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The Reader's Reflection in Swift's "A Voyage to Laputa"

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THE READER'S REFLECTION IN SWIFT'S

A VOYAGE TO LAPUTA

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
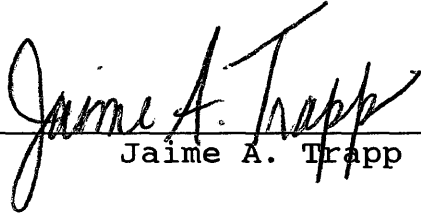
Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

Jaime A. Trapp

1992

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between the reader and the text as depicted in Jonathan Swift's third voyage in Gulliver's Travels, A Voyage to Laputa.

If, according to Swift, satire is a reflective glass, and, A Voyage to Laputa is a satire, then A Voyage to Laputa is a reflective glass. Reading a satire, therefore, is similar to looking in a glass (or mirror), whereby the reader may "see" his reflection. Sight, then, is a metaphor for knowledge--when the reader "sees" himself reflected in the satire determines whether he is a fool.

Simply decoding the text forces the reader to participate in the satire, for he too may be mocked if he incorrectly deciphers Gulliver's words or expressions, if he erroneously "breaks" Swift's "literary codes."

But, if the reader must "break" those codes to understand the text, and, he must "see" his reflection in Swift's satiric glass, then a certain kind of foolishness is required--namely, an admission that one is a fool. Ultimate wisdom, therefore, comes from being a reader who "sees" himself "face to face" as in a reflective glass.

This reading process is ridiculed in A Voyage to Laputa. To understand the text, the reader must perform the very tasks Swift mocks. When the reader chooses to "break" a code, when he unscrambles anagrams, when he discovers who "speaks as a fool," he risks being a hypocrite who cannot "see" his decoding errors or a fool who can.

Yet, sometimes, the reader may successfully decode a word or expression without being a hypocrite or a fool, an achievement which encourages his intellectual vanity, and thus, may lead him to commit decoding errors. Hence, the reader may confront his reflection numerous times during the course of his reading experience, a tug-of-war between foolishness and wisdom.

Decoding A Voyage to Laputa, then, challenges not the reader's intellectual capabilities, but his ability to see his intellectual limitations.

THE READER'S REFLECTION IN SWIFT'S

A VOYAGE TO LAPUTA

I.   Looking through Swift's glass

> Lewis Grumbles a little at [Gulliver's Travels] &
> says he wants the Key to it . . . . Gulliver is
> in every body's Hands Lord Scarborow who is no
> inventor of Storys told me that he fell in company
> with a Master of a ship, who told him that he was
> very well acquainted with Gulliver, but that the
> printer had Mistaken, that he lived in Wapping, &
> not in Rotherhith. I lent the Book to an old
> Gentleman, who went immediately to his Map to
> search for Lilly Putt (John Arbuthnot to Swift,
> November 5, 1726).

Readers have often behaved like the foolish man racing to

his map since the first publication of Gulliver's Travels.

Abounding in political allusions and teasing word games,

Swift's voyages entice readers, promising some answers while

withholding others. Nowhere is this more apparent than in

Gulliver's third adventure, A Voyage to Laputa, the least

understood and the least liked of the four voyages.

How one reads a satire like A Voyage to Laputa is a

difficult question. "Satire," Swift wrote, "is a sort of

glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's

face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind

of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are

offended with it."[1] If A Voyage to Laputa is such a glass,

anyone searching for a non-existent, flying island on a map

is a fool who cannot see his own reflection.[2] Simply

deciphering the text, therefore, forces the reader to

participate in the satire. Lured to unscramble the

anagrams, to find the puns, to provide a "key" for

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interpretation, to discover an imaginary island on a map, the reader often seems foolish. Yet, this foolishness is also necessary to Swift's satire, because the underlying political allusions must also be decoded. I believe that in *A Voyage to Laputa*, **when** the reader sees himself reflected in the satire determines whether the reader is a fool.

If the reader must decide when it is appropriate to decode the text, and, his judgment is influenced by a capricious narrator, when the reader sees through him determines whether the reader decodes foolishly. Because decoding is an act of reading "perceptively," and because Swift is an author who demands a particular interchange between the reader and the text, I believe that decoding is a tug-of-war between foolishness and wisdom; and I shall argue that in order to decode the text wisely, the reader must recognize that in reading the text, the act of decoding is necessary on one page, demeaning on the next. Since Gulliver is a narrator whose speech and antics often trick us into decoding incorrectly, I believe that the reader's self-reflection, however revealing, is necessary to a fuller understanding of a text like *A Voyage to Laputa*, Swift's satire on intellectual folly.

II. The reader's reflection

When Swift compared satire to a reflective glass he alluded to a type of reading process where the author

invites the reader to observe himself during the course of
his literary analysis, known today as "reader response"
criticism.[3] First, the detective-like reader decodes the
text created by the author--or what Paul J. Korshin calls,
the author's "literary codes" ("Deciphering Swift's Codes").
By "literary codes" I mean a word or expression in the text
used ambiguously so that other meanings are implied.[4] When
the reader deciphers such codes, he actually replaces the
initial word or expression with one which, in most cases,
seems to resolve the ambivalence. Metaphors are
conceptually similar codes, a view which Korshin advances,
"[i]n its simplest sense, a metaphor, whereby a speaker or
writer substitutes one or perhaps several words for a single
verbal unit, is a literary code" (124). Reading, then, is
similar to an investigative process whereby we "break" the
author's literary codes by resolving the ambiguity they
present by substituting a series of plausible meanings which
we make at our own discretion.

Thus, deciphering a literary code involves more than
exchanging the author's word or expression--it involves our
individual dispositions as well. Wolfgang Iser defines such
self-analysis as the reader's active participation in
bringing out meaning through self-confrontations with his
abilities to comprehend the text (The Implied Reader, 31).
Similarly, Swift holds up his satiric glass for the reader's
perusal, whereby the reader may scrutinize himself. If

"breaking" Swift's codes wisely means we sometimes see ourselves reflected in the satire, then reading wisely produces a series of self-confrontations, a process of learning during which our own sense of discernment may fall under investigation.

This intersection of text and reader is what brings the literary work into existence, a point of convergence that Iser claims must remain indefinite, or "virtual":

> It is the virtuality of the work that gives rise
> to its dynamic nature, and this in turn is the
> precondition for the effects that the work calls
> forth. As the reader uses the various
> perspectives offered him by the text in order to
> relate the patterns and "schematised views" to one
> another, he sets the work in motion, and this very
> process results ultimately in the awakening of
> responses within himself (275).[5]

So the reader's reflection upon his substitutions continues a reading process out of which emerges the actual content of the text.[6] And, if such responses are part of the text, then Swift's summons to observe ourselves in his satiric glass fosters a method of reading which may ridicule our responses.

Swift's readers are ridiculed during this process precisely because distinguishing between Swift's sincere hints and red herrings is often difficult.[7] Gulliver's Travels contains a variety of serious and superficial codes that stimulate the reader's participation because of their duplicitous nature.[8] Thus the reader, not always knowing

when it is appropriate to substitute a word or expression for what appears cryptic in the text, often miscalculates. These errors in judgment are compounded by an author who willfully manipulates the reader into these failures, for Swift's satire achieves its greatest end when the reader recognizes his mistakes. Because Gulliver's Travels invites our self-reflections, we must remember that, if we accept this invitation, we may be the satire's target.

The reader who fails to make this distinction is himself satirized. If Swift's satires can be compared to a reflective glass, then those readers who discover everybody else's face reflected in the satire except their own are foolish, because they cannot see their own reflection; yet, those readers who discover their faces reflected in the satire are also foolish, because they admit that they see their own reflection. The reader must decide which type of fool he is: if the reader does not see his own reflection in the satire, he denies being the object of Swift's ridicule, thus making him ridiculous; and if the reader does see his reflection, he admits that he is ridiculous.

This rhetorical contradiction is an example of what Frederik N. Smith calls the dangerous Swiftian "double binds" found in Gulliver's Travels ("The Danger of Reading Swift: The Double Binds of Gulliver's Travels"). Such "entrapments" are Swift's "demonstration to the reader that his usual procedures of understanding are debilitatingly

naive, simplistic, complacent, inconsistent, or inadequate
in some other way" (Smith, 110). Smith further explains how
such a trap is set:

> 1) two or more persons, one of whom is the
> "victim"; 2) a primary injunction to do or not to
> do such a thing, which is coupled with a
> threatened punishment for an infraction; 3) a
> secondary injunction that conflicts with the first
> on a more abstract level, is often implicit, and
> is likewise coupled with threatened punishment; 4)
> repeated experience, to the point that the victim
> comes to expect mixed messages (120).

Swift's reflective glass is such a trap, for he displays his
satire for our examination and says "Look!" Because we are
inconsistently rewarded and punished for "breaking" Swift's
codes--even when he instructs us to do so--we alternate
between obedience and disobedience when we decipher these
metaphors.

If reading is a continuous tug-of-war between two
conflicting injunctions, then Gulliver's Travels possesses
two audiences--those who look into satire's glass and those
who do not. Smith also discusses this kind of readership in
Gulliver's Travels, defining one as the characterized reader
that Gulliver addresses, and the second as the implied
reader that Swift addresses.[9] The characterized reader is
much like Gulliver: he is British, he is familiar with
travel literature and its conventions, he is easily shocked
by the profane, he is easily impressed by the supercilious,
and his naivety, arrogance, and shallowness often make him

the object of Swift's ridicule. He is Gulliver's "Gentle

Reader," a man who automatically sympathizes with Gulliver's

point of view, especially when Gulliver solicits his

opinion.

The implied reader, however, is Swift's audience: he

can decode clues faster than the characterized reader, he is

wise to the ways of the world, he knows he can be satire's

victim as often as the characterized reader, and he can

admit it, which ultimately brings him to a greater

understanding of what has happened in the text (Smith, 119).

Iser further defines this type of reader:

> If the fulfillment of the novel demands a
> heightened faculty of judgment, it is only natural
> that the narrator should also compel the reader--
> at times quite openly--to reflect on his own
> situation, for without doing so he will be
> incapable of judging the actions of the characters
> in the novel" (114).

The implied reader, then, questions his ability to render

sense out of the text, for he is aware of his potentially

hypocritical stance. Hence, readers are similar to the

characters within the text, readers who are given certain

traits they may accept or reject, in the same way they may

see their reflection in Swift's glass or not.

Character-like, these performances are sometimes worthy

of censure and sometimes praiseworthy. The characterized

reader is encouraged to distance himself from the other

characters, to judge and decipher the text from a

supercilious position, thus avoiding any personal

involvement, or reflection upon such an attitude:

> In order to develop this awareness, the narrator
> creates situations in which the characters'
> actions correspond to what the reader is tricked
> into regarding as natural, subsequently feeling
> the irresistible urge to detach himself from the
> proceedings. And if the reader ignores the
> discreet summons to observe himself, then his
> critical attitude toward the characters becomes
> unintentionally hypocritical, for he forgets to
> include himself in the judgement (Iser, 116).

Disregarding Swift's admonitions to see himself reflected in

the satire, the characterized reader becomes hypocritical,

for he neglects to evaluate his own responses. Conversely,

the implied reader reflects upon his performance in the same

manner in which he evaluates the other characters, thus

granting him a greater understanding of the text and his

position in it:

> Instead of just seeing through them [the
> characters], he [the implied reader] sees himself
> reflected in them, so that the superior position
> which the narrator [i.e., Gulliver] has given him
> over the pretenses and illusions of the characters
> now begins to fade. [This] reader realizes that
> he is similar to those who are supposed to be the
> objects of criticism, and so the self-
> confrontations that permeate the novel compel him
> to become aware of his own position in evaluating
> that of the characters (Iser, 116).

Swift's solicitation reminds the implied reader of his

deficiencies in understanding by revealing his resemblance

to the cast. Whether we are such readers depends on our

willingness to see ourselves in the text as a character, or we risk being "two-faced."

Because having "two faces" implies two reflections, the reader may see alternate images of himself in Swift's reflective glass. Depending on **when** we chose to **see**, or rather, to evaluate the wisdom of our decoding decisions-- our substitutions--we are either the characterized reader or the implied reader, a tug-of-war between roles throughout the course of our reading experience. Swift creates this duality when he asks us to react in one of two ways: to see ourselves in the glass of satire or not. Reading, therefore, is a process of self-confrontations with our procedures of judgment--our ability to **see** ourselves reflected in the decisions we make.

Sight, then, is a metaphor for knowledge: to **see** oneself revealed in satire's glass is to be a **wise** reader. Similarly, if asserting wisdom is foolish, and confessing folly is wise, then ultimate wisdom means becoming a reader who **sees** his own reflection in the satire, or rather, who recognizes his decoding errors. If our "vision" is sometimes obscured by the ambiguity a word or expression presents, and our decoding decisions are influenced by the narrator, then deciding whether Gulliver is trustworthy determines when we decode those words or expressions. If we do not trust Gulliver, we will search for the metaphor lurking behind his words--if we trust him, we will accept

his words at "face value." What constitutes truth, then,
must be determined if we are to decode Swift's glass of
satire.

II.   Looking through Paul's glass

In defining satire as a glass that reveals such truths, Swift alludes to I Corinthians 13:12: "For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (Holy Bible, King James Version of 1611, 855).[10] The correlation hinges on the word "glass." The Greek word "esoptron," here translated as "glass," "refers to the common bronze mirror of antiquity, the surface of which, even when freshly polished, produced a dim and distorted image . . ." (Holy Bible, 855).[11] In the Pauline text, once again sight is a metaphor for knowledge: "Now I **see** incompletely, then I shall **know** fully." Ultimate wisdom--or rather, truth--for both Paul and Swift, then, comes from communicating "face to face," as in a reflective mirror.[12]

If Paul's and Swift's mirrors/glasses reveal truth, then how truth is revealed is an important question. Since what we see depends upon our perception and upon what has been made available, then what we know depends upon a combination of our innate abilities and what is disclosed. Like an oracle, a glass reveals images or answers; but since man "sees through a glass darkly," such images or answers are obscure. Delphi answered Oedipus, but Oedipus did not understand what Delphi said; so, according to his intellectual abilities, Oedipus interpreted, or decoded, that answer.[13] Because man understands incompletely, he

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is forced, like Oedipus, to decode revealed answers based on his natural abilities. If interpretation is subject to perception, truth is ambiguous; similarly, if the reader's perceptions determine what he sees in the satire, answers appear ambiguous. So, the author reveals answers to his readers' queries through his glass--or rather, his satire-- but whether readers perceive them, or rather, how they decode them, depends on their intellectual abilities.

Decoding a satire wisely, therefore, depends on both the author's willingness to provide answers and the reader's ability to decode them. Such an interpretative process is similar to the concept of revelation in Christian theology, where revelation is a combination of what is disclosed by God and our natural abilities; or rather, a combination of revealed and natural theology.[14] That Swift deliberately withheld some answers and provided others is evident from both his correspondence regarding Gulliver's Travels and the secretive manner in which he first published it. Both bits of evidence point to the conclusion that a select few were "in on the joke" while the rabble was ignored.[15] Irvin Ehrenpreis' biography on Swift is persuasive about this:

> Swift's allusive but secretive style of dealing
> with the progress of his masterpiece [Gulliver's
> Travels] suggests what one would assume from
> reading it with attention--i.e., that he wished it
> to surprise his readers and yet wanted a chosen
> few to be prepared for the hoaxes and ironies . .
> . . Swift wished to hide what he was doing from
> the profane while revealing it to the initiate . .
> . . It would have been pointless to produce a

> book that no one understood. He relied on a core
> of enlightened readers to pick up clues . . . a
> chosen few who might join him in laughing at the
> rest. The friends whom he entrusted with his
> secret stood for that select audience. They would
> know without being told that the author was only
> clowning . . . (III, 447).

Ultimate knowledge depends upon an act of grace on the
author's part, where the reader's natural abilities are
augmented by what is revealed by the god-like author.
Unfortunately, although today's reader may have a more
comprehensive view of the eighteenth century, he is less
able to decipher Swift's satire itself because it contains
unfamiliar political allusions and word games; therefore, we
are more apt to read foolishly.

In order to decode a satire, however, a certain type of
foolishness is required--namely, an admission that one is a
fool. St. Paul argues for this type of folly in I
Corinthians (according to Ehrenpreis, Swift's favorite
Pauline epistle was I Corinthians) when he claims that
ultimate salvation comes from being a Fool in Christ.[16]
To be such a fool in Christ found its fullest expression in
an early sixteenth century work by one of Swift's favorite
authors, Desiderius Erasmus' Moriae encomium or The Praise
of Folly.[17] In it, Stultitia (Folly) praises the role she
plays in human life, which is to grant man the formula for
true happiness, "ignorance is bliss." Certainly Swift
expounds this philosophy in his "Digression Concerning
Madness" (another type of folly) in A Tale of A Tub: "This

[ignorance] is the sublime and refined Point of Felicity, called, the Possession of being well deceived; the Serene Peaceful State of being a Fool among Knaves" (Writings, 352). Furthermore, Stultitia argues, if to be a man is to be a fool, Christ's incarnation made him the greatest of all fools.[18] Hence, if man is to imitate Christ, then in order to achieve ultimate wisdom, he too must become foolish in order to be wise. For Paul, if ultimate salvation comes from being a fool who clearly sees his own image in a mirror, then such foolishness is desirable. Similarly, for Swift, ultimate wisdom comes from being a reader who sees himself in the satire, or "face to face." Reading, then, is a series of self-confrontations with our own reflection, our own standards of criticism, our own mistakes.

These errors are compounded by a narrator who often looks like a fool, yet, upon reflection, speaks wisely. The oxymoronic idea that the fool may possess wisdom evolved from the centuries-old custom of employing physically deformed or mentally retarded people for the purpose of household entertainment.[19] These unaffected fools speak without offense because the witless cannot be regulated by society--they are outside of society's rules because rules apply only to those responsible for their actions. When Paul says, "I speak as a fool" (II Corinthians 11), Stultitia echoes it: "it's the special privilege of fools to speak the truth without giving offense" (78). Their very

idiocy protects them from society's censure. Consequently, those who assume such an "idiotic" defense to disguise their wisdom escape the criticism wise men suffer. If Gulliver, like Paul, sometimes "speaks as a fool," then such speech explains why Swift's satire offends so few--the sting of truth is dulled by the appearance of folly.

The distinction between what William Willeford in his The Fool and His Scepter calls these "natural" fools and "artificial" fools was made during the reign of Elizabeth I, when knaves performed like "natural" fools (10). The literary value of such characters who speak and act freely was recognized by such authors as William Shakespeare (As You Like It), Ben Jonson (The Alchemist), and Alexander Pope (The Dunciad), whose works often contained professionally amusing fools who were far from witless. The "all-licensed fool" (so-called in Shakespeare's King Lear by Lear's enraged daughter, Goneril) is the perfect mouthpiece for the author, for such leniency allows "artificial" fools the opportunity to be aggressive in their denunciations, vindictive in their attitude, and most of all, wise in their condemnation of folly. One thinks of the fool in Shakespeare's King Lear, whose special status in society allowed him to expose truths that Kent was banished for revealing. Such an "artificial" fool can mask the author's voice--the author can now speak and act with the fool's impunity, without fear of censure or retaliation.[20]

Using this literary artifice--the "wise" fool--is
another example of Swift's rhetorical contradictions, or
entrapments. Initially, we dismiss what the babbling fool
says, for such drivel is usually offensive and senseless--
both of which encourage our dissociation from the text,
whereby we become characterized readers. Upon reflection,
however, such hasty assessments may transform us into what
we condemned (i.e., fools), because we first ignored the
possibility of wisdom lurking behind the prattle--such
contemplation, then, would make us implied readers. At the
same time, it may be foolish to meditate upon such asinine
speech--if so, then the characterized reader's dismissal
would be wise, and the implied reader's meditation foolish.
These ironic reversals of our expectations undermine our
attempts to "break" Swift's codes, for such entrapments
sabotage our confidence in our normal procedures of
understanding, of ascertaining truth.

But decoding a satire astutely requires the reader to
unmask truth. Unfortunately, because Gulliver may be
justified not by truth but by the pretension to truth, the
reader's attempts to distinguish between honest hints and
surreptitious hoaxes, to discriminate between sincerity and
duplicity, are often thwarted.[21] Discovering when fools
affect wisdom and wise men affect folly, then, signifies
when it is appropriate to decode their words.[22] Yet,
because Gulliver's speech and antics seem normal in *A Voyage*

to Laputa, we are inclined to identify with this narrator and trust his judgments, rather than decode his words. If this satire ridicules our decoding efforts by demonstrating that our usual procedures of understanding are naive and deficient, then I believe that Swift intended the nondescript narrator of *A Voyage to Laputa* to lure us into a sense of complacency regarding our own intellectual abilities, which makes us this satire's victim.

III. Gulliver's reflection

When Gulliver narrates his adventures in Laputa, he
neither looks nor behaves like the fool he appears to be in
the other three voyages, so deciding when he "speaks as a
fool" is difficult. Because Gulliver appears like an
ordinary, modest Englishman in Laputa, we accept his
assessments at "face value" without bothering to search for
a duplicitous metaphor lurking behind his words. Depending
on when we choose to "see" or rather, to evaluate, the
wisdom of trusting such a conventional narrator--we are
either the characterized reader or the implied reader, whose
roles are in a tug-of-war throughout the course of our
reading experience. Without the physical resemblance to
what readers might recognize as a "natural" or "artificial"
fool, we may be duped into regarding Gulliver as a harmless,
honest narrator. Because such overt clues are lacking in *A
Voyage to Laputa*, determining when we should "break" Swift's
literary codes depends on whether Gulliver successfully
appeals to our intellectual vanity.

Gulliver is more appealing--and therefore, more
credible--in this voyage precisely because he lacks the
visual abnormalities between himself and the different
societies he encounters there, which, in the other three
voyages, make him look foolish. In the other voyages--the
journeys to Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and Houyhnhnms--Gulliver
betrays characteristics that belie the truth he advocates.

Although his physical appearance may seem normal to the reader who identifies with Gulliver as the narrator and as an Englishman, when compared to the Lilliputians, the Brobdingnagians, and the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver appears grossly deformed. In Lilliput, he is a giant towering above people to whom he fawns. In Brobdingnag, he is a midget among giants--smaller even than the Queen's fool, her dwarf, whose animus Gulliver incurs when Gulliver teases him about his height (85-6)--and becomes the plaything of dogs (93), monkeys (97-9), and immodest maids of honor (96). In the land of the Houyhnhnms, he is a savage among a society of cultivated animals (202-3). These physical differences parallel the overall thematic design in Gulliver's Travels, namely, that our conceptions about our faculties are grossly exaggerated. Because Gulliver's adventure in Laputa lacks these overt clues, we often assume that Gulliver's faculties, like ours, are intact. In Laputa, Gulliver is more likely to convince us of his sincerity, and thus, we will take his words at "face value," neglecting to decipher them.

This identification is also encouraged by the Laputians' treatment of Gulliver. He walks unmolested through their streets and is considered an honored visitor, rather than a slave or beast whose intelligence is debatable, a theme that is only lightly touched upon in Laputa. While residing in Lilliput, he is first

incarcerated in a cathedral; in Brobdingnag he is placed in a box; in the land of the Houyhnhnms he is housed in a stable like their servants. In Laputa, however, Gulliver is a free man, traveling to several different countries and encountering several different races of men within the third book. Because Gulliver is considered an equal in Laputa, we are therefore more likely to take him seriously, and less likely to "see" a literary code lurking in his words.

Because Gulliver also behaves decorously in Laputa, we presume he is not as licentious as he appears in Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and the land of the Houyhnhnms. These societies disapprove of his behavior, citing such reasons as publicly urinating (Lilliput), possessing barbarous ideas (Brobdingnag), and lying (Houyhnhnms). He is accused in Lilliput of seditious actions: "in open Breach of the said Law, under Colour of extinguishing the Fire kindled in the Apartment of his Majesty's most dear Imperial Consort, did maliciously, traitorously, and devilishly, by discharge of his Urine, put out the said Fire kindled in the said Apartment . . ." (48). He is vilified in Brobdingnag: "how so impotent and groveling an Insect as [Gulliver] . . . could entertain such inhuman Ideas [as advocating murder]" (109-10). He speaks falsely to the Houyhnhnms, or "says the Thing which is not" (214). Though inflating and deflating Gulliver's "stature" is amusing, his conduct in these societies is reprehensible even to the reader who identifies

with him; and, being such, should make the reader pause
before he identifies with such foolish behavior. In Laputa,
however, because Gulliver behaves properly, he seems a more
trustworthy narrator during this voyage.

Furthermore, Gulliver's sincerity is suspicious in the
other voyages because his characteristics and antics are
also reminiscent of the "all-licensed fool," who is
frequently portrayed with exaggerated body parts, i.e., with
an extended phallus (as in Lilliput); depicted as a dwarf or
midget, or with some such physical deformity (as in
Brobdingnag); and, is associated with the bestial and
lascivious (as compared with the Houyhnhnms).[23] Such
distortions produce elements of what is termed "the
grotesque"--components of "the ridiculous, bizarre,
extravagant, freakish and unnatural--in short, aberrations
from the desirable norms of harmony, balance and
proportion."[24] Because Gulliver is a foreigner among
societies of midgets, giants, and animals, then according to
these societies, he is the deviant, the abnormality--the
fool (whether Gulliver is a "natural" or "artificial" fool,
however, depends on the situation). Such clues aid the
reader's decoding facilities, for it places Gulliver in a
literary legacy of wise fools--the "wise folly" tradition of
Paul and Erasmus, Shakespeare and Jonson--a history of
freaks, their shenanigans, and their perceptions. But,
Laputa lacks the outward manifestation of this literary

stratagem, so determining when Gulliver "speaks as a fool" in this voyage is more difficult.

Such a plain appearance is what makes Gulliver a more insidious narrator; for he is not the target of derision that he is in the other three adventures, does not commit gross errors in action or judgment, neither displays his penis nor discusses his own excrement, and is physically indistinguishable from the people he meets. Determining when Gulliver speaks foolishly in *A Voyage to Laputa*, then, is difficult because we identify best with those who resemble us; so, we are more likely to become characterized readers whose sagacity Gulliver, a conventional Englishman, beseeches. Thus, we are more apt to be deceived because we have been lulled into a sense of security with this narrator.

Because Gulliver appears unremarkable and behaves properly when we compare *A Voyage to Laputa* with the other voyages, critics of Gulliver's Travels have found *A Voyage to Laputa* so boring, so completely lacking in the originality the other voyages share, that most chalk up its deviations to Swift's eccentricities.[25] Without the obvious physical differences pointing to the overall thematic design, the satire in *A Voyage to Laputa* is less obvious, and therefore, seems less stimulating.[26]

I believe, however, that such dullness encourages our decoding errors--we are seduced by this satire's monotony

and deceived by Gulliver's humdrum appearance. Here, Gulliver's banality is conspicuous. Since we must decide when it is appropriate to decode this satire, and our judgment is influenced by such a credible narrator, seeing ourselves reflected in Swift's glass of *Laputa* is harder, for we must resist identifying with Gulliver simply because he is made in our image. This being so, then Swift's more subtle entrapments in *A Voyage to Laputa* make our "fall from grace" a greater plunge, because such an unpretentious text and narrator give us more confidence in our normal procedures of understanding. I believe that Swift, determined to prove "the falsity of the Definition *animale rationale*; and to show it should be only *rationis capax*," satirizes our faith in our intellectual abilities by compelling us to misapply it.[27]

Ironically, Swift's portrayal of the narrator, Gulliver, parallels the reader's situation, because Gulliver also decodes his own experience both wisely and foolishly. Depending on the situation, Gulliver is either condemning foolishness or being the foolish victim of Swift's ridicule.[28] In the first instance, he is the wily voyager who can avoid "trampling on a Crucifix" (*A Voyage to Laputa*, 187). And, he can adequately identify what he calls a "very common Infirmity of human Nature . . . [which] inclin[es] us to be more curious and conceited in Matters where we have least Concern, and for which we are least adapted either by

Study or Nature" (*A Voyage to Laputa*, 137). In the second

instance, Gulliver is the dupe, the simpleton, whose

bumbling attempt at ingenuity fails to convince those

readers who see through him:

> The Word, which I interpret the *Flying* or *Floating*
> *Island*, is in the original *Laputa*; whereof I could
> never learn the true Etymology. *Lap* in the old
> obsolete Language signifieth *High*, and *Untuh* a
> *Governor*; from which they say by Corruption was
> derived *Laputa* from *Lapuntuh*. But I do not
> approve of this Derivation, which seems to be a
> little strained. I ventured to offer to the
> Learned among them a Conjecture of my own, that
> *Laputa* was *quasi Lap outed*; *Lap* signifying a Wing,
> which however I shall not obtrude, but submit to
> the judicious Reader" (*A Voyage to Laputa*, 135).

Because "Laputa" actually means "the whore" in Spanish, to

supply the appropriate substitution for the word one must

know Spanish; but, Gulliver's faculties, despite proceeding

in a rational manner, decode the word because they lack a

key piece of the code, i.e., knowledge of Spanish. Gulliver

has committed an act of folly: despite his obfuscating

modesty (which may be a pretense), he has betrayed himself

as a pompous ass affecting wisdom, especially to those

readers who know Spanish and see the metaphor. Gulliver's

meanderings among alternate decodings should alert even the

reader who does not know Spanish that Gulliver's decoding is

suspect. For the reader who must determine when Gulliver is

foolish and when not, his erratic behavior makes it

difficult; and his affectation of reason confuses the

foolish with the wise.

Swift further complicates our decoding of Gulliver by frequently presenting him in a favorable light. Gulliver seems a humble surgeon, who, according to himself, merely reports the facts.[29] As an impartial observer, Gulliver appears innocent, and consequently, seems not to be blamable for any particular reflections upon society or men. At the end of his travels, Gulliver claims, "I meddle not the least with any Party, but write without Passion, Prejudice, or Ill-will against any Man or Number of Men whatsoever" (257). He asserts that no objections can be made because no one else has ever travelled to these lands: "I am not a little pleased that this Work of mine can possibly meet with no Censurers: For what Objections can be made against a Writer who relates only plain Facts that happened in such distant Countries, where we have not the least Interest with respect either to Trade or Negotiations? (257)" He claims he writes virtuously, "for the noblest End, to inform and instruct Mankind, over whom I may, without Breach of Modesty, pretend to some Superiority, from the advantages received by conversing so long with the Houyhnhnms" (257). He writes without expecting earthly reward: "I write without any View towards Profit or Praise" (257). And, Gulliver attests to the purity of his observations: "I never suffer a Word to pass that may look like **Reflection** or possibly give the least Offence even to those who are most ready to take it. So that, I hope, I may with Justice pronounce myself an

Author perfectly blameless; against whom the Tribes of Answerers, Considerers, Observers, **Reflectors**, Detectors, Remarkers, will never be able to find Matter for exercising their Talents" (257; emphasis mine). Such a defense makes Gulliver's integrity appear impregnable.

These protestations, however, are questionable because of Gulliver's apparent hostility. First, Swift creates a situation in which Gulliver's actions correspond to what the reader is tricked into regarding as a natural defense against hordes of critics. Next, Gulliver tells us his words do not reflect upon anyone; therefore, he is blameless of any wrongdoing. Finally--here is where Swift springs his trap--Gulliver's name-calling contradicts his original assertions, for decoding this passage means that the judicious reader becomes what Gulliver denounces, namely an "Answerer, Considerer, Observer, Reflector, Detector, and Remarker." And, Gulliver becomes a hypocrite, for he does offend and he does pass judgment . . . on the reader who decodes his words. By encouraging readers to distance themselves from the objects of his attack, however, those who identify with Gulliver--i.e., characterized readers approving of Gulliver's assessments--fail to see his and their hypocrisy, which in turn, ridicules them.

Swift confirms the success of such a defense in a heavily sarcastic letter to L'Abbé des Fountaines, July 1727. Reproaching Des Fountaines, an editor whose French

translation of <u>Gulliver's Travels</u> callously deleted passages unfavorable to France and whose preface recorded offenses the original book had committed, Swift assures him that his portrayal of Gulliver has aroused no suspicions, because no one takes his observations on the "imperfections, the follies, and the vices of man" personally (<u>The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift</u>, III. 226).[30] Such a presentation protects Swift from those who would accuse him of guile. But, under Gulliver's veneer of simplicity and artlessness lurks a crafty author out to trap the reader.

Swift further supports the credibility of the flying island with elaborate maps, street names, town names, etc. . . , which establish a visual image and lend a sense of geographical reality to the text.[31] Although distortion is characteristic of satire, these fabrications are given with Gulliver's solemn guarantee that because he is only a reporter of things that are, what he says must be true. Such protestations maintain the facade necessary to satire, where fantasy challenges reality, where imagination challenges science, where folly challenges wisdom.

Readers are further duped because Gulliver's straightforward descriptions of preposterous objects, such as a flying island, seem to sustain his credibility; for, ingeniously, Gulliver's descriptions are actually based on eighteenth-century science. In a two-article series on the scientific background of *A Voyage to Laputa*, Marjorie

Nicolson and Nora Mohler establish that, for his flying island, Swift used scientific sources that may account for the peculiar objects and experiments that abound in the satire, particularly those in the Laputian "Royal Academy of Lagado."[32] Certainly the mechanisms by which Swift's floating island "flew" were recognizable to his audience, as Nicolson and Mohler pointed out, through the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society on London, particularly the few papers of John Strachey on strata in coal-mines and Gilbert's De Magnete.[33] Nicolson's and Mohler's articles were the first that coherently explained where Swift's satire in A Voyage to Laputa was directed, and also showed that Swift's satire was meant to perplex his readers in the same way a puzzle intrigues those who attempt to decode it:

> Swift himself expressed the hope that posterity would be curious enough "to consult annuals and compare dates" in order to detect the double meanings in his work; he might have gone further and urged his reader to scrutinize with care his mathematics, to be vigilant whenever figures were introduced, to be on guard, indeed, at every phrase if they would finally succeed in "untwisting all the chains that tie The hidden soul of harmony" in his pattern. Such analysis is particularly important in solving the puzzle of the complex Flying Island, for magnetism and loadstones, Gilbert and Newton, "flying chariots" and the world in the moon are here welded into a new whole which takes its place as one of the most remarkable pseudo-scientific passage in the literature of the eighteenth century ("Swift's 'Flying Island' in the Voyage to Laputa," 406).

Once again Swift presents us with a double-bind. Though Swift gave this satire a recognizable scientific background,

using science to document the existence of a flying island establishes its credibility at the same time science actually mocks its credulity.

Presenting Gulliver as an impartial observer, then, makes him a kind of scientist who endeavors to record the facts, or rather, the truth; therefore, *A Voyage to Laputa* appropriately parodies such endeavors, for Swift mocks the objective truth Laputian science strives to obtain by mocking its *modus operandi* in the same way that Erasmus uses logic to mock logic. If Swift parodies science in *A Voyage to Laputa*, or uses reason to validate the unreasonable, then Swift again follows in the Erasmian tradition, where the speaker uses logic to substantiate the illogical. Walter Kaiser, in his <u>Praisers of Folly</u>--a study focused on three praisers of folly, Erasmus, Shakespeare, and Rabelais-- believes that only Erasmus and Swift successfully use the mock encomium:

> I know no other mock encomium before the <u>Moriae encomium</u> that employs this subtle device [the mock encomium--where the mocking is mocked], and after Erasmus only Swift successfully approximates it. Certain modern authors have at times done something analogous, and there are common dramatic devices that are similar, but, with the exception of Swift, no one has employed this particular strategy in quite the way Erasmus does (37).

A Voyage to Laputa has an aura of logical discourse and objectivity similar to Stultitia's in <u>The Praise of Folly</u>, an aura which serves to convince the reader that the

narrator is trustworthy and no simpleton, and has a
scientific deportment that can dupe the reader.

A Voyage to Laputa, then, like The Praise of Folly,
satirizes the reader's intellectual facilities--or rather,
his decoding efforts--by mocking his methodology. This
theme is underscored by yet another parallel to The Praise
of Folly, for Swift's Laputians seem to be exaggerated
versions of Stultitia's natural philosophers.[34] If
Stultitia's natural philosophers are so "ignorant of
themselves [that] they cannot avoid falling into a ditch or
stumbling over a rock in the path" (56), then Gulliver's
physical description of the Laputians is the literal
manifestation of such behavior: "[t]heir Heads were all
reclined to the Right, or the Left; one of their Eyes turned
inward, and the other directly up to the Zenith" (132).[35]
If the vision of these cross-eyed Laputians is thus
distorted, and, if sight is a metaphor for knowledge, then
such abstract thinkers are fools who cannot "see" straight.
The reader, then, can be compared to the Laputians, for he
too may become so caught up with intense deciphering, he
cannot "see" himself reflected in the satire.[36]

Swift's solution for such absent-mindedness alludes to
a familiar plaything of the literary fool--his bauble--which
further mocks the Laputians. The Laputians are "so taken up
with intense Speculations, that they neither can speak, or
attend to the Discourses of others, without being rouzed by

some external Taction upon Organs of Speech and Hearing. .
." (132). This "external Taction" is provided by
"flappers," Laputian servants who gently strike upon their
masters' ears and mouth with "a blown Bladder fastned like a
Flail to the End of a short Stick, which they carried in
their Hands. . . . In each Bladder was a small Quantity of
dried Pease, or little Pebbles" (132). Willeford's The Fool
and His Scepter discusses characteristics of the fool and
notes that "attached to the bauble of the European court
jester was often a bladder formed into a clear
representation of a phallus" (11).[37] And E.K. Chambers in
The Mediaeval Stage observes that the *marotte* in some
figures is "replaced or supplemented by some other form of
bauble, such as a bladder on a stick, stuffed into various
shapes, or hollow and containing peas" (385).[38] Swift,
associating the Laputian flapper/bladder practice with the
traditional fool's bauble, undermines their lofty
"speculative" thinking and mocks their mocking.

This repulsive convention even ridicules communication,
because Swift degrades the Laputians' audio and vocal
abilities. Gulliver describes this Laputian practice as if
the "flappers" are urinating on their employers--he "gently
strike[s] with his Bladder the Mouth of him who is to speak,
and the Right Ear of him or them to whom the Speaker
addresseth himself" (133). So, to gain the Laputians'
attention, they must be hit on the ears and mouth with a

bladder, an absurd image which contradicts their claim to rational thought. This joke becomes more grotesque when Gulliver later refers to the flappers' flails as "flaps," saying "[t]here stood by him [the King of Laputa] on each Side, a young Page, with Flaps in their Hands. . ." (133). If "flaps" are bladders, then Gulliver makes it sound as if the flappers are holding their penises (masturbating?), ready to strike the King on his ears and mouth with them.[39] Again, this ludicrous image makes the Laputians appear ridiculous. When Gulliver protests this "practice," he later discovers that doing so "gave his Majesty and the whole Court a very mean Opinion of my Understanding" (134), so the Laputians think less of Gulliver's intelligence because he can converse with others without being urinated upon or hit with a penis. Such repulsive practices, then, would convince the reader that, because the Laputians communicate in such a grotesque manner, Gulliver is more trustworthy in his assessments.

If we determine that such practices are loathsome, Gulliver's choice of companions while in Laputa makes sense. Gulliver eventually confesses that he prefers second-class citizens as companions to the Laputians, declaring "I conversed only with Women, Tradesmen, Flappers, and Court-pages, during two Months of my Abode there; by which at least I rendered my self extremely contemptible; yet these were the only People from whom I could ever receive a

reasonable Answer" (147). Because these lowly people were not concerned with such speculative thinking, they could converse without being hit on the ears and mouth with a bladder, much to the Laputians' abhorrence.

But decoding a text requires some degree of speculation, or rather, reflection, on the reader's part, for Swift invites such scrutiny when he holds up his satiric glass. Again, we are caught in a double-bind: we are asked to reflect on this text at the same time we are punished for doing so. If we condemn the Laputians for such speculative thinking, then we are hypocrites, for we have disassociated ourselves from the text, and have become characterized readers who cannot see that reading requires speculation. Our *modus operandi* is parodied by Swift, for he compels us to perform the tasks he ridicules, namely, speculate.

The reader's methodology is further ridiculed by Swift when Gulliver visits the Royal Academy of Lagado, an academy of scientific projectors. Here, he tries his hand at projecting, proposing a way to discover treasonous plots. He says that in a country "where I had long sojourned," the bulk of people were "Discoverers, Witnesses, Informers, Accusers, Prosecutors, Evidences, Swearers," and that the name of this kingdom is **"Tribnia,** by the Natives called **Langden"** (163). If the reader unscrambles the anagrams, he discovers **Tribnia** is "Britain" and **Langden** is "England,"

indicating that Swift is making a political allusion.

Gulliver continues with his proposition, remarking that,

> It is first agreed and settled among them [the
> natives of **Tribnia**], what suspected Persons shall
> be accused of a Plot: Then, effectual Care is
> taken to secure all their Letters and other
> Papers, and put the Owners in Chains. These
> Papers are delivered to a Set of Artists very
> dextrous in finding out the mysterious Meanings of
> Words, Syllables and Letters. For Instance, they
> can decypher a Close-stool to signify a Privy-
> Council; a Flock of Geese, a Senate; a lame Dog,
> an Invader; the Plague, a standing Army; a Buzard,
> a Minister; the Gout, a High Priest; a Gibbet, a
> Secretary; a Chamber pot, a Committee of Grandees;
> a Sieve, a Court Lady; a Broom, a Revolution; a
> Mouse-trap, an Employment; a bottomless Pit, the
> Treasury; a Sink, a C[our]t; a Cap and Bells, a
> Favourite; a broken Reed, a Court of Justice; an
> empty Tun, a General; a running Sore, the
> Administration (163-164).

While Gulliver is oblivious of his examples' significance,

the reader is intended to view them as reflective of a real

event; namely, the fabrication of evidence used against

Swift's "traitorous" friend Francis Atterbury, Bishop of

Rochester and Dean of Westminster.[40] The charges brought

against him alleged that he was a leader in a treasonable

conspiracy, involving invasion, insurrection, and the

restoration of the Pretender to the throne of England.

Since such political "deciphering" lent itself to elaborate

mockery, Swift reduces the body of "evidence" the government

used to a few silly deductions. Yet, when the reader solves

the anagrams and acrostics, he is compelled to view these

cryptic messages as political allusions to events in

England, and Swift ridicules him for decoding the text in
the same way Swift ridicules those who "deciphered" the
documents used against Atterbury--readers who use unraveled
anagrams as answers.

Paradoxically, for the reader to "get the joke," he
must decode such political decipherings. For example,
Swift's contemporaries were meant to recognize further
allusions to Atterbury's situation in Gulliver's examples of
what such word "Artists" might substitute, i.e., "a lame
Dog, an Invader; the Plague, a standing Army; a Buzard, a
Minister; the Gout, a High Priest." Gulliver is alluding to
three letters that were used against Atterbury, containing
references to the whereabouts of a known renegade, Jones or
Illington, on specific dates that coincided with Atterbury's
movements, Jones/Illington is suffering from gout and his
wife's having died, and a dog named Harlequin, that had been
sent as a gift from France to Jones/Illington.[41] After
these letters were produced as "evidence," the counsel
against Atterbury sarcastically asked, "[i]s there no other
Person who was in Town on the seventh of *May*, out of Town on
the tenth and fourteenth, in Town on the fifteenth, whose
Wife died the Week before the thirtieth of *April*, he himself
ill of the Gout, to whom a Dog was sent from *France* by the
name of *Harlequin* that broke its Leg, and was brought to
Mrs. *Barnes* by Mr. *Kelly* in order to be cured?" (Rosenheim,
"Swift and the Atterbury Case," 181)[42] If Swift felt that

such trumped up evidence used to condemn Atterbury was an affront to reason, then Gulliver's examples mock such testimony, because his connections between the initial word and his substitution are unintelligible, unless we substitute for his substitutions.[43] If we do not, we miss Swift's joke; if we do, we become the butt of the joke, for we perform the very task Swift ridicules--we decipher words in a text.

We are again ridiculed when we decode the word "privy." In the body of "evidence" used to condemn Atterbury, the "close-stool" referred to inconsequential letters discovered in the episcopal close-stool (or toilet), from which Gulliver's "dexterous Artists" derive "Privy-Council," or a group conducting secret transactions.[44] If we substitute "latrine" for "privy," then a "Privy-Council" sounds like a group of men conducting secret and potentially seditious meetings in a latrine (defecating?), which ridicules both Gulliver's pretentiousness and Atterbury's trial.[45] Yet, because our substitution is as ludicrous as those used to condemn Atterbury, we too become "dexterous Artists," the objects of Swift's attack.

But to understand the text, we must "break" Swift's codes; and sometimes, Swift does not punish us for doing so. We find such a literary code in the word "utter." One Laputian projection that Gulliver observes was for "entirely abolishing all Words whatsoever, for words corrode the lungs

thereby shortening our life span" (158); so, these projectors propose to communicate not with words but with things carried in a bundle upon a servant's back, like so many peddlers, who, opening their sacks, "hold Conversation for an Hour together" (158). The great advantage to this scheme, as Gulliver expresses it, is that "it would serve as an universal Language to be understood in all civilized Nations, whose Goods and Utensils are generally of the same Kind, or nearly resembling, so that their Uses might easily be comprehended" (159). And thus, Gulliver concludes, "Embassadors would be qualified to treat with foreign Princes or Ministers of State, to whose Tongues they were **utter** Strangers" (159). As an adjective, "utter" means "entire, total"; but, as a verb, "utter" means to **speak** or **to pronounce**, which is what the science projectors want to abolish.[46] Swift reverses our expectations when we decode this word, for it trivalizes the whole projection by mocking its attempt to abolish "uttering."

Other codes exist that we may "break" without fear of punishment. For example, Gulliver's description of the Laputian experiment concerning a cure for colic might have sounded familiar to his contemporaries, for it had also been performed at the Royal Society of London. Gulliver, "complaining of a small fit of the cholick", observes a "great Physician famous for curing that Disease" inserting a pair of bellows into the anus of a dog, then discharging air

into its bowels; when the dog dies, the physician attempted
to revive it by the same operation [i.e., by artificial
respiration--I take this to mean he traded the anus for the
mouth] (154-5). Nicolson and Molher note that this
experiment, satirized by Shadwell, was described in Sprat's
History of the Royal Society (ed. cit., 232): "By means of
a Pair of Bellows, and a certain Pipe thrust into the Wind-
pipe of the Creature", artificial respiration was
established and its effects observed" ("The Scientific
Background of Swift's *Voyage to Laputa*," 325).[47] Swift,
however, takes this "scientific observation" to farcical
exaggeration--here, a Laputian projector blows up dogs. The
reader can only imagine what would have happened if
Gulliver, who had complained of a bit of colic, had agreed
to be "cured" in such a manner. Here, the reader may safely
decode this metaphor without fear of ridicule.

Other codes exist that may be safely "broken." Again,
Swift's contemporaries might also recognize the Royal
Academy of London when he portrays the Laputian projectors
as beggars. When Gulliver first visits the Royal Academy
(Chapter V), he undermines the whole academy when he
describes his first encounter with a projector trying to
"extract Sun-Beams out of Cucumbers" (152-3). This man,
immediately after explaining the nature of his experiment,
begs Gulliver for money: "He complained that his Stock was
low, and intreated me to give him something as an

Encouragement to Ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear Season for Cucumbers. I made him a small Present, for my Lord [Munodi] had furnished me with Money on purpose, because he knew their Practice of begging from all who go to see them" (153). Certainly Swift trivalizes these pursuits by making such noble science projectors nothing but beggars, or rather, charlatans, since they beg for money in order to support themselves. Thus, "breaking" these codes does not victimize us--rather, successfully recognizing the Royal Academy of London in Gulliver's Royal Academy of Lagado encourages us to find more codes.

Yet, such success lures us into feeling self-satisfied, for these triumphs of reading also encourage our intellectual vanity. Our faith in our abilities to comprehend the text, then, may persuade us to misapply it; and, if we see those foolish mistakes reflected in Swift's satiric glass, may lead us to a greater understanding of the text.

Simply deciphering the text, then, forces us to perform the very tasks Swift condemns--and though we are sometimes correct in doing so, we must acknowledge our foolish behavior or risk being hypocrites. We can only "break" Swift's literary codes at the cost of our intellectual vanity, for it is the "breaking" that Swift parodies. When we choose to substitute a word or expression, when we unscramble anagrams, when we discover who "speaks as a

fool," then, determines whether we are fools. Lured by flattery, seduced by partial success, attracted to an appealing narrator, when we decipher *A Voyage to Laputa*, Swift challenges not our intellectual capabilities, but our ability to see our intellectual limitations.

1.   Swift's "Preface of the Author," in <u>The Battle of the Books</u>, 1710.

2.   I take glass to mean mirror. From the O.E.D.: Glass: II.8a: A glass mirror, a looking glass: *1712 Addison <u>Spec. No. 311</u> "A fop who admires his Person in a Glass."* 8b: Applied to a mirror of other material: *1576 Gascoigne (title) <u>The Steele Glas</u>.* 8c: Applied to water as a mirror: *1716 Addison <u>Salmacis & Herm</u> 37 "In the limpid streams she views her face, And drest her image in the floating glass."* IV.4a: To set (an object, oneself) before a mirror or other reflecting surface, so as to cause an image to be reflected, also to view the reflection of, see as in a mirror: *1566 Sidney <u>Arcadia</u> III 358 "He had lifted up his face to glasse himselfe in the fair eyes."* 4b: Of a mirror or reflecting surface: *1628 Greville Brooke <u>Coelica Poems</u> (1633) 220 "Let my present thoughts be glassed in the thoughts which you have passed."*

3.   Wolfgang Iser's <u>The Implied Reader</u> states that this relationship between the author and the reader was cultivated during the eighteenth century (see 31 and 102). He quotes a letter of Richardson's: "[T]he story must leave something for the reader to do" (<u>Selected Letters</u>, 296); and the narrator's address to the reader in Fielding's <u>Tom Jones</u>: "Bestir thyself therefore on this occasion; for, though we will always lend thee proper assistance in difficult places, as we do not, like some others, expect thee to use the arts of divination to discover our meaning, yet we shall not indulge thy laziness where nothing but thy own attention is required; this great work, to leave thy sagacity nothing to do; or that, without sometimes exercising this talent, thou wilt be able to travel through our pages with any pleasure or profit to thyself" (XI.9:95).

4.   Also known as a "double-entendre," or "doublespeak." From <u>A Dictionary of Literary Terms</u>: *"double entente, un mot à* a French term signifying an ambiguity (*q.v.*). A word or expression so used that it can have two meanings; one of which is usually frivolous or bawdy . . . . It is commoner now to use the phrase *double entendre*" (202).

5.   By "schematised views" Iser is referring to the different ways of perceiving the characters and events in the text, which are offered by the text itself.

6.   Iser defines this method: "The phenomenological theory of art lays full stress on the idea that, in considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text" (The Implied Reader, 274).

7.   I believe that Korshin missed the point when he states that the reader need not take all of Swift's code names seriously, because Swift parodies secret writing. How does the reader know which codes are serious and which are superficial? Korshin does not tell us.

8.   In a hilarious letter to Swift, after Gulliver's Travels was first published, John Gay sarcastically advises him, "[b]ut it will be much better to come over your self, and read it here [in London], where you will have the pleasure of variety of commentators, to explain the difficult passages to you" (The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift, 176).

9.   Some of the following characteristics of the two readers comes from Smith's article previously cited, and in particular, the characterized reader described in Ewald's The Masks of Jonathan Swift (124-62).

10.   "ἔσοπτρον, ου, τό: Mirror." The same Greek word for mirror/glass is also used in James 1:23-4, where James talks about a man who sees himself in a glass and then forgets who he is, "[f]or if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 84). Another commentary paraphrases the Corinthian passage thus: "[n]ow we try to guess at truth as we see its blurred and distorted outlines in the mirror of burnished metal: (The Abingdon Bible Commentary, 1188).

11.   Please note that the Greek word Paul uses to express the quality of knowledge we will have means "to know exactly, completely;" or, in Greek, "ἐπιγινώσ^{n}ω" (also note that Paul is using the future tense; A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 78).

12.   See Num. 12:8 in relation to I Cor. 13:12's reference to "face to face" communication--"With him [Moses] will I

[God] speak **mouth to mouth**, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold . . ." (116; emphasis mine). Here, God is addressing Aaron and Miriam, both of whom spoke out against Moses. The Anchor Bible comments on the relationship between "mouth to mouth" and "face to face": "[t]he phrase is probably not to be taken in a general sense but is to be referred to direct knowledge of God. The reference to Num. 12:8 suggests Moses as the paradigm: there the expression is 'mouth to mouth'; but it is clear that immediate confrontation is intended (cf. Exod. 33:11; Deut. 34:10). The same idea occurs elsewhere (e.g., Gen. 32:10; but since Paul has been writing about prophecy, Moses as the key prophet provides the appropriate referent). Moses' 'face to face' communication with God marks his unique prophetic role" (292). I believe that the similarity between the two expressions "face to face" and "mouth to mouth" emphasizes the idea that ultimate communication occurs at a one-to-one correspondence, where the division between appearance and reality is eradicated. Linguistically, this is where the signifier actually signifies the signified.

13. Creon first describes to Oedipus that the oracle is ambiguous: "the Oracle, most noble King, is dark and hidden lies" (1.9). And then, Creon tells Oedipus what is said: "Apollo then, most noble King, himself commandeth thus: 'By exile purge the prince's seat, and plague with vengeance due/That hapless wretch whose bloody hands of late King Laius slew./Before that this performèd be, no hope of milder air./Wherefore do this, O King, or else all hope of help despair'" (Oedipus, II.1.14-15). This oracle provided an obscure answer (an oxymoron), a response which needed to be interpreted because it is puzzling.

14. From The Westminister Dictionary of Christian Theology: "The dominant influence on the treatment of revelation in Christian theology, however, is the distinction between natural and revealed theology. Although there are earlier suggestions of this distinction, it was brought into prominence by Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274). Basically it distinguishes between those truths about God which can be determined by unaided human reasoning and other truths which cannot be apprehended, or cannot be apprehended without doubt and the risk of distortion [a common characteristic of satire], unless they are disclosed by God. The former [natural theology], are usually held to contain such truths as that God exists and that he is eternal, while the latter [revealed theology] include such matters as God's triune

nature and the manner of his redemptive activity. According the prevalent view in Christian theology, it is only when the former are augmented by the latter that humanity has the saving knowledge of God which it seeks" (504).

15. Swift and his friends refer to <u>Gulliver's Travels</u> before its first publication: *Viscount Bolingbroke to Swift, 24 July 1725*, "[T]hus much I thought I might say about my private affairs to an old friend without diverting him too long from his labours to promote the advantage of the church and state of Ireland, or from his travels into those Countrys of Giants and Pigmeys from whence he imports a cargo I value at an higher rate than that of the richest Galeon" (<u>The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift</u>, III. 82); *Swift to Charles Ford, 14 August 1725*, "I have finished my Travells, and I am now transcribing them; they are admirable Things, and will wonderfully mend the World" (<u>The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift</u>, III. 87); *Alexander Pope to Swift, 14 September 1725*, "Your Travels I hear much of; my own I promise you shall never more be in a strange land, but a diligent, I hope useful investigation of my own Territories [Pope's earliest reference to his "Essay on Man"]" (<u>The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift</u>, III. 96); *Swift to Sheridan, 11 September* 1725, "[E]xpect no more from Man than such an Animale is capable of, and you will every day find my Description of Yahoes more resembling" (<u>The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift</u>, III. 93-4).

16. From I Corinthians: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ" (4:10); and "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (3:18-19). Walter Kaiser nicely sums up this "wise folly" motif: "The Pauline concept of the Fool in Christ, which is given its fullest exposition in the Epistles to the Corinthians, affirms the worthlessness of worldly wisdom in contrast to the wisdom of the Christian, which to the world appears folly" (<u>Dictionary of the History of Ideas</u>, IV., 517). Ehrenpreis concludes that "[o]n the level of morality Gulliver echoes the claim of St. Paul in Swift's favorite epistle, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection' (I Corinthians, 9:27; Ehrenpreis, III, 427).

17. That Swift esteemed Erasmus as a true "ancient scholar" is mentioned in Ehrenpreis' discussion of Swift's <u>The Battle of the Books</u> (I.226-37). Also, Swift freely makes reference to him in his letters, writing on one occasion that "The Christian religion, in the most early times, was proposed to the Jews and Heathens, without the article of Christ's divinity; which I remember, Erasmus accounts for by its being too strong a meat for babes" (Davis, IX. 262). Most notably, in the early months of 1714, Swift was part of a club consisting of Oxford, Arbuthnot, Gay and Pope--a.k.a. "the five wits." The club's aim was "a collaborative periodical [about] the life and works of an imaginary pedant to be named Martin Scriblerus [who] was to be a dabbler in all sciences and master of none. Like Panurge in Rabelais's

Third Book, he was to search for truth through every field of systematic knowledge but never meet it. The club was to produce pseudo-treatises supposed to be by Scriblerus, and to attribute to him the real work of real men. Like Stultitia of Erasmus, he was to take credit for all abuses of learning" (Ehrenpreis, II. 725). About the literary impact of such a character Ehrenpreis later says, "[w]hether he [Swift] was recalling Jack in *A Tale of a Tub* or germinating Captain Gulliver, he had similar ingredients in his finest work" (II. 726).

18.   Stultitia paraphrases Paul: "All these witnesses point to a single conclusion, that all men are fools, even the pious ones. Christ himself, though he was the wisdom of the Father, took on the foolishness of humanity in order to relieve the folly of mortals, just as he became sin in order to redeem sinners" (81).

19.   Sir Thomas More (c. 1500) actually employed a mentally retarded man who had suffered brain damage as the result of a fall from a church steeple as his household fool (incidently, Erasmus wrote the <u>Moria encomium</u> in More's house, the title of which is a pun on Sir Thomas' name).

20.   Such a mouthpiece is know as a personae, a mask that the author assumes to distance himself from the attack, thus protecting his own integrity. Alvin Kernan's <u>The Cankered Muse</u> asserts, "[t]he gap between author and satirist implicit in the elaboration of fictitious personae in formal verse satire grows wider in those narrative and dramatic works where the author disappears and the satirist becomes a character in his own right, responsible for the attack and for any unpleasantness that may be associated with it" (213). <u>Gulliver's Travels</u> is sometimes this kind of narrative--Gulliver occasionally emerges as a world weary adventurer whose bitter and scathing comments on man's degenerate nature are made without appearing to indict Swift. Just as often, Gulliver is the object of his attack, and when this occurs, Gulliver is not Swift's personae.

21.   Rosenheim's <u>Swift and the Satirist's Art</u> gives a detailed analysis of the satirist's "truth": "Quasi-slander is redeemed from being outright slander to the extent that demonstrable fact serves as a minimal basis for the satirist's fabrications and distortions. In this sense--and only I believe, in this sense--is the truth under all circumstances indispensable to the satirist. It is essential to the satiric art that truth be exploited; it is not essential that truth be novelly disclosed, reaffirmed, augmented, or glorified. In many successful satires--particularly of the kind I have called 'punitive'--the only 'truth' which must necessarily be apprehended is entirely simple: the identification of a fictional protagonist with

an authentic individual, the grasp on manifest actuality
which enables us to sense an equally manifest distortion,
the recognition of correspondences between the satiric
invention and what are often the most commonplace matters of
fact" (180).

22.   Ehrenpreis says this of Swift's occasional mask,
Gulliver: "But rather than speak out directly, he would
speak both ironically and simply in turns, through the
mouths of various spokesmen, including an eponymous
narrator. By employing fictitious persons and places in a
pseudo-memoir, he would escape the frustrations that had
smothered his less covert speech. Thus self-transforming
energy of the unprintable essays found a new vehicle, bold
enough to satisfy Swift's anger, expressive enough to convey
his doctrine, but so disguised that it could be sold in
London" (III. 446).

23.   About physical size and deformity, Willeford notes that
"in many times and places dwarfs and hunchbacks have served
as jesters, the dwarf being defective in physical size in a
way that corresponds to the idiot's insufficiency of
intelligence, the hunchback being deformed in a way that
corresponds to the psychic aberration of the madman . . . .
The use of such physical freaks as jesters is surely in part
the expression of an ambivalence that also results in the
relegation of such people to the margins of human society:
grotesques have both positive and negative powers; they are
hideously attractive; they should be approached and avoided,
abused and placated" (The Fool and His Scepter, 14-5).

24.   The term "grotesque" is one of those slippery literary
catagories that can be applied to any distortion of nature,
of meaning, of architecture. A Dictionary of Literary Terms
gives an excellent definition of where the term "grotesque"
came from and how it is employed in literature (298-9).

25.   One twentieth century critic, W.S. Eddy, blames this
banal account on Swift's literary quirks: "There seems to
be no motive for the story beyond a pointless and not too
artfully contrived satire on mathematicians . . . . For
this attack on theoretical science I can find no literary
source or analogue, and conclude that it must have been
inspired by one of Swift's literary idiosyncracies.
Attempts have been made to detect allusions to the work of
Newton and other contemporary scientists, but these, however
successful, cannot greatly increase for us the slight
importance of the satire on Laputa" (158). Even Ehrenpreis
asserts that although Gulliver's Travels is built on the
body/soul dichotomy, because A Voyage to Laputa avoids such
a distinction, it is comparatively second-rate: "On the one
hand, the body is the spirit's tragedy; on the other, it is
the spirit's farce. Gulliver's Travels is designed to keep

both these attitudes in sight at once, and to destroy the dignity of man in all his shapes by their constant juxtaposition. This is why Swift delights in the quarrel between physical needs and human ambition, between the tangible world and the ways of men. It is why he builds his work on the physical contrasts of size and shape, why he draws attention to Gulliver's bowels and bladder, to his genitals, to the freckles of Lilliputian ladies, to the breast of the giant wet nurse, the stinks of the maids of honor, the cancer of the giant beggar-woman. It is one reason that Part Three, which is not based on such contrasts, is the weakest section of the book" (III. 464).

26. Why *A Voyage to Laputa* deviates from the other three voyages structurally and thematically is partially explained by the composition of Gulliver's Travels itself. If Swift's correspondence is taken literally, then *A Voyage to Laputa* was the last of the four to be written, and the voyages to *Lilliput, Brobdingnag,* and *Houyhnhnms* are all of a piece; thus, *A Voyage to Laputa* is more likely to be a separate literary venture. Swift says to Ford, 19 January 1724: "I have left the Country of Horses, and am in the flying Island, where I shall not stay long, and my two last Journyes will be soon over. . ." (5). Ehrenpreis devotes a section to the composition of *A Voyage to Laputa* in his biography of Swift, where he carefully outlines collaborating evidence of its being the last one written, citing both Swift's correspondence and Gulliver's Travels' allusions to current political events. Williams claims this proves that Part Four was written by 1723 and that *A Voyage to Laputa* was mostly written in 1724 (The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift, III. 5). These observations, however, conflicts with the arrangement of the four books, for *A Voyage to Laputa* is the third voyage in Gulliver's Travels. This can be explained in two ways: 1) Swift might have wanted to bury *A Voyage to Laputa* between voyages because it contained the most contemporary political allusions, and therefore, was the most dangerous of the four voyages; and, 2) Swift's first publisher, Motte, might himself have recognized the danger and rearranged them.

27. Swift writes to Pope, 29 September 1725, where he playfully upends a stock Latin maxim: "I have got Materials Towards a Treatis proving the falsity of the Definition *animale rationale*; and to show it should be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of Misanthropy (though not Timons manner) The whole building of my Travells is erected: And I never will have peace of mind till all honest men are of my Opinion . . . (The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift, III). From the Oxford Latin Dictionary: *Animale*: 1. "A member of the animal kingdom, a living creature, animal" (133). *Capax*: 4. "Capable of apprehending, understanding" (268). *Rationālis*:

"Possessing reason, rational" (1577). I take Swift to mean that man is not innately rational, but only capable of behaving rationally, which implies that man is just as capable of behaving irrationally. Ehrenpreis has an interesting discussion on Swift's penchant for inverting stock Latin expressions: "For it was in the *Institutiones logicae* written by the provost [Marsh] 'in usum iuvbentutis academicae Dubliniensis' that he [Swift] studied those commonplace examples and ancient truisms which he was to manipulate in his most brilliant satires: *homo est animal rationale; nullus equus est rational; si simia non sit irrationalis est homo; solum animal rationale est disciplinae capax;* and those apostolic names, 'Johannes, Petrus, Thomas' used as examples of individual men" (I.49-50).

28. This satire, which Ricardo Quintana aptly calls "situational satire," is also known as Menippean--"after Menippus, its originator, who was a philosopher and a cynic of the third century B.C., who satirized the follies of men, including philosophers, in a mixture of prose and verse; or Varronian, after Varro, Menippus' imitator" ("Situational Satire: A Commentary on the Method of Swift," 91-9). Alvin Kernan defines Menippean satire in his The Cankered Muse: "the term 'Menippean' originally referred to those satires which were written in a mixture of verse and prose, but it has gradually come to include any satiric work obviously written in the third person, to put it another way, where the attack is managed under cover of a fable. Dryden--who prefers the alternate term Varronian--cites as examples . . . The Praise of Folly" (13).

29. Quintana notes, "[i]t is to be observed that the satirist [Gulliver] is himself not involved: he is as much an observer, as much outside all the fuss and nonsense, as we are" (95).

30. The Abbé did more than drop passages he thought inappropriate to France in his French translation of Gulliver's Travels. In his first edition (around the end of April 1727), the Abbé devoted a section of his preface to the crudeness and indecency in the original book, and then brutally cut and rewrote the narratives to suit the French. Swift's letter to the Abbé, as I quote, reads in the French, "Les Partisans de ce Gulliver, qui ne laissent pas d'etre en fort grand nombre chez nous, soutiennent, que son Livre durera autant que noter language, parce qu'il ne tire pas son merite de certaines modes our manieres de penser et de partler, mais d'une sutie d'observations sur les imperfections, les folies, et les vices de l'homme . . . . Vous serez sans doute surpris de scavoir qu'ils regardent ce chirurgien de vaisseau come un Auteur grave, qui ne sort jamais de son serieux, qui n'emprunte aucun fard, que ne se

que point d'avoir de l'esprit, et que se contente de
communiquer au publikc, dans une Narration simple et naive,
les avantures qui luy sont arrivées, et les choses qu'il a
vû ou entrendu dire pedant ses voyages" (The Correspondences
of Jonathan Swift, III. 226).

31.   These maps and drawings were not done by Swift, but by
Herman Moll, an eighteenth century cartographer; nor were
the prints of scenes from Gulliver's adventures that
appeared more than a year after the first publication
(Ehrenpreis, III. 498). Swift, though, did offer
suggestions: "He [Gulliver] would appear best, wedged in
the marrow bone up to the middle, or in the monkey's arms
upon the roof, or left upon the ridge and the footman on the
ladder going to relieve him of fighting with the rats on the
farmer's bed, or in the spaniel's mouth, which being
described as a small dog, he might look as large as a duck
in ours; one of the best would I think be to see his chest
just falling into the sea while three eagles are quarrelling
with one another. Or the monkey hauling him out of his box"
(Williams, III. 257).

32.   The first article claims, "[t]he attempt of this study
will be to show that Swift borrowed for A Voyage to Laputa
even more than for the other tales, but that the sources of
his borrowings were different. The mathematicians who
feared the sun and comet, the projectors of the Grand
Academy, the Flying Island--these came to Swift almost
entirely from contemporary science. The sources for nearly
all the theories of the Laputians and the Balnibarians are
to be found in the work of Swift's contemporary scientists
and particularly in the Philosophical Transactions of the
Royal Society" ("The Scientific Background of Swift's Voyage
to Laputa," 415).

33.   Nicolson and Mohler conclude, "for there seems little
doubt that Swift intended his generation to recognize in his
Floating Island and in its curious relation to Balnibari the
symbolism of 'Mr. Gilbert's Notion' (of the Earths whole
body being but one great Magnet; and lesser Magnets being so
many Terrella's sympathizing with the whole)" ("The Flying
Island in the Voyage to Laputa," 415).

34.   From The Praise of Folly: "Come next the natural
philosophers, long of beard and furry of gown, who declare
that they alone possess wisdom, the rest of mankind being
incapable of nothing more that fleeting impressions. How
agreeably they hallucinate when they construct innumerable
worlds, measuring sun, moon, stars, and heavenly orbits as
if with thumb and tape-rule. Never at a loss to explain
thunder, wind, eclipses, and other incomprehensible events,
and never even hesitating over their explanations, they act
as if they were in on all the secrets of nature who created

the universe, as if they came down to us bearing the word
direct from on high [revelation]. Yet all the time nature
derides both them and their conjectures. For that nothing
is settled among them is perfectly evident from the fact
that they are always fighting with one another over
inexplicable phenomena. Though they know nothing specific,
they lay claim to know everything in general. Not only are
they ignorant of themselves, they cannot avoid falling into
a ditch or stumbling over a rock in the path (perhaps they
are blear-eyed from study or just absent-minded); yet they
claim to know all about abstract ideas, universals, separate
forms, primary matter, quiddities, and different modes of
being--objects so phantasmal I doubt if Lynceus himself
could make them out. They particularly set themselves above
the profane mob when they bring forth their triangles,
circles, and such-like mathematical shapes, scribbling one
atop the other to make a labyrinth and then sprinkling
letters over them as if in battle-formations designed to
submerge the plain man in waves of confusion. Some of this
breed venture to make predictions by consulting the stars;
they promise more that magical miracles, and sometimes, when
they are extra lucky, find people to believe them" (56-7).

35. As Ehrenpreis says of Swift's trick of turning the
intangible into the tangible, "Illusion and truth,
appearance and reality, vapour and solid, light and
darkness, hero and crowd, upward flight and sudden fall,
these are applied just where they do not belong. The vapour
which means spirit becomes the vapour which means
flatulence; the light which illuminates becomes the
phosphorescence of rotting wood in the dark. **The intangible
is treated as tangible.** This is Hobbes' skeptical method of
reducing ideals to delusions; and Swift, whose flavour is
remarkably close to Hobbes', may have learned it from him.
However, as Empson says, 'the language plays into [Swift's]
hands' because 'the spiritual words are all derived from
physical metaphors'" (198). [Footnote--Some Varieties of
Pastoral, 1935, 60.]. . . . Swift's warning is not to
confuse the intangible with the good, or the anus with evil"
(III. 199).

36. Ehrenpreis observes that Swift was a lover of moral
wisdom, not abstract science: "In literature and learning,
one division was philosophical. Here, Swift assumed the
central position belonging to the accepted moralists, from
Plutarch to Montaigne, who warned men against the frailty of
their nature and praised the stern but humble pursuit of
duty . . . . To this plain sort of moral 'philosophy' was
opposed either the old scholasticism or the new systems of
Descartes and Hobbes; and in a lunatic fringe were to be
found a procession of quack sciences (alchemy, astrology),
hopeless researches (the longitude, squaring the circle, the
philosopher's stone, occult studies, numerology, the

cabbala, rosicrucianism, the work of Paracelsus). Both
scholastic metaphysics and the modern (but outmoded) systems
of Hobbes and Descartes appeared, to Swift, useless
speculations beside the irrefutable validity of moral
wisdom. The ethics of Plato (i.e., the early dialogues),
Epicurus, and Zeno deserved respect in so far as they
anticipated Christian doctrine; but neo-platonism, extreme
stoicism, epicurean physics, all belonged to another
department and had more significance as illustrating folly
than as teaching virtue. Scholasticism of course possessed
few defenders by this date. Long before Bacon, it had been
the fashionable butt of humanist sneers. But the
geometrical 'method' of Descartes and the parallel,
mechanistic scheme of Hobbes (whose critique of
scholasticism Swift accepted) had admirers. Nevertheless,
their reduction of the world and of mankind to soulless
machines, their loud boasts of great accomplishments by easy
devices, their dismissal of earlier philosophy as futile,
their promising panaceas while supplying little to help
man's condition--such appearances made it necessary for
Swift to reject their work. As for the virtuosi and amateur
experimenters--the Royal Society and the Dublin
Philosophical Society--not only did they fall into the same
class; but if Swift had any knowledge of his university
teachers' extracurricular studies, the very pedants who
expounded Aristotle's physics and logic must have seemed the
first convert to the new (though now fading) obsession"
(III. 193).

37. Willeford also observes: "[t]hus one lexicographer,
Ernest Weekley, carries further the derivation of 'fool'
from the Latin *follis*, which he defines as 'bellows,
windbag, but probably here in the specific sense of *scrotum*;
cf. Ig. *coglione*, 'a noddie, a foole, a patch, a dolt, a
peacock' (Florio), lit. testicle; also L. *gerro*, fool, from
a Sicilian name for pudendum.' One could also compare the
obscene oath 'ballocks!' or 'balls!'--testicles--meaning
'nonsense!' or 'silly pretension!' Weekley's derivation is
in keeping with the exaggerated sexuality of many clowns and
fools throughout history and with a commonly accepted idea
of the origin of the European clown; as Thelma Nikkaus
summarized the notion, 'It seems probable that all mimes,
clowns, drolls, and mummers known to Europe were engendered
by the Satyr of Greek Old Comedy, a form of entertainment
derived from the phallic ritual and ceremonies of Dionysos'
(11).

38. *Habit des fous* (or fool's costume) is described as
"parti-coloured garments, the hood with its ears, bells and
coxcomb, and the *marotte* (or kind of doll carried by the
fool which is a replica of his own head and shoulders with
his hood upon the end of a short staff) . . ." (E.K.
Chambers' Chapter XVI "Guild Fools and Court Fools" gives an

excellent discussion of these characteristics in his <u>The
Mediaeval Stage</u>). Please note that Rabelais makes his
famous Panurge present Triboullet, the fool of Louis XII,
with a sword of gilt wood and a **bladder**. See Kaiser's
Chapter 13, "Bridoye and Triboullet" for a good discussion
of the *docta ignorantia*, or the foolishness of worldly
wisdom and the wisdom of folly in <u>Praisers of Folly</u>, 163-
178.

39. This masturbation joke is an echo of an earlier, less
subtle one made in the first few paragraphs of <u>Gulliver's
Travels</u>, when Gulliver is narrating his background. He says
that he was apprenticed to a "Mr. James Bates"; recommended
by "my good Master Mr. Bates"; encouraged by "Mr Bates, my
Master"; and finally, mentions the death of "my good **Master
Bates**" (*A Voyage to Lilliput*, 3-4).

40. In spite of protestations to the contrary, Atterbury
was guilty. However, the evidence the government collected
to use against him was fabricated. See <u>The Tory Crisis in
Church and State, 1688-1730: The Career of Francis
Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester</u>, in particular Chapter
Twelve, "The Atterbury Plot, 1720-22."

41. Regarding other manufactured evidence, Rosenheim
states, "It is probable that Atterbury's opponents
recognized the weakness of this kind of evidence, and it is
thus not surprising that their chief arguments centered upon
a third collections of documents. These were the letters
that involved, among other things, the celebrated "lame
dog", and though somewhat complicated and highly
circumstantial, they were far more damaging that the
depositions of the informers or the non-committal notes
found in the close-stool"(180). The link to Atterbury in
the last example was supplied by a hopelessly confused Mrs.
Barnes, a former landlady of George Kelly, another
conspirator, who claimed that a dog, injured on the trip
from France, "had been left to her to be cured by Mr Kelly"
and was told by Mr. Kelly that "the said dog was for the
Bishop of Rochester" ("Swift and the Atterbury Case," 180).

42. Such highly questionable methods used to convict
Atterbury are further detailed by Rosenheim: "Damning as
such a question appears, it had been concocted from little
more than hearsay evidence and some highly irregular
procedures. The three letters attributed to the Bishop were
copies--the originals having been intercepted at the post
office, but eventually sent on to their addresses (obviously
to elicit the forthcoming damaging replies). The letters
were alleged to be in Kelly's hand by clerks who had seen,
but not retained, specimens of Kelly's writing months
earlier. More astonishingly, the experts, on whose skill at
deciphering the Lords relied almost entirely for the

substance of the letters, refused to answer questions concerning their methods, because this might "tend to discover the art or mystery of deciphering"--a refusal cheerfully sustained by the House. As for the circumstantial details of the letters themselves, they acquired their overwhelming particularity only if the Harlequin story could be believed--and to support its truth there was only one bewildered woman's account of something she had been told by one man" (182). To add to the catalogue of offenses against such proceedings, Atterbury was never on trial. Rather, on May 16, 1723, the House of Lords passed a Bill to "inflict pains and penalties" upon Francis Atterbury, which took effect on June 18, 1723, when the late Bishop, deprived of "any office, dignity, promotion, benefice, or employment in England", sixty-plus years of age and in poor health, left his native country for exile on the Continent, and died nine years later (Rosenheim, "Swift and the Atterbury Case", 174). An account of the proceedings is found in <u>A Complete Collection of State Trails and Proceeding for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors...</u>, ed. T.B. Howell (London, 1809-26), XVI. 323-695.

43. Rosenheim concludes: "Beyond the fact that the enemies of Atterbury were likewise those of Swift, there were aspects of the affair that, whatever the personalities or politics involved, were calculated to arouse the Dean's indignation. These included the solemn reliance upon the deposition of shoddy informers, the highly circumstantial evidence, the Lords' complacent acceptance of the experts' arcane decipherings, and not least, the professions of piety, patriotism, and benevolence which accompanied every stage of the attack. Despite the debate that continues to rage around Swift's 'ultimate' beliefs, it seems safe to say that the proceedings against Atterbury must have offended him quite as much upon moral as upon political grounds" ("Swift and the Atterbury Case," 190).

44. From the <u>O.E.D.</u>: Privy-Council: 2. The private counsellors of the sovereign; *spec.* in Great Britain a body of advisers selected by the sovereign together with certain persons who are member by usage, as the princes of the blood, the archbishops and the chief officers of the present and past ministers of state. 1667 Duchess of Newcastle <u>Life Dk. N.</u> (1886) 9 *"King Charles the first made him withal a member of the Lord's of his Majestys most honorable Privy Council."* b.: Applied (by English writers) to a council of state in a foreign country, or to the council of an ancient King or ruler. *1650 <u>Nicholas Papers</u> (Camden) I. 184 "These foure are noble men and all of his [Russian] Ma(ties) Privy Councell."* Atterbury was accused of plotting against the British government with Jacobites, a group of men

(mainly in foreign parts, particularly France) who wanted to depose the present King in favor of the Stuarts.

45. From the O.E.D.: II.3. A private place of ease, a latrine, a necessary: *1704 Swift Mech. Operat. Spirit § 2 Misc. (1711) 303 "As if a Traveller should go about to describe a Palace, when he had seen nothing but the Privy."*

46. From the O.E.D.: Utter: adjective, II.4a: Going to the utmost point; extreme, absolute, complete, entire, total: *1718 Prior Poems Dedication, "Two things which were his utter aversion."* Verb, II.6a: To give utterance to (words, speech, a sentence, etc.); to speak, say or pronounce: *Addison Spect No. 1 ¶ 3 "I scarce uttered the Quantity of an hundred words."* 6b: To give expression to (a subject, theme, one's thought, etc.); to express, describe or report in words; to speak of or about: *1710 Steele Tatler No. 2 ¶ 3 "I must not Prostitute the Liberal Sciences so far, as not to utter the Truth in cases which [etc.]"*

47. Mr. St. Andre in the Philosophical Transactions (1717, 30, 580; vol.v,i, 270-2) suggests this method as a cure for colic: "The Peristaltick Motion of the Intestines is by all Anatomists supposed to be the proper Motion of those Cylindrical Tubes. The use of this Motion is to propel the Chyle into the *Vasa lactea*, and to accelerate the grosser parts of the Aliment downwards, in order to expel them, when all their nutritive Contents are extracted. This Motion, thus established, it naturally seems to follow, that an Inversion of it (call'd for that Reason an Antiperistaltick Motion) should force the Aliments, Bile, Pancreatic Juice, and lastly the Faeces, to ascend towards the Mouth" (Nicolson and Molher, "The Scientific Background of Swift's *Voyage to Laputa*," 325).

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