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Ab Ovo: Swift's Small-Endians and Big-Endians and Transubstantiation

Hermann J. Real

The Greatest Concern of Meum and Tuum, Ly's in
Hoc est Corpus Meum.

Samuel Butler, *Prose Observations*

I

While in Lilliput, Gulliver is treated to a crash course in the country's political and religious history. The 'two great Empires of *Lilliput* and *Blefuscu*', Reldresal, 'Principal Secretary […] of private Affairs', instructs the voyager, have been engaged in long and murderous warfare. The occasion for all this warring, Reldresal explains, was a conflict about the breaking of eggs, the 'primitive Way' of which 'was upon the larger End'. 'But his present Majesty's Grand-father, while he was a Boy', the Secretary continues, 'going to eat an Egg, and breaking it according to the ancient Practice, happened to cut one of his Fingers', with unforeseen consequences. 'The Emperor his Father', Reldresal expatiates:

> published an Edict, commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penalties, to break the smaller End of their Eggs. The People so highly resented this Law, that our Histories tell us, there have been six Rebellions raised on that Account, wherein one Emperor lost his Life, and another his Crown. These civil Commotions were constantly fomented by the Monarchs of *Blefuscu*; and when they were quelled, the Exiles always fled for Refuge to that Empire. It is computed, that eleven Thousand Persons have, at several Times, suffered Death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the smaller End. Many hundred large Volumes have been published upon this Controversy: But the Books of the *Big-Endians* have been long forbidden, and the whole Party rendred incapable by Law of holding Employments. During the Course of these Troubles, the Emperors of *Blefuscu* did frequently expostulate by their Ambassadors, accusing us of making a Schism in Religion, by offending against a fundamental Doctrine of our great Prophet *Lustrog*, in the fifty-fourth Chapter of the

Figure 1: Engraving by Grandville (Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard).

> *Brundrecal* […] This, however, is thought to be a meer Strain upon the Text: For the Words are these; *That all true Believers shall break their Eggs at the convenient End*: and which is the convenient End, seems, in my humble Opinion, to be left to every Man's Conscience, or at least in the Power of the chief Magistrate to determine.[1] (I, iv, 5)

This account is significant on a variety of counts, structurally and allegorically, historically and symbolically, all of them interrelated, of course. Superficially, it is also a teasing inversion of the Horatian admonition, which grew into a proverb, never to begin a story from the egg, *ab ovo*.[2]

Structurally, the episode is a *ritardando*: it not so much develops the sequence of events surrounding Gulliver as it opens up a vista of the Lilliputian past, that is, English political and religious history. In that respect, it anticipates, and supplements, the 'utopian' Chapter vi, which in its first part (paragraphs 1–18) describes the legal, moral, and educational constitution of the Lilliputian, that is, English, *res publica*.[3]

1 *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. by Herbert Davis and others, 16 vols (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939–68; various re-impressions [sometimes corrected]), XI, 49–50. All following quotations are from this edition, abbreviated as *Prose Works*.

2 Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, and London: William Heinemann, 1965 [1926]), p. 462: 'nec gemino bellum Troianum orditur ab ovo; | semper ad eventum festinat et in medias res | non secus ac notas auditorem rapit' (ll. 147–49). Horace was referring to the amorous adventure of Zeus with Nemesis, metamorphosed as swan and goose, respectively. From one of Nemesis's eggs, Helen, the most beautiful of women, was born. Married to Menelaus, King of Sparta, she was carried away by Paris to Troy, and thus became instrumental in the outbreak of the Trojan War. In Swift's parodic account, then, wars are not only initiated by the sexual lust of kings (*Prose Works*, I, 103), the 'Ambition of Princes' (*Prose Works*, XI, 53 [I, v, 4], and the '*Avarice*' of Generals (*Prose Works*, III, 80–85), they also start 'from eggs'.

3 For the best interpretation of its function(s), see Dirk F. Passmann, 'The Lilliputian Utopia: A Revised Focus',

Although in Swift studies there is little that is uncontested, consensus on the allegorical character of this episode seems almost universal.[4] Irvin Ehrenpreis summarized the long history of this consensus when jotting down, in the firm and unmistakable manner so characteristic of him, the story's allegorical equivalents in the margin of his own copy of *Gulliver's Travels*, now at the Ehrenpreis Centre at Münster:

> the primitive way of breaking Eggs] Rom[an] Cath[olics]
> his present Majesty's Grand-father] Henry VIII
> The People so highly resented this Law] Protestants
> one Emperor lost his Life] Charles I
> another his Crown] James II
> Monarchs of *Blefuscu*] France
> But the Books of the *Big-Endians* have been long forbidden, and the whole Party rendred incapable by Law of holding Employments] Roman Catholics
> a fundamental Doctrine of our great Prophet *Lustrog*] Transubstantiation.[5]

The majority of the Dean's annotators have endorsed this view, if occasionally with a pinch of salt. Some at times worry about the 'historical exactitude',[6] reminding their audience, implicitly or explicitly, of the methodological caveat that, in *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift was not concerned with 'actual events' but with Swift's '*versions* of those events'[7] and that 'a satirist does not want to make his targets too obvious' in any case.[8] Others supplement the allegorical equivalents, even though not unanimously. Thus, while one critic takes the 'Boy [who], going to eat an Egg […] happened to cut one of his Fingers' as a thinly veiled allusion to Queen Elizabeth, who 'according to the canons of the Roman Catholic Church, was illegitimate, and consequently incapable of inheriting the crown',[9] another sees the boy as a reference to Henry VIII who 'felt injured at not being allowed to marry Anne Boleyn'.[10] Still another

Swift Studies, 2 (1987), 67–76.

4 For possible definitions of 'allegory', see Hermann J. Real, 'Allegorical Adventure and Adventurous Allegory: Gulliver's "Several Ridiculous and Troublesome Accidents" in Brobdingnag', *Qwerty*, 11 (2001), 81–87. From what follows, it will become clear that I endorse the first definition according to which allegorical characters and events, which are superimposed on a narrative basis, refer to historically authentic, identifiable equivalents, 'to persons [and events] important in history' (p. 82).

5 Ehrenpreis used a copy of Herbert Davis's edition of *Gulliver's Travels (1726): With an Introduction by Harold Williams*, in *Prose Works*, XI (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), Ehrenpreis Centre, Münster (EC 389). One of the first to have suggested this reading is W. C. Taylor in his edition of *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World: With Copious Notes, A Life of the Author, and An Essay on Satirical Fiction* (London: Hayward and Moore, [1840]), pp. 64–65. See also *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Harold Williams, with an Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes (London: First Edition Club, 1926), p. 464; *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*, ed. by Louis A. Landa (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976 [1960]), p. 505; Martin Kallich, *The Other End of the Egg: Religious Satire in 'Gulliver's Travels'* (Bridgeport, Connecticut: Conference on British Studies, 1970), pp. 25–33; *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Paul Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994 [1971]), p. 299; *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Angus Ross (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 280, 303; *The Writings of Jonathan Swift: Authoritative Texts, Backgrounds, Criticism*, ed. by Robert A. Greenberg and William Bowman Piper (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1973), pp. 30–31; *The Annotated Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Isaac Asimov (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1980), pp. 38–40; *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Robert DeMaria (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 277; *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 294.

6 See, in addition to *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*, ed. by Landa, p. 505, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by A. B. Gough (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961 [1915]), pp. 354–55.

7 Irvin Ehrenpreis, *The Personality of Jonathan Swift* (London: Methuen, 1958), pp. 85–86.

8 *The Annotated Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Asimov, p. 39.

9 *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Arthur E. Case (New York: Ronald Press, 1938), p. 37, note 8. See also the same author's *Four Essays on 'Gulliver's Travels'* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1945), pp. 73–74.

10 *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Turner, p. 299, note 36.

echoes this view in explaining Henry's cutting his fingers as a metaphor of 'Catholic doctrine' which would not grant the King a divorce from his Queen.[11] Whichever the case, neither of these alternatives is likely to affect the interpretation of the episode as a whole.

II

What matters most for its more 'enlightened' understanding is a reassessment of the story's *causa efficiens*: 'His present Majesty's Grand-father, while he was a Boy, going to eat an Egg, and breaking it according to the ancient Practice, happened to cut one of his Fingers', whereupon 'the Emperor his Father, published an Edict, commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penalties, to break the smaller End of their Eggs'.[12] This decision sets the sequence of events — the subsequent peculiarities and memorabilia of England's religious and political history — in motion.[13] Here, more often than not, Swift's annotators *do* point to Edward VI and Henry VIII (seldom failing to note that their chronological order has been transposed), and to the egg as a symbol of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist.[14] Indeed, there seem to be good reasons for this view.[15] For one thing, Henry VIII was Swift's favourite *bête noire*. His copy of Lord Edward Herbert's *Life and Raigne of King Henry the Eighth* (1649) is peppered with ferocious marginalia denouncing the King, among other things, as a 'profligate Dog' and 'detestable, hellish Tyrant' as well as a 'Hypocritical Villain', 'Viper, Monster' and 'Bloody inhuman Hell-hound', in comparison with whom Nero, perhaps the most cruel of all Roman Emperors 'was a Saint'.[16]

However, what mattered even more for Swift's satirical purposes in *Gulliver's Travels* was his conviction that Henry VIII's ostensible advocacy of the Reformation notwithstanding 'he made no other Step than rejecting the *Pope's* Supremacy'. On the contrary, as Swift had recorded in his Preface to Gilbert Burnet's *Introduction to the Third Volume of the History of the Reformation* of 1713, Henry 'retained every Corruption of [the *Roman* Court and Church]', going so far as to persecute all 'who professed any Protestant Doctrine'.[17] Swift continued to be obsessed with this image of Henry as a pseudo-Papist. As late as May 1736,

[11] *The Annotated Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Asimov, p. 39.

[12] Readers who are interested in the question of how it would have been practically possible to cut one's fingers within a context of seventeenth-century table manners are referred to J. V. Guerinot, J. K. Welcher, and Jonathan Gray, 'Re Egg Breakers, Eggcups, and Gulliver', *The Scriblerian*, 24 (1991), 58–61.

[13] From what follows, it will become apparent why I disagree with Charles Allen Beaumont, who sees Gulliver's encounter with 'the great debate between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians' as 'entirely a *political* matter'; see his *Swift's Use of the Bible: A Documentation and a Study in* Allusion (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1965), pp. 53–54.

[14] See, for example, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Case, p. 37, note 9, and p. 332.

[15] For an illuminating account of Swift's critical attitude towards Henry VIII (even if not germane to the present discussion), see Louis A. Landa, *Swift and the Church of Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 161–64.

[16] These marginalia were first published by Lord Rothschild, *Some Unpublished Marginalia of Jonathan Swift* (Cambridge, 1945), from Swift's copy of Herbert's *Life*, now in the Rothschild Collection at Trinity College, Cambridge (*The Rothschild Library: A Catalogue of the Collection of Eighteenth-Century Printed Books and Manuscripts Formed by Lord Rothschild*, 2 vols [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954], II, **2313**), but more easily available today in Dirk F. Passmann and Heinz J. Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift: A Bio-Biographical Handbook*, 4 vols (Frankfurt on Main: Peter Lang, 2003), II, 824–31. See also Dirk F. Passmann and Heinz J. Vienken, 'That "Hellish dog of a king": Jonathan Swift and Henry VIII', in *Henry VIII in History, Historiography, and Literature*, ed. by Uwe Baumann (Frankfurt on Main: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 241–79, and, more recently, Brean S. Hammond and Nicholas Seager, 'Jonathan Swift's Historical Novel, *The Memoirs of Capt. John Creichton* (1731)', *Swift Studies*, 24 (2009), 70–87.

[17] *Prose Works*, IV, 73.

he reiterated in an unfinished, posthumously published paper, *Concerning that Universal Hatred, which Prevails against the Clergy*, that the 'detestable Tyrant Henry VIII, although he abolished the Pope's power in England', nonetheless persisted in defending 'all the Popish doctrines, *even those which were the most absurd*'.[18] The 'popish doctrine' Swift, and the majority of seventeenth-century Anglican theologians beside him, is likely to have regarded as 'the most absurd' is the Catholic teaching on Transubstantiation, the conversion of the whole substance of the bread and wine into the whole substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, with the 'accidents,' the outer appearance of bread and wine, unaltered.[19] Swift had targeted Transubstantiation as the 'principal Occasion to that great and famous *Rupture*', the Reformation, in his early stroke of genius, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704),[20] and he knew from Gilbert Burnet's *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, the first two volumes of which he had studied with care during his great reading period at Moor Park in 1697–98,[21] that Henry VIII had upheld the Catholic belief in Transubstantiation. As the Bishop had noted in his Preface to this monumental work,[22]

> And indeed in the whole progress of these Changes, the Kings design seemed to have been to terrifie the Court of *Rome*, and cudgel the Pope into a Compliance with what he desired: for in his heart *he continued addicted to some of the most extravagant Opinions of*

[18] *Prose Works*, XIII, 123, 223 (my emphasis).

[19] See Phillip Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of 'A Tale of a Tub'* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969 [1961]), pp. 43–44, and *passim*. See also the wider perspective, including philosophical, anthropological, and literary sources, in Frank Lestringant, *Une sainte horreur ou le voyage en Eucharistie, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996). Here, we are told that Protestant polemics against the Eucharist climaxed in the charge that 'Catholic "theophagy" was infinitely worse than the modest cannibalism of the Savages' (p. xix) (my translation). For some pertinent criticism of this, see John Milton, *De doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. by John Carey, *Complete Prose Works, VI: ca. 1658–ca. 1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 552–55.

[20] *Prose Works*, I, 72–74. Transubstantiation was defined by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), whose positions on the Eucharist were reiterated by the Council of Trent, 'although transubstantiation was merely described as "apt" rather than "required" for belief'; see Gary Macy, *The Banquet's Wisdom: A Short History of the Theologies of the Lord's Supper* (New York and Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 177. Swift would have known of the Council's rulings through Nathanael Brent's translation of Father Sarpi (Pietro Soave, Polano), *History of the Council of Trent* (London: by John Macock for Samuel Mearne and others, 1676), pp. 304–10, which he read and excerpted in 1697–98; see Jonathan Swift, *'The Battle of the Books': eine historisch-kritische Ausgabe mit literarhistorischer Einleitung und Kommentar*, ed. by Hermann J. Real (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), pp. 128–32 (p. 128) (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, III, 1704–05). As Anne B. Gardiner has recently shown, it was to Lateran IV that 'almost every treatise attacking Transubstantiation in the 1680s referred'; see her '*A Tale of a Tub* and the Great Debate over *Substance*, with Regard to Sacrament, Church, and Nature', *Swift as Priest and Satirist*, ed. by Todd C. Parker (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), pp. 123–46 (p. 131). Transubstantiation is sometimes identified with Real Presence. An example from Swift's own library is Jacques Benigne Bossuet, *Exposition de la doctrine de l'église catholique sur les matières de controverse* (Brussels: Eug. Henry Fricx, 1681), pp. 42–47 (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, I, 271–72). However, it seems wise to follow Gilbert Burnet's recommendation not to use the term Real Presence (*An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, 2nd edn (London: by R. Roberts for Richard Chiswell, 1700), p. 318) because of Anglican quibbles 'over the term "Real," opposing it to figurative or metaphorical but not necessarily defining it as corporeal'; see Eleanor McNees, 'John Donne and the Anglican Doctrine of the Eucharist', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 29 (1987), 94–114 (p. 96). See also, on the non-identity of the two concepts, James F. McCue, 'The Doctrine of Transubstantiation from Berengar through Trent: The Point at Issue', *Harvard Theological Review*, 61 (1968), 385–420 (pp. 403, 413–14, 417–23).

[21] *'The Battle of the Books'*, ed. by Real, pp. 128–32 (pp. 129, 131). We do not know whether Swift read the first edition of 1679–81 or the second of 1681–83.

[22] For an assessment of Burnet's 'pioneering work as a historian', see John Kenyon, *The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance*, 2nd edn (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993), pp. 34–40.

> *that Church, such as Transubstantiation* and the other Corruptions in the Mass, so that he was to his lives end more Papist than Protestant.[23]

Historians of the Church have confirmed this view in recent years. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, the controversy about the Eucharist developed and proliferated. In fact, as one of them has noted, 'one's eucharistic beliefs were in many of the Tudor years literally a matter of life or death'.[24] It is small cause for surprise, then, that Swift should have returned to it here in *Gulliver's Travels*, even though with a change in orientation and intent.[25]

III

All Protestant reservations against the Eucharist were summarized in the Westminster *Confession of Faith* of 1658. On this *Confession*, including the larger and lesser catechisms of the Protestant churches, an Assembly of Divines had publicly agreed, after lengthy deliberations following its summons by Parliament in 1644 to assist in re-organizing the religious system of the country. There were three variant issues of *The Confession of Faith* in 1658, one of which was in the Dean's library.[26] Its Chapter XXIX, '*Of the* Lords *Supper*', ruled on Transubstantiation:

> That Doctrine which maintaines a change of the substance of Bread and Wine, into the substance of Christ, Body and Blood (commonly called Transubstantiation) by consecration of a Priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common Sense and Reason; overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament, and hath been, and is the cause of manifold Superstitions; yea of gross Idolatries.[27]

This paragraph presents all the familiar, indeed stereotypical counterarguments with which seventeenth-century Protestant polemicists were endeavouring to scold their Catholic adversaries into silence. All of these had often been raised before *The Confession of Faith* was published, and all of them were to be repeated many times after it came out:

> being against the evidence of the senses, the doctrine of the Eucharist was irrational;
> being against the authority of Scripture, it was without validation,
> and being against both the evidence of the senses *and* the authority of the Bible, it was idolatrous.

Remarkably, the fiercest critic of Transubstantiation as an act of idol worship was a philosopher whom many Anglicans would have regarded as a strange bedfellow, Thomas Hobbes.[28] In his *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes went out of his way to distinguish between 'Consecration' and 'Conjuration, or Enchantment'. This distinction put him in a position to bracket the Catholic practice of consecration with conjuration, which, in turn, made Transubstantiation, being as

[23] Gilbert Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: by T. H. for Richard Chiswell, 1681–83), I, sig. c2r (my emphasis). See also I, 258–59.

[24] See, in particular, 'Chapter III: The Eucharistic Controversy' in Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, I: From Cranmer to Baxter and Fox, 1534–1690* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Cambridge, England: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 76–123. In what follows, I am indebted to Davies's account.

[25] This largely forgotten observation was made, rightly, I believe, some seventy years ago; see G. V. Jourdan, 'The Religion of Dean Swift', *Church Quarterly Review*, 126 (1938), 269–86 (pp. 283–84).

[26] See Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift* , I, 450–51.

[27] *The Confession of Faith, together with The Larger and Lesser Catechismes: Composed by the Reverend Assembly of Divines, Sitting at Westminster*, 2nd edn (London: by E. M. for the Company of Stationers, 1658), p. 99.

[28] See Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth-Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. vii–viii.

it was 'contrary to the testimony of mans Sight, and of all the rest of his Senses', an act of primitive magic enchantment.[29]

Among the countless theologians who joined in the chorus and who were also all well represented in Swift's library were bishops, such as Edward Stillingfleet and John Tillotson, scholars like Richard Hooker, John Hales, and Henry More, as well as preachers like Isaac Barrow and William Clagett, to name but a few. Predictably, their contributions to the controversy vary greatly, both in tone and substance. Like the undogmatic Hooker who, in his defence of the Church of England, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, lamented above all the 'fierce contentions' this sacramental issue had given rise to,[30] the 'eirenical' John Hales, Canon of Windsor, and the Bishop of Worcester, Edward Stillingfleet, were moderates, who firmly but calmly justified their rejection of Transubstantiation by its being 'not only *repugnant* to *reason*', but also by its [being] '*insufficiently* proved from *Scripture*'.[31] Resorting to the same repertory of arguments, both the Cambridge Platonist Henry More and the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson, by contrast, were openly confrontational. More was happy to denounce Transubstantiation vociferously as 'incredible' and 'impossible' as well as 'conducive to atheism and idolatry' whenever an opportunity presented itself.[32] Tillotson likewise articulated his hatred of the Roman Catholic Church in haughty and self-complacent, if learned, rodomontades: 'So that the business of *Transubstantiation* is not a controversie of Scripture against Scripture, or of Reason against Reason, but of downright Impudence against the plain meaning of Scripture, and all the Sense and Reason of Mankind'. This rhetoric mingles with liberal doses of 'absurd', 'scandalous', 'monstrous', and 'groundless throughout'.[33]

In 1680, Isaac Barrow, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, added a new facet to all this opprobrium. In line with the general thrust of his *Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy*, he derided Transubstantiation, which was urged, he claimed, 'with so furious zeale', as a power game designed for the purpose of creating a godlike status for priests, 'to magnify the credit of those, who by saying of a few words can *make* Our God and Saviour'.[34] A few years

[29] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), ed. by C. B. Macpherson (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1986), pp. 633–34 (IV, 44); see also pp. 146–47 (I, 8). In 1685, Father John Gother, a former Protestant who was converted to Catholicism, took special care to defend his new-found faith against this charge; see his *A Papist Misrepresented and Represented: or, A Twofold Character of Popery* (1685), pp. 13–16, *English Catholicism, 1680–1830*, ed. by Michael Mullett (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), I, pp. 1–36.

[30] Swift owned two editions of Hooker's *Works* (London: by J. Best for Andrew Crook, 1662), pp. 264–69; and *Works* (London: for R. C. and others, 1705), pp. 306–11 (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, II, 899–902). See also Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed. by Christopher Morris, 2 vols (London: Dent, and New York: Dutton, 1964), II, 323–24 and notes (containing additional and very telling Hooker MS notes).

[31] Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacræ: or, A Rational Account of the Grounds of Christian Faith*, 4th edn (London: by R. W. for Henry Mortlock, 1675), pp. 238–39 (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, III, 1752–54). See also John Hales, 'A Tract on the Sacrament of the Lords Supper', *Four Tracts* (London: [John Blyth], 1677), pp. 3–22 (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, II, 785).

[32] See Henry More, *Opera theologica*: *anglice quidem primitùs scripta* (1674), in *Opera omnia*, ed. by Serge Hutin, 3 vols (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), I, 543–44, 843–44, 847, and *passim*. References are to this edition for reasons of greater availability. For More's English works owned by Swift, see Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, II, 1283–84.

[33] *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson: Containing Fifty-Four Sermons and Discourses, on Several Occasions*, 3rd edn (London: B. Aylmer and W. Rogers, 1701), pp. 297–317 (p. 297) (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, III, 1858–60).

[34] Isaac Barrow, *A Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy* (London: by Miles Flesher for Brabazon Aylmer, 1680), p. 205 (my emphasis) (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, I, 162–63). In *The History*

later, in February 1686, when England was manifestly in danger of being re-catholicized, William Clagett, one of William III's Chaplains in Ordinary, engaged in a conference about Transubstantiation with the vociferous Catholic pamphleteer Father Peter Gooden (d. 1695).[35] The sum of this conference was appended to a collection of Clagett's *Sermons*, showing the preacher firing off salvos against his hair-splitting opponent and ending, deservedly, on a note of mockery that is reminiscent of Erasmus's ridicule of theological casuistry in his own critique of Transubstantiation in *The Praise of Folly*:

> I observe the *Answerer* [Father Gooden] will allow nothing to be *broken* but *Accidents*; I observe also, that nothing is said to be the *Body of Christ*, or the *Communion of the Body of Christ*, but what is *broken*: If therefore nothing is *broken* but *Accidents*, then *Accidents* are either […] *the very Body of Christ*; or […] the *Communion of the Body of Christ*.[36]

Finally, if around the turn of the century any Anglican faithful had asked for an elucidation of their Church's stance on the doctrine of Christ's 'Corporal Presence' in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they would have found plenty of exegetical and spiritual orientation in Gilbert Burnet's *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* (1699), the doctrinal formulae accepted by the Church of England in its attempt to define its dogmatic tenets. However, having sifted numerous biblical passages germane to his subject and having invoked the hermeneutic authority of the Fathers of the Church, the Bishop of Salisbury was but able to polish doctrinal clichés:

> This we believe is plain Idolatry, when an Insensible piece of Matter, such as Bread and Wine, has Divine Honours paid it; when it is believed to be God, when it is called God, and is in all respects Worshipped with the same Adoration that is offered up to Almighty God.[37]

IV

There can be no doubt that Swift was familiar with most of these 'arguments'. In fact, he not only subscribed to them, he also utilized them, with his selective and modifying intelligence, as 'raw material' for his ridicule of Transubstantiation in *A Tale of a Tub*.[38] But there were

of the Reformation, Burnet echoed this argument (I, 366), as Swift was to do in his sermon *On the Trinity*, first published in 1744 (*Prose Works*, IX, 163).

35 Among other things, this danger becomes evident in the flood of (at times as violent as absurd) pamphlets and treatises rejecting Transubstantiation published between 1685 and 1688. See, among others, [Samuel Johnson], *The Absolute Impossibility of Transubstantiation Demonstrated*, 2nd edn (London: William Rogers, 1688), whose 'BOOKS *lately Printed for* W. Rogers' appended at the end lists no less than two dozen anti-Catholic tracts, several of which bear on Transubstantiation (p. 56); [Thomas Goodwin], *Transubstantiation a Peculiar Article of the Roman Catholick Faith … Never Own'd by the Ancient Church or Any of the Reform'd Church*es (London: Printed in the Year, 1688); [Robert Nelson], *Transubstantiation Contrary to Scripture* (London: Dorman Newman, 1688). Admittedly, there is no evidence that Swift knew any of these authors, yet for an assessment of the intellectual climate in the latter half of the 1680s, it is perhaps useful to realize that many of them invoke, and resort to, traditional arguments, such as the authority of the Scriptures, the evidence of the senses, the possibility of miracle and mystery, and the nature of 'substance'.

36 William Clagett, *Seventeen Sermons Preach'd upon Several Occasions*, 3rd edn (London: W. Rogers, 1699), Appendix: *The Summ of a Conference* (London: William Rogers, 1698), pp. 8–9 (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, I, 427–28). For Erasmus, see *The Praise of Folly and Other Writings: A New Translation with Critical Commentary*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Adams (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1989), pp. 57–58 (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, I, 574).

37 Burnet, *An Exposition*, pp. 308–42 (p. 340).

38 For useful observations on Swift's satirical allegory, see, among others, John M. Bullitt, *Jonathan Swift and the Anatomy of Satire: A Study of Satiric Technique* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p.

logical dilemmas inherent in this assault, which rested on the assumption that 'a crust of bread', which Lord Peter, Swift's symbol of the Papacy, tries to pass off for a piece of mutton on his brothers Martin and Jack,[39] 'can never be anything more than a piece of bread'.[40] This position expressly ruled out any possibility of a mysterious divine intervention happening in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, a position that conflicted with Swift's own views on mysteries, such as the Trinity.[41] It is for this reason, I suggest, that when the Dean resumed the topic in *Gulliver's Travels*, he focused on two other aspects of Transubstantiation which he had ignored in the *Tale*'s parody but which had come to upset him by the time he was engaged in *Gulliver's Travels*.

The first concession Swift was ready to make is that belief in Transubstantiation was a matter of an individual's faith and liberty of conscience, defined by him in *Thoughts on Religion* as 'no more than the liberty of possessing [one's] own thoughts and opinions, which every man enjoys without fear of the magistrate'.[42] As Swift posited a few years after *Gulliver's Travels* had been published, in *Reasons Humbly Offered to the Parliament of Ireland for Repealing the Sacramental Test* (1733), this 'liberty of possessing [one's] own thoughts and opinions' including 'the Belief of *Transubstantiation*' does '*not affect the political Interest of Society*' and is therefore not '*subject to human Jurisdiction*'.[43] In other words, it is neither legal nor legitimate for 'the authorities' to *enforce* belief, no matter whether Catholic or Anglican, by whatever political means, least of all 'Edicts' leading to rebellions and wars designed to silence the minds of 'non-believers'. Swift took this point so seriously that he made Gulliver repeat it with unconcealed contempt in his traveller's conversations with the Houyhnhnm master:

> Difference in Opinions hath cost many Millions of Lives: For Instance, whether *Flesh* be *Bread*, or *Bread* be *Flesh*; Whether the Juice of a certain *Berry* be *Blood* or *Wine* […] Neither are any Wars so furious and bloody, or of so long Continuance, as those occasioned by Difference in *Opinion*.[44]

The emphasis is on 'opinion', together with ignorance, the very opposite of truth and knowledge. In Swift, as throughout seventeenth-century intellectual history, 'opinion' is as uncertain and inconclusive as it is many-headed, temporal, and forever changing. At best, it grants probability, that is, non-demonstrative knowledge.[45] Significantly, Gulliver's

144; Kathleen Williams, 'Restoration Themes in the Major Satires of Swift', *Review of English Studies*, 16 (1965), 258–71 (pp. 264–65); Philip Pinkus, *Swift's Vision of Evil, I: 'A Tale of a Tub'* (University of Victoria, British Columbia, 1975), 88–89; Frederik N. Smith, *Language and Reality in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub'* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1979), pp. 21–22; Martin Price, 'Swift in the Interpreter's House', *Satire in the 18th Century*, ed. by J. D. Browning (New York and London: Garland, 1983), pp. 106–09; J. A. Downie, *Jonathan Swift, Political Writer* (London, Boston, Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 98–100.

39 *Prose Works*, I, 72.

40 See, for this and what follows, in addition to Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of 'A Tale of a Tub'*, p. 44, William John Roscelli, '*A Tale of a Tub* and the "Cavils of the Sour"', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 64 (1965), 41–52 (pp. 47–48).

41 See *Prose Works*, IX, 163–68; and Louis A. Landa, 'Swift, the Mysteries, and Deism (1945)', *Essays in Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 89–106.

42 *Prose Works*, IX, 263. See also Irvin Ehrenpreis, 'Swift on Liberty', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 13 (1952), 131–46.

43 *Prose Works*, IX, 291. For a detailed analysis of *Reasons Humbly Offered to the Parliament of Ireland*, see Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man, his Works, and the Age*, *III: Dean Swift* (London: Methuen, and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 764–68.

44 *Prose Works*, XI, 246 (IV, v, 245) (my emphasis).

45 See Hermann J. Real and Ian Simpson Ross, 'The "extreme Difficulty understanding the Meaning of the Word *Opinion*": Some Limits of Understanding Dean Swift', in *Reading Swift: Papers from The Fourth Münster*

Houyhnhnm master, the embodiment of reason, has difficulty understanding the 'Meaning of the Word *Opinion*' (IV, viii, 9). In wholly rational creatures, reason is bound to be an innate, intuitive standard with which to distinguish true from false; for wholly rational creatures, to perceive is to recognize the truth, and the truth is as certain and conclusive as it is indisputable and incontrovertible. But this is not the case with fallible humankind, torn by 'difference in opinion'. Thus, the point is not that Swift here ridicules 'the trivial causes of religious controversies' and 'the struggle between Catholic and Anglican [as] an empty one',[46] but that wars have been waged *by either party* on an issue which is a matter of faith not of reason, and which thus is incapable of truth. By no stretch of the imagination is this assessment a sign of irreverence; it is rather a pretty accurate description of historical facticity.[47] If Swift objected to Transubstantiation in *Gulliver's Travels*, he did not object to it so much as a Catholic doctrine as to the *donnée* that the doctrine, and any of its opposites, had lent themselves to distressing misuse by both Catholics and Anglicans as a vehicle of war. He thus linked it up with a powerful motif of the *Travels*, the criticism of war, warfare, and warmongering.[48] At the same time, Swift proposed as his norm, his ethical alternative, the recommendation he had laid down in *Thoughts on Religion*: '*That all true Believers shall break their Eggs at the convenient End*: and which is the convenient End, seems, in my humble Opinion, to be left to every Man's Conscience.'

On the other hand, this reading does not rule out that Swift privately objected to Transubstantiation as a theological doctrine. But if he did, he did not make this view explicit in Reldresal's account of Lilliput's religious and political past. Rather, his evidence is hidden in the subtext, veiled in the symbolism of the egg, and has to be inferred. As a rule, the Dean's annotators have professed to be mystified on the signification of the egg as a symbol of the Eucharist. While one group refrained from commenting on the allegory altogether, ostensibly 'because it was extremely obvious',[49] another points towards the egg as an age-old symbol of Easter, and, thus, of Christianity.[50] A third, finally, suggests that the choice of the egg demonstrates 'the insignificance' of the dispute.[51] But these explanations will not do. After all, the egg figures widely in Christian iconography and European folklore as an emblem of the Resurrection, of fertility, of new life, and, unsurprisingly, as a symbol of every beginning.[52]

More precisely, in a painting by the Italian artist Piero della Francesca, which draws on a rich pictorial tradition, the egg assumes the symbolic value of divine holiness. It shows

Symposium on Jonathan Swift, ed. by Hermann J. Real and Helgard Stöver-Leidig (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003), pp. 349–61.

46 Patrick Murray, 'Some Notes on the Interpretation of Swift's Satires', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 110 (1968), 158–72 (pp. 165–66). This view was endorsed by John Cunningham, 'Perversions of the Eucharist in *Gulliver's Travels*', *Christianity and Literature*, 40 (1991), 345–64 (p. 346).

47 See, for example, David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), I, 252–321, 357–88, and *passim*, the same author's *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 246–439, and Richard L. Greaves, *Enemies under his Feet: Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664–1677* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), *passim*.

48 See Ian Simpson Ross, 'Satire on Warmongers in *Gulliver's Travels*, Books One and Two', *The Perennial Satirist: Essays in Honour of Bernfried Nugel, Presented on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. by Peter E. Firchow and Hermann J. Real (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005), pp. 49–65. This essay lists all pertinent studies on the subject.

49 Kallich, *The Other End of the Egg: Religious Satire in 'Gulliver's Travels'*, pp. 25–26.

50 *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Turner, p. 299, note 36.

51 William Monck Mason, *The History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick* (Dublin: Printed for the Author, 1819), pp. 356–57.

52 See the rich material assembled by Robert Wildhaber, 'Zum Symbolgehalt und zur Ikonographie des Eies', *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, 6 (1960), 77–84.

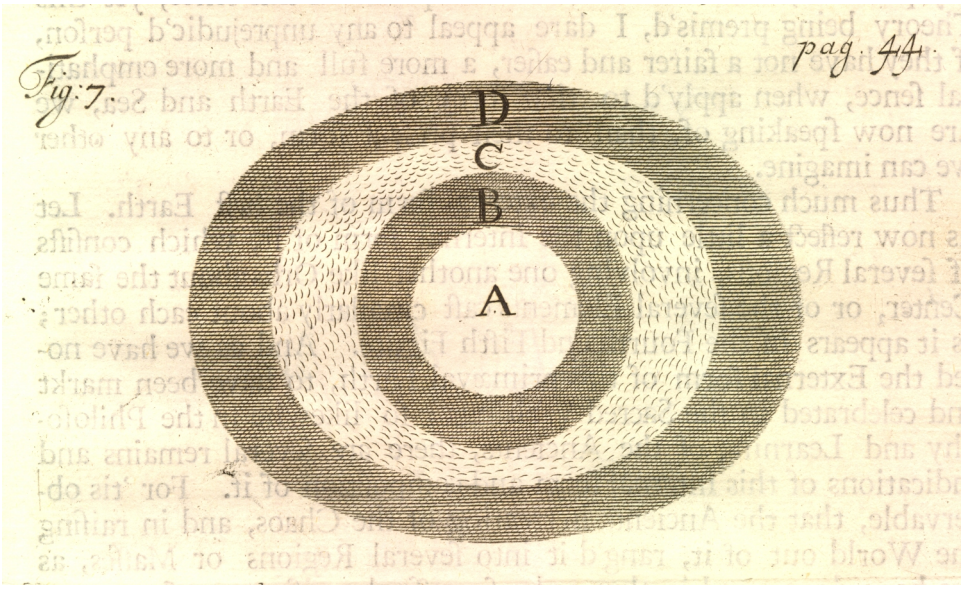

Figure 2: From Thomas Burnet, *The Theory of the Earth* (from a copy at the Ehrenpreis Centre).

the Virgin Mary, seated in the chancel of a church, with the sleeping child Jesus in her lap, and surrounded by saints, with an egg, emanation of the Divine Essence, dangling over her head from above.[53] In a more secular version elaborated by Thomas Burnet, Master of the Charterhouse, in *The Theory of the Earth*, the egg becomes the symbol of perfection for the ante-diluvian earth, whose oviform construction, Burnet explained, was rather different from its present one: 'The face of the Earth before the Deluge was smooth, regular and uniform', resembling in fact the shape of 'an *Egg*': 'And this not so much for its External Figure, though that be true too: as for the inward composition of it; consisting of several Orbs, one including another, and in that order, as to answer the several Elementary Regions of which the new-made Earth was constituted'. As Burnet pointed out, this model had not originated with him, but '[had] been the sence and Language of all Antiquity'.[54]

Within these *con*-texts, it does not, perhaps, come entirely as a surprise that the egg, as a symbol of holiness and perfection, also surfaces in emblematic descriptions of the Eucharist. For a more meaningful understanding of Swift's satiric purposes, it is important to note that these descriptions are associated with Jesuit emblem books throughout.[55] The

[53] See Matilde Battistini, *Bildlexikon der Kunst, III: Symbole und Allegorien* (Berlin: Parthas Verlag, 2003), pp. 133–37. For the interpretation, see also Alessandro Angelini, *Piero della Francesca* (Mailand: Scala, 1992), p. 73. I thank Dr Kirsten Juhas and Esther F. Sommer for these references.

[54] Thomas Burnet, *The Theory of the Earth: Containing an Account of the Original of the Earth, and of All the General Changes*, 3rd edn (London: by R. N. for Walter Kettilby, 1697), pp. 34–45. This edition was in Swift's library (Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, I, 302–04). See also Michael Macklem, *The Anatomy of the World: Relations between Natural and Moral Law from Donne to Pope* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 6–8.

[55] See Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura,

most momentous of these may well be a work by 'the subtle and learned' Father Georg(ius) Stengel(ius) (1584–1651). This was first published in Munich under the title *Ova paschalia sacro emblemate inscripta descriptaque* in 1634, in the declared intention to disseminate 'the profound mysteries' of the Catholic faith at a time when Germany was ravaged by the Thirty Years' War, and reprinted again in a slightly revised version under the same title in 1635, 1672, and 1678.[56]

All of its one hundred emblems are egg-shaped, and divided into those in which a 'good meaning is inscribed [*quae virtutem ac res divinas habent insculptas*]' (nos 1–55) and those 'which are disgraced by vices or vicious men [*vitijs aut vitiosis deformata*]'.[57] Their structure follows a familiar pattern: each emblem is preceded by an *inscriptio*, a pithy and terse caption, which is easy to memorize, and accompanied by a moral, political, or religious *interpretatio* in prose of up to five pages.

Emblem, no. 48, for example, is introduced by the *inscriptio*: 'In ovo unius speciei Eucharisticæ sufficientia ostensa', and subsequently explained in a lengthy interpretation studded with biblical references:

> Omnes Christianos *Oonas* esse oportet, & *ovo* vivere, postquam Christum ipsum, quia homo, *ovum* esse docuimus. Nam nihil obstat, esse eum & *vitem*, & *panem*, *qui de cœlo descendit*, *Io.* 6. 14 & *ovum*, quod cœlestis Pater dat filio, *Luc*. 11. 22. Tanta enim in illo est virtus, ut sit hæc omnia. *Ovum* ergo hoc gustulum est, *quod omnis habet saporis suavitatem*. In cujus *fortitudine cibi* usque ad montem Dei possumus ambulare. 3 *Reg*. 19. 8.

Similarly, Emblem, no. 47, in response to the question in what way a nest of eggs and the sacrament of the Eucharist were comparable, answers: 'Quibus Symbolum Eucharistiæ, clarissimum continetur. Nam in primis, quod in *ovo* nonnulli mirantur, hoc in nido quoque est isto. In *ovo* nucleum, & vasculum, cibum & lancem; potum & poculum, nectar & cyathum habemus'.[58]

Admittedly, some scepticism is bound to remain: there is no certain evidence that Swift was familiar with it. *Ova paschalia* was never in his library at any stage, nor is it known to have been in any other library, such as that of Archbishop Marsh, of which the Dean of St Patrick's was *ex-officio* governor,[59] or that of Swift's friend Thomas Sheridan,[60] or that of

1964), I, 195–98.

56 For Father Stengel's biography and bibliography, see Helmut Zäh, 'Die Welt im Ei: Georg Stengels *Ova paschalia*', in *Emblematik und Kunst der Jesuiten in Bayern: Einfluss und Wirkung*, ed. by Peter M. Daly, G. Richard Dimler, SJ, and Rita Haub (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2000), pp. 145–61. This essay also lists a number of further important studies.

57 See, in addition to the essay by Zäh, 'Die Welt im Ei: Georg Stengels *Ova paschalia*', pp. 149–51, G. Richard Dimler, SJ, 'The Egg as Emblem: Genesis and Structure of a Jesuit Emblem Book', *Studies in Iconography*, 2 (1976), 85–106.

58 Quotations are from the edition of *Ova paschalia* published at Ingolstadt, Bavaria, by Johann Simon Knabs Witwe, 1672, pp. 276–81 (p. 278) and 272. I would like to acknowledge here that a dear 'old' friend, Professor Anne Barbeau Gardiner, New York, who has written so well on Transubstantiation and the Real Presence, made the same discovery, simultaneously and independently, shortly before this essay was submitted, although she never saw any edition of Stengel's *Ova paschalia* but had to rely on secondary information; see her 'Swift and the Primitive Church', *Sustaining Literature: Essays on Literature, History, and Culture, 1500–1800, Commemorating the Life and Work of Simon Varey*, ed. by Greg Clingham (Cranbury, New Jersey: Bucknell University Press, 2007), pp. 109–26 (pp. 113, 124, note 21).

59 Muriel McCarthy, *All Graduates and Gentlemen: Marsh's Library* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 1980), pp. 49–51. I am indebted to Dr McCarthy, Librarian, for the information that Stengel was not in Marsh's Library.

60 See Passmann and Vienken, *The Library and Reading of Jonathan Swift*, IV, 217–88.

any other friend to which he may have had access.[61] We *do* know, however, that like the English Jesuit missionaries who surreptitiously returned to their native country after having trained at Jesuit seminaries on the Continent,[62] 'the Jesuit emblem book was likewise making its entrance into England'.[63] Like the majority of his fellow citizens, Swift associated the Jesuits with the detested Pretender, eager 'to introduce *Popery* and *Slavery*, and *Arbitrary Power*' and always in the mood for 'Plots against the State', for freethinking and schisms in religion.[64] Presumably, like many of his contemporaries, the Dean was unable to think of a more odious name than 'Jesuit', 'the vile brood of *Loyola* and Hell',[65] when he wished to heap opprobrium on an enemy, a position, or an attitude he despised. And this is what he did, I would like to suggest, in a veiled way, in the case of the egg, which had so baneful an effect on a century of Lilliputian religion and politics: Swift articulated his contempt for Transubstantiation, the Catholic view of the Eucharist, in a Jesuit symbol. It is true that the evidence for this suggestion is circumstantial, but the alternative to it does not carry greater conviction, either. It would lead us to assume that Swift chanced upon the egg as a symbol of the Catholic Eucharist, or that he thought of it independently. Logically, such a coincidence is not to be ruled out, of course. However, given the unusualness of the image, not to mention its contribution to an improved meaning of the passage, choice here seems more probable than chance.

V

In the history of his posthumous reputation, the Dean of St Patrick's has often been taken to task for his religious views. In fact, it is presumably no exaggeration to say that Swift has been made to suffer for his religion, or rather what others have taken to be his religion, from a welter of accusations and recriminations. This religion has been described as 'impious' and 'hypocritical', as 'unprincipled' and 'lukewarm' as well as 'dangerous' and 'blasphemous', and Swift himself been characterized, grotesquely, as 'a ribald, faithless priest' and as 'one of those beings whom Providence occasionally inflicts upon the world, blighting all they pass, poisoning all they come in contact with, withering all that clings to them'.[66] 'For one critic', a reader has summarized the prevailing impression, 'who deems the Dean "jocose," innumerable

[61] See, for example, A. C. Elias, Jr, 'Richard Helsham, Jonathan Swift and the Library of John Putland', *Marsh's Library – A Mirror on the World: Law, Learning, and Libraries, 1650–1750*, ed. by Muriel McCarthy and Ann Simmons (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), pp. 251–78.

[62] See Godfrey Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests: A Dictionary of the Secular Clergy of England and Wales, 1558–1850* (Ware: St Edmund's College, 1968).

[63] G. Richard Dimler, SJ, 'The Jesuit Emblem Book in 17th Century Protestant England', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 63 (1984), 357–67 (p. 357).

[64] *Prose Works*, II, 37; III, 88, 97–98, 143–44.

[65] John Oldham, 'Satyrs upon the Jesuits', *The Poems of John Oldham*, ed. by Harold F. Brooks and Raman Selden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 5, 356, and *passim*. Even the most cursory of glances at the superb *Poems on Affairs of State* series, ed. by George deF. Lord in seven volumes (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963–75) will tell interested readers that few murders, plots, fires, and other crimes in seventeenth-century English history were apparently not attributed to the Jesuits.

[66] Alexander Andrews, *The History of British Journalism* (1859), 2 vols (London: Scholarly Press, 1968), I, 115–16. See also Ricardo Quintana in the Preface to his *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (1936) (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1965), p. vii: 'Through the immoderate hostility of his critics Swift's fame was assured: he was a man of unclean mind, a blackguard, a faithless priest, but he was represented as having been all of these things to an unnatural degree.'

others describe his religious positioning as "problematic", "mysterious", or "debatable" '.[67] Although more recent scholars, including Swift aficionados, tend to be more cautious in their judgements, they still contribute to proliferating old prejudices, doubting, for example, that the Dean had 'serious views' on specific religious issues,[68] or positing that he '[stood] in opposition to tenets of Christian faith'.[69] However, given the fact that these judgements are based on insufficient historical evidence, we need to look, *and* think, again. If we continue to be interested in a more reasoned and less arbitrary understanding of 'our man', we had better engage in reconstructing the historical *con*-texts in which his texts were written and embed them in harder, and more philological, facts.[70] After all, whoever caught anything with a naked hook?[71]

[67] See the impressive collection of such and similar verdicts in Nathalie Zimpfer, 'Swift and Religion: From Myth to Reality', *Swift Studies*, 24 (2009), 46–69.

[68] See, in addition to Ehrenpreis, *Dean Swift*, pp. 461–62, the same author's 'Swiftian Dilemmas', *Satire in the 18th Century*, ed. by Browning, pp. 222–23.

[69] Brean Hammond, 'Dean Swift: The Satirist and his Faith', in *Sustaining Literature: Essays on Literature, History, and Culture, 1500–1800, Commemorating the Life and Work of Simon Varey*, ed. by Clingham, pp. 127–35 (p. 135). See also John Traugott, 'Swift, our Contemporary', *University Review*, 4, no. 1 (1967), 11–34 (pp. 29–31), and the same author's 'The Yahoo in the Doll's House: *Gulliver's Travels* the Children Classic', in *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition*, ed. by Claude Rawson and Jenny Mezciems (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 135–36; Michael DePorte, 'The Road to St Patrick's: Swift and the Problem of Belief', *Swift Studies*, 8 (1993), 5–17 (p. 14).

[70] I have elaborated this view in 'Facta Sunt Servanda: Or, A Plea for a (Swiftian) Return to Scholarly Sanity', *Poetica*, 68 (2007), 17–38. I agree with Roger D. Lund, 'Swift's Sermons, "Public Conscience", and the Privatization of Religion', *Prose Studies*, 18 (1995), 150–74 (p. 151).

[71] This is the moment to thank Dr Kirsten Juhas, and Sandra Simon, M.A., 'my people' at the Ehrenpreis Centre, for intellectual inspiration as well as bibliographical and electronic support, and for just being there.