinthians.[123] He claimed that 'half of [the] allusions and quotations' in his prose came from these two books and then tracked a series of instances in the surviving corpus of sermons to prove it. On this evidence, Daw concluded that Swift's writing 'often seems calculated to conceal his command of Holy Writ.'[124] Daw also says that 'like most Christian clergymen, Swift refers to the New Testament more often than to the Old', but Swift's Old Testament allusions were of considerable significance in his work.[125]

Genesis, to begin with, provided him with political metaphors. Swift considered Adam a 'monarch' over the animals: in the *Further Thoughts On Religion*, he argued that after the Fall 'the animals began to reject [Adam's] government' and that Nimrod's new 'reign' was tyrannical.[126] Although this was said with a humorous touch, Swift was drawing on a critical scholarly puzzle. According to Estienne's *Dictionarium* (1579), which Swift could have consulted in Archbishop William King's library, the word 'Nimrod' is etymologically synonymous with rebellion (Heb. *mârad* = Lat. *rebellis*).[127] Indeed, for Swift, this story from Genesis had a ring of the English Civil War about it because Cromwell behaved like the tyrannical Nimrod. Swift expressed this via a carefully chosen allusion to *Paradise Lost*:

---

[123] C.P. Daw, 'Swift's Favourite Books of The Bible', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 43:3 (1980), pp.201-212 (p.203).
[124] Ibid., p.201.
[125] Ibid., p.202.
[126] *Further Thoughts on Religion* (not printed until 1765), Davis, *Prose*, ix.264. Swift compared Queen Anne with Nimrod in a letter to Stella: 'The queen was abroad to-day in order to hunt, but finding it disposed to rain, she kept in her coach: she hunts in a chaise with one horse, which she drives herself, and drives furiously, like Jehu, and is a mighty hunter, like Nimrod. Dd has heard of Nimrod, but not Ppt, for it is in the Bible.' Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.252.
[127] See Matteson, 'Archbishop William King's Library Catalogue', p.307. It was common for poets to mine the dictionaries of their school years for allusions and obscure definitions. See John R. Mulder, *The Temple of The Mind*, p.24.

The Scripture mentioneth no particular acts of royalty in Adam over his posterity, who were cotemporary with him, or of any monarch until after the flood; whereof the first was Nimrod, the mighty hunter, who, as Milton expresseth it, made men, and not beasts, his prey. For men were easier caught by promises, and subdued by the folly or treachery of their own species.[128]

For political allegiance, Swift uses the phrase 'mighty hunter' — a common epithet for Nimrod in Royalist verse of this period, alluding to Genesis 10:9 ('he was a mighty hunter before the Lord') — but the explicit allusion to Milton is, in fact, to the parenthesis about Nimrod in *Paradise Lost* (xii.30), '(and men not beasts shall be his game)'.[129] Swift's alteration of 'game' to 'prey' suggests that he saw a starker aggression in Nimrod's tyranny than Milton did, but the allusion nonetheless aligns the *Further Thoughts On Religion* with other critical views of the monarchy.[130] Since this parenthesis comes from the famous Babel section of *Paradise Lost*, it also hints at Swift's taste for polyglotism: he would have known that the original Genesis story (10:8-10) does not connect Nimrod with the Tower of Babel at all, and that this was an invention of Josephus (*Antiquities,* I.iv.2f). Swift did not just allude to Milton for political allegiance, then, but to an English writer who made complex mixtures out of biblical and pagan incongruities, playing with scholarly subtlety on the theme of hunting and gathering that runs through the Nimrod story.

Babel was important to Swift in its own right: partly because he was interested in language games, and partly because his own collection of bibles was polyglot. More importantly, however, he used it as a tag for dissent. He alluded to Babel in the riddle on 'echoes': 'Then I fret and rave and babble, / Like the labourers of Babel.'[131] The couplet is not a rhyme but a half-rhyming echo, drawing attention to Swift's own skill with the unstable rhyming patterns of doggerel tetrameter, but also to the unstable etymology of the word 'Babel' itself, which, originally a calque, passed through four languages before reaching modern English. It might also echo the line in Thomas Parnell's *Essay On The Different Stiles of Poetry,* 'to civilise the babbling *Ecchoes* there.'[132] The same punning effect was staged in *Vanbrugh's House*, a poem designed to confound our tongues if read out loud:

---

[128] Davis, *Prose*, ix.264.
[129] For the phrase 'mighty hunter', see *Paradise Lost,* xii.33, and *The Hind and The Panther,* i.282.
[130] This is complex, because the first instalment of Swift's *Thoughts On Religion* had sided with Cromwell: 'Cromwell's notion upon this article, was natural and right', Davis, *Prose*, ix.263. An affected neutrality or critical distance on the Civil War was a mark of scholarly tact, in Swift's period, though writers were often more strident about it in print. Alistair Fowler, for example, notes that both Royalists and Parliamentarians accused one another of rebellion and tyranny during the Civil War, and Milton's display of both sides in *Paradise Lost* has proverbially led to conflict. See Milton, *Paradise Lost*, p.42.
[131] Williams, *Poems*, iii.933. On the association of Babel with echoes and noise, compare again with *Paradise Lost*, xii.55-58: 'To sow a jangling noise of words unknown: / Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud / Among the builders; each to other calls / Not understood, till hoarse, and all in a rage'.
[132] Thomas Parnell, *Essay*, p.4.

Then, from the motly mingled Style
Proceeded to erect his Pile:
So, Men of old, to gain Renown, did
Build *Babel* with their Tongues confounded.[133]

The verb or adjective 'confounded', which breaks the tetrameter just to half-rhyme with 'did', is drawing on the (now contested) Hebrew etymology of 'Babel' from *balal* — literally 'to confound' — which, again, Swift took from the first book of Josephus (*Antiquities,* I.iv.3).[134] The word 'confounded', here, is playfully ambiguous. It is unclear whether Swift meant these tongues to be destroyed, confused, or damned, or because of the sexual innuendos, 'ashamed' (*OED* v.1a, 3a, 4a, adj. 2a,). What emerges from these allusions is Swift's tendency to use 'Babel' as a pejorative term for confusion, fanaticism, or the rabble. Indeed, in one of the *Queries Relating To The Sacramental Test*, Swift mentioned the dangerous '*Babel* of Fanaticism' that ensued after 'the Murder of the Royal Martyr' Charles I.[135] In *Verses On The Death of Dr. Swift*, lamenting the fall of the Tory ministry after the death of Queen Anne (in the voice of a speaker at The Rose Tavern), he blamed the Whigs for turning 'Religion to a Fable' and making 'the Government a *Babel*'.[136]

Swift could be rude about figures from Genesis, and liked to play with their names. He conjured up a series of fake etymologies in *A Discourse to Prove the Antiquity of the English Tongue*: a text which (as discussed in Chapter 1) Rumbold sees as a 'compilation of learned puns and wordplay, supported by preposterously invented anecdotes', parodying 'the linguistic tradition of looking in existing languages for features supposedly predating the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel':

Abraham was a person of strong bones and sinews, and a firm walker, which made the people say, He was a man (in the Scotch phrase, which comes nearest to the old Saxon) of *a bra ham*; that is, of a brave strong ham, from whence he acquired his name.[137]

---

[133] Williams, *Poems*, i.108.
[134] Cf. Milton, 'The work Confusion named', *Paradise Lost*, xii.63. We do not know which edition of Josephus Swift owned. See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading,* ii.991. From what we know of his other editions of classical writers, he may have had a late (and therefore complete) Renaissance edition of *De Antiquitatibus Iudaicis* by Froben, from whom he also had a Bible. The edition might have been *Flavii Iosephi Opera* ed. Arlenius Arnoldus Peraxylus (Basilae: Heironymous Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius, 1543). He is also likely to have consulted Roger L'Estrange, *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (London: Richard Sare, 1702).
[135] Davis, *Prose*, xii.260.
[136] Williams, *Poems*, ii.568. Cf. Williams' note to 384: 'rabble' written next to '*Babel*'. Cf. Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, pp.196-204 for the Rose speaker.
[137] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.231 and n.73. Cf. headnote, p.230.

The neutrality of the scholarly endeavour is an affectation: Swift's clarifying parenthesis elaborates on the pedantry (and guesswork) of the etymologist's task (stigmatised elsewhere in the text) but also hints at a residual anti-Scottish prejudice, which is not a part of scholarly decorum. The association of Abraham with a 'brave strong ham' (perhaps gesturing to the Curse of Ham, Genesis 9:20-27) continues this theme of racial condescension by mocking Jewish laws against eating pigs, which suggests that his mock-scholarship was not only an attack on scholarly pedantry, but a vehicle for other prejudices: a tendency registered by Rawson in *Swift and Others*.[138] Swift then strides into an even more playful etymology for Isaac, and plays on his blindness (Genesis 27:1):

Isaac is nothing else but *Eyes ake*; because the Talmudists report that he had a pain in his eyes. Vide *Ben-gorion* and the *Targum* on *Genesis*.[139]

The command to look — 'Vide' — at '*Ben-Gorion*' perpetuates the joke on 'pain' in the 'eyes' in this passage: this etymological entry is also a composite of existing scholarship, and points in two different directions, to '*Ben-gorion*' and a specific targum (a 'targum' being a translation of Hebrew scripture into Aramaic, which occasionally included commentary). '*Ben-Gorion*' is characteristically ambiguous. It may point to Nicodemus ben Gurion, a man sometimes believed to be Nicodemus in the Gospel of John; or (more likely) Yoseph ben Gurion, a medieval Italian Jew who, in the eighteenth century, was thought to have translated the *Josippon*, making it one of Swift's deliberately playful uses of names (such as 'Patridge' and 'Vanbrug').[140] In another entry, for Moses, Swift introduced an unexpected element of charity (insofar as he praises him) while playing on his division of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-2):[141]

Moses, the great leader of those people out of Egypt, was in propriety of speech called *Mow seas*, because he *mowed* the *seas* down in the middle, to make a path for the Israelites.

---

[138] Cf. Claude Rawson, *Swift and Others*, p.15: 'Swift shows little interest in maintaining a fiction of mock-antiquity, inserting instead more immediate causes for the textual lacunae: inadvertence, laziness, incompetence, or anxious considerations of security.'

[139] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises,* p.242, and n.78.

[140] Cf. Peter Morwen's English translation of the *Josippon*, which was widely circulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. *A Compendius and Most Marueilous Historie of the Latter Tymes of the Lewes Common Weale* (London: Richard Lugge, 1578), which Swift is most likely to have read. One of the more stable targumim supplying commentary to Genesis is called the 'Targum Pseudo-Jonathan', so named because of a scribal mistake (it should have been 'Targum Jerusalem'). The play on names, here, may be entirely felicitous.

[141] Cf. the presentation of Moses as another figure masturbating in 'Sid Hamet': 'While Moses held it in his hand', etc. Williams, *Poems*, i.132. It was also recorded by Laetitia Pilkington that Swift liked to make up stories about Moses. On bees: '*Yes, my Lord,* said *Swift, they are a Nation of great Antiquity; you know, my Lord,* Moses *takes Notice of them; he numbers the* Hivites *among the Nation which* Joshua *was appointed to conquer*'. Pilkington, *Jests*, p.79.

Balaam is identified with his flock (perhaps a joke about preachers), but the mock-etymology might also be playing on his talking donkey, who objects to his bad treatment (Numbers 22:28):

> The man whom the Jews called Balam was a shepherd; who, by often crying Ba to his lambs, was therefore called Bealamb, or Balam.[142]

To support these parodic pieces of philology, Swift creates an elaborate rhetoric of pseudo-learning, claiming privy access to rare knowledge and literature from all over the world (Scottish folklore, Josephus, '*Ben-Gorion*', a specific targum, the Talmud) in a parade of mock-scholarship, which targets philologists genuinely at work on the origins of names in the texts, which Swift would have associated with Bentleyan pedantry, even with secularism.[143] As Rumbold suggests, this text is parodying a genre 'so established, even old-fashioned, as to be laughable', but it also involves 'a more familiar kind of allusion' to Bentleyan pedantry and 'modern projectors' trying to solve larger problems on behalf of the nation.[144]

He made few other allusions to the Pentateuch.[145] 1 and 2 Kings, however, which are proverbially full of contradictions, caught Swift's attention for the presentation of Solomon.[146] Swift was divided about Solomon because, as with the noble murderer Brutus, he found it difficult to separate his virtues from his vices.[147] In the complexly parodic *Mr. Collins' Discourse of Free-Thinking* the speaker entertains a ludicrous 'free-thinking' argument about Solomon's atheism, which, despite the text's function as an attack on Collins, was based on a real query about Solomon's behaviour: '*Solomon* himself […] was such a *Free Thinker*, that if he were now alive, nothing but his Building of Churches could have kept our Priests from calling him an Atheist.'[148] It certainly suits the parodied 'free-thinker' for Solomon to be a '*Free Thinker*' too,

---

[142] Archbishop King mentioned Balaam to Swift in a letter outlining the 'new Church of England' that he was trying to set up in Dublin. 'That to own the King is a damnable sin & to pray for him like the sin of Balaam, if he had cursed Israel, that to be present at the prayers made for him is the like sin.' Woolley, *Correspondence*, ii.191.
[143] Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible,* p.106, 'Philology substituted for Theology: we might expect this from a devotee of secularism.' Sheehan then cites Swift as an example of those who opposed it. The opening of the *Discourse* refers to 'Doctor Richard Bentley, with whom the republic of learning must expire', Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.231, and n.3-4.
[144] Ibid., p.xlviii.
[145] There is a possible allusion to Numbers 18:23 in the *Directions to Servants,* 'Let your answer be, That Service is no Inheritance' (a proverbial phrase in English), but it bears closer resemblance to a line from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* than to Numbers itself. However, Shakespeare might have been alluding to it. Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.450. Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (I.iii), 'service is no heritage'.
[146] On Kings and its contradictions see Spinoza, *Tractatus,* I.cxxii (for Swift's attitude to Spinoza see next page). Also, notes to *KJB*, pp.342-7.
[147] 1 Kings 3:16-28.
[148] Davis, *Prose*, iv.27-28. Though the *Discourse* is targeting 'free-thinkers' (specifically deists), Solomon's idolatry and acquisition of wives have led numerous Biblical scholars to hint at his immorality (though this is not the same as him being a free-thinker). Yahweh famously chastises Solomon at 1 Kings 11:1-11; particularly 11, 'thou has not kept my covenant.'

and an 'Atheist', because it gives scriptural precedent for those views (a ludicrous manipulation of the texts, in Swift's view). Perhaps, through the allusion, Swift is showing how 'free-thinkers' alight on passages of the Bible which are morally questionable. Swift never quite settled on a view of Solomon. Like Pope — perhaps inspired by him, owing to the collaborative nature of the *Thought On Various Subjects* — he also blamed Solomon for maintaining an immoral and obsequious court: 'A Person was ask'd at Court what he thought of an Ambassador, and his Train, who were all Embroidery and Lace, full of Bows, Cringes, and Gestures. He said, it was *Solomon's* Importation, *Gold and Apes*' (1 Kings 10:22).[149] The sycophantic actions here — 'full of Bows, Cringes, and Gestures' — become increasingly vague as Swift's distaste for sycophancy rises ('Gestures' might be anything at all).[150] And, since the line revises a quip from *A Meditation Upon A Broomstick* — a broomstick is said to be 'full of Boughs' — it invites comparison with a whole range of Swift texts that parody gravitas and philosophical high-mindedness.[151] This contempt was revisited in *Strephon and Chloe* (1734), where Swift imagined Solomon and the Queen of Sheba as puppets 'strung on Pegs behind the Door' — a mockery not just of Solomon's cowardice, but also of scholarship's polite attempt to cover up sexual intrigue in the Bible (the puppet-man hides his 'Wood and Wire', Sheba is 'completely drest', Solomon is wearing his 'vest'):

> From yonder Puppet-Man inquire,
> Who wisely hides his Wood and Wire;
> Shows *Sheba's* Queen completely drest,
> And *Solomon* in Royal Vest;
> But, view them litter'd on the Floor,
> Or strung on Pegs behind the Door;
> *Punch* is exactly of a Piece
> With *Lorraine's* Duke, and Prince of *Greece*.[152]

However, he warmly referred to Sheridan as the 'Second Solomon' in his *Character of Dr. Sheridan* (printed 1765), and the comedy of this peculiar sketch relies on a surreal sense that he

---

[149] Ibid., iv.247. 1 Kings 10:22: 'once in three years the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.'
[150] Cf. Gulliver's dislike of the Houyhnhnms' gestures 'not unlike those of a Philosopher, when he would attempt to solve some new and difficult Phænomenon', Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.337.
[151] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises,* p.13: 'It was full of Sap, full of Leaves, and full of Boughs'.
[152] Williams, *Poems*, ii.592. The poem is about domineering wives: so, by '*Lorraine's* Duke' Swift might mean Francis I, Duke of Lorraine and eventually Holy Roman Emperor (1728-1737) who famously let his wife run political affairs. However, he is likely alluding to the previous Duke of Lorraine, Leopold the Good, who married Élisabeth Charlotte d'Orléans — an impetuous and agitated woman who behaved 'as rough as a boy'. See Antonia Fraser, *Love and Louis XIV: The Women in The Life of The Sun King* (London: Phoenix, 1988), p.189. It is unclear who Swift means by 'Prince of *Greece*' but likely Alexander the Great, who famously avoided and decried sexual relations of any kind. See Plutarch, *Alexander*, 21 and 22.

is talking about the biblical king: 'Solomon, without the least provocation, writ a long poem, describing that person's muse to be dead, and making a funeral solemnity with asses, owls &c'; 'Solomon has no ill-design upon any person but himself, and he is the greatest deceiver of himself on all occasions'; 'A fancy sprung in Solomon's head, that a house near Dublin would be commodious for him'.[153]

There are few allusions to the Old Testament prophets in Swift. More frequently, he targeted modern prophets (in contrast to the Biblical figures), as part of his parody of false learning and spurious predictions. Perhaps for similar reasons to Hobbes, Swift was deeply ambivalent about modern prophets owing to their nonconforming (perhaps even 'free-thinking') behaviour, though prophets are the spokespeople of God in the Old Testament.[154] Isaac Bickerstaff, for example, Swift's (hoax) prophetic astrologer, is a 'gentleman concerned for truth rather than a plebeian conjuror'.[155] However, the words 'prophet' and 'prophecy' recur in these hoaxes, despite Bickerstaff wanting to draw a clear distinction between his brand of prophecy and that which is bogus or fraudulent (suggesting some degree of hypocrisy in Bickerstaff).[156] As part of the distinction he draws between himself and lower kinds of modern prophet, Bickerstaff refers to a group of modern prophets as 'ridiculous deluded Enthusiasts' in *Predictions for the Year 1708*, which has a local target (French Protestant refugees who had come to Britain in 1706, espousing millenarian views).[157] Unlike the words of the prophets which can be found in the Old Testament, modern prophecy is subject to parody, in Swift.[158] Dangerously, in Swift's view, the Old Testament prophets are seen as modern 'free-thinkers' by the speaker of *Mr. Collins' Discourse*: 'the Prophets of the *Old Testament* were generally *Free Thinkers*.'[159] 'You must understand', says the 'free-thinking' target, 'that their way of learning to Prophesie was by *Musick* and *Drinking*'. It is also argued that 'you

---

[153] Ibid., v.222-3.

[154] Cf. *Leviathan*, III.xxxii, 'If one Prophet deceive another, what certainty is there of knowing the will of God, by other way than that of reason?'. Hobbes saw modern prophets as anti-sovereign, and was concerned by their popularity during the chaos of the Civil War, which would have been closely akin to Swift's view. Cf. Kinch Hoekstra, 'Disarming the Prophets: Thomas Hobbes and The Predictive Power', *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 59:1 (2004), pp.97-153. Such a critique of prophets was not limited to Anglican rationalists or those in the tradition of Hobbes: one could cite Spinoza, *Tractatus*, II.v-vii. However, Swift would not have admired Spinoza's 'free-thinking' text or its followers. Spinoza's manipulation of prophetic voices for his own argument would also have been unsettling to Swift. See Norman O. Brown, 'Philosophy and Prophecy: Spinoza's Hermeneutics', *Political Theory*, 14:2 (1986), pp.195-213 (pp.204-5 for discussion of rhetoric). Swift owned a copy of Benedictus de Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* (Amsterdam: J. Rieuwertsz, 1670). See Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, iii.1727.

[155] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.37.

[156] Ibid., p.37. Cf. *The Vindication*, p.70, 'my last Year's Prophecies'; p.73, 'the Truth of my Prophecies'. On Bickerstaff's hypocrisy, or the contradictory quality of what he is doing, cf. Appendix E, p.576. The *Answer* suggests that Bickerstaff will suffer the same fate as his victims. Possibly by Swift (headnote p.573, and cf. 51, n. 43).

[157] Cf. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.198. Ehrenpreis sees Bickerstaff as close to Swift, ibid., p.201.

[158] Ibid., p.51, n.43.

[159] Davis, *Prose*, iv.45.

may read several Passages in *Isiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jeremiah* &c. wherein you will find such Instances of *Free Thinking*', a sequence which re-arranges the order of the texts, perhaps to give the effect of browsing through them in haste or 'freely'. Very few allusions to the Old Testament prophets can be found in Swift, but he would have drawn a very clear distinction between those modern prophets he parodied and those in the Old Testament.

Swift's allusions to other texts from the Old Testament were quite sparse, and did not reflect major developments in his clerical life (with the possible early exception of those in the *Tale*, put to the service of a parody he later regretted).[160] The use of Old Testament quotations in his sermons does not clarify any of his beliefs about the texts either, owing to the sermons' thorough conformity to the principles of the Anglican establishment, and uncomplicated display of Anglican orthodoxy: a curiosity to which Landa pays attention in the separate introduction to the sermons in Davis' *Prose*.[161] Swift infrequently alluded to the Old Testament in conversation or correspondence, and if he did it was usually with a light touch of humour. He referred to Sheridan's house as 'Canaan' in a letter to Mrs. Whiteway, for example: 'I have been now the third day at Cavan, the Doctor's Canaan, the dirtiest place I ever saw, with the worst wife and daughter, and the most cursed sluts and servants on this side Scotland.'[162] A series of Old Testament allusions occur throughout his correspondence. In an elaborate compliment to Robert Harley, for example, he compared his political bravery to that of Samson slaying lions and bears (1 Samuel 17:36).[163] In the same spirit of comparison, this time humorous, he said to Pope: 'I knew thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart' (1 Samuel 17:28). To Pope, again, complaining about everyone who 'hath a dram of power', he exclaimed 'I have sinned greatly, but what have these sheep done?' (2 Samuel 24:17).[164] One anecdote even suggests that Old Testament tags remained with him in his old age and mental decline: he would rock in his chair at the dinner table repeating '*I am what I am, I am what I am*' (Exodus 3:14), a line which seems to suggest a fantasy of omnipotence

---

[160] Walsh has suggested allusions to the Pentateuch in the *CWJS* edition of the *Tale*, notably to Deuteronomy 8:4 and Genesis 35:2 at the introduction of the clean coats conceit (p.47), and a cluster at the famous discussion of a 'Memorial […] no more to be found', 1 Maccabees 12:53, Revelation 12:8/20:11, and by association Deuteronomy 32:26, Job 7:9-10, Zechariah 10:10 (p.22-23).

[161] Davis, *Prose,* ix.106. On the orthodoxy of Swift's sermons, see Roger D. Lund, 'Swift's Sermons, 'Public Conscience', and the Privatisation of Religion', *The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats*, 31:2 (1999), p.200. Also Camille R. La Bossière, "Upon Sleeping in Church": Swift's Sermons and the Ethics of Wit', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 19:1 (1993), pp.1-11. La Bossière shows how Swift's sermons were written against the temptations of wit and eloquence, and strove for a plain enunciation of orthodoxy. Evidence for Swift's sermon-writing is scarce: Landa acknowledges that 'we know surprisingly little of him as a preacher', Davis, *Prose*, ix.79.

[162] Woolley, *Correspondence,* iii.213.

[163] Ibid., ii.139: 'You were destined to both Tryals; and the same Power which delivered You out of the Paws of the Lyon and the Bear, will, I trust, deliver you out of the hands of the uncircumsized.'

[164] Ibid., iii.21.

(owing to the line's context as a response to Moses asking the name of God), or a struggle to retain a sense of coherent identity.[165]

VI - The New Testament

As Daw argued, the New Testament was very important to Swift as an alluder, but there were also 'remarkable biases' in what he took from it, and the allusions themselves did not show the same element of play, or polyglot learning.[166] Some eighteenth-century readers were left disappointed by this uncharacteristic reticence: David Hume, for example, lamented that Swift was a cleric because 'had he been a Lawyer or a Physician, we had nevertheless been entertain'd at the Expense of these Professions'.[167]

As one might predict of an Anglican Dean with authoritarian tendencies (some of which have been explored in Chapter 3), Swift's allusions to the New Testament largely pertained to Paul. Wotton picked up on this in his *Observations* of the *Tale* (and on Paul's own allusions), accusing Swift of blasphemy: 'Is this not to ridicule St. *Paul's* own Description of his own Temptation; in which the Apostle manifestly alludes to a Passage in the Prophet *Ezekiel*?'[168] Perhaps this is why Swift never alluded to Paul improperly again, even though he treated the Pauline epistles as a catalogue of quotations.[169] In line with his essentially conservative and defensive beliefs about the Anglican establishment, Swift defended Paul against modern alluders. Concurring with Delany's arguments in favour of plain style — and other handbooks such as South's *The Scribe Instructed* (1660), Wilkins' *Ecclesiastes* (1646), and Eachard's *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy* (1670) — Swift argued in the *Letter* that one can (or should) simplify Paul's difficult words, but must leave them alone if they are part of direct quotations:

> And I defy the greatest Divine to produce any Law either of God or Man, which obliges me to comprehend the Meaning of *Omniscience, Omnipresence, Ubiquity, Attribute, Beatifick Vision,* with a thousand others so frequent in Pulpits, any more than that of *Excentrick, Idiosyncrasy, Entity,* and the like. I believe I may venture to insist further, that many Terms used in Holy Writ, particularly by St. *Paul,* might with more Discretion be changed into plainer Speech, except when they are introduced as Part of a Quotation.[170]

---

[165] Reported by Deane Swift, ibid., iii.670.
[166] Daw, 'Swift's Favourite Books of The Bible', p.209.
[167] David Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), i.153. Also mentioned by Womersley, *Gulliver's Travels*, p.83.
[168] See Wotton's *Observations* in Walsh, *Tale*, p.228.
[169] Archbishop William King was consecrated on St. Paul's day. See Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.618.
[170] Davis, *Prose*, ix.66. Cf. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.82-3.

The argument against technical language is as irritable as Paul — 'I defy the greatest Divine' — and the list of 'terms' resembles the equally irritable notes Swift took on the sermons given by his colleagues, in which he adduced their errors.[171] However, the argument is clear: that one should aim for 'plainer Speech' unless the words are 'introduced as Part of a Quotation.' In counterpoint to the dogmatic nature of the rhetoric, Swift approaches Paul himself via a jumble of politenesses, all of which simply introduce the next introduction: 'I believe I may venture to insist further'. This juxtaposition of rage and grace at once enforces the argument in favour of 'plainer speech' and respects Paul, making it an example of what Geoffrey Hill refers to as Swift's 'capacity to be at once resistant and reciprocating'.[172]

Writing to Pope in 1726, a period (as shown in this chapter) during which Swift was aggressively committed to his anti-dissent agenda and felt hostility towards the Irish bishops, he showed him how to quote — or 'reap' from — Paul properly: 'I think you ought to say it with St. Paul, *if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*'[173] Swift's voice is merged with Paul's while ostensibly examining the ethics of property, making it another of Swift's allusions that, even in the form of advice, showed Pope a moveable boundary of what constitutes theft. Paul is put to particularly complex use in *The Presbyterians' Plea of Merit*, where he is shown to be misappropriated by Swift's target: Presbyterians trying to gain power by abolishing the Test. (Swift's intolerance of Presbyterians discussed in this chapter and the beginning of Chapter 1). This difficult text outlines the Presbyterian contribution to recent British history (which is largely characterised by scheming and allying with Catholics), and Swift is intent on 'destroying' their claims to have aided the Restoration of Charles II and the establishment of William III.[174] The passage which alludes to Paul is ambiguously placed:

> But, if they mean to be honest and upright, they will and must endeavour by all Means, which they shall think lawful, to introduce and establish their own Scheme of Religion, as nearest approaching to the Word of GOD, by casting out all superstitious Ceremonies, Ecclesiastical Titles, Habits, Distinctions, and Superiorities, as Rags of *Popery*; in order to a *thorough Reformation*; and, as in Charity bound, to promote the Salvation of their Countrymen: Wishing with St. *Paul, that the whole Kingdom were as they are.*[175]

---

[171] Delany, *Observations*, p.206.
[172] Hill, *Collected Critical Writings*, p.71.
[173] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.19. 1 Corinthians 9:11.
[174] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.763. Swift's zeal was considered partial and prejudiced in *A Vindication of The Protestant Dissenters from the Aspersions cast upon them in a late pamphlet, entitled The Presbyterians Plea of Merit.* Cf. Davis, *Prose*, xii, especially xliv: Swift's text is deemed 'ineffective, except as a mere party pamphlet to arouse bigotry and rancour.'
[175] Ibid., xii.276.

The paragraph in which this statement occurs begins by querying how the Presbyterians will ever redeem their history of anti-monarchical politics (while recognising that they would like to 'insinuate' themselves into the established government). Swift's next move is to imagine a Presbyterian takeover (instead of them converting to Anglicanism), and how they will treat the Anglican dissenters (i.e. Anglicans living under the imagined Presbyterian rule): Swift's conclusion is that they will show relentless intolerance, as contrasted with the tolerance shown to them since the Restoration by the Whig portion of the Anglican Church (though not by Swift himself). Swift says that when they acquire power (in this fantasy), they will cast out 'all superstitious Ceremonies, Ecclesiastical Titles, Habits, Distinctions, and Superiorities' as evidence of '*Popery*', and by doing so they (think that they) achieve a '*thorough Reformation*', which is 'nearest approaching the Word of God' (an extreme and misguided view, to Swift, though his own text is explicitly critical of Catholic practices too). At the end of this passage, the allusion aligns the Presbyterians' wishes with Paul as he speaks at 1 Corinthians 1:10: 'I beseech you […] that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.' However, there is a deep irony here. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul addresses the many divisions in Corinth, where idolatry and false-gods have led worshippers astray: for example, 'Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led' (1 Corinthians 12:2). Swift is actually marshalling Paul in service of his own anti-dissent agenda, showing that Presbyterians are dangerous for wishing that everyone in the '*whole Kingdom*' might become a Presbyterian, the irony being that Paul (as Swift sees him) would not have approved (and presumably would have sided with the established church, in Swift's view).[176] This could link this text with *On the Words — Brother Protestants, and Fellow Christians,* because it shows how Presbyterians manipulate the language of brotherhood and unity (in this case, using Paul's words).

Many satirists have been interested in the voice of St. Paul because of its didacticism. 'St. Paul pointed the way' for Rabelais, according to Michael Screech.[177] Donne stated that 'St Paul is a more powerful orator than Cicero'.[178] Pope, in his imitation of Horace, *Epistles*, I.i, wrote that '[I] Sometimes, with Aristippus, or St. Paul, / Indulge my Candor, and grow all

[176] The phrases 'their Countrymen' and '*whole Kingdom*' may refer to the Presbyterian connections with Scotland and Ireland. 'For, after all, what assurance can a *Scottish* born northern Dissenter, born on *Irish* ground, have, that he shall be treated with as much favour as a TRUE SCOT born beyond the Tweed.' Ibid., xii.275. Cf. Ehrenpreis, *Life*, iii.764.
[177] Screech, *Laughter at the Foot of The Cross*, p.238.
[178] Donne, *Sermons*, iv.167.

to all.'[179] Swift also admired Paul's imperious tone of voice, and appears to have found in him 'a wit not unlike his own'.[180] Indeed, he manipulated Paul's tone of voice because the apostle reprimanded races and cultures for bad behaviour. Swift's treatment of Christ, however, was quite different. He spoke of the Trinity in an unwaveringly orthodox manner when preaching at St. Patrick's Cathedral, showing resistance to the ongoing debate among dissenters about the nature of the Trinity.[181] He was preaching establishment principles with Luther's moderation at St. Patrick's Cathedral, where public mention of Christ was often designed to affirm the Trinity and the conventional roles of Christ in Anglican doctrine.[182] Satire did not provide him with much of a precedent for alluding to or parodying Christ, should he have wanted to (which would have been unlikely). All satirists of the Bible are uncomfortably overshadowed by the Gospel account of the mocking of Christ.[183] And, few texts overtly parody Christ or his teachings. In Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Hythloday — literally a 'nonsense specialist' — argues that we should forget the teachings of Plato and Christ, but Swift did not put this argument to use: indeed, in the words of Dustin Griffin, 'readers do not enlist behind Hythloday's banner, or "More's"'.[184] It may have been true, as Terry Lindvall argues, that the 'Reformation was bathed in laughter as well as blood' — that Luther 'borrowed stylistic turns from Lucian', among others — but Christ himself was rarely the object of parody or derision.[185] Swift would have known, too, that Rabelais' allusions to Christ sparked some unwelcome controversy in the sixteenth century: 'the Sorbonne objected to laughter at the expense of the genealogies of Jesus in the New Testament', and Rabelais was forced to deny having used them 'as a basis for laughter'.[186]

Dubious accounts of divine nativity and crucifixion are put into the mouths of Swift's most dangerous (and deranged) personae: 'free-thinking' deists such as Collins, and the modest proposer. In parodic 'free-thinking' patter, Swift argued that virgin birth is a common trope of ancient religions from all over the world:

---

[179] Pope, *Poems,* iv.281 (ll.31-2). The Apostle's famously abrasive rhetoric has been the subject of much recent scholarship. See Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric In Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2004); Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in The Letters of Paul* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004); *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric: Theory and Practice in The Hellenistic Context*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Bryan R. Dyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
[180] Norton, *A History of the English Bible As Literature*, i.252.
[181] For Swift's personal dislike of Arianism see Davis, *Prose*, ix.107, and Landa's remark that '*On the Trinity*, which is Swift's most elaborate statement on Christian doctrine, exhibits clearly the orthodoxy and conventionality of his religious views.'
[182] Swift attacked Woolston for suggesting that Christ 'was a grand imposter'. See *Verses On The Death of Dr. Swift,* Williams, *Poems*, ii.564 (ll.293-4).
[183] Matthew 27:27-31, Luke 22:63-71. Cf. Galatians 6:7, 'God is not mocked'.
[184] Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), p.46.
[185] Terry Lindvall, *God Mocks: A History of Religious Satire from the Hebrew Prophets to Stephen Colbert* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), pp.86-7.
[186] Screech, *Laughter at The Foot of The Cross*, p.238.

But the *Talapoins* or *Heathen* Clergy of *Siam* approach yet nearer to the System of our Priests; they have a Book of *Scripture* written by *Sommonocodum,* who, the *Siamese* say, was *born of a Virgin,* and was *the God expected by the Universe;* just as our *Priests* tell us, that *Jesus Christ* was born of the *Virgin Mary,* and was the *Messiah* so long expected.[187]

The deranged argument of the speaker continues:

Christ himself commands us to be *Free-thinkers,* for he bids us search the Scriptures, and take heed what and whom we hear; by which he plainly warns us, not to believe our Bishops and Clergy; for *Jesus Christ,* when he consider'd that all the *Jewish* and *Heathen* Priests, whose Religion he came to abolish, were his Enemies, rightly concluded that those appointed by him to preach his own Gospel, would probably be so too; and could not be secure, that any Sett of Priests, of the Faith he deliver'd, would ever be otherwise; therefore it is fully demonstrated that the Clergy of the Church of *England* are mortal Enemies to Christ, and ought not to be believ'd.[188]

The 'free-thinking' speaker is not quite convinced of his own mind — 'probably', 'ought not to be' — but seems at least to be aware of the controversy he is generating, and delays it with platitudes. The passage begins with an empty clarification, 'Christ himself' rather than simply 'Christ'. Eventually, the speaker introduces his scandalous idea, but in the disguise of a deist convention, 'not to believe our Bishops and Clergy', and the argument then — after much periphrasis — settles on its truly alarming point, that 'the Clergy of the Church of *England*' are 'are mortal Enemies to Christ'. This is a complex: '*England*' dimly alerts the reader to Swift's Irishness behind the mask of his English 'free-thinking' deist (his choice of '*English*' rather than Anglican is suggestive), a fact which until now has been artfully concealed behind rhetorical distractions (Swift repeated this trick in *A Modest Proposal*, though in 1713 Swift was not yet the Irish patriot he would later become).[189] Christ 'himself' is certainly not being satirised, then: he is implicated in the dangerous deist ideas Swift is subjecting to parody.

The coats conceit in the *Tale* was taken from John 19:23-24, 'then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part', and relates to a series of conventional metaphors about doctrine as clothing in the Bible (John 19:23 being a central example). A much nastier impulse to dissect, inspect, and scatter pieces of Christ anticipates the crucifixion passage in *A Modest Proposal*:

---

[187] Davis, *Prose*, iv.32.
[188] Ibid., iv.46.
[189] 'We find out the writer is himself Irish just before he starts campaigning for mass-infanticide', 'Lists', *If Not Critical*, p.22.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous *Sallmanaazor*, a Native of the Island *Formosa*, who came from thence to *London*, above twenty Years ago, and in Conversation told my friend, that in his Country when any young Person happened to be put to Death, the Executioner sold the Carcass to *Persons of Quality*, as a prime Dainty, and that, in his Time, the Body of a plump Girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to Poison the Emperor, was sold to his Imperial *Majesty's prime Minister of State*, and other great *Mandarines* of the Court, *in Joints from the Gibbet*, at Four hundred Crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same Use were made of several plump young Girls in this Town, who, without one single Groat to their Fortunes, cannot stir Abroad without a Chair, and appear at a *Play-House*, and *Assemblies* in Foreign fineries, which they never will Pay for; the Kingdom would not be the worse.[190]

Even the proposer is aware that such a story is highly controversial, and uses George Psalmanazar, a 'notorious imposter', as the source of the story (operating like Swift himself in the voice of his modest proposer).[191] The proposer's unexpected knowledge of historical crucifixions is not just peculiar for its delight in 'plump' young girls who 'happened to be put to Death', but also for its confused cultural vocabulary. The hierarchy of political figures which descends in power while spanning across the Roman, European, and oriental empires — 'Emperor', '*prime Minister of State*', '*Mandarines*' — reveals a mind that has already merged a vast range of cultural barbarisms with Irish statecraft before the analogy has begun.[192] This is doubled in the list of adolescent vices that hint at 'foreign' immodesties without breaking the gentle bureaucratic patter of the proposal: 'cannot stir Abroad without a Chair, and appear at a *Play-house*, and *Assemblies* in foreign Fineries'. The 'crucifixion' in *A Modest Proposal* is eerily camouflaged, then, among other useful deaths from a range of cultures, which supplies not only a sense of biblical terror but a perverted basis for comparison. As Claude Rawson says in *God, Gulliver, and Genocide* (2001), Swift's exploration of 'troubling moral nightmares' often rested on scriptural distortions of this kind.[193]

This use of crucifixion, however, is highly unusual in Swift's writing (even if, as shown in Chapter 3, he indulged in imaginative violence with high frequency). Most of his allusions to the Gospels occurred in intimate correspondence with important political figures, either in the form of castigation or wisdom. For example, he said to the Duke of Dorset, 'My Lord; I will as a Divine, quote Scripture. Although the Childrens meat must not be given to Dogs; yet the Dogs eat the Scraps that fall from the Childrens tables' (Mark 7:27-8).[194] He also said to

---

[190] Hayton and Rounce, *Irish Political Writings After 1725*, pp.152-3.
[191] Cf. ibid., pp.152-3, n.31.
[192] Cf. 'Mandarines', *OED* 1a.
[193] Claude Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide*, p.1.
[194] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iv.248.

the Earl of Chesterfield, 'I used to quote to the then ministers a passage in the Gospel, *The poor* (meaning their own dependents) *you have always with you,* &c', which as James Woolley notes, is slightly misremembered but nonetheless retains its air of serious advice.[195] He said to the Earl of Peterborough, 'you are in one thing an Evangelical man, that you know not where to lay your head' (Matthew 8:20), and made a slight emendation to a line from Matthew 10:16 to describe how the new Dean Jebb would make his way in the world: 'he is forced to tack the prudence of the Serpent, to the innocence of the Dove.'[196] He also wrote to Bolingbroke to complain of his giddiness and anticipated Gospel advice in his interlocutor: 'you will be ready to say, Physician cure thy self, and that is what I am about' (Luke 4:23).[197] This was the advice of a conservative clergyman working in a complex and threatening period for the established Church of Ireland, whose senses of responsibility and authority were inextricable from the texts he was alluding to. In his own words: 'I look upon myself, in the capacity of a clergyman, to be one appointed by providence for defending a post assigned me, and for gaining over as many enemies as I can.'[198]

[195] Ibid., iii.337, n.5.
[196] Ibid., iii.642 and 650.
[197] Ibid., iii.102.
[198] Davis, *Prose*, ix.262.

Conclusion:
Hints

I do not expect other men's ears to agree with my own.[1]
- Irvin Ehrenpreis

The argument of this thesis is that Swift inflected learning and erudition with the kinds of playful obscurity and suggestion which characterised the other aspects of his satire. In some cases, especially in his allusions to the Bible, the element of play was subordinate to the pragmatic concerns of a clergyman writing against the nonconforming or dissenting populations of England and Ireland, but even in these allusions the complexities of parodic voicing were frequently put to work.[2] Swift's allusions were also determined to unsettle the Augustan fondness for statement and taxonomy by drawing, often unpredictably, on a range of associative meanings and connotations: connotations which reinforce a given argument but are rarely intelligible immediately or uniformly. As J. L. Austin observes, many official or carefully managed statements — in poetry or otherwise — are 'strictly nonsense, despite an unexceptionable grammatical form', and it is questionable whether Augustan literature really was as preoccupied with statement-making as some critics have suggested.[3] However, resistance to the forces of pedantry, whether in a context of statement-making or not, would have been — to Swift's mind — one of his successes: in his own words, with cynical emphasis on the word 'properly' to mean 'strictly speaking' (*OED* 4), 'Pedantry is properly the over-rating any kind of knowledge we pretend to. And if that kind of knowledge be a trifle in itself, the pedantry is the greater.'[4]

The reader's struggle to infer his intentions from such complexly allusive writing was an integral part of its parodic intention, even though the nature of that parody (and to whom it is directed) is often unclear, or split between a range of targets.[5] Rumbold argues (in the introduction to the *Parodies* volume of the *CWJS*) that Swift's parody was so successfully deceptive that it resembled the activity of hoaxing, and that his hoaxes (once deciphered) can be read as parodies: 'in the same way that many of Swift's parodies could conceivably

---

[1] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.19.
[2] The complexity of Swift's parodic voicing, in which his allusions were implicated, is addressed by Phiddian, *Swift's Parody*, p.6. 'Swift's parodic writing is restless, allusive, and eccentric'.
[3] J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955), p.2.
[4] *On Good-Manners and Good-Breeding* (possibly 1714-27), Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.188. Cf. Herbert Davis, 'Swift and The Pedants', in *Jonathan Swift: Essays On His Satire and Other Studies*, pp.199-216.
[5] It is difficult to recover what kind of reader Swift imagined, and it often depends on the specific text in question, but he did suggest that he wrote more for the 'vulgar' than the 'learned'. See Faulkner, *Works* (1762), i.'To the Reader'. Cf. Bateson, *English Poetry: A Critical Introduction*, p.125.

function, if only briefly, as hoaxes, so some of his hoaxes, once revealed, become available for appreciation as parodies.'[6] Many of Swift's allusions, as shown in this thesis, did serve as hoaxes in themselves which deceived readers into believing their authenticity or which might direct the reader into unexpected lines of argument (see, for example, his misleading footnotes and marginal tags, or the range of classical allusions in his poems). Rumbold also argues that 'the kinds of pre-texts that Swift's parodies lead us to intuit are sometimes far less completely and solidly realised in the contemporary world of print than we might have expected.'[7] As this thesis has shown, Swift also visited fragmentation and obscurity onto texts if they were well established or familiar, paying attention to the ways in which the reader can be vexed or rendered powerless in the face of such artificially obscure writing. The nature of parody, in Swift, is not only dependent on the definition of parody itself (which Rumbold examines in her introduction), but also, as the edition's notes reveal, on the kinds of target he selects and the kinds of allusive obscurity he marshals in his favour.

Parody, in this thesis, is seen as an instrument of Swift's erratic and often ambiguous argumentation, not simply as a rehearsal of another text's ideological commitments or a sustained mockery of its style (these features appear to have been necessary but not sufficient to him). Such a view is more comfortable with a lack of internal continuity in Swift's writing, because it often exhibits powerfully localised negotiation or attack. As the thesis has shown, Swift's most allusive texts (sometimes put forward by ever-shifting speakers) often reveal themselves to be assemblages of contrived parts, though they often make known that continuity exists in the principles which drove Swift to compose them. The use of local contrivances can be seen in the opening stanza of one of Swift's attacks on Marlborough's avarice, called *The Fable of Midas* (1712):

---

[6] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.xxxviii.
[7] Ibid., p.xli.

MIDAS, we are in Story told,
Turn'd ev'ry thing he touch't to *Gold*:
He *chip't* his *Bread*, the Pieces round
Glitter'd like Spangles on the Ground:
A Codling e'er it went his Lip in,
Would strait become a *Golden* Pippin:
He call'd for Drink, you saw him sup
Potable Gold in *Golden Cup*.
His empty Paunch that he might fill,
He suck't his Vittels thro' a Quill;
Untouch't it pass't between his Grinders,
Or't had been happy for *Gold-finders*.
He cock't his Hat, you would have said
Mambrino's Helm adorn'd his Head.
Whene'er he chanc'd his Hands to lay,
On Magazines of *Corn* or *Hay*,
Gold ready Coin'd appear'd, instead
Of paultry *Provender* and *Bread*:
Hence we are by wise Farmers told,
Old Hay *is equal to old* Gold;
And hence a Critick deep maintains,
We learn't to weigh our *Gold* by *Grains*.[8]

The poem was published on the 14th February 1712 as a (slightly delayed) attack on Marlborough's embezzlement of public money. The accusation was brought against him on the 21st December 1711: on the 29th a letter of dismissal was read to him, so that he was 'deprived of all his appointments' and the matter could be assessed impartially. This might have made Swift apprehensive, owing to its severity.[9] The event was subject to attention in print. As Harold Williams notes, a poem called *A Fable of the Widow and her Cat* was attributed to Swift immediately by the Whigs: in Abel Boyer's *Political State of Great Britain* for January 1712 (which Abigail Williams reveals to have been based on incorrect information about the author of the *The Examiner*), but also in another fable called *When the Cat's away, the Mice may Play* ('*Humbly inscribed to Dr. Swift*').[10] This text is no longer attributed to Swift, or at the very

[8] Williams, *Poems*, i.156.
[9] Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.358. Cf. Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp.348-9.
[10] See headnote, ibid., i.155, and to *A Fable of the Widow and her Cat*, ibid., i.151. Abigail Williams, *Journal to Stella*, p.360, n.14. Cf. Williams, *Poems*, i.151.

least his authorship is considered highly doubtful.[11] *The Fable of Midas*, then, printed slightly after these texts, was composed in a modish form (a fable), and it was probably his first authentic contribution to the issue (which he claimed to have been received 'wonderfully' well among friends).[12]

The poem straightforwardly (or, in Ehrenpreis' unusually hostile judgement, 'not very ingeniously') compares Marlborough with Midas.[13] It derives from the 'Story' of Midas in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, xi.85ff, where Bacchus — who grants King Midas the power to turn objects into gold — is disappointed by his avarice, suggesting that Swift is agreeing, at least in part, with the mood and moral stance of the God, even if he does not have his powers ('adnuit optatis nocituraque munera solvit, / Liber et indoluit, quod non meliora petisset', 'Bacchus granted his prayer and gave him the baleful gift, grieving the while that he had not asked better', ll.104-5). Ovid's poem proceeds through a sequence of natural objects which are metamorphosed into golden ornaments: a 'virga' (twig), 'saxum' (stone), and so on. Swift replaces these objects with a piece of (mockingly) transubstantiated '*Bread*', which seems to be playing on Marlborough's suspicious (to Swift) toleration of James II and Jacobites: connections which created (perhaps undue) suspicion around him from the Glorious Revolution up to and including the reign of Queen Anne.[14] The insinuation of Catholicism and avarice is reinforced by the recurrence of '*Bread*' in line 18, 'paultry *Provender* and *Bread*', but this time '*Bread*' comes with the dexterous pun on '*provender*' which is either being used to mean 'food, provisions' (*OED*, 2) or as a cant term for 'a person from whom money is stolen' (*OED*, 3), comprehending the problem with embezzlement. Swift picks up the Ovid text again with the '*Golden* Pippin', which alludes to the golden apples of the Hesperides (also an allusion in Ovid's text, 'Hesperidas donasse putes', 'you would suppose the Hesperides had given it', l.114), but he then moves to liquid gold in a '*Golden Cup*', which shifts unpredictably to line 125-6 in the *Metamorphoses*. The sequence of objects in Swift's poem does not coherently align with that in Ovid, and Ovid's own sequence is subject to fragmentation, making it one of the Swiftian contrivances that Claude Rawson says are 'less patterned' than

---

[11] Williams, *Poems*, i.151. 'This piece [*A Fable of the Widow and her Cat*] is printed with some hesitation. The evidence is strong, however, that Swift had a hand in it.' See p.152 for rationale. Recent scholarship suggests that there is even less chance of it being Swift's. See Abigail Williams, *Journal to Stella*, p.360, n.14. Cf. Rogers, *Poems*, p.651, for account of Prior's possible involvement. Not yet known whether the poem will be completely deattributed by the forthcoming volumes of the *CWJS*, but treated here as though it will.

[12] Abigail Williams, *Journal*, p.388. 'it passt wondrfully at our Society to night'.

[13] Ehrenpreis, *Life*, ii.533-4.

[14] The *ODNB* details the suspicious Catholic acquaintances and tolerations that chequered Marlborough's career (though he was not a Catholic: in fact, his Protestantism held him back from fully supporting the cause of James II). During the reign of Queen Anne: 'Although Jacobite leaders distrusted Marlborough and were suspicious of his sincerity, Jacobite agents continued to maintain contact with him.'

we might expect.[15] As argued in Chapter 1, Swift's allusions to antiquity often contrived muddles out of fragments taken from well-known classical texts such as the *Metamorphoses*, rather than sustaining a coherent parody of them, or working within the limits of formal imitation.

True to Swift's lack of concern for systematic coherence, the poem does not stay with Ovid throughout this stanza: Mambrino, mentioned at line 14, was a Moorish King of chivalric romance who can be found in the *Orlando Furioso*, I.xxviii. However, as Harold Williams suggests, Swift is referring to his occurrence in *Don Quixote* (XXXVI), where Don Quixote puts on a bronze helmet and believes it to be made of gold. This reference to a quixotic delusion shifts the decorous classicism of the *Midas* poem towards low comedy, allowing a more savage critique to emerge out of the uneasy assemblage of literary allusions: in Rawson's words, this is another 'satiric catalogue' of allusions which has at once an 'unruly abundance' and an 'imprisoning force', implicating the target in a range of avaricious stories, and aligning the speaker with the sorts of unruly play appropriate to Bacchus.[16] It would be difficult to argue for the unity of these allusions beyond their shared subject matter, gold, but Swift ends the first stanza by referring to the 'Critick' who says that we learn 'to weigh our *Gold* by *Grains*', suggesting — alongside the satire on Marlborough's avarice — that '*Grains*' constitute the value system of the text. An allusion, particularly in Swift's poetry, tends to collapse (or at least disturb) the structural integrity of the text at the moment that it releases a particular effect, even if a larger — and much clearer — argument is being carried out by the text as a whole, or by a parodied speaker: the unity of the text is often subordinate to the erudition that created it, though its integrity as apology, polemic, or parody remains. Rumbold acknowledges this by saying that 'parody is not necessarily a formally discrete and structurally coherent imitation of a specific pre-text'.[17]

One way of accounting for Swift as an alluder who dealt in local pieces of contrivance without a persuasive sense of structural coherence (and who does not seem to have seen the need for one) is to compare him to his contemporaries: to examine how literary allusions were collected in the period, and how they made their presence known in other texts. One of the most common words for an allusion in the eighteenth century was a 'hint', suggesting something unfinished, provisional, and potentially treacherous: as explored in the introduction, Swift played on the many connotations of this word when he wrote 'To steal a Hint was never known, / But what he writ was all his own', which was plagiarised from

[15] Rawson, *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader*, p.101.
[16] Ibid., p.104.
[17] Rumbold, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises*, p.xl-xli.

Denham.[18] Johnson defined the verb 'to hint' in the following terms: 'to bring to mind by a slight mention or remote allusion' (the noun 'hint' is similarly defined: 'faint notice given to the mind; remote allusion; distant insinuation.') Johnson's example for 'to hint' was from Pope: 'Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike, / Just *hint* a fault, and hesitate dislike.' The couplet comes from the portrait of Atticus (Addison) in *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, and it is as difficult to work out as Johnson suggests:

> Bear, like the *Turk*, no brother near the throne,
> View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate for Arts that caus'd himself to rise;
> Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
> Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
> A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend,
> Dreading ev'n fools, by Flatterers besieg'd,
> And so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd;
> Like *Cato*, give his little Senate laws,
> And sit attentive to his own applause;[19]

As Butt recorded in Twickenham, this passage hints at several texts that Pope might have come into contact with but does not specify, leaving them in a state of 'faint' or 'remote' obscurity. For example, the '*Turk*' who will not let a 'brother near the throne' seems to draw on Denham's *On Mr. John Fletcher's Works* (1647), 'Of Eastern Kings, who to secure their reign, / Must have their Brothers, Sons, and Kindred slain.'[20] In *Spectator* No.253, these lines were quoted in close proximity to Addison's review of *An Essay On Criticism*, and in a letter to Craggs, Pope wrote that 'we have, it seems, a great Turk in poetry [Addison], who can never bear a brother on the throne.'[21] Pope's unwillingness to clarify the presence of the allusion in *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, or promote it to the status of an explicit reference, bears out his dislike of a 'brother near the throne', keeping the allusion subordinate in the workings of his own verse while suggesting, however obliquely, its unsettling presence (to those who notice it). Again, the line 'Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer' alludes to Wycherley's *Plain Dealer,* 'with faint Praises, one another Damn', a very 'faint' allusion to a 'remote' text that was originally spotted by Malone, not by Pope's contemporaries (it might have become cant by

[18] Williams, *Poems*, ii.565.
[19] Pope, *Poems*, iv.110-11.
[20] Ibid., iv.110-11, n.198.
[21] Pope, *Correspondence*, i.306.

Malone's time).[22] The cluster of allusions that surrounds this line about 'hints' — a line which is one of the few that does not allude to something — draws on real sibling rivalries without breaking the carefully managed decorum of the portrait, true to its own discussion of subtle, passive aggression: 'Just hint a fault'.

On the surface this appears 'Swiftian', or related to Swift's style insofar as its radius of antagonism is expressed through literary allusion. The difference between this kind of obscurity in Pope, however, is that he insists on the relative unimportance of the allusion to the coherence of the poem's scheme, writing so that it might be passed over by uncomprehending readers and still understood as an expression of discontent. Empson argues that this one of the most important things that an allusion can achieve, discerning an ethical imperative for a writer who composes his lines in this way: 'it is tactful, when making an obscure reference, to arrange that the verse shall be intelligible even when the reference is not understood. Thus many conceits are prepared to be treated as subdued conceits, though in themselves they have been fully worked out.'[23] Pope's obscure fragments are subordinate to a wider sense of the poetic whole: he wrote poetry which Reuben A. Brower refers to as 'imaginatively various and unified', 'at once richly allusive, sensuously alive, and morally serious.'[24] Brower's model of allusion is perhaps outdated, because it has been replaced by approaches which are more alert to textual variation and the precise contexts in which Pope's poetry was written and circulated. However, Brower registers an important truth: that the relative unity of Pope's poetry is still perceptible amid its 'richly allusive' idiom. One of the differences between Pope's poetic achievement and Swift's is that Pope manages to deploy erudition without the same emphasis on unstable poetic voices or necessarily leaving himself open to objection because of the misuse or concealment of sources (of the sort that Swift received for the allusions in the *Tale*). By contrast, Swift's tendency to play with the connotations of stolen lines and to collect fragments of even more texts to go with them, speaks of a general lack of commitment to any kind of poetic whole and a favouring of obscure local intensities, playing on the extent to which they are familiar to a given reader: as Ehrenpreis remarks, 'too much care for apothegms or *sententiae* breaks up the continuity of any discourse', and as much is true of allusion, especially in texts such as the *Tritical Essay* which parody reliance on fragments acquired from other writers, and do not refer in a specific way to their origins.[25] A large proportion of Swift's writing is unintelligible without following its trail of allusions; or, if it is intelligible, it tends to be so at the expense of the reader's

---

[22] Pope, *Poems*, iv.110.
[23] Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, revised edition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1947), p.167.
[24] Reuben A. Brower, *Alexander Pope and The Poetry of Allusion*, p.3 and p.29.
[25] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.40.

patience, always gesturing towards a remote store of learning to which access can only be hard won, if at all.

Meanings of the word 'hint' were rarified in Augustan literature to mean either a 'slight indication intended to be caught by the intelligent' (which is very close to Johnson's definition of an allusion) or 'an occasion; an opportunity' (which, in literature, could mean a practical prompt for a line).[26] Despite the separation of meanings, however, it is possible to see the different senses of 'hint' working in tandem in Augustan literature, with a sense of how each might inform the other. We know that Pope thought very carefully about which hints (meaning allusions to other texts) he would use for his own poems: Spence recorded that he 'first designed' a stanza of Spenser for his motto to *The Dunciad*, and later 'omitted' it (the passage dramatises the 'feeble stings' of lesser poets).[27] In one of the surviving manuscripts of *An Essay On Man* (printed 1733-4), now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, hints (in the different sense of practical prompts) were recorded for lines that would eventually become an early passage of the third epistle (III.27-42).[28] On the recto of the fourth folio, Pope wrote the following down the left hand side of the page:

What warms
If for thy Table feed

For his
~~nature~~ all-bounteous nature spread [?]
Tis not for thee
Joy
Tis
Loves
The
Shares
Think
The Birds
Think
Past

[26] *OED*, 1a and 2a.
[27] Spence, *Anecdotes,* i.182. The proposed stanza was *Faerie Queene*, I.i.23.
[28] *Essay On Man*, III. Pierpont Morgan Library: MA 348. Cf. Pope, *Correspondence*, iii.271, 'the great heap of fragments and hints before me'. There is similar evidence of Swift taking down 'hints' in the sense of practical prompts. See *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises* volume: *Hints Towards An Essay On Conversation* (pp.172-82) and *Hints On Good Manners* (pp.194-7), both a 'posthumously published fragment', and the *Good Manners* piece possibly intended as an *Intelligencer* (cf. Woolley, *Intelligencer*, p.270); 'Specimens of Irish English' (composed of 'A Dialogue in Hybernian Stile between A, and B' and 'Irish Eloquence', which 'rework similar material' (*Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock-Treatises,* pp.529-535, headnote p.529); 'Notes for Polite Conversation' (pp.545-547); and the 'Fragment of a Preface for *Directions to Servants*' (pp.549-50). See also 'Hints for *Intelligencer* Papers, and *Maxims Examined*', in Hayton and Rounce, *Irish Political Writings After 1725*, pp.321-7; and Woolley, *Intelligencer*, pp.269-71.

The Hog
Lives

These scattered words eventually became:

Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
For him as kindly spread the flow'ry lawn.
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings:
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
Loves of his own and raptures swell the note:
The bounding steed you pompously bestride,
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride:
Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain?
The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain:
Thine the full harvest of the golden year?
Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer:
The hog, that plows not nor obeys thy call,
Lives on the labours of this lord of all.[29]

Pope had an acute sense of how 'slight' origins can be expanded into poetry: 'a poem on a slight subject requires the greater care to make it considerable enough to be read' (though, in the *Essay On Man*, the subject is not 'slight').[30] While this expanded passage of the *Essay On Man* diminishes human significance with rhetorical questions — 'Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good' — it also records things in nature that 'spread', 'ascend', 'elevate', 'swell', and culminate in a 'full harvest'.[31] These contrary forces of breaking down and expanding, which Jones also notices in the poem, draw upon the manuscript origins where small 'hints' were expanded into heroic couplets: however, it is of significance that the two senses of 'hint' are working together. The *Essay On Man* negotiated, in complexly reciprocal ways, the powers of allusive suggestion and practical prompt, which Maynard Mack observes in the various

[29] Pope, *Poems*, (I) iii.95-96. ll.27-42. Cf. *An Essay On Man*, ed. Tom Jones (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), p.54. Discussion of the epistle pp.lxx-lxxvii.
[30] Spence, *Anecdotes,* i.168.
[31] Cf. Jones, *Essay*, p.55. The argument is that 'individuals are made for the whole, rather than the reverse.' Also, 'Rising and Falling', p.xlv-xlvii.

MSS of *An Essay On Man* in *The Last and Greatest Art*.[32] The line 'Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?', an example of a diminishing rhetorical question that also refers to an ascent, sets off a pair of heroic couplets which 'swell' the ornithological opening of Dryden's *Ode, On the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell* (1696):

> Mark how the Lark and Linnet sing,
> With rival Notes
> They strain their warbling Throats,
> To welcome in the Spring.[33]
> - Dryden

> Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
> Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings:
> Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
> Loves of his own and raptures swell the note:[34]
> - Pope

Amid the manuscript's rich and suggestive disorganisation, it is possible to observe Pope treating his own provisional notes and Dryden's 'rival' poem as two different — but related — kinds 'hint'.[35] It appears that an ornithological conceit — which might have been the allusion to Dryden's 'Lark and Linnet' — was playing on Pope's mind, but that its final form had not yet taken shape: 'Think / The Birds / Think.' Even when the lines had been expanded into heroic couplets, they questioned whether the 'notes' of others — either musical sounds or perhaps allusions — could be taken for oneself: 'Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?'

This passage of the *Essay On Man* manuscript shows that the eighteenth-century preoccupation with literary 'hints' (in the related senses of allusions to other texts and practical prompts) helped to organise and rehearse ideas: working from hints furnished Augustan literature with a life beyond its straitening demands of explicit statement. The difference, however, is that Swift hinted at (alluded to) other texts to push them to the edge of plausibility, leaving his own writing open to the accusation that it was not coherent or had not

---

[32] Maynard Mack, *The Last and Greatest Art: Some Unpublished Poetical Manuscripts of Alexander Pope* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984), pp.190-1: 'a considerable group of Pope's marginalia have the character of editorial annotations: they name an authority or simply an analogue for what is being attempted in the verse.' Mack cites Pope's notes to lines 75-6 of Epistle I, 'Lucretius of death reverst. lib. 3. finè.', and lines 117-22, 'Arist[otle] Eth[ica] 1. 7. e. 11. ~~of ye mean~~ reduces all ye Passions under Pleasure & Pain as their universal Principles', etc.

[33] Dryden, *Works*, iv.468. Cf. Jones, *Essay*, p.101, Dryden in 'Pope's Knowledge Of Authors Cited'.

[34] The allusion is not acknowledged in Mack's Twickenham notes, Pope, *Poems*, (I) iii.95; or Jones, *Essay*, p.55. Jones adduces Montaigne, 'Apology', ii.218, 348-9, and Prior, *Solomon*, i.549-54, which both address the pride of man. Jones believes that this particular epistle's sources are understudied. Cf. his argument for Pope's use of Polybius, pp.lxxiv-lxxvi.

[35] Cf. Mack, *The Last and Greatest Art*, 'General Introduction', p.18.

alluded to anything at all, which was part of his constitution as a satirist: 'the chief end I propose to my self in all my labours is to vex the world'.[36] As we can tell from responses in the period, he seems to have succeeded: his readers were not wholly or uniformly alert to his allusive dexterity. Gay thought that he might bond with Swift over their shared departure from other texts: 'You and I are alike in one particular, (I wish to be so in many) I mean that we hate to write upon other folk's Hints' (in the sense, perhaps, of practical prompts, even though Gay supposedly took the hint for *The Beggar's Opera* from Swift, suggesting that he was happy with hints from his friends).[37] When the students of Trinity College asked for Swift's bust to be sculpted by Roubiliac, they proposed to inscribe it with a similar claim to originality: 'Rich in unborrow'd wit, thy various Page / By Turns displays the Patriot, Poet, Sage'.[38] Johnson argued that 'perhaps no writer can be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original' (it is possible that 'well maintained' was cynical).[39] These readings of Swift as 'original', even impervious to external influence, are important even if they are demonstrably untrue. They show that his allusions were so slight that they passed unnoticed to some of the eighteenth-century audience, which one might assume to have been better at spotting them.

Ehrenpreis argues that 'allusive interpretations are supposed to enrich a poem and add to its suggestiveness' rather than detract from it, and Ricks argues that 'poets, by and large, are more generous or magnanimous than critics' and that 'poems are more so than poets.'[40] Accidental or chance allusions occurred — and were observed — with high frequency in Augustan literature as a whole, because its higher ambition to encompass the accomplishments of the language was based on a near-obsessive acquaintance with the texts which contributed to such an achievement: what Milton referred to as the 'pretious life-blood' of the 'master' spirits.[41] A typical observation about literary influence, in this period, simply flagged the presence of one text in another, offering little by way of comparison or analysis: Warburton, for example, stated that there are 'several lines of Mr. Pope's in Gardiner's translation of Rapin's *De Hortis,* and of Dryden's in Soame's *Art of Poetry*.'[42] However, the attempt to encompass — even with a characteristically Augustan declaration of ease — the span of the language and these achievements often rendered it less vigilant to the threat of disaggregation and redundancy. As Rawson argued in *Henry Fielding and The Augustan Ideal*

---

[36] Woolley, *Correspondence*, ii.606.
[37] Ibid., iii.410.
[38] See Robert Mahony, *Jonathan Swift: The Irish Identity*, p.12.
[39] Johnson, *Lives*, iii.214.
[40] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.19. Ricks, *Allusion*, p.301.
[41] Milton, *Prose*, ii.493.
[42] Spence, *Anecdotes*, i.151.

Under Stress (1972), an 'animating ideal or live fiction of order and coherence' was 'so essential a part of the Augustan sensibility', but it was 'felt to be under threat' from forces of disruption.[43] Augustan verse, in particular, was often undermined by a range of linguistic and aesthetic disruptions in the form of unwilled connotation and verbal ambiguity: this thesis argues that, compared with his contemporaries, Swift was more ready to manipulate such threats and convert them into the strengths of his satire.[44]

Ehrenpreis, whose reading of Augustan literature expresses a reticence (even a distaste) towards these forces of disunity, makes light of them in *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*: 'one sometimes gets the impression that when Moses wrote the Pentateuch, he was inspired less by Jehovah than by Milton'. He supplies an example of such wilful reading in response to the following lines from *Absalom and Achitophel*: 'His motions all accompanied with grace; / And Paradise was open'd in his face.' Anne Davidson Ferry, he argues, finds allusions here not 'worth considering' to Chaucer and Dante, but one that does seem to work from *Paradise Lost*.[45] Ehrenpreis goes on to say that 'when I strain, I think I detect *Paradise Regain'd*, although I do not expect other men's ears to agree with my own', citing passages as diverse as ll.29-30, 67-8, 92-3, 280-1, 299-300.[46] He builds up a general theory of such dubious connotations, concluding that 'parallels with *Paradise Lost* teach one little about the meaning of *Absalom and Achitophel*'.[47] However, it might teach us that Dryden, in a satire on Charles II's illicit and voluminous procreation, could have deliberately contrived a kind of poetry in which precisely this temptation to expose its origins aligns with the object of its satire: a king whose illicit progeny is scattered throughout the land. As Eleanor Cook argues, allusion is part of a 'whole process of remembering and not remembering and misremembering', rather than a final confirmation of the truth: part of the satiric complexity of *Absalom and Achitophel* is that Dryden's awareness of such an effect is ambiguous and untraceable beyond the text that has survived.[48]

Swift's writing has benefitted from the phenomenon of accidentally alluding to something — or alluding in a way that appears accidental — and it can be observed in much literature of the period. One of the characteristics of such allusions is that they often refer, in themselves, to imprecise or chance occurrences, 'comprehending the nature of allusion' as

---

[43] Claude Rawson, *Henry Fielding and The Augustan Ideal Under Stress* (London: Routledge, 1972), p.ix.
[44] Davis refers to Swift's sense that modern corruption has destroyed the 'finest achievements' of culture, in *The Satire of Jonathan Swift* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p.17.
[45] Ehrenpreis refers to Anne Davidson Ferry, *Milton and The Miltonic Dryden* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968).
[46] Ehrenpreis, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values*, p.19.
[47] Ibid., pp.18-19.
[48] Eleanor Cook, *Against Coercion: Games Poets Play*, p.100.

they are uttered.[49] Johnson, for example, said the following in a letter to Francesco Sastres: 'Dictionaries are like watches, the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true.'[50] This alludes to an often rehearsed couplet from Pope's *An Essay On Criticism*, which did not 'go' quite the same: ''Tis with our *Judgments* as our *Watches*, none / Go just *alike*, yet each believes his own.'[51] The line clearly stuck with Johnson in some capacity, either as something half-remembered or consciously manipulated. The ambiguity as to which it might be registers a deeper affinity, in the eighteenth century, for learning which resists attribution in its new ownership and deployment, even if it is designed to be noticed as a literary allusion: an affinity which might have derived from the more casual methods of commonplacing that were being followed in the eighteenth century, after Locke's *New Method*, which allowed for — and even anticipated — an element of human error.[52] The same casual inaccuracy can be observed in one of Johnson's comments about Edmund Burke: 'If a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed, to shun a shower, he would say — "this is an extraordinary man."'[53] This line appears to have remembered, or misremembered, Swift's *City Shower*: 'Here various Kinds by various Fortunes led, / Commence Acquaintance underneath a Shed. / Triumphant Tories, and desponding Whigs, / Forget their Fewds, and join to save their Wigs.'[54] The allusion to Swift, if it exists, is even more resilient to attribution owing to there being fewer repeated words, which suggests that it was curtailed by Johnson's unease about Swift's poems, of which he said 'they are, for the most part, what their author intended' (a line which suggests, *ad fontes,* a problem with misrepresentation).[55] One finds, repeatedly in Johnson, a reliance on Swift's writing which at the moment of usage reveals an instinctive disrespect for accuracy. In the 'Preface' to his edition of Shakespeare, for example, Johnson chose a particularly self-comprehending image to describe people who take extracts from the plays: 'he that tries to recommend him

---

[49] Cf. Ricks, *Allusion*, p.10.
[50] Johnson, *Letters*, iii.206.
[51] Pope, *Poems*, i.240. Swift alluded (perhaps accidentally) to this couplet from *An Essay On Criticism*. See 'Bishop Kennett's Picture of Swift' in Williams, *Correspondence*, v.228-9. '"How can I help it", says the doctor, "if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?" Then he instructed a young nobleman, that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a papist)'.
[52] Ann Moss argues that the commonplace book declined towards the end of the seventeenth century, implying that an inferior kind of formal commonplacing survived. See *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.279. 'It was by Locke's time a rather lowly form of life, adapted to fairly simple tasks, and confined to the backwaters of intellectual activity.' However, cf. Lucia Dacome, 'Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65:4 (2004), pp.603-25. Locke's text, assessed in this article, was *A New Method of of a Common-Place Book* in *The Posthumous Works of Mr. John Locke* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1706). Despite the claim to near-mathematical specificity, his plan actually leaves room for error: 'You will not indeed always light on the Page you want, because of the breaches that are made in different Editions of Books […] but you are never very far from the place you want', p.323.
[53] Boswell, *Life*, iv.275.
[54] Williams, *Poems*, i.138.
[55] Lonsdale, *Lives*, iii.214.

[Shakespeare] by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.'[56] Scholars have queried whether Johnson would have known Hierocles' *facetiae*, from which this anecdote derives. Boswell tried to attribute an imitation of them to Johnson, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* but G. B. Hill has since rejected those claims.[57] It is perhaps more likely that Johnson stole the idea from Swift's *Drapier's Letters* (No.2), which he certainly read.[58] In Swift, the anecdote conceals its source: 'I have heard of a Man who had a Mind to sell his House, and therefore carried a Piece of *Brick* in his Pocket, which he shewed as a *Pattern* to encourage Purchasers.'[59] In Swift's case, we can prove that he owned an edition of Hierocles, and that it contained the extant *facetiae,* suggesting that this was probably one of his characteristic allusions to antiquity which concealed its genuine depth of learning.[60] If Johnson picked this anecdote up from Swift, then his own attribution of it to Hierocles, despite an official claim of accuracy, would have concealed the truth of how it had really been acquired.

It was typical of writers alluding to Swift, in the eighteenth century, to imitate his creative subtleties with regard to attribution: the submission of Swift's own writings to various practices of hinting (in both of its separate senses) was, partly, his legacy to satire. Christine Gerrard, in 'Laetitia Pilkington and The Mnemonic Self' (2018), has gestured towards a phenomenon, in the oral poetic culture of eighteenth-century Dublin, of memorising long passages of poetry, often in situations of game-playing and deception.[61] Pilkington, for example, refers to '*the Book and Volume of my Brain*', a phrase memorised from *Hamlet* (I.v.97):

> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
> That youth and observation copied there,
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmix'd with baser matter.

---

[56] 'Preface' (1765), *Yale*, vii.62.
[57] Cf. *Yale*, vii.63., n.4.
[58] Johnson, *Lives*, iii.203: 'which way soever the eye or the ear was turned, some tokens were found of the nation's gratitude to the *Drapier*.'
[59] *Drapier's Letters,* 'To Mr. Harding', Davis, *Prose*, x.17.
[60] Passmann and Vienken, *Library and Reading*, ii.857. Swift owned *Hieroclis Philosophi Commentarius in Aurea Pythagoreorum Carmina,* ed. J. Pearson (London: R. Daniel and J. Williams, 1654).
[61] Christine Gerrard, 'Laetitia Pilkington and The Mnemonic Self', p.489. See Pilkington, *Memoirs*, i.134.

Hamlet's attempt to purify the mind, to cleanse it of 'baser matter', was not important to Pilkington or Swift. Both were in competition to memorise poetry with little standard of acquisition other than the size of the text:

> When I read any thing peculiarly charming, I never forget it; and that I could repeat not only all his [Swift's] Works, but all *Shakespear's,* which I put to this Trial; I desired him to open any Part of it, and read a Line, and I would engage to go on with the whole Speech; as we were in his Library, he directly made the Experiment: The Line he first gave me, he had purposely picked out for its singular Oddness: I readily went on with the whole Speech, and did so several times, that he tried me with different Plays. The Dean then took down *Hudibras*, and ordered me to examine him in it, as he had done me in *Shakespear;* and, to my great Surprize, I found he remembered every Line, from Beginning to End of it.[62]

The game was a playful variation on some of the genuine practices of composition in Augustan literature, evident from the manuscript of *An Essay On Man,* in which hints of other texts are used to initiate more extended trains of thought, exhibiting at once the strength of the speaker's memory and affecting a notional fondness for spontaneity. Laetitia Pilkington's teasing acknowledgement that she had memorised 'all his Works' as well as Shakespeare's might well have been true. One of the practical jokes recorded in her *Memoirs* was to memorise *Verses On The Death of Dr. Swift,* which, Swift thought, she repeated to a large audience:

> The Dean did not know what sort of Memory I had, when he intrusted me with his Verses: I had no occasion for any other Copy, than what I had registred in the *Book and Volume of my Brain*: I could repeat the whole Poem, and could not forbear delighting some particular Friends with a Rehearsal of it. This reached the Dean's Ear, who imagined I play'd him false, and sent for me to come to him. When I entered, he told me, I had broke my Word with him, and consequently forfeited all the good Opinion he had ever conceived of me. I looked, as I think he generally made me do, like a Fool; and asked what I had done? He told me, I had copied his Poem, and shewn it round the Town. I assured him, I had not. He said I lyed, and produced a Poem something like it, published in *London*, and told me, that from reading it about, that odd Burlesque on it had taken rise. He bade me read it aloud. I did so, and could not forbear laughing, as I plainly perceived, though he had endeavoured to disguise his Style, that the Dean had burlesqued himself; and made no manner of scruple to tell him so.[63]

Swift's anger at being 'play'd false' is ambiguous: he might mean deceived by Pilkington, who promised not to share the poem, or he might mean misquoted. Karian shows that Pilkington's quotations from the poem in her *Memoirs* do contain 'variants not occurring in any printed copy during her lifetime', but, in one case, 'she records variants found only in manuscript additions from two copies of the poem', suggesting that 'Swift continued to modify his poem

---

[62] Ibid., i.136.
[63] Ibid., i.134-5.

between Pilkington's perusal and its later publication by Faulkner'.[64] Swift expressed an anxiety about being misquoted to Pope: 'My Poem (which it grieves me that I dare not send you a copy of, for fear of the Curl's and Dennis's of Ireland, and still more for fear of the worst of Traytors, our friends and admirers) my Poems, I say, will shew you what a distinguishing age we live in?'.[65]

This tendency to misrepresent Swift, either playfully or with a serious commitment to stealing from him, would have confirmed his belief about the limits of friendship: 'I love my Friend as well as you, / But would not have him stop my View.'[66] As he said to Bolingbroke, 'I hate a crowd where I have not an easy place to see and be seen.'[67] A sense that literary acquaintance was undermined by selfishness in the same way that friendship might have been was especially important to Irish poets of the period, whose defensiveness in the face of English colonial rule was proverbial: Ian McBride suggests that 'the inhabitants of Ireland', in this period, 'shared an awareness that they did not determine their own history', which led to a characteristic competitiveness among the Irish population and its writers.[68] Thomas Parnell, author of *An Essay On The Different Stiles of Poetry*, imagined the work of his Scriblerian friends being eaten by a book-worm:

> Insatiate *Brute*, whose Teeth abuse
> The sweetest Servants of the *Muse*.
> (Nay never offer to deny,
> I took thee in the Fact to fly.)
> His *Roses* nipt in ev'ry Page,
> My poor *Anacreon* mourns thy Rage.
> By thee my *Ovid* wounded lies;
> By thee my *Lesbia's Sparrow* dies:
> Thy rabid Teeth have half destroy'd
> The Work of Love in *Biddy Floyd*,
> They rent *Belinda's* Locks away,
> And spoil'd the *Blouzehind* of *Gay*.[69]

Characteristically, Gay misread the poem's mock-heroic intentions, and wrote to Parnell to say 'I am obliged to your Bookworm' simply because it alluded to the *Shepherd's Week*.[70] However, as Claude Rawson acknowledges in his edition of the poem, the ostensibly honest

---

[64] Karian, *Print and Manuscript*, p.176.
[65] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.136.
[66] Williams, *Poems*, ii.554.
[67] Woolley, *Correspondence*, iii.231.
[68] Ian McBride, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2009), p.26.
[69] *The Book-Worm*, Parnell, *Collected Poems*, p.162.
[70] Gay, *Letters*, p.29.

allusions are complicated by several kinds of secrecy. Goldsmith, who disapproved of the Augustan tendency to conceal learning, cynically adduced Theodore Beza's *Poemata* ('Ad Musas') as the origin of 'The Book-Worm', accusing Parnell of passing off an 'unacknowledged translation' of it as his own.[71] As Rawson's commentary shows, the poem takes several important ideas from Beza, not least the allusion to Catullus' Lesbia and her sparrow, which he would have seen at lines 21-2 of the 'Ad Musas' text, not in Catullus's *Carmina*: 'Tu fere mihi Lesbiam abstulisti.'[72] Swift's *To Mrs. Biddy Floyd* (c.1709), a poem in praise of a famously beautiful woman, is about the 'Work' of Cupid, but it was printed (and went through four editions that year) by Edmund Curll as *Cupid's Contrivance* in an anthology of Rochester's verses, which Swift would not have readily admitted.[73] In light of these secrets, Parnell's bookworm might be read as an allegory for the piratical printer, whose 'rabid Teeth' only 'half destroy' the texts on which they prey, delighting in their obscurity as much as in their reputations. There was another sense in which Swift was 'half' destroyed in this text. Parnell composed another couplet which alluded to him, but it was taken out in Pope's printed edition. It survived in a manuscript that was not seen again until 1755: 'Now *Spencer Milton Driden* lift, / *Row Steel Pope Addison* and *Swift*.'[74] The juxtaposition of Swift with figures he did not like creates the kind of social discomfort in which he specialised himself, playing with the ordering and preferment of named writers to induce irritation. The metrical delinquency of the second line alerts the reader to the extraneous position of Swift on the periphery of modern literature, while rhyming him with 'lift' (likely *OED* 2b, 'to raise in dignity', but perhaps a pun on *OED* 1c, 'to bear', or *OED* 8, 'to steal'). Swift's inability to tolerate bad company — bad defined as affectedly polite — would perhaps have been on Parnell's mind: 'Many persons of both sexes, whom I have known, and who passed for well-bred in their own and the world's opinion, are the most troublesome in company to others and themselves.'[75]

Ricks argues that allusive poems can constitute and comprehend imaginary company, and 'realize loneliness' in the process: 'at their best, such poems are alive to — because of — an acknowledgment not only of the opportunities but of the limits, and the perils of this particular artistic and human enterprise [of loneliness].'[76] To Swift, who was temperamentally disposed towards independence (as discussed in Chapter 3), the reduction of

---

[71] For discussion of Goldsmith's comment, see Parnell, *Complete Poems*, p.516. Beza's *Poemata* was printed by Bernard Lintot in 1713.
[72] Ibid., p.517. 'Ad Musas', *Poemata*, p.59.
[73] Williams, *Poems*, i.118. See *The Works of The Right Honourable the Earls of Rochester and Roscommon, with Some Memoirs of The Earl of Rochester's Life, by Monsieur St. Evremont*, 2 vols. (London: Edmund Curll, 1709), ii.187.
[74] Ibid., p.518.
[75] Davis, *Prose*, iv.221.
[76] Ricks, *Allusion*, p.261.

literary allusions to ephemeral hints allowed for them to be disposed of easily, as well as collected at speed: 'Why do we grieve that Friends should dye? / No loss more easy to supply.'[77] He would often attend to hints gathered from other writers at moments of sincere disagreement, either as an individual or on behalf of his church, 'rolling' ideas around in an energetic — and enigmatic — drama of potential and possibility: 'I come home rolling resentments in my mind, and framing schemes of revenge: full of which (having written down some hints) I go to bed.'[78] This is why some of his texts exhibit a temperamental allusive aggression, marshalling information with an ever-dwindling possibility of attribution in service of the parody based on a specific target. From the 'History of *Fanaticism*' passage in *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*:

> The most early Traces we meet with, of *Fanaticks*, in antient Story, are among the *Ægyptians*, 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. These Feasts were celebrated to the Honor of *Osyris*, whom the *Grecians* called *Dionysius*, and is the same with *Bacchus*: Which has betray'd some superficial Readers to imagine, that the whole Business was nothing more than a Set 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 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*.[79]

This account of fanaticism, which Walsh suggests is a parody of Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), begins with pagan rites carried out in morally dubious (and historically vague) contexts: '*Orgya*' and festivities of Dionysus. Melampus, who according to Herodotus understood the language of animals, is suggested to be (alongside Orpheus) the instigator of 'Rites' in ancient Egypt, but Swift's speaker — whose exposition of fanaticism in rhetorically strategic ways neglects the coherence and accuracy of his detail — admits that dispute will not arise now, 'nor in all likelihood, at any time for the future' (paying parodic tribute to the ignorance that Swift believed was germane to dissenting and nonconformity, as explored in Chapter 4).[80] The marginal note to this passage does not necessarily help, because it simply points to sources that the reader is unlikely to follow up in detail: '*Diod. Sic. L. 1. / Plut. de Iside & / Osyride.*' Walsh fills in such detail, pointing to Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historia* 1.97,

---

[77] Williams, *Poems*, ii.562.
[78] Abigail Williams, *Journal to Stella*, p.10.
[79] Walsh, *Tale*, pp.183-4.
[80] Cf. Melampus in Herodotus, *Histories*, ii.49, or perhaps Homer's *Odyssey*, xi.223ff.

and Plutarch's *Moralia* 351.C-384.C.[81] However, these genuine references to antiquity are immediately undermined by the bawdy parodies of false knowledge in the form of index-reading (like describing a 'Palace' having seen only the '*Privy*') and of 'reading a Man's Destiny, by peeping in his *Breech*' (a detail which Ehrenpreis tried to locate in a specific travel book that Swift might have read, but which Walsh describes as 'untraced').[82] The sense that allusion, here, functions in service of higher parodic tactics unsettles its internal coherence (on the part of Swift's speaker, at least, who is constructing a history of fanaticism along pejorative lines). Swift's insistence on the potency of short prompts in this extended piece of ideological argument suggests, in line with the evidence presented in this thesis, that his sense of allusion was never fully distinguished from lower sorts of commonplacing or theft; nor did he see a need to realise that distinction more clearly, because its potential to disaggregate sense or create obscurity was valuable as a rhetorical strategy (or those strategies he attributed to his speakers). This passage on fanaticism justifies Johnson's observation that Swift could not have written without commonplacing what he read, because of its wide range and careful manipulation of detail: 'it is apparent that he must have had the habit of noting whatever he observed; for such a number of particulars could never have been assembled by the power of recollection.'[83]

The allusions to which this thesis attends were undoubtedly accompanied by a great many more. Such slippery writing might always contain fragments of other texts that appear obvious to some and not others, leaving the critic lost in enquiry for which Swift himself laid a trap. The hack writer of the *Tale* says that 'A *True Critick*, in the Perusal of a Book, is like a *Dog* at a Feast, whose Thoughts and Stomach are wholly set upon what the Guests *fling away*, and consequently, is apt to *Snarl* most, when there are the fewest *Bones*.'[84] Nokes responded to this line by saying that 'Swift has been most obliging to his critics and biographers, leaving a goodly scatter of bones buried just beneath the surface of his works', and that 'the more enthusiastic burrowers have dragged whole skeletons into the light of day.'[85] This thesis supplements the work of other 'burrowers' looking for Swift's 'bones' by showing the extent of the literary allusions that were hidden under the deceptively plain surface of his writing: in a range of texts written throughout his lifetime, and in relation to the libraries he assembled and books he acquired. The thesis also shows how such allusions might either be aligned with Swift's intentions or made useful if this is not possible. What Swift would have felt about such

---

[81] Walsh, *Tale*, p.526, n.62.
[82] Ibid., p.527, n.66.
[83] Johnson, *Lives,* iii.207.
[84] Walsh, *Tale*, p.67.
[85] Nokes, *Hypocrite Reversed*, 'Preface', p.vii.

exposure is not clear. It is also unclear what he would have thought of the evidence that volumes of his own *Works* were stolen from Marsh's Library after he died.[86]

[86] 1767 catalogue, H|3|16.

Bibliography

Archives and Special Collections

Bodleian Library Special Collections, Oxford.
Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Fountain Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
Hurd Library, Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury.
Marsh's Library, Dublin.
Rylands Collection, University of Manchester.
Trinity College Archives, Dublin.

Editions of Swift Pre 1900

Swift, J., *Verses On The Death of Dr. S——, D. S. P. D., Occasioned by Reading a Maxim in Rochefoucault* (London [reprinted Dublin]: Bathurst, 1731).

Faulkner, G., (ed.) *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D., D.S.P. D.,* 4 vols. (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1735).
———, *The Works of Jonathan Swift*, *D. D., D. S. P. D.*, 8 vols. (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1745-6).

Hawkesworth, J., (ed.) *The Works of Jonathan Swift*, *D. D., D.S.P.D.,* 14 vols. (London: C. Bathhurst, *et al.,* 1755 ——).

Nichols, J., (ed.) *The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift, D. D., Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin*, 19 vols. (London: J. Johnson, *et al.*, 1801).

Scott, W., (ed.), *The Works of Jonathan Swift,* 19 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable *et al.,* 1814).

Davis, H., (ed.) *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, 14 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939-68).

Ellis, F., (ed.) *Swift vs. Mainwaring: The Examiner and The Medley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

Elias, A. C., Fisher, J. I., Reid, P., (eds.) *Jonathan Swift's Word-Book: A Vocabulary Compiled for Esther Johnson and Copied in Her Own Hand* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2017).

Fabricant, C., (ed.) *A Modest Proposal and Other Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 2009).

Just, M. M., *Jonathan Swift's On Poetry: A Rapsody*: *A Critical Edition With A Historical Introduction And Commentary* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003).

Mahony, R., *Different Styles of Poetry: Verses by Wentworth Dillon, Fourth Earl of Roscommon, Thomas Parnell, & Jonathan Swift*, (Dublin: Cadenus Press, 1978).

Passmann, D. F., and Vienken, H. J., (eds.) *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift: A Bio-Bibliographical Handbook*, 5 vols. (Frankfurt am Main and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003).

Rawson, C., (ed.) *Gulliver's Travels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Rogers, P., (ed.) *The Complete Poems of Jonathan Swift* (London: Penguin Books, 1983).

Ross, A., and Woolley, D., (eds.) *A Tale of A Tub and Other Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Williams, H., (ed.) *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)
———, (ed.) *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 2nd edition, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).

Woolley, D., (ed.) *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999-2007).

The Cambridge Edition of The Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. David Womersley, *et al.*, 17 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008 —):
———, Hayton D., and Rounce, A., *Irish Political Writings After 1725* (2018).
———, Gadd, I., and Goldgar, B., *English Political Writings 1711-1714: The Conduct of The Allies and Other works* (2008).
———, Rumbold, V., *Parodies, Hoaxes, and Mock-Treatises* (2012).
———, Walsh, M., *A Tale of A Tub* (2010).
———, Williams, A., *The Journal to Stella* (2013).
———, Womersley, D., *Gulliver's Travels* (2012).

Shinagel, M., (ed.) *A Concordance to The Poems of Jonathan Swift* (Ithaca and London: Cornell, 1972).

Early Modern Editions of Ancient Writers (by Editor)

Loeb editions of classical texts used for modern translations unless otherwise specified.

[Anonymous], *The Works of Virgil Translated Into English Prose, As Near The Original As The Different Idioms of Latin and English Allow*, 2 vols. (London: Joseph Davidson, 1743).

Bielkium, J., (ed.) *T. Petronii Arbitri Satyricon* (Amsterdam: 1702).

Burman, P., *Titi Petronii Arbitri Satyricon Quae Supersunt Cum Integris Doctorum Virorum*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: 1743).

Casaubon, I., (ed.), *C. Suetoni Tranquili De XII Caesaribus Libri VIII* (Lyon: Jacob Chouet, 1595).
———, *Polybii Lycortæ F. Megalopolitani Historiarum Libri Qui Supersunt*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam: Johannis Janssonii à Waesberge, & Johannis van Someren, 1670).
———, *Diogenes Laertii De Vitus, Dogmatibus et Apophthegmatibus Clarorum Philosophorum Libri X*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Henricus Wetstenium, 1692).

Dacier, A., (ed.) *Les Vies Des Hommes Illustres de Plutarque* (Amsterdam: R. and G. Wetstenium, 1724).

Duport, J., (ed.) *Homeri Poetarum Omnium Seculorum Facilè Principis Gnomologia* (Canterbury: Johannes Field, 1660).

Gale, T., (ed.) *Herodoti Halicarnassei Historiarum Libri IX Novem Musarum Nominibus Inscripti* (London: E. Horton, *et al.*, 1679).

L'Estrange, R., *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (London: Richard Sare, 1702).

Manutius, A., (ed.) *Ex Plauti Comœdiis* (Venice: Aldine Press, 1572).

Nodot, F., (ed.) *Satyricon Cum Fragmentis Albae Graecae Recuperatis Anno 1688* (London: Churchill, 1693).

Peraxylus, A. A., *Flavii Iosephi Opera* (Basel: Froben and Episcopius, 1543).

Scaliger, J., (ed.) *D. Magni Opera Ausonii Burgdigalensis* (Geneva: Stoer, 1608).

Serranus, (tr. and ed.) *Platonis Opera Quae Extant Omnia. Ex nova Ioannis Serrani Interpretatione, Perpetuis Eiusdem Notis Illustrata: Quibus et Methodus et Doctrinae Summa Breviter et Perspicue Indicatur. Eiusdem Annotationes in Quosdam Suae Illius Interpretationes Locos Henr. Stephani de*

Quorundam Locorum Interpretatione Iudicium, et Multorum Contextus Graeci Emendatio. 3 vols. (Geneva: Estienne [Stephanus], 1578).

———, (tr. and ed.) *Xenophontis (Viri Armorum & Literarum Laude Celeberrimi) Quae Extant Opera. Annotationes Henrici Stephani, Multum Locupletatae: Quae Varia ad Lectionem Xenophontis Longè Utilisima Habent*, 2nd edition. (Geneva: Estienne [Stephanus], 1581).

Pre 1900

[Anonymous] *A Compleat Key to The Dispensary* (London: T. Wotton, J. Lacy, J Shuckburgh, and C. Motte, 1726).

[Anonymous] *Daphnis: OR, A Pastoral Upon the Unfortunate Death of Mr. Thomas Creech; With a Poem On The Despairing Lover, and The Despairing Shepherd* (London: Henry Hills, 1709)

[Anonymous] (ed.) *The Historie of Ireland, Collected by Three Learned Authors Viz. Meredith Hanmer, Doctor in Divinitie; Edmund Campion Sometime Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford; and Edmund Spenser Esq.* (Dublin: Society of Stationers, 1633).

[Anonymous], *A Step to Oxford: Or, A Mad Essay on the Revered Mr. Tho. Creech Hanging Himself (as 'tis said) for Love* (London: [unidentified printer], 1700)

[Anonymous] *Sacri Lusus. In Usum Scholæ Kilkenniensis* (Dublin: Joseph Wilde, 1675).

Alsop, A., *Fabularum Æsopicarum Delectus* (Oxford: [unidentified printer], 1698).

Andrewes, L., *Apospasmatia: Or, a Collection of Posthumous and Orphan lectures* (London: R. Hodgkinson for H. Moseley, 1657).

Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* ed. Juan Luis Vives and tr. John Healey, 2nd edition (London: G. Eld and M. Flesher, 1620).
———, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans,* tr. Henry Bettenson, ed. G. R. Evans (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

Bacon, F., *Francisci Baconi, Baronis de Verulamio, Vice-comitis Sancti Albani, Operum Moralium et Civilium Tomus,* ed. William Rawley (London: Edward Griffin, 1638).
———, *The Oxford Francis Bacon,* eds. Graham Rees, Michael Kiernan *et al.*, 15 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996 —).

Bailey, N., *Dictionarium Britannicum, or a Compleat Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, 2nd edition (London: T. Cox, 1736).

Barnivelt, E., [Pope], *A Key to The Lock* (London: James Roberts, 1715).

Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici,* 12 vols. (Antwerp: Plantin Press, 1601 and second edition 1612).

Bentley, R., *Remarks Upon a Late Discourse of Free-Thinking: In a Letter to F. H. D. D. by Phileleutherus Lipsiensis* (London: John Morphew, 1713).

Berkeley, G., *Alciphron: Or, the Minute Philosopher* (London: G. Risk, G. Ewing, and W. Smith, 1732)

Bernard, J., *The Lives of The Roman Emperors from Domitian, Where Suetonius Ends, to Constantine The Great*, 2 vols. (London: Charles Harper, 1698).

Blackmore, R., *A Satyr Against Wit* (London: Samuel Crouch, 1699).
———, *Advice to the Poets: A Poem* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1706).
———, *A Treatise of Consumptions and Other Distempers Belonging to the Breast and Lungs* (London: John Pemberton, 1724).

Blair, H., *Lectures On Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 3 vols. (Dublin: Whitestone, *et al.*, 1783).

Boswell, J., *Life of Johnson,* eds. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

Brady, R., *A Continuation of the Complete History of England: Containing The Lives and Reigns of Edward I, II & III and Richard the Second* (London: Edward Jones, *et al,* 1700).

Bracton, H., *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Anglicæ* (London: Tottel, 1569).

Browne, M., *Poems On Various Subjects* (London: Edward Cave, 1739).

Bulteel, J., *A Collection of Apothegmes or Sayings of The Ancients* (London: William Whitwood, 1698)

Burton, R., *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989-1998).

Butler, S., *Satires and Miscellaneous Poetry and Prose,* ed. René Lamar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928).

Callières, F., *Histoire Poëtique de la Guerre Nouvellment Declareé Entre les Anciens et les Modernes* (Paris: 1688).

Carthy, C., *A Translation of the Second Book of Horace's Epistles, Together With Some of the Most Select In The First* (Dublin: Christopher Dickson, 1731).

Chaucer, G., *The Riverside Chaucer,* ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Clarendon, Edward Hyde (Earl of), *The History of The Rebellion and Civil Wars in England,* 3 vols. (Oxford: New Theatre, 1707).

Clayton, R., *The Religion of Labour* (Dublin: George Grierson, 1740).

Coke, *Brief Animadversions On Amendments of The Fourth Part of The Institutes of Lawes of England* (London: John Strater, 1670).

Coles, E., *An English Dictionary* (London: Printed for Peter Parker, 1677)

Cordier (Corderius), M., *School Colloquies,* tr. Charles Hoole (London: Stationer's Company, 1709).

Cotton, C., *The Genuine Poetical Works of Charles Cotton, Esq.* (London: R. and J. Bonwicke and R. Wilkin, *et al.*, 1725).

Cowley, A., *Cutter of Coleman-Street* (London: Henry Herringman, 1663).

Creech, T., *T. Lucretius Carus the Epicurean Philosopher, His Six Books "De Natura Rerum", Done into English Verses, with Notes* (Oxford: Lichfield, 1682).
———, *The Odes, Satyrs, and Epistles of Horace* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1684).
———, (tr.) *The Five Books of Manilius, Containing A System of the Ancient Astronomy and Astrology* (London: Tonson, 1697).
———, *T. Lucretius Carus, of the Nature of Things, in Six Books*, 5th edition (London: Tonson, 1715).

Curll, E., *The Works of The Right Honourable the Earls of Rochester and Roscommon*, *with Some Memoirs of The Earl of Rochester's Life, by Monsieur St. Evremont*, 2 vols. (London: Edmund Curll, 1709).
———, *The Flying Island, &c. Being A Key to Gulliver's Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Glubdubdribb, Luggnagg, and Japan. In A Third Letter to Dean Swift* (London: Edmund Curll, 1726).

Dampier, W., *A New Voyage Around The World* (London: James Knapton, 1697).

Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, tr. Mark Lucas, 3 vols. (London: Penguin Books, 1976).

Defoe, D., *The Shortest-Way With The Dissenters; Or Proposals for the Establishment of the Church* (London: [unidentified], 1702),
———,*The Storm*, ed. Richard Hamblyn (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

Delany, P., *The Anniversary of The Martyrdom of King Charles the First* (Dublin: 1738).
———, *Twenty Sermons on Social Duties*, *and Their Opposite Vices. The second edition: In which the Five Last Sermons Are Now First Printed*, 2nd edition (London: Rivington, 1747).
———, *Observations Upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (London: W. Reeve, 1754).

Denham, J., *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, ed. Theodore Howard Banks, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale, 1969).

Dennis, J., *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (London: Richard Parker, 1701).

Dodsley, R., *The Correspondence of Robert Dodsley: 1733-1764* ed. James A. Tierney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Donne, J., *The Sermons of John Donne,* eds. Evelyn M. Simpson and George R. Potter, 10 vols. (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962).

Dryden, J., *The Works of John Dryden,* ed. H. T. Swedenberg Jr., 20 vols. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1956-2000).
———, *Essays of John Dryden,* ed. William P. Ker, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926).

Echard, L., *The Roman History from the Settlement of the Empire by Augustus Caesar to the Removal of the Imperial Seat by Constantine The Great*, 2 vols. (London: Gillyflower, 1698).

Edwards, J., *The Preacher: The Second Part* (London: J. Robinson, J. Lawrence, and J.Wyat, 1706).

Edwards, T., *Gangræna: Or, a Catalogue and Discovery of Many of The Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and Pernicious Practices of the Secretaries of This Time, Vented and Acted in England in These Last Four Years* (London: T. R. and E. M. for Ralph Smith, 1646).

Estienne, *Dictionarum Sive Latinae Linguae Thesaurus* (Paris: Estienne, 1536).

Fletcher, J., *The Night-Walker: Or, The Little Thief* (London: Andrew Crook, 1661).

Fuller, T., *The History of the Worthies of England* (London: Thomas Williams, 1662).

Garth, S., *Oratio Laudatoria, in Ædibus Collegii Regalis Med.* (London: Roper, 1697).
———, *The Dispensary; a Poem* (London: John Nutt, 1699).
———, *A Poem to The Earl of Godolphin* (London: John Nutt, 1710).
———, (ed.) *Ovid's Metamorphoses, in Fifteen Books, Translated by the Most Eminent Hands* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1711).

Gibbs, J., *The First Fifteen Psalms of David, Translated Into Lyric Verse: Propos'd As An Essay, Supplying the Perspicuity and Coherence According To The Modern Art of Poetry; Not Known To Have Been Attempted Before in Any Language. With a Preface Containing Some Observations of Great and General Defectiveness of Former Versions in Greek, Latin, and English* (London: J. Matthews for John Hartley, 1701).

Gildon, C., *A New Miscellany of Original Poems On Several Occasions* (London: Peter Buck, 1701).

Hale, M., *The Primitive Origination of Mankind Considered and Examined According to The Light of Nature* (London: William Godbid, 1677).

H. G., *The Eagle and The Robin. An Apologue* (London: Henry Hills, 1709).

Hobbes, T., *Leviathan,* ed. C. B. Macpherson (London: Penguin Books, 2002).

Hooker, R., *Works* (London: Andrew Crook, 1662)
———, *Works* (London: H. Mortlock, 1705)

Hoole, C., *New Discovery of The Old Art of Teaching Schoole, in Four Small Treatises* (London: Andrew Crook, 1661).

Howell, J., *Epistulae Ho-Elianae: Familiar Letters, Domestic and Foreign*, 4th. edition. (London: S. Crouch, 1705).

Hughes, J., *A Complete History of England,* 3 vols. (London: R. Bonwicke, *et al.*, 1706).

Hume, D., *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932).

Jonson, B., *Ben: Ionson his Volpone or The Foxe* (London: Thomas Thorppe, 1607).
———, *The Works of Ben Jonson* ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947).
———, *The Cambridge Edition of The Works of Ben Jonson*, eds. David Bevington, Ian Donaldson, *et al.*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Johnson, S., *A Dictionary of the English Language: In Which Words Are Deduced From Their Originals, and Illustrated In Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers*, 2 vols. (London: William Strahan, 1755).
———, *The Lives of The Most Eminent English Poets,* ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).
———, *The Yale Edition of The Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Robert Demaria Jr., *et al.,* 20 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958-2019).

Keach, B., and Laune, T., *Tropologia: a Key to Open Scripture-Metaphors* (London: Enoch Prosser, 1681).

King, W., *Dialogues of The Dead: Relating to The Present Controversy Concerning The Epistles of Phalaris* (London: A Baldwin, 1699)
———, *A Sermon Preach'd Before Their Excellencies, the Lords Justices of Ireland,: at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Dublin, Alias Christ-Church, on the 7th. of September, 1704* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1704).

Knaggs, T., *The Cruelty and Tyranny of Popery* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1720)

Locke, J., *A New Method of of a Common-Place Book in The Posthumous Works of Mr. John Locke* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1706)
———, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

Mandeville, B., *The Virgin Unmask'd; Or, Female Dialogues Betwixt an Elderly Maiden Lady and Her Niece* (London: J. Morphew, 1709).
———, *The Fable of The Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

Marsh, N., (ed.) *An Biobla Naomhtha* (London: Etheringham, 1690).

Maule, H., *God's Goodness Visible in Our Deliverance from Popery* (Dublin: George Grierson, 1733).

Milton, J., *Paradise Lost,* ed. Alistair Fowler, 2nd edition (London: Longman, 2007).

Montagu, L. M. W., *Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy* ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

Moréri, L., *The Great Historical, Geographical and Poetical Dictionary; Being A Curious Miscellany of Sacred and Prophane History*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Rhodes, Luke Meredith, John Harris, Thomas Newborough, 1694).

Oldmixon, J., *Reflections On Dr. Swift's Letter to The Earl of Oxford, About The English Tongue* (London: A. Baldwin, 1712).

Orrery, *Remarks On The Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift*, 5th edition (London: Andrew Millar, 1752).

Parnell, T., *An Essay On The Different Stiles of Poetry* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1713).
———, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Parnell*, ed. Claude Rawson and F. P. Lock (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989).

Phillips, J., *Cyder: A Poem, In Two Books* (London: Henry Hills, 1708).

Pilkington, L., *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington, wife to Rev. Mr Matthew Pilkington, Written by herself* (Dublin: R. Griffiths and G. Woodfall, 1748).
———, *The Celebrated Mrs. Pilkington's Jests: Or the Cabinet of Wit and Humour. To Which Is Now Added A Great Variety of Bon Mots, Witticisms, and Anecdotes of The Inimitable Dr. Swift*, 2nd edition (Dublin: W. Nicoll, 1764).

Pomfret, J., *Miscellany Poems On Several Occasions by The Author of The Choice* (London: John Place, 1702).

Pope, A., *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, ed. Normal Ault, 2 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936).
———, *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, eds. John Butt, Maynard Mack *et al.*, 11 vols. in 12 (London: Methuen, 1939-69).

Prior, M., *The Literary Works of Mr. Matthew Prior*, ed. Henry Bunker Wight and Monroe K. Spears, 2 vols., 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

Richardson, S., *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded,* ed. Thomas Keymer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Rochefoucauld, *Moral Reflections and Maxims, Written by the Late Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Newly Made English from The Paris Edition* (London: D. Leach, 1706).

Rowe, N., (ed.) *The Works of Monsieur Boileau*, 3 vols. (London: E. Sanger and E. Curll, 1712)

Rundle, T., *A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, Dublin, on Thursday the 23d of October, 1735. Being the Anniversary of the Irish Rebellion* (Dublin: Roberts, 1735).

Selden, J., (ed.) *Fleta* (London: Lee and Pakeman, 1647).

Sheridan, T., *A Sermon Preached at St. Patrick's Church, On St. Cæcilia's Day* (Dublin: S. Powell, 1732).
———, *Lectures On The Art of Reading* (London: J. Dodsley, 1775).

Sherlock, W., *A Resolution of Some Cases of Conscience Which Respect Church-Communion* (London: T. Bassett, 1694).
———, *A Letter to Anonymous, In Answer to His Three Letters to Dr. Sherlock, About Church-Communion* (London: Fincham Gardiner, 1683).

Shiells, R., and Cibber, T., *The Lives of The Poets of Great Britain and Ireland: Compiled from Ample Materials Scattered in A Variety of Books*, 5 vols. (London: R. Griffiths, 1753).

Skelton, J., *The Tunning of Elinor Rumming* (London: Isaac Dalton, 1718) [possibly not by Skelton, as acknowledged in the thesis].
———, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. John Scattergood (London: Penguin Books, 1983).

Smedley, J., *An Hue and cry after Doctor S---T: Occasion'd by a True and Exact Copy of Part of His Own Diary, Found in His Pocket-Book, Wherein He Has Set Down a Faithful Account of Himself and of All That Happen'd to Him for the Last Week of his Life* (London: Roberts, 1714).

Smollett, T., *The History and Adventures of An Atom*, ed. O. M. Brack (London and Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989).

Spence, J., *Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters, of Books and Men* ed. James Osborn, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966).

Spenser, E., *The Works of that Famous English Poet, Mr. Edmond Spenser* (London: Henry Hills for Jonathan Edwin, 1679).

Spinoza, B., *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Amsterdam [claimed to be Hamburg]: J. Rieuwertsz, 1670).

Spratt, T., *The History of The Royal-Society of London* (London: printers to the Royal Society, 1677)

Stanley, T., *The History of Philosophy*, 3rd edition (London: A. J. Churchill, 1701).

Stearne, J., *King David's Case Apply'd to King James and King William, in a Sermon* (Dublin: Andrew Cook, 1691).

Swift, D., *An Essay Upon the Life, Writings, and Character of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (London: Bathurst, 1755).

Taylor, J., *The Whole Works of Jeremy Taylor*, 10 vols. (London: F. and J. Rivington, 1859-62). This edition used because it is the first authoritative collection of his works.

Temple, W., *Sir Williams Temple's Essays: On Ancient and Modern Learning and On Poetry,* ed. J. E. Spingarn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).

Thackeray, W. M., *The Oxford Thackeray,* eds. G. E .B. Saintsbury *et al,* 17 vols. (London and New York: Oxford, 1908).

Tuke, S., *The Adventures of Five Hours*, 2nd edition (London: Henry Herringman, 1664).

Varisco, G., *Le Antichita Della Citta' Di Roma* (Venice: Varisco, 1569).

Walton, I., *The Compleat Angler,* 3rd edition (London: Richard Marriott, 1676).

Wilkins, J., *Mercury: Or, The Secret and Swift Messenger* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1694).

Woolston, *Discourses On The Miracles of our Saviour* (London: 'printed for the author', 1727-9)

Young, E., *Conjectures on Original Composition: In a Letter to The Author of Sir Charles Grandison* (Dublin: Andrew Millar, 1759).

Post 1900

Ames, D. S., 'Gay's "Trivia" and the Art of Allusion', *Studies In Philology*, 75:2 (1978).

Anstey, P. R., '"De Anima" and Descartes: Making up Aristotle's Mind', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 17:3 (2000), pp.237-60.

Appert, L. G., 'The Pen is Mightier than the Whore: Imperialism and Cultural Authority in Spenser and Swift', *South Central Review*, 17:2 (2000).

Austin, J. L., *How To Do Things With Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955).

Backsheider, P., 'Inverting the Image of Swift's "Triumfeminate", *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14:1 (2004), pp.37-71.

Baker, D., *Jonathan Swift and The Vested Word* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

Barchas, J., *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Barker, E. T. E., *Entering The Agon: Dissent and Authority in Homer, Historiography, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Barnard, T., *Making The Grand Figure: Lives and Possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).
———, (ed.) *The Clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: Messengers, Watchers, and Stewards* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).

Barton, G. and Matteson, R.S. (eds.) *A Large and Private Park: The Collection of Archbishop William King, 1650-1729,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Palladian Press, 2003).

Bateson, F. W., *English Poetry: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edition (London: Longman, 1966).
———, *Essays In Critical Dissent* (London: Longman, 1972).

Benjamin, E., 'Bacon and Tacitus', *Classical Philology,* 60 (1965), pp.102-110.

Bloom, H., *The Anxiety of Influence,* 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale, 1973).

Brewer, D., *Afterlife of Character: 1726-1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

Briggs, P. M., 'John Graunt, William Petty, and Swift's *Modest Proposal*', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 29:2 (2005), pp.3-24.

Brower, R. A., *Alexander Pope and The Poetry of Allusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Brown, M., *The Irish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Browne, J., 'Kilkenny College', *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 1:2 (1850), pp. 221-9.

Bullard, P., and McLaverty, J., (eds.) *Jonathan Swift and The Eighteenth Century Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Bullitt, T. M., *Jonathan Swift: The Anatomy of Satire* (Cambridge MA: Harvard U.P, 1961).

Burrow, C., *Imitating Authors: from Plato to Futurity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Butterfield, H., *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: Bell and Sons, 1931).

Cameron, A., *Callimachus and His Critics* (New York: Princeton, 2017).

Carroll, J., 'Richardson On Pope and Swift', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 33:1 (1963), pp. 19-29.

Carpenter, A., and Harrison, A., 'Swift, Raymond, and a Legacy', *Swift Studies*, 1 (1986), pp. 57-60.

Chesterton, G.K., *All I Survey: A Book of Essays*, 2nd edition (London: Methuen, 1934).

Child, P., 'Jonathan Swift's Latin Quacks: "A Consultation of Four Physicians Upon A Lord That Was Dying"', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 40:1 (2011), pp.21-35.

Clark, J. R., *Form and Frenzy in Swift's A Tale Of A Tub* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970).

Clifford, J., and Ehrenpreis, I., 'Swiftiana in Rylands English MS. 659 and Related Documents', *Bulletin of John Rylands Library*, 37:2 (1955), pp.368-392.

Colie, R., 'Some Notes On Burton's Erasmus', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 20:3 (1967), pp.335-341.

Comparetti, D., *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, tr. E. F. M. Benecke (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Cook, E., *Against Coercion: Games Poets Play* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998).

Dacome, L., 'Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65:4 (2004), pp.603-25.

Damrosch, L., *Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013).

Davis, H., *Stella: An Eighteenth Century Gentlewoman* (New York: Macmillan, 1942).
———, *The Satire of Jonathan Swift* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).
———, *Jonathan Swift: Essays On His Satire and Other Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Davis, P., *Translation and The Poet's Life: The Ethics of Translating English Culture, 1646-1726* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Daw, C. P., 'Swift's Favourite Books of The Bible', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly,* 43:3 (1980), pp. 201-212.

DePorte, 'Contemplating Collins: Freethinking in Swift', *Reading Swift: Papers from The Third Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, eds. Hermann J. Real and Helgard Stöver-Leidig (München: Fink, 1998).

Donoghue, D, 'Swift's Perspective', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review,* 56:223 (1967), pp.248-265.

Doody, M. A., 'Swift Among The Women', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 18 (1988), pp.68-92.

Dyer, B, and Porter, S, (eds.) *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric: Theory and Practice in The Hellenistic Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Edwards, A., *John Skelton: The Critical Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age*, 3 vols. (London: Methuen, 1962-83).
———, 'Swift On Liberty', *Journal of The History of Ideas,* 13:2 (1952), pp.131-146.
———, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1974).

Eliot, T. S., *Selected Essays*, 3rd edition (London: Faber and Faber, 1951).

Empson, W., 'Wit in the Essay On Criticism', *The Hudson Review*, 2:4 (1950), pp.559-577.
———, *Seven Types of Ambiguity,* 3rd edition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953).
———, *Argufying,* ed. John Haffenden (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988).

Falle, G., 'Divinity and Wit: Swift's Attempted Reconciliation', *University Of Toronto Quarterly*, 46:1 (1976), pp.14-30.

Fisher, A. S., 'An End to the Renaissance: Erasmus, Hobbes, and "A Tale of A Tub"', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 38:1 (1974), pp.1-20.

Fredericks, S. C., 'The Function of the Prologue (1-20) in the Organisation of Juvenal's Third Satire', *Phoenix*, 27:1 (1973), pp.62-7.

Friedlander, W. J., *The Golden Wand of Medicine: A History of The Caduceus Symbol in Medicine* (CT: Greenwood Press, 1992).

Frye, N., *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

Gee, S., *Making Waste: Leftovers and The Eighteenth Century Imagination* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Gerrard, C., 'Laetitia Pilkington and the Mnemonic Self', *Review of English Studies*, 70:295 (2019), pp.489-508.

Gigante, D., *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

Gillespie, R., *Reading Ireland: Print, Reading, and Social Change in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005).

Grafton, A., *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Gregg, E., *Queen Anne* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001)

Greene, J., *The Trouble With Ownership: Literary Property and Authorial Liability in England: 1660-1730* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

Griffin, D., *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1995).

Griffiths, E., 'Dryden's Past', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 84 (1992), pp.113–49.
———, *If Not Critical,* ed. Freya Johnston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Gunn, S., *Henry VII's New Men and The Making of Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Hammond, B., *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670-1740: 'Hackney for Bread'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
———,'Swift's Reading', *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Hammond, E., 'In Praise of Wisdom and the Will of God: Erasmus' "Praise of Folly" and Swift's "A Tale of A Tub"', *Studies in Philology,* 80:3 (1983), pp.253-276.hawk
———, *Jonathan Swift: Irish Blow-In* (London: University of Delaware Press, 2016).

Hamlin, H., '"Very mete to be used of all sortes of people": The Remarkable Popularity of the "Sternhold and Hopkins" Psalter', *The Yale University Library Gazette*, 75:1/2 (2000), pp.37-51.

Harth, P, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background Of A Tale Of A Tub* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

Haslett, M., *Pope to Burney, 1714-1779: Scriblerians to Bluestockings* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Haugen, K. L., *Richard Bentley: Poet and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Heninger, S. K., 'Sidney and Serranus' Plato', *English Literary Renaissance*, 13:2 (1983), pp. 146-161.

Higgins, I., *Swift's Politics: A Study In Disaffection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.29.

Highet, G., *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences On Western Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1957).
———, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962).

Hill, G., *Collected Critical Writings,* ed. Kenneth Haynes (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Hind, S., *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Hoekstra, K., 'Disarming the Prophets: Thomas Hobbes and The Predictive Power', *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 59:1 (2004), pp.97-153.

Hollander, J., *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allison in Milton and After* (London and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).

Hopkins, D., 'Dryden and the Garth-Tonson Metamorphoses', *The Review of English Studies*, 39:153 (1988), pp.64-74.
———, 'Thomas Creech's Preface to Lucretius and John Dryden', *Studies in Philology*, 109:5 (2012), pp.702-707.

Houston, C., 'Utopia, Dystopia, or Anti-utopia? Gulliver's Travels and the Utopian Mode of Discourse', *Utopian Studies*, 18:3 (2007), pp.425-442.

Irwin, J., 'What Is An Allusion?', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59:3 (2001), pp. 287-297.

Johnson, M., *The Sin of Wit: Jonathan Swift as a Poet* (Michigan: Syracuse University Press, reprinted Gordian Press,1966).

Johnson-Haddad, M., 'Englishing Ariosto: "Orlando Furioso" at the Court of Elizabeth I', *Comparative Literature Studies,* 31:4 (1994), pp.323-350.

Jones, R.F., 'Eclogue Types in English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology,* 24:1 (1925), pp.33-60.

Jones, T., (ed.) *An Essay On Man* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016)

Karian, S., *Jonathan Swift in Print and Manuscript* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Kay, D., 'To The Very Hour of Death: the Friendship of Addison and Swift', *Aevum,* 47:3 (1973), pp.332-5.

Kelly, A. C., 'Swift's Explorations of Slavery in Houyhnhnmland and Ireland', *PMLA*, 91:5 (1976), pp.846-855.
———, 'Why Did Swift Sign His Name to "A Proposal for Correcting… The English Tongue"?', *Neophilologus*, 63:3 (1979), pp.469-480.

Keymer,T., 'Seditious Libel in Eighteenth-Century Dublin', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland,* 31 (2016), pp.168-76.

Kinsella, E., 'In Pursuit of a Positive Construction: Irish Catholics and the Williamite Articles of Surrender, 1690-1701', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 24 (2009), pp.11-35.

Kneidel, G., '"Mighty Simplenesse": Protestant Pastoral Rhetoric and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calendar*', *Studies in Philology*, 96:3 (1999), pp.275-312.

Kupersmith, W, *English Version of Roman Satire in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Newark: Delaware Press, 2010).

La Bossière, C. R., "Upon Sleeping in Church": Swift's Sermons and the Ethics of Wit', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 19:1 (1993), pp.1-11.

Leddy, M., 'The Limits of Allusion', *British Journal of Aesthetics,* 32:2 (1992), pp.110-122.

Lefanu, W. R., *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's Dublin, Aug. 19. 1715: A Facsimile of Swift's Autograph with an Introduction and Alphabetical Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge Bibliographical Society, 1988).

Lee, C., and Morley, N., (eds.) *A Handbook To The Reception of Thucydides* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2015).

Lelièvre, F. J., 'Maittaire and The Classics in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Phoenix*, 10:3 (1756), pp.103-115.

Lewis, J. E., *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Lewis, P. E., *John Gay and The Scriblerians* (London: Vision, 1988).

Levine, J., *The Battle of The Books: History and Literature In The Augustan Age* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994).

Lindvall, T., *God Mocks: A History of Religious Satire from the Hebrew Prophets to Stephen Colbert* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

Louis, F. D., *Swift's Anatomy of Misunderstanding: A Study of Swift's Epistemological Imagination in A Tale of A Tub and Gulliver's Travels* (London: George Prior, 1981).

Lucci, D., *Scripture and Deism: The Biblical Criticism of the Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008).

Lund, R. D., 'Swift's Sermons, 'Public Conscience', and the Privatisation of Religion', *The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats*, 31:2 (1999).

Machacek, G., 'Allusion', *PMLA*, 122:2 (2007), pp.522-536.

Mack, M., 'Pope's Copy of Chaucer', *Evidence in Literary Scholarship: Essays In Memory of James Marshall Osborne*, ed. René Wellek and Alavaro Ribeiro (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp.105-123.

———, *The Last and Greatest Art: Some Unpublished Poetical Manuscripts of Alexander Pope* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984).

Mahony, R., *Jonathan Swift: The Irish Identity* (London: Yale University Press, 1995).

Marsh, D., *Lucian and The Latins: Humour and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

Marshall, A., *The Practice of Satire in England: 1658-1770* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013).
———, *Swift and History: Politics and The English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
———, 'Steele's Rhetorical Duel With The Authors Of *The Examiner* (1710-14)', *Swift Studies*, 34 (2019), pp.67-89.

Matteson, R. S., 'The Early Library of Archbishop William King', *The Library,* 30:4 (1975).
———, 'Archbishop William King's Library Catalogue', *The Library,* 6:4 (1981).

Mayhew, G. P., *Rage or Raillery: The Swift Manuscripts at the Huntingdon Library* (San Marino: California, 1967).

Mayor, A., *Gods and Robots: Myths, Machines, and Ancient Dreams of Technology* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018).

McBride, I., *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Long peace* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2009).

McCarthy, M., 'Swift and The Primate of Ireland: Marsh's Library in the Early Eighteenth-Century', *Dublin Historical Record*, 27:3 (1974), pp.109-112.
———, 'Narcissus Marsh and His Library', *History of Ireland*, 4:3 (1996), pp.17-22.

McCullough, D., *All Things Made New: Writings On The Reformation* (London: Penguin Books, 2017).

McDonald, G., *Biblical Criticism in Early Modern Europe: Erasmus, the Johannine Comma, and Trinitarian Debate* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

McLane, P. E., 'Spenser's Political and Religious Position in the "Shepheardes Calendar"', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 49:3 (1950), pp.324-32.

McLaverty, J., *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

McMinn, J., *Jonathan Swift and The Arts* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2010).

Mercier, V., *The Irish Comic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

Milne, K., *A Short History Of The Church of Ireland* (Dublin: Columbia Books, 1966, reprinted 2004).

Moore, S. D., *Swift, the Book, and the Irish Financial Revolution: Satire and Sovereignty in Colonial Ireland* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

Moss, A., *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Mulder, J. R., *The Temple of The Mind: Education and Literary Taste in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Pegasus, 1969).

Nichol Smith, D., 'Samuel Johnson's Poems', *Review of English Studies*, 19:73 (1943), pp.44-50.

Nokes, D., 'Pope's Chaucer', *Review of English Studies* 27:106 (1976), pp.180-182.
———, *Jonathan Swift, A Hypocrite Reversed: Critical Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

Norton, D., *A History of The English Bible As Literature*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Novak, M. E., *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions: His Life and Ideas* (New York: Oxford, 2001).
———, (ed.) *English Literature In The Age of Disguise* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982).

Oakleaf, D., *A Political Biography of Jonathan Swift* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008)
———, 'Decentering The Dean: Locating Jonathan Swift in Ireland Grub Street', *Literature Compass*, 8:10 (2011), pp.690-699.

Ogg, D., *England In The Reigns of James II and William III* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

Ormsby-Lennon, H, 'Commonplace Swift', in the *Papers from The Third Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift* ed. Hermann J. Real and Helgard Stöver-Leidig (Munich: Fink, 1998), pp.13-45.

Passmann, D. F., 'A Pretty Mixture: Books from Swift's Library at Abbotsford House', *Bulletin of The John Rylands Library*, 67:1 (1984), pp.522-543.
———, 'Swift's Books In Trinity College Library', *The Old Library*, *Trinity College Dublin: 1712-2012*, ed. W. E. Vaughan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp.122-133.

Paulson, R., *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820* (London: Rutgers, 1989).

Peill, J., *Irish Furniture: Woodwork and Carving in Ireland from the Earliest Times to the Act of Union* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

Pelttari, A., *The Space That Remains: Reading of Latin Poetry in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014).

Perri, C., 'Knowing and Playing: The Literary Text and the Trope of Allusion', *American Imago*, 41:2 (1984), pp.117-128.

Phiddian, R., *Swift's Parody* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Pollard, M., *A Dictionary of the Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, *1550-1800* (London Bibliographical Society: Cambridge University Press (for the London Bibliographical Society), 2000).

Power, H., *Epic Into Novel: Henry Fielding, Scriblerian Satire, and The Consumption of Classical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Pucci, J., *The Full-Knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Literary Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Quintana, R, *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (London: Methuen, 1936, reprinted 1953)

Raven, J., (ed.) *Lost Libraries: The Destruction of Great Book Collections Since Antiquity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.197-219.

Rawson, C., *Henry Fielding and The Augustan Ideal Under Stress: 'Nature's Dance of Death' and Other Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).
———, *Gulliver and The Gentle Reader: Studies in Swift and Our Time* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).
———, (ed.) *The Character of Swift's Satire* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983)
———, *Order from Confusion Sprung: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature from Swift to Cowper* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985).
———, *God Gulliver and Genocide: Barbarism and The European Imagination, 1492-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
———, *Swift and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
———, *Swift's Angers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
———, 'T. S. Eliot and Swift', *Essays In Criticism,* 67:4 (2017), pp.355-66

Real, H. J. (ed.) *Reading Swift: Papers from the Third Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift* (München: Fink, 1998).
———, *Reading Swift: Papers from the Fourth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift* (München: Fink, 2003).
———, *Reading Swift: Papers from the Sixth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift* (München: Fink, 2013).
———, *Reading Swift: Papers from the Seventh Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

Reilly, E., 'Irony in *Gulliver's Travels* and *Utopia*', *Utopian Studies,* 3:1 (1992), pp.70-83.

Ricks, C., *The Force of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
———, *Allusion to the Poets* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Rogal, S. J., *Index to the Biblical References, Parallels, and Allusions in the Poetry and Prose of John Milton* (New York: Mellen Biblical Press, 1994).

Rogers, P., *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (London: Methuen, 1972).
———, *The Augustan Vision* (London: Methuen, 1974).
———, 'The Origins of Swift's Poem on "Sid Hamet"', *Modern Philology,* 79:3 (1982), pp. 304-308.
———, *Essays On Pope* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
———, *Documenting Eighteenth Century Satire: Pope, Swift, Gay, and Arbuthnot in Historical Context* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012).

Rumbold, V., 'Pope and The Gothic Past', PhD Dissertation (Cambridge: 1989).
———, *The Dunciad In Four Books* (Harlow: Longman, 1999).
———, *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, Volume III: '*The Dunciad* (1728) and *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729)', (London: Longman, 2007).

Seidel, M. A., *The Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979).

Sena, J. F., 'Samuel Garth's *The Dispensary*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 15:4 (1974), pp.639-48.

Schakel, P. J., *The Poetry of Jonathan Swift: Allusion and the Development of a Poetic Style* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).
———, 'Swift's "dapper Clerk" and the Matrix of Allusions in "Cadenus and Vanessa"', *Criticism*, 17:3 (1975), pp.246-61.

Screech, M., *Laughter at the Foot of the Cross* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

Sheehan, J., *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Sherbo, A., 'John Gay: Lightweight or Heavyweight?', *The Scriblerian*, 8:1 (1975), pp.4-8.

Sommerstein, A., 'Hinc Omnis Pendet? Old Comedy and Roman Satire', *The Classical World,* 105:1 (2011).

Spiller, M., 'The Idol of the Stove: The Background to Swift's Criticism of Descartes', *Review of English Studies,* 25:97 (1974), pp.15-25.

Staley, G. A., 'Juvenal's Third Satire: Umbricius' Rome, Vergil's Troy', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 45 (2000), pp.85-98.

Stanley, C. D., *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in The Letters of Paul* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

Starkman, M,, *Swift's Satire On Learning In A Tale Of A Tub* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950).

Steele, P., *Jonathan Swift: Preacher and Jester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978)

Steiner, G., *On Difficulty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

Stubbs, J., *Jonathan Swift: The Reluctant Rebel* (London: Penguin Books, 2017).

Terry, R., *Poetry and The Making of the English Literary Past: 1660-1781* (New York: Oxford, 2001)
———, *The Plagiarism Allegation in English Literature from Butler to Sterne* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

Tilley, M. P., *A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950)

Tillyard, E. M. W., *Poetry Direct and Oblique* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1945).

Tobin, T. H., *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2004).

Toynbee, P., 'English Translations of Dante in the Eighteenth Century', *The Modern Language Review* 1:1 (1905), pp.9-24.
———, *Dante In English Literature*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen, 1909).

Traugott, J., 'A Voyage to Nowhere with Thomas More and Jonathan Swift: "Utopia" and "The Voyage to the Houyhnhnms"', *Utopian Studies*, 3:1 (1992), pp.534-565.

Trickett, R., *The Honest Muse: A Study In Augustan Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967)

Tucker, B., "Our Chief Poetess': Mary Barber and Swift's Circle', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 7 (1992), pp.43-56.

Vance, J. A., *Samuel Johnson and the Sense of History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

Van Doren, M., *John Dryden: A Study of His Poetry* (New York: Holt, 1920).

Vaughan, W. E. (ed.) *The Old Library, Trinity College Dublin, 1712-2012* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013).

Wallace, A., *Virgil's Schoolboys: The Poetics of Pedagogy In Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Weever, J., *Chaucer Name Dictionary* (New York and London: Garland, 1996).

Weinbrot, H., *The Formal Strain: Studies in Augustan Imitation and Satire* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

Went, A. E. J., 'Angling in Ireland', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland,* 108 (1978), pp.104-7.

Wilkinson, H., *Edmund Spenser and the Eighteenth-Century Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Williams, A., '"I Hope to Write as Bad as Ever": Swift's *Journal to Stella* and the Intimacy of Correspondence', *Eighteenth Century Life*, 35:1 (2011), pp.102-118.
———, *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

Williams, H., *Dean Swift's Library: With A Facsimile of the Original Sale Catalogue and Some Account of Two Manuscript Lists of His Books* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

Williams, K, *Jonathan Swift And The Age Of Compromise* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1958)

Wittowsky, G., 'Swift's *Modest Proposal*: The Biography of an Early Georgian Pamphlet', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 4 (1943), pp.75-104.

Womersley, D., (ed.) *Augustan Critical Writing* (London: Penguin Books, 1997).

Woodhead, A. G., 'Thucydides' Portrait of Cleon', *Mnemosyne*, 13:4 (1960), pp.289-317.

Woolley, D., 'The Textual History of *A Tale of A Tub*', *Swift Studies*, 21 (2006), pp.7-26.

Wyrick, D. B., *Jonathan Swift and The Vested Word* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).