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Mechanical Operations of the Spirit: The Protestant Object in Swift and Defoe

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Mechanical Operations of the Spirit: The Protestant Object in Swift and Defoe

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Mechanical Operations of the Spirit: The Protestant Object in Swift and Defoe

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This study revises a dominant narrative of the eighteenth-century, in which a secular modernity emerges in opposition to religious belief. It argues that a major challenge for writers such as Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe, and for English subjects generally, was to grasp the object world—including the modern technological object—in terms of its spiritual potential. I identify disputes around the liturgy and common prayer as a source of a folk psychology concerning mental habits conditioned by everyday interactions with devotional and cultural objects. Swift and Defoe therefore confront even paradigmatically modern forms (from trade items to scientific techniques) as a spiritual ecology, a network of new possibilities for practical piety and familiar forms of mental-spiritual illness. Texts like *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) renew Reformation ideals for the laity by evaluating technologies for governing a nation of souls.

Swift and Defoe's Protestantism thus appears as an active guide to understanding emotions and new experience rather than a static body of doctrine. Current historiography neglects the early modern sense that sectarian objects and rituals not only discipline religious subjects, but also provoke ambivalence and anxiety: Swift's *Tale* diagnoses Catholic knavery and Puritan hypocrisy as neurotic attempts to extract pleasure from immiserating styles of material praxis. *Crusoe*, addressed to more radical believers in spaces of trade, sees competent spiritual, scientific and commercial practice on the same plane, as techniques for overcoming fetishistic desires. Swift's orthodoxy of enforced moderation and Defoe's oddly worldly piety represent likeminded formulae for psychic reform, and not—as often alleged—conflicts between sincere belief and political or commercial interests.

Gulliver's Travels (1726) and *A Journal of the Plague Year* **(**1722) also link mind and governance through different visions of Protestant polity. Swift sees alienation from the national church—figured by a Crusoe or Gulliver—as refusal of common sense and problem solving. Defoe points to religious schism, exemplified by dissenters' exclusion from state church statistics, as a moral and medical failure: the city risks creating selfish citizens who also may overlook data needed to combat the plague.

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Introduction: Belief and Its Vicissitudes

> But, the fourth Method of Religious Enthusiasm, or launching out of the Soul, as it is purely an Effect of Artifice and *Mechanick Operation,* has been sparingly handled, or not at all, by any Writer.

Overview

The long eighteenth century in England has often been represented as a seedbed of modernity, a period in which literature reflects, resists or aids a shift from a religious past to a secular future. Increasingly, that future has been understood in terms of its material culture. New structures of commerce, science and government were, after all, embodied in new cultural *things*: the spinning jenny, the power loom, navigational tools, carriage springs, city maps, clocks and a panoply of consumer goods. Literary scholars have by now thoroughly embraced that artifactual world, turning especially to the commodity form and, by extension, the popular book itself, as avatars of a secular society. Materialist approaches, including recent "thing theory," have examined cultural objects chiefly as new technologies or products presumed resistant to traditional or spiritual values.

This study, in contrast, seeks to challenge dominant literary histories that understand the eighteenth century in terms of an epistemic shift between religious ways of knowing and the technical apparatuses of the modern, secular state. It acknowledges

persisting spiritual thought by broadening our sense of what counts as early modern religion in literature. In particular, I argue that by the eighteenth century English Protestantism's ceremonial fixations—parish-level disputes around the liturgy and common prayer—developed into what we might call an object-relations psychology, in which religious belief was construed in terms of mental habits conditioned by everyday interactions with devotional and cultural objects. Authors therefore confronted even paradigmatically modern institutions as a kind of liturgy, a network of new possibilities for practical piety and familiar forms of mental-spiritual illness.

This sense of a spiritual ecology led writers like Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe to use familiar sectarian thinking to assess cultural artifacts, institutions of governance and ethical habits in ways we do not easily recognize as religious. Literary estimations of modern forms (from newspapers to trade items to scientific techniques) may be seen as efforts to distinguish between object practices that edify believers and idols that provoke neurotic illness. Texts like *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) confront or reference new technologies not as avatars of modernity but as new possibilities for governing a nation of souls.

Most broadly, I claim that a continuing English Reformation, rather than a break between religion and secular modernity, continued to guide thought about the material world. I connect theories of mind in popular literature to post-Reformation debates about the laity's propensity to abuse devotional practice and fall into antisocial behaviors. Seemingly narrow sectarian controversies—stereotypes about Puritan character or conflict over Anglican liturgical moderation, for example—employ a common folk

psychology that sought to diagnose pathological modes of faith. My account therefore questions the application of narratives about secularization or religious disenchantment to literature, since concepts from ecclesiology and theology more directly structure cognition about social change. I seek, then, to provoke a sense of Protestantism in these works as an active guide to understanding emotions and new experience, rather than a static body of knowledge. I will work with the premise that modernization should not be understood as a decay of religion but as a gradual reform of England's religious culture into its nineteenth-century Anglican form.

The featured texts by Swift and Defoe—*A Tale of a Tub* (1704), *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Gulliver's Travels*, and *A Journal of the Plague Year*—reflect influential eighteenth-century attitudes toward elements of modernization, and have been frequently appraised from that point of view. Histories of the novel, for example, have typically looked to Swift and Defoe as exemplars of available political and artistic-mimetic responses to cultural change across the eighteenth century; both have been recruited as symbols for various modern reactions to secularity and capitalism. Against such magisterial accounts charting modernity's rise through secular institutions, my treatment of these authors seeks to acknowledge the importance of the humble English parish to literary studies. My comparison of these writers looks to their religious prejudices to discern a common spiritual hermeneutic about object culture and ethical disposition. This can alter our sense of the domain in which arguments about governance and modernity proceeded; at the same time, this model suggests a need to reassess common

modern ideas about what counts as religious belief as inherited from the early modern era.

Spiritual Technology

This study seeks to make a novel claim by adopting an uncontroversial premise: that the eighteenth century remained significantly religious in its sensibility. Ecclesiastical historians recently have offered accounts of popular religion and a culture of practices that held sway even outside the Church of England well into the nineteenth century: the intuition that spiritual forms are inherently averse to urbanization, industrialization, or technological innovation has been actively challenged.[1] Evidence suggests the view of a fractured or complacent, unaccommodating Church of England under the late Stuarts and Hanoverians, administrated by an acquisitive (or destitute), pedantic or badly educated clergy must certainly be qualified.[2] In cases where industrial workers and the poor were indeed alienated from the church, there seems to have been little concomitant decline in spiritual or supernatural belief, and a compensatory shift to dissent or Methodism.[3] In addition, the analysis of religion as a discursive field or

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[1] Callum G. Brown, "The Mechanism of Religious Growth in Urban Societies: British Cities since the Eighteenth Century," in *European Religion in the Age of the Great Cities, 1830-1930*, ed. Hugh McLeod (New York: Routledge, 1995), 239-62; Steve Bruce, ed. *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (New York: Oxford University Press,1992); Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Mark Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).
[2] William Gibson, *The Church of England 1688-1832: Unity and Accord* (New York: Routledge, 2001); John H. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Later Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Smith, *Religion*, 32-62.
[3] Brown, "Religious Growth"; M. F. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society: The Lancashire Parish of Whalley in the Eighteenth Century* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003).

"protocols of behavior" not explicitly connected to institutions or quantifiable ritual behavior has revealed syncretic complexes of folk belief, magical thinking, and the affective communities that typify evangelicalism.[4] The continued bestselling status of works like Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* (1611), Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* (1658), and Gilbert Burnet's *Discourse of Pastoral Care* (1692) testifies to the continued importance in the eighteenth century of devotional modes involving personal transformation through discrete practices.[5] Historians like J.C.D. Clark have insisted on the persistence of religious consensus.[6]

Certainly the literary history of the eighteenth century has been written with an awareness of religious belief. Influential studies of the early novel and its social matrix by Ian Watt and Michael McKeon make explicit use of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.[7] Theoretical texts with lasting impact in the field have

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[4]Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 12. See also David Hempton, *The Religion of the People* (London: Routledge, 1996); W.M. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jim Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

[5] Gibson, *Church of England*, 159-66.

[6] J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[7] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 190-95; Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 64, 90-1.

likewise acknowledged the Reformation's influence on modernity.[8] Discourses of sentiment and ethics have been traced to a formative religious matrix.[9]

But appreciations of religion's influence or vitality in the era sit, in literary history, perhaps too comfortably alongside grand narratives of technology and secularity. Most of these narratives have defined literary culture in terms of a shift from a numinous or enchanted world of religion to a scientistic and secular rationality. Weber's disciples see Protestantism as a vanishing mediator on the way to modernity; others point to Anglican moderation, tolerance or natural religion as self-destructive or unstable concessions on the way to science and secular liberalism[10]; other prominent critical works have tended to stress religion as part of a receding past, or as a didactic mode at odds with emergent social forms.[11]

In this regard, my argument for the importance of spiritual discourse depends, in part, on a larger claim that literary history does not lack an appreciation of religion so much as an adequate concept of belief itself. Literary historiography has tended to characterize all religious faith similarly—as the subject's wholesale immersion in a world presumed shaped by supernatural forces, inner convictions regarding dogmatics, and

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[8] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harbard University Press, 1989); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

[9] R.S. Crane, "Suggestions toward a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling'," *ELH* 1, no. 3 (1934); Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780. Vol. I: Whichcote to Wesley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[10] Again, see Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment*.

[11] See, for example Martin C. Battestin, *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art: A Study of Joseph Andrews*, [1st ed. (Middletown, Conn.,: Wesleyan University Press, 1959); Nancy Armstrong, *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism from 1719-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1990); McKeon, *Origins*.

narrow ethical imperatives. Belief, that is, remains at once 1) a fragile inner state defined by supernatural perceptions that are undermined by naturalistic observation and 2) a stubborn set of ideological-epistemological constraints on the subject. To the extent that Anglican subjects, for example, embraced religious tolerance, natural philosophy, or rational ethics they are perceived to participate in an erosion of real religious faith. By the same token, a believer like Defoe can be tasked with betraying real Puritan providentialism with pragmatic capitalist motivations, individualism, or empiricism.

But the Protestantism inherited by Swift and Defoe was not confined to static metaphysical prejudices; it also included an evolving practical piety organized around manipulating public behaviors and affects. Rather than look to the more subjective components of what we usually take to be religion (doctrinal convictions or paranormal world-views), I propose to examine the broader spectrum of what we might call spirituality: acts of self-transformation. The domain of investigation for this study—discourses of spiritual technique or technology—has been suggested by scholarship regarding "spiritual exercises," described by Pierre Hadot as

> practices which could be physical, as in dietary regimes, or discursive, as in dialogue and meditation, or intuitive, as in contemplation, but which were all intended to effect a modification and a transformation in the subject who practiced them. [12]

Hadot offers the possibility of conceiving of religious practice in day-to-day living: that is, not as the expression of a world view but as a tool for cultivating dispositions and

[12] Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), 6.

guiding relations between social actors and institutions. [13] Under Hadot's influence, Michel Foucault, in his 1981-82 lectures, "The Hermeneutics of the Subject," treats spirituality as the subject's concrete efforts to transform himself as a condition of access to truth—that is, "researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence, etc., which are, not for knowledge but for the subject, for the subject's very being, the price to be paid for the access to the truth." [14] Elsewhere, he designates these practices "technologies of the self" that "permit individuals to effect … a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality."[15] Foucault distinguishes spirituality from philosophy and theology, which treat truth as accessible to all subjects equally upon rational reflection, without reference to self-modification. Spirituality, therefore, has no necessary "constitutive or structural opposition" to science, for example, if the latter is seen as an edifying influence on the self, and not merely a neutral epistemological instrument.[16]

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[13] For examples of this approach see: Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus, or the Simplicity of Vision*, trans. Michael Chase (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); David Livingston, *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium: Hume's Pathology of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998); Ian Hunter, "The Morals of Metaphysics: Kant's Groundwork as Intellectual Paideia," *Critical Inquiry* 28(2002).

[14] Michel Foucault, *The Hermenuetics of the Subject: Lectures at the College De France, 1981-1982*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 15.

[15] Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Huck Guttman, Luther H. Martin, and Patrick H. Hutton (1988), 18.

[16] Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 26-7. Recent work in the history of science confirms the importance of spiritual exercises as a component of otherwise novel and rational scientific techniques. See, for example, Matthew L. Jones, *The Good Life in the Scientific Revolution: Descartes, Pascal, Leibniz, and the Cultivation of Virtue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Stephen Gaukroger, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

In England, early legislation of Reformation embraced a religion based in this kind of practical spirituality. The Royal Injunctions of 1538, for example, emphasized daily material praxis over dogma—a trend possibly reinforced by a dearth of native theologians and Calvinist emphasis on institutional change. Reform of liturgical and popular practice enforced doctrine and political will, but also expressed reformist emphasis on conscious lay participation in salutary activity based on the primitive church. For early Puritans that meant especially purging Catholic remnants and practices that supposedly diminished introspective piety; official policies embraced, with equal pragmatism, common worship in the name of edification. The parish, the "basic territorial unit" of ecclesiastical and civil administration and the center of local culture, became the locus of prescriptions for self-reform effectuated through common prayer.[17] These traditional functions led Victorian theorists to identify the parish as the origin and foundation of English civil government.[18]

This study argues, then, that English subjects into the eighteenth century viewed quotidian objects and practices, like those defining everyday parish life, as spiritual technologies for inculcating habits of belief. The religious objects and clothing that feature prominently in texts like Swift's *Tale* were central to post-Reformation debates in England—not only as signs of inner faith or expressions of doctrine, but as actively creating specific kinds of religious subjects.

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[17] N.J.G. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.
[18] Joshua Toulmin Smith, *The Parish: Its Powers and Obligations at Law*, Second ed. (London: H. Sweet, 1857), 5. On Toulmin Smith's politics and a review of scholarship see Benjamin John Weinstein, "Local Self-Government Is True Socialism: Joshua Toulmin Smith, the State and Character Formation," *English Historical Review* 123, no. 504.

Belief at a Distance

It would be easy, given the influence of the state church, to tie spirituality or spiritual technologies in England to the equally Foucauldian analysis of ideological discipline by material apparatuses. But writers like Swift, beyond acknowledging the conditioning influence of spiritual apparatuses (of the state or otherwise) also point to the failures of those objects. Employing their own anthropologies of material culture, early modern religious controversialists show a hardheaded awareness that subjects can be maladapted to culture—that religious belief is not immersive, but bound up with resistance and disbelief.

The modern view of belief tends to preclude, that is, common sense observations about religion and religious believers that were routine in the post-Reformation era: For example, that believers, instead of experiencing a coherent reality anchored in divine purpose, often struggle with disbelief, anxiety and ambivalence in their faith, and even because of it; that they are often unable to articulate what they believe, contradict themselves, fail to understand or accept basic tenets of their faith and believe anyway; that they object to and argue about the religious cultures in which they dwell; that they can exploit their faith, often without loss of sincerity. The assumption that believers are more or less perfectly integrated into their faiths neglects the ways sectarians themselves saw belief as inclusive of self-doubt, hypocrisy and neurotic performances of piety. Belief, that is, includes a variety of psychological and emotional stances internal to

devotional practice; it is not simply a way of perceiving the world in light of supernatural assumptions.

Swift, for example, therefore attacks alien liturgical cultures for the ways their social rituals tend to produce anxious subjects, neither fully disciplined by their object practice, nor able to evade their desire to conform. From a strictly theological perspective, one could say Swift's archetypal Catholic and Puritan figures in the *Tale* falter between the tenets of Luther's *Disputation* on indulgences: that repentance can be understood neither as sacramental penance administered by clergy, nor as mere inward contrition. More pragmatically, though, Swift's analysis suggests that cultural objects associated with these errors encourage dishonest, self-serving psychological habits that are inextricable from faith. Swift depicts Catholic practice as excessive public ritual performance; such cultural imperatives, he assumes, encourage a subjectivity oriented toward desperately pleasing the imagined gaze of authority, yet aware of performance as a means of concealing antisocial desires. Conversely, the purported Puritan tendency to identify with an ever-diminishing godly community, accomplished by rejecting common prayer, helps elevate personal imperatives to the status of truth. But, he alleges, the resulting precisianism and self-scrutiny only repeat, in a subjective form, the Catholic tendency to overinvest in psychological objects: the Puritan's inner world of obsessions gives psychic license to repress his complicity in other, less spiritual acts or attitudes.

An early-modern-style corrective to modern descriptions of religious culture thus involves more than admitting the existence of perfunctory devotions, dissidents or unbelievers, or resistance to repressive institutions. My claim is that English Protestant

practice was itself substantially defined by accounts of belief as inherently bound up with ambivalence toward one's ideals. Gone unrecognized, such alienation is expressed, in Swift's terms, in hypocrisy or knavery. The enthusiast hypocrite, for instance, does not simply dissemble piety; rather, his very character as believer is fully organized around evasive practice— assuaging psychic pressures of both pious performance and his wayward urges. However contradictory his motivations, he is nonetheless organically constituted as a subject of enjoyment extracted from all the components of his social world.

In this study I have relied on Lacanian analogies to explicate this mode of reading character in a material world; but the limitations of the modern sense of hypocrisy as cynical pretense or failure are familiar enough from everyday experience: in, say, the irresponsible and lazy person who rejects all censure *specifically because* they are (they claim) more responsible and hardworking than others. Such a hypocrite, in the Swiftian sense, does not only dissemble or reject a painful truth, but incorporates into his personality enjoyment of the full dynamic of self-delusion, laziness, righteous indignation, and defensive grandiosity. The response to a narcissistic wound—a challenge to his self-image—only partly captures the anti-social pathology of both over-identification with a chosen signifier (responsible, hardworking) and habitual exploitation of that designation as a defense against the burdensome cultural demand to perform to perfection.

For thinkers like Swift there is no perfect capitulation to ideology—no fitting the subject seamlessly to his cultural practice without loss. The question at hand is,

therefore, how is this loss to be experienced? For the zealot, self-righteousness and contempt serve to soothe feelings not compatible with severe ideals expressed in their material culture. Swiftian satire therefore sets itself the task of getting the reader to recognize his face in satire's glass by acknowledging not only his flaws, but also his libidinal position. Critiques of objective conditions (corruption, human vice), are even secondary; those most under fire are sectarian-style hypocrites and knaves whose true refuge is in criticism itself, in flawed practice that disavows itself in scorn for others—hence the danger of deflecting satire by identifying with it.

Less onerous and damaging, Swift suggests, is a conformity regarded as a civic duty, not a metaphysical imperative. Such merely edifying and yet also spiritual practice can underwrite cognition—not repression— of one's desires and humble self-reform. This religious mode, accordingly, does not consist primarily of a mélange of doctrinal and ethical prejudices and metaphysical colorings of natural phenomena; it is instead—to a significant degree—a psychologically informed social theory that describes morality in terms of conscious integration of object practice. Its impetus comes from the Reformation's particular adoption of Christian traditions of reform, in Gerhart Ladner's phrasing, "the idea of free, intentional and ever perfectible, multiple, prolonged and ever repeated efforts by man to re-assert and augment values pre-existent in the material-spiritual compound of the world."[19] The element missing from literary history as informed by modern concepts of religious belief is, quite simply, Protestantism itself—as

[19] Gerhart Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 34.

a body of techniques of self-culture uniquely concerned with disrupting the epistemological limits often taken as definitive of all religious faith.

Such strategies of reform can thus be identified in, for example, orthodox Anglican practices that seem hard to reconcile with common theories of religion. Under a narrower understanding of belief as internal metaphysical conviction, the tendencies of the reconstituted Church of England after 1660 are easily conflated with secular positions: Anglican emphasis on reason and free will exalts something recognizable as a modern subject; Anglican thinkers embrace elements of modern science; Latitudinarians and high churchmen like Swift share a discomfort with dogmatics; divines who rejected "difficult and dark" Puritan theorizing advocated a clear and precise language that would find expression in the methods of the Royal Society and empiricist language philosophers.[20]

But longstanding assimilations of Protestant discourse to secularization neglect the relevance of these techniques to an underlying spiritual psychology. Such practices affirm, for example, that access to truth must be earned—whether in the secular courtroom or in the church; that truth and a good will emerge from heeding natural evidence and from consensus and debate rather than individual communion with the divine; that the Word and literacy underwrite everyday spiritual practice rather than only church-based ritual and iconography. All of these practices serve, in sum, to disrupt pathological modes of piety based in self-deceit or supposed privileged access to reality.

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[20]Rivers' *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment* touches on all of these points in the service of a broader argument: that orthodox Anglicanism paved the way for the divorce of ethics from religion in ascendant, if originally heterodox, fora, and hence, by extension, for the intellectual break toward a modern England.

Spirituality, in these terms, might be described as a cognitive tradition, one with roots in longstanding Protestant beliefs, but without necessary reference to explicitly religious forms.

Expressed more socially, the model here points to the legacy of virtue politics in England, as examined by J.G.A. Pocock, for example.[21] But the influence of public virtue as part of a religious tradition has typically been traced to Classical ethics; the presumed decay of that discourse has therefore been described as the defeat of Aristotelian and medieval Christian concepts by Enlightenment models of empiricism and utilitarianism.[22] This again neglects or passes over what I suggest are distinctive qualities and influences of Reform culture into the eighteenth century. Aristotelian models, for example, define virtue as a mean between extremes—a notion antithetical to the Protestant cognitivism I am arguing for here. Consonant with modern ideas of religious belief as a coherent set of ethical-symbolic limits, Classical ethics sees virtue as a public performance of abstract principles. In contrast, discourses around reforming Anglicanism saw static external proofs of virtue as an invitation to fetishistic practice; the better position was to see the virtue of conscious distance from perfection, to see edifying object practice as a social norm, not an abstract ideal.

In this sense, Anglican moderation, the *via media*, I will suggest, was not understood—as Victorian High Church theory later had it—as a perfected compromise

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[21] J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and "Virtue and Commerce in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3(1972).
[22] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

between Catholicism and Reform. Instead, moderation was conceived along the theoretical lines of liturgical *adiaphora*—not an idealized mean but, as Bernard Verkamp explicates, an "indifferent mean": a practice not doctrinally necessary, but whose merely formal rehearsal tutored a moderate conscious internalization of the spirit (not the letter) of the Law.[23] Thus, the Swiftian character analysis of hypocrisy points not to a vice of—as modern and Aristotelian analyses would have it—"underbelieving," negotiated to an ideal Anglican practice when contrasted with zealotry/"overbelieving," but rather to a cognitive failure itself involving wrongheaded ideas of abstract perfection.[24]

Medieval or Classical models fail to illuminate a pragmatic religious tradition oriented chiefly toward objects and mental practices— something closer to a psychology, as we see it today. For an approach to Swift, at least, that resembles what I am proposing, one needs to look to now-unfashionable Freudian criticism, to Norman O. Brown's remark, in his essay "The Excremental Vision," that "Swift hit upon the doctrine of sublimation as a new method for the psychoanalysis of religion, specifically religious enthusiasm. … If you want a distinctive label for Swift's new psychology of religion, it can only be called psychoanalysis."[25] Psychoanalytic criticism, as is well known, has tended by turns to pathologize Swift, read him as modern analyst (in mid-century America), or make him a whipping boy for cultural misogyny as well as a champion of

[23] Bernard J. Verkamp, *The Indifferent Mean: Adiaphorism in the English Reformation to 1554* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1977).
[24] For this analysis coupled with the modern sense of hypocrisy as an uncomplicated pretense see Jay Newman, *Fanatics and Hypocrites* (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus, 1986), 84-91.
[25] Norman O. Brown, *Life against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1970), 193.

the abject.[26] Brown's attempt to identify him with Freudian orthodoxy chafes in its fairly hydraulic theory of vital energies and overemphasis on sublimation, displacement and the "universal neurosis of mankind."

More specifically, Brown adopts a progressive countercultural stance that sees secularization as a process of self-actualizing and all religion as a neurotic formation—an enchantment, in Weber's sense—to be dispelled by re-integrating universally repressed bodily desires.[27] And yet the now studiously ignored Brown, in pointing to Swift as a station on the way to Freud, also locates him in a tradition that he traces to Luther.[28] That move hints at a more cultural, less totalizing reading of Reform hermeneutics—one that finds less of Freud in Swift and Luther, and more of Luther in Swift and (in spirit at least) Freud. For that view, we might turn for a precedent to Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (1958). That work, often misremembered as a reductive psychological account of Luther's theology as a product of feelings towards his father, *etc.*, makes the case for Protestant practice as a psychological theory—one that expressed its cognitivist supplanting of id with ego in terms of grace:

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[26] Ibid; John Middleton Murray, *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967). Brown's chapter on Swift, dating from 1956, reviews several earlier touchstones for psychologically inflected criticism of Swift, including Murray—originally published in 1954. For further relevant discussion, see Carole Fabricant, *Swift's Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Ruth Salvaggio, "Swift and Pychoanalysis, Language and Woman," *Women's Studies* 13(1988); William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York: New Directions, 1974); Thomas B. Gilmore, "The Comedy of Swift's Scatalogical Poems," *PMLA* 91, no. 1 (1976) and "Freud and Swift: A Psychological Reading of Strephon and Chloe," *PLL* 14(1978); Richard Rodino, "Blasphemy or Blessing? Swift's Scatological Poems," *PLL* 14(1978); Everett Zimmerman, "Swift's Scatalogical Poetry: A Praise of Folly," *MLQ* 48, no. 2 (1987).

[27] Brown, *Life against Death*, 231.

[28] Ibid., 232.

> It is obvious that rituals, observances, and performances do evoke transitory affects which can be put on for the occasion and afterward hung in the closet with one's Sunday clothes. Man is able to ceremonialize, as he can “automatize” psychologically, the signs and behaviors that are born of the deepest reverence or despair. However, for an affect to have a deep and lasting effect, or, as Luther would say, be affectionalis and moralis, it must not only be experienced as nearly overwhelming, but it must also in some way be affirmed by the ego as valid, almost as chosen: one means the affect, it signifies something meaningful, it is significant.[29]

Erikson recognized a conceptual, not merely theological, concern with consciousness-raising object practice, an attempt to overcome unconscious automaticity.

Disenchanting the Disenchantment Narrative

The readings I offer here therefore constitute something of a sustained argument against the dominant description of religion’s eclipse as a “disenchantment” of the world. This historical narrative, implicit in many accounts of eighteenth-century literature’s cultural context, remains the most stubborn manifestation of modern assumptions that religious belief involves subjects integrated into a totalizing faith. The disenchantment narrative is important to literary history because it involves 1) an implausibly narrow notion of what counts as religion and religious discourse in eighteenth-century texts; 2) a

[29]Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Norton, 1962), 209.

naïve view of religious belief (or indeed of any ideological conviction) in the era; and 3) an attenuated description of Protestant culture and its historical place in literary texts.

For Max Weber, who coined the phrase, the "disenchantment of the world" (*Entzauberung der Welt*) describes the way subjects experience the historical marginalization of religion by increasingly rationalist social institutions.[30] Weber saw the "elimination of magic" in Western science and religion itself, in a dynamic with a logical end in Calvin's rejection of "sacramental forces," the repudiation of "all magical means to salvation as superstition and sin."[31] The process issues in the modern conviction that "there are today no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather … one can, in principle, master all things by calculation."[32] Along these exact lines, for example, McKeon describes Francis Bacon's efforts to order knowledge according to methods of sensory observation as, inevitably, an instrument of disenchantment:

> In Bacon's thought, the hierarchical relation of material signifier and spiritual signified may be felt to modulate into a respectful analogy, and this in turn threatens to transform itself into an antithetical signifying relationship in which the priority of sense experience is felt to have not simply a pedagogic but an ontological force. And from this alternative perspective, the materialist language of empiricism does not so much mediate saved truth as comprehend it within its

[30] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner, 1958), 117. For another standard account of disenchantment, including Protestantism as a secular force, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner's, 1971).
[31] Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 221.
[32] Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Routledge, 1991), 139.

own triumphant epistemology, while the claim to historicity is revealed to be not a sophisticated weapon against atheism but its supremely powerful ally.[33]

Here the attenuation of spiritual culture appears first and foremost an epistemological crisis—a change in the ordering, experiencing and representation of sensory data that corrodes an enclosed ideological structuring of experience according to supernatural beliefs. This is, in other words, an account of religion chiefly as a way of knowing the world and, more importantly, as a way of knowing that absorbs subjects into a coherent and pervasive mode of perception. McKeon's account takes up Ian Watt's influential view—following Weber—that an emphasis on individual experience, apart from tradition and authority, marked the end of a truly religious era. That view points to, for example, Robinson Crusoe's individualism and materialism as "the progressive desacralizing of the world that was implicit in Protestantism, and that ended (in Weber's phrase) by disenchanting it altogether."[34]

Charles Taylor, in *A Secular Age* (2007), offers a recent and representative account of religious disenchantment (his term as well) that has the benefit of being explicitly theorized; my argument as it concerns this narrative may be illuminated by a comparison. Taylor describes religious belief in terms of pre-critical background assumptions that inform the subject's way of being in the world. With reference to Heidegger's phenomenology, he argues that belief is best described not by explicit theories that subjects might articulate (explanations for natural phenomena; "credal

[33] McKeon, *Origins*, 87.
[34] Leopold Damrosch, *God's Plot and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictiona Imagination from Milton to Fielding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 192.

statements”), but as the tacit “conditions of belief” or “conditions of experience” that structure their everyday lives. This “pre-ontology” shapes ordinary common-sense existence in the presumptively spiritual world of religious eras; it forms the background of more doctrinal beliefs.[35] Taylor therefore rejects the idea that religion can simply be disproven by naturalism, that “science refutes and hence crowds out religious belief,”[36] or that religion can simply be “subtracted” as a superfluous superstition to reveal an ever-present natural world.[37] His sense of belief’s persistence is therefore arguably stronger than may be implied in, say, McKeon’s account of Bacon. But I think it is fairer to say that Taylor captures exactly the central claim of all disenchantment historiography: that religious believers are deeply inscribed in (or predisposed to) a symbolic-spiritual perception of reality, one that is “naïve”—in Taylor’s wording—in the sense that it is preconscious and, until disturbed by a skeptical epistemological sensibility, automatically colors experience of everyday life along religiously prescribed lines.

Taylor, accordingly, describes religious belief as a “[form] of immediate certainty” ; “a condition of lived experience, where what we might call a construal of the moral/spiritual is not lived as such, but as an immediate reality, like stones, rivers and mountains.”[38] This is, in short, Weber’s persistent depiction of religious eras as enchanted. Taylor explains it this way: “The enchanted world in this sense is the world

[35] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 3-5;13.
[36] Ibid., 4;26.
[37] Ibid., 22.
[38] Ibid., 12.

of spirits, demons, and moral forces which our ancestors lived in"[39]; the disturbing figures painted by Hieronymous Bosch, for example, "were objects of real fear, of such compelling fear, that it wasn't possible to entertain seriously the idea that they might be unreal"[40]; "the natural world [believers] lived in, which had its place in the cosmos they imagined, testified to divine purpose and action."[41]

In this enchanted world, supposedly, people could find supernatural meaning in matter itself, which was experienced as suffused with spirit:

> Power also resided in things. For the curative action of saints was often linked to centres where their relics resided; either some piece of their body (supposedly), or some object which had been connected with them in life, like (in the case of Christ), pieces of the true cross, or the sweat-cloth which Saint Veronica had used to wipe his face … And we can add to this other objects which had been endowed with sacramental power, like the Host, or candles which had been blessed at Candlemas … These objects were loci of spiritual power; which is why they had to be treated with care, and if abused could wreak terrible vengeance.[42]

Objects are "charged" and "have what we usually call 'magic' powers."[43]

Here it may be useful to make a few casual and preliminary objections. One could reject, for example, Taylor's homogenizing of belief, and the apparent Romantic animus against disenchantment as a kind of fall into knowledge. Also, Taylor's well-

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[39] Ibid., 26.
[40] Ibid., 11.
[41] Ibid., 25.
[42] Ibid., 32.
[43] Ibid., 34;35.

founded insistence that belief in pre-secular societies cannot be equated with modern belief within secular ones does not suffice to allay the firsthand intuition that belief simply does not look like this in any period; as I have suggested, believers have always exhibited beliefs and behaviors not consistent with their avowed faiths. His model accounts poorly for phenomena like doubt, hypocrisy, religious disputes, and artistic representations of spiritual reality that are not naïve, but rather highly conventional (like Bosch's, certainly), intellectual or pragmatic. Obviously representations produced in religious eras do not simply register the hallucinatory (from our view) experiences of their producers; but, significantly, literary histories that deploy the disenchantment narrative have been prone to define modern "realism" in a way that understands pre-modern mimisis as, essentially, realism for people who believe in magic.

One might also object, more pointedly, that Taylor seems to equate belief with an idealized, if not outright fictional, high medieval Catholicism—characterized by fully immersive and universal practice, and magical-folk attitudes about relics and sacraments. Indeed, if belief is equated with enchantment, including numinous enchantment of the object world, Reformation critiques of corrupt or superstitious ritual practice can only be described, prejudicially, as a force of secularity. That is to say, the usual theoretical account of belief in general is predisposed to exclude historical Protestantism as real religion, as failing to incorporate real enchantment.[44] By extension, it foreshortens the historical distinctiveness of Protestant culture in favor of an incipient modernity. And,

[44] In theory, Taylor could probably account synchronically for closed groups of modern Protestant fundamentalists in terms of feelings of enchantment similar to what he finds in medieval Catholicism. But as a movement or agent of historical change, a reaction or dialogue with its predecessors, Protestantism only appears here as a disturbing secular force.

following Weber, Taylor indeed treats the Reformation almost exclusively as the main force of disenchantment.[45]

But defining belief in idealist terms as epistemological closure or embedding in religious culture means, necessarily, excluding spiritual practice that is interested in discerning the limits of ideology. Indeed, portraying Protestant critiques as, essentially, rationalist assaults on fragile, unspoken Heideggerian lifeword completely misses the substance of Reformation complaints about Catholic practice. Taylor describes the Reform critique of "sacramentals; all the elements of 'magic' in the old religion" in narrowly logical and doctrinal terms: rejecting the idea that humans can influence God and achieve salvation through works and rituals, Taylor asserts, reformers denounced these practices as blasphemous and without effect. The consequence was a general disillusioning, a loss of the power previously felt to inhabit the world.[46] In this Hegelian scheme, an intellectual shift mediated by practice accomplishes a change in lived experience, in the essence of the historical lifeworld. One set of "real" beliefs about the world is eclipsed in dialectical fashion by another.

But the reformers' objection was never merely that the Roman sacramental economy was false doctrine and therefore untrue and unworthy of belief—which they consequently eradicated; it was, rather, that the sacramental economy had never actually functioned as a coherent belief system in the first place. In the reformers' view, subjects were never wholly enchanted in their belief; instead they experienced, time and again, the

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[45] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 61.
[46] Ibid., 79-80.

frustrations of trying to believe in ritual regimens. Or rather, reformers argued, it was precisely feelings of magical enchantment or fear that characterized the immoral fetishist or the doubting dissembler. The Reform position was that faith premised on magical-seeming acts, objects and privileged manipulators of them inculcated a belief inextricable from despair. For them, Catholic practice testified daily to the co-presence of belief, disbelief and resistance—in hypocrisy, knavery and exploitation of the laity. Reform culture furnished, accordingly, sophisticated accounts of belief itself as a struggle against mental idols—not just in prohibited objects and practices, but as a general tendency to psychologically overinvest in cultural artifacts without necessarily mastering any spiritual principles.

Interestingly, even Taylor's theory of religious faith as totalizing mental ideation acknowledges the problem of desire and despair around which Protestants built much of their theology and culture. The enchanted world, he argues, refers subjects' deepest intimations of moral and spiritual coherence or "fullness" to God; the unbeliever or humanist, in contrast, seeks this fulfillment within, or in the immanent space of human endeavor.[47] For believers "the sense is that fullness comes to them, that it is something they receive; moreover receive in something like a personal relation, from another being capable of love and giving; approaching fullness involves, among other things, practices of devotion and prayer (as well as charity, giving)."[48] Fullness, in general may involve "an experience which unsettles and breaks through our ordinary sense of being" or

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[47] Ibid., 5-7.
[48] Ibid., 8.

feeling “united, moving forward, suddenly capable and full of energy. Our highest aspirations and life energies are somehow lined up, reinforcing each other, instead of producing psychic gridlock.”[49] It is, for unbelievers, also in the “admiration” or “awe” of reason or “the sense of ourselves as beings both frail and courageous” which “empowers” us.[50]

But in so characterizing belief, Taylor opens his standard account to the objection that the way of knowing the world he describes is also a way of *feeling* it—not an epistemology so much as an affect, and a participation in public emotions. And Taylor describes, without taking on their theoretical significance, the negative side of these structures of feeling: enchanted subjects who order their lives to experience Godly power also sense, quite often, “a distance, an absence, an exile, a seemingly irremediable incapacity ever to reach this place; an absence of power; a confusion, or worse, the condition often described in the tradition as melancholy.”[51] Unbelievers, too, may feel far from their ideals of human flourishing: “he’s not really happy in his marriage, or fulfilled in his job, or confident that this job really conduces to the benefit of humankind … there is something he aspires to beyond where he’s at.”[52]

The disenchantment narrative has little to say about these emotive components of belief; believers’ negative affects are assumed to be, as it were, safely contained within their broader religious habitus. Nor does Taylor draw any conclusions from the identical

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[49] Ibid., 5-6.
[50] Ibid., 9.
[51] Ibid., 6.
[52] Ibid., 7.

structures of feeling he finds in believer and unbeliever alike. Yet as a psychological rather than an epistemological state—what he is really describing here—it appears that belief is not an immersion in a presumptively spiritual lifeworld. Instead it includes feelings of alienation from one's most central commitments; it even *is* that sense of alienation—or the drive to assuage it. Indeed, the closer one is to spiritual centers of power, the worse the risk of feelings of exile. My point, of course, is that this is a defining insight of the Protestant movement—that, in reformers' eyes, the kind of belief Taylor (among others) takes to be religion *as such* is an impossible idealization of belief, and one prone to producing neurotic and dysfunctional failures of real piety. The main product of trying to live fully immersed in the religious imaginary and its artifacts, the symbolic Law, is guilt: this is the central point of Martin Luther's analysis of exemplary orthodox belief:

> The Law accuses and terrifies the conscience on account of sin. And the sin that the conscience feels cannot be removed by pilgrimages, vigils, labors, efforts, vows, or any other works; in fact, sin is increased by works. The more we work and sweat to extricate ourselves from sin, the worse off we are. … Many have worked hard, inventing various religious orders and disciplines, to find peace and a quiet conscience; but instead they have plunged even more deeply into even greater misery, for such tactics are merely ways of multiplying doubt and despair.[53]

[53] From "Lectures on Galations," 1.3, in Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. *Luther's Works*, vol. 26 (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House,1963), 26-7.

Living experience suggests not only that devout believers are prone to crisis, but that belief itself includes a sense of loss and failure. In this tradition, controversialist texts like Swift's *Tale* are informed by the conviction that claims for magical enchantment only betray, or cause, a deeper insecurity.

Our modern sense of faith as firm inner commitment or an enchanted optic on the world implies that religious conviction involves asserting a kind of personal knowledge. But conviction is also an emotion—compatible even it its strongest manifestations with doubt, defensiveness and dissembling. Mainstream Anglican divines therefore commonly distinguished between modes of faith as emotional, not epistemological, experiences. Isaac Barrow's sermon "Of Justifying Faith," for example, observes that faith, or belief, as common parlance suggests, means "a firm persuasion of mind concerning the truth of what is propounded."[54] But he also distinguishes healthy belief from zealous enthusiast "firm and certain knowledge of God's eternal good will toward us particularly."[55] The former (exemplified by Abraham's persuasion that God's promises were true) results in "satisfaction, or acquiescence … an effectual obedience; a cheerful expectation"; his faith is not "his bare persuasion only, but all those concomitants thereof."[56] The latter is a presumptuous certainty incompatible with other mental states, including doubt or ignorance or even hope; unlike Abraham's salutary trust in God, "it supposes God to become our friend by knowing that he is our friend."[57] It is,

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[54] Isaac Barrow, *The Works of Isaac Barrow, D.D.*, vol. 2 (New York: John Riker, 1845), 206-7.
[55] Ibid., 216.
[56] Ibid., 208.
[57] Ibid., 217.

in short, an entirely different emotional complex— one Barrow rejects as contrary to the doctrine of faith itself and inimical to healthy, Christian mental dispositions: "By this notion many, or most … humble and modest Christians are excluded from being believers … and on the other side, the most presumptuous and fanatical sort of people are most certainly the truest and strongest believers."[58] These two modes of faith are only indistinguishable under the modern umbrella sense of faith-as-epistemology.

Belief of any kind relevant to religion is an emotional, not only an evidential process. Belief is not knowledge, and the enthusiast attempt to discern God's good will absolutely only leads to a deepening of the negative affective component. Barrow's discourse describes real faith as a salutary reverence for religious imperatives while acknowledging the subject's inevitable distance from them –what we might think of as the impossibility of enchantment. Grace— God's promise to embrace imperfect or uncertain subjects—here represents not just a theological construction, but also a term for a mode of psychological integration: to accept master signifiers optimistically, as something one can be without being fully, impossibly subsumed.[59]

The hermeneutic concerning the spiritual artifactual environment I locate in Swift and Defoe derives from this intellectual move; it adds a detailed account, I argue, of the coordinates of "firm persuasion" as conditioned by—broadly speaking—cultural objects, the symbolic world. In this tradition, the divisions between psychological terminology

[58] Ibid., 216.
[59] Even Calvin distinguished justification, God's spiritual-metaphysical act, from sanctification, the mental relief of release from the Law, caused by knowledge of justification, that consequently makes it possible to follow the Law as a conscious choice, rather than a neurotic imperative. One might add, though, that the Anglican rejection of zealous reform tends to see Calvin's programmatic discussion as already a fall into unhealthy attempts to establish firm knowledge of metaphysical absolutes.

and theology are not so clear. The Lacanian term for the pleasure Charles Taylor describes in satisfied religious subjects is *jouissance*; but the disenchantment hermeneutic purges that enjoyment of its manifestations in the death drive, feelings of loss, or in transgression—all phenomena given ethical and theological explication by post-Reformation culture. It is, however, as an analysis of belief in the vicissitudes of pleasure that I think the Protestant tradition as manifest in Swift and Defoe can be understood. These literary, psychological presentations of religion differ from modern historiography of immersive beliefs—in which, for example, the popularity of Reformation or Laudianism in England may be measured by increasingly complex estimations of discontent or satisfaction among traditional Catholics or Calvinists—whether through written or material culture. The discourse I want to follow past its Reformation roots is one—readily seen in Luther's own example—that confounds prejudices about partisanship by observing that it is the most devout Catholic who may make most fervent reformer, the most severe Puritan who finds relief in converting to Catholicism—and that a host of libidinal positions fall in between. The assertion that pre-modern believers differ from modern ones by virtue of a more pervasive enchantment may therefore be seen as a tendentious defense of religion itself—against the fact that there is nevertheless great continuity in the ambivalence or duplicity that can constitute faith as such. My modern-day neighbor's religious belief may differ fundamentally from that of his early modern counterpart, but my possible analysis that he is a fraud and a hypocrite likely has a distinguished early modern pedigree.

Idols of the Marketplace (Not Modern Things)

A psychoanalytic perspective furnishes here not a privileged way of reading the content of these texts, but only one possible analogy for a discourse that appears in multiple forms across sectarian lines. Another one—deserving of its own explication, but beyond the immediate aims of this project—might be found in Francis Bacon's breakdown of cultural prejudices into different forms of mental idols; his move brings together Protestant theology, Bacon's own cultural criticism, and a sense of psychological objects.

Bacon's "Doctrine of Idols" in the *Novum Organum* (1620) aims at, in Graham Rees' description, "the pernicious illusions, prejudices, mental habits and false perceptions that stand between the mind and nature."[60] It identifies four types of mental idol: Idols of the Tribe, Cave, Market, and Theater. Idols of the Tribe include illusions of the native human intellect—biases of the senses, projections and generalizations from personal experience, misapplications of probability and the like.[61] Idols of the Cave "originate from the peculiar nature of the individual, both body and soul, as well as from education, custom, and accident"; they are an effect of local acculturation.[62] Idols of the Market are generated by the confusion of words for things, by carving out reality through the contingent terms of culture and reified abstractions; they are the product of broad social convention.[63] Idols of the Theater, finally, concern illusory realities generated by

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[60] Graham Rees and Maria Wakely, ed. *The Instauratio Magna, Part II: Novum Organum and Associated Texts*, vol. 11, The Oxford Francis Bacon (New York: Oxford University Press,2004), liv.
[61] Ibid., 79-89.
[62] Ibid., 89.
[63] Ibid., 93-5.

authority of dubious philosophical sects and systems.[64] I will argue that something very like this approach guides both Swift and Defoe in assessing cultural objects.[65]

It is important, then, to retain Bacon's religious sensibility, his conviction that idols and the trappings "must be forsworn and renounced with unwavering and solemn resolve, and the intellect must be thoroughly freed and purged of them, since entrance into the Kingdom of Man, which is founded on the sciences, differs little from that into the Kingdom of Heaven."[66] John Shanahan notes that "though it has rarely been a sustained subject of Swift scholarship, Bacon's account of the 'idols' that plague mankind was surely an important source for Swift in that it deployed the ethical force of theological iconoclasm while directing it at broadly secular and psychological targets."[67] I would suggest, though, that to identify certain targets as "secular" and iconoclasm as an import from a more properly religious domain is already to capitulate to modern prejudices that religion stood apart from sociological and psychological claims about worldly things. The spirit of Bacon's analytic in Swift and Defoe derives from a religious practice that took psychological states as its proper object. Iconoclastic discourse is not "theological" in the sense of being tied to doctrine and disputes about

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[64] Ibid., 95-109.

[65] I have used Lacan's terminology—particularly his designation of three Orders (or registers) of psychic experience, the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real—as helpful in explicating what I see as a more dynamic approach to *behavior* around objects in Swift and Defoe than is immediately contemplated in Bacon's critique. It is worth noting, though, that Bacon's classes of Idols can be mapped, essentially without loss of meaning, onto Lacan's Imaginary and Symbolic Orders; the Real, properly considered, would require more complicated correlation, but is certainly to be found here.

[66] Wakely, ed. *Novum Organum*, 109.

[67] John Shanahan, "In the Mean Time: Jonathan Swift, Francis Bacon, and Georgic Struggle," in *Swift as Priest and Satirist*, ed. Todd C. Parker (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 206.

church décor, the liturgy or religious imagery: rather, those issues reflect a more fundamental spiritual interest in psychic disposition as conditioned by social objects. Inasmuch as ordinary objects condition desire and ethical behavior, they remain spiritual objects. Again, I do not at all suggest that these objects were construed to have numinous or mystical qualities; on the contrary, I argue for an English Protestant practice deeply suspicious of exactly that sense of enchantment construed as a psychic phenomenon.

This is to erase the common distinction (or way of distinguishing) between supposedly secular and religious perceptual/conceptual objects—first, by broadening our sense of what counts as early modern religion and, second, by admitting that as psychological objects, social artifacts can never be purely enchanted by religious ideology or disenchanted into a “real” empirical thing. What English orthodoxy perceived as automatic-literalist aspects of Catholic-enthusiast belief (sacraments directly influence salvation; one must discern exact ritual prescriptions or offend God) can be characterized equally well as superstitious-magical happenings or as a kind of real materialist machine. Either way, the Christian universe appears to operate like something in a Tolkien novel: Frodo’s evil ring falls into Mount Doom’s fire and Mordor magically-automatically collapses. The mainstream post-Reform critique of such claims does not appeal to supposedly more accurate knowledge about God or nature, a differently constructed machine. Instead, it points to the enthusiast (defined in relative terms, of course; Defoe, too, condemns enthusiasm) failure to recognize even religious truths as artifacts of social consensus: enthusiast claims are magical fantasies in that they originate

in artificially small Protestant hermeneutic communities, but it is precisely as such they can be experienced as "real" events.

Protestant controversialists, then, did not seek to locate spiritual events or objects metaphysically (as modern emphasis on epistemology implies), but rather psychologically. An idol is not a prohibited object (given magical-metaphysical weight) as much as one that has fallen into a dubious cognitive role. Alleged enthusiast "mechanical" belief of this sort takes place in what Lacan calls the register of the Real—strictly, among thought-objects outside ordinary social consensus, and here, therefore, fantasized to have a quality of independent certainty. It is in this sense that Slavoj Žižek— in terminology not far removed from Isaac Barrow's— characterizes fundamentalist religion as knowledge rather than belief.[68] For the fundamentalist, the remains of Noah's Ark or the Shroud of Turin can prove his convictions; his claims occupy the same psychic plane as science, as understood in the modern era.[69] The modern view of belief accepts this model rather uncritically, designating religion as a realm where supernatural truth claims among believers are sorted very much like empirical ones, with the provision that believers need be held to no public standard of accountability.

This view of all objects as psychological objects and hence as spiritually significant, therefore challenges the sense, implicit in the disenchantment narrative, that secularity can be measured by the prevalence of technological or commercial object

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[68] Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (New York: Verso, 2008), 31.
[69] Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (New York: Verso, 1997), 108-9.

culture. This disenchantment narrative gives the exemplary cultural object a genealogy that runs from the Catholic sacrament to the commodity as the avatar of a secular and commercial society. Barbara Benedict, for example, observes that "things" in literature "become a site of cultural struggle between a religious and a secular approach to meaning":

> Since the medieval period, sacred objects and relics in the Catholic tradition were believed to hold God's spirit, most cogently in the Host, and eighteenth-century collecting practices mimicked this reverence for things, albeit desacralized. Conventional Protestant doctrine however, held that objects embody the irreligious pursuit of wealth and worldly power over the pious worship of God . … As the material of consumption, objects also incarnate the satanic power of secular desire over spirituality. Moreover, such objects refuse relationship, existing entirely in and of themselves, in a sphere whose detachment from quotidian concerns parallels but never intersects with the religious.[70]

Obviously one cannot draw so firm a line between Catholicism's supposedly numinous objects and post-Reformation commodities. If the enchantment narrative ignores the Protestant insight that subjects are never wholly immersed in a magical universe, it also construes Catholicism in—oddly—deeply Protestant terms, as a religion of unconscious mystical fantasy. Catholicism, for its part, had always been, by virtue of the mysteries of the incarnation and bodily resurrection, deeply invested in a sense of the material.

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[70] Barbara Benedict, "The Spirit of Things," in *The Secret Life of Things: Anlimals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 20.

Catholic relics were venerated chiefly as signs and a tangible material presence--not magical or mystical vessels.[71] The Eucharist fell into a completely different category, of course; it is not a "most cogent" version of a relic. But even prevailing opinion regarding the Host was not that it "held God's spirit."[72] It is on the one hand, a wholly material object: bread, followed by another wholly material object: God's flesh. Protestantism, here, fares little better. Even foundational secularizing accounts in Weber and Tawney argue that zealous Protestant iconoclasts were deeply interested in matter (liturgical and otherwise) both as sensible objects and aids to spiritual reflection. Protestant otherworldliness found expression precisely in industrious application to trade— ideally cognized in a casuistic framework of pious pragmatism in the material realm.[73]

The disenchantment narrative purports, of course, to take a particular interest in the cultural status of objects, yet a central feature has been the tendency to see elements of modernity (including scientific discourse or objects of empirical observation) as also somehow deprived of social weight:

> The thingness of objects opposes traditional spiritual or social values: the new, troubling ubiquity of objects in an urban world of shifting social relationships

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[71] Lay misuses were common enough, but the doctrinal position would have been that the relic was, in and of itself, a material thing with a connection to a spiritual plane: relics do not perform miracles, although the saint with whom one was associated might. Patrick Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

[72] Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 36.

[73] R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998); Weber, *Protestant Ethic*.

promotes competition, isolation, insignificance…humans are shouldered aside by the parade of commodities that are capturing the center of culture.[74]

Such claims too readily equate the object-thing with the commodity and a purely secular grid of space-time, all of which are said to be characteristic of the eighteenth century. Taylor, for one, is at pains to distance himself from the idea that religion is a superstructure easily removed to reveal a real world of bare objects. But both his account and Benedict's require a distinction between what they take to be religion's defining otherworldly sensibility and worldly object concerns taken as necessarily definitive of secularity.[75]

The move in eighteenth-century studies to a philosophically informed "thing theory," that speaks (in theory) to the pre-conceptual realm of object engagements seems, then, chiefly a re-iteration of Taylor's disenchantment account. It has been marked, for example, by a tendency to equate modern objects like the commodity form with the bare Thing itself and consequently with secular sensibility—a peculiarity related to the idea that commodities are objects that are neutral or value-free in a way that religious objects are not: secular objects (if not secular cultures) are, supposedly, those reduced to their basic essence, exclusive of conceptual additions. [76]

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[74] Barbara Benedict, "Encounters with the Object: Advertisements, Time, and Literary Discourse in the Eighteenth-Century Thing-Poem," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 20, no. 2 (2007): 203-4.

[75] A stricter Heideggerian account concerned with Being rather than sociology might actually erase the distinction between, at least, nominally religious and secular subjects who are philosophically inclined to think about Being. But this is merely to see that Heidegger's suitability for theorizing the disenchantment narrative arises out of an account of Dasein and Being that is already a kind of fantasy Catholicism.

[76] Thing theory has found a warm reception in eighteenth-century studies, where it resonates with extant work on material culture. See, for example, Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800 : Image, Object, Text*, Consumption and Culture in the 17th and 18th Centuries (New York: Routledge, 1995); John Brewer and Roy Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York:

It seems unfortunate that the “new materialism” should be so intimately tied to the commodity, as if the latter suddenly brought an awareness of the material world that had previously gone unremarked. By no means is commercialism an obvious counterpart of interest in some obdurate *thing*-ness: Bill Brown’s influential theorizing of breaks in cultural understanding that constitute encounters with Things in fact describes them as “beyond intelligibility.”[77] At the same time, though, his mixture of Heidegger and Lacan suggests that to escape the bounds of cultural rhetorics is to be in touch with the bare Thing, which suggests a kind of nominalism.[78] But Lacan's Real, incompletely gestured at in his formulations, cannot be understood simply as the inexplicably pre- or extra-linguistic, but rather indicates only the outer edges of a particular, historical symbolic competence, the realm of the repellent, the unappetizing, or the foreign, or the surplus pleasure derived from objects without being socially sanctioned. A cultural perception of the unspeakable remains a cultural perception.

Along the same lines, commercial society does nothing to strip objects of their social-psychic constitution. Objects, as Marshall Sahlins points out with reference to Marx’s *German Ideology*, are for social subjects, themselves produced by a social object world; hence “not even capitalism, despite its ostensible organization by and for

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Routledge, 1993); Lorraine Daston, ed. *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, Zone Books ed. (New York: MIT Press,2004).

[77] Bill Brown, "Things," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 4-5.

[78] Brown writes in *Critical Inquiry*: “We look through objects because there are codes by which our interpretive attention makes them meaningful, because there is a discourse of objectivity that that allows us to *use them* [my emphasis] as facts. A *thing*, in contrast, can hardly function as a window. We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls.” Things are “what is excessive in objects” and “what exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects. …Things lie beyond the grid of intelligibility.”

pragmatic advantage, can escape this cultural constitution of an apparently objective praxis. For, as Marx also taught, all production, even where it is governed by the commodity-form, by exchange-value, remains the production of use-values."[79] Here use-value does not designate an objective, utilitarian quality of a neutral commodity-thing opposed in some way to "social values"; nor is use-value some authenticity opposed to commodification. Rather, use-value inheres in the object's cultural significance—as an object of desire in a symbolic social system.[80]

From that perspective, the vague magical quality imputed to the premodern-religious object and the mysterious notion of use-less Thingness may perhaps be identified as simple inversions, projected on an Other, of secular capitals' rational and utilitarian self-image. Sahlins observes that "treating production as a natural-pragmatic process of need satisfaction. … risks an alliance with bourgeois economics":

> The explanation is satisfied to re-create the self-deception of the society to which it is addressed, where the logical system of objects and social relations proceeds along an unconscious plane, manifested only through market decisions based on price, leaving the impression that production is merely the precipitate of an enlightened rationality.[81]

It therefore hardly improves this perspective to note, for example, that eighteenth-century subjects formed emotional bonds with commercial objects—as if this somehow

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[79]Marshall Sahlins, *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000), 166.
[80] Ibid. Sahlins: "The determination of use-values … represents a continuous process of social life in which men reciprocally define objects in terms of themselves and themselves in terms of objects."
[81] Ibid., 163-4.

constituted a surprising resistance to or subversion of the flow of commodities. Indeed one wonders whether thing theory —with its simultaneous embrace of the commodity and an alluring thingy substrate—is not itself a mode of commodity fetishism, bringing to the literary critic the more palpable pleasures of the antiquarian or the collector. As Žižek suggests, the properly Marxist reproach to the commodity fetishist is not to point out that a commodity seems to him a "magical object endowed with special powers" but is really "just a reified expression of relations between people." Instead the interpreter should point out that the commodity object may appear as a simple embodiment of social relations, but participating in those social relations reveals that one really regards the commodity as a magical object endowed with special powers.[82] Similarly, the thing theorist purports to examine Things in a hard-nosed return to the material world—styled as a refreshing overcoming of exhausted historicism or baroque theory—but in doing so betrays the fetishist's sense that there is something more in the thing than its mere use.

Most importantly, one should question the assumption that religion is compromised from a full ideal when wedded to commercial forms—as if it were not always already compromised within traditional religious culture itself: by contested, ever-shifting material praxis and even orthodox psychological objects. From the standpoint of spiritual practice designed to produce a particular Protestant individual, practices, objects, or institutions are heretical/orthodox not because of a doctrinal or technological status, but from unconscious position of desire. For English subjects, even those embracing new

[82] Slavoj Žižek, *Interrogating the Real: Selected Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 106-7.

techniques of commerce and governance, the product of religious reform and technical change was less the secular object than the common sense world of the English parish.

A Brief Summary

The first chapter of this study argues for the importance of discourses about object culture in post-Reformation thought and seeks to identify commonplace hermeneutics. It therefore departs from literary history, in the narrower modern sense, to locate this materialist sensibility in broader religious culture, including theological texts obsessed with objects. I highlight the unrecognized influence of this material by following recent historiography, which—like early modern thought itself—understands sectarian culture through local micro-practices and liturgical disputes rather than homogeneous beliefs or dogma; but this similarity, I suggest, still fails to capture the nuances of Protestant hermeneutics which, as I have indicated, assert that religious subjects are not merely conditioned by objects and rituals, but develop strong affective relations of aversion, obsession, and ambivalence to them.

Swift's allegorical history of the Reformation in the *Tale*—the subject of chapter two—therefore exemplifies sectarian rhetoric grounded in sensitivity to problematic objects. Catholicism's elaborate rituals and "idols" (Peter's gaudy coat) allegedly encourage *pro forma* obedience without spiritual introspection. Zealous dissent (the austere Puritan Jack's ragged condition) is seen to elevate subjective inspiration at the expense of practical morality. More than this, though, Swift presents alleged Catholic knavery and Puritan hypocrisy as neurotic formations, attempts to extract pleasure from

immiserating styles of faith. This chapter serves, then, to demonstrate, in Swift, a kind of orthodox norm for this sort of thought. From this perspective, Anglicanism's tendency to push liturgical conflicts to the periphery, even as it affirmed orthodoxy, reads more coherently as an attempt to secure the territorial church through common praxis without recourse to devotional styles perceived to encourage pathological modes of belief. Sectarian labels function, that is, as shorthand diagnostic terms: rather than say, with Freudian critics, that Swift anticipates a diagnosis of the enthusiast as an obsessive neurotic, we might say that the eighteenth-century English descriptor for an obsessive neurotic is "enthusiast."

Here orthodoxy bears a counterintuitive resemblance to dissenting thought: Swift's striking comparison of Catholic and Puritan "objects" to artificial belief machines follows the logic of Puritan attacks on church ceremony as inimical to the Reformation project of raising belief to a level of conscious introspection. A comparison of Swift and Defoe (chapters three and four) thus shows a common vision of social objects that furnish affective coordinates of a living interpretive community modeled on the primitive church: a spiritual-civic ecology. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* expresses the more radical Protestant's world-building impulse: if community is exemplified by the dissenting congregation, traumatic encounters with novelty can be assimilated into a providential civic order by isolated souls in the spaces of trade. Specifically, I argue that religious readings of *Robinson Crusoe* have portrayed an otherworldly providentialism tied to the idea of religious enchantment. But this reading has the unintended effect, I argue, of reducing the content of the narrative to a series of disconnected encounters with

modernity that take place against a static backdrop of an unappealing and unconvincing religious faith. I therefore read the text as a more active phenomenology of Crusoe's experience—one that describes a process of mastering new objects and experiences in a process of spiritual and psychological self-critique.

Chapter four reads Swift's *Travels* as a response to *Crusoe*—seen by Swift as a defective devotional manual. With the premise that Gulliver is a psychic subject not unlike Crusoe, the text, I argue, seeks to demonstrate that the freelancing Puritan courts neurosis; it charts Gulliver's degrading ability to re-cognize events in a Christian frame absent the visible church's influence. Equally importantly, the text demonstrates Swift's early modern psychic approach to religious and material artifacts—as opposed to the modern epistemological hermeneutic; in that sense, its critiques of commercial culture, popular literature, and proto-scientific projects can be seen not as responses to a creeping modernity, but as assertions that these forms function like liturgies or ritual styles that create all-too-familiar sectarian subjects. Swift's sermon *On the Testimony of Conscience* serves here as a convenient guide to Swift's political-religious imaginary, since it offers a schematic view of available cultural styles, their sectarian analogues, and their psychic effects. The *Travels*, I argue, may be seen as a thick description of these cultures as realized in a hypothetical English subject.

Where those texts fantasize about encounters with novelty, Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722)—the subject of the final chapter—responds, in the same terms, to real crisis. With graphic reproductions of vital statistics, quarantine orders, and quack medicine advertisements, the text has naturally been seen to reflect bureaucratic

governance and aggressive commodification. But Defoe's archive of public speaking more plausibly models London as an interpretive Protestant *ekklesia*. His view of the city as the ideal unit of governance reflects a culturally Presbyterian sensibility—attuned neither to the national territorial church, nor to the isolated or amorphously networked godly communities of enthusiasm or Independency. Plague, no respecter of sectarian boundaries, but determined by physical vectors of contagion, demands consideration of medical data from the city as a comprehensive unit. But Defoe points out Dissenters' legal or civic invisibility as a crucial gap in London's historical and statistical records: the failure to realize a unified Protestant hermeneutic community is both unchristian and a health hazard. The *Journal* thus affirms aspects of modern technical governance within a city space—but in the service of a spiritual community.

I have tried to be consistent in the use of religious labeling. "Anglican" and "Anglicanism" are inevitable anachronisms, and I use them for established church positions with an awareness that this was a contested norm. For practice outside or critical of orthodoxy I have tried to use the neutral term "nonconformity" with a sense that nonconformists were not necessarily entirely outside the church. Similarly, I have used the term "Puritan" in the sense of cultural Puritanism—the more specific historical style or complex of practices as defined by modern scholarship—and with intent to invoke the thought of Patrick Collinson and others who insist on the constructed nature of the term. I have used "dissent" chiefly regarding the legally defined set of nonconforming subjects and practices after 1662, though I have not capitalized the term. Where I construe Swift to be speaking broadly of zealous Protestantism, I have tried to

use his term, “enthusiasm.” I have tried to avoid construing Swift as referring to “Calvinists,” despite the allegorical presence of “Jack,” in the *Tale*, in that it seems misleading to associate all Reformed churches with Calvin (again the term was originally pejorative), and all dissenters with the Reformed churches; an unfair association is likely Swift’s point. Similarly I have avoided the term Presbyterian as a catch-all, though Swift’s contemporaries certainly employed it this way. In keeping with the argument here, I have tried to be true to the sense that all of these positions claimed authority over some version of an English Church.

PART I: DISAPPOINT AND PUNISH: ENGLISH PROTESTANTISM AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL OBJECT

Chapter 1: The Long Reformation and the Object World

Beyond Religious Style

This chapter outlines a particularly English mode of religious discourse centered on the object world. In what follows I attempt to develop insights of historians who have focused on local Protestant micro-practices and liturgical objects, particularly the conflicts over these in the English Church in the post-Reformation era. Such recent historiography has examined religious groups in terms of their local identities, practices and material cultures, rather than in terms of homogeneous beliefs or theological dogmas. Missing from this otherwise convincing historical method, I suggest, is an overt recognition that English Protestants themselves made sophisticated analyses of material objects and everyday practices as spiritual technologies for inculcating habits of belief. Using these traditional methods, they developed new ideological critiques of Catholicism, as they saw it, and of competing religious groups, charting the effects of specific liturgical object-practices on individuals striving for a conscious sense of grace.

I therefore first suggest a parallel between modern historical method and this Protestant mode in which everyday interactions with liturgical and cultural objects are understood in terms of what Foucault has termed "care of the self," the conditioning of the religious subject into a spiritually acceptable state of being and feeling. I then suggest that this parallelism fails to capture an additional nuance of native Protestant discourse in

that, unlike modern histories, the accounts of identity produced this way include a strong sense that religious subjects are not merely conditioned or habituated by their use of objects and rituals, but also develop strong feelings of aversion, obsession, and ambivalence regarding religious duties. The more complicated mode of cultural analysis that I find here approaches a kind of religious psychology, defining religious belief not only as a set of mental contents, but also in terms of its ability to initiate and frame unconscious psychic dynamics, including neurotic commitments to social forms. These dynamics, analyzed as ideological pathologies that structure belief itself, are presented in the era under question as inimical to the Protestant project of raising belief to a level of conscious introspection—to a set of practices guiding life choices, rather than a static body of knowledge.

In these terms, I argue, it is possible to see sectarian rhetorics (narrative forms regarding Puritan or Roman Catholic character, for example) as predicated on a common structural analytic of the psychological object, rather than as merely giving voice to disparate cultural prejudices or styles. Such rhetorics are not only expressions of particular states of spirit, but also active cultural logics, available to believers to approach the understanding of new experience and for structuring their selves. Similarly, I suggest that diverse religious forms, including Puritanism and Laudian ceremonialism—and, more broadly, the Anglican "*via media*"—were understood on the same plane, as strategies for structuring belief and knowledge of the world in terms of object practices that do not devolve into mere unconscious ideology.

Reformation and Micro-History

It is by no means surprising that post-Reformation texts address the world of religious objects and technologies. The field of religious conflict in England was substantially defined by closely fought engagements over material forms: the liturgy and sacraments, church layout and public ceremonies—all signposts of daily parish life.[1] Early Reformation bans on relic veneration, altars and rood screens, offerings to images, pilgrimages, the use of holy bread and water, the Latin mass itself, and assaults on practices such as prayers for the dead and devotional guild activities set the terms for partisan wrangling that continued unabated into the eighteenth century. As Anglican tradition sought to codify practice and the accepted array of religious objects in the evolving *Thirty-Nine Articles* and *Book of Common Prayer*, enforced through various acts of uniformity, sectarian debates remained fixed on the specific materia of religion. In short, the laity experienced Reformation—broadly construed as the ongoing struggle to define English religious identity after the break with Rome—as a series of abrupt and drastic changes in familiar objects and practices in favor of novel spiritual protocols.[2] An

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[1] For general characteristics of the English Reformation see, for example: John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Patrick Collinson, *The Reformation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003); A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) and *The Reformation* (New York: Viking, 2004); Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin: The Intellectual, Political and Cultural World of Europe's Reformed Churches* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); Bernard M.G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Reformation* (New York: Longman, 1981); J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (New York: Blackwell, 1984).

[2] For accounts of local responses to Reformation with respect to specific religious practices, see, John Craig, *Reformation Politics and Polemics: The Growth of Protestantism in East Anglian Market Towns*

account of churchwardens at St. Michael's, Gloucester hiring laborers to lower the altar floor and install a communion table in 1551, only to require the table removed and the altar raised up again two years later under Mary I, captures something of this experience, as does the thrifty conversion of priestly vestments to surplices, communion tablecloths, or even cushions.[3] At an everyday level, the religious world was

> disrupted, sometimes in sudden and wrenching ways. One month people were being urged to make pilgrimages to shrines which housed holy relics; the next month the relic was gone. … Some would welcome the new religion each time it was promoted, others would rejoice in every swing back toward the old.[4]

But liturgical style or the status of sacred objects needs to be considered more broadly, since objects marked only the most discrete and contentious center of wider changes in public rituals, the ordering of the calendar, or sanctioned forms of recreation (as laid out, for example, in James I's *Declaration of Sports*). Even here, one barely touches on the radiating effects of official prohibitions as they impinged on whole social networks and socializing processes. A praxis as humble as church seating, for example, could affirm local hierarchies, even as it helped unite individuals in a community, while rites like

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1500-1610 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001); Gary Gibbs and Beat Kumin Katherine French, ed. *The Parish in English Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press,1997); Robert Whiting, *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Patrick Collinson and John Craig, ed. *The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640* (New York: St. Martin's Press,1998); Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Caroline Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[3] Litzenberger, *English Reformation and the Laity*, 1-2; Whiting, *Local Responses*, 69.

[4] Litzenberger, *English Reformation and the Laity*, 2.

communion and baptism served as social markers and touchstones for group identity. [5] For practicing Christians, changing traditions, especially those tied closely to forms and objects, meant more than affirming or denying underlying dogma, and more than confronting the strange and novel—it meant psychologically accommodating oneself to a potentially new identity and reconfiguring senses of space and reality.

In line with the crucial role played by parish politics in reflecting doctrinal shifts, historiography of the English post-Reformation increasingly has emphasized everyday interactions over ideological disputes across the borders of official regimes spanning from Roman Catholicism to the Elizabethan settlement—and back again— to rising Calvinism, Laudian Arminianism, contending Puritanisms, and a reconstituted Anglicanism. If the once-standard model of popular Protestantism, in influential accounts like that of A.G. Dickins, opened up the field of local histories, revisionists like Eamon Duffy, in charting popular resistance to reform, further raised awareness of intense allegiance to local traditions. Later evaluations, also attuned to parish-level micro-histories have proposed even more cellular models of religious and cultural change and have pointed to a more complex and divided popular Protestantism.[6]

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[5] Christopher Marsh, "'Common Prayer' in England 1560-1640: The View from the Pew," *Past and Present* 171(2001) and "Sacred Space in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53, no. 2 (2002). On the "life cycle" of English subjects and the social importance of religious traditions, see David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); David. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[6] For discussion of recent trends in English Reformation historiography see Patrick Collinson, "The English Reformation, 1945-1995," in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (New York: Routledge, 1997). See also Christopher Haigh, ed. *The English Reformation Revised* (New York: Cambridge UP,1987); A.J. Dickins and J. Tonkin, *The Reformation in Historical Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985);

This trend in scholarship underscores the difficulty of pinning down religious identity in individual communities, particularly in terms of broad doctrinal labels; parish practices, notwithstanding the sharp social divides suggested by partisan rhetoric, were highly syncretic and idiosyncratic in ways that resist idealogical generalization.[7] Modern ecclesiastical history consequently has embraced a Long Reformation, supplanting the idea of dominant, stable Anglican or Puritan traditions in favor of a plurality of modes of worship and devotion competing over time, substantially within the church, to embody Reformation ideals.[8] Exemplary here is Peter Lake's important notion of a "style" of divinity or piety, which stresses concrete habits and quotidian traditions in a spectrum of positions:[9]

> By [a style of divinity or piety] we mean a synthesis of positions, opinions and modes of affect, constructed by a variety of contemporary groups always in

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Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, "Introduction," in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[7] Useful examples of parish inertia and independence, in spite of shifting political sands may be found in Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion in the City Parishes* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 130-43.

[8] Nicholas Tyacke, ed. *England's Long Reformation:1500-1800* (New York: Routledge,1998). Judith Maltby observes that "Anglicanism" consisted in "the hardening of certain religious traditions *within* the larger Church of England existing before the Civil War and their emergence as *the* Church of England," in Judith Maltby, "Suffering and Serving: The Civil Wars, the Commonwealth and the Formation of 'Anglicanism,' 1642-60," in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, ed. Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 175. See also, for example, Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); Nicholas Tyacke, "Anglican Attitudes: Some Recent Writings on English Religious History, from the Reformation to the Civil War," *Journal of British Studies* 35(1996); Haigh, *English Reformations*. I include here historiography of the Civil War era and the conflict over Laudianism, which also has increasingly emphasized conflicts over ceremonial innovations and material culture. See J. S. Morrill, *Revolt in the Provinces: The People of England and the Tragedies of War, 1630-1648*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999); David. Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, C. 1590-1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[9] Lake's initial important essay on religious "style" was "The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness in the 1630s," in *The Early Stuart Church: 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993).

> polemical struggle the one with the other. What marked one such style off from another was not an ideology or theology made up of opinions or positions peculiar to that grouping—that would have been impossible, all these people were Christians. Rather it was the way in which the synthesis was constructed, the relative stress or value placed on the constituent parts that tended to mark off one group from another.[10]

A label like "Laudian," as Lake has employed it with his example of a "Laudian style," for instance, defines sectarian interest not in terms of a homogeneous ideology, but instead by a set of family resemblances—acts and performances that clearly look to be related—pertaining to concrete practices of the self and the material stuff of worship. The rubric of style meshes with a general move to understand sectarian differences as praxes reflecting different points of emphasis around, for example, the visible or the gathered church.[11] Lake's analytic is in this sense ideally suited to the broader trend that sees rifts in English Protestant practice as at once continuations of longstanding disputes and irreducibly local and contingent. Like the new historicism or new cultural history, ecclesiology has embraced an ethnographic turn congenial to materialist analysis of micro-practices or the writing of so-called micro-histories.[12]

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[10] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, ed. *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, C.1560-1660* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), xviii-xix.

[11] See, for example, Peter Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church, 1570-1635," *Past and Present* 114(1987); Charles W. A. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[12] Peter Burke, ed. *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991); Lynn Hunt, ed. *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press,1989); H. Aram Veeser, ed. *The New Historicism* (New York: Routledge,1989). Peter Lake and Michael Questier's remarks in *The Anti-Christ's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), xxv, give some sense of recent trends and their debt to the functionalist textual and cultural

Protestant Discourse Around Objects

Current scholarship has begun to match, in other words, a certain cultural materialist analytic to a religious history acknowledged to turn on local traditions and the material stuff of devotion. But we can easily add a discursive claim to these historical and epistemological frames: simply, that English subjects across the Long Reformation developed their own complex modes of writing about and analyzing material culture and artifacts, not just as matters of cultural preference or religious dispute, but in terms of their psychic and ideological impact. That is, while it has been a tenet of ecclesiastically-oriented materialist history that the fine points of, say, wearing the surplice or railing the altar table could define religious constituencies and had powerful ideological effects (as in analyses of effects of church seating), it has been less remarked to what degree post-Reformation Protestants themselves developed sophisticated conceptual schemes regarding the psychic interaction of English subjects and their (religious) object-world—that is, how conscious they were of the correlation between practices and the cultural logics they espoused. As noted, each shift in liturgical practice also reconfigured individuals' experience of space, community, and objects, often disrupting what had been "normal" experience of everyday life. Controversialists of that era were already attuned to the formative power of material culture, as they dealt with these transformations, the

interpretive strategies of new historicism: "The narratives and performances at the centre of this book should be seen as providing contemporaries with a complex, interconnected and gendered web of narrative conventions, images and tropes that allowed them to confront and control, to scare themselves and reassure themselves about, some of the most threatening aspects of their social, religious and political worlds." See also Patrick Collinson's remarks in "The English Reformation, 1945-1995," 354.

second-order echo of doctrinal shifts; but modern readings neglect this aspect of religious texts, seeing English subjects as naively advocating for specific liturgical cultures or formed by them, without a serious analytic mode of their own informing their preferences.

One way of making this case is to observe that recent artifactual historiography resembles nothing so much as the texts of post-Reformation religious disputants themselves. Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke's *Altars Restored* (2007) might serve as a case in point.[13] The study takes up national religious conflict across a *longue durée* by tracking parish-level changes in the placement, construction and status of the altar, a focus of reforming iconoclasm and conformist ritual. The authors thereby insist on the laity's critical influence on Reformation and counter-Reformation based on complex and passionate attitudes toward familiar object-practices, recovered from arguments about altar placement. Their set of historical data for this micro-history of parish customs, they note, includes "the fabric of church buildings, and furnishings such as communion tables and rails, fonts, imagery in stained glass, painting, or plasterwork, and communion plate. … [sources] usually left to the tender mercies of art historians and antiquarians."[14] Only now, following Duffy and others, we might say, does modern scholarship, in the form of a book-length study on the positioning and railing of a common table, attend to the altar controversy with the same exacting, perhaps excruciating, detail and attention it commanded at the time and has commanded since,

[13] Kenneth Fincham and Nichlas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-C.1700* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[14] Ibid., 1-7.

within the church itself. The modern volume bears generic comparison to the material focus and liturgical genealogies of Bishop John William's nuanced argument against altar-wise placement of the communion table in *Holy Table Name and Thing* (1637), contemporaneous Laudian texts, or even their Victorian Tractarian analogues.[15]

But here we must also draw a distinction: Modern history writing in this vein veers somewhat between 1) cataloging emergent constituencies (and texts) surrounding various local or object-practices—as in the Fincham-Tyacke work—and 2) charting the socializing effects of praxis (supposed psychic resultants)—just as has been fashionable respecting, say, the ideological apparatuses of the modern state, or the confessional mechanisms of the Catholic Church.[16] Gone missing is a discussion of the original texts' own materialist hermeneutics, as voiced from a specifically Protestant perspective—the longstanding interest in spiritual technologies, and the way that interest in some sense defined the Protestant project itself. That is, these studies largely miss how ritual and other material forms were sociologically analyzed within sectarian conflict to discern certain results in the hearts and minds of believers.

The native interest in materialist hermeneutics that today's scholars may be undervaluing is easily recognized in the earliest Puritan texts. We need only renew

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[15] Anthony Milton, "Canon Fire: Peter Heylyn at Westminster," in *Westminster Abbey Reformed: 1540-1640*, ed. C.S. Knighton and Richard Mortimer (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003); John Harvey Treat, *Notes on the Rubric of the Communion Office* (New York:1882); John Williams, *The Holy Table Name and Thing* (London:1637).

[16] Fincham and Tyacke specifically note their approach's utility in defining communities of worship even more precisely than recent refinements like "prayer-book Protestants." This obviously suggests, however, an extension of the same localizing logic. Christopher Marsh notes the tendency of social historians to theorize early modern behavior in church in terms of "discipline" and "instrument[s] of hierarchy" in Marsh, "Common Prayer," 67-68.

appreciation of these critical strategies regarding what we now term the "micro-politics" of power. John Field's *An Admonition to Parliament* (1572), for example, attacks specifically the concrete ceremonial signs of incomplete Reformation: infant baptism and confirmation, as well as such customs as last rites and saint's days.[17] These attacks—simply an amplification of more mainstream Protestant assaults on Catholic mystification and liturgical elements unsanctioned by scripture ("matters of custome, and not in the booke") exemplify a profound awareness of material objects and practices and their spiritual implications. Thus, the un-reformed wedding service, alleged to idolize the beloved improperly, is for Field characterized by a material object: the couple's unseemly interaction with the wedding ring, "taking it up and laying it downe"; in "churching" a woman after childbirth "she must lie in with a white sheete upon her bed, and come covered with a vayle, as ashamed of some folly"; there is, Field insists, "no edification" in church services in which "they tosse the Psalmes in most places like tennis balles. The people, some standing, some walking, some talking, some praying by themselves, attend not to the minister. He againe posteth it over, as fast as he can gallop."[18] Observable material moments signaled for him breakdowns in desirable new practice.

Far from a dogmatic rejection of symbolic activity in favor of the Book, then, Protestant piety in such accounts remains linked to the physical activity or performance of the service. The Puritan authors regard liturgical practices as *techniques*—for practice and acquiring the habits of a Christian life that underwrite skillful, conscious

[17]"An Admonition to Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt*, ed. W.H. Frere and C.E. Douglas (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), 26.
[18]Ibid., 27-9.

participation in a Christian community, technologies of practice that will lead souls to Christ. In Field's example, that means quiet attendance and stillness before the Word, and personal "edification," rather than, as in the Catholic mass, mere presence or busy inattention.[19]

William Bradshaw's 1605 attempt at a semi-sociological account of "Puritanism" as it then existed within the church acknowledged this concern with practice in terms of its underlying logic rather than simply the set of material preferences; it is the group's defining feature:[20]

> They hold that all outward means instituted and set apart to express and set forth the inward worship of God, are parts of the divine worship and that not only all moral actions but all typical rites and figures ordained to shadow forth in the solemn worship and service of God, and spiritual or religious act or habit in the mind of man, are special parts of the same; and therefore that every such act ought evidently to be prescribed by the word of God, or else not to be done.[21]

For the present argument, it is critical that Bradshaw identifies these zealous Protestants by their theory of subject formation, the connection they draw between external acts and

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[19] The rite of churching is similarly grasped in its ideological dimension. The material accoutrements, white sheet and veil, function with the lying-in process not simply as remnants of Catholic belief or signs to be deconstructed (signifying, for example, woman's shame before original sin, male or priestly control of reproduction, *etc*.) but as physically socializing tools, designed to alter a woman's understanding of her body and her labor. Similarly, an allegedly crypto-papist practice like kneeling acts as a "technology of the self," and a means of physically integrating cultural norms. The action serves as focal point for a variety of subsystems: by broad cultural code (based itself on biological signs of vulnerability: physically prostrating oneself) it signifies obeisance, ideally to God—but in the Puritan analysis, to the priest (a man) and altar (an idol), while also miming a theologically rejected sacrificial tableau.

[20] On Puritanism as a liturgical movement, see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Cape, 1967), 29-55; Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, vol. I (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970).

[21] William Bradshaw, *English Puritanisme* (London:1605), 2.

an internal spiritual habitus. Further, Bradshaw himself privileges such a definition of religious style over dogma in his account. Like modern historians, he uses material predilections to assign a convenient label (Puritan), tacitly making use of a pragmatic understanding of faith common even to those who did not consider themselves Puritans.

Pitched toward the same Reformation ideals touted by hotter sorts of Protestants—against innovative rites and works in favor of a conscious Christian community—the conformist or ceremonialist perspective can be said to employ the same object-oriented mode of argument. Along these lines, as Peter Lake has shown, Laudian ceremonialists in the 1630s also were quick to connect external ceremony and internal spiritual disposition, to the disadvantge of lax parishioners:

> How unseemly is it, to see some kneele, some stand, some sit, some leane upon their elbowes? As if they thought of any thing rather than of God, and his service; as if necessity, and not devotion, brought us hither. Distraction in our behavior manifests distraction in our minds, and gives a just advantage to the enemies of our Church.[22]

While the text emphasizes elegant and compulsory ceremony rather than deliberate and introspective simplicity, the notion of a spiritual habitus conditioned by outward activity is clear. The idea that "such correspondency, and sympathy between the Soule and the body; as maketh to accord one with an other, like those Creatures and wheels, mentioned

[22] Edward Boughen, *A Sermon Concerning Decencie and Order in the Church* (London:1638), 11. Lake quotes an immediately preceding portion of Boughen's sermon, regarding the bracing effect of the congregation behaving in unison with "reverence and decency." See Lake, "Laudian Style," 166-7.

by the prophet [Ezekiel]" brings out a decided parallel with Puritan analytic modes.[23] Bodily activity, within an ecology of liturgical objects, the whole environs of worship, was seen to shape pious habits of mind in particular directions. Accordingly, ceremonialists denounced the emphasis on preaching facilitated by the prominence of the pulpit, just as Puritans decried transformation of the communion table into an altar,— a material struggle manifested even in the physical design of parish churches for two centuries after the Civil War.[24] In both cases, a physical setting accommodates a liturgical discipline, including both practice and objects, in which theological positions (stressing a mediated sacrament or universal access to scripture) link directly to practical ecclesiological and political concerns (whether communion might be received seated or whether preachers might extemporaneously speak beyond their political authority) and to mundane but psychologically powerful contingencies that could undermine parishioners' beliefs (whether the altar might chance to be profaned by use as an ordinary table). Those concerns are therefore expressed not strictly doctrinally or in terms of the objects' symbolic potential, but in terms of the objects—altar and pulpit—themselves. These *things*, in their spatial, auditory and physical possibilities, crucially facilitate opposing spiritual modes; they are not simply the requisite furnishings or signs of underlying belief.

Consequently, the Puritan position condemning mindless, rote popish ritual may neatly be set alongside the ceremonialist estimation of Puritan sermonizing; both demand

[23] The quotation is offered, in part, in Lake, "Laudian Style," 165. But see also the expanded context in Foulke Robartes, *God's Holy House and Service* (London:1639), 2-3; 61-2.
[24] Nigel Yates, *Buildings Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches, 1600-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

liturgical supports for conscious education of the laity, as opposed to mechanical attendance. In fact, far from defining a distinctive Laudian style opposed to nonconformist austerity or slackness, the ceremonialist charge against preaching and pulpit closely mimics the logic of early nonconformist complaints against the Elizabethan church: that reformed Christianity risks a return to automatic behaviors that inhibit self-transformation—in this case by nonconformists passively auditing sermons while neglecting the deliberate behaviors, prayer and reverent ceremony, characteristic of an engaged and present mind. Lake's exemplar, Foulke Robartes, thus condemns Puritanism for all activities—whether zealous displays of prayer or asceticism or passive attendance—that are taken as beneficial in and of themselves, without reference to conscious and sustained commitment to duty:

> If a man thinke that though he neglect the true duties of godlinesse, he is yet a godly man; because he is very exact in all the gestures of outward reverence in God's worship: I parallel that man with an other sect of hypocrites, whose whole godlinesse consisteth, in going to some selected Church, and in being present where a Sermon is: though in the meane time, they learne nothing and practice as little of true godlinesse.[25]

Both Puritan modes amount to fetishism, in contrast to Laudian ceremony, which Robartes endorses not for its own sake, but as a vital support for pious training of the soul within. Both tendencies of English Protestantism, toward the visible and the gathered church, availed themselves of the same deep discourse regarding the material elements

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[25] Robartes, *God's Holy House and Service*, 68.

and practices of worshipful life; indeed Robartes' charges employ the same logic as attacks on Laudianism's own affinity for "gestures of outward reverence." Lake therefore crucially notes that for Laudians the outward act "served both to express and to inculcate various spiritual qualities or habits of mind." But his formulation that lay piety could be equated with "mere assiduous attendance at and participation in the services of the established Church" or "puppet-like obedience" runs directly counter to Robartes's explicit emphasis on genuine internal change as opposed to rote activity, and obscures a common disdain for "mere" ceremony of any sort.

The well-known doctrinal/theological touchstone here is of course the Pauline notion of edification, seen from two points of view, as inculcating decency and order in the soul, and as participation in the living church. But a common acute awareness of the object-world's tendency to generate ideological investments binds this familiar opposition. Sectarians grasped rival artifactual cultures expansively, in terms of interlocking objects and praxes that conditioned a given spiritual habitus. More broadly, we might say that writers across a spectrum of beliefs developed analyses directed at cultural artifacts as embodying—actually crystallizing or petrifying— religious logics that in turn territorialized authorized users of those material infrastructures. In that sense, the tenor of English anti-Catholicism, striking many scholars and observers over time as variously out of proportion, can be understood in the light of the sense that Catholicism persists even less in its adherents than it does in its stubborn material residues—including the very parish churches in which English Protestants worshipped. As long as spaces, objects, and physical habits remain, so, too, will traces of hated corruption of doctrine.

Similarly, nonconformity's *ad hoc* conventicles were seen not merely as spaces for secreting illicit belief, but as physically generating—mutating and evolving—belief itself.

Maladapted Subjects: The Insufficiency of the Object

Similarities between contemporary historiographic method and Protestant discourse contemporaneous with the Reformation can help highlight the ways English subjects appraised material culture in a religious language calibrated for that purpose. Artifacts fell under severe scrutiny for their implications in regimes that could shape a religious disposition co-extensive with everyday activities. With this observation we supplement the historian's analytic of religious style with a sense that Reformation liturgical disputes were *already* conditioned on just such a hermeneutic—what is, as style, potentially dismissed as almost anterior to dogma is in fact its physical correlate. Because it had a clear view of this correlation, Protestant culture was particularly invested in its mental furniture and, by extension, in the environment's spiritual impact.

But I wish to push the notion of liturgical—and cultural—style further: When we speak of a religious style, habitus, or subculture, our thinking remains drawn to notions of enculturation, inscription in power relations, or, less stringently, the mutually reinforcing texts and institutions scrutinized in the best practices of finely-tuned historical contextualism. Yet English sectarian texts, for all their interest in objects' formative power, insist also on the *failure* of cultural conditioning, as evidenced by psychic, affective—and ultimately spiritual—costs of investment in cultural objects. The basic Reformation critique of the Roman Church remains the paradigmatic instance. Far from

asserting that Roman Catholic subjects are harmoniously, or even repressively, inscribed into a misguided ritual belief system, Protestant tropes depict Catholic subjects held in place by deep ambivalence, by a strictly neurotic attachment, and even resistance to, the sacramental economy of rites, works and objects.

This analysis of Catholicism as the ritualistic religion *par excellence* underwrites the most fundamental Reformation-era critiques following Luther's re-conceptualization of *Romans* I: 17 as affirming justification by faith over good works. The emphasis on faith implies an concomitant account of unreformed Catholicism as imposition of an elaborate symbolic network of religious objects, rituals and prescribed behaviors, which nonetheless fails to provide a subjective experience of justification—a technology that has become an empty form, purportedly without spiritual content.

More than this, it is precisely the inadequacy of these object-practices (this orientation to outward practice rather than to a state of soul) to assure a sense of salvation or full membership in God's communion that *secures* the subject's investment in the sacramental economy. The more the subject fails, the more desperate he is to conform. Conversely, the more the subject strives, the more alienated he becomes. Early English reformers consequently reconceived of their Catholic past in these terms, borrowed from Luther's account of the Gospels as a threat afflicting him with a bad conscience even as he redoubled his efforts to live righteously. In the words of one evangelical: "How we ran from post to pillar, from stock to stone, from idol to idol, from place to place, to seek remission of our sins. … How were we bewitched to believe, that in observing the pope's

ceremonies there was everlasting salvation, and in neglecting them eternal damnation."[26] In contrast, Protestant faith meant a saving grace that dispelled guilt unassuaged by immoderate religious devotion or self-mortification.

This baseline theological narrative may also be expressed in terms of the materialist hermeneutic I am targeting here: Protestant discourse furnishes, in one moment, a language for the material social machinery that promises adequation of the historical subject to his milieu; in this sense, one's belief is external and conditioned by a network of prescribed object-practices acting as master signifiers within the social order. They saw subjects as, in Althusserian terms, interpellated by an ideological apparatus. Catholic sacramental structure therefore furnishes them with an exemplary instance of just such a material culture or style deployed to inculcate the habits of belief and hence with a domain of experience that may need to be managed in new ways. Using this insight, English reformers emphasized the edifying power of ritual and everyday practice, as well as their potential for harm.

But Protestant texts depend also upon a second insight: that custom gains its unconscious power by catching subjects in a relation of desire (as Lacan would use the term), in which habituation is identified as a by-product of the social order's inability fully to contain or satisfy the subject. The array of cultural objects, in this sense, fascinates by virtue of its failure to grant the subject what it promises, or the subject's proximity to his own resistance. Protestant texts thereby posit a decidedly more complex

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[26] Peter Marshall, "Evangelical Conversion in the Reign of Henry VIII," in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (New York: Cambridge, 2002), 30.

relation to the object world than that proposed in recent models, one involving ambivalence, obsession, and alienation. Bluntly, recent historiography sees religious discourse as coextensive with cultural values and belief, underwriting preferences for cultural objects, and objects as the environing conditions of largely complimentary ideologies. Instead, in these Reformation-era examples, religious discourse often functions in a meta-critical capacity to describe belief itself as unconsciously structured around what cultural objects ultimately deny the subject, or force him to repress. The subject is therefore not positively conditioned and subjectivized by the object, but by the gap between the object's promise of social place and its real status as a mindless injunction supported by a collective fiction/fantasy.

In this sense, the object (the pew, the pulpit, the liturgy…) acts not just a Foucauldian disciplinary machine or an Althusserian ideological apparatus, but rather becomes, as I have hinted, the Lacanian Thing: an "object a" or signifier in the dominant symbolic order of a community around which an individual's desire is formed—not harmoniously, but in the vexed attempt to remedy a constitutive lack in the *Other*, some state of affairs that is not in the subject's present.[27] The subject relates to social objects in libidinal/affective terms, as imagined remedies to his deficiency. In Lacan's less existentialist formulation, "there is no big Other,"—no guarantee of the consistency of

[27] The most familiar recent attempt to articulate the interlocking of belief and material practice in these Lacanian terms is Slavoj Žižek's critique of the Althusserian model of ideology. As his project insists, ideological belief consists in subjecting oneself to automatic social behaviors and rituals. These unconscious coordinates of the subject's commitment to the social "big Other," far from opposing true, inner belief, are its positive condition. See especially Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (New York: Verso, 1991) and *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1999).

the social symbolic in an absolutely secure existence of satisfaction, and no signifier for what the subject truly seeks. Good works and penance remain, ineluctably, just a dead set of rituals that never offer fulfillment; but they also serve to deflect scrutiny, to transfer belief by fooling witnesses, real or perceived, thought to believe more fully than the subject.

In this sense, Roman Church practice in these texts stands in for a typical, not an exceptional, social form—a representative instance of the lure of cultural objects and their capacity to disappoint and punish. Its particular failure rests, allegedly, in representing religion, a realm of struggle for self-mastery, in terms calibrated to demand simple obedience to the network of objects, the sacramental economy. English Protestantism's counterpoint to that assumption, its cognitivist concern with devotion as an internal conscious state, takes aim at this automatic belief structure, locating piety instead in an introspective gap between practical activity and self-representation.[28]

This account of a subject's relation to the Roman Church-as-Thing clarifies the formal roots of two emblematic complaints regarding Catholicism by reformers. First, Catholicism encourages, in the Protestant view, an overzealous and hopeless pursuit of individual acts that cannot properly confer a sense of justification. Second, and perhaps more familiar, is the charge that Catholic practice that is supposed to correlate with feelings of justification actually countenances purely superficial and externalized forms of penance—indulgences and pardons or confession—that permit a speedy return to

[28] This is not to suggest that all Protestant texts contain this specific proposition—rather, Protestant discourse, in all its variety and conflict is structured around the introduction of the cognitivist demand, which produces—as I will discuss below— a persistent tension between polarities of fetishism and self-authorizing revelation.

private sin—a quick fix rather than a true change of heart.[29] The subject will use the form to reinforce or guarantee the state of his soul, rather than to interrogate that soul directly. A merely rhetorical analysis of these narratives thus might well deconstruct English Protestant prejudices along these lines, revealing apparently mutually exclusive accusations, indicative of an unfalsifiable set of biases: the Catholic is crazed with ostentatious religion; the Catholic is careless about religion, confesses his sin or purchases indulgences, and happily goes back to his vices. Both charges, however, stem from the same structural account of religion expressed, in the Protestant view, as pure performance through signifying forms, without spiritual content.

The notion of a "Catholic" subject, then, the butt of English stereotypes as the passive victim of arbitrary government or the obsessive ritualist, stems not strictly from rhetorical-social construction (othering; narrative tropes) but from an analysis of the

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[29] The latter charge's longevity can be measured by George Orwell's dry comments apropos of one of Graham Greene's many afflicted Catholic characters: "If he really felt that adultery is mortal sin, he would stop committing it. … If he believed in Hell, he would not risk going there." Indeed, Greene's rather irritating novels of Catholic faith conveniently illustrate the dynamic here: In *The End of the Affair* (1951), Sarah Miles abruptly ends her adulterous affair during the London blitz after pledging to God that she will return to the Church if only He will spare her lover from death during a German bombing raid. *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) finds protagonist Major Scobie, out of a misplaced sense of pity and guilt, continuing an adulterous affair while attempting to shield his wife—which ultimately leads him to compound his error by taking communion while in a state of sin. Out of a sense of his own unworthiness, Scobie commits the sin of suicide. On the one hand, then, one finds a profound connection to the purely formal aspect of obedience: Sarah Miles expresses her deep love precisely by obeying the formal stricture not to see her lover. On the other hand, one finds a certainty that mere formal obedience cannot express the true religious self: the sinner Scobie is led further into sin exactly out of his own acute sense of guilt and duty; the sinner who feels subjectively unworthy of grace and cannot objectively obey has the sensibility of the saint. Greene's unsatisfying gambit is to adduce these seeming paradoxes, the impossible absurdity of these conundrums (love expressed as rejection, saint as sinner), as proof of the profound and sacred character of the religious life. He misrecognizes his own perceptive analysis of paradox as a constituent quality of faith itself, rather than a quality contingent on a Catholic faith-structure organized around symbolic obedience, rather than cognitive activity. This is not to say that Greene's presentation of Catholicism is not one he could defend; if Orwell's complaint is insensitive to Catholicism, it is so simply to the readiness of the Catholic to admit that membership in the institutions of the Church is exactly what is at stake. See George Orwell, "The Sanctified Sinner," *The New Yorker*, July 17 1948, 61-3.

subject in relation to his object world—not only his habituation to the ideological work of the object, but in his evasion of challenges to it, and in its inherent failure to include his deepest desires. In this estimation, the Catholic subject is formed not (only) in conformity with his objects, but in a neurotic and hopeless relation to them or—just as undesirable—evades them with rote performance while seeing through the dead gaze of the social Other—at benefit to his peace of mind, but at a cost to his soul. In this sense, the subject adopts ritual, socially sanctioned norms, as a means of keeping "real" belief at a remove, handed off, as it were, to the social Other, which believes for him. Put another way, the apparently cynically-preforming subject remains just as fetishistically bound as the zealot, but through his disavowal.

It is critical to note that this explanatory strategy is not confined to the Catholic/Protestant divide. The same analytic, which locates belief in relation to psychological objects, may also be found in familiar English conventions regarding so-called Puritan character, typified by the gloomy ascetic, the hysterical enthusiast, or the hypocritical busybody. [30] These prejudicial conventions derive from consistent claims about the way objects condition—and fail to condition—subjects. A key distinction, however, lies in the sense that the Puritan liturgical apparatus and, more broadly, the subjectively-defined godly community—unlike Catholicism's external works—encourages a self-aggrandizing sense of inner spirit, authorized by charismatic preaching and the like and by the perceived neglect of official church public performance. But the

[30] Patrick Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1989). Collinson's remarks on this subject are invaluable.

same object-logic is evident in the—again familiar—claim that Puritan culture encourages despairing self-recrimination in a somewhat Catholic vein—the characteristic problem, in William Perkins's words, "that a man may seem both unto himself and to the Church of God to be a true professor of the Gospel, and yet indeed be none."[31] This psychic symptom of failure fully to inhabit one's ideal is caused not by the need to perform endless duties under the eye of a universal church, but, in a kind of inversion, by the failure to permit any commonly recognized external duty to signify the limit of responsibility and an end to self-criticism.

This quintessentially Puritan neurosis stems from its own psychic insight—inasmuch as self-examination means suspicion that in renouncing enjoyment (including the satisfaction of cleansing one's self with works) in favor of godly introspection, I leave myself open to grandiosely enjoying my sense of sanctity and asceticism.[32] To a critic, that internal self-policing potentially gives rise to projection of negative impulses on one's neighbors, and a hypocritical self-justifying sense that one's actions do not matter, so long as one is consumed with the question of inner sanctity.[33] The critic finds the Puritan, like the Catholic subject, at once a wretched slave to his impossible drive toward

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[31] William Perkins, " A Treatise Tending Unto a Declaration Whether a Man Be in the Estate of Damnation or in the Estate of Grace," (London:1590).

[32] Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 158-68.

[33] A common formulation seen, for example, in John Wilson's play, *The Cheats* (1664), in which Scruple, a nonconformist minister, assures a married woman that she might satisfy her appetite for adultery, "provided always she have no intention of sin." See also the dialectical presentation of Puritan desire in W.H., *The Puritan Convert, Not to Prelatick Protestantism and yet to Prelatick Protestantism* (London:1676). Here the Puritan is described as wracked with guilt and repressed desire, which issues in paranoid jealousy of others, from which he find shelter in the notion of imputed righteousness, which permits him hypocritically to engage in illicit behavior, which issues in a further paranoid resentment of outward ceremonies and devotion.

satisfaction/grace, and also liable to neglect his Christian duty even as he chastises his fellows . This hypothetical Puritan lacks the pacifying effect of collective social institutions, not only out of his refusal to identify with the Church of England as universal arbiter, but also out of the instability of his connection to his own milieu. He never trades his desire to realize his ideal for integration of a stable sublimating social structure, never anchors/submits himself to mere public duty. He thereby regards his neighbors in specular or mimetic terms, as relative points of comparison to be judged abstractly and inwardly by his own defensive standard—as doubles, or rivals with unacceptable dispositions from whom he may be forced to schism.

In short, we can perceive an important and logically consistent spiritual hermeneutic enacted in the long Reformation neither by theological doctrine per se, nor by the broad cultural norming we might expect as a subcultural styles confront, domesticate or demonize foreign liturgical-social material through narrative webs and so forth. Important analyses of competing sects don't merely enumerate false beliefs and condemn rejected objects as their trappings; nor need they be read primarily, as recent historiography suggests, as but one expression of cultural tradition and ideology among others. Neither the tenets of faith nor the predilections of culture can sufficiently account for an English religious tradition that manifestly explored belief styles as psychic—ultimately ethical-spiritual—states conditioned by material interactions. Instead, exploring how sects interpreted objects shows a much more practical set of problems that may have driven individuals into schism.

The point here is not to translate early modern discourse into psychoanalytic terms (still less to rehearse arguments about the applicability of psychoanalysis to historical data), but rather, by way of judicious application of Lacanian strategies for understanding how individual psyches related to hegemonic discourses, to emphasize the way Protestant materialist hermeneutics aspired to a form of object relations psychology: objects were linked not simply to doctrine, nor even to indoctrination, but to particular psychic-spiritual states of individuals—to situated believers, not just sectarian theologies. This analytic takes aim at pathologies manifest in believers and in specific sects that are, nonetheless, part of ideology's normal functioning. In an obvious sense, this formulation reiterates Enlightenment-style accounts of Reformation as ideological critique, but with a fundamental difference. Rather than assert Reformation as a project aimed at dispelling false consciousness—mystification, mindless ritual, priestcraft—we discern texts vitally concerned with ideology's very ineradicability, because of its material interpellations, its stubborn clinging to social objects and its return even in disavowal and self-criticism. Reformation in this sense reveals itself as an ongoing critical approach to states of being in the world, as opposed to a stable and proper practice undertaken once error has been cleared. Further, acknowledging these textual strategies confutes once-standard accounts of individualism—Puritan or Protestant—as supposed tonic to ideological illusion, and suggest not a Reformation theory of individual consciousness, but a Reformation, like its modern psychoanalytic analogue, interested in the ubiquitous collective, embodied in objects.

What I am tracing here as the real Protestant interpretive intervention into material culture is therefore both ethical and epistemological: Devotional activities involving libidinal relations to cultural objects potentially represent a sub-ethical commitment to godly activity, secured by a fantasmatic relation to reality. Further, faux-pious commitment to arbitrary social forms, instead of conscious mastery of techniques (*technés*) for developing the soul is psychically untenable, empirically associated with immiserating or antisocial behaviors. Edward Fisher's Puritan text, *The Marrowe of Modern Divinity* (1646), for example, clearly locates the spiritual defect in legalist adherence to the law of works in a psychic dynamic related to this kind of thought about cultural objects:

> Though a man before he believe God's love to him in Christ, may have a great measure of legall humiliation, compunction, sorrow and griefe, and be brought down (as it were) to the very gate of hell, and feele the very flashings of hell fire in his conscience for his sins; yet is it not because hee hath thereby offended God, but rather because he hath thereby offended himself, that is, because hee hath thereby brought himselfe into the danger of eternal death and condemnation.[34]

Precisianism of this sort leads to self-condemnation, a purely psychological guilt effect, rather than true abasement before God. On a philosophical level, Fisher's reasoning is, we might say, flawlessly Kantian: only a pure motive of duty, detached from pathological

[34] Edward Fisher, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity Touching Both the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace* (London:1646), 174.

objects of desire, can count ethically as love of God and the Law (of works).[35] He thus invokes the characteristic Puritan problematic to state his problem: how to securely identify one's motives. Glossed another way: The Law's very efficacy rests in the inevitable emergence of this question of motive, in the relentless potential for guilt. Thus, the problem is not merely how to distinguish selfish motives from godly ones, but rather how to change one's psychic relation to the Law so that right perception of one's state of being is assured. Fisher's immediate theological answer is, in its own right, psychodynamic in nature. He reminds his reader that knowledge that God has, by love and grace, released man from the covenant of works can secure for man respect for the Law as such, as a concrete set of principles in the world, rather than as a psychic object. Consciously mastering objects and knowingly applying spiritual principles—that is, realizing the spirit rather than, pathologically, the letter of the Law, depends first upon sublating the notion of God as simply the personification of cultural imperatives, as the Thing itself.

But in more social terms, the problem for such Protestant explanation remains one of individual ideological inscription into a dead, non-reforming collective—to which may be opposed a more lively image of salvation in an interpretive community, devoted to conscious institution-building and communal deliberation about spiritual goals and desires; a living, evolving communal spirit, in other words, that supersedes mere Law. For Fisher, as is evident in his text, severe Presbyterian legalism appears much in the same light as would crypto-Catholic conformist practice; this static structure, he

[35] Law, in other words, as obedience to social forms, psychological objects.

indicates, has its mere dialectical opposite in the figure of the antinomian ("they that can talke like believers, and yet do not walke like believers"), who likewise denies responsibility to a community of fellows in the real world.[36]

Crucially, that is, Fisher locates within generically Puritan practice itself both the psychic dynamic associated most generally with Catholicism (and located by Puritans within conformity, and by Independents within Presbyterianism) as exemplary of a religion of ritual (Law/works) *and* the tendency toward antisocial solipsism generally directed at Puritanism as a whole. The point here is that Fisher's text does not merely assign these variant tendencies to particular doctrines or styles, depending upon their particular theological system. Instead, he identifies them as constituent features/dangers of object practice (including his own) in general—which tends to perform ideologically in these two directions, one internal and one relating to objective practice.

We see, then, a general tendency of this Protestant explanatory logic to define the self and relate to other sects in relative terms, based upon a common analytic of the object's ideological work, not as nuanced against a norm—almost a deductive, rather than an inductive analysis. Thus I claim here the need to see the sectarian field not only in terms of unique, or even interacting, theological and cultural positions, but also as structurally-related positions that sought variously to accomplish ostensibly non-pathological or ideological forms of social binding around the cultural Thing: Opposing,

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[36] As I have indicated, the characteristic Puritan refusal to Oedipalize oneself within a universal social structure strictly relates the antinomian to the legalist. Fisher's own tendencies, in spite of his formulation here, are arguably rather antinomian. See David R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

for example, elite authority and its practices with local parish traditions, or opposing solipsistic inner light with the national body and public duty—or, in Fisher's case, opposing the solipsistic legalist and antinomian with a community of mutual critique.[37] This interpretive stance is less revolutionary (oppositional, in the Hegelian sense) than it is reforming, aimed at improving the practice of Christian doctrine.

Fisher's *A Touch-Stone for a Communicant* (1647) confirms this kind of reading. It imagines a would-be communicant, Simon, who claims to be versed in Christian doctrine, but who is shown by his minister-interlocutor to be deficient in humility as compared to his (mildly) sinning but more authentically pious neighbor, whom Simon deplores. Fisher's lesson, beyond the theological corrective against prideful legalism, may be found in the text's dialogic structure itself: the Protestant requires examination by his spiritual peers within a communion of believers. Simon's devotional practice is thereby revealed as psychically structured around his own covert sense of superiority and hence his individualism—the "stain of enjoyment" on his ostensible renunciations in favor of duty, for which he must be made to take responsibility like the less formally pious neighbor does.[38] Certainly we may put institutional predilections in terms of cultural forms, like the visible or invisible church, but speaking in terms of textual hermeneutics, we can see how various formulations were justified also in terms of objects—with institutional forms as means of intervening between the subject and his psychic commitments. The broader discussion of institutional structures may be seen

[37] See Edward Fisher, *A Touch-Stone for a Communicant* (London:1647). It goes without saying that Fisher's own formulation remains open to similar critiques from different relative positions.
[38] Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 239.

hand in hand with the liturgical disputes that contain so much of the content/volume of sectarian argument, but which seem, in a certain sense, also strangely narrow unless we grasp the larger place of the analytic of the object.

On the Psychological *Via Media*

The Protestant controversialist (or modern psychoanalyst) whose perspective I am arguing for might first complain, then, regarding the usual cultural materialist analysis of religious subgroups, that subjects are not rhetorically or ideologically inscribed: they remain at a remove of desire from their objects; they are *not* simply what they own or do. But his second, more serious complaint ought to be that subjects, by virtue of not being fully inscribed, are also positively involved in a fantasy structure (a Lacanian *imaginary*, if you will), some almost-inevitably neurotic—because it attracts and repulses at the same time—commitment to the social field.[39]

I am in this arguing for the era's perception of ideology as externalized in *things*—as the unconscious fantasy that permeates and structures reality itself—which underwrites the severe reactions to spiritual technologies said to evoke pathological rather than devotional states of mind. In the post-Reformation, in a common analytic of conscious grace conditioned by salutary object practice resolves into fear of public fetishistic ritual and solipsistic neglect of common worship and public duty—a world seeking balance between ideologues and the things of the world. Sectarian texts locate

[39] For a version of this argument as a critique of Foucauldian historicism, see Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994).

these dialectically-related pitfalls in object-practice itself, rather than associating them with particular world views along conformist-"heart religion" or visible-invisible Church binaries. Sects are not only identified by dogmas, but also by how their dogmas are practiced. Referencing the primitive church's edifying purity, conformists and nonconformists alike condemned on the one hand, automatic behaviors involving rote duty and, on the other, innovating practice that led to self-involved schism from the spiritual community. It is natural, therefore, to find this theoretical splitting mirrored *within* constituencies on either side of the Hot Protestant-Ceremonialist divide as sects sought to triangulate between negative poles—and managed to ascribe both qualities to their opponents.[40] These tendencies are, in other words, not distinguished as cultural binaries or oppositions; they are identified as mutually implicated symptomal relations to objects of ideology in any cultural system.

But inasmuch as Protestant logic of Reformation cognized these problems, it also formulated prescriptions for the salutary use of objects, also working out of a structural-psychic analytic to set all Reform off from Catholicism. The real aim here is a conscious, educated laity involved in public and communal mastering of—as opposed to cynical obedience or consuming enthrallment to—the social symbolic. The goal was to formulate a conscious community beyond the sub-ethical realm of neurotic cultural investment, to alter the psychic relation to social practice, rather than simply mint a novel practice prone to the same forms of false piety (prone, that is, to subordinating the ethical

[40] I assert here, that is, a common *analytic* about social practice, in addition to common *thematics* regarding the doctrine of "faith versus works" or similar formulations.

to the contingently social). From this perspective we find, across the religious spectrum, particular condemnation of lukewarm pragmatic solutions that embrace cognitively naive compromises between liturgical-cultural extremes.

Indeed: It is a recurrent commonplace (Puritan, Methodist, Victorian …) that official Anglicanism, at least as constructed or projected by critics, risks an unsatisfying pragmatic compromise, a kind of desiccated virtue ethics coupled with a disenchanted but excessive pseudo-Catholic ceremonialism. This, allegedly, the result of a merely expedient, strategic attempt to find a middle way between Catholic ceremony and Calvinist enthusiasm—neither quite committed to ritual objects and doctrine, nor democratically-affectively inclined. Similarly, against dissenting groups one finds stereotypes and charges of antinomian zeal and austere precisianism, but coupled with an even dimmer view of baroque and dogmatic attempts to resolve this impossible split. That is, the ultimate negative stereotype of the predestinarian is neither the ranter nor the ascetic busybody, but the dark and obscure apologist, endlessly glossing or claiming to resolve the contradictions of a bleak, nonsensical doctrine. The point—particularly with respect to Anglicanism—is that the oft-cited middle way of moderation in the sense of classical virtue between two extremes, a kind of idolatrous practice itself, was also the subject of the most withering analyses—and in fact constituted an even greater objection than collapse into either crypto-papist fetishism or enthusiasm.

The reading I am suggesting here thus has long-standing implications for our understanding of the position of religious rhetoric in Protestant thought. The nature of triangulation between these limit cases, arguably characteristic of the English Church, for

instance, therefore requires some new thought, in light of Protestant discourse that frowned on strategic moderation as an insufficient solution to a structural problem: neither the Law (of works/prescribed objects) nor its repressed can condition true faith and piety. Anglicanism's own defense of this ideal—as distinct from the tepid compromise attacked by critics—in fact often insists explicitly on a cognitive standpoint beyond moderation as "style." Along these lines we can see, in certain positions regarding *adiaphora*, for example, solutions to the twin problems of the fetish object and solipsistic schism. We can, from this perspective, perhaps restore a certain luster to various Anglican apologetics as theories of the object, part and parcel of English religion's liturgical focus.

The church of course held, with perfect logical consistency and institutional bias, that it could dictate uniform liturgical praxes to edify and prevent schism, while maintaining that it in no way held those praxes to be soteriologically necessary. Still, one understands nonconformist objections that the position is at best disingenuous or an outright contradiction ("If it be a thing indifferent, why is it then so rigidly imposed, as a thing of absolute necessity to be observed?") and at worst an invitation to idolatry ("Seem it never so pious and specious to mans carnall fancie, yet being idolatrous … it is but pious idolatry, or idolatrous piety; and God abhorreth that piety").[41]

What we might re-emphasize in the more or less familiar Anglican position, is that the arbitrariness of the prescribed object practice is precisely the point. Rather than a somewhat underhanded position, designed to justify theologically a passionate

[41] Henry Burton, *Jesu-Worship Confuted* (London:1660), 6.

commitment to a particular "moderate" Anglican style (in other words, as was charged, to remove the theological taint of idolatry from a privileged ceremonial practice), the formula endorses object-practices not for their own sake, but, quite the contrary, by virtue of their ultimately arbitrary and indifferent nature—for the sake of conscious formal obedience to a national civic ethic as opposed to fetishistic investment in a multiplicity of local forms. This is not quite the same as demanding interpellation in some ideal Anglican structure so much as it represents, in theoretical terms, the ideal as conscious freedom from passionate attachment to any fetishistic or merely mechanical set of rites, in favor of universal communal participation in a formally outlined state. In other words, conformity to an ultimately arbitrary, in the sense of manifestly socially and historically contingent, and strictly formal set of rules is seen partly as the psychic guarantee of freedom from merely pathological activity, rather than conformity or the rites of Anglicanism as ideal in and of themselves.[42] A certain lack of passion is, in this sense, regarded as a salutary psychic and spiritual virtue, not a liability—the individual believer must know experience, not be swept up into it.

In a way, this formulation of the position of a proper Protestant believer courts the hypothetically Catholic problem of paying hypocritical lip service to a set of rites in place of spiritual development—but with a crucial difference. While the Roman Catholic sacramental structure is alleged to imply (mere) obedience as both necessary and

[42] This is not to say that edification was not held to be important—simply that edifying practices were not seen as unique or timeless or fully realizable (as in purification of the reformed church's rites) and that accession to formal uniformity and conformity (acting in unison, *etc.*) was itself part of beauty and edification. Arbitraryness, in the sense of social contingency obviously does not imply practices selected capriciously.

sufficient for grace, the Anglican analysis touts obedience as simply the guarantor of participation in the community whose ethical judgments supercede any punishing regimen of idealized devotional practice. This set of consciously mastered activities was meant to teach the subject more generally to apply not the rote letter but also the active principles of the Law—that is, to master the logic of analysis even to the theoretical point of violating its strict letter in favor of its spirit (at least to the point of accepting the State's right to set indifferent practice) while accepting fellow citizens as spiritual peers. Conformity, in these terms, teaches membership in a deliberative national Protestant community whose public self-reflexivity replaces passionate subjective rituals and their pitfalls with a conscious free-floating and deliberative ethics, a state of mind rather than set activities.

Thus, the hypothetical Catholic subject who is being reformed by this Protestant optic, while allegedly engaged in a mechanical sort of obedience (or precisely because he is), is the one who "really believes" in the efficacy of ritual. While engaged in symbolic ritual as the material support for a fantasy structure, it is the Catholic subject who, either through obsessive-fetishistic behavior, or through fetishistic denial (passing off belief to the Other) clings to the efficacy of the rite/object in the Lacanian Real—thus mistakenly taking such material trappings of belief as more than a social contract, as *needed* for salvation, a magical act, *etc*.[43] A merely legislated ceremony, on the other hand, makes no claim to being (unlike neurotic abstention from acts, or Catholic rites) directly efficacious, as Robartes explains:

[43] On the idea of belief through the other, see Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 107-8.

> If we held, that some prayers were not acceptable to God: except that they were made precisely in this or that place: Or if we reputed the Supper of the Lord to be uneffectual, if it be not received in the Chancell: then here were superstition. But when we do things not upon any such fancy: but in obedience and conformity to discipline and order, for decency and comelynesse; we are no way to be, either taxed or suspected, for Superstition.[44]

The analysis specifically rejects the charge of superstition for Protestant ritual, since the rituals, however desirable, are in no way equated with a real function apart from their social-symbolic one; this manifestly arbitrary and communal function is denied the function of unconscious ideology. Overall, Protestant reform levels the charge that true Christians need to participate body and mind in their faith, not disassociate the two.

Exactly this analysis also underwrites charges exchanged between Protestant subgroups, as I have suggested with the examples above. Tellingly, one finds relatively few accusations that a given object-practice is inherently forbidden by God/superstitious; instead, the typical reformist critique aims at an the underlying psychic dynamic of fixation on the object, which is generally said to *lead* to idolatry, in the specific sense of unconscious pathological devotion to the object rather than its spiritual referent.[45] Against crude notions of Puritans as fundamentalist iconoclasts, that is, one finds that their charges of lapses into papism rest on this more sophisticated analysis. They tend to avoid rhetoric concerning directly idolatrous acts, in favor of a social analysis, regarding

[44] Robartes, *God's Holy House and Service*, 43.

[45] See, for example, Burton, *Jesu-Worship Confuted*. Of course, this was in a sense the official Roman Church position as well, as reformers acknowledged in their sense that the church had not so much advocated idolatry as abdicated its responsibility to regulate local practices.

the education of the populace, the tainting of practices by association with Catholicism's more general errors, and the risks of giving aid and comfort to Catholic recusants and so forth. They, too, seek to talk about Reformed Protestantism as psycho-social, not just doctrinal. Robert Crowley's *Briefe Discourse Concerning the Outwarde Apparell and Ministring Garmentes of the Popishe Church* (1578), for example, links conformist concern with vestimental decency and order to idolatrous images—but strictly by way of analogy, in the sense that even images themselves are not forbidden *qua* images, but by virtue of God's awareness that people fall into error and build up "deificies around things."[46] Crowley's real concern is the ready-to-hand English object and the logic of cultural habituation that scripture warns about —not a scriptural injunction concerning a particular class of objects.

Of course the same logic of object practice could easily be deployed by conformists against their hot Protestant critics. A ceremonialist like Robartes easily turns the tables on Puritans, pointing out that their plain style—crudely, their supposed knee-jerk iconoclasm—in no way immunizes them from superstitious idolatry. On the contrary, one is just as easily bound to an obsessional fixation on abstaining from certain acts, or eschewing certain objects as to espousing them, as the Puritans' typological Catholic did. Superstition inheres not in the object itself, nor only in positive (obsessional) acts, but also in phobic aversion—in the psyche of the believer:

[46] Robert Crowley, *A Briefe Discourse Concerning the Outwarde Apparell and Ministring Garmentes of the Popishe Church* (s.n.:1578).

> The apostle setteth forth the disposition of superstitious people, afraid to touch, taste, or handle, those things in the touching tasting, and handling whereof there is no danger. Of this abstaining superstition I may say as David speakes of some men, they were in great feare, where no fear was. … Superstition is the very foolery of the minds of men, for it is like a scarecrow in the brain, and maketh man afraid of his owne shadow, as he that durst not looke out, for feare the skye should fall.[47]

Fear characterizes the metonymic shift of aversions, the inescapable fear, strictly analogous to unsatisfying Catholic zeal. Robartes simply repeats a longstanding charge that the precisian mindset is, as evidenced by the fervor of adherents, not directed at a reasonable discussion of difference about efficacious style. (Such a dispute in itself, seen as such, need not necessarily have affronted Robartes; indeed the inevitability of such a disagreement is implicit and central to the Anglican ceremonialist position. By virtue of "indifference," it simply falls to the authorities to settle the matter by fiat.)

Instead, the Puritan betrays an unconscious commitment in excess of any pragmatic result; his belief is, we might say, magical:

> As for example: if a man should now abstaine from eating Swineflesh, in a conceit that it doth now defile or make a man a sinner, This were plain Superstition. So if in time of Lent, or on any of the days upon the which we are commanded by Law to abstaine from eating flesh, a man should imagine now, that it is a sinne to eate flesh, not so much in regard of the wholesome Lawes of

[47] Robartes, *God's Holy House and Service*, 37-8.

> the State and Church, which do indeed bind the conscience … as in a conceit, that flesh as it is flesh, eaten on such a day, hath a special power to defile or make a man a sinner: this also were mere Superstition. … And as, thus the rule holdeth in the use of the Creatures of God; so doth it also in the actions of men which are in themselves indifferent, neither good nor bad: but as they be applied. As for example, to kneele, to bow, to stand.[48]

The contrast here is between conscious acts of devotion (conscious because their necessity has been explicitly evacuated in favor of mere authority), and unconscious fixation on an ideal perceived to be absolute: the alleged Puritan position, in this estimation, is that there is a right way to act that somehow, out of biblical or divine sanction, transcends the mere social compact and thus becomes its own kind of zealotry. Such a position, that a transcendently right way (as opposed to a legislated way) to do things exposes the purely pathological, rather than moral nature of his concern.[49] And again, it resembles in logical form the arguments leveled against Catholics.

This set of charges has long been noted, but I would contend not entirely understood as pertaining to the psycho-social in the way I am explicating here. Along these lines, controversialists diagnosed Puritan vehemence against alleged idolatry principally in pathological terms, as a function of projection, stemming from their own

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[48] Ibid., 96.

[49] The same argument that the nonconformist is ruled by superstitious fear in avoiding certain rites and enjoining other activities, along with the charge that he *knows* God to be directly pleased or displeased by such acts, may be found in Simon Patrick, *A Friendly Debate Betwixt Two Neighbours, the One a Conformist, the Other a Non-Conformist* (London:1668), 117-20. Whiting quotes Richard Baxter in noting that the work was widely influential. C. E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660-1688* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968), 499.

excessive fears, and not as pertaining to the community of believers. In denouncing ceremony as quasi-Catholic mysticism the Puritan betrays his own investment in exactly that possibility, his tacit implication in a social imaginary that includes magical God-pleasing acts. Indeed, he betrays his desire for Catholic-style enjoyment, the hope for an action (rite or abstention) that could indeed confer satisfaction, and his resentment at those who might obtain it. Ceremony here is invested with the power of the Catholic repressed, as Matthew Parker suggests in his psychologically astute 1566 rebuttal to Puritan objections to priestly vestments:

> This many men thynke very straunge in you, that you stande in greater feare that men wyll beleue rather your apparell then your wordes: your coate, then your preachyng: your outwarde shewe, then your inwarde mynde often opened by speache, and playnelye set before them to perceyue. What do you iudge of Gods people, that they be so muche without sense & vnderstandyng? *You feare the thyng yourselues imagine, and imagine euen what you lyst* [my emphasis].[50]

For Parker, as for Robartes, Puritan fear of a rite with efficacy in the Real marks off the space of superstition—a hardened spiritual practice is as dangerous as any Catholic ritual object might have been to the believer. Here the position gets an additional twist: the Puritan reaction stems from the rite's function for him as a symptom, a cause of phobic aversion and excessive pleasure. The Puritan's supposed interior sanctity is linked directly to his reliance for his identity on the continued social meaning of Catholic symbolic structure. His outward show functions as a sign solely out of a structural

[50] Matthew Parker, *A Briefe Examination* (London:1566).

opposition to Catholic practice, and derives its psychic power from a libidinal investment in that same material system.

To put this chapter, finally, in methodological terms, Foucault's notion of self-care, with which we might provisionally associate the cultural/anthropological turn toward religious styles, identifies theology as the termination of religion as technique and its modern (degradation, implicitly) into bare sets of doctrinal propositions.[51] But with respect to English history, doctrine proves to be stubbornly inextricable from debates about spiritual techniques. It can and must be seen as itself directly concerned with material culture so that the handling of objects in general will be straightforwardly revealing of Protestantism's new optic on the individual.

[51] Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*.

Chapter 2: Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, *Adiaphora* and Folk Psychology

Things Indifferent and Indifference to Things

The account, in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), of religious conflict between the Big-Endians and Little-Endians—sectarians who dispute the proper side on which to break an egg— has an iconic status as a parable about sterile debates over religious dogma and the absurdity of war in God's name. The allegory's logical machinery is obvious enough: Swift compares religious schism to a trivial and irresolvable dispute and ridicules the ways believers argue about matters of no earthly consequence, willfully disregard the plain sense of sacred texts, and rupture violently on the results. Swift, a great anti-modern conservative, seems here an exemplary modern: strangely, in arguing through these partisans, in fact, for liturgical conformity to the state church, Swift seems to produce one of literature's great secular liberal set-pieces.[1]

The same temptation to minimize Swift's religious prejudices has arguably guided accounts of *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) and the appended *A Discourse Concerning Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, as Swift's liturgical fixations have been

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[1] Popular readings that neglect Swift's Anglican orthodoxy are understandable, and perhaps reflect, as well, recent decades when secular modernity's triumph seemed more certain. The undergraduate resource SparkNotes glosses the episode this way: "The egg controversy is ridiculous because there cannot be any right or wrong way to crack an egg, so *it is unreasonable to legislate how people must do it*" [my emphasis]. SparkNotes Editors, "Sparknote on Gulliver's Travels," SparkNotes LLC, http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/gulliver/section3.rhtml. See also Ann Cline Kelly, *Jonathan Swift and Popular Culture: Myth, Media, and the Man* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 184.

overshadowed by his apparent disdain for such concerns as the mark of zealotry. The *Tale*'s central Reformation allegory features, of course, the three brothers—Peter (a Catholic), Jack (a Calvinist/dissenter), and Martin (the orthodox Anglican heir of Luther's magisterial reform)—who are bequeathed coats signifying "the Doctrine and Faith of Christianity" (1:44).[2] Peter's coat, ridiculously adorned, and Jack's, shamefully stripped in protest, artfully distinguish Anglican moderation from the Roman Church's apocrypha and pomp and Puritanism's scriptural fundamentalism and austerity. The supposed transparency of Swift's allegory has led, in some measure, to its neglect; the clothing signifying three major Christianities functions at the expense of its literal referent, the liturgical controversies that significantly defined the Reformation in England, in which the style of clerical vestments was a central issue.[3] This implicit interest in post-Reformation ritual culture has, by and large, either been read so broadly as to be lost in the *Tale's* larger narrative of temperance, or so narrowly as to be a footnote to the text. Indeed, a book-length study of Swift's "vestimental" metaphor makes only passing mention of religious debate or the legacy of the Vestments Controversy of the 1560s, the conflict over priestly garb—specifically the surplice and square cap— that encapsulated divisions about common prayer and ecclesiastical

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[2] Parenthetical references to Swift's texts cite *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis et al., 14 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939-1968) and are given as volume and page number.

[3] Philip Harth noted the tendency to concentrate "upon the simple equations of Peter for Catholicism and Jack for Puritanism" at the expense of the larger religious argument. He makes the related point that the *Tale* does not function as a strict allegory—and argues for the term "parable." Phillip Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of a Tale of a Tub* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 13-14.

authority, liturgical practice, and the very idea of Reformation in the English Church.[4] Yet this "historic bifurcation in English Protestantism" marked the very origins of dissenting culture, a major concern in the *Tale*.[5]

The tendency to look past Swift's apparently contradictory promotion of narrow ceremonial orthodoxy as a tonic to ritual extremism reflects the difficulty of grasping the underlying Anglican position on *adiaphora*, or "things indifferent" — elements of worship deemed inessential for salvation but whose legislation, for the sake of their edifying value, fell to the discretion of the episcopal structure in tandem with civil authority.[6] This "corner-stone of Anglicanism," in Patrick Collinson's words, represents a difficult position between dismissing such matters as a kind of spiritual trivia, and insisting on these visible institutions as the very core of the established church, the neglect of which amounted to a challenge to authority and a schismatic affront to one's fellow Christians.[7]

I want to suggest here that Swift's orthodoxy—and that of the church—seems opaque because we've neglected early modern Protestantism's tendency to regard religious belief as conditioned by interactions with the material object-world. I will argue, in particular, for a kind of inversion of the usual view of Swift's parable in the

[4] Deborah Baker Wyrick, *Jonathan Swift and the Vested Word* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), xvi; 32-3. On the Vestments (or Vestiarian) Controversy, see Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 71-97; Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London: J. Cape, 1979), 167-83; Brett Usher, "The Deanery of Blocking and the Vestiarian Controversy," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52, no. 3 (2001); M.M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).
[5] Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London: J. Cape, 1979), 168.
[6] Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean*.
[7] Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 27.

Tale: instead of representing (implicitly reducing or simplifying) sectarian faiths by their vestimental styles, the *Tale* affirms that it is precisely ritual forms that transmit belief. The clothing and devotional objects that feature so prominently were central to post-Reformation debates in England not only as signs of inner faith or expressions of doctrine, but as actively creating specific kinds of religious subjects. Accordingly, the *Tale* relies on longstanding Protestant critiques of sectarian psyches shaped by these object-practices. Specifically, Catholic sacraments are seen to encourage grandiosity and defensiveness, while Swift links zealous reform's rejection of public ritual to self-deceit and crippling resentment.

This liturgical hermeneutic, as I have already argued, involves a specific psychological insight: that-ritual objects and cultural "things" do not simply enculturate or discipline subjects, but encourage obsessive and antisocial forms of belief that are driven by underlying doubt and insecurity. Accordingly, Swift's intervention in the *Tale* ascribes to his foes vices drawn not from Classical or biblical Christian ethics, but from sectarian rhetorics linking devotional styles to psychological character flaws like knavery and hypocrisy. The *Tale* presents these vices as neurotic formations, attempts to extract pleasure from mentally impoverishing styles of faith. From this perspective, Anglican liturgical moderation reads more coherently as a psychological strategy, an attempt to secure the national church through common praxis without recourse to devotional styles perceived to encourage pathological and spiritually dishonest modes of belief

One goes a long way toward grasping this early modern sensibility by reflecting on the modern sense of hypocrisy, which sees mainly cynical deceit in the failure to

uphold professed beliefs: one is shocked (or gratified) to see the sanctimonious politician caught in a sordid scandal. But the early modern narrative tendency is not merely to decry and expose the puritanical hypocrite, but also immediately to identify Puritan institutions as inevitably *generating* hypocrisy within faith itself, as a complex of enthusiastic grandiosity and gloomy self-loathing.

Charges of crypto-Romanism or enthusiasm therefore served English Protestants as pejoratives that also conveyed specific claims about psychological and spiritual constitutions. Sectarian labels could function, in effect, as shorthand diagnostic terms. Here, rather than condescend to some early modern proto-psychoanalysis, we might observe that the charge of enthusiasm, for example, simply furnishes one term in a religious folk-psychology. By "folk psychology" I intend the everyday semantic relations that form a working theory of human behavior. In Paul Churchland's words:

> The fact is that the average person is able to explain, and even predict, the behavior of other persons with a facility and a success that is remarkable. Such explanations and predictions standardly make reference to the desires, beliefs, fears, intentions, perceptions, and so forth, to which agents are presumed subject. But explanations presuppose laws—rough and ready ones, at least—that connect the explanatory conditions with the behavior explained. The same is true for the making of predictions. … Reassuringly, a rich network of common sense laws can indeed be reconstructed from this quotidian commerce of explanation and anticipation; its principles are familiar homilies; and their sundry functions are transparent. Each of us understands others, as well as we do, because we share a

> tacit command of an integrated body of lore concerning the lawlike relations holding among external circumstances, internal states, and overt behavior.[8]

Rather than say, with Freudian critics, that Swift anticipates a diagnosis of the enthusiast as an obsessive neurotic, we might say that the eighteenth-century English descriptor for an obsessive neurotic is "enthusiast."

In what follows I will first propose that scholarly neglect of the nuances of Anglican liturgical debate has generated an apparently intractable difficulty, an inability to reconcile Swift's authoritarianism and his calls for moderation. Resolving this problem requires us to re-examine Swift's use of post-Reformation commonplaces linking sectarian devotional styles to behavioral traits, an acknowledged focus of the *Tale*. I therefore propose a re-evaluation of the text's genealogy: Swift's predecessors have been read mainly for diagnoses of enthusiast madness derived from medicine or natural philosophy; but their remarks on common prayer and parish ritual traditions may be the more crucial influence. The *Tale's* analysis of Catholic and Puritan devotional

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[8] Paul Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes," in *The Nature of Mind*, ed. David M. Rosenthal (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Despite his useful formulation, the balance of Churchland's article, which argues for the potential supersession of "functionalist" folk psychology by neuroscience, is obviously at odds with the linguistic emphasis of my arguments. Wilhelm Wundt coined the term "folk psychology" to describe something closer to a *mentalité*, world view, or episteme (to use Foucault's term), a shared approach to understanding the world. See Wilhelm Wundt, *Elements of Folk Psychology: Outlines of a Psychological History of the Development of Mankind* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1916). The idea of stereotypes used within a quasi-predictive religious or folk psychology might be compared to Weber's notion of the "ideal type": "Those ideas which govern the behavior of a population of a certain epoch, i.e., which are concretely influential in determining their conduct, can, if a somewhat complicated construct is involved, be formulated precisely only in the form of an ideal type, since empirically it exists in the minds of an indefinite and constantly changing mass of individuals and assumes in their minds the most multifarious nuances of form and content"; Max Weber, "On the Ideal Type," in *Structures, Symbols, and Systems: Readings on Organizational Behavior*, ed. Marshall Meyer (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 45.

“mechanical operations,” reveals a common hardheaded recognition that (religious) belief includes pathological forms of ambivalence regarding piety or cultural norms. Swift’s broader politics may be read as an extension of this psychological insight, as an attempt to posit cultural authority that does not breed zealous antisocial civic and spiritual behavior.

Swift’s Predecessors and Liturgical Psychology

Defenders of a state-sanctioned liturgy who denigrated Catholic pomp while advocating reverence for the space of the church and the institutions of common prayer naturally had a longstanding awareness of the symbolic form’s double-edged potential to discipline and edify. Meric Casaubon, whose *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm* (1655) served as a source for Swift’s *Tale,* justified the established church position by carefully noting even the iconoclast Calvin’s use of the symbolic object in *Of the Necessity of Reformation in, and Before Luther's Time* (1664):

> In civil worldly things, that outward visible Signs and Ceremonies have great power and influence upon men, ordinarily, to beget affection, or reverence; is acknowledged by wisest men and Politicians. … I remember I have read in Calvin, of a certain *Staff*, which was the *Insigne* or proper badge of Supreme Authority, in that Town where he lived. He calleth it *Sacrum baculum*; a *Sacred Staff*; and saith plainly, that the people generally gave so much respect to it, that the very sight of it (when the authority of the persons did not, or could not: so I understand him:) did appease tumults, and prevent slaughters: so that the breaking

> of that *Staff*, in a tumult, which at other times did use to appease tumults, was looked upon, as highest contempt, and rebellion. … If this be the nature of men, in point of *Signs*, and *Ceremonies*, civil: why should not Religious *Signs* and *Ceremonies* (used with moderation, and discretion) be a help to devotion, and a preservation to reverence, as well? [9]

In these terms, Catholic innovation and dissenting iconoclasm appear as extremes between which one might discern a golden mean of reverence without intemperance. Familiarly, as Martin's sartorial restraint suggests, we can see Swift as a proponent of the Anglican *via media,* as intellectually attributed to Thomas Cromwell and Richard Hooker, between alleged superstitious Catholic excess and a zealous Protestantism.[10] We find here the distinct position between Jack's demented and hysterical stripping of tradition and Peter's florid innovations; Swift's imagery directly conveys Archbishop Bramhall's estimation of the English Church in 1660 as "neither garish … nor yet sluttish."[11]

But this formulation of liturgical compromise, too, glosses over the ambiguity, or at least the subtlety, of the state church position. Casaubon's self-defeating example— a bludgeon as an instrument of peace, broken in a "tumult" it is alleged generally to prevent—suggests the contradictory nature of an enforced moderation. Nonconformists

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[9] Meric Casaubon, *Of the Necessity of Reformation in, and before Luther's Time* (London:1664), 152.
[10]Dickens, *English Reformation*, 203; Patrick Collinson, "Sir Nicholas Bacon and the Elizabethan Via Media," *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 2 (1980). It is worth noting that Cromwell's critique of zealous Protestantism in fact contained, in addition to critique of austere jettisoning of "pious customs," a sense of sectarian innovative excess, in "licentious" heresies; that is, the moderate position was generally conceptual, not necessarily tied to triangulating between different iterations of Christianity.
[11] Quoted in Collinson, "Nicholas Bacon," 256.

quite reasonably asked what remained indifferent about ceremonies if they were to be legislated, particularly if instead of encouraging decency and order in worship they tended to promote superstitious practice.[12] An anachronistic shorthand for the contested ground taken by the church following the Elizabethan Settlement, the term *via media* was itself popularized by nineteenth-century Anglican conservatives eager to assert a longstanding high church tradition at the expense of historical struggles to define reform within the English church.[13] Even so, the term's suggestion of a chiefly practical or qualitative compromise unwittingly conveys the dissenting tradition's sense that political expedience resulted in the paradox of a Church of England marred at once by 1) arbitrary quasi-Catholic ritual and authoritarian acts of uniformity and 2) a tepid neglect of doctrine and affective piety. The latter sense of Anglican moderation or toleration of course informs progressive narratives of secularization—in which a liberal Anglicanism is perceived naturally to give way to civic virtue ethics or secular sentimentalism.[14]

Anglican orthodoxy (as much as it can be defined), therefore involves a stubborn apparent contradiction. On the one hand, it employs a devotional disciplinary apparatus, enforcing consensus through liturgical conformity and attacks on competing ritual forms.

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[12] Robert Crowley, *A Briefe Discourse Concerning the Outwarde Apparell and Ministring Garmentes of the Popishe Church* (Emden:1566); Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean*, 61-92.

[13] John Henry Newman, *The Via Media of the Anglican Church: Illustrated in Lectures, Letters and Tracts Written between 1830 and 1841* (New York: Longmans, 1897-1899). For discussion of historiography and the notion of the *via media*, see Diarmid MacCulloch, "The Myth of the English Reformation," *The Journal of British Studies* 30, no. 1 (1991); Tyacke, "Anglican Attitudes: Some Recent Writings on English Religious History, from the Reformation to the Civil War." Verkamp's *Indifferent Mean* makes clear that the notion of a *via media* in the Reformation-era English church was directly related to a theory of *adiaphora*; but he notes that, without specifying the complex debates around the latter term, the idea of a *via media* means "next to nothing" (xiv).

[14] Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780. Vol. I: Whichcote to Wesley*; Crane, "Suggestions toward a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling'."

But to the extent that the English Church also counseled detachment from zealous devotions, it likewise appears, in a secularizing mode, to reduce belief to private convictions within a neutral civic sphere.

Naturally, the state church's historical tendency to push religious conflict, particularly over ritual forms, to the periphery even as it affirmed liturgical orthodoxy has parallels in Swift, with vexing results for critics. Swift's suspicion of zealotry fits equally well with "the moderate skepticism of emerging civil society" and an entrenched religious conservatism.[15] The elements of civic humanism that inform Philip Harth's identification of Swift with "Anglican rationalism" have been set against the observation that such tropes of moderation and common sense formed precisely the ideological appearance of Tory authoritarianism.[16] From another perspective, Swift's presumptive mainstream orthodoxy has been contrasted with his manic prose and unrelenting critique, which are perceived to act corrosively on his attempt to assert the authority of tradition.[17]

Efforts to explain or resolve Swift's paradoxical style have variously explored aesthetic categories, cultural authority and epistemic shifts, but have not investigated the

[15] James Noggle, *The Skeptical Sublime: Aesthetic Ideology in Pope and the Tory Satirists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 72. Noggle reviews Swift's "ideologically divided position" between skeptical critique and authority as perceived by critics. Daniel Eilon, similarly, points to "skeptical and authoritarian elements in Swift's politics" and "revolutionary modernism alongside strains of profound conservatism." Daniel Eilon, *Faction's Fictions: Ideological Closure in Swift's Satire* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 16. The apparent contradiction also frames Warren Montag's discussion in Warren Montag, *The Unthinkable Swift: The Spontaneous Philosophy of a Church of England Man* (New York: Verso, 1994).
[16] Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism*; Montag, *The Unthinkable Swift*, 13-14.
[17] A.E. Dyson, "Swift: The Metamorphosis of Irony," *Essays and Studies* 11(1958); Terry J. Castle, "Why the Houyhnhnms Don't Write: Swift, Satire and the Fear of the Text," in *Jonathan Swift*, ed. Nigel Wood (New York: Longman, 1999); Judith C Mueller, "Writing under Constraint: Swift's "Apology" For a Tale of a Tub," *ELH* 60, no. 1 (1993). Noggle observes that "the *Tale's* use of sublime language to parody the inflated convictions of ideologues tends to exaggerate [Swift's] skepticism so much that it makes recuperation of any authority, however mediated or cautious, seem impossible," *Skeptical Sublime*, 71.

specific texture of his Protestantism—in particular, Anglican thought about *adiaphora.*[18] The concept of "things indifferent" may be seen in light of calls, not exclusive to conformity, for material Protestant institutions that connect parishioners to an affective community without courting idolatry— understood less as doctrinal error than as psychic over-investment. This is to read moderation as a coherent cognitive goal rather than a cynical authoritarian pretense or skeptical compromise. Swift's "Tory anarchy" may best be approached through broader discourses of psychically attuned ceremonial indifference.[19]

Swift's addition to the *Tale*, *A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* advertises itself as a novel examination of "launching out of the Soul, as it is purely an Effect of Artifice and *Mechanick Operation*" (1:175). But that concern appears throughout the *Tale*, in several iterations of mechanical or material methods of religious self-formation: in, for example, the discussion of the pulpit, the ladder, and the stage-itinerant as oratorical "machines" associated with Puritan public identity (1:34), the depiction of the tailor as a maker of "vestimental" social personae (1:46), and the description of the Aeolist sect's wind-inducing, comic-infernal devices (1:96-7). The

[18] For example: for Terry Castle, Swift's proto-deconstructive insights into unstable textuality compete with his fantasy of an authoritative text. Swift's satire, she argues, is a "hallucinatory" performance of this tension (253). Dyson argues for a similar suspended play, in Swift's irony, between moral critique and unbounded iconoclasm. Noggle develops Swift's use of the "skeptical sublime" as an aesthetic category expressed in "withering critical exposure" of ideology that nevertheless "accepts the ideological enforcement of unthought authority on the mind as the true expression of humanity's epistemological predicament" (32). These approaches have in common a recasting of Swift's contradictory impulses into privileged aesthetic modes whose defining feature is a critical awareness co-extensive with the modern critic's perspective on ideology. I hope, less anachronistically, to find a model for Swift's negotiation of dogmatism and doubt in spiritual prescriptions deployed around liturgical objects, rather than in modern formulations concerning epistemology.

[19] George Orwell, "Politics Vs. Literature: An Examination of Gulliver's Travels," in *The Orwell Reader: Fiction, Essays and Reportage* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956), 293.

Discourse itself purports to supplement attempts to define religious enthusiasm as a kind of madness, the result of natural or pathological processes.

And, as Casaubon's remarks above show, Swift's predecessors in anti-Puritan genres associated with the *Tale* also addressed sectarian conflict in terms of liturgical objects and practice, offering materialist analyses of belief predicated on man-made ritual paraphernalia rather than, as is usually noted, internal convictions or natural causes. Casaubon's own *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm* promises an analysis of "Mechanical Enthusiasm" as the "eighth and last" species of delusional divine inspiration to be investigated, after taking up inspiration caused by more directly physiological disorders.[20] Casaubon never delivers the projected chapter, however, having forewarned readers in prefatory remarks that he may have overextended himself: "that I shall go through all these kinds [of enthusiasm], at this time especially, is more than I can promise my self."[21]

It is intriguing to speculate on what Casaubon might have written—perhaps a more novel, modern or Swiftian text. But it seems likely that the missing chapter simply would have reiterated the traditional Reformation discourse of liturgical dispute that Causabon treats elsewhere. The precedent for Swift's notions about "mechanical operations," that is, may perhaps be better located in these ceremonial quarrels than in the specific forays into enthusiastic madness via medicine and natural philosophy with which he is usually directly linked.[22] Casaubon's *Of the Necessity for Reformation in Luther's*

[20] Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme, as It Is an Effect of Nature, but Is Mistaken by Many for Either Divine Inspiration, or Diabolical Possession* (London:1655), 18.
[21] Ibid., 19.
[22] Henry More's *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (London: 1656), too, sidelines artificially induced inspiration, which he associates with Quakerism, as irrelevant to his immediate subject, "natural" enthusiasm (28-9);

Time, for example, arguably provides as many important connections to Swift as the often-cited *Treatise*. The former offers a model for Swift's literal and figurative concerns with devotional praxis, social conformity, and spiritual health. Addressing the imposition of devotional uniformity on reluctant nonconformists, Casaubon explicitly takes up liturgical forms as psychological objects—points of affective investment that provoke severe reactions because they are deeply inscribed in the laity's sense of self and community:

> It is true, when a Rite or Ceremony, though never so good and warrantable, hath been disused in a place, or never used; it may seem strange at first; as apparel, that a man hath not been used unto, though never so comely of itself; by children, and fools, especially: (such I mean, that know little of the world, besides the place of their birth, and usual abode) is looked upon with admiration, if not derision. But wiser men, who judge of what they see, by the nature of things, and not by vulgar apprehensions; they will soon be satisfied, if their reason be satisfied. Yet some men, though wise and prudent enough, otherwise, (too much austerity, perchance,

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but his anti-Papist *Appendix to the Late Antidote Against Idolatry* (London: 1673) does address the issue, identifying idolatrous liturgical practices as fomenting "the highest Devotion, and reverential affection and passion, that humane nature is excitable into or can express by his look or mind, and profoundly devout motion of the spirits of his eyes, which passion and signification thereof is due to God alone" (37). The major anti-Puritan text in the more naturalistic vein, besides Casaubon's *Treatise* and More's *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, is Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). On Swift's predecessors and sources, see C.M. Webster, "Swift's Tale of a Tub Compared with Earlier Satires of the Puritans," *PMLA* 47, no. 1 (1932), "Swift and Some Earlier Satirists of Puritan Enthusiasm," *PMLA* 48, no. 4 (1933) and "The Satiric Background of the Attack on the Puritans in Swift's a Tale of a Tub," *PMLA* 50, no. 1 (1935). On naturalist explanations of enthusiasm and their perceived influence on Swift, see also Angus Gowland, "The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy," *Past and Present* 191, no. May (2006); Michael Heyd, "The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century: Towards and Integrative Approach," *The Journal of Early Modern History* 53, no. 2 (1981); John Sena, "Melancholic Madness and the Puritans," *The Harvard Theological Review* 66, no. 3 (1973). For related theological background, see Geoffrey F Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947).

> may be some cause:) have naturally such an antipathy to *Ceremonies*, that Nature (if they look not to it carefully) will sooner overcome their Reason.[23]

Strange rites mark the limit of familiar objects and places, the everyday realities that define a parishioner's identity and psychic home. Casaubon's own vestimental metaphor of "comely" apparel directly alludes to priestly garb and the Vestments Controversy, the "comely surplice with sleeves" demanded in Archbishop Matthew Parker's 1566 *Advertisements*. At the same time, Casaubon explains dissenting resistance in terms of emotional ties to apparel, an obvious and familiar nexus of public identity and bodily comfort. The metaphor acknowledges the laity's visceral links to congregational subcultures even as it derides these commitments, as the comparison with children and fools suggests, as trivial, provincial and temporary.

The analysis goes beyond the church service's symbolic or doctrinal particulars to the larger social project at stake, to the state's deliberate attempt to forge and enforce a national religious identity beyond the parish or conventicle. Casaubon explicitly defines comforting and familiar liturgical life in terms of its spatial boundaries—the place of one's birth and usual abode—literally the bounding of a social self by the parish's physical limits and the reach of local traditions marking passage from birth to marriage to death.[24] Against this, the Church of England's more cosmopolitan community stands for him as the source of "reason"—used in an entirely pragmatic sense—by which to judge social praxis truly, and not by means of "vulgar apprehensions." Common prayer

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[23] Casaubon, *Of the Necessity of Reformation in, and before Luther's Time*, 153.
[24] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*.

appears here in its aspect as social re-education, implicated even in the cognition of geographic space. More than arguing for one spiritual disciplinary apparatus over another, Causabon implicitly recognizes quotidian objects as catalysts for complex emotional resistance or loyalty metonymically extended to a background of linked cultural institutions.

A related argument may be found in Jasper Mayne's anti-Puritan *Sermon Against False Prophets* (1647), which complements Casaubon's advocacy of "strange" conformity in recalcitrant parish backwaters by opposing Puritan attempts to defamiliarize state church customs as superstitious and heretical:[25]

> Have not these *Prophets* dealt with the mindes of vulgar people, as *Melancholy* men use to deale with the *clouds,* raised monstrous formes and shapes to fright them, where no feare was? Have they not presented strange *visions* to them? *Idolatrie* in a *Church window, Superstition* in a white *Surplice, Masse* in our *Common-prayer Booke,* and *Antichrist* in our *Bishops?* Have they not also to make things seem hideous in the *State,* cast them into strange, fantasticall, *Chymera figures?* And have they not, like the fabulous, walking *Spirits* wee read of, created imaginary *Apparitions* to the people from such things, slight, unsolid melting *Bodies* as *Ayre?*[26]

The Puritan challenge, as Mayne perceives, comes not in terms of doctrine or even iconoclasm *per se*, but rather represents a struggle to reconfigure the laity's feelings

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[25] Webster identifies Mayne among Swift's generic predecessors.
[26] Jasper Mayne, *A Sermon against False Prophets* (s.n:.1647), 17-18.

about the parish's object world. Familiar items turn out to be psychic avatars of abstract concepts—idolatry, superstition—that demand the believing Christian's ethical-emotional reaction. Mayne represents Puritan influence as the familiar object world's dissolution into fearful ghost objects—signs of a mental meltdown of sorts, in which the meaning inhering in cultural things bleeds out, leaving an unassimilated flux of anxieties projected on matter. In what amounts to a high compliment to the effectiveness of Puritan cultural revolution, Mayne can only object in frustration that the Puritan strategy sidesteps rational argument.[27]

The same concern for psychological objects pervades multiple domains of sectarian and political debate. For example, Swift's apparent distrust of textuality and the promiscuous possibilities of language —on display in his *Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712)—has generally been linked to Enlightenment attempts to stabilize language, the plain style of emergent science, or Anglican orthodoxy's distaste for abstruse theological speculations.[28] In this regard, Swift has been associated with John Eachard's *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion Enquired Into* (1670), which rails in part against the "inconsiderate use of frightful metaphors" that find their way into the sermons of provincial clergymen influenced by Presbyterianism.[29] But this attempt to cleanse

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Marilyn Francus, *The Converting Imagination: Linguistic Theory and Swift's Satiric Prose* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 22-32.

[29] Eachard is not explicit about his Puritan targets, but alludes to these divines' use of the Geneva Bible. Whiting links the text to the influence of dissent in *Studies in English Puritanism*, 404. See also my discussion of John Flavell in chapter four, below—a likely Presbyterian target known for his devotional texts aimed at mariners—who was purged in 1662 but whose career demonstrates the lingering influence of

language away from poor style or politically dangerous religious speculation can also be associated with longstanding discourse regarding the object world seen in its spiritual aspect. Eachard, for example, emphasizes the thingly "vehicles" of figurative speech, as in his complaint that preachers explain doctrine using metaphors drawn from narrow or specialized worldly experience:

> Perhaps one Gentleman's Metaphorical knack of Preaching comes of the Sea: And then we shall hear of nothing but *star-board* and *lar-board*, of *stems, sterns* and *fore-castles*, and such like Salt-water Language: So that one had need take a Voyage to *Smyrna* or *Aleppo*, and very warily attend to all the Saylers terms, before I shall in the least understand my Teacher. Now, although such a Sermon may possibly do some good in a *Coast-Town*, yet upward into the Countrey, in an Inland Parish, it will do no more than *Syriack* or *Arabick*.[30]

Eachard, like Causabon, condemns narrowing the religious imaginary to the geographical and material bounds of the parish or the preacher's or tradesman's cognitive map, to an idiosyncratic lifeworld of customs and technologies.

Eachard explains that the homely language of Christ's parables, unlike these specialized references, the exotic locales or heterotopias to which preachers increasingly refer, makes salvation explicable to the entire Christian community, defined by common sensory and conceptual waypoints: "As for our Saviour when he spoke a parable, he was pleased to go no further than the Fields, the Sea-shore, a Garden, a Vineyard, or the like;

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cultural Puritanism. Ronald Paulson sees attacks on Eachard primarily in terms of abuses of prose style in *Theme and Structure in Swift's Tale of a Tub* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 36-39.

[30] John Eachard, *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion Enquired into in a Letter Written to R.L.* (London:1672), 58.

which are things, without the knowledge whereof, scarce any man can be supposed to live in this world."[31]

For these controversialists, as for Swift, the liturgy in its original sense of "the work of the people" furnished the affective coordinates of a living community modeled on the primitive church. Everyday rituals and symbolic culture could draw subjects into communion or drive them into solipsistic schism, limiting Providence away from the space of the nation

On Spiritual Machines as Dead Technologies

From this materialist perspective, Swift's orthodoxy bears a counterintuitive resemblance to the Puritan hermeneutic that saw hardened social institutions as potential idols, analogous to Catholic ceremonies that devolved from spiritual acts in a shared epistemological community into an arbitrary complex of objects worshipped for their own sake. Swift's comparison of Catholic and Puritan cultural artifacts to artificial belief machines follows the logic of Puritan attacks on ceremony as inimical to the Reformation project of raising belief to a level of conscious introspection.

Nonconformists of course charged that the established church used the liturgy in an arbitrary idolatrous fashion, trampling local traditions and embracing unreformed parishioners through rote ritual while arbitrarily excluding a godly minority. Swift's support for the national church against enthusiasm actually shares or extends features of attacks on clerical vestments and the Catholic-style mass—as furnishing exciting points

[31] Ibid., 63.

of libidinal investment, teaching blind commitment rather than edifying introspection, and conferring membership without regard to spiritual effort. The *Tale's* portrait of Jack's Reformed Church habits by means of his "Meddley of *Rags*, and *Lace*, and *Rents*, and *Fringes*" (1:88), a mere semblance of Peter's equally outré attire, owes much to early Puritan texts like William Bradshaw's 1604 attack on the surplice. Jack's appearance calls to mind Bradshaws' unflattering association of priestly vestments with a beggar's cloak:

> Those that abhorre Idolatrie … cannot but accompt that priestly attire that is enjoined to us by our Prelates, an apparel more unbeseeming the Minister of the Gospel than a Cloake with a thousand patches, or a coate with foure elebowes, for beggary and folly being judgmentes and not siness, the notes of beggarie and folly can not be so odious in a spiritual eye as the notes of Idolatry.[32]

To take another example, Swift's description of enthusiasm's panoply of liturgical props closely resembles Calvinist-inflected attacks on conformist ceremony as enforced under Archbishop Laud. Indeed, Peter Smart (1569-1652?), in his colorful objections to Laudian liturgical innovations at Durham Cathedral, written in 1628, could serve as Swift's Low Church counterpart.[33] This irate appraisal, nicely distilled in Smart's aperçus that not even Jesus Christ received so much bowing and scraping as the Laudian altar, revives Reformation critiques of excessive (Catholic) ritual as a kind of belief

[32] William Bradshaw, *A Treatise of Divine Worship* (Middelburg:1604), 38.

[33] Peter Smart, *A Short Treatise of Altars, Altar-Furniture, Altar-Cringing, and Musick of All the Quire, Singing-Men and Choristers When the Holy Communion Was Administered in the Cathedrall Church of Durham, by Prebendaries and Petty-Canons, in Glorious Copes Embroidered with Images* (London:1643). The text attacks high church liturgical innovation in terms of its blind emotionalism, carnivalesque theatrics and absurd apparatuses.

machine, designed to produce mystified, unthinking subjects who replace ethical-spiritual transformation with superficial obedience and rote behaviors. Swift, likewise, marks this problem efficiently in the *Tale*: Peter's Catholic faith is not only marred by pageantry and novelty, but manufactures passive adherents in a sacramental economy of artificial assemblages. The same tendency underwrites Peter's denigration of the inner, spiritual truth of the Eucharist in favor of a vulgar, literal interpretation—parodied in his delusional non-transubstantiation of bread into mutton (1:72). In this sense, Swift's "literalization" of Catholic doctrine—exemplified by Peter's "universal pickle" or the "office of ensurance" as parodies of holy water and indulgences—illustrates Catholicism's deepest tendency, as a largely symbolic religion to reside purely in the formal automaticity of rites and sacraments falsely endowed, Protestants charged, with direct, magical effects on the spiritual world (1:67).

The mechanical operations Swift associates with enthusiasm, designed to bypass the public space of conscious understanding in favor of inspiration in this sense share the automatic quality of the Roman sacramental structure Smart associates with High Church ceremonialism. Like Catholic ritual, enthusiast liturgical innovation springs from alleged indifference to conscious spiritual reflection—replacing edifying practice with interchangeable props ("the *Spirit* being the same in all, it is of no Import through what Vehicle it is convey'd.") for sensory excitement (1:183). Similarly, the dissenting predilection for preaching tends to bypass the conscious mind such that "cant and droning replace sense and reason" and is "in greatest perfection, when managed by ignorance" (1:182). In both cases emotional theatrics suggest that devotional activity, rather than

facilitating an ongoing conscious transformation of self, functions with direct—mechanical—efficacy. For Swift, this conviction marks out the space of madness and superstition: the believer either places his faith in the direct "objective" influence of rites and works on God and his soul, or he comforts himself that his solipsistic search for grace has been confirmed by (materially conditioned) subjective excitement, mistaken for the Holy Spirit's presence.

But Swift's critique of religious formalisms marks enthusiasm not only as qualitatively similar to Catholicism, but as a structural complement of its ideology, a shift that is less a doctrinal repudiation than a psychological reaction formation:

> The reason of which is easy enough to apprehend; for, the phrenzy and the spleen of both having the same foundation, we may look upon them as two pair of compasses, equally extended, and the fixed foot of each remaining in the same center; which, though moving contrary ways at first, will be sure to encounter somewhere or other in the circumference. (1:127)

Rather than depict two extremes as discrete belief systems or cultures exemplified by contrasting liturgical styles, Swift confers on them an identity, conveyed in the image of "two Pair of Compasses" circumscribing the same circle (1:127). Puritanism's internalized spirituality—invisible membership in the elect, or a purely subjective sense of salvation based on mental self-policing—suggests a simple Hegelian reversal of the Catholic public performance hierarchy, a straight-line transformation of the good into the bad, the desirable into the undesirable and vice versa. Such a reversal is considerably less than a thorough-going reform of the bases for individuals' spiritual justification.

From an external structure, one would turn solipsistically inward, to virtually no gain, albeit with a change of style—of vestments, as it were. From a rote confessional sacrament that neglects one's lasting internal disposition, one turns to institutionalized self-scrutiny without necessary public morality.[34] Jack rejects common ritual out of hand as a quasi-Catholic remnant. But in turning reflexively inward, Swift suggests, he opens himself to the same fruitless search for certainty that he is saved: if he need not perform a symbolic duty, a work, he must meet his own impossible standard, and devote himself to avoiding, in an equally superstitious fashion, the accoutrements of Catholicism.

Jack's decision to "dress up Necessity into a Virtue" (1:88) and embrace an ethic of austerity leaves him, Swift shows, with a "strange Variety of Conceptions" (1:121) designed to affirm sanctification through sensory excitement or by marking off a true godly community from the territorial church. Swift's veiled catalog of these object-practices, from austere dress to adult immersive baptism, shows that Jack's efforts as a "Person of great Design and Improvement in Affairs of *Devotion*" merely repeat Peter's superstitious formalism (1:124).

Mechanical operations—Catholic sacraments or Puritan obsessions—represent, to borrow the Marxian metaphor, dead spiritual labor, and service not to living cognition of spiritual reform, but to an alien edifice. These modes offer materiality—smoke and mirrors, pompous regalia, or the charismatic's speaking platform—as superficial evasions

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[34] This is a very Lacanian move; any position for a subject within the symbolic order constitutes itself by means of an appeal to what it is not, its *Other*. The qualitative identity of the allegorical figures of Swift's time evidently runs along these lines, as well, as he shows how the subject of Dissent and the *Other* of Catholicism are part of the same social-symbolic.

of spiritual work in material world, in favor of passive performance or production of a subjective state of excitement.

Objects, or Idols?

Swift's materialist analysis of sectarian customs resembles, to a degree, modern critiques of ideology or contextual analyses that see subjects embedded in religious cultures or styles. Along these lines, James Noggle recently has argued, alluding to Slavoj Žižek's work, for the *Tale's* insistence on ideological inscription at the brute or banal level of reality, in the "dead degraded matter" of (paradoxically) "sublime objects of ideology" that permit no analysis[35]:

> In short what the *Tale* offers is an account of the subject in society not as a "*political* animal," … but as something like an ideological one. Our social being is determined not by what we choose to think about it but by psychological powers that necessitate particular thoughts and actions and involve us in sects, crowds, and unthinking discipleship.[36]

For Swift, that is, cultural and religious objects, material bodies that "exhaustively define all that we can know," enforce automatic behaviors and determine unconscious cultural commitments.[37]

But this misses the liturgical context that leads Swift to associate unconscious object-practices with abnormal and fragile forms of religious belief, and symbolic culture

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[35]Noggle, *Skeptical Sublime*, 96, 76. Noggle's reference to Žižek is to *Sublime Object*, 206-8.
[36] Noggle, *Skeptical Sublime*, 81.
[37] Ibid., 95.

not with constraint but with superficial appearance. Swift's intended critique of "Corruptions in Religion and Learning" (1:1), far from describing helpless, epistemologically circumscribed subjects of "cognitive failure," offers a moral critique of subjects *responsible* for the way they exploit, as well as suffer under, cultural objects.[38] Swift's erring believers, Peter and Jack, routinely operate outside their public faiths, using cultural objects, idols, merely to prop up their public personae. This does not make them free of ideology—it suggests, in quite a different analysis, that belief as such is fraught with ambivalence. More specifically, symbolic cultural items signify but do not fully represent or contain the subject:

> 'Tis true, indeed, that these Animals, which are vulgarly called *Suits of Cloaths,* or *Dresses*, do according to certain Compositions receive different Appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a Gold Chain, and a red Gown, and a white Rod, and a great Horse, it is called a *Lord-Mayor*; if certain Ermines and Furs be placed in a certain Position, we style them a *Judge*, and so an apt Conjunction of Lawn and black Sattin we entitle a *Bishop.* (1:47)

The speaker—like Casaubon—makes a strong case for symbolic object's inescapable power: outward forms determine identity.[39] But Swift also mocks this view, inasmuch as its adherents, obviously, confuse social signifiers with the actual subject.

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[38] The remark is in Swift's 1710 "apology" to the *Tale*; Noggle, *Skeptical Sublime*, 95.

[39] Montag argues that the brothers' coats point to religion as a material practice that runs no deeper than its signifiers; he remains, however, close to those who see Swift's conformity as a political expedient, "necessary fictions" deprived of real religious status as ideological apparatuses; Montag, *The Unthinkable Swift*, 98-100.

Swift links vested symbolic authority in general with controversial ecclesiastical garb in particular, bringing out the Catholic emphasis on public performance –or Puritan aversion to it—as idolatry, supplanting ritual's transformative, edifying influence with its mere mechanical rehearsal. The *Tale* compares the brothers' religious innovations to sartorial displays, explicitly developing Peter's budding Catholicism as an expression of slavish devotion to external forms and fashions. The subsequent account of the tailor, who "creates" men affirms the ordinary workings of social signifiers, while warning, in religious terms, of excessive investment in outward ceremony: "They worshipped a sort of idol, who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufactory operation"—ultimately, the unhealthy confusion of self identity with one's public function, a veneer rather than an essence (1:46).

The *Tale* accounts for ideology strictly in terms of longstanding Protestant critiques of liturgical cultures that overstress vestimental reality. Only the hack tale-teller, in the *Digression Concerning Madness* (1:102-114), embraces the notion of an inescapably closed consciousness limited by "the *Superficies* of things."[40] His mockery of the limits of rational inquiry ("the pretended philosophy which enters into the depth of things" [1:109]) seemingly leaves no alternative but mystification conditioned by depthless objects:

> Last Week I saw a woman *flay'd*, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her Person for the worse. Yesterday I ordered the Carcass of a *Beau* to be

[40] Noggle identifies Swift's position with that of the Tale-Teller: "Swift's spirituality always lies in this absolute denial that we may reach beyond our immediate, bodily experiences, beyond 'the *Superficies* of things' to find some satisfying subjective mediation between them and the absolute," 76.

> stripped in my Presence; when we were all amazed to find so many unsuspected Faults under one Suit of Cloths: Then I laid open his *Brain*, his *Heart*, and his *Spleen*; But I plainly perceived at every Operation that the farther we proceeded, we found the Defects increase upon us. (1: 109-110)

The hack is correct, inasmuch as the nominalist (here, the vivisectionist) simply misses socially constituted reality, the communal codes and signifiers that make psychological, not empirical, objects. But the hack's hyper-corrective embrace of the superficial "wisdom which converses about the surface" leads to a similar error: neglect of the way the subject always exceeds his social identity (1:109). His preference for "superficies" throws us back on Swift's association of surfaces with sectarian garb and symbolic practice. The speaker's odd surprise that the beau's vestment is not the man himself points to a naivety about social convention, in reality a dead code whose reality rests in a contingent social agreement. The "unsuspected faults" concealed by the beau's public-vestimental identity as a dandy—that is, an exemplary dissembler and idolater of fashion—cruelly designate his humanity, but as external to both social and empirical. He neither lives up to his pretensions, nor can quite escape their judgment to be reduced to brute matter: the more he is discovered as an excess of his symbolic function, the more it lingers to condemn him.[41]

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[41] Noggle's reading mistakes Lacan's "object *a"*—Žižek's sublime object— for an epistemological limit (32), an entry point to blind belief, a "material body that exhaustively defines all that we can know," or an incarnation of the ideology in which subjects are inscribed. On the contrary, the Lacanian model, like Swift's, describes the object's lure precisely in terms of a subject's *distance* from social ideals, the fact that there is no public signifier that can exhaustively represent him. Far from being solely "an instrument of ideological enforcement," (31) the sublime object emerges only as an unconscious fantasy, a desire for an objective remedy for the subject's "unsuspected faults," as Swift terms the failure to embody a symbolic

The *Digression Concerning Madness* in fact argues that to be completely "invested" in superficial social forms is to occupy an exceptional or fanciful, not an inescapable condition. The hack's ironic definition of the "Point of Felicity" as "*the Possession of being well deceived*" concerns the unusually lucky subject who is simply too willfully stupid to realize that intersubjective reality is a collective fiction, a condition that gives him the dubious distinction of being a "fool among knaves" (1:110). Swift indicates (in qualified fashion, in the tale-teller's excessive enthusiasm) that blissful ignorance is a rare improvement on the usual human burden, which is not epistemological blindness but, quite the opposite, something like knavery—an all-too-knowing participation in a fraud.

Material Culture and Moral Psychology

Swift's intervention remains a critique of religious corruption and not an exploration of epistemology or tendentious ideology. The modern, fideist prejudice that sees belief as installation of internal epistemological limits sees all cultural inscription as equally representative of the trivially broad category "ideology." But Swift's text, surely, seeks to differentiate spiritually between precise *modes* of involvement in social forms. As seen by controversialists like Swift, liturgical styles channel believers toward distinct ways of managing gaps between their symbolic duty, their self-image and their remaining desires. In this sense, knavery denotes worshipful complicity with conventions, even as

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role. It therefore grounds an ideological reality, but entices the subject toward social norms only to the limited degree that he can interpolate his fantasy; it also embodies precisely the subject's experience of those norms as a mindless imposition to be evaded. It is only as a result of the subject's failure to be fully inscribed that the sublime object can be referred to as a kind of dead remainder.

the subject feels them to be false. This is, on the one hand, a feature of "normal" social integration—the level of outward conformity and etiquette that form the social Other; on the other hand, Swift identifies hyper-formalism as a nonconformist pathology that actually leads to religious laxity. Accordingly, Swift sketches representative subject positions in Peter and Jack, with thick descriptions of social behaviors or neuroses associated with each style of faith.

Peter's character, certainly, reflects the psychic dishonesty Swift sees in the Catholic permutation of allegiance to social ideals—one that privileges the hierarchies of public function due to over-identification with symbolic/vestimental roles. Peter's "pride, projects, and knavery" (1:71), his grandiosity and insecurity speak to the fragility of maintaining an authority ("emperor," "God Almighty," "Monarch of the Universe" [1:71]) he knows fundamentally to be false:

> To support this Grandeur, which he soon began to consider could not be maintained without a Better *Fonde* than what he was born to; After much Thought he cast about at last to turn *Projector* and *Virtuoso*, wherein he so well succeeded, that many famous Discoveries, Projects, and Machines which bear great Vogue and Practice at present in the World, are owing entirely to *Lord Peter's* invention. (1:65)

His papal attire, mechanical signs of sanctity and arrogance both buttress his claims and convey his fear of exposure, further generating yet distancing the "real" authority he seeks to inhabit. The satire on transubstantiation, in which Peter maintains against all evidence that his loaf of brown bread is in fact mutton and wine, likewise involves

maintenance of a public fiction—even to the point that Peter's brothers, before effecting a "reformation," are drawn in, reluctantly supporting Peter's brittle identity by acceding to his fantasy. More than Peter's personal intransigence, we see the social production of the delusive collective reality alleged to characterize Catholic culture. Faced with his rage and doggedness, Jack and Martin capitulate to his fancy:

> Such a thundering Proof as this left no further Room for Objection: the two Unbelievers began to gather and pocket up their Mistake as hastily as they could. *Why, truly*, said the first, *upon more mature consideration*—*Ay*, says the other, interrupting him, *now I have thought better on the Thing, your Lordship seems to have a great deal of reason.* (1:73)

Peter, in part, represents demanding church authorities to whom Catholic subjects make professions of belief. But Swift undermines this priestly image, presenting Peter less as a panoptic authority than a gaze whose innocence must be preserved—for whom appearances must be maintained lest he crumble. In this sense, Peter embodies the symbolic order itself, in its aspect as an idiotic set of conventions sustained only by collective participation, but secured by individual reluctance to disturb the field of socially sanctioned knowledge and propriety. Catholic belief, we are told, consists not in an inner conviction, but in compulsion to perform publically, even or especially as a means of concealing mental reservations. Against the domineering inquisitory apparatus, Swift points to the repressive power of politesse and civil custom. It is precisely as complicit "unbelievers" that Martin and Jack stand in as paradigmatic Catholic subjects.

Peter's psychic problems derive, in Swift's portrait, from the Catholic tendency to endow rituals with directly spiritual benefits exceeding their merely social function. The inevitable gap between the subject and his over-valorized role or duty is experienced as severe guilt—resulting, in Swift's analysis, in Peter's extreme defensiveness and angry fear of exposure:

> However, it is certain that *Lord Peter*, even in his lucid Intervals, was very lewdly given in his common Conversation, extreme wilful and positive, and would at any time rather argue to the Death than allow himself to be once in an Error. Besides, he had an abominable Faculty of telling huge palpable *Lies* upon all Occasions; and swearing not only to the Truth, but cursing the whole Company to Hell if they pretended to make the least Scruple of believing Him. … In short, *Peter* grew so scandalous that all the Neighbourhood began in plain words to say he was no better than a Knave. (1:75)

Peter's defensive pretenses and commitment to outward sanctity, as encouraged by Catholicism, stem from an excessive need to fully inhabit ideals or mechanically achieve justification through works. At the same time, the strictly formal nature of those duties encourages belief as superficial conformity – mechanical obedience-- and as attempts to deflect scrutiny, to transfer belief by fooling witnesses, real or perceived, thought to believe more fully than the subject. Swift designates this psychic structuring of self in society as knavery —the dishonest promulgation of a severe Law, while exempting the self from real inward reform. Or, rather, participating in the Law precisely as means of evading responsibility for one's own perceived deficiencies and temptations.

Neither the notion of a subject of confessional discipline nor an Enlightenment-style critique of priestcraft quite captures Swift's complaint. Peter, no wholly inscribed subject of ideology, holds himself outside of his belief system, resists or dissembles his lofty ideals; indeed, his severity and misery stem from that failure.[42] Similarly, Jack and Martin's complicity points to Catholicism as a delusion sustained by a silent crowd of equally alienated souls. By the same token, the notion of a cynical priestly manipulator operating from a realist position outside belief, of (im)moral freedom, clearly fails to capture Peter's extreme libidinal investment in social forms, both in trying, and failing, to occupy the place of sanctification, and in his subsequent defensive enjoyment of social status within the sacramental hierarchy.

Swift matches the Catholic zealot immersed in superficial ceremonialism with a familiar Puritan type: the pious hypocrite, who repeats the Catholic dynamic of inadequacy and ostentatious performance in a quest for sure signs of election. Jack's self-scrutiny and austerity merely replace works and sacraments. Ostensibly in pursuit of spiritual perfection, Jack regards self-punishing rigor as itself a sign of grace, a self-aggrandizing source of satisfaction without reference to actual self-reform:

> [Jack] would stand in the Turning of a Street, and calling to those who passed by, would cry to One; *Worthy sir, do me the Honour of a good Slap in the Chaps*: To another, *Honest friend, pray favour me with a handsom kick in the Arse*: *Madam, shall I entreat a small box in the ear from your ladyship's fair hands*? *Noble Captain, Lend a reasonable Thwack, for the love of God, with that Cane of yours*

[42] That is, Peter is no subject of ideology in the sense intended by Noggle, above.

> *over these poor Shoulders*. And when he had by such earnest Solicitations made a shift to procure a Basting sufficient to swell up his Fancy and his Sides, he would return home extremely comforted, and full of terrible Accounts of what he had undergone for the *publick good.* (1:126)

Where the Catholic type can use rote obedience to deflect the imperative of reform, Jack exempts his real behavior from scrutiny on the grounds that he is subjectively consumed with the question of grace. His adolescent-style rebellion against Peter captures precisely the affective hysterical negation of Catholic identity that is a failure to shift the deep conceptual terrain. We also see an emotional cost as Jack remains, through its mere disavowal, actually invested in ceremony—experiencing his austerity as a decided loss. Whereas Peter's sense of inadequacy issues in a characteristic defensiveness, Jack is associated with extreme resentment. His wish to see Martin reduced to his own state rather than remedy his own condition reflects an incomplete renunciation of symbolic forms—his lingering sense that those who retain them will access enjoyment that he has denied himself:

> That which most afflicted him was to observe his Brother's Coat so well reduced into the State of Innocence, while his own was either wholly rent to his Shirt, or those Places which had escaped his cruel Clutches were still in Peter's livery. So that he looked like a drunken *Beau* half rifled by *Bullies*, or like a fresh tenant of *Newgate* when he has refused the payment of *Garnish.* … He would have been extremely glad to see his Coat in the condition of *Martin's*, but infinitely gladder to find that of *Martin's* in the same Predicament with his. (1:88)

In short, if Swift shares conceptual space with Lacanian theorists, it is less in the analysis of inescapable ideology than of ineradicable enjoyment. In Swift's exemplars, we see religious subjects who are, both in their obsessive involvement with cultural forms, and in their alienation from or evasion of them, essentially in pursuit of their own satisfaction. Swift premises his ethical critique on this unacknowledged enjoyment: the way these subjects fail to take responsibility for their own basic libidinal pleasure as their real motivation -- ritual soothes, in whatever form, and renders world experience intelligible. The categories of knavery and hypocrisy designate the behavioral correlates of sectarian styles that sustain these pleasures. This means that the culture of dissent, originally a conscious embrace of alterity, has become a kind of dominant symbolic order that sustains individuals *outside* the kind of conscious commitment that Protestantism had demanded of its members.

Swift's remark that "satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind reception it meets with in the world, and that so very few are offended with it" (1:140) touches on the problem endemic to zealous nonconformity and social forms generally: individuals are psychically constituted at a distance from the social reality in which they participate. They accrue to themselves its benefits and rewards, even as they exempt themselves from responsibility for the injustices they thereby inflict on others. Swift's fat unwieldy fellow who fails to see himself as part of the crowd in which he participates exemplifies the antithesis of the Reformation project that Swift upholds:

> A Mountebank in Leicester-Fields had drawn a huge Assembly about him. Among the rest, a fat unwieldy Fellow, half stifled in the Press, would be every fit crying out Lord! what a filthy Crowd is here? Pray, good People, give way a little, Bless me! what a Devil has raked this Rabble together: Z——ds, what squeezing is this! Honest friend, remove your Elbow. At last, a Weaver that stood next him could hold no longer: A Plague confound you (said he) for an over-grown Sloven; and who (in the Devil's Name) I wonder, helps to make up the Crowd half so much as your self? Don't you consider (with a Pox) that you take up more room with that Carkass than any five here? Is not the Place as free for us as for you? Bring your own Guts to a reasonable Compass (and be d——n'd) and then I'll engage we shall have room enough for us all. (1:28)

The weaver takes up the satirist's burden, his aggression an attempt to get the fat fellow to discover his own face despite his fetishist disavowal of complicity. By extension, we might reread Swift's observation that "Principally I hate and detest that animal called man; although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth" as a kind of therapeutic, charitable (in a strictly Christian sense) inversion of the more usual pretence that principally I am full of love for my neighbor, although I heartily detest John, Peter, Thomas and so forth.[43]

Obey, But Only Obey

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[43] Swift to Alexander Pope, September 29, 1725 in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, ed. David Wooley, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 2:606.

Swift's exploration of sectarian vestimental-liturgical objects implicitly offers Anglican moderation as an alternative to neurotic and antisocial devotional cultures. But Swift's modern reception has had difficulty imagining the adiaphoric ideal of edifying, rather than disciplinary spiritual technology. The problem is understandable, given that Swift's critique of sectarian pathologies runs close to his analysis of socialization as such. An idealized Anglican style, however restrained its qualitative features, seems merely another set of vestments or idols. Alternatively, if orthodoxy means taking distance from passionate commitment, it surely risks resemblance to secular civic religion, or a call for just the sort of religious hypocrisy—public orthodoxy with private detachment—Swift condemns in the *Tale* and the *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* (1708).[44]

As Claude Rawson points out, Swift's interpretation of religious duty seems to call for public behavior as a kind of pious façade; "want of belief is a defect that ought to be concealed when it cannot be overcome" (9:261).[45] This dissembling seemingly approximates Catholic emphasis on objective tokens of belief, in violation of Swift's association of ceremonial dogmatism with spiritual decay. One finds the same

[44] The apparent conflict is obvious enough in criticism surrounding the *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* and *The Project for the Advancement of Religion* which offer, respectively, a critique of Christian hypocrisy and a direct call for the public to dissemble virtue. The texts divide critics, as Judson Curry notes, into contending visions of Swift, either as cynical or disillusioned authoritarian (implicitly opening himself to the secularist charge), or a proponent of a pious orthodoxy whose plan in the *Project* must be rejected as ironic;see Judson Curry, "Arguing About the Project: Approaches to Swift's an Argument against Abolishing Christianity and a Project for the Advancement of Religion," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 20, no. 1 (1996).

[45] Claude Rawson, "The Character of Swift's Satire: Reflections on Swift, Johnson, and Human Restlessness," in *The Character of Swift's Satire: A Revised Focus*, ed. Claude Rawson (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), 27. Rawson's discussion of the tension in Swift, between the call to outwardly conform and distaste for hypocrisy (45-52) captures precisely the conflict that I believe a closer examination of religious debate can illuminate.

formulation in Swift's *A Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners* (1709). First, Swift embraces symbolic identity, censuring clergymen whose behavior diminishes the sartorial tokens of their authority, at a cost to their social function:

> The Clergy are the only Set of Men among us, who constantly wear a distinct Habit from others; The Consequence of which (not in Reason but in Fact) is this, that as long as any scandalous Persons appear in that Dress, it will continue in some Degree a general Mark of Contempt. Whoever happens to see a *Scoundrel in a Gown*, reeling home at Midnight, (a Sight neither *frequent* nor *miraculous*), is apt to entertain an ill Idea of the whole Order, and at the same Time to be extremely comforted in his own Vices. (2:54)

Swift's solution, a decidedly panoptic scheme for moral discipline, culminates in an explicit endorsement of religious hypocrisy in vestimental terms:

> Neither am I aware of any Objections to be raised against what I have advanced; unless it should be thought, that making religion a necessary Step to Interest and Favour might increase Hypocrisy among us: And I readily believe it would. But if One in Twenty should be brought over to true Piety by this, or the like Methods, and the other Nineteen be only Hypocrites, the Advantage would still be great. Besides, Hypocrisy is much more eligible than open Infidelity and Vice; *it wears the Livery of Religion*, it acknowledges her Authority, and is cautious of giving Scandal. Nay, a long continued Disguise is too great a constraint upon human Nature, especially an *English* disposition. Men would leave off their Vices out of

> meer Weariness, rather than undergo the Toil and Hazard, and perhaps Expence, of practising them perpetually in private. And I believe it is often with Religion, as it is with Love; which, by much Dissembling, at last grows real. (2:56-7; my emphasis)

Here, however, Swift's embrace of convention is exactly what sets him apart from the hypocrite sectarians he attacks. Against Puritan precisianism, which aspires to certain sanctity, or the Catholic sacramental economy, which endows ceremony with soteriological effects, Swift embraces the strictly superficial nature of social norms. Conformity, in this more knowing sense, entails the conscious burden of one's distance from social ideals, as opposed to the delusion that symbolic ideals could fully inform us or be fully realized. Indeed Swift portrays conformity frankly, as a wearying, dullish imposition best relieved by mastering one's impulses, or by a calculated decision that private vice is more trouble than it is worth. Obedience and resistance are thereby depleted of the enjoyment characteristic of nonconformist belief, the promise of both social sanction and private indulgence undisturbed by guilt. The hypocrite-enthusiast, that is, is free to pay mere lip service to his ideal *precisely because* he "really believes" in it, can evade the gaze of the Other, by conforming in an entirely narrow sense.

In part, Swift commends public performance as disciplinary training; but only to the extent that restraint leads to recognition of one's flaws, not denial or secret guilt, and to a good will rather than punctiliousness, never allowing the letter of the Law to triumph over its spirit. True devotion means struggle to inculcate a spiritual disposition that can be applied spontaneously, even in excess of particular duties. That lesson appears in

Swift's analysis of politeness in the *Treatise on Good Manners and Good Breeding* (1754), which argues for the foundations of civility in compassion and good sense rather than "bigotry of forms." Swift, remarkably, makes his case in terms of an anti-Catholic historiography:

> As the common forms of good manners were intended for regulating the conduct of those who have weak understandings; so they have been corrupted by the persons for whose use they were contrived. For these people have fallen into a needless and endless way of multiplying ceremonies, which have been extremely troublesome to those who practice them, and insupportable to everyone else: insomuch that wise men are often more uneasy at the over civility of these refiners, than they could possibly be in the conversations of peasants or mechanicks. (4:214)

One does not obey the Law; one masters it, understanding when its letter must be superseded.[46]

By insisting on rituals as quotidian points of conscious social binding, Swift counters the destabilizing neuroticism of sectarian zealotry, offering the compulsory as a tonic against the compulsive. The Anglican imperative might therefore be formulated not: Obey, but rather: Obey, *but only obey*.[47] The adiaphoric ideal of indifferent

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[46] Swift's fairly mainstream discomfort with Christian mystery and opposition to metaphysical speculation may also be contextualized as a psychological corrective to Puritan or Calvinist speculations on election or scriptural ideals against which to measure absolute spiritual success or failure.

[47] The idea that one practice without belief, or accede to purely legal forms of obedience was, of course, from the dissenting standpoint, exactly the problem with the Church of England. Without the same sense of the national church, the proposed minimal obedience could only appear as a lure to a form of Catholic hypocrisy.

conformity represents a coherent psychic ideal for cultural integration; acknowledging it obviates the need to posit Swift's writerly mode or attitude toward governance as divided between anarchic or skeptical impulses and reactionary authoritarianism—or, indeed, as an aesthetic or deconstructive performance of insight and blindness.

Folk Psychology and Sectarian Identity

In a sense, the *Tale* paints religious beliefs as epiphenomenal symptoms of more fundamental ways that subjects relate to cultural artifacts in their lives. Catholic practice, in this sense, exemplifies the tendency of any cultural-spiritual practice to degenerate into unexamined prejudices and routines—idols—valued for their own sake rather than as spiritual or moral exercises. Swift's allegorical history in Section II of the *Tale*, for example, presents Catholic doctrine as an *effect*—of the three brothers' desire to indulge material wants and fashions; they develop the Roman church's interpretive practices and apocryphal traditions secondarily, to rationalize neglect of primitive Christianity's plain virtues and edifying practice in favor of fetishistic obsessions. If Catholicism is here a worldly religion, it is also the native religion of worldliness, the cargo-cultish norm symbolized by the tailor and the ladies representing the early church's chief temptations to greed, ambition and pride, "the *Duchess d'Argent, Madame de Grands Titres*, and the Countess *d'Orgueil*" (1:45).

Similarly, Swift's description, in the *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, of religious orders on the Continent as a series of asylums for particular mental disorders,

while narrowly polemical, also captures the pervasive—and unmodern—tendency to think of the body politic and religious practice in terms of mental disposition:

> The Institution of Convents abroad seems in one Point a strain of great Wisdom; there being few Irregularities in human Passions which may not have recourse to vent themselves in some of those Orders, which are so many Retreats for the Speculative, the Melancholy, the Proud, the Silent, the Politick, and the Morose, to spend themselves, and evaporate the noxious Particles; for each of whom we in this Island are forced to provide a several Sect of Religion to keep them quiet (2:45)

Swift's prejudicial account is not, in the end, so far removed from Richard Baxter's Puritan sense of pastoral psychology—the way he classifies parishioners into the spiritually weak, those "that labor under some particular distemper," those who are declining due to scandal or lack of zeal, those who "lie under temptation," and so forth.[48] That impulse toward taxonomy informs, as well, Baxter's sociological-spiritual accounts of his flock and of conformists and nonconformists after 1662. Swift's notion of governance remains intertwined with discourses of psychological care of the laity.

The notion of a folk psychology captures the way a coherent signifying network for familiar behavior patterns can be built out of these analyses, as our own use of the word "puritanical" suggests. This shorthand (Puritan, enthusiast, hypocrite, knave …) for complex but recognizable cognitive dynamics —something more than stereotypes—served within the constraints of the rhetorical and social contests that forged (for

[48] Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1956), 51-60.

example) Puritanism itself, but more flexibly across the eighteenth century to represent the symbolic order of international cultures of dissent and Catholicism, within which individual subjects seeking their senses of justification persistently functioned.

Swift's analysis, while grounded in at least a pretense of empirical observation, is perhaps best categorized as a working-out of the logical possibilities of contending Reformation-era cultural and thought structures—or, rather, as a delineation of limit cases defining the edges of the Anglican-national symbolic. The clinical existence of Puritan psychology or of the stereotyped version of Catholicism that Swift presents is thus somewhat beside the point. Indeed, the question of who counted as a Puritan was strictly relative to one's own idealized object-practices. In this sense, the analytic itself helps condition the varying positions to which constituencies gravitated. What people meant by a term of abuse like "Puritan" was, to a significant degree, already freighted with a number of quasi-sociological observations, by virtue of sectarian interest in mental dispositions conditioned by the material environment. Put another way: my claim is not that Swift's texts make empirical-sociological claims that transcend ideology, but rather that the ideological universe of English Protestantism was itself constructed at least partly out of a discourse of psychological analyses like Swift's.

PART II: MODERNITY AS LITURGY

Spiritual Ecology in Swift and Defoe

The early modern tendency to assess cultural artifacts for their potential to edify and bind the community or devolve into idols might be described as a concern with an environing spiritual ecology. This scheme implies several overlapping domains of concern, including material culture, church polity, hermeneutics, doctrines of salvation and ethical disposition. In ecclesiastical terms, conformists and dissenters alike sought a reformed church defined by conscious ritual practice. The liturgy, in its original sense of "the work of the people," furnished affective coordinates for a living community modeled on the primitive church as it rehearsed connections between states of mind and the object world. The resulting (territorial or godly) community served epistemologically to counter superstitious belief through public inquiry. For thinkers like Swift, dissenters were linked through idiosyncratic rites with cellular congregations, isolated locales or ambiguously defined networks of the godly. In theory, these unregulated subcultures could interpret scripture or providential signs without submitting to full public scrutiny; they could lend authority to spiritual claims by limiting the sphere of debate and evidence. Puritans voiced similar concerns about rituals they saw as arbitrary Roman-style idols, inimical to

conscious hermeneutic community. In turn, controversialists linked conscious practice to civic and ethical self-reform. The non-pathological Christian subject's resulting sense of grace spoke also to the psychic relief of dispensation from the letter of the Law.

The real dispute here concerns conflicting visions of the church body as manifest through object-practice, with varying emphases on the visible territorial church and the invisible church of godly souls. Which version of the primitive church, partisans asked, best served to guarantee a critical eye on the practices that supposedly inculcated public virtue? In this regard, it may be useful to set Swift alongside Daniel Defoe, whose dissenting perspective is perhaps not so far removed from him as one might think. The relation between the authors—and then I will take up an obvious point of comparison, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*—has been summed up with striking brevity: "Defoe embodies everything that Swift hates":

> He is the other half of England that Swift struggled all his life to suppress or ignore. … Defoe, with his brickworks and bankruptcies, is the rising small businessman whom Swift saw very correctly as the man who would unseat his timocracy of landed gentleman and substitute an economy of stocks and shares for one of estate and title. He is the Roundhead Dissenter to whom the Whigs run as an ally in their fight with the Tories of the Established Church.[1]

[1] Nigel Dennis, *Jonathan Swift: A Short Character* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 123.

The extreme polarity here has been variously nuanced, but stands as a familiar point of contrast in literary history.[2]

In these terms, a critical distinction between the authors lies in their relative comfort with elements of modernity. Their most popular texts, *Crusoe* and the *Travels*, likewise, have often been evaluated along these lines: the former seems, consciously or not, to embrace a new episteme characterized by empiricist truth-seeking, capitalist commerce, the commodity form and ideologies of bourgeois individual self-determination; the latter seems fundamentally opposed to the erosion of public virtue by these presumptively secular phenomena.

But early modern concern with psychic-spiritual objects suggests changing the terms of this comparison to bring out a different set of opposing tendencies: Namely, the way different visions of the church as a guarantor of psychic health and problem-solving guided evaluations of new forms as spiritual technologies—a debate about how to modernize, not about modernity itself.

For Defoe, the isolated dissenter guided by scripture offers sound analog for the church itself; encounters with novelty simply suggest the zealous Protestant's opportunity to build a godly community from the ground up. *Robinson Crusoe* therefore may be seen, in part, as a metaphorical account of exemplary Protestant practice not necessarily

[2] See, for example, McKeon, *Origins*, 338-9; Montag, *The Unthinkable Swift*, 2. For a less personal comparison related to the discussion here and in the next chapter, see J. Paul Hunter, "Gulliver's Travels and the Novel," in *The Genres of Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Frederik N. Smith (1990). See also John Ross, *Swift and Defoe: A Study in Relationship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1941); Paula Backscheider, *A Being More Intense: A Study of the Prose Works of Bunyan, Swift and Defoe* (New York: AMS Press, 1984).

at a modern frontier, but within England's unreformed spaces. Even isolated individuals, he suggests, can competently assimilate (psychological) objects to spiritual purpose, and their activity in this direction can inhibit pathological investment in dead culture. Defoe's comfort, in other words, with "modern" forms stems from a religious prejudice toward self-reform through worldly activity; it need not represent a secular predilection toxic to enclosed inner beliefs.

Swift's partial re-imaging of Crusoe as Gulliver suggests the orthodox reaction to Defoe's vision of the freelancing nonconformist: divided from the national church's corrective influence, the zealous Protestant risks mistaking his own fantasy for reality. Gulliver is a likely fabulist who ultimately drives himself into schism, not only physically in his journeying, but through a definitively dissenting psychic illness. Modern social and technological forms in Defoe's text —tools of business and exploration, nautical-journalistic prose, middle-class domestic culture—appear to condition psychological isolation and unspiritual desire. Swift's critique of these popular forms has often been understood to extend to commercialism, the commodity, and empiricism—all of which are presumed to instantiate a secular world view. Yet we see here a critique of artifacts that threaten not with disbelief, but with familiar and flawed mental habits. The master pejoratives of Swift's analysis—idolatry, fashion, innovation and artificiality—do still still have their roots firmly in the liturgical disapproval of "newfangled" practice, as the *Book of Common Prayer* puts it, in which cancerous or unnatural growth of new forms appears chiefly as a deviation from the cognitive health ensured by the established church.

Chapters three and four will set *Crusoe* and the *Travels* side-by-side in these terms. My evaluation of *Crusoe,* below, will take up the way Defoe's text describes a spiritual habitus in terms of mental states keyed to material encounters and spiritual exercises, including experiences with artifacts presumed to belong to the secular. The following chapter (four) will read Gulliver's adventures as a rebuttal of Defoe's vision of spiritual self-care. Swift describes Gulliver in near-Weberian terms, as a Protestant subject driven by material desires that soothe his mental insecurities. Gulliver, like the subjects in Swift's *Tale*, seems damaged by a sectarian-type overinvestment in mental idols. Swift links his dysfunction to English ethical cultures of the court and commerce, but only as replicas of sectarian styles to which religion, properly conceived, is the remedy. This reading challenges simple oppositions of Swift and Defoe by highlighting the way they employ a similar religious hermeneutic from different points of view; it also suggests that Swift's critique has nothing to do with modernity as commonly understood.

Robinson Crusoe and *Gulliver's Travels* have been compared often enough as iterations of the adventure tale or simply as versions of the emerging novel form itself. The texts have not, however, been evaluated together in terms of their explicit aspirations as instruments of pious moral improvement. Crusoe's ostensible editor asserts:

> *The Story is told with Modesty, with Seriousness, and with a religious Application of Events to the Uses to which wise Men always aply them* (viz.) *to the Instruction of others by this Example, and to justify and honor the Wisdom of Providence in all the Variety of our Circumstances, let them happen how they will.*

> *The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it: And however thinks, because all such things are dispatch'd, that the Improvement of it, as well as the Diversion, as to the Instruction of the Reader, will be the same; and as such he thinks, without farther Compliment to the World, he does them a great Service in the Publication.* [3]

Swift's second edition, in 1727, adds these claims to his many implicit complaints about Defoe. He exposes Gulliver's similar hopes —only to have Gulliver note as well, in the prefatory letter to his cousin Sympson, his utter failure to put "a full Stop put to all Abuses and Corruptions" (11:6), and to inculcate various public virtues "and a Thousand other Reformations" to correct "every Vice and Folly"(11:6-7). It is, then, not so much as novels or voyage narratives, but as devotionals that I mean to investigate these texts.

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[3] Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (London: W. Taylor, 1719), iii-iv. Subsequent references to Robinson Crusoe are to this (the first) edition and are given parenthetically. The text has ETSC number T072264; document number CW113746641 at Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

Chapter 3: Robinson Crusoe's Primitive Church

Defoe and the Religion of Disenchantment

Defoe does not submit easily to the usual modern narrative about a religious past confronted with a secularizing modernity. He has often been seen as an ultra-realist, a writer whose engagement with commerce or the natural world conditions a kind of brute empiricism.[4] Yet, as critics note, this supposed central impulse of his fiction, the representation of secular factual data, cannot be easily reconciled with his religious sensibilities.[5] Even those who caution against artificial divisions between the novel's aspect as Puritan devotional and the "economic" *Crusoe* have tended to see a conflict between the religious message and Defoe's narrative of material accumulation; at best, they suggest, the text conjures an ideological fantasy—leaving telltale fissures and fractures—an imaginary if impossible reconciliation of irreconcilable orders of truth and value.[6]

But while critics differ as to the degree Defoe's narrative undermines his religious intent, they have tended to construe the nature of belief itself similarly: as deep inner convictions or immersion in a romance-like lifeworld. Defoe's providentialism has

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[4] Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 108-13; Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, 96-104.

[5] Influential cases for a religious motif opposed to worldly concerns include J. Paul Hunter, *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966); G.A. Starr, *Defoe and Casuistry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).

[6] McKeon, *Origins*, 315-37; John Richetti, "Secular Crusoe: The Reluctant Pilgrim Re-Visited," in *Eighteenth-Century Genre and Culture: Serious Reflections on Occasional Forms* ed. Dennis Todd and Cynthia Wall (Cranbury NJ: University of Delaware Press, 2001).

been upheld, typically, by construing the narrative's worldly encounters in allegorical terms, as reflections of more crucial happenings on a spiritual plane. Those who see conflicts between the text's worldly and spiritual elements agree, at least, that (conversion to) belief consists in something like enthrallment to a predetermined symbolic arrangement of reality.[7] The modes of belief and disbelief are drawn from a familiar disenchantment narrative.

Consequently, one might say that the argument for the modern or economic Crusoe emerges less from the strength of his modern impulses than from imputation of a fairly insipid religion. It seems, after all, to be drained of any pragmatic value or intellectual depth, to be reduced to an insistence on typology, narrative conventions or divinatory intimations. Crusoe's (and Defoe's) providentialism is often construed in purely epistemological terms, as little more than the willful desire to attribute all events to God's overarching wisdom in the best of all possible worlds.[8] The disobedience-redemption arc, when treated as a lapse from immersive belief, offers little to inspire: the insistence on Crusoe's adventuring as a fall from grace would seem to be, if not flatly contradicted by his success on the island, reductive of his religion to one of material wish fulfillment[9]; more charitably, but equally unappealingly, it would seem to confirm a

[7] John Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969); Damrosch, *God's Plot*. Richetti argues the novel presents opposing visions of "secular" and "religious" ways of being in the world. Damrosch goes so far as to suggest that Defoe fails to achieve a real Puritan consciousness. Richetti also argues, in "Secular Crusoe," that Defoe cannot "allow Crusoe to achieve and enjoy freedom and power without violating the restrictions of a moral and religious ideology which defines the individual as less than autonomous."
[8] Richetti, "Secular Crusoe," 61; Damrosch, *God's Plot*, 190.
[9] Damrosch, *God's Plot*, 187; McKeon, *Origins*, 326-7.

religious outlook consisting in a rather vapid representation of heavenly reward or an artificial demonstration of Providence's magical guidance.

The strongest proponents of a straightforwardly emic reading of religion in Puritan terms have likewise described a remarkably feeble-seeming faith of otherworldly irrelevance. G.A. Starr, for instance, acknowledges a potentially active Puritan commitment to self-care of the soul in the world, but declines to specify its concrete goals. Ordinary objects, he notes, were sometimes seen as having "symbolic significance" and could be "spiritualized," but this seems to indicate primarily a predilection for typology or premonition-seeking.[10] Biographical or worldly events, he asserts, figure in the narrative and the Puritan mind chiefly as "objectifications" of a spiritual state; he describes scrutiny of God's signs mainly in terms of looking for personal and deliberate coded messages.[11] Hunter, similarly, sees worldly referents mainly as reflective of a spiritual state ("ultimately [Crusoe's] physical activities become a metaphor"), and reads providence largely as "divine control."[12]

The reading here will attempt to find a more serious phenomenological and psychological purpose in Defoe's fiction—one that unites empirical observation of the world with pragmatic self-critique and religious ethics. I suggest that Defoe's text describes, in a programmatic fashion, techniques for habituating the psyche to the kinds of adverse conditions faced by dissenters in England. This reading puts pressure on critical assumptions that have dominated since Hunter and Starr's religious readings by

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[10] Starr, *Defoe and Casuistry*, 22-5.
[11] Ibid., 36-8, 80, 90-1, 94.
[12] Hunter, *Pilgrim*, 189, 53, 56.

proposing that *Robinson Crusoe* is not primarily a travel narrative or about colonial spaces, that the island has no special status ideological or otherwise, that capitalism has no presence in the narrative as a cultural novelty, that none of Crusoe's implements or observations testify to modern empiricism, and that commercial objects are accorded no new or novel treatment. In contrast to religious readings, which have long made some of these claims, I will also argue that Defoe's spirituality has significant practical uses—but that to see them we must alter our sense of what counts as early modern religion in the text.

Robinson Crusoe and Disposition of Mind

Readings of Crusoe's spiritual narrative obviously differ widely, but its structural role in the text has generally been construed along several basic lines. In one sense, for example, Crusoe's early failure to repent of his disobedience to his father—his "original sin"—furnishes a specific example of the more abstract drama of sin and grace; Crusoe's life serves as a parable on the order of the biblical prodigal son, to whom he directly compares himself (230). The narrative thus offers a tangible correlate for a soteriological message, a kernel of meaning to be applied to the reader's own life. Crusoe's story therefore also functions more practically or ideologically as a cautionary tale of the wages of greed or disobedience to authority. One can, as well, point to the spiritual narrative as furnishing the underlying moral and structural conventions of a surface-literal or even secular tale, with latent content that may or may not be meaningful for individual readers.

In general, then, it is usual to find a gap between Crusoe's thoughts and emotions as they figure a representative human consciousness and the religious meaning that readers could derive. But the text also affirms that spiritual conditions—in this case, failure to repent—also directly *are* affective states conditioned by worldly experiences, rendered here as an experience of shame:

> Shame opposed the best Motions that offered to my Thoughts; and it immediately occurr'd to me how I should be laugh'd at among the Neighbours, and should be asham'd to see, not my Father and Mother only, but even every Body else; from whence I have since often observed, how incongruous and irrational the common Temper of Mankind is, especially of Youth, to that Reason which ought to guide them in such Cases, *viz.* That they are not asham'd to sin, and yet are asham'd to repent (16).

That is, while shame is a worldly obstacle to a more spiritual path (obedience, contrition), and arguably the exterior or allegorical sign of a deeper unrepentant state of the soul or failure to accept grace, it also is itself Crusoe's religious failing and the condition to which spiritual practice is a remedy. Crusoe's affect, his perception of humiliating surveillance locates his problem in a psychological disorder: He experiences piety improperly, as an ordinary unconscious desire for approval amid arbitrary social norms; it is a submissive work carried out before an unforgiving projected Other. The text therefore recounts Crusoe's cognitive interventions to repair this emotional state through a more conscious integration of religious imperatives within his worldly encounters. His experiences of grace are, similarly accounts of mental well-being or confidence. Crusoe

is “exceedingly refresh’d, and my Spirits lively and cheerful”; he finds, at times, a “calm, sedate Way of Living” and elsewhere can see that “both my Sorrows and my Joys; my very Desires alter’d, my Affections chang’d their Gusts, and my Delights were perfectly new” (111, 197, 132).

My point here is not the reductive one, that religious feelings are nothing but elevated, culturally contingent terms for mental states, or that the narrative is transparent to psychoanalytic concepts; rather, I suggest the way Defoe’s inherited affective-religious terminology offers an internally coherent cognitive theory of belief. The text should serve as a caution that neither apparently emotional terms (shame) nor religious concepts (providence) can be neutrally extracted from a native religious psychology.

This, most simply, is to attend to acknowledged elements of spiritual autobiography; yet I want to address more fully the text’s pragmatic goals—to see the account more as notes toward a working theory of mental objects and what Crusoe calls “disposition[s] of mind” than as a set of doctrines, thematics or genre conventions (134). Plot events, even in this sensational narrative, may be secondary: Crusoe’s careful account of tasks and encounters arguably functions largely as a record of environmental variables underlying the corresponding record of moods—subtle shades of, mainly, anxiety and moments of mental relief.[13] He is by turns—to compile a non-exhaustive cross section of examples: “terrify’d in my Mind”, in “Agony of Mind”; “dreadfully frighted”; in “Horror of Mind”; in “the deepest Gulph of human Misery”; able to bring “

[13] John Bender has argued that “narrative in its relation to consciousness is the actual subject here: accounts of the self are the self.” See *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 53.

my Mind a little to relish my Condition"; "afflicting my self"; "surpriz'd and perfectly astonish'd"; "like one dead or stupify'd"; "terrify'd and dejected";" under dreadful Apprehensions"; possessed of "a certain Stupidity of Soul, without Desire of Good, or Conscience of Evil"; "surpriz'd with a Kind of Extasie"; "confus'd"; "very sad and heavy-hearted."[14]

The narrative does a certain analytic work with these states, teasing out, for example, the differences between a "meer common flight of joy" and a cautious "compleat happiness" (104, 261). It also affirms the pervasive power of affect, as when Crusoe recounts living for two solid years in "Uneasinesses" (193). This, if we take it seriously, is an unnerving account of helplessness before psychological objects and feelings for which one is nevertheless responsible:

> How strange a Chequer Work of Providence is the Life of Man! and by what secret differing Springs are the Affections hurry'd about as differing Circumstance present! To Day we love what to Morrow we hate; to Day we seek what to Morrow we shun; to Day we desire what to Morrow we fear; nay even tremble at the Apprehensions of; this was exemplify'd in me at this Time in the most lively Manner imaginable. (184)

Crusoe's ever-changing circumstances are, at bottom, a shifting array of desires and aversions conditioned, but not predictably determined by a world of psychological objects. There are neither good objects nor bad except in the paradoxical sense of

[14] See pages: 7; 8; 11; 12; 43; 77; 81; 90; 93; 94; 101; 103; 104; 105; 107.

modern psychoanalysis, that the subject can guiltily annihilate their own cause of desire, or desire their own annihilation. As Crusoe formulates the matter:

> There are some secret moving Springs in the Affections, which when they are set a going by some Object in view, or be it some Object, though not in view, yet rendred present to the Mind by the Power of Imagination, that Motion carries out the Soul by its Impetuosity to such violent eager embracings of the Object, that the Absence of it is insupportable. (222)

Even Robinson Crusoe's signature object-encounter, with the mysterious footprint in the sand, serves more as an opportunity for self reflection than an account of the charged possibilities that he may encounter a longed-for companion or a deadly threat. The object of attention here is the emotion itself, "how many various Shapes affrighted Imagination represented Things to me in, how many wild Ideas were found every Moment in my Fancy, and what strange unaccountable Whimsies came into my Thoughts" (182). Upon reflection, the improbably extreme possibilities for the imagined mysterious stranger—either best friend or cannibal—surely point to an encounter with the psychological, rather than the plot object, as does its ultimate resolution—friend *and* cannibal.

The narrative often treats affect less as a subjective response than an unbidden, even objective force and, beyond this, as a quality of the world itself. Defoe/Crusoe's phenomenological accounts of mental "disposition" perhaps bear brief comparison to Martin Heidegger's analysis of same concept in *Being and Time*, if only to highlight the difficulty of finding a ready modern analogue. Heidegger's quasi-poetic, quasi-theological project furnishes, in the notion of disposition or sensibility (*Befindlichkeit*),

an account of being as a pre-conceptual embedding in the world—one that is, nonetheless, disclosed to beings through their sense of attunement to the world, their mood.[15] The notion of mood not as a content of beings, but as that in which their being takes place, offers a provisional shorthand for Crusoe's casual but hard-to-conceptualize links between self, creation, and affect—the way the merest accidents, natural forces and the deepest states of his soul are in continual conversation.

Heidegger's sense of embeddedness as a "being-toward" some potential state also speaks to the temporally directed quality of Crusoe's self-presentation.[16] For the former, existence takes place within practical tasks and ultimate goals that provide a horizon of meaning. Crusoe is perhaps most crucially always outside of himself—involved in some future project, identified with some state of affairs not in his present—a past sinner, a rescued survivor, a future financial success—that also discloses his orientation toward providence and the state of his soul.

One is, however, brought up short with respect to the Heideggerian analogy by Crusoe's pervasive anxiety—for Heidegger a constitutive element of all being-in-the-world, but for Crusoe a sign of avoidable spiritual and mental-physical illness.[17] His

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[15]See, for example, I.v, ¶ 29-31 in Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). On the translation of *Befindlichkeit*, see Richard Sembera, *Rephrasing Heidegger: A Companion to Being and Time* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007), 252-3. Macquarrie and Robinson use the translation "state of mind," but Heidegger also glosses his concept as "mood" (*Stimmung*) or "attunement" (*Gestimmtheit*). On mood and attunement see also Martin Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeil and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995), 66-9. For a discussion of Heideggerian analyses of mood see Thomas Pfau, *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 1-26.

[16] For example, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 149-68.

[17]Ibid., 179-82.

involvement in futurity—“afflicting my self with Fruitless Wishes” (127) -- or identification with hypothetical selves as ideals or lost opportunities serves, naturally enough as a source of misery:

> Here I meditated nothing but my Escape; and what Method I might take to effect it, but found no Way that had the least Probability in it: Nothing presented to make the Supposition of it rational; for I had no Body to communicate it to, that would embark with me; no Fellow-Slave, no *Englishman, Irishman,* or *Scotsman* there but my self; so that For two Years, tho’ I often pleased my self with the Imagination, yet I never had the least encouraging Prospect of putting it in Practice. (21)

This sort of wishing and hoping and regretting exceeds discrete individual dissatisfaction inasmuch as it reveals a quality of improper worldly care, a turning away from providence. Heidegger’s ontology suggests, in a way resonant in the text, that fundamental attunements (toward salvation, for example) change the subject’s very world, as the ground of their being. But where he supposes an immersion in such moods, Defoe offers, in terms more congenial to psychoanalysis, a subject whose rejected choices remain operative. Defoe’s narrative casts Crusoe’s existential spreading out into potential or incipient selves as a function of renunciation: to invest in one path entails a loss or disavowal of others that may be keenly felt. Most obviously, Crusoe’s sin equates with a habit of repression, the denial of his present in favor of fantasies. The redemption plot offers most basically a counter-narrative of deliberate bringing to consciousness of this material.

Hypothetical Training: If I Had … I Should Have …

As in the case of spiritual illness, Crusoe describes grace mainly as a class of mental dispositions, perhaps less a positive state of affairs than the receding of anxiety. The language of relief pervades the text as the fruit of Crusoe's strenuous efforts at "Religious Exercise" (121). He reads and studies, prays, marks time, meditates, observes holidays, and engages in mental reflection, allowing him, at times, to bring "my State of Life to be much easier in it self than it was at first, and much easier to my Mind, as well as to my Body" (153).

Crusoe describes his fears as something to be mastered, rendered only apparent. The goal might best be described as a state of equanimity or Stoic *ataraxia*, in which mental objects are deprived of their capacity to disturb: "I look'd now upon the World as a Thing remote, which I had nothing to do with, no Expectation from, and indeed no Desires about: In a Word, I had nothing indeed to do with it, nor was ever like to have; so I thought it look'd as we may perhaps look upon it hereafter, *viz.* as a Place I had liv'd in, but was come out of it" (151).

This requires, we see, constant scrutiny of unbalancing emotion, as well as a theoretical awareness of the problem. Such self-control, while a conscious and worldly activity, remains in the ambit of religion, since it is the means by which Crusoe is able to reconstrue his circumstances as a gift from God, to see "what a Table was here spread for me in a Wilderness, where I saw nothing at first but to perish for Hunger" (175). When Crusoe remarks, subsequently, that "it would have made a Stoick smile to have seen, me

and my little Family sit down to Dinner; there was my Majesty the Prince and Lord of the whole Island" (175) we can hear him boasting not only that the scene could move even a Stoic, but also that his mental discipline and ability to re-conceive his desolation might garner the Stoic's approval. If Crusoe's feelings run to more enthusiastic expressions of deliverance and thankfulness, these remain victories of self-control over previously unruly and unbidden mental states:

> It was now that I began sensibly to feel how much more happy this Life I now led was, with all its miserable Circumstances, than the wicked, cursed, abominable Life I led all the past Part of my Days; and now I chang'd both my Sorrows and my Joys; my very Desires alter'd, my Affections chang'd their Gusts, and my Delights were perfectly new from what they were at my first Coming, or indeed for the two Years past. (132)

In the simplest possible terms, Crusoe re-figures what appears to be a curse into a blessing:

> I spent the whole Day in humble and thankful Acknowledgments of the many wonderful Mercies which my Solitary Condition was attended with, and without which it might have been infinitely more miserable. I gave humble and hearty Thanks that God had been pleas'd to discover to me, even that it was possible I might be more happy in this Solitary Condition, than I should have been in a Liberty of Society, and in all the Pleasures of the World. (132)

This progress often has been shorthanded as a "conversion." True enough, but the term—at least in the sense of privileging a key event, driving narrative, or sudden pious

enlightenment—doesn't really do justice to Crusoe's steady devotion to mental training techniques. His refreshed spiritual perspective follows repeated distinct exercises, including steady re-application in the face of failure.

Specifically, and perhaps counter-intuitively, his reform requires deliberate application of the same psychic-spiritual habits that drove his discontent and despair: rigorous contemplation of hypothetical realities designed to cast his situation in light of some alternative:

> It put me upon reflecting, How little repining there would be among Mankind, at any Condition of Life, if People would rather compare their Condition with those that are worse, in order to be thankful, than be always comparing them with those which are better, to assist their Murmurings and Complainings. (198)

> I spent whole Hours, I may say whole Days, in representing to my self in the most lively Colours, how I must have acted, if I had got nothing out of the Ship. How I could not have so much as got any Food, except Fish and Turtles; and that as it was long before I found any of them, I must have perish'd first. That I should have liv'd, if I had not perish'd, like a meer Savage. That if I had kill'd a Goat, or a Fowl, by any Contrivance, I had no way to flea or open them, or part the Flesh from the Skin, and the Bowels, or to cut it up; but must gnaw it with my Teeth, and pull it with my Claws like a Beast.(154)

> These Refections made me very sensible of the Goodness of Providence to me, and very thankful for my present Condition, with all its Hardships and Misfortunes: And this Part also I cannot but recommend to the Reflection of those, who are apt in their Misery to say, *Is any Affliction like mine!* Let them consider, How much worse the Cases of some People are, and their Case might have been, if Providence had thought fit. (154)

Crusoe inverts his obsessive dwelling on counterfactuals, replacing longed-for ideals with unrealized fears. He then commends his experiences to the reader as honed techniques. His spiritual exercises include precise parameters for maximizing edifying effect (representing "in the most lively colours"); they are deliberate and repeated; and they imbue the redemption narrative—inevitably a rather predictable arc—with a sense of contingency and agency.

> I had another Reflection which assisted me also to comfort my Mind with Hopes; and this was, comparing my present Condition with what I had deserv'd, and had therefore Reason to expect from the Hand of Providence. I had liv'd a dreadful Life, perfectly destitute of the Knowledge and Fear of God. I had been well instructed by Father and Mother; neither had they been wanting to me, in their early Endeavours, to infuse a religious Awe of God into my Mind, a Sense of my Duty, and of what the Nature and End of my Being, requir'd of me. But alas! falling early into the Seafaring Life, which of all the Lives is the most destitute of the Fear of God, though his Terrors arc always before them; I say, falling early into the Seafaring Life, and into Seafaring Company, all that little Sense of

> Religion which I had entertain'd, was laugh'd out of me by my Mess-Mates, by a harden'd despising of Dangers; and the Views of Death, which grew habitual to me; by my long Absence from all Manner of Opportunities to converse with any thing but what was like my self, or to hear any thing that was good, or tended towards it. (154-5)

Crusoe's backslidings, narrative repetitions and revisions, if not calculated to specific effect, show Defoe's cultural prejudice toward small scale narratives of day-to-day piety, a daily struggle to re-center the self amid a number of potentials. The narrative here equates faith itself with a willingness to study a variety of dire alternatives in the service of the present: "we never see the true State of our Condition, till it is illustrated to us by its Contraries; nor know how to value what we enjoy, but by the want of it" (164).

Being-Toward Being Eaten

As dogma or a bare proposition, Crusoe's recognition of "how easy it was for the Providence of God to make the most miserable Condition Mankind could be in *worse*" is a crude foundation for faith (164). At best, it suggests redemption through fearful discipline or a defensive rationalization of belief in the face of evil. At worst, it may resemble the modern injunction toward so-called positive thinking; or, it risks (as Anglican critics indeed charged) a convenient and callously narrow notion of Providence—in which the horrible deaths of Crusoe's fellow sailors, for example, serve

neatly as proof of God's benevolent concern for Crusoe.[18] Despite the puerile sensibility such a faith might suggest, modern estimations of the novel have often implied the presence of exactly this perspective.

But seen as religious exercises simulating an individual's interface with the world, Crusoe's frightening hypotheticals take on a different cast. More than simply conjure dire alternatives—against which his situation can be regarded in an attitude of thankfulness—Crusoe describes a process of acclimating himself to radical changes in circumstance. This means, in part, cultivating healthy reactions to the unexpected. More importantly, though, the text suggests that casting himself forward into imaginary permutations of disaster helps Crusoe master corresponding traumatic implications for his place in creation—what Crusoe calls the "nature and end of my being" (155). He must learn to see himself not only as shipwrecked, but as shipwreckable: a being for whom shipwreck reflects on or figures his human potential, limits and dignity—a being for whom, alternatively, slavery or cannibalism are existential, not merely circumstantial, possibilities. Crusoe's anxiety over particular events often seems a shield against the more generalized anxiety of threats to his sense of being and the world's symbolic constitution. Thus Crusoe, in the passage above, locates his early Fall not only in sinful activity, but also in a forgetting of the true limits of his being. His Puritan upbringing offered no less than the humbling perspective provided by terrors of the sea: the Real

[18] There are certainly grounds for this reading: "Thanks to God who had so happily and comfortably provided for me in my desolate Condition; and that of two Ships Companies who were now cast away upon this part of the World, not one Life should be spar'd but mine: I learn'd here again to observe, that it is very rare that the Providence of God casts us into any Condition of Life so low, or any Misery so great, but we may see something or other to be thankful for; and may see others in worse Circumstances than our own" (221).

always hides a further possibility. The Christian (or Stoic) lesson must be to give up on the idea of security.

Crusoe's view here, quite clearly I think, amounts to a firm repudiation of the positivist notion of empirical observation often attributed to Defoe and alleged to sit uncomfortably with his religious sensibility. Defoe rejects any simple concept of an underlying bedrock "real" in favor of the kind of pragmatism we find in Swift: reality is here simply that which God continues to make manifest, and Defoe's whole spiritual outlook rests on the premise that it is never exhausted by human knowledge. This conceptual scheme implies something like a Lacanian Real rather than empirical reality, though one might also reference Heidegger's sense of truth as an unconcealing.[19] The human relation to the world is not, to put it another way, epistemological at all, since it is really defined by the psychic stance one takes toward what can only be a provisional limit of knowing.

Crusoe's spiritual contemplation amounts to metaphysical work or a re-creation of the subject; his hypothetical thought objects help stabilize a self identified less with former projects of desire and more with his actual surroundings. He engages in a kind of *fort-da* game with himself, making repeated mental forays along provisional alternate paths until he is bound up with or spread across more relevant or realistic possibilities.[20] His reform of desires appears in the subtle shift in his guilt: from a self-pitying

[19] Heidegger's use of the phenomenological category of "the world" as opposed to philosophically loaded concepts like "reality" also speaks to the critique Lacan makes with his concept of the Real.
[20] Freud's well-known *fort-da* example of soothing anxiety, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, concerns a child repeatedly playing out a toy on a length of thread and reeling it back to virtually rehearse and master the here/gone dynamic of his mother's absence; Peter Gay, ed. *The Freud Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton,1989), 599-601.

identification with a path he should have chosen, at the expense of his present, to recognition of the need to expand, not narrow, his sense of possibilities.

This process deliberately limits the possibility of specious Panglossian belief. Crusoe, in fact, explicitly anticipates and critiques the posture of defensive apologetics and disciplined obedience. He can never simply believe that everything is for the best, since real respect for providence means renouncing attachments to inevitably temporary conditions, the provisionally accepted object world, and their inducements to a false sense of psychic security. Having achieved a certain acceptance of fate, he further declares that "it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken Solitary Condition, than it was probable I should ever have been in any other Particular State in the World; and with this Thought I was going to give Thanks to God for bringing me to this Place" (133). But he quickly recants: "I know not what it was, but something shock'd my Mind at that Thought, and I durst not speak the Words: How canst thou be such a Hypocrite" (133). Crusoe does not mistake faith for a would-be totalizing narrative that demands repression of his reservations. Instead, he maintains a conscious awareness of real conditions and their limits, a stance opposed to his former habit of idealizing certain states of affairs. He therefore rejects the psychic character of the zealous convert, who overcompensates for persistent doubt by clinging neurotically to his newfound piety.

Crusoe's discovery of the footprint offers an exemplary instance of his repeated dynamic of reform. There he is as much concerned with his reaction, which threatens collapse of his mental equilibrium, as he is with the thing itself: "My Fear banish'd all

my religious Hope; all that former Confidence in God which was founded upon such wonderful Experience as I had had of his Goodness, now vanished" (184). Crusoe distinguishes between the disturbing object and his ontological anxiety, between localized fear and the sense that he has been cast altogether from the world of meaning secured by his recent assumptions about Providence: "Fear of Danger is ten thousand Times more terrifying than Danger it self, when apparent to the Eyes; and we find the Burthen of Anxiety greater by much, than the Evil which we are anxious about … I had not that Relief in this Trouble from the Resignation I used to practise, that I hop'd to have. I look'd, I thought, like *Saul,* who complain'd not only that the *Philistines* were upon him; but that God had forsaken him" (188). His subsequent reflections suggest, again, that desire—or, rather, his longing for what he thinks and understands as desirable—is his chief obstacle.

During his long isolation, he observes, he naturally came to regard the prospect of fellow man as "the greatest Blessing that Heaven it self, next to the supreme Blessing of Salvation, could bestow" (185). Now, however, his fears blight the possibility. The encounter destabilizes because it forces a real confrontation with a merely idealized future. Having worked to acclimate himself to the psychic reality of solitude he still risks and experiences unwitting attachment to this new set of assumptions. Under pressure of being actualized, the prospect of a visitor threatens a more traumatic horizon of expectations—one that retrospectively (so to speak) alters his accustomed cognitive map of future-directed life activity, his hopes and plans—changing his desire to anxiety.

In answer to this new trauma, Crusoe toys with an unsubtle acknowledgement that he exists, in any case, at God's sufferance; he falls into a fatalism that substitutes passive submission for real mental self-possession. But this dogmatic formulation of God's power retains a theoretical unhelpfulness for "Hours, Days; nay, I may say, Weeks and Months" of backsliding and anxiety (186). Only when Crusoe marshals his mental composure and begins to "think sedately" does he re-master his sense of saving grace and rebuild his sense of objects of desire (189). The real spiritual solution is a rather pedestrian reflection resulting in reasoned observations: that the island is likely to encounter some inevitable number of incursions; that the interlopers, by all available empirical evidence, seem uninterested in staying. With a realistic view of his actual danger, Crusoe finds real relief when he then begins the practical exercise of building his fortifications, a process of participation in a formerly unthinkable reality that cannot be distinguished from the preceding spiritual inner dialogue.

A Great Many Things: Reconfiguring and Repetition

One might say Crusoe's moral progress occurs less through events than through psychological objects—comprising new spiritual eco-systems that he strives to identify and master. His devotional exercises carry into his technical innovating—"the mechanick Exercises which my Necessities put me upon applying my self to"—as a regimen of investing himself the here-and-now (170). Crusoe, who finally becomes, for example, "a very good *Carpenter*" has his technical mastery rewarded with a new potential identity, one signifying a deep and earned connection with a particular physical

domain (170). Arriving, too, at "an unexpected Perfection in my Earthen Ware" Crusoe reports a kind of grace-through-competence, sliding into the mode of spiritual self-analysis:

> I think I was never more vain of my own Performance, or more joyful for any thing I found out, than for my being able to make a Tobacco-Pipe. And tho' it was a very ugly clumsy thing, when it was done, and only burnt red like other Earthen Ware, yet as it was hard and firm, and would draw the Smoke, I was exceedingly comforted with it. (170)

Crusoe's time on the island has, of course, long been seen in terms of his relations with objects and technologies. For good reason, that analysis has focused on commodity objects he trades, salvages and finally creates as he re-builds a society in miniature. Yet these elements of capital, empire, or empirical description, or of modernity, as they are generally seen, can also be described as part of a radical spiritual re-purposing and reconfiguration of things, a disengagement from the world of goods that dominates in so much critical work.

Such goods are impressively re-thought throughout the novel. Crusoe gives a detailed account of the items he ships from place to place prior to his travail on the island. But the global network is, of course, ruptured in a minor way by Crusoe's shipwreck; his removal from circulation is marked by the erasure of exchange value, the often-noted uselessness of his money. In Crusoe's obsessive accounting, as it continues after the shipwreck, there is at least a scintilla of parody on the order of Thoreau's penurious tabulation of the cost of building materials for his cabin on Walden Pond. Crusoe's

scrounging of capital's flotsam offers an image as prophetic of the modern economy's refugees, recyclers and waste as it is of the self-starting entrepreneur. If Crusoe is capital's dawn in property accumulation, then he is also its twilight in the Bangladeshi shipbreaker. Crusoe, disconnected as he is, engaged in salvage and survival, re-composes units of materiel liberated from approved channels of production.

The island itself, certainly—as John Bender has argued—furnishes an image of isolation and encapsulation; it is a crucible.[21] And yet, precisely as a space withdrawn or concealed, it offers at least the possibility for a re-purposing and innovating of technological society. It is, after all, a place where a chest and boards can become a "kind of hut"; a "sail and some poles" become a tent; ship masts become a raft, pieces of cable help comprise a fence, iron crowbars make a pick axe, neckcloths serve as a sieve, and so forth.

The obvious objection here is that Crusoe, given this potential freedom, quickly busies himself re-creating a bourgeois fantasy of life in England. A great innovator, he is in at least one sense, extraordinarily uncreative; the prison is of his own making, because he uses only what already exists in his head. The narrow parameters of his familiar-fantasy world are given in the not-quite-ironic designations of his new home: his caves and tents and gardens become "cellars," "kitchens," a "country house," a "country seat," a "castle" (69, 86, 168, 179, 182). This is a testament to his iron will and resourcefulness, but it also raises the question of whether the few technologies he salvages from the wreck—bits of sail, iron bars—already contain the DNA of

[21] Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary*, 56-61.

commercial culture, much as the caveman's bone tool, in the famous cut in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, inevitably becomes the spacecraft.

But rather than simply give up reading for Crusoe's creative potential, we might note that the text itself points to Crusoe's repetition of established social practice as a problem, or something that holds meaning, at least, against a background of other unrealized possibilities. The issue is central, especially, to his period of sin and failure, which are characterized precisely in terms of a repetition compulsion, which we might take in its full psychoanalytic sense and as a diagnosis of the culture's role in Crusoe's spiritual side. Having defied his father and risked a great deal to, ultimately, try his hand as a plantation owner in Brazil, Crusoe finds himself, under less pleasant circumstances, doing exactly what he sought to avoid:

> But alas! for me to do wrong that never did right, was no great Wonder: I had no Remedy but to go on; I was gotten into an Employment quite remote to my Genius, and directly country to the Life I delighted in, and for which I forsook my Father's House, and broke thro' all his good Advice; nay, I was coming into the very Middle Station, or upper Degree of low Life, which my Father advised me to before; and which if I resolved to go on with, I might as well ha' staid at Home, and never have fatigu'd my self in the World as I had done; and I used often to say to my self, I could ha' done this as well in *England* among my Friends, as ha' gone 5000 Miles off to do it among Strangers and Salvages in a Wilderness, and at such a Distance, as never to hear from any Part of the World that had the least Knowledge of me. (39-40)

This realization leads him to make the further (fatal) observation that his condition resembles nothing so much as being stranded on a desert island:

> In this manner I used to look upon my Condition with the utmost Regret. I had no body to converse with but now and then this Neighbour; no Work to be done, but by the Labour of my Hands; and I used to say, I liv'd just like a Man cast away upon some desolate Island, that had no body there but himself. But how just has it been, and how should all Men reflect, that when they compare their present Conditions with others that are worse, Heaven may oblige them to make the Exchange, and be convinc'd of their former Felicity by their Experience: I say, how just has it been, that the truly solitary Life I reflected on in an Island of meer Desolation should be my Lot, who had so often unjustly compar'd it with the Life which I then led, in which had I continued, I had in all Probability been exceeding prosperous and rich. (40)

Crusoe recounts these reversals to show his signature errors—habits of regret and attachment—and the lessons learned. But his insights, too, are implicated in the dialectics of his desire. He glimpses the emptiness of the dissatisfaction that led him to Brazil—but only by, in a simple reversal, idealizing England; cast on the island, he regrets his former discontent—by comparing his lot to a fantasy about success in Brazil.

Crusoe diagnoses his sin in disobeying his father as "not being satisfy'd with the Station wherein God and Nature has plac'd" him (230). But his upward mobility, if it is that, hardly suggests a destabilizing or violation of his father's social vision. Instead, even at the level of fantasy, Crusoe reliably duplicates his father's England. His ever-

elusive ideals here (prosperity and ease, society and friends, security and feelings of felicity) are all internal to, even definitive of, the father's own principles. Instead of a transgression against social or economic norms, Crusoe's discontent reflects a sense of inadequacy instilled at his point of origin. Repeatedly, he surrounds himself with familiar objects of desire whose perfection, however, always lies elsewhere. Only through spiritual exercises aimed at cultivating equanimity does he cease projecting or deferring a sense of self away from his present and onto his abstractly idealized semblance. Crusoe's ultimate reconciliation to his island fate is a recognition that he is, after all, best suited—at the levels of desire and competence—to exactly those tasks that his father commended to him, and indeed that he is fit for little else.

The point here is that Crusoe and his father differ less in kind than in degree. The latter's advocacy of bourgeois prosperity does not offer a meaningful alternative to the temptations of capital. His ideological references to Classical moderation and a three-estate social model offer at best a patina of tradition compatible with his own commercial past, with no clear religious critique. His wish to see Crusoe made a lawyer is consistent with a second-generation consolidation of cultural capital in the era—a continuation, that is, of his own entrepreneurial journey; his son's adventuring offers no departure into the economic future but a too exact repetition of the family's economic past. Crusoe proposes the antithesis of modern economic thinking, substituting a symbolic gamble with death and fortune for the trans-generational investment of his father's primitive accumulation.

We know, too, that Crusoe's father acquired his wealth by leaving his native Germany to engage in foreign trade, as Crusoe plans. Tellingly, Crusoe, who can only account for his ambitions as vague wanderlust, makes his crucial first departure by sea from Hull, just where his father landed, seemingly unconsciously, "being one Day at *Hull,* where I went casually, and without any Purpose of making an Elopement that time" (6). But beyond the narrow Freudian reading of submerged family drama, the text posits (in terms more congenial to Lacan) Crusoe's stubborn lack in social terms: as an over-identification with the material signifiers of his father's milieu. From the Oedipal reading that arguably underlies accounts of the capitalist-economic Crusoe (he wants to "outdo" his father, thus threatening traditional structures) one can salvage the actual psychoanalytic insight that what Oedipus desires is the desire of the Other: to outdo his father is only to become the *ne plus ultra* of, precisely, his father. Implicitly, Crusoe's materialistic streak manifests a greed that is actually at the core of his father's petite bourgeois soul. This is to upset the common juxtaposition of Crusoe's supposedly boundless will-to-power with his father's restraint; in shrewd practical terms, it is the father who seeks to extend his acquisitive will even beyond death. Crusoe's flight plausibly suggests a refusal to be the instrument of his father's dead hand—though his guilty complex of repetition and self-sabotage suggests, as he directly asserts, a spiritual problem rather than a critical repudiation.

At the same time, the real distinction between Crusoe and father rests in the latter's insistence on worldly activities not only as libidinal imperatives, but also as boundaries calculated to maximize prosperity without risk, and—concomitantly —to

secure conditions favorable to self-discipline. His advice, while nominally proposing a sort of stasis and class identity, mainly concerns the equanimity Crusoe learns to associate with spiritual health. Those in “the middle state” are not exposed to “the Miseries and Hardships, the Labour and Sufferings, of the mechanic Part of Mankind, and not embarrass’d with the Pride, Luxury, Ambition, and Envy of the upper Part of Mankind”; their “happiness” consists in, besides avoiding material afflictions of labor, want and calamity, “Vertues” and “Enjoyments” and freedom from “so many Distempers and Uneasinesses either of Body or Mind;” they are not “harrast with perplex’d Circumstances, which rob the Soul of Peace, and the Body of Rest; not enrag’d with the Passion of Envy, or secret burning Lust of Ambition for great things; but in easy Circumstances sliding gently thro’ the World, and sensibly tasting the Sweets of living, without the bitter, feeling that they are happy, and learning by every Day’s Experience to know it more sensibly” (3-4). His goal is a life conducive to states free of anxiety, in circumstances that do not tempt to behaviors further provocative of sin, desire and disturbance. Crusoe’s father ties his native material culture to techniques for conscious mastery of surroundings—they are a means, not, as Crusoe experiences them, libidinal ends in themselves.

Surprisingly little has been made of this rationale for his strictures. Readings of the father’s desire tend to fall into two broad categories, neither much interested in its actual content or merit. It has been seen, first, as divine or paternal Law itself, making a certain formal arbitrariness more or less the point: Crusoe’s rebellion represents disobedience/sin as such; his redemption amounts to an allegorical disciplining into

(problematic, as I have suggested) faith in providence whatever the apparent circumstances. Alternatively, the advice has been seen in light of Defoe's political imaginary, the father figuring pious or traditional resistance to, or an alibi for, capitalist or imperialist appetites—a conflict sublated by a notional spiritualization of Crusoe's desires on an island, insulated from real exchange.[22]

But the rhetoric of spiritual exercise and equanimity locates Crusoe's problem in desire itself, not in real departure from his father's ideals or in simple disobedience. His repeated re-assembling of England shows pursuit of something very like his father's vision, yet without willingness to compromise (or spiritually reform) his desire through real work, inevitable failures, and partial success. The father's model, in contrast, excludes gratuitous objects (causes) of desire and anxiety; he eschews cultural idols and situations provocative of self-doubt in favor of a cultivated, conscious mastering of self into a limited environment. Crusoe's attempt on the island to "master my Despondency" through double-entry bookkeeping, the account of his blessings and troubles, offers the perfect image of the life intended for him at home, in which techniques for prudent exercise of one's calling serve, spiritually, to refine object choices in line with actual options (76). This is not, in other words, a degraded and capitalist version of a Calvinist toting-up of heavenly accounts (itself something of a caricature). What could, certainly, be a dead commercial practice is here a rational exercise with the spiritual end of challenging ideological assumptions: Crusoe undertakes a blunt cost-benefit analysis of his material situation, one that tutors him away from fantasy or unproductive

[22] See the readings offered in McKeon, *Origins*; Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*.

idealizations of imagined alternatives. In theory, his father's guidance contains the possibility of doing the same through continual concrete activity. In England, as on the island, he should simply have mastered the situation in all its shortcomings.

Influential readings of *Crusoe* have been guided, at least in part, by the apparent difficulty of reconciling Crusoe's island successes with his recognition that he never should have disobeyed his father (his apparent materialism must be sanitized, or his spirituality seen to be compromised). But there is no need to second-guess Crusoe's claims of redemption, just as we can take the father's advice at face value: the real issue is one of management, of the spiritual self realized in real activity, a convergence of object practice and state of soul—and not, as in Oedipal crisis, deferred onto a projected state of full satisfaction. Crusoe's decision to set sail "in the habit of a gentleman" (17) rather than a sailor illustrates the point. The incident contrasts mere outward signs of success with the actual aptitude of a vocation; the corollary, of course, is that spiritual-mental serenity follows from conditions of practical knowledge (a belief easily vulgarized, both by and about Puritan thought into the idea that material rewards follow a state of grace). We might thus better understand Crusoe's references to social "station" in the sense of a zone of competence where the letter and the spirit of the law converge, rather than an indication of hierarchy. This is not a narrative about being who you aren't supposed to be (a modern reading), it is a narrative about doing what you don't know how to do (a Protestant conversion narrative).

Discussions of capitalist acquisition therefore lead us astray from the real issue of good governance: Crusoe only shows impulses long ingrained in the bourgeios mentality;

his deviation consists in pursuing them beyond the space where they are mastered into profit, faith *and* expertise. His island sojourn belatedly instances corrective activity from the ground up.[23] This entails, though, the (needless, from his father's point of view) hard work of managing realms in which he has little to no control or authority. His reiterations of English symbolic culture on the island—that is, his predisposition to middle class success—suggest exactly the reason he should have stayed home.

Internal Exile: How Like a King I Din'd Too All Alone

To come to *Robinson Crusoe* for a critique or tribute to capitalist modernity or to witness the shock of its newness is to arrive too late. Crusoe might, conceivably, present Weber's neurotically driven Puritan-capitalist type; but more in evidence is a Puritan corrective to unfettered cultural desire. For Crusoe's father, commerce's prudent managerial techniques offer a pious antidote to idolatrous forms of social struggle that produce unease and incompetence. Crusoe, true, evinces a potential fetishism of commercial forms; his father's specific voicing of spiritual pragmatism through business might be a generation late, being directed at aristocrats and adventurers, whose emotional commitments include imperatives like honor or envy. But this is to admit, as well, that capital's more corrosive features are already suffused in the psychological constitution of the family, in the objects they identify themselves through. Their expression, furthermore, remains susceptible to technical and psychological mastery not necessarily

[23] Note, too, that in retrospect Crusoe avers that Brazil might have afforded him a state of grace as well as extreme prosperity, had he been willing to continue in the endeavors in which he was most knowledgeable: there is nothing unique about the island in this regard, and no difficulty aligning the spiritual with commodity exchange.

at odds with circuits of labor and value. In a larger sense, the text points to the limitations of reading early modern capitalism abstractly, in terms of commodity exchange, and not socially, inclusive of cultural capital, biological limits and inheritance, financial risk and technical instruments—all things that Crusoe and father seek to manage.

As an alternative approach, Tom Paulin recently has reminded critics of the text's interest in religious politics, as opposed to the crises of modernity. He points, for example, to the long neglected correspondence between the dates of Crusoe's exile (1659-1687) and the restored Stuart reign (1660-1688)—a fact that argues for an allegory more pointed than the usual religious readings. He argues that the island offers a detailed set of analogies or allegories of the trauma experienced by the dissenting community in their own segregation and exile within England.[24]

But the novel's devotional concerns imply a more material and pragmatic interest in the psychological and civic challenges of alienation from official culture: beyond comparing dissent to island exile or displacing trauma or "survivor's guilt," the novel charts the active reform required during internal isolation from acknowledged authority. Crusoe's re-creation of English culture models the creation of a parallel dissenting society. He shows, as well, the need to master the self in adverse conditions of legal non-existence. The island in this sense depicts a spiritual community within England's own space, offers a map of the unofficial church as something like an overlapping ghost image or a co-existing plane of England's symbolic realities.

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[24] Tom Paulin, *Crusoe's Secret: The Aesthetics of Dissent* (London: Faber, 2005), 80-104.

Crusoe's description of the island, in effect, re-enacts a basic task of the Reformation: to re-think civic and ecclesiastical polity and establish a legitimate Protestant community independent of pre-existing structures. Defoe poses questions of ideal governance in the same terms as early reformers—by positing a hypothetical return to the conditions of the primitive church so as to justify devotional and social structure from first principles, having—in a kind of Cartesian or, better, Baconian mental reduction—eliminated prejudicial extant forms. In the novel this is also a problem of *self*-governance. Crusoe must master the self in new conditions—form a new identity and also avoid resentment, fear and neurotic hypocrisy; he shows how to assimilate trauma and retain a sense of blessedness by refusing to make idols of the past or hoped-for futures.

What might appear as distant isolation from capitalist exchange appears more fully as domestic exile from the nation's community of social exchange. Crusoe, to put it perhaps too crudely, is cast off from the ship of state—yet in a position to exploit it materially, to re-compose needful elements even as he is no longer part of its living process. He is a self-sufficient individual only in the Puritan sense of being complete given the necessary guidance of his Bible. Likewise, the allegedly imperialist connotations of Crusoe's various observations that speak more directly to a defensive posture about political reality in England:

> This was all my own … I was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly, and had a Right of Possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in Inheritance, as compleatly as any Lord of a Mannor in *England*. (117)

> I had nothing to covet; for I had all that I was now capable of enjoying: I was Lord of the whole Mannor; or if I pleas'd, I might call my self King, or Emperor over the whole Country which I had Possession of. There were no Rivals. I had no Competitor, none to dispute Sovereignty or Command with me. (151)

The attitude is one of spiritual nobility, describing the Puritan sense of a self-sufficient godly minority co-existing with the state church.

The (Really) Primitive Church

The best evidence of textual interest in nonconformist polity lies in Crusoe's relations with Friday. Their meeting seems, certainly, to speak to colonial-cultural encounters; yet its main elements strike closer to home as a different kind of object relationship. Crusoe approaches Friday most conspicuously as a fellow potential religious dissenter—a victim of paganism but, more crucially, of Roman-style priestcraft. Crusoe, having obtained a description of Friday's mountain-dwelling God, Benamuckee, makes further inquiry:

> I ask'd him if ever he went thither [to the mountain], to speak to him; he said no, they never went that were young Men; none went thither but the old Men, who he call'd their *Oowocakee,* that is, as I made him explain it to me, their Religious, or Clergy, and that they went to say *O,*(so he called saying Prayers) and then came back, and told them what *Benamuckee* said: By this I observ'd, That there is *Priestcraft,*even amongst the most blinded ignorant Pagans in the World; and the

> Policy of making a secret Religion, in order to preserve the Veneration of the People to the Clergy, is not only to be found in the *Roman,* but perhaps among all Religions in the World, even among the most brutish and barbarous Savages.
>
> I endeavour'd to clear up this Fraud, to my Man *Friday,*and told him, that the Pretence of their old Men going up the Mountains, to say *O* to their God *Benamuckee,*was a Cheat. (257)

Faced with pagan idolatry and cannibalism Crusoe responds: That's terrible, you have *priests*? The encounter's ideological terms concern Friday's position *vis à vis*, essentially, the state church, the real entity that Crusoe directs him to abjure. Crusoe's construction of the problem—"there is *Priestcraft,* even amongst the most blinded ignorant Pagans in the World"—clarifies his priorities. Crusoe's own position as, presumably, religious dissenter, further qualifies any reading of his role as generic representative of Christianity faced with the non-Western subject: the union of the two in worship signifies, chiefly, the formation of an English Protestant conventicle, opposed not to paganism, but to episcopacy.

Crusoe therefore takes up the role of lay-priest, a position conspicuously in line with his newly earned vocations as tailor, carpenter, baker, farmer, boatwright, potter … and with the tenets of a more radical Protestantism. Defoe's cultural Puritanism treats religion as a practical skill, teachable within the available priesthood of believers' epistemological community. Tellingly, Crusoe follows Friday's religious training with a parallel set of technical mysteries: "I let him into the Mystery, for such it was to him, of

Gunpowder, and Bullet, and taught him how to shoot: I gave him a Knife, which he was wonderfully delighted with" (263). Engaging with religion means engaging with the world.

In general, Crusoe authorizes his priestly duties through the open availability of scripture. In the Presbyterian spirit, his instruction provokes a deeper reading that arises from Friday's corrective queries:

> I always apply'd my self in Reading the Scripture, to let him know, as well as I could, the Meaning of what I read; and he again, by his serious Enquiries, and Questionings, made me, *as I said before,* a much better Scholar in the Scripture Knowledge, than I should ever have been by my own private meer Reading. Another thing I cannot refrain from observing here also from Experience, in this retir'd Part of my Life, *viz.* How infinite and inexpressible a Blessing it is, that the Knowledge of God, and of the Doctrine of Salvation by *Christ Jesus,* is so plainly laid down in the Word of God; so easy to be receiv'd and understood: That as the bare reading the Scripture made me capable of understanding enough of my Duty (262).

Where his confidence in the communally discoverable intent of scripture flags amid obscure points of doctrine ("I was but a young Doctor and ill enough quallified for a Casuist"), he affirms the need for affective belief, that "nothing but divine Revelation can form the Knowledge *of Jesus Christ,* and of a Redemption purchas'd for us" (259). In the end, Friday's conversion instances, more than effacement of his paganism, the creation from first principles of a church of equals—one that replicates, rather than is annexed to,

the godly community in England: "The Savage was now a good Christian, a much better than I ….we had here the Word of God to read, and no farther off from his Spirit to instruct, than if we had been in *England*" (261).

It is critical here that the text refuses to posit Friday's native religion as some wholly consuming or perfectly integrated belief system. The fractured religious politics known to Defoe furnish an account of belief inclusive of resistance and doubt, both Crusoe's and Friday's, and the possibility of conscious mutual correction and continuing reform as they rebuild object relations. As Defoe recounts the dissenting community's tasks in England, so Crusoe and Friday's godly community exists within the sphere of a greater, more powerful culture among the islands: For Crusoe, that means contending with the cannibal nation whose practices he so abhors—yet without lapsing into a resistance that resembles his own version of state church idolatry or enacting damaging resentment of a dominant culture. His temptation to judge and, if possible, kill these enemies risks his hard-earned mental composure, and Defoe presents his work to quell his urges in language that links submission to Providence to calmness and non-interference:

> I began with cooler and calmer Thoughts to consider what it was I was going to engage in. What Authority, or Call I had, to pretend to be Judge and Executioner upon these Men as Criminals, whom Heaven had thought fit for so many Ages to suffer unpunish'd, to go on, and to be as it were, the Executioners of his Judgments one upon another. How far these People were Offenders against me,

> and what Right I had to engage in the Quarrel of that Blood, which they shed promiscuously one upon another. (202)

Crusoe grounds his restraint in the parallel structure of the cannibals' and his own respective kingdoms; the prerogatives of governance and, accordingly, enactment of God's judgment, follow the lines of symbolic, not territorial, nation states defined by their religious norms.

> As to the Crimes they were guilty of towards one another, I had nothing to do with them; they were National, and I ought to leave them to the Justice of God, who is the Governour of Nations, and knows how by National Punishments to make a just Retribution for National Offences; and to bring publick Judgments upon those who offend in a publick Manner, by such Ways as best pleases him. (204)

Although geographically linked, Crusoe is not part of their nation—a view reminiscent of repudiation of de facto membership in the established church in favor of an internal self-determining community.

The notion of separate national or church spheres might be voiced a political or ecclesiastical principle, but Crusoe addresses it as a psychic problem endured by England's Puritans. As a godly minority, he risks self-destructive attitudes of hatred or superiority toward the dominant culture; to condemn the cannibals risks, implicitly, yet another spiritual lapse into over-identifying with his ideal, refusing to accept reality in all its adversity.

Crusoe is greatly troubled by his reaction to the cannibals and by its compulsive element; he is troubled, too, by God's apparent injustice in condemning those he has failed to enlighten with Christian scripture ("why it has pleas'd God to hide … saving Knowledge from so many Millions of Souls" [248]). He is repulsed by taboo behavior, yet he reacts emotionally to—resists—the apparently arbitrary and irrational Law that condemns.

But we should not be misled by Crusoe's humane concern for cannibals faced with God's severe and inscrutable judgment. It is *Crusoe* who is forced, in the encounter with the apparently free or ignorant cannibals (who are, of course, unbothered by all of this) to experience his own Law in its fundamental arbitrariness—who experiences his own norms as a capricious and contingent set of demands whose upholding is a serious burden and a compulsion.

Crusoe cites a scriptural solution, grounds for intellectually dismissing his internal struggle and leaving judgment to God. The text, Romans 2:12-16 contains Paul's somewhat ambiguous assertion that those not given the Law can nonetheless be judged by the Law as contained in their own hearts and consciences. (Glossed by Crusoe, "if these Creatures were all sentenc'd to Absence from himself, it was on account of sinning against that Light which, as the Scripture says, was a Law to themselves, and by such Rules as their Consciences would acknowledge to be just, tho' the Foundation was not discover'd to us" [249]). But the context again makes Crusoe, not cannibals, the real subject; the reference necessarily identifies Crusoe with the Jews (original Christians) who, in Paul's account, are sure of their salvation, yet skeptical of the gentiles'purity.

The real subject here, naturally, is not the gentiles at all, but the Jews' legalistic self-aggrandizement and their ill-concealed dislike of those who seem to do without it. The biblical text offers a parallel account of resentment of the other's perceived pleasure, their freedom from the demands of one's own beliefs—the haunting fear that somebody, somewhere is having a good time.

Chapter 4: *Gulliver's Travels* as Anglican Critique

From Robinson Crusoe to Gulliver's Travels

To see the problem with Defoe's text from Swift's vantage, one need look no further than (once again) Crusoe's description of his solitary dining, a moment of physical and spiritual ease in the midst of his tribulations:

> It would have made a Stoick smile to have seen, me and my little Family sit down to Dinner; there was my Majesty the Prince and Lord of the whole Island; I had the Lives of all my Subjects at my absolute Command. I could hang, draw, give Liberty, and take it away, and no Rebels among all my Subjects. Then to see how like a King I din'd too all alone, attended by my Servants, *Poll* [a parrot], as if he had been my Favourite, was the only Person permitted to talk to me. My Dog who was now grown very old and crazy, and had found no Species to multiply his Kind upon, sat always at my Right Hand, and two Cats, one on one Side the Table, and one on the other, expecting now and then a Bit from my Hand, as a Mark of special Favour. (175)

Seen in parallax, from Swift's Anglican point of view, this Mad Hatter's gathering could only confirm schism from common prayer as a solipsistic deviation from the correctives of common sense. Defoe's fantasy—as I have argued— of the godly community's self-

sufficiency, risks this appearance quite willingly, secure in the guidance of scripture and the basic mutual attunement of isolated members (in the Pauline sense) of the church body. Crusoe habitually thwarts any potential interference in his small technological world, fashioning a perimeter of exclusion zones and booby traps with himself as the sole (self) authorized user of the system. By his own admission, his innovations accommodate his inner fears and desires, complementing a pervasive paranoia with a confident willingness to embrace his own deviations from the norm, including his outlandish appearance:

> Had any one in *England* been to meet such a Man as I was, it must either have frighted them, or rais'd a great deal of Laughter; and as I frequently stood still to look at my self, I could not but smile at the Notion of my travelling through *Yorkshire* with such an Equipage, and in such a Dress: Be pleas'd to take a Scetch of my Figure as follows, I had a great high shapeless Cap, made of a Goat's Skin, with a Flap hanging down behind, as well to keep the Sun from me, as to shoot the Rain off from running into my Neck. … I had a short Jacket of Goat-Skin, the Skirts coming down to about the middle of my Thighs; and a Pair of open-knee'd Breeches of the same, the Breeches were made of the Skin of an old *He-goat,* whose Hair hung down such a Length on either Side, that like *Pantaloons* it reach'd to the middle of my Legs; Stockings and Shoes I had none, but had made me a Pair of some-things, I scarce know what to call them, like Buskins to flap over my Legs, and lace on either Side like Spatter-dashes; but of a most barbarous Shape, as indeed were all the rest of my Cloaths. (176)

His dress, despite the self-reflexive humor, cannot but conjure Puritan vestments in all their senses for Swift. Crusoe's garb physically recalls Jack's ruined coat; his attitude, a cheery contrast to Jack's resentful gloom, nonetheless displays stereotypically Puritan indifference to conventions and the tribal self-regard that provoked their neighbors. Defoe's admiration for the virtues and edifying power of simplicity reflects a sensibility that also grounded dissent's vestimental austerity. Few would deny that Crusoe's problem-solving in extreme conditions, seen here in his clothing, provides much of the text's narrative pleasure. But the prospect of total self-sufficiency—long linked by critics to middle-class ideology—could easily be seen as the solipsistic self-aggrandizement of a schismatic.

Crusoe's tendency toward the isolation that enables departure from convention, a warning sign from Swift's point of view, appears early in the text. Crusoe is enjoined not to leave home, but his point of origin has little substance in any case: his roots in England, as the son of an immigrant, are shallow; his family name is recently altered from the original Kreutznaer; there is little concrete description of home; and little is promised beyond the rewards of commerce and the social ties of business. Gulliver, on the other hand, hails from "a small Estate in *Nottinghamshire*" (11:19)—and the faux publisher's note assures us that this is "where his Father dwelt, yet I have heard him say, his Family came from *Oxfordshire*; to confirm which, I have observed in the Church-Yard at *Banbury*, in that County, several Tombs and Monuments of the *Gullivers* (11:9). The background is not so far from Swift's autobiographical claim that "the family of the Swifts was antient in Yorkshire" (5:187). Gulliver's time as a castaway, then, can be read

as a departure from his rightful familial place in the bosom of the national church and its trappings. Crusoe's island, seen from Swift's perspective, offers a perfect metaphor for a nonconformist bubble-like reduction of reality, whether that of the provincial yokel or the rootless merchant.

That sense of a closed world, in which all of God's signs point to oneself, pervades Crusoe's religious reckonings; his flirtations with discerning God's direct interventions surely struck Swift as pure fantasy, something closer to incantation than religion:

> But after I saw Barley grow there, in a Climate which I know was not proper for Corn, and especially that I knew not how it came there, it startl'd me strangely, and I began to suggest, that God had miraculously caus'd this Grain to grow without any Help of Seed sown, and that it was directly purely for my Sustenance, on that wild miserable Place. (91)

Crusoe's eventual position is not so crude: He quickly takes a more naturalistic view and realizes that he unwittingly dropped barley seeds himself, then regrets seeing the two perspectives as mutually exclusive. I have argued that, for Defoe, providence is a complex signifier; but unsympathetic readers naturally picked up on the pitfalls—not absent from Defoe's text—of construing the metaphysical, manifest in relations with the object world, from the individual's standpoint. Charles Gildon's attack on Defoe in *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Mr. D---- de F--, of London* (1719) gives voice to precisely the mainstream Anglican critique one imagines from others, including Swift:

> I cannot pass in Silence his Coining of Providences; that is, of his making Providence raise a Storm, cast away some Ships, and damage many more, meerly to fright him from going to Sea. If this be not a bold Impiety, I know not what is, and an Impiety for which I can see very little ground; for why should he imagine that the Storm was sent to hinder him from going to Sea, more than any other that were in it, and suffer'd more by it?[1]

> What you call Religion, is only to mis-lead the Minds of men to reject the Dictates of reason, and embrace in its Room a meer Superstitious Fear of I know not what *Instinct* from unbodied Spirits, when you impiously prophane the very Name of Providence, by allotting to it either contradictory Offices, or an unjust Partiality.[2]

With little patience for Defoe's tendency to turn experience into fodder for developing a spiritual habitus, Gildon sees only a narcissistic theodicy.

Gildon condemns, as well, the political consequences of Defoe's vision of providence. Crusoe's godly community logically becomes a legal one, as he assumes the role of a governor who metes out legal punishments: "So if I had hang'd them all, I had been much in the right, and should have been justifiable both by the Laws of God and Man." Gildon responds: "The contrary of which Assertion is directly true, *viz*. That if you had hang'd them all, you had been guilty of down-right Murther by all the Laws of

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[1] Charles Gildon, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Mr. D---- De F--, of London* (London:1719), 8-9.
[2] Ibid., 33.

God and Man; for pray, sweet Sir, what Authority had *Robinson Crusoe* so much as to fine, or inflict any Punishment upon any man?"[3] What for modern critics may suggest a generally English colonial impulse, Gildon sees as a specific religious disorder. Defoe's imaginary City on a Hill tempts him to neglect realistic restraint in his fiction, revealing the enthusiast's basic megalomaniac fantasy. To see Crusoe as an avatar of the nation's innermost imperial compulsions is to neglect the way contemporary readers like Gildon could revile Crusoe's enterprise as a direct repudiation of England's institutions.

Gildon's critique has often been characterized as an epistemological one, directed at "false realism," or what McKeon calls a "naive empiricism" that credulously grants authority to individual witnesses employing a factual style.[4] And Gildon does, famously, rebuke Defoe for factual inconsistencies. Crusoe, for example, strips naked to swim to the wrecked ship, but later fills his pockets with biscuits; Defoe forgets that Crusoe salvaged linen and wool for clothes. But Gildon actually shows little interest in historicity as such. He even claims he could accept "improbabilities, and sometimes impossibilities," were he not moved, as we see, to prevent "impieties and superstition."[5] Most plausibly, Gildon offers an Anglican critique of nonconformist failure to test certainties of all kinds against the state community —quite apart from the question of an underlying real. Defoe's

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[3] Ibid., 36.

[4] Hunter, "Gulliver's Travels and the Novel," 68. "[Gildon's] attack is on the false realism in Defoe, just as in Gulliver's travels the thrust is to demonstrate what the realism and pseudo-facticity of contemporary travel accounts and fictional narratives come to at last." Hunter acknowledges associations with dissent, but characterizes these as part and parcel of a "modern" mode of narrative. McKeon, *Origins*, 315-16. For a more general discussion see John Bender, "Enlightenment Fiction and the Scientific Hypothesis," *Representations* 61(1998). See also Kate Loverman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 140-45.

[5] Gildon, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures*, 1-2.

implausibilities serve, in Gildon's essay, chiefly as evidence of a religious character defect: an enthusiast tendency to unreflecting confabulation. The thrust of Gildon's argument is not that Defoe is unrealistic; it is that he is a liar.

Similarly, Swift's parody, in Gulliver's account, of the travel genre's journalistic style has been taken as a jab at conventions that seem to naively accept language as a transparent medium. But Swift, like Gildon and John Eachard (as I noted in chapter two, above), sees signifiers in their social-constructive, and not merely mimetic, capacity. One of Eachard's likely targets, condemned for preaching in local dialects, John Flavell (1630?-1691), a Presbyterian minister in Dartmouth, Devon, links liturgical debate to the nautical prose Swift mocks in Part II of the *Travels*.[6] Flavell, who was ejected from his pulpit in 1662, was best known for devotional works on the meditative value of vocational experience, especially seafaring. His published works included, for example, *A New Compass for Seamen* (1664), *Husbandry Spiritualized* (1669), *The Seaman's Companion* (1676), *Sea Deliverances* (*c*.1679), and *Navigation Spiritualized* (1682). The last of these demonstrates the offending mixture of local expertise and enthusiast piety; Eachard asks rhetorically, by way of an analogy for "spiritual concernments":

> How watchfull and quick sighted are Sea-men, to prevent Dangers? If the Wind die away, and then fresh up Sourtherly; or if they see the Sky hezy, they provide for a Storm: If by the Prospective-Glass they ken a *Pirate* at the greatest distance, they clear the Gun-room, prepare for fight, and bear up, if able to deal with him; if not, they keep close by the Wind, make all the Sail they can, and bear away. If

[6] Hunter, *Pilgrim*.

> they suppose themselves by their reckoning near Land, how often do they sound? And if upon a Coast with which they are unacquainted, how careful are they to get a *Pilot* that knows and is acquainted with it?[7]

This is a clear enough violation of Eachard's call to avoid ministering in obscure professional argot.

Flavell's work shows the ease with which Swift could associate detail-laden or vocational prose with low church cultural deviation. Those at the literal or metaphorical edges of society, the realm of the plebian specialist, suggest for him a kind of *de facto* enthusiast— exactly as Defoe finds the sea voyage a natural metaphor for an edifying journey in dissent. Indeed, Flavell's life and writing furnish plentiful parallels to Defoe's experiences as projected into Crusoe: After the Act of Uniformity, Flavell continued preaching in private and taught at a dissenting academy until the Five Mile Act forced him, in 1665, to keep his distance from Dartmouth. In a miniature island exile, away from incorporated townships, he occasionally preached on the Saltstone, a rock edifice in Salcombe harbor "accessible only at low water during spring tides."[8] Flavell returned to Dartmouth after the declaration of indulgence, but fled again, under pressure of persecution, to London in 1682.[9] Before undertaking that voyage by sea, Flavell reported a prophetic dream about a great storm. His ship, allegedly, experienced a "dreadful

[7] John Flavell, *Navigation Spiritualized*, fourth ed. (London1698), 19.
[8] James William Kelly, "Flavell, John (Bap. 1630, D. 1691)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008). [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/9678, accessed 22 June 2010] See also Arthur Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon* (New York: Augustus Kelley, 1969), 80; John Flavell, *The Whole Works of John Flavell*, vol. I (London1701), 1-7.
[9] Kelly, "Flavell, John (Bap. 1630, D. 1691)."

Tempest, insomuch that, betwixt One and Two in the morning, the Master and Seamen concluded, That, unless God changed the Wind, there was no hope of life."[10] Flavell undertook to beseech God with prayer, "committing himself and his Company to the Mercy of God. ... No sooner was Prayer ended, but one came down from the Deck, crying, *Deliverance!* "[11] The biographical note in Flavell's collected works records, appropriately, that "He was not only a Zealous Preacher in the Pulpit, but a Sincere Christian in his Closet, Frequent in Self-Examination, as well as in pressing it upon others; being afraid, lest while he Preach'd to others, he himself should be a Cast-away."[12]

The same concern with social and affective context of language that guided critique of Flavell appears in the *Travels*. Questions of common understanding, more than verisimilitude, lie at the heart of Gulliver's letter to his cousin Sympson in the prefatory matter, which denounces linguistic novelty in London in the same terms other conformists criticized newfangled liturgical innovation and Flavell's nautical empiricist prose. Defending against alleged complaints on the part of "Sea Yahoos" about the accuracy of his "Sea-Language," Gulliver notes that "Sea-*Yahoos* are apt, like Land ones, to become new fangled in their Words; which the latter change every Year. … When any *Yahoo* comes from *London* out of Curiosity to visit me at mine own House, we neither of us are able to deliver our Conceptions in a Manner intelligible to the other" (11:7). Swift's imaginative sympathy in this passage actually lies, partly, with Defoe, against the

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[10] Flavell, *Whole Works*, 3.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 4.

Gildon-like Sea Yahoos; if Defoe is guilty of newfangledness, pedantic quibbling by other subcultural experts hardly improves the situation. Accuracy is quite beside the point when the problem is one of institutional decay. The relevant danger is the moral one that Gulliver identifies as his chief concern: the lapse into vices of "Lying, Shuffling Deceiving and Equivocating" (11:8).

Idols of the Marketplace: The Grub Street Liturgy

Elsewhere, Swift's warnings about deforming what we might today call the symbolic order equate linguistic innovation with more obviously material signifiers of authority and desire. Remarks in the *Tatler* (September 28, 1710) closely parallel Gulliver's remarks to Sympson, with connections drawn between ordinances of common prayer, new prose styles and material culture. Swift's speaker echoes Eachard's fear of degrading the linguistic and material boundaries of the church's interpretive community by criticizing young clergymen's use of neologisms:

> Then in their Sermons they use all the Modern Terms of Art, *Sham, Banter, Mob, Bubble, Bully, Cutting, Shuffling,* and *Palming*: All which, and many more of the like Stamp, as I have heard them often in the Pulpit from such young Sophisters, so I have read them in some of *those Sermons that have made most Noise of late*. The Design, it seems, is to avoid the dreadful Imputation of Pedantry; to shew us, that they know the Town, understand Men and Manners, and have not been poring upon old unfashionable Books in the University (2:177).

Swift moves, though, from Eachard's concern with provincial centers of dissent to London's urban culture. The article also takes on Grub Street writing in the same terms of cultural-liturgical innovation. The hegemonic "unfashionable books" that embarrass young clergy contrast directly with the new books by disreputable hack writers:

> *I cannot but observe to you, that till of late Years a* Grub-Street *Book was always bound in Sheep-skin, with suitable Print and Paper; the Price never above a Shilling, and taken off wholly by common Tradesmen, or Country Pedlars; But now they appear in all Sizes and Shapes, and in all Places: They are handed about from Lapfuls in every Coffee-house to Persons of Quality, are shewn in* Westminster-Hall *and the Court of Requests. You may see them gilt, and in Royal Paper, of five or six Hundred Pages, and rated accordingly. I would engage to furnish you with a Catalogue of* English *Books published within the compass of seven Years past, which at the first Hand would cost you a Hundred Pounds, wherein you shall not be able to find ten Lines together of common Grammar or common Sense* (2:174).

Not only do undeserving writers have undue influence, but their work gains traction by being arrayed in material vestments of authority and edification. Like Roman-style Catholicism, the market channels desire through a self-organizing network of fashionable idols.

For Swift, the symptoms of modernity—exemplified by the literary marketplace, and commercial culture generally—mimic the symptoms of nonconformity. Anglican regulation of symbolic authority ideally meant a national psychic and epistemological

community to correct schismatic and compulsive desires. The market merely propagates them; its premium on variety and novelty furnishes the same unsettling assemblage of artificial cultural components as religious innovation. These are not secular "things," but new ideals and idols, versions of what Swift already saw as desiring machines, nodes in a complex web of enjoyment.

The *Tale* offers Swift's most striking examples of the perceived danger in detaching the cultural organ, as it were, from the natural or social body. The mythical Aeolist sect, for example, physically redirect the flow of bodily energies with their use of objects:

> It was an Invention ascribed to Æolus himself, from whom this Sect is denominated; and who in Honour of their Founder's Memory have to this Day preserved great Numbers of those *Barrels*, whereof they fix one in each of their Temples, first beating out the Top. Into this *Barrel*, upon Solemn Days, the Priest enters; where, having before duly prepared himself by the methods already described, a secret Funnel is also conveyed from his Posteriors to the Bottom of the Barrel, which admits new Supplies of Inspiration from a *Northern* Chink or Cranny (1:98).

By analogy, the market alters the distribution of power across the social body, and threatens to put even the hack writer in charge of the assemblages of cultural authority.

The social mechanism, Swift suggests, can be reconfigured so quickly that common cultural reference points can disappear irrevocably. This potential loss of meaning arises most obviously, in the *Tale,* in the dedication to Prince Posterity, which

asks whether new writing can even survive beyond its immediate, local context, being "sunk in the Abyss of Things" (1:19).

A look at the editorial notes for a modern edition of the *Tale* confirms Swift's darkest fears; the reader's perceived deficiency lies not only in the religious allegory itself (in this respect, the editorial interventions mirror those of Curll and Wotten, in explaining basic Reformation history), but in the specific allegorical details drawn from contemporary London.[13] Martin and his brothers "eat at *Locket's*, loytered at *Will's*," they drink at the Rose—all details important to understanding the brothers and their moral progress (1:43). Religious allegory, of course, typically draws on stable types and figures—the ship of state, the body of the nation, the prodigal son; but the hack Tale-Teller employs a modern mode that furnishes meaning using fleeting and contingent institutions that also manufacture subjects with perverse desires. Swift's parable affirms the strict equivalence between the decay of Anglican cultural style through religious innovation and the innovations of the market economy, which render today's symbolic order, quite literally, yesterday's news. *Robinson Crusoe's* spiritual narrative grafts the traditional onto more modern forms in the latest prose, but this is no descent into secular ways of knowing; both Defoe and Swift recognize, in new technologies and techniques, the building blocks of the conventicle.

On the Testimony of Conscience: Gulliver and Styles of Cultural Faith

[13] Angus Ross and David Wooley, ed. *Jonathan Swift: Major Works* (New York: Oxford University Press,2003), 96, 626.

Defoe's thought experiment in *Crusoe* rejects the need for a state church to regulate new spiritual ecologies like those described by Swift's Tale-Teller. He affirms the possibility of self-reform in England's modernizing spaces: Crusoe overcomes the libidinal temptations of dominant cultures, both innovating and traditional, and new experiences by incorporating technology and empirical inquiry into solitary spiritual exercises. A return to the primitive church, he suggests, is always within reach of the committed individual.

The *Travels* are more skeptical of the individual's ability to self-diagnose spiritual illness.[14] Gulliver's moral compass seems increasingly off, and as his adventures become more outlandish, his access to common reality diminishes. That skepticism toward self-sufficiency informs Swift's bias toward the established church, as a corrective to the mental idols of schismatic communities—idols that Defoe, conversely, locates largely in majority culture. As re-figured in Gulliver, Defoe's hypothetical island most naturally suggests an image of failure to countenance large portions of reality—whether through neurotic denial, local fixations or actual Petri-dish-like isolation. Crusoe is complete unto himself wherever he goes; Gulliver is typically cut off from all reason.

Swift's diagnosis of sectarian-style pathologies includes, obviously, aspects of commercial culture. Yet it extends as well, to other English institutions, even traditional ones, that lay claim to governing the nation. Swift's sermon *On the Testimony of Conscience* (1708) contains a synopsis of his views on dominant cultural styles,

[14] This is by no means to suggest that Crusoe, in the scheme I have argued for, represents anything like the modern individual or Cartesian subject; from Swift's point of view, individuality indicates, chiefly, the schismatic; Defoe assumes the guidance of scripture and the presence of investments in the outside world.

considered as ethical and libidinal structures, including: a not-yet residual aristocratic-courtly culture associated with a Catholic past and ideals of property and honor; a freethinking and dissenting culture of critical inquiry and private belief; and an emergent Whig culture of commerce.

Typically, Swift understands ethics in terms of psychic-spiritual orientations toward civic virtues as embodied in public culture. The sermon maps a familiar ethical terrain, largely divided between solipsistic enthusiast punctiliousness and knavish Catholic-style performance; it also extends this psychic-spiritual hermeneutic to embrace less overtly sectarian trends in English governance, including presumptively modern developments.

The sermon offers a useful preview of the psychological critiques that lie at the heart of *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver presents an English subject exposed to variant available governing styles with certain psychic-sectarian inflections. Given much the same spiritual hermeneutic as Defoe, Swift's text shows Gulliver's failure, absent the state church, to locate an Archimedean point of neutrality from which to reform his desires away from anti-social and self-defeating behaviors.

The sermon, in one instance, questions civic duty as defined by ruling class codes of personal honor. The principles of honor, Swift observes, furnish objective ideals/public norms and rewards suited to "the style of military men; of persons with

titles; and of others who pretend to birth and quality."[15] Yet this aristocratic ethic remains narrow in scope:

> No man of honour, as that word is usually understood, did ever pretend that his honour obliged him to be chaste or temperate; to pay his creditors; to be useful to his country; to do good to mankind; to endeavour to be wise, or learned; to regard his word, his promise, or his oath; or if he hath any of these virtues, they were never learned in the catechism of honour; which contains but two precepts, the punctual payment of debts contracted at play, and the right understanding the several degrees of an affront, in order to revenge it by the death of an adversary.[16]

Further, honor, as defined socially, derives solely from public reputation—it is, in the *Tale's* terms, situated exclusively in vestimental appearance. Should one stand to gain the appearance of honor, even "by the falsest and vilest action," it would be rational to do so.[17] Swift associates honor with courtly privilege and pagan custom rather than directly with Catholicism—but Bernard Mandeville's comparable 1732 attack on honor, *An Enquiry Into the Origin of Honour*, confirms the roots of Swift's fairly common anti-aristocratic critique. Mandeville directly blames popery for the aristocratic ethos, for "blending rites seemingly sacred with the emblems of vainglory, which made all of them an eternal mixture of pomp and superstition."[18]

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[15] Temple Scott, ed. *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, vol. IV (London: George Bell,1897), 123.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 124.
[18] Bernard Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour, and the Usefulness of Christianity in War* (London:1732), 47.

Swift compares codes of public-vestimental reputation to an equally flawed deference to subjective (religious) convictions. He includes both zealous dissenters and freethinking metaphysical speculators among the followers of “private conscience.” He argues, though, that all such non-traditionalists abuse the notion of conscience, which, as distinct from mere desire, applies only to verifiable public ideals; a private conscience is a contradiction in terms.[19] In a Christian culture, he argues, conscience is “our director only in those actions which Scripture and reason plainly tell us to be good or evil.”[20] For Swift, this scheme necessarily directs conscience only at duty as confirmed by the state church:

> In cases too difficult or doubtful for us to comprehend or determine, there conscience is not concerned; because it cannot advise in what it doth not understand, nor decide where it is itself in doubt: but, by God's great mercy, those difficult points are never of absolute necessity to our salvation. There is likewise another evil, that men often say, a thing is against their conscience, when really it is not. For instance: Ask any of those who differ from the worship established, why they do not come to church? They will say, they dislike the ceremonies, the prayers, the habits, and the like, and therefore it goes against their conscience: But they are mistaken, their teacher hath put those words into their mouths; for a man's conscience can go no higher than his knowledge; and therefore until he has thoroughly examined by Scripture, and the practice of the ancient church, whether

[19] Conscience here serves as a bit of a psychological term of art: it does not designate, as in some ordinary usage, any qualitative feeling of duty or a confirming sense of virtue. Instead it serves to distinguish between potentially perverse demands of the nonconformist superego, and the Anglican ego-ideal.
[20] Scott, ed. *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, 121.

> those points are blameable or no, his conscience cannot possibly direct him to condemn them.[21]

This is a cavalier dismissal, obviously, of dissenting ecclesiology and, by extension, ethics. But the argument is consistent with the assumption that matters susceptible to dispute are, by definition, matters of indifference to be settled in good faith, for the sake of order, by an established church. The practical alternative Swift sees as proliferating schism destructive of very idea of the church. More importantly, the theological alternative appears as belief in (or disputes about) a God who operates mechanically, denying salvation on the basis of obscure legalisms or difficult points of metaphysics. (Or, in the case of freethinkers, a religion that has abdicated its function of moderate social binding, encouraging fashionable absolute truths, scientific or otherwise) From Swift's spiritual point of view, as we have seen, these schemes only devolve into intolerance and hypocritical performance.[22]

Again, Mandeville confirms Swift's hegemonic perspective, attacking low church moralists as intolerant hypocrites; he, too, balances his critique of honor with an attack on

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[21] Ibid.

[22] For Swift, as invoked by dissenter and freethinker "liberty of conscience" is necessarily disingenuous and hypocritical. Truly private mental reservations make no demand on the public sphere and remain unobjectionable; if they disturb church and state, they presumably arise from a dangerous and self-contradictory certainty that established policy is metaphysically/"really" wrong—a position that cannot ultimately abide difference: "'Liberty of Conscience' … properly speaking, is no more than a liberty of knowing our own thoughts; which liberty no one can take from us. But those words have obtained quite different meanings: Liberty of conscience is now-a-days not only understood to be the liberty of believing what men please, but also of endeavouring to propagate the belief as much as they can, and to overthrow the faith which the laws have already established, to be rewarded by the public for those wicked endeavours: And this is the liberty of conscience which the fanatics are now openly in the face of the world endeavouring at with their utmost application. At the same time it cannot but be observed, that those very persons, who under pretence of a public spirit and tenderness towards their Christian brethren, are so zealous for such a liberty of conscience as this, are of all others the least tender to those who differ from them in the smallest point relating to government." (121).

personal religious morality—particularly as formulated by societies for the reformation of manners, which he equates with Puritan prurience and hypocrisy. Swift's own estimation of such groups, in spite of his own reforming efforts, was that they had "dwindled into factious Clubs, and grown a Trade to enrich little knavish Informers of the meanest Rank, such as common Constables, and broken Shop-keepers" (2:57).[23]

Both writers link the discarded ethical abstractions—conscience and honor—to specific emotional and material cultures of governance. There are notes of Weber in their association of dissent with commercial interests: specifically, in the equation of a mercantile culture of bourgeois politeness—the coffee house and a sanitized public sphere—with a meaner Puritan ethic that suits capitalist acquisition, one of temperance, opportunism and resentment of patrician license. Conversely, they critique honor as an ethic evolved in defense of material privilege, marking chiefly aggression toward threats to status and property. Swift differentiates between two real and spiritual economies evolved around psychological objects: one defined by petit-bourgeois vices of envy, thrift, and melancholy—not coincidentally strategies of coping with the lost object; another by stereotypical aristocratic defensiveness—in effect, a castration complex defined by the constant threat of losing one's social place. Both cases reveal the costs of sectarian-style object relations in major residual and emergent institutions: middle class struggle and ossified privilege are recognizable iterations of sectarian error.

[23] On this point I have consulted Richard Cook, "Mandeville's Modest Defense of Public Stews," in *Mandeville Studies: New Explorations in the Art and Thought of Dr. Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733)*, ed. Irwin Primer (The Hague: Kluwer Academinc Publishers, 1975); Shelley Burtt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 39-63.

As an existing alternative to these dated modes, Swift notes the ethic of civic culture he calls "Moral Honesty": the principles of behavior adopted by many "who appear very indifferent as to religion, and yet have the repute of being just and fair in their dealings; and these are generally known by the character of good moral men." As Swift summarizes:

> For example: You trust a moral man with your money in the way of trade; you trust another with the defence of your cause at law, and perhaps they both deal justly with you. Why? Not from any regard they have for justice, but because their fortune depends upon their credit, and a stain of open public dishonesty must be to their disadvantage. [24]

The marketplace, in other words, can reconcile individual desire and public good. It is Mandeville, of course, who is best known for this claim that in a modern economy conflicts between a vice-provoking market and traditional virtue are only apparent: his model is a clear structural resolution to what he, too, saw as problematic modes of imposing social imperatives through public symbols and personal discipline. This most modern solution is simply to set desire free.

Swift naturally refuses to regard enlightened self interest as a moral quality, and refuses the notion that capital can reconcile individual desire with a providentially ordered state.[25] He sees—in the shift to social utility over ethical self-culture—only a proliferation of desires along unpredictable material paths, with no consideration of the

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[24] Scott, ed. *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, 122.
[25] Ibid., 123.

manner of ethical integration; indeed the question of ethics, as an experience of duty apart from one's libido is entirely to the side. To follow the implications of Swift's typical stance: enlightened self-interest merely substitutes the market's blind reconfigurings for the blind arbitrariness of aristocratic hierarchy or the perverse researches of enthusiast metaphysics. Worse, Mandeville's utilitarian formulation risks a more complete withdrawal of symbolic authority; rather than let symbolic authority and desires proliferate randomly-schismatically, Mandeville hints at a subject subsumed into the market's amoral automatic machinery.[26]

Swift consistently equates legitimate social institutions with a healthy Anglican technology of the self. Against Mandeville, he insists on, rather than denies, the gap between the subject and social imperatives. Against the absolute ideals furnished by aristocrats and nonconformists, religion as such affirms the subject's ethical duty as conscious integration of mutually agreeable and provisional social forms, established by the church, held to inculcate ethical norms and not embody absolute ideals. Under the auspices of grace, the subject's cultural faith can be experienced through the spirit rather than the letter of the Law.

Swift's psychic map of England differs little from Defoe's. Like Crusoe's father, he condemns the mental idols of aristocrats and social climbers; he sees the mercantile mind prone to obsessive-compulsive disorders, as Crusoe's early discontent demonstrates; he, too, affirms real Protestantism as an ethical freedom from these desires.

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[26] Mandeville's secular scheme offers a formula for "real belief" in modern terms of fully immersive faith: not only do objects of desire proliferate of their own logic, as in stereotypical Catholicism, with authority following in their wake, but the subject is here construed as directly identified, through profit, with the proliferating logic itself.

Swift insists, though, that a Crusoe or a Gulliver—a middle class figure critical of existing structures—cannot, without the aid of the established church, divide his desires from those of the institutions he critiques.

Set out explicitly, including references to ethical styles of governance, liturgical cultures, class position and—in my analogy, Lacanian registers of psychic cognition—Swift's perception of ethical object cultures may be represented in the following scheme:

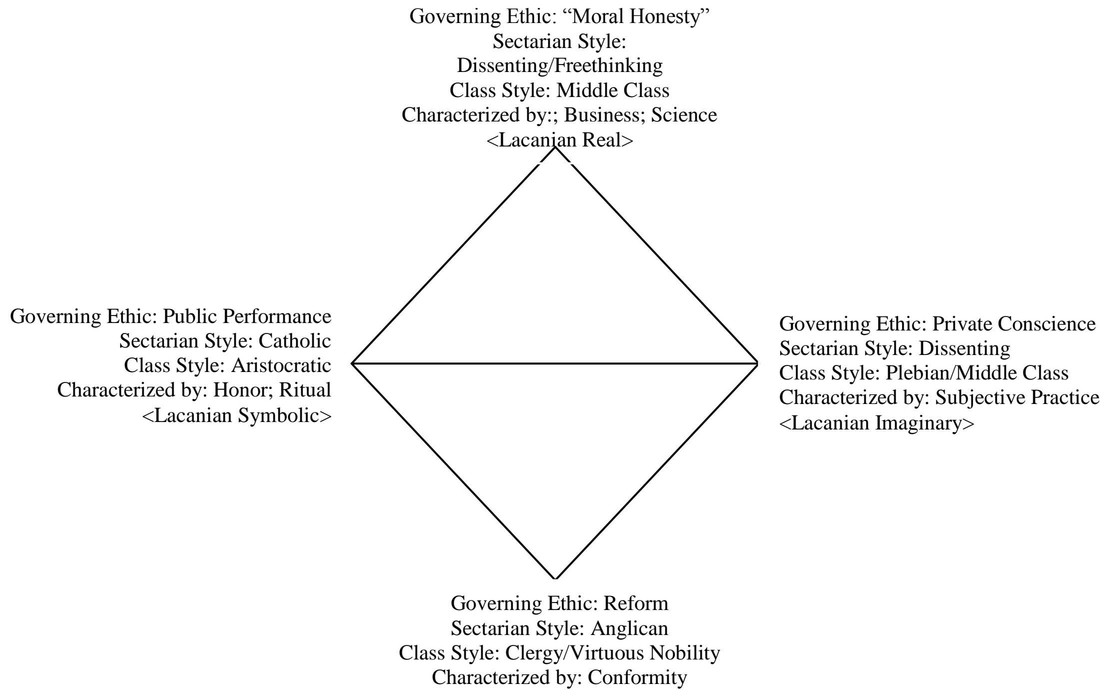

Figure 1

Here (from left to right) the dominant aristocratic-Catholic and plebian-dissenting styles oppose one another chiefly as a disjunction between excessively private and public configurations of duty and object practice. This major axis, given greater explication in the *Tale*, is supplemented here: The modern solution to this cultural conflict, as formulated by Mandeville (above center) represents a union of public and private in the domain of utility; personal desire, good business and the civic good coincide. As I will argue below, Swift sees the same style in the efforts of the Royal Academy—in forming

desires around supposedly objectively justified technocratic projects. The traditional Anglican claim for reform represents (in the bottom quadrant), not a resolution, but rather an insistence on the distance between public duty and the subject in the call of real, not private, conscience: the Anglican formula, in other words, for edification and resistance to immoderate identification with duty or vestimental identity.

Gulliver's first voyage sets the stage for an expanded investigation of these psychic possibilities for (self) governance—one that progresses from one configuration to another in distinct allegorical locations as well as in Gulliver's continuous mental development. In short, I will trace a development from the aristocratic ethos of Lilliput to its collapse into subjective desire in Brobdingnag to an encounter with the technocratic Real in Laputa.

The Courtly Object and the Middle Class Thing

Gulliver, as has been noted, is at his best in Lilliput: there his virtues—refusal to destroy Blefuscu and the Big-Endians; willingness to act as an ambassador of peace; discernment concerning Lilliputian morality—shine most brightly.[27] His middle-class bona fides serve to set off the court's corruptions. There is a catch here, however—in that Gulliver is his best self only insofar as he has the court's regard. He requires their symbolic sanction. Lilliput's emperor is distinguished by his towering height ("taller by almost the Breadth of my Nail" [11:30]) over his subjects, and Gulliver's size designates

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[27] Allan Bloom, "An Outline of Gulliver's Travels," in *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg (New York: Norton, 1970), 301.

him here as partaking of the same symbolic power. He is not only physically powerful, morally big or subjectively confident, but is also integrated into, embodies, Lilliput's symbols of authority (11:30). Along these lines, the emperor grants Gulliver various honors and accolades (11:44, 53) which the latter is only too happy to enjoy, despite his skeptical descriptions of Walpolean favor-seeking in the court. The emperor's own absurdly long title (11:43) confirms Lilliput's mode of conferring authority, and Gulliver is willing to identify with it to the point of recognizing the emperor as his own ("our Emperor" [11:54]). He is, in every sense, an outsized member of Lilliput's culture, as opposed to simply a well-endowed ("my Breeches were at that Time in so ill a Condition, they afforded some Opportunities for Laughter and Admiration" [11:42]) interloper.

Gulliver's socially constructed stature is confirmed by his outsized fall from favor after a banal series of courtly intrigues, jealousy and gossip that effectively reduce him to the status of non-person. Swift's resentments toward capricious patrons, on display here, are probably overdetermined: by a general skepticism of the court, by Whig abuse of patronage, by his frustrations regarding advancement in the church. But Swift gives this failure of virtue a sociological, not personal or political analysis. The incidents, seen in light of Swift's religious-psychic analytics, and the sermon on conscience, point to a psychic danger in identifying civic virtue with aristocratic vestimental signifiers. Swift shows the psychological effects of this corrupt authority structure on situated class types. Flimnap's jealousy and the other courtier-politician's intrigues are a corrupting influence, but they also are encouraged by the court's power structure of leaping and creeping for accolades; their character flaws mark them, in fact, as the system's ideal users.

Gulliver's experience may be compared to Crusoe's exile from the visible church and political community. He is suddenly and arbitrarily denied official symbolic recognition, rendering him legally non-existent and unprotected: he is condemned in secret "without *the formal Proofs required by the strict Letter of the Law*" (11:71).

The episode expresses the precarious position of the non-elite when vestimental signifiers of authority native to (ideally) an aristocracy of public-spirited virtue are corrupted into arbitrarily dispensed favors. Gulliver encounters, arguably, the symbolic culture produced by an imperfect marriage of parliamentary politics and the networks of landed privilege—the weight, that is, of corrupted tradition and the vulgarities of temporary popularity.

The subsequent voyage to Brobingnag therefore ought not to be read as an independent episode that contrasts Gulliver's physical-moral expansiveness in Lilliput with his actual and moral littleness in Brobdingnag. Instead, we can see an extended exploration of the psychic reality conditioned by the alienation from symbolic authority Gulliver suffers in Lilliput.

The contours of his abjection in Brobdingnag can be quickly laid out: Gulliver is associated with a series of animals and low-status persons. Upon arriving he is not conveyed directly to court, but detours through the hands of a peasant farmer and a little girl and is reduced to a sideshow curiosity, a child's toy and, at court, a sexual object. Gulliver's deteriorating sense of self suggests the series of object comparisons as his inability to find his likeness within the established order.

Gulliver's humiliation allows Swift to explore inner psychological terrain even as his fable takes on a pointed class critique. The question here is not Gulliver's character or that of humanity generally, but the spirit of aspirant social classes. Weber's play on the "spirit" of capitalism serves here as a fairly accurate measure of the era's own analytic: as a psychologically motivating drive cognized within a religious framework and also conditioned by prevailing material circumstances.

At the depth of his humiliations, he recounts a battle with the kitchen clerk's monkey (11:121-3)—another blow to his pride to which he responds, rather late, with a defensive account, to the king, of his bravery.

> This I delivered in a firm Tone, like a Person who was jealous lest his Courage should be called in Question. However, my Speech produced nothing else beside a loud Laughter; which all the Respect due to his Majesty from those about him could not make them contain. This made me reflect, how vain an Attempt it is for a Man to endeavour doing himself Honour among those who are out of all Degree of Equality or Comparison with him. And yet I have seen the Moral of my own Behaviour very frequent in *England* since my Return; where a little contemptible Varlet, without the least Title to Birth, Person, Wit, or common Sense, shall presume to look with Importance, and put himself upon a Foot with the greatest Persons of the Kingdom (11:124).

This is a painful self-negation and a powerful insight: It begins as a feeble attempt to re-assert himself, with an inkling of his own defensiveness. Gulliver then collapses completely, identifying himself with class-jumping upstarts in England in the most

humiliating terms. Before simply reading the censure of "contemptible Varlets" as ventriloquism of Swift's conservative ideology, we ought to take in the self-reflexive mode in which it is uttered. Gulliver's self-contempt, his willingness to supply his own humiliating designation suggests a problematic identification with his social superiors (oppressors) from whose point of view the critique is leveled—yet one that also accurately diagnoses his driving motive as middle-class envy and resentment, the desire to occupy the same symbolic space as the "greatest persons of the kingdom."

The Brobdingnagian odyssey chronicles, in effect, Gulliver's attempts to regain the regard that he lost in Lilliput—or, more accurately, reveals his preexisting dependence on the courtly object of desire. The passage above continues with Gulliver's account of "every day furnishing the court with some ridiculous story." That circumstance owes to constant surveillance by his nurse-minder Glumdalclitch who "was arch enough to inform the Queen whenever I committed any folly that she thought would be diverting to her majesty" (11:124). This omnipresent courtly gaze presents the quest for recognition as, inevitably, a paranoid experience of self-critique as well as unfair persecution; the Brobdingnagian king's aura as wise ruler cannot be divorced from his role as a relentlessly shaming Lacanian Big Other. The court drama merely externalizes Gulliver's subjective wish for power as a complex of self-loathing grounded in both admiration and resentment.

Gulliver's supposed principles in Lilliput derive, then, less from his merits (as would befit a critique of injustices done to capable servants, like Swift, by their social betters), than from his master's sanction. His high-mindedness flows from an inflated

self-regard conditioned by approval from the very symbolic authorities he critiques.[28] One could venture, as well, the hypothesis that the capricious Lilliputian emperor and sensible Brobdingnagian king merely present two sides of Gulliver's splitting of the all-powerful (courtly) Other into its constituent libidinal elements. When Gulliver is secure in a state of basic enjoyment, he can denounce the alienating aspects of a system whose approval he nonetheless craves. When Gulliver is forced into separation but unable to locate an alternative identity, the England he criticized appears once again as the benevolent source of sense.

The shift in satiric mode between the first two voyages can be read as a function of these flawed forms of cultural faith. In Lilliput, Gulliver's emotional security underwrites, paradoxically, an awareness of power's more ridiculous aspects; likewise the critique of England occurs through direct analogies with Lilliput, as by one consciously disenchanted. In Brobdingnag, where he desperately seeks authority's sanction, Gulliver stubbornly idealizes England, unable to question any longer the system with which he best identifies. The critique follows, in this case, from the reader's awareness of flaws that Gulliver dishonestly represses. Both satirical modes function, finally, through the contortions in reality produced by Gulliver's false consciousness: first, as the disdain of a "beautiful soul" who cannot acknowledge his participation in the

[28] The king and court are, more strictly, imaginary objects onto which Gulliver transfers his desire; to the extent "there is no Big Other," they are less the system of cultural imperatives than his fantasy of where they repose. In this sense Gulliver's own standards exceed those of his chosen master. He plays to the symbolic king beyond the actually existing one. The psychological logic is that of the subject whose fetish-object helps him achieve heroic tasks only to be revealed as a fraud—leaving him to realize that "it was him all along."

society he claims to abhor; second, as the intrusive reality that drives the complacent ideologue into defensiveness.

One can perhaps confirm the durability of the spiritual-psychic analytic for the eighteenth century by the fit between Swift's critiques of Gulliver/England and the modes of satire distinguished by Henry Fielding in the preface to *Joseph Andrews* (1742). Fielding locates the source of "the Ridiculous" in "Affectation"—in which he subtly discerns "two Causes; Vanity, or Hypocrisy: For as Vanity puts us on affecting false Characters, in order to purchase Applause; so Hypocrisy sets us on an Endeavour to avoid Censure by concealing our Vices under an Appearance of their opposite Virtues."[29] His analysis of socially constructed affect perfectly captures the distinction between Gulliver's partly commendable behavior in Part I and his desperate obsequiousness in Part II: "Affectation doth not imply an absolute Negation of those Qualities which are affected: and therefore, tho', when it proceeds from Hypocrisy, it be nearly allied to Deceit; yet when it comes from Vanity only, it partakes of the Nature of Ostentation."[30] It is common to object to Gulliver's behavior in Brobdingnag—but aren't Gulliver's misguided responses to his shame in Part II more evocative of a moral drive, in a motivational sense, than anything in Part I?

Fielding's analyses, and Gulliver's shifts, offer slight variations on Swift's basic Catholic-Puritan psychological types. Part I presents Gulliver as a (Catholic or aristocratic-style) knave whose vain loyalty to protocol pushes him to oppositional

[29] Henry Fielding, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews*, ed. Adam Potkay (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), 7-8.
[30] Ibid., 8.

critique; Part II recasts the self-righteous hypocrite as self-doubting compulsive fabulist. These are not discrete new types, but structurally predictable modulations or logical moments in the same fluid system. More colloquially, one might see the knave's subtle shift from scheming-cynical courtier to earnest Malvolio figure (or a male Goody Two-Shoes); the hypocrite, under pressure of disillusionment, passes from sanctimonious prig to miserable apologist.[31]

The unity of Gulliver's various poses, the way they reveal mere variations on fundamental libidinal investments, suggests a bleak view of social reform. Improvements in governance would require a wholesale material- psychological project, a new set of identities and desires. Gulliver's ambivalence toward traditional authority is obviously quite close to Swift's; yet Swift portrays the flight from tradition as a class-bound, middle class naivety, reminiscent of Puritan reaction to Catholicism. Gulliver is cast out like Crusoe—but instead of confidently creating a new order, he remains dishonestly linked to the old one. He falls prey to the dangers Defoe, too, identifies with respect to the would-be reformer confronted with hegemonic power: envy, resentment, narcissism, aggression.

In effect, Swift's limited political imagination—his inability to picture a reconfigured desiring system of the kind that would transform the social order—produces a kind of plausible tautology justifying the status quo: a plebian, whose

[31] Or, one could say that Swift distinguishes, in two cases, between the psychologies of a system's user-exploiter and its apologist (a path from unbelieving belief to believing disbelief). The first case describes, for example, the way a political insider paying cynical lip service to virtues like bipartisanship can fossilize into a pundit who piously deplores its absence from a system that merely exploits the concept (like the *Washington Post's* David Broder). The latter case may be exemplified by the contortions of such faux moderates when compelled to defend the extreme position they really espouse when their ideology is subject to real-world challenge (like the *New York Times'* David Brooks).

contingent libidinal position necessarily leaves him psychically damaged by attempts to rise, merely seems to confirm his essential plebian character.[32] Swift's vision of social reform remains confined to that typified by the jealous, upwardly mobile Puritan.

Technocratic Innovation: It's Actual, But Not Factual; Everything is Artifactual

Swift's narrative, like Defoe's, highlights everyday objects as the subject's point of investment in governing institutions. In Lilliput, Gulliver is characterized by an array of personal effects that signify comfort, competence and utility: his watch, spyglass, spectacles, pistols and sword, and snuffbox. He employs the most promising know-how of a rising class. But Swift exposes this technical autonomy as fraud by describing Gulliver's more basic passivity. In brute material terms, Gulliver is reduced to an infant whose needs are met with absolute dependability. His food, in improbable quantities, is automatically and regularly supplied; after an initial embarrassment, his bodily waste is discretely whisked away by others, requiring no efforts of his own. Under these conditions of total, if largely unacknowledged reliance, the Brobdingnagians propose, perhaps not wholly unreasonably, the possibility of slowly starving Gulliver to death.

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[32] Swift's views suggest an alternative genealogy of the modern conservative tradition as supposedly derived from thinkers including Swift. Swift offers a more radical analysis than is generally admitted. His implicit position, that real social reform (apart from that promised by the church) demands a cultural revolution of desire, is closer to Deleuze or Marcuse: the difference lies, of course, in the estimation of practical success. Edmund Burke, by this standard, voices a reactionary collapse into outright endorsement of tradition for its own sake: a neurotic attachment at odds with Swift's religious sensibility. Swift's logic here is that of the aristocrat who deplores the autodidact or *nouveau riche's* vulgar social climbing as evidence of his innate lower class status; but Swift's insistence on a critique of desire permits him to suggest as well that the vulgarian merely embodies the most essential part of the aristocrat.

In Brobdingnag, Gulliver's gold and weaponry, as opposed to more benign objects, feature most immediately. The items mark his castrated sense of self as he attempts to reassert his power through these signifiers of potency. His impotence drives him, as well, to items that serve him as signifiers of taste, accomplishment and inducements to royal appreciation: He improvises a means of playing the spinet with padded sticks; he fashions, from the queen's giant hairs, a set of cane-chairs and a "neat little purse": "I made a present of them to her Majesty, who kept them in her cabinet, and used to shew them for curiosities"(11:125-6). He finally abandons appeasement to more directly prove his worth—by revealing to the king the secret of gunpowder, a scene that recalls Crusoe's revelations to Friday, but for the king's horrified reaction (11:134).

Swift points to the social climber's potential to transfer energies from useful activity to aping his betters to violent self-assertion. Gunpowder here represents less an element of techno-modernity than a tool of middle class resentment: it is Gulliver's degraded cultural faith externalized.

The action in Brobdingnag helps explain Swift's seemingly arbitrary distinction between benign "improvement of agriculture and all the mechanical arts"[111] and useless or dangerous technological "projecting."—a distinction that rests not in the technical differences, but in psychic modes of investment. In this regard, Gulliver's drawing-room implements of subservience and vulgar pretence relate more closely to gunpowder than more obviously (to the modern mind) correlated technologies of mechanical improvement for which Swift seems, unaccountably, to make room.

Gulliver's first two voyages explore governance organized around 1) a public symbolic hierarchy (of honors and titles), and 2) subjective (Whig-dissenting) fetishism of commercial and nationalist forms. But Swift was aware, as the sermon on *Testimony of Conscience* articulates, of claims to renew Protestant culture in firmer ground: in metaphysical or scriptural certainties, the market's self-correcting wisdom, or study of the natural world by experts. The voyage to Laputa takes on the last of these strategies—but only to expose it as a reiteration of familiar spiritual error.

If Lilliput and Brobdingnag, in the Lacanian analogy, exemplify social faith organized excessively around the Symbolic and the Imaginary, then Laputa depicts the attempt to ground it in the Real—in metaphysics or nature that are experienced as beyond manipulation by the Symbolic Order, in areas requiring expert interpretation and inquiry, beyond the realm of ordinary consensus and into the particular. It would be easy to conclude that Swift fears a materialist disenchantment of the world that locates truth in an underlying bedrock reality of facts. But his interest lies entirely in the status of new truths as thought objects, in the way they influence people as objects of social faith. For Swift, even the objects of science remain social objects; the Real, in this view (as in Lacan's) remains merely that aspect of psychic reality experienced as external or still-resistant to ordinary conventions of speaking and thinking. He does not approach modern philosophy's discoveries as a new way of knowing some ultimate reality, but as a new subspecies of social objects, foisted on the public with a familiar rhetoric of zealous certainty. From the material-psychic perspective of Swift's Protestantism, claims for science merely concern the authority to define objects of public belief. In an ideal form,

of course, science proposes only provisional objects of observation; Swift's responds—justifiably or not—to the psychic problems of what he saw as a more arrogant subculture of certainty, quite apart from questions regarding the actual implications of science or metaphysics as a challenge to religious truth.

Defoe takes much the same position: Crusoe's supposedly modern empirical investigations never produce certainties about a fully knowable secular reality; they offer instead a means to constantly expand the psychological space in which Crusoe dwells, signaled by means of an expanding domain of objects he has grasped. He tests his perceptions against that which remains resistant to his mastery. His self-reform includes salutary use of observation, vocational practice, and revelations tied to scripture. Rather than contacting a determinate reality, then, Crusoe engages in repeated mental journeying into an inexhaustible Providence. Defoe allows this consciousness-raising to take place within the individual, subject to renewed investigation and the correction of the available laity.[33]

Swift's critique of this mode, therefore, does not respond to some offending secular positivism, but—in entirely traditional terms—to Defoe's Puritan tendency to accept a much diminished hermeneutic community away from the church and into the realm of individual conscience. There is no sufficient corrective, in his view, for a subject like Crusoe to be sure he has exceeded his own imagination and libidinal idols. The critique of projectors merely extends this analysis to identify modern philosophy's

[33] It is worth noting that Crusoe always struggles to interpret his more mystical visions and revelations, and is open to a continuum of explanation from delirium to serendipitous mental event to divine inspiration. There is every sense that he would be open to corrective interpretation and little evidence of claims to unmediated access to God.

objects as the fantasy products of a minority. Swift simply refuses, in other words, to see the established bodies of expert research as legitimate epistemological community.

The Academy of Lagado, unsurprisingly, presents a strict analogue for the proliferation of schismatic symbolic orders Swift describes in Bedlam in the *Tale*, in the Continent's monastic communities, and in the marketplace. The academy resembles an asylum, overseen by a warden and divided into over 500 rooms, each with a miniscule solipsistic projecting community (11:179). From this perspective, Swift describes the professor "employed in a Project for improving speculative knowledge by practical and mechanical Operations" (11:182)—a description that carries the same meaning as mechanical operations of sectarian belief in the *Tale*—as does the "innovation" that characterizes the projectors generally (1:177). The project is a kind of Turing machine for generating/simulating knowledge by randomly manipulating wooden dies marked with linguistic signs; it is a perfect image for a blindly self-expanding signifying system deprived of any conscious, edifying order. Like the Academy itself, or the market, the machine produces a randomly mutating symbolic order that can never underwrite a coherent co-conscious society.

The machine's schizophrenic and autonomous work, supposedly, furnishes knowledge directly and automatically, without the "laborious" process of learning and mastery of arts and sciences (11:182).[34] It bypasses subjectivity altogether, leaving no space of conscious awareness between its symbolic idols and the self. Swift depicts the

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[34] Schizophrenic, that is, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense of desiring-production among cultural objects in a discontinuous or aleatory fashion. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Viking Press, 1977).

ultimate senseless liturgical order, one deprived even of the ethically striving subject. Where Defoe's Protestant subject learns to interact humbly and flexibly with the objects of his world, Swift's ideal Protestant subject exists ethically through conscious awareness of the gap between self and vestimental order—responding through humility, skepticism, self-reform, and acceptance of grace; the machine offers, in a new mode, the (impossibly) fully-inscribed sectarian or the amoral honest businessman of the sermon on conscience.

Swift's Lagado, in this sense, resists incorporation into modern historiography. Swift never sees "science" as furnishing modernity's world of unified space-time coordinates of realist agreement because it is a mechanism rather than a belief. The notion of modernity's imagined community in these terms, as described by Benedict Anderson and embraced by theorists of eighteenth-century literature, runs directly counter to what Swift describes as modernity's proliferation of individual psychotic sects.[35] Swift approaches the new science, that is, as a familiar mode of belief, not a new mode of knowledge. As an "epistemic shift," in fact, it seems barely to register.

Swift's thinking thus allows for both inductive thought and the correctives of the sensory world. Described in these terms, Swift is a proponent of science. The real issue

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[35] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.Swift's vision of modernity derives directly from accounts of enthusiasm that also resist incorporation into a narrative of religious-political division that stand as secular unity's opposite. Rather than merely equate enthusiasm with interpretive friction and political discord, for example, Meric Causabon offers a surprising argument that enthusiasm leads to an undesirable religious peace, a collection of religious monads strictly orthogonal to one another. He argues that, among the ancients, "There were as many Religions almost as men; for every man's religion was his phansy; and they had most credit and authority that could best invent, and make best shew. Among so many religions, there were no controversies, but very good agreement and concord; because no reason used either to examine, or to disprove. There was no talk among men, but of dreams, revelations, and apparitions: and they that could so easily phansy God in whatsoever they did phansy, had no reason to mistrust or to question the relations of others, though never so strange." Casaubon, *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme*.

is whether that sensory data has been cognized by a full corrective community into authorized social signifiers—objects of utility, God's signs, or cultural imperatives. Yet at the same time Swift simply refuses to see the new science as a genuinely communal project of mutual correction; he is unable to extend to an institution like the Royal Society an authorized role co-terminal or cooperative with existing governing bodies, including the church. Swift could imagine a priesthood of believers, up to a point (conveniently equating the interests of the subject with those of his lord)—but not a priesthood of scientists. Before equating Swift's critique of modern philosophy with one of modern science and then of modernity, we need to draw a distinction between pragmatic inductive method and the theoretical nominalism that posits a fully speakable underlying reality.

Conclusion: On "Epistemological Crisis"

Isn't Swift's real problem with the "modern" more or less that he simply didn't believe in it? In Swift's writing, claims for progress and novelty are generally treated as an affectation, a vain and empty claim, a pretense. Critics like Orwell may have been hasty to condemn Swift for wholesale failure to understand science.[36] But wasn't Orwell right on a deeper level, that "reason" for Swift, really does mean nothing more than "common sense"—as the realm of full mutual investigation into inevitably psychological objects—, and that, without this, science, as he saw it, was nothing new? From a spiritual point of view, the modern generally simply replicated sectarian liturgical cultures,

[36] Frank Boyle, *Swift as Nemesis: Modernity and Its Satirist* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000), xiii.

offering a dangerous proliferation of new objects of social faith, demanding a "real" belief in arbitrary idols rather than mutual assent to a provisional common judgment. Swift differs from both progressive and conservative critics of modernity who see a regime of instrumental materialism or naïve social engineering. His is a more quietist reactionary mode, which situates the new as the "new"—merely a presumptuous unwitting repetition of the past.

A dominant view situates Swift at a moment of "epistemological crisis," in which empirical ways of knowing —what Ian Watt described as confidence that "truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses"—associated with a modern regime threaten to deprive both Christian belief and traditional authority of their basis in divinely revealed truths.[37] According to this view, naturalistic explanations displace religion, making its claims superfluous, empty of content except as pious glosses on phenomena more convincingly described in material terms.[38] Yet this framing also limits the defense of religion to a kind of willful ignorance, in which numinous truths are preserved by the expedient of not looking into them too closely.[39] To cast Swift as a defender of this version of faith leaves him, rather weakly, as a proponent of a fragile credulity in the enchanted world of God's immanence, a vague fideism, or belief in "the ineffable," or eternal or human truths associated with poetic language and the like.

But this narrative, of Swift mounting a painfully earnest obscurantist defense against a fully cognized, inevitably secular episteme, seems incomplete, from the point of

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[37] Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*.
[38] McKeon, *Origins*, 87.
[39] Ibid., 83.

view of objects as reference points for subjectivity. It poorly describes Swift's most relevant religious rhetoric, which remains impatient with epistemology and, in its tone, less anxious about disbelief than an irritated rehearsal of well-worn truths to Christians of dubious character who should know better.[40] At times, certainly, Swift offers arguably weak, if common, defenses of mystery as "incomprehensible and above reason."[41] Yet these conventions go hand-in-hand with a tendency to regard mysteries and sacraments chiefly in their symbolic capacity, as part of a habitus linked to practical piety and salvation. Swift's defense of Protestant culture hinges less on leaving the foundations of faith undisturbed so much as recognizing them as points of social binding whose destruction results not from their exposure as implausible or historically dubious, but from their reduction to objects of metaphysical certainty and "real" contention that inhibit reform. Rawson has described Swift's tendency to see religion as "pragmatic principle[s] of cohesion" that "curb" wayward desires.[42] And while he does not generally go so far as to write off Swiftian piety as a mere political expedient or useful fiction for inculcating virtue in the vulgar, he comes close. Others have not hesitated to level that charge.

But Swift's emphasis on religion's social function also need not appear as an irreligious bent, epistemological double-dealing or intellectual cop out. It is consistent, as I have argued, with an analytic of the spiritual capacity of social artifacts, as potentially nurturing dispositions of conscious reform opposed to zealous inner certainty.

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[40] Where atheism figures in Swift's texts, for example, it is chiefly a sign of social breakdown—a temptation to the vulgar, rather than plausibly refutation or threat to belief.
[41] Landa find this evidence of anti-intellectualism in "Swift, the Mysteries, and Deism," *Studies in English* 24(1944).
[42] Rawson, "Character of Swift's Satire," 47.

For religious theorists concerned not only with belief, but also with spiritual character, the expectation of belief grounded in sense evidence or historic certainty (as opposed to social or symbolic authority), did not threaten faith with a secular futurity so much as it exemplified a familiar enthusiast/Catholic spiritual pathology. Consequently, Swift rebukes freethinkers like Toland and Collins not for proto-secularism, but for neglecting faith as a social practice. Collins displays, Swift assumes, an obvious ignorance when he posits a Christianity founded in the Real, on a series of mechanically linked metaphysical claims, the loss of any one of which might undo the whole system as if it were a Rube Goldberg device: a logical proof, a magical machine, or a series of natural causes. Here he ventriloquizes the freethinker to expose this narrowly mechanical vision of faith:

> The Priests dispute every Point in the Christian Religion, as well as almost every Text in the Bible; and the force of my Argument lies here, that whatever Point is disputed by one or two Divines, however condemned by the church, not only that particular Point, but the whole Article to which it relates, may lawfully be received or rejected by any *Free Thinker* (4:35)

No less than the Catholic ritualist or the predestinarian, freethinkers mistake faith for firm knowledge of a kind of machinery; their researches to ground cultural authority in the Real resemble the desire to see salvation manufactured by sacramental machinery, legalistic prohibitions or what Swift called “abstruse points of predestination, election and the like.”

Frank Boyle, then, is surely right to discern Swift's association of "the Roman Church's fraudulent doctrine of transubstantiation" with "modern intellectual systems."[43] Both, in Swift's view, vulgarize faith: "Before the mystery was defined materially—that is, in terms of a physical switching of substances [bread and wine to body and blood]—the scriptural event was available to the faithful in any number of modes of understanding. Once it was reduced to a specific sequence of material occurrences, it became the material of worldly arguments and religious schisms. … From Swift's perspective the argument is a rational absurdity because it is premised on the reduction of a transcendent religious event to a mechanical operation."[44] But Boyle identifies Swift's foe here as secular modernity itself, in its "terrifying reduction of the human intellect … to make all modes of human experience submit to a materialist discourse"[45]; however the danger is not (modern) materialism eclipsing "transcendent" mystery as the stuff of religious knowledge; it is uncritical psychological belief in an absolute eclipsing edifying accommodation of a social article of faith. Boyle is forced here to equate Catholicism with a secularizing dialectic of Enlightenment—a materialism--that Swift supposedly discerns in Duns Scotus; but Swift does not concern himself here with a problem of creeping disenchantment. His critique of the Roman Eucharist as a kind of secular material machinery is the very same Reformation critique, in a more modern register, that identified Roman ritual as a kind of mystical magic. Both critiques, whether in emphasizing superstitious thinking or automatic-mechanical sequence, speak to the

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[43] Boyle, *Swift as Nemesis*, 100.
[44] Ibid., 114-15.
[45] Ibid., 115.

psychic costs of belief in the register of the Real. The final eclipse of early modern Protestantism, itself constructed around warnings against this mode of faith, is not by secularity, but by modern religion.

Chapter 5: Reading the Spiritual City: Dissenting Hermeneutics and Governance in Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*

Beyond Crusoe

Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), which purports to be a first-hand account of the 1665 plague by the Londoner "H.F.," offers harrowing reading made all the more impressive by the inclusion of archival documents—including, for example, reproductions of demographic records, the Lord Mayor's quarantine decree, and advertising for quack medicines. These graphic elements seem to capture the emergent modern city as a place of scientific abstraction, rationalized and bureaucratic governance and aggressive commodification. Unsurprisingly, the *Journal* has recently been assimilated to narratives about the rise of the modern, secular state and, implicitly, the eclipse of religion.

This chapter will argue instead that the *Journal* reproduces documents from popular science, government and popular print culture to show their limitations for representing a city in crisis, whether during the plague of 1665, or during the 1720s. Defoe takes these documents up in an act fostering a kind of critical cultural literacy, to argue that none of these textual forms, taken alone, can represent London's many interdependent communities. Instead, Defoe's assemblage, tied together by his fictional observer, constitutes an archive of public speaking that aims to present London as a

unified living and interpreting community modeled on a Protestant (Puritan) *ekklesia*, rather than as a set of dead norms or letters. The *Journal* invites the reader to engage in a characteristically Puritan mode of reading and history writing, one that employs potentialities for writing scientific history within a spiritual framework. As such it complements *Robinson Crusoe* as an approach to reforming subjectivity amid modernizing culture. At the same time, it shows an affinity with Swift's *Travels* by arguing for a more transformative, integrative view of society as a whole than *Crusoe* shows us.

Defoe's response to plague suggests that, for him, technologically savvy governance is best exemplified by an engaged laity in a comprehensive and locally determined church; he extends this model to show London's potential as just such a civic and spiritual body. Rather than simply provide a religious sanction for modern authorities or epistemologies, then, Defoe's theo-political thought, I want to suggest, represents an altogether different regime, in which civic activities are understood as spiritual exercises of self-governance within a specific sense of the unity of church and state.

Regulating the Soul

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) surely suggested for critics *The Journal's* compatibility with narratives about an epistemic shift between traditional ways of knowing and the proto-technical apparatuses of the modern state. There Foucault finds a "compact model" of the panoptic state's spatial and bureaucratic disciplinary

apparatuses in seventeenth-century plague measures, “the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of a complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power.”[1] John Bender’s *Imagining the Penitentiary* (1987) extends that model, and finds the *Journal* articulating the conceptual matrix of those modern authorities by naturalizing, in realist imaginative prose, an apparently neutral discourse of documentary evidence amenable to urban regulation.[2] Along these lines, critics have continued to mine the *Journal* for evidence of a shift from traditional ways of knowing and speaking to modern forms of command and control and their associated technologies.[3]

Defoe’s textual and generic choices have likewise been described in terms of this broad social narrative, in that interpolations drawn from science and bureaucracy have been taken as Defoe’s attempts to lend veracity to his narrative, to increase the “realism” of his faux journal. This realism has been understood both in terms of the modern novel and as Defoe’s attempt to present the public with a modern work of history.[4] As scholars

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[1] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), 198.

[2] Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary*, 63-84. Bender’s account analyzes the text’s reality effect and its contingent potential to underwrite new forms of governance,—as opposed to the more common and simpler claim that Defoe is a proto-empiricist who employs modern methods of historiography and representation concerning factual data.

[3] George Drake notes that “The *Journal* documents the history of spatial practices during the plague, and those practices reflect in turn the rise of capitalism and innovations in state control.”George A. Drake, "The Dialectics of inside and Outside: Dominated and Appropriated Space in Defoe's Historical Fictions," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 14, no. 2 (2002): 136. Paula McDowell sees Defoe as a conscious advocate of “a new, print-oriented modernity associated with the collection and reproduction of accurate statistics and true report.”Paula McDowell, "Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral: Modeling Media Shift in a Journal of the Plague Year," *PMLA* 121, no. 1 (2006): 89. See also, along these lines, Nicholas Seager, "Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics: Epistemology and Fiction in Defoe's a Journal of the Plague Year," *The Modern Language Review* 103(2008).

[4] For an argument that Defoe’s numerical tabulations of the dead contribute to narrative plausibility see G. Gabrielle Starr, "Objects, Imaginings, and Facts: Going Beyond Genre in Behn and Defoe," *Eighteenth-*

acknowledge, the conventions of both novel and history writing were, at the time of Defoe's writing, fluid and interchangeable. Nevertheless the work retains the status of a problem text: a proto-novel in which Defoe, who drew directly on numerous sources, invented almost nothing, and an eyewitness history written by a fictional persona.[5]

Certainly, Defoe's interest in regulating London's population according to insights drawn from science and medicine suggests the institutional accoutrements of modern city governance. The London Bills of Mortality, the official records of plague deaths, which Defoe interpolates into his narrative, would seem, for example, to epitomize a statistical and probabilistic perspective based on empirical observation. Accordingly, readings of Defoe that closely adhere to narratives of incipient modernity tend to diminish the more traditional elements of the text, especially Defoe's earnest engagement with providential readings of the plague, its meaning to H.F and to the city at large. Implicitly, in such readings, his religious concerns are ignored as external to the technological-institutional innovations he embraces or reflects; as a corollary, it is presumed that features of Defoe's landscape are easily categorized, according to current divisions of knowledge, as belonging to a traditional past or a modern future. By same

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Century Fiction 16, no. 4 (2004). On the *Journal's* generic status and history writing, especially with respect to Defoe's use of primary sources, see Watson Nicholson, *The Historical Sources of Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year* (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1919); F. Bastian, "Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year," *The Review of English Studies* 16, no. 62 (1965); Robert Mayer, "The Reception of a Journal of the Plague Year and the Nexus of Fiction and History in the Novel," *ELH* 57, no. 3 (1990).

[5] H.F. has been identified, at least loosely, with Defoe's uncle, Henry Foe.

token, readings that highlight Defoe's Puritan literary heritage in the *Journal* have little to say about its more pragmatic concerns.[6]

But the whole tenor of Defoe's text suggests that it needs to be read otherwise, in ways that escape the modern tendency to split the material from the spiritual. If anything, the ease with which Defoe shifts between these realms creates a sense of London's spiritual ecology, as I have called it,—in which matters of public health, "science" and medicine, and government policy occupy the same conceptual space as problems of grace and spiritual development. Indeed, as a self-conscious historiography, the *Journal* demonstrates that cultural artifacts dating from the era of the plague (and 1722), were in fact available for appropriation by any number of divergent discourses—none of which may be easily categorized as modern or traditional. There is nothing, for example, self-evidently modern about the church-generated demographic records Defoe deploys—unless we understand them anachronistically—nor is it clear why they should convey "realism" if, as subtler readings have noted, the very notion of realism or neutral nominalism is an ideological effect to which Defoe's text contributes.[7]

Minimally, splitting Defoe's spiritual concerns from questions about governance risks stripping the *Journal* of any coherent rhetorical purpose—the same sort of problem we have encountered in secularizing readings of *Robinson Crusoe*, and in ideological diagnostics of Swift. More than this, such readings shift the rationale and functions of good governance away from the milieu in which Defoe would have conceived them. The

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[6] See, for example Hunter, *Pilgrim*; Everett Zimmerman, "H.F.'S Meditations: A Journal of the Plague Year," *PMLA* 87, no. 2 (1972).
[7] Again, see Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary*.

notion of spiritual exercises or technologies, which has guided this discussion of the confluence of liturgical cultures and proto-modern institutions, offers the possibility of re-conceiving Defoe's text and ideas about civic practice in terms that might have been more familiar to him. We can see, that is, a pragmatic approach to cultivating mental dispositions and mapping (in the active sense of offering a strategic guide) relations between social actors and institutions. In this sense, Defoe's Puritan heritage comprises more than a set of conventions, and more than a set of beliefs pertaining to matters epistemological and soteriological; it represents a cognitive system that binds public structures of governance as well as private behavior. The *Journal*, in other words, models governance as a spiritual exercise; and in critiquing various responses to plague it models, in miniature, the kind of thinking it demands.

Defoe would have had ample opportunity to absorb a basic set of prejudices about the interdependence of civic and spiritual life. Paula Backscheider's biography emphasizes Defoe's early nonconformist religious training in terms of "habits of mind" inculcated during his time as a student at Charles Morton's Newington Green Academy.[8] Morton's rigorous curriculum stressed the importance of free inquiry in diverse subjects as well as spiritual development, and Morton's own writings speak to the deep connection drawn between Protestant tenets, personal disposition, and the social environment. Virtue was certainly to issue in public spiritedness, but Morton's doctrine likewise held that accepting grace depended in large part on available social institutions.

[8] Paula Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 14-21.

Morton's *The Spirit of Man* (1693), for example, schematizes Morton's understanding of the influence of the social and institutional environment on the individual spirit. This exegetical text makes a case for the existence of a noumenal soul, embedded or "informed" in the brute physical body—but having expression via the Spirit, understood as a mediating seat of dispositions subject to bodily passions, but also to correction through active habituation:

> 1. The *Faculties* of the *Soul,* (as Understanding, Will, Sensitive Appetite or Passions) are all Ingredients as the *Substrate Matter* of this *Spirit* in Man; But the *Modification* of them is from the other Causes. *Souls* in themselves are all *Equal;* but the *Spirits* are vastly *Different* one from another. And this is from the particulars that follow, and in a chief manner from 2. The *Temperament* of the *Body,* which is (more or less) Different in every Individual Man. The *Soul* Receives no power from the *Body;* But in Exerting its own proper powers, is helped or hindred by the *Bodys* good or ill *Temperament.*[9]

> *Acquired Habits* do much Alter the *Genius* or *Spirit,* from what it would be, if men were left to their Pure Naturals. These Habits arise partly, (1) From *Instruction* & Rules: so Intellectual & Moral Habits (whether good or evil· are formed much according to the Information men meet with, especially in their younger dayes. … 2. From *Pattern.* Example, and Converse, with People, make deeper impression then Rules, and have a very great influence in forming the

[9] Charles Morton, *The Spirit of Man* (Boston1692), 19-21.

> *Genius*· especially of Youth, when they are stepping from Boy to Man, and are taking upon them to chuse their own way.[10]

Consequently, the state of the soul depends upon discipline and training, but also upon the social environment:

> Thus *Prosperity,* Wealth, Honour, Health, friends *&c.* do commonly enlarge the mind of a man; and make him bold and brisk: Whereas the contrary *Poverty,* Disgrace, Sickness, *&c.* do usually Contract and Emasculate the *Spirit.*[11]

A poor spirit, while not in itself good or evil, may be sanctified or unsanctified by faith. In the latter case, it is the common good that suffers:

> This Spirit is a *Saddled Ass,* ready to be Rid at pleasure; and is most mischievous in a *Church,* where are *Diotrephian Spirits [those affecting preeminence],* and Ruinous to a State, where *Tyranny* would be playing pranks. Such are men *Born to be Slaves,* for whose *Unreasonable Yielding,* their Posterity will have cause to Curse them.[12]

To the extent that Defoe internalized this model, for him the realms of soul and state would have mirrored one another; he would have seen neglect of one to have, for entirely practical reasons, a deleterious effect on the other. Morton's writing constructs a pragmatic sanction for applying a dissenting hermeneutic to the world at large: the responsibility for self-inquiry extends equally to inspecting social conditions, while social

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[10]Ibid., 21-22.
[11] Ibid., 25.
[12]Ibid., 66.

conditions—particularly those involving a danger of tyranny or impoverishment—become the indices of the health of a community of souls.

The equivalence suggested here is readily apparent in Defoe's *Due Preparations for the Plague, as well for Soul as Body* (1722), which is split into a section of medical and legislative responses to plague, and a second part comprising dialogues on spiritual preparation for death; but this work has not been seen as unified in this sense.[13] I will turn to Defoe's better known *Journal* in hopes of modeling an inquiry that gives prominence to social processes of cognition as they arise out of Defoe's religious environment. It will, I hope, become apparent that it is possible to locate a deep religious logic in Defoe's work—one that transcends his use of genres that seem, to modern sensibilities, incompatible. I begin by placing Defoe in the context of alternative discourses by tracing his own meta-discursive strategy in the Journal. From there it will be possible to relate his critique to an underlying dissenting vision that is applied to broad social institutions.

Competing Discourses in the *Journal*

Defoe's text presents—even at a visual level—the co-existence of important but potentially irreconcilable world-views inhering in discursive strategies native to the proto-scientific community, state authorities, popular culture, and religious sects. A discussion of the historical background of the *Journal's* production will serve to illuminate Defoe's referents.

[13]Daniel Defoe, *Due Preparations for the Plague, as Well for Soul as Body* (London1722).

In 1720, news of plague in Marseilles reached England, causing a minor panic and public discussion of what measures might be taken to prevent infection, and what to do in the event of an outbreak. The French epidemic occasioned a flurry of religious tracts, medical treatises, and firsthand reports. Characteristically, Defoe had numerous ideas about prevention, the civic mechanisms for enacting his ideas, and the religious import of the epidemic. In 1722 he produced the *Due Preparations*. Just a month later, he published *A Journal of the Plague Year*. The *Journal* incorporates *Due Preparations*' policy advice on plague prevention into H.F.'s first-person account (with the somewhat disheartening conclusion that "the best Physick against the Plague is to run away from it") and its religious dialogue into H.F.'s running commentaries on providence.

Defoe's intervention was a timely and pragmatic one, addressing not only immediate fears of plague, but, implicitly, problems of London's administration by competing and overlapping civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Explosive growth had long been attended by potential for health problems, civil unrest, and religious conflict.[14] The City and its adjoining territories were thus a microcosm of possibilities for experiments in governance, and plague represented their severest test.

In spite—or perhaps because of—its origins in an opportunistic publishing frenzy surrounding the public crisis, the *Journal* shows a profound ambivalence about popular print culture and the variety of information available to the public. Seemingly aware of its own status as a potentially troubling mixture of reporting and fiction, the *Journal*

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[14] For background on London's growth and civil administration see Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution; City Government and National Politics, 1625-43* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 9-44.

suggests parallels between the rumor-mongering and commercial exploitation surrounding the plague of 1665 and the print culture of 1722. At one point, H.F.—on pages that enthusiastically reproduce and exploit the attention-seeking typefaces and sensationalist titles of quack doctors who claim to treat the plague—complains about the "flourishes" and "spacious titles" and "Capital Letters" of the physicians.[15] H.F. explicitly describes the influence of printed material on public apprehensions:

> Whether this unhappy Temper was originally raised by the Follies of some People who got Money by it; that is to say, by printing Predictions, and Prognostications I know not; but certain it is, Book's frighted them terribly; such as *Lily's* Almanack, *Gadbury's* Alogical Predictions; Poor *Robin's* Almanack and the like; also several pretended religious Books; one entituled, *Come out of her my People, least you be partaker of her Plagues* ; another call'd, Fair Warning; another, *Britains* Remembrances, and many such; all, or most Part of which, foretold directly or covertly the Ruin of the City (25)

Indeed, H.F.'s initial reaction to the plague involves a careful scrutiny of factual sources in an attempt to determine whether the reports of illness are accurate, and what sources are credible. By examining the limitations of popular print literature, Defoe points to public discourses that seem to offer truth, but are not adequate to the social situation they purport to represent.

The *Journal* begins, then, with the plague figured not as a crisis of health, or even spirit, but one of information: "It was in the Beginning of September, 1664, that I,

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[15] Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (London: E. Nutt; J. Roberts; A. Dodd; and J. Graves, 1722). Subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically. The text has ETSC number T070342 and document number CW107092774 at Eighteenth Century Collections Online. I have referred to the text as the "Journal" throughout.

among the Rest of my Neighbors, heard in ordinary Discourse, that the Plague was return'd again in Holland." To this opening, which evokes the situation of 1720, is added,

> We had no such thing as printed News-Papers in those days, to spread Rumours and Reports of Things; and to improve them by the invention of Men, as I have lived to see practis'd since. But such things as these were gather'd from the Letters of Merchants, and others, who corresponded abroad, and from them was handed about by Word of Mouth only; so that things did not spread instantly over the whole Nation, as they do now. (1-2). [16]

The *Journal* establishes the explosion of print in the early years of the eighteenth century as a distinguishing feature of the era in which the work is published, one that serves to set it apart from the culture of 1665—but also one that makes analogies between unreliable rumors and dubious printed material. Besides the sheer volume of popular printed matter engendered in the era and possibly covering up truths necessary to the public, H.F.'s suspicion regarding, and delight in reproducing, graphic elements also evokes developments in typography and the profitability of commercial advertising.[17] At the same time, direct reproduction of documents was a common practice in history-writing at

[16] See also McDowell's reading of this passage. Given the explicit critique of print sources, from the governmental to the fraudulently pious to the commercially-minded, McDowell's binary association of print culture with a modern factual mode favored by Defoe over a deficient oral tradition as part his "effort to rewrite the chaotic past of a not-yet-modern civic bureaucracy in the new idealized image of a civic order based on the gathering and dissemination of printed news" strikes me as problematic.

[17] James Raven, "The Book Trades," in *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (New York: Leicester University Press, 2001).

the time—one Defoe had engaged with his earlier histories.[18] Indeed, one of Defoe's chief sources for the *Journal* was *A Collection of Very Valuable and Scarce Pieces Relating to the Last Plague in the Year 1665*, a compendium of primary-source documents printed in 1721 by J. Roberts.[19]

Amid this flurry of information, Defoe invests his narrator with a degree of epistemological suspicion that bears more critical investigation. For H.F., the "ordinary discourse" of the commercially minded public sphere can only be read as a dubious sign, rather than information—sufficiently so that H.F. arguably likens uncertain knowledge to the "spread" of disease—the meaning of which is likewise mysterious.[20]

As an alternative, H.F. turns to governmental, juridical rhetoric as a possible source of knowledge, but finds it also problematic in its application to the whole of society. Frustrated with popular reports, subsequently described as "rumours," H.F. contrasts them with the state's knowledge of the threat: "But it seems the Government had a true Account of it [the plague], and several Counsels were held about Ways to prevent its coming over; but all was kept very private. Hence it was, that this Rumour died off again, and People began to forget it, as a thing we were very little concern'd in, and that we hoped was not true" (2). The possibility for knowledge exists—but only in

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[18] Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: Ambition and Innovation* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 71;98.

[19] Bastian, "Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year."

[20] In one interesting moment, H.F. describes a confrontation between a woman and a physician whose printed advertisement she feels has misled her. While the doctor's printed bills purport to offer free help to the poor regarding plague, in person he requires payment, his advice being that they should purchase his medicine: "Alas, Sir! says she, that is a Snare laid for the Poor then; for you give them your Advice for nothing, that is to say, you advise them gratis, to buy your Physick for their Money." Defoe notes the creation, by modern advertising, of a treacherous public sphere in which printed promises are granted a narrow, quasi-contractual meaning even as they play on the sphere of private, everyday expectations.

the private and, to the ordinary citizen, inaccessible realm of official discourse. Assimilating the public, textual face of this bureaucratic idiom to his pseudo-memoir, Defoe faithfully reproduces the *Orders Conceived and Published by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London Concerning the Infection of the Plague, 1665*.[21] But Defoe undercuts this official and documentary history of events with his exposé of the brutality and futility of enforcing quarantines. The *Journal*, after some equivocation, bluntly concludes that these health measures are unlikely to be effective, since many plague victims are asymptomatic carriers, indistinguishable from the healthy. Defoe's approach points to a suspicion of the monologic authority implied by juridical discourse, one grounded in the controversy surrounding the government's response to the plague scare of 1720. Defoe's use of the *Orders* transposes to 1665 his more immediate intervention in intense debate over the application of governmental powers, particularly the use of military force against a civilian population.

In January of 1721, the government passed a bill establishing strict quarantines, restrictions on trade, and provisions for maintaining civil order in the event of plague. Certain provisions of the act, widely perceived as draconian, allowed for capital punishment for quarantine violators, the restriction of commerce, and isolation of infected areas. A second act, authorizing the king to halt trade with infected areas and providing for huge fines for violators, drew the ire of merchants and consolidated criticism of the first act, which culminated in the City of London's petition for a repeal of

[21] Bastian speculates that Defoe simply gave a copy of the *Orders*, which were included in the Roberts collection, to his printer—who, following Roberts, added the names of the officials and the date, which were not included in the original 1665 printing. Of course Roberts *was* one of Defoe's publishers—so the connection may have been closer still; but the type at least appears to have been re-set for the *Journal*.

the most severe clauses.[22] Defoe defended the bill's trade restrictions in *Applebee's Journal* in July of 1721.[23] The *Journal of the Plague Year,* however, strongly criticizes the kinds of policies authorized by the more severe provisions; Defoe's willingness to support the government did not extend to summary execution of fleeing detainees, or to isolating infected cities and towns with trenches and gunfire.[24]

Defoe's elevation of local rights and sensibilities stands in contrast to the rhetoric employed by the government's strongest advocate at the time. Although the objectionable quarantine bill clauses were rescinded in 1722, the government defended its position with a propaganda campaign waged by proxy. The Whig clergyman and future Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson, who was well rewarded for his efforts, anonymously authored a pamphlet, widely distributed across the country at government expense, designed to show the reasonableness of the act and call for public calm.[25] *The Causes of the Discontents in Relation to the Plague and the Provisions against it, Fairly Stated and Considered* (1721) complains of the "Misrepresentations of *Facts*, and Misconstructions of the Designs, as well as *Actions*, of our Superiors" that were leveled against the clauses by critics.[26] Gibson admits that any measures undertaken in the dire circumstances of infection are destined to be unpopular ("The Hand that administers Help and performs the

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[22] Charles F. Mullett, "The English Plague Scare of 1720-23," *Osiris* 2(1936): 486-91.
[23] William Lee, *Daniel Defoe: His Life and Recently Discovered Writings*, vol. 2 (London: John Camden Hotten, 1869), 407-10.
[24] Maximillian Novak makes the case for Defoe's opposition to the three clauses in Maximillian E. Novak, "Defoe and the Disordered City," *PMLA* 92, no. 2 (1977).
[25]Norman Sykes, *Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, 1669-1748: A Study in Politics and Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 80-81.
[26] Edmund Gibson, *The Causes of the Discontents, in Relation to the Plague, and the Provisions against It, Fairly Stated and Consider'd* (London:1721).

Operation, will be thought cruel, tho' it be never so evident, that nothing but Cruelty stands between us and Death."), but points out the necessity of the measures:

> Where the Disease is desperate, the Remedy must be so too; and to dwell upon *Rights* and *Liberties*, and the *Ease* and *Convenience* of Mankind, in case of a sudden Invasion, or the Plague hanging over our Heads, is as wild a Way of Reasoning, as if under a malignant Fever we should insist upon being dealt with in all respects like Men in perfect Health.[27]

Here Gibson deploys the language of military threat to the body politic ("a case of sudden Invasion") to investigate the remedy for a medical crisis, interpreting the problem in terms of state sovereignty. He rejects other kinds of narrative as inadequate, dismissing religious understanding of plague as "the immediate Hand of God, and therefore not to be resisted."[28] The narrowly providential paradigm, by virtue of its Puritan inflection, offends Gibson's Anglican sensibility and is incompatible with administration of a modern government apparatus.

Conversely, Gibson uses illness itself ("reasoning as if under a malignant fever") as a metaphor for a nation that fails gladly to submit to the salutary and reasonable ministrations of the government. In this regard, we can see the plague not merely as a potential threat, but as a master trope for civil disorder generally, and the basis for thought experiments regarding the proper place and limits of civil authority. Defoe's

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[27] Ibid., 2.
[28] Ibid., 13.

text, read as one such philosophical investigation, is therefore in line with contemporary models.

Interestingly, Gibson reproduces ("because I will be very sure, while I am accusing others of Misrepresentation, to stand clear of the same Charge") the three offending clauses of the Provisions against the plague. It is reasonable to regard Gibson's excerpts as a model for Defoe's inclusion of the Lord Mayor's *Orders,* and to consider the *Journal* as a work recognizable as a rejoinder to Gibson and his manner of thinking. Whatever Defoe's hopes regarding the pragmatics of plague prevention, he would have regarded an entry like Gibson's as politically charged in ways that transcended the immediate crisis.

The sticking points of the plague controversy involved larger debates in which Defoe had long taken an active part. Gibson, in his tract, is particularly anxious to rebut those who liken the severe plague measures to those taken in France, implying the provisions sounded more suitable for a country with an absolutist "Arbitrary Government." Behind the insinuation that the government had adopted a "French scheme" was the impression that the authorized use of the military amounted to, as Gibson puts it by way of ridicule, "a Dragoon planted at every one's Door."[29] The threat of military action against civilians and Gibson's defense of government power by raising the specter of invasion recall the political environment that sparked Defoe's 1717 opposition to a standing army. Noting in an editorial piece that fears of a Jacobite invasion were being exploited to buttress support for the army, Defoe attacked the

[29] Ibid., 6.

"Nurseries of Red Coats bred up in Foreign Pay, always ready at Command, to be called Home for any Drudgery that a King, *who knows not Joseph*, may have for them to do."[30]

While critics have remarked on Defoe's critique of government measures, others emphasize his partial defense, or note that he often applauds the Lord Mayor and officials generally in the *Journal*.[31] I would suggest that the more moderate 1665 Lord Mayor's *Orders*, inserted as a stand-in for the offending 1721 act and as a riposte to Gibson, offer a more positive model of government conceived in terms of local interests, rather than a remote and centrist authority. At the same time, Defoe's critical ruminations on the *Orders'* efficacy warn against state power in the abstract, while reflecting approval of the City's petition against the severe measures of 1721.

Gibson's mission, bringing his authority as an Anglican bishop to bear on behalf of civil administration, equally suggests the overlapping domains of knowledge and authority made especially problematic during a time of crisis, when a unified or at least comprehensive vision was called for. [32] The difficulty had been evident during plague since Archbishop Laud forbade sermons in infected areas during Lent. Laud was criticized for religious innovation for this violation of tradition, which he defended in 1637 as a "matter of state, as well as of religion." His accusers, that is, were able to

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[30]Geoffrey M. Sill, *Defoe and the Idea of Fiction 1713-1719* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), 133-5.

[31] Novak negotiates Defoe's contradictory views by exploring his complex attitudes toward the salutary potential of civil unrest. The populist potential he finds in Defoe (with reference to Christopher Hill's work) is particularly relevant here. Again, see Maximillian E. Novak, "Defoe and the Disordered City." Schonhorn sees Defoe as moderating or evading any serious criticism of officialdom in favor of a celebration of moderation and tolerance Manuel Schonhorn, "Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year: Topography and Intention," *Review of English Studies* 19, no. 76 (1968)..

[32] Gibson's DNB biographer notes, if only to reject it, the bishop's reputation as "Walpole's Pope."

attack a reasonable civic precaution from the domain of religion, even as Laud was able to employ a medical-civic authority for a conveniently anti-Puritan result.[33] Defoe's *Journal*, seen in these contexts, goes beyond questions of epistemology to acknowledge variant rhetorics that, while not necessarily inaccurate, serve a particular constituencies and political ends. It is therefore unsurprising that, to his suspicion regarding public speech and official communication, Defoe adds the problem of interpreting signs presented under the aegis of political science or archival documentation as well as that of religion. His textual ventriloquism reaches for a more complete and local community of knowledge, represented particularly by London.

The London Bills of Mortality

The fault lines in public discourses that purport to capture the experience of the plague are especially visible in Defoe's interpolations of London's *Bills of Mortality*—the weekly register of births, causes of death, and burials collected by each of London's parish clerks. The merchant John Graunt famously published, in 1662, a cumulative table of vital statistics based on the *Bills* and accompanied by a series of inductive "observations."[34] His "Natural History," written in the style of Sir Francis Bacon or

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[33] William Laud, *A Speech Concerning Innovations in the Church* The English Experience (New York: DaCapo Press, 1971).

[34] For a history of the parish clerks and the Bills of Mortality, see Reginald H. Adams, *The Parish Clerks of London: A History of the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks of London* (Chichester: Phillimore and Co., 1971), 48-70. Bastian notes, "The Bills, as published each week, consisted of single sheets showing, on one side, the total number of deaths in the whole area broken down according to their causes, and on the other, the total number of deaths, withn each parish. At the end of the *Plague Year* a compilation of these was published by John Bell, under the title of *Britain's Remembrancer*. It has generally been assumed that it was a reprint of this, in 1720, that Defoe used. However, since as early as 1712 he had published one of the 1665 Bills in his *Review*… it seems that he must have had the earlier compilation." Bastian, "Defoe's

natural philosophy, advances what has been regarded as the genesis of modern statistics and probabilistic calculation.[35]

While the inclusion of the Bills have been taken as Defoe's attempt to lend an air of facticity to his narrative, Defoe's text has a more critical role, playing directly on the tension between varying concepts of truth and knowledge as figured variously by overlapping religious systems, cultural elites, and technocratic government. It has been common to take the Bills, too easily equated with Graunt's proto-statistical presentation of them, as inherently representative of an aspiring empiricism set against a past of traditional knowledge. But such framing ignores the uses of such texts, the many discursive realms in which the data itself became truthful or meaningful to different readers—a central investigation of Defoe's text. In fact, the significance of the records throughout the text, far from being confined to questions of science and accuracy, depends entirely on the community of readers, which is conceived in a thoroughly religious mode.

The Bills, it must be recalled, are part of a record keeping tradition firmly grounded in religious purpose—from medieval accounts of alms, wills and the like to Reformation-era tracking of the religious polity. Parish clerks were universally charged

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Journal of the Plague Year," 161. The collection of 1665 plague writings published by Roberts also contains a collection of data from the bills entitled *Reflections on the Weekly Bills of Mortality* which does not indicate an author; it does not appear to be one of the versions authored by Graunt. Neither the Bell nor the Roberts collection can have been Defoe's sole source, however, since neither includes the statistics related to infant mortality or causes of death other than plague that are included in Defoe's *Journal*. The Graunt collection, which was republished in several editions appears the most likely source for this material. Defoe had certainly made some cursory statistical study of the Bills, at least in their weekly published version, as early as 1697, since his *Essay Upon Projects* of that year contains, in a proposal for a pension office, a reference to the recorded proportion of deaths between men and women and children.

[35] Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability*, 1995 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1975), 102-10.

with keeping formal records of christenings, weddings and funerals in the Tudor era—a duty that merely extended longstanding secretarial and ecclesiastical functions. London reports related to plague begin as early as 1532, with the weekly form of the Bills including causes of death traceable to 1592.[36] There is, in other words, no easy distinction between record keeping as it served the parish as a civic-territorial unit and as an ecclesiastical one.

H.F.'s usual mode of referencing and reproducing the Bills in the *Journal* involves, reasonably enough, a simple tallying of the dead for the purpose of gauging the severity, location and future of plague in the city. For example:

> The usual Number of Burials within the Bills of Mortality for a Week, was from about 240 or thereabouts, to 300. The last was esteem'd a pretty high Bill; but after this we found the Bills successively increasing. … This last Bill was really frightful, being a higher Number than had been known to have been buried in one Week, since the preceeding Visitation of 1656. (5)

> Now there died four within the City, one in *Wood-street,* one in *Fenchurch street,* and two in *Crooked-lane*; *Southwark* was entirely free, having not one yet died on that Side of the Water. (8)

> I liv'd without *Aldgate* about mid-way between *Aldgate Church* and *White-Chappel-Bars,* on the left Hand or North-side of the Street; and as the Distemper

[36] Adams, *Parish Clerks*, 1-10;48-51.Adams seems to rely on Bell's account, in *London's Remembrancer*, that he could find no earlier records in the Company of Parish Clerk's Hall.

had not reach'd to that Side of the City, our Neighbourhood continued very easy: But at the other End of the Town, their Consternation was very great; and the richer sort of People, especially the Nobility and Gentry, from the Westpart of the City throng'd out of Town, with their Families and Servants in an unusual Manner; and this was more particularly seen in *White-Chapel*. (8)

It has generally been assumed that H.F.'s use of the Bills ties him to a probabilistic, bureaucratic mode of knowledge and decision-making. The proof of this incipient mechanistic modernity has been located in Graunt's statistical tables, which are seen as the Bill's evolution into a fully modern, secular form. But, in fact, Graunt himself identifies H.F.'s style of interpretation as directly opposed to his proto-scientific project. Further, Graunt's innovations were, in their original context, an expression of a religious sensibility quite at odds with the future he supposedly prefigures. Far from employing modern probability, H.F (who remains in London against his better judgment in order to protect his business interests) consults the Bills in the time-honored manner of elite readers who possess a basic numerical literacy but have little interest in observational science. Graunt describes them with a certain disdain in the Preface to his *Observations*:

Most of them who constantly took in the weekly Bills of *Mortality*, made little other use of them, then to look at the foot, how the *Burials* increased, or decreased; And, among the *Casualties*, what had happened rare, and extraordinary in the week currant: so as they might take the same as a Text to talk upon, in the next Company; and withal, in the Plague-time, how the Sickness increased, or decreased, that so the Rich might judge of the necessity of their removal, and

> Trades-men might conjecture what doings they were like to have in their respective dealings.[37]

Graunt's remarks on this unimaginative mode of reading suggest the coincidence of self-interested interpretation with narrow neglect of available data, better applied, as he suggests, to "other, and greater uses" to "present the World with some real fruit."[38] His sophisticated pattern-seeking and public policy conclusions contrast sharply with mere accounting of the dead.

H.F.'s ill-concealed concern for the financial bottom line thus puts him in league with readers who misuse church reports to evade social and spiritual obligations; the *Journal* offers unflattering descriptions of the rich abandoning servants and of H.F.'s refusal to heed God's warnings of danger. That egotism comes at a practical cost. Like Graunt, H.F. shows a merchant's confident facility to read and calculate from the tables—but his simpler conclusions offer no more comfort than the searching for portents with which he began:

> This [increase in recorded deaths] alarm'd us all again, and terrible Apprehensions were among the People, especially the Weather being now chang'd and growing warm … However, the next week there seemed to be some Hopes again, the Bills were low, the Number of Dead in all was but 388 (6)

The numbers present the public with nothing more than one more omen, like the weather, and serve chiefly to fuel already rampant speculation:

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[37] John Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations, Mentioned in a Following Index, and Made Upon the Bills of Mortality* (London1662), 1.
[38] Ibid., 1-2.

> These Things [dire quasi-religious predictions] terrified the People to the last Degree; and especially when two or three Times, as I have mentioned already, they found one or two in the Bills, dead of the Plague at St. *Giles*. (26)

In such inclusions, then, Defoe depicts class-bound intellectual habits that limit both good science and healthy religion. The elite construe God's signs in numerical data, but only at the expense of the community and any felt need to further analyze information for the common good. Popular culture, on the other hand, regards the Bills more as public providential signs, but without a guiding religious or educated authority. The *Journal*, a spiritual autobiography that also voices Defoe's pragmatic advice on plague, leaves H.F.'s reading of the Bills in an uncomfortable middle ground between natural philosophy and augury.

For Graunt, a devout Puritan, good science offered a pious and complete numerical model of society "as a set of correspondences uniting man, God and nature."[39] Defoe would have appreciated this perspective and Graunt's methodology, drawn from accounting and double-entry bookkeeping and applied to a moral empirically-grounded public policy. Yet, Defoe also voices doubt about political arithmetic's potential to fully represent reality. In addition to H.F.'s elite reading, he discerns a possible affinity between statistics and the narrow, instrumental discourse of state apparatuses. [40] Thus the

[39] Philip Kreager, "New Light on Graunt," *Population Studies* 42, no. 1 (1988).

[40] "Petty was a man who wanted to put statistics in the service of the state. He made plain their significance for enumerating potential soldiers and for collecting taxes. He had made himself rich by this knowledge by exploiting the defeated Irish, and he thereby saw the real importance of collecting statistics to test a wide range of hypotheses." Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability*, 105. See also Peter Buck, "Seventeenth-Century Political Arithmetic: Civil Strife and Vital Statistics," *Isis* 68, no. 1 (1977): 80-81.:"From the 1660s on, an increasing number of civil servants were drawn into the Royal Society,

Due Preparations offer a direct critique of the Bills in their capacity as medical statistics—neither because they are inherently secular, nor because they are insufficiently accurate ("factual," in the modern sense), but because they only incompletely represent the truth about the community:

> Were the diseases and Casualties of which People frequently die in this populous City rightly given into the *Bills of Mortality*, many would be set down of other Distempers, than as we find them: Instead of *Hang'd themselves* (being Distracted) and *Cut their own Throats* (being Distracted) it would be said, *Hang'd themselves* (being in Despair) and *Cut their own Throats* (being in dreadful trouble of Mind).[41]

Arbitrary medical categories alone, Defoe suggests, fail to link cause of death and contributing mental state ("distraction") understood in its spiritual aspect. A full accounting of mortality would connect to social/spiritual as well as physical morbidity.

Rather than diminish these remarks as a religious gloss on material reality, we can see that Defoe reasonably points to the social dimension of inner states of mind in religious subjects, and to environing conditions as they influence the cultural order typically maintained by a religious habitus. That is, like his mentor Gibson, Defoe connects governance with spiritual habits of mind, reading failures of public policy in

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attracted by a sense of sharing common intellectual orientations with its scientist members. These men were the principle architects of a steady expansion and strengthening of the British state's central administration, and in the work of John Graunt and [William] Petty they found an enormously appealing approach to the problems of government. Political arithmetic provided the intellectual underpinnings for their conviction that the bases of stable and effective rule were not to be laid simply by limiting or redistributing political power but required instead increased administrative efficiency and therefore an expanded role for practical knowledge"

[41] Defoe, *Due Preparations*, 130-1.

moral terms, and likewise identifying the practical effects of flawed moral agency on the polity. This capacity to posit a coincidence of material and spiritual reality naturally involves scrutinizing discourse biased in any one direction; we can perhaps confirm Defoe's critique of proto-bureaucratic knowledge as part of that vision by turning to his critique of crudely providential readings as neglecting available empirical evidence.

The Bills as Providential Signs

The same kind of paratextual material Defoe uses to invoke multiple linguistic-literary communities shows the Bills' legibility within a popular religious constituency. The 1662 edition of Graunt's *Observations* begins with a dedication to Sir Robert Moray, President of the Royal Society, and has a restrained graphic design to match its scientific aspirations. Graunt carefully situates his work as part of a new Baconian project, apart from the readers he associates with the weekly printed Bills. Yet another framing of the information can be seen in two collections of the Bills assembled by John Bell for the Company of Parish Clerks, and published in 1665: *London's Remembrancer* and *London's Dreadful Visitation*.[42] Graunt's project likely influenced both (the former includes a number of "observations"), which were intended to preserve information as well as defend the clerks' methodology.[43] Bell supplements this civic purpose, however, with a religious one, signaled by a remarkable title page design used in both publications.

[42] The former assembles data from the weekly Bills from a variety of plague years throughout the century, including 1664-5; the second collects weekly Bills for 1664-5. Both were printed by Elinor Cotes, printer to the Company.
[43] Bell directly addresses critics of the Bills in the *Remembrancer* and affirms Graunt's observations about missing records. The collection is obviously an entry in a discussion about the Bills' utility—in which Graunt, despite his few criticisms, figures as a strong advocate.

A headstone-shaped border, featuring skeletons and burial tools, a winged timepiece and the words "memento mori" evokes the late medieval macabre and *ars moriendi* traditions: The images of bodily death recall humanity's material nature in light of its religious responsibility to seek contrition.[44] A printer's notice in the *Dreadful Visitation* insists that the assembled materials, essentially a list of parish names keyed to numerical death totals, will "assist thy Meditation" and entreats the reader to "consider [God's] *Mercy* to *Thee* and *Mee*, that *we are in the Land of the Living, to work out our salvation with Fear and Trembling*."[45]

While the number of dead is sobering, the presentation of these dry records as a spiritual aid shows the distance between modern divisions of knowledge and the flux of discourses that Defoe addresses. Bell's overtly religious perspective gets the same scrutiny as the Bills' reductive quantitative story-telling: In *London's Remembrancer*, Bell, who also acknowledges "causes natural," interprets the plague as God's wrath. He takes this providential language into the political realm, construing the epidemic as divine retribution for Charles I's execution—a point he makes by quoting Bishop Lancelot Andrewes:

> May not then this Nation justly expect God's greatest judgments to fall on the people of it, for shedding the blood of their lawful Soveraign? … And because Murther of all Sins is the most heinous in the sight of the Almighty, but especially

[44] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 134.
[45] Adams seems to regard the printer's notice as Bell's own—and in commending the records to posterity they do recall his remarks in the *Remembrancer*. However, there seems no reason to exclude Cotes as the possible author.

> the Murthering of *Kings* and *Nobles*, therefore God punisheth it with one of his severest punishments, I mean with the *Plague.*[46]

If Defoe used the Bell compilation as a primary source, as is generally supposed,[47] he could hardly have overlooked this aspect of the work, and would certainly have felt the danger of yielding national story/history to these anti-Puritan rhetorics. He is not above providing a direct counter-narrative to interpretations of this sort—but is notably more circumspect in characterizing God's will:

> It must not be forgot here, that the City and Suburbs were prodigiously full of People, at the time of this Visitation, I mean, at the time that it began; for tho' I have liv'd to see a farther Encrease, and mighty Throngs of People settling in *London,* more than ever, yet we had always a Notion, that the Numbers of People, which the Wars being over, the Armies disbanded, and the Royal Family and the Monarchy being restor'd, had flock'd to *London,* to settle into Business; or to depend upon, and attend the Court for Rewards of Services, Preferments, *and the like,* was such, that the Town was computed to have in it above a hundred thousand people more than ever it held before; nay, some took upon them to say, it had twice as many, because all the ruin'd Families of the royal Party, flock'd hither: All the old Soldiers set up Trades here, and abundance of Families settled here; again, the Court brought with them a great Flux of Pride, and new Fashions; All People were grown gay and luxurious; and the Joy of the Restoration had

[46] John Bell, *London's Remembrancer* (E. Cotes, 1665).
[47] Bastian, "Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year."; Nicholson, *The Historical Sources of Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year*; Zimmerman, "H.F.'S Meditations: A Journal of the Plague Year."

> brought a vast many Families to *London*. I often thought, that as *Jerusalem* was besieg'd by the *Romans,* when the *Jews* were assembled together, to celebrate the Passover, by which means, an incredible Number of People were surpriz'd there, who would otherwise have been in other Countries: So the Plague entred *London,* when an incredible Increase of People had happened occasionally, by the particular Circumstances above-nam'd: As this Conflux of the People, to a youthful and gay Court, made a great Trade in the City, especially in every thing that belong'd to Fashion and Finery. (22)

Defoe deftly changes the object of God's putative judgment from revolutionary regicide to the dissolute Restoration court, characterized by prideful luxury and given Biblical weight by parallel with the First Jewish-Roman War. (Defoe seems here to follow the medieval tradition that the Roman general Vespasian represents God's justice, inflicted on unrepentant Jews for killing Christ; the anti-Semitic logic is counterintuitive). At the same time, he does not, like Bell or more naïve religionists, bluntly read natural phenomena as an instrument of God's political will. His reading, instead, more subtly locates proximate empirical causes of the disaster in moral failings: the Court's immediate temptations to hangers-on and indirect swelling of the population—beyond the city's capacity for healthy management, as the text makes clear—by a kind of bubble economy. While linking spiritually dubious motives with dire consequences, Defoe does not stray from evidence-based analysis.

On the whole, the *Journal* takes a dim view of arbitrary and self-interested interpretations of providence and, as here, insists on spiritual reading as an inductive

evidential process, involving self-criticism and communal work—a process at least theoretically opposed to irresolvable competing claims based on inner belief. H.F's attempts to refer the dire situation to religious authority are troubled to the extent that he falls short of this ideal.

Comfortable within a narrow providential framework, H.F. advises the reader to "keep his Eye on the particular Providences which occur … I think, he may safely take them for Intimations for Heaven of what is his unquestion'd Duty" (11). The plague and subsequent events are signs from God, who by further signs makes clear his will. Yet in practice, H.F. cannot determine what does or does not constitute a sign. Interpreting setbacks in leaving London as God's desire for him to stay in the diseased city—a result that accords neatly with his pressing business interests—, H.F. declines to flee town. But his brother, "a very Religious Man," reproaches him for his self-serving and passive notion of providence. H.F. looks only to dramatic events bearing on him directly rather than actively reconcile his knowledge with signs available to the larger godly community. His convenient self-centered fatalism, condemned by his brother as "predestinating Notions" (12), arbitrarily limits his responsibility to think and act.

Subsequently, in a superstitious mockery of genuine religious sensibility, H.F. seeks guidance by selecting a passage at random from his Bible. His bibliomancy mirrors the response of the uneducated public, for whom the narrator has contempt. "The People," he notes, "from what Principle I cannot imagine, were more adicted to Prophesies, and Astrological Conjurations, Dreams, and Old Wives Tales, than ever they were before or since" (22).

These credulous responses, in H.F.'s description, like religious enthusiasm, schismatically limit the interpretive community to a few readers—or one— and produce incompatible, subjective readings:

> And no Wonder, if they, who were poreing continually at the Clouds, saw Shapes and Figures, Representations and Appearances, which had nothing in them, but Air and Vapour. Here they told us, they saw a Flaming-Sword held in a Hand, coming out of a Cloud, with a Point hanging directly over the City. There they saw Herses, and Coffins in the Air, carrying to be buried. And there again, Heaps of dead Bodies lying unburied, and the like; just as the Imagination of the poor terrify'd People furnish'd them with Matter to work upon. (27)

But H.F. also tries to offset enthusiasm and its popular-superstitious equivalent with a studied naturalism drawn partly from natural philosophy. With respect to the appearance of a comet, taken by many to herald the plague, H.F. remarks, "I was apt to look upon them, as the forerunners and warnings of God's Judgments. … But I cou'd not at the same Time carry these Things to the heighth that others did, knowing too that natural Causes are assign'd by the Astronomers for such Things; and that their Motions, and even their Revolutions are calculated, or pretended to be calculated; so they cannot be so perfectly call'd the Fore-runners, or Fore-tellers, much less the procurers of such Events, as Pestilence, War, Fire, and the like" (22). He cannot, in other words, arbitrarily decide where to exercise explanatory logic and where to insist on miraculous happenings; the former must be included in the domain of his religious thought.

H.F. demonstrates as well that true providential reading, as exemplified in

Bacon's ideals, scrutinizes the observer's prejudices. He relates, for example, an unpleasant encounter with three men who are "not afraid to blaspheme God, and talk Atheistically; making a Jest at my calling the Plague the Hand of God, mocking, and even laughing at the Word Judgment, as if the Providence of God had no Concern in the inflicting such a desolating Stroke"(79). H.F censures them and records that they were soon "struck from Heaven with the Plague, and died in a most deplorable Manner" (80). He observes that, at the time, "I went Home indeed, griev'd and afflicted in my Mind, at the Abominable Wickedness of those Men not doubting, however, that they would be made dreadful Examples of God's Justice; for I look'd up-this dismal Time to be a particular Season of Divine Vengeance" (82). He soon moderates his views, however, realizing that his certainty of God's judgment might spring from personal animus:

> I was doubtful in my Thoughts, whether the Resentment I retain'd was not all upon my own private Account, for they had given me a great deal of ill Language too, I mean Personally; but after some Pause, and having a Weight of Grief upon my Mind, I retir'd my self, as soon as I came home, for I slept not that Night, and giving God most humble Thanks for my Preservation in the eminent Danger I had been in, I set my Mind seriously, and with the utmost Earnestness, to pray for those desperate Wretches, that God would pardon them, open their Eyes, and effectually humble them. By this I not only did my Duty, namely, to pray for those who dispitefully used me, but I fully try'd my own Heart, to my full Satisfaction; that it was not fill'd with any Spirit of Resentment as they had ofended me in particular; and I humbly recommend the Method to all those that

> would know, or be certain, how to distinguish between their real Zeal for the Honour of God, and the Effects of their private Passions and Resentment. (82-3)

The passage shows the congruence of spiritual and proto-scientific discourses as idealized by Defoe: Reading the book of nature demands a full consideration of evidence, free from institutional or personal prejudice. This is less an attempt to forge a neutral master discourse than a process undergone by the interpreter, who must humbly examine his perspective and motives. Here, Baconian principles of disinterested observation that undergird political arithmetic function as spiritual and psychological exercise—one that divides piety from its false appearance in resentment and self-aggrandizement. The real product of H.F.'s struggle to affirm a good reading, free of psychological bias—necessitating prayer and charity—is an altered H.F.

London as Symbolic Community

In light of Defoe's persistent emphasis on interpretation as a spiritual act concerned with overcoming self-serving, schismatic practices, whether institutional or psychological, we should note one final association bearing on Defoe's use of the London Bills of Mortality—namely, their status as a register of London itself as a symbolic Protestant community. The Bills had long featured as political metaphors for London as a whole, "within the Bills of Mortality" being a common phrase signifying the civic and

geographic locale comprised of those parishes contributing to the records (significantly, Bell's collection is dedicated to the Lord Mayor).[48]

Like the subsequent Great Fire, the plague of 1665 served as a test of the city's independence and resilience. A push for self-determination also fostered a vigorous dissenting resistance to Charles II during the years James Foe, Defoe's father, served the city as an elected parish official and a leader of the Butcher's Company.[49] London's causes were a microcosm of Defoe's own, and the city's religious and political independence echoes in the debates over the Quarantine Act. Defoe's real allegiance here, beyond his shifting political loyalties, seems to be toward the local, self-determining Protestant community his city had long been.

As state church records, the Bills served, in effect, to document legally or symbolically recognized members of the London community. That is, as a record of christenings and (ideally) burials in parish churches, the Bills offered an official population record tied to the rituals and membership of the established church. As a result, one chief criticism of the Bills' accuracy, from the perspective of those interested in a full demographic-geographic survey, was that dissenters were not included in the totals.[50] But from another point of view, the omission of dissenters accurately reflects their status as legal or political nonpersons.

This sense of the Bills representing a civil death, implicit in exclusion from the dominant Protestant community, may be seen in *A General Bill of Mortality of the Clergy*

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[48] Adams, *Parish Clerks*, 52.
[49] Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life*, 22-8.
[50] Adams, *Parish Clerks*.

of London (1646), a tract that roughly replicates the appearance of the weekly Bills and lists by parish in the ministers deprived of livings between 1641 and 1647 as casualties of the “contagious breath” of the Presbyterians. It memorializes them, in essence, as having suffered a living death—physically alive yet deprived of their legal or public identity. The tract was reprinted, rather defensively, in 1662 to justify the comparable purge of Puritan (or merely scrupulous) ministers—including the Foe’s own pastor, Samuel Annesley, accomplished by the Act of Uniformity—who were likewise seen as living dead.

To a moderate Puritan like Richard Baxter, who still hoped to see a comprehensive Protestant church, the clergy’s ejection needlessly split the community around ill-chosen adiaphora. From that point of view, the threat of actual death represented by plague highlighted how poorly such symbolic divisions mapped onto the real community of people who were in any case linked by their fate within the geographical city:

> But one great Benefit the Plague brought to the City, that is, it occasioned the Silenc'd Ministers more openly and laboriously to Preach the Gospel, to the exceeding comfort and profit of the People. … And when the Plague grew hot, most of the Conformable Ministers fled, and left their Flocks, in the time of their Extremity: whereupon divers Non-comformists pitying the dying and distressed People, that had none to call the impenitent to Repentance, no▪ to help Men to prepare for another World; nor to comfort them in their Terrors, when about Ten Thousand dyed in a Week, resolved that no obedience to the Laws of any mortal

> Men whosoever, could justifie them for neglecting of Men's Souls and Bodies in such extremities.[51]

Besides shaming conformable clergy who fled with "the richer sort," Baxter calls for an inclusive Protestant church. Plague merely makes evident the perpetual need to repent with faith—which ought to be the real test for membership in the church, and of the pressing need for clerical guidance. The passage goes on to observe that the 1662 expulsion of nonconforming ministers left London underserved by ministers, a point Baxter makes with reference to the population extending beyond the walls as indicated in the Bills.

The *Journal* echoes Baxter's call for all, including the minority godly community, to be made "visible Christians" by pointing to the unity of all Christians in extremis. The backdrop of plague features as a leveling presence, destroying former hierarchies since all are equal before death (193-4) and indeed, the *Journal* claims that the split between dissenters and Anglicans is erased during plague: both are united in worship.

> It was indeed, a Time of very unhappy Breaches among us in matters of Religion: Innumerable Sects, and Divisions, and separate Opinions prevail'd among the People; the Church of *England* was restor'd indeed with the Restoration of the Monarchy, about four Year before; but the Ministers and Preachers of the Presbyterians, and Independants, and of all the other Sorts of Professions, had begun to gather separate Societies, and erect Altar against Altar, and all those had their Meetings for Worship apart, as they have but not so many then, the

[51] Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (London:1696), III.6.

> Dissenters being not thorowly form'd into a Body as they are since, and those Congregations which were thus gather'd together, were yet but few; and even those that were, the Government did not allow, but endeavour'd to suppress them, and shut up their Meetings. But the Visitation reconcil'd them again, at least for a Time, and many of the best and most valuable Ministers and Preachers of the Dissenters, were suffer'd to go into the Churches, where the Incumbents were fled away, as many were, not being able to stand it; and the People flockt without Distinction to hear them preach, not much inquiring who or what Opinion they were of. (31-2)

Defoe and Baxter both draw on the commonplace that extreme conditions reveal the spiritual truth that man is always under suspended sentence, and must repent. They extend their point to the advantage of the dissenting cause, observing that their practice and call for a more inclusive church most closely approximate the view that others take only under duress.

The *Journal* takes up the articulation of that spiritual and ecclesiastical position in the civic and municipal body. Baxter's call for all who meet the basic test of faith to be made visible Christians points, in the context of the plague, to the need for a coincidence of the real city and the visible church—for all citizens to be counted. Defoe's ecological concerns about public health and civic institutions that manage disasters, as extreme tests of good management, are grounded very much in his dissenting perspective. His particular emphasis on the city as the unit of governance in its correct scale reflects a culturally Presbyterian or congregational sensibility—attuned neither to an arbitrarily

designated territorial church, nor to the isolated or amorphously networked godly communities of enthusiasm or Independency.

Plague, no respecter of class or sectarian boundaries, but determined by physical vectors of contagion makes an ideal case study for Defoe's (or Baxter's) vision of a Protestant community roughly coincident with a geographic and civic locale. The spiritual community depends for its existence upon its ability to work together to collectively and honestly read signs from God; at the same time, the interpretive work of civic duty serves to purge the community of schismatic self-interest or psychic dishonesty. Defoe's text makes clear the practical dangers of leaving anyone off the map of the community: Dissenting status as legally semi-existent is belied by the practical need to count everyone. The danger associated with inaccurate Bills—misreading the plague and allowing disease to spread to everyone—makes for an implicit critique of governing from within the national church as well as pointing to the practical advantages of a more complete church—a link between symbolic and actual death, between the civic body and the church body.

Conclusion: A City of Souls

In Defoe's *Journal*, we witness, overall, H.F.'s inability to represent, using dominant social narratives or epistemologies, his experience according to his religious impulses, his respect for judicious observation, and his wish to capture the historical truth of the public tragedy. The Bills invite an array of reading strategies, none of which fully

reflect a pious pragmatic engagement with interpretation itself—as a spiritual exercise designed to foster health self- and civic governance.

Defoe emphasizes the official status of the would-be hegemonic discourse of "fact." But that perspective remains unavailable to the public, whose religious faith and alienation from the channels of official power and knowledge (figured here particularly in the abandonment of the city by that elite group) make it unsuitable for their purposes. On the other hand, for the bourgeois Defoe, the alternative medium of public speech too readily collapses into mob behavior and uncertainty. Similarly, the possibility for a religious resolution is thwarted by the sense of religious schism, the fact that no institutional authority exists to give shape to these interpretations. A summary of the schema involved may be approximately:

Speech Genre	**Characterized By…**	**Status**
Popular Commercial	Rumor	Irrational/ Demagogic/Superstitious
Official/Scientific	Isolated "Fact"	Rational/Autocratic/Secular
Popular Religious	Providential Sign	Irrational/Schismatic/Reverent
(Defoe)	Narrative/Interpolations	Rational/Communal/Reverent

Figure 2.

Defoe examines several available discourses, each appropriate to a specific social space, but each with limitations with respect to the political and religious circumstances of 1665, or 1722. From every space of representation, Defoe is able to draw some desirable element, but each is, in and of itself, inadequate. In this sense, the plague embodies, or is a symbolic representation of, the threatening limit-cases for the constituency associated with each speech genre: In plague (social crisis) loom the possibilities for revolt by the masses (figured in the text, but not discussed here), dereliction of duty or authoritarian practice by the elite classes, and the metastasis of religious schism into a heterogeneity of superstitious practices.

Defoe's textual strategy, including his direct representation of the printed matter itself, assimilates the material, illuminates these competing modes of communication and, perhaps, sublates them into a more complete representation. From a political point of view, the *Journal* resists a vertical stratification of society and its expressive authority in which any one discourse gains precedence over others. Defoe preserves in his narrative what he sees as the best elements of speech (rationality, reverence, and commonality) in a horizontal structure: the texts are presented on the same plane, and torn from control of any particular interest, as comparable discourses of truth. By presenting the array of texts, Defoe forms a readerly community expected to pass judgment on authority as he renders the texts legible to a broad spectrum of society. In this sense, the historical narrative simulates a live voice, reviving the dead letter of authoritative texts by casting them back into the community in the form of a critical discussion.

With Defoe's meta-epistemology in view, it will be useful to return to the notion of the text as an aspect of spiritual practice—as opposed to a modern imaginative or historical project. My point here is not to classify or re-classify *Due Preparations* or the *Journal* in terms of their genre or reception, but rather to unearth the fundamental mode that unites the variant forms Defoe utilized: this is a mode or speaking position that might be characterized as a spiritual meditation on emergent governmental and popular institutions and narratives, which are subjected to scrutiny within a dissenting framework. Characteristically, Defoe rejects nothing that is "new"—not print culture, not public management, not the new science—, but he does subject emergent institutions to a re-visioning that makes their spiritual potential a test of their value. Under the logic of the cultivation of Spirit, as expressed by Charles Morton, the one-to-one correspondence between the self as a potentially realizable member of a spiritual community and the State as both nurturer and beneficiary of that member's potential is crucial.

So, while the *Due Preparations* has been seen as a repository of practical advice, coupled with a separate series of dialogues on the highly subjective problem of salvation, we can nonetheless discern a symmetry in the projects. Defoe's legislative proposals in that work, for example, are concerned in large part with preventing the deployment of soldiers against civilians, as occurred in France.[52] Authority for the "Invasion of Liberty and the Ruin of Property" cannot be legitimate while, on the other hand, civilians certainly have a "natural Right to flee for preservation of their lives."[53] Similarly, Defoe

[52] Defoe, *Due Preparations*, 9.
[53] Ibid., 16-17.

devotes a sizeable portion, if not a majority, of his argument regarding evacuation and quarantine to the necessity of making provision for the poor, the incarcerated, and the infirm.[54] From the other side, the "Mother" character in Defoe's dialogue concerning salvation does not hesitate to identify the plague as a "National humiliation," one that should force the country as a whole to cease its commerce and reflect upon God.

The points of exchange between individual Spirit and public institutions are even more on view in the *Journal*, where, as I have noted, H.F.'s temptation toward superstitious forms of religious practice is marked out for particular criticism. Characterized, finally, as a "Turkish predestinarianism"—that is, an unchristian and unseemly fatalism—his real sin is not merely that of irreligion or superstition, but the particularly offensive failing of refusing to interpret the full range of God's signs from the point of view of the community. To narrow the field to a simple and direct token of God's will represents a complete abdication of the more difficult responsibility for engaging and interpreting the whole world as a step toward altering the self. The implication of Defoe's insistence on this point is that his pragmatic engagements are, equally, spiritual ones.

By the same token, there is a decided respect for scientific methods and statistics as one useful facet of God's world even as—as the quotation regarding suicides in the *London Bills* suggests—there is a distinction drawn between the scientific knowledge that there were suicides, and the spiritual meaning of the raw data. The spiritual is not marked off from the empirical; rather, the spiritual is marked by the mode of engagement

[54] Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 20-7.

with the empirical. To Defoe's dissenting sensibility, there is very little tension between faith and the pure contents of modernity frequently taken as the secular—a perspective that will survive in Enlightened versions of natural philosophy. The problems lie instead in the deployment of institutions that curtail the development of the spiritual seeker.

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