

Swift Burning the Library of Babel

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## SWIFT BURNING THE LIBRARY OF BABEL

We are told in *A Tale of a Tub* that brother Jack ‘introduced a new Deity, who hath since met with a vast Number of Worshippers; by some called *Babel*, by others, *Chaos*’.<sup>1</sup> What is the meaning of this disturbing gnomic pronouncement? What are we to understand by Babel? This paper argues that Babel, briefly interpreted, signifies *the tyranny of the many*; in Swift’s opinion, the related evils of republican absolutism and literary mass-production were ultimately caused by pernicious pluralism. My argument is that Swift saw his own contemporaries as a generation that had been fragmented like that of the Confusion, a nation divided by partisan politics, religious sectarianism, literary controversy, and a host of private languages; and I shall argue that he assigned particular blame for this state of anarchy to Jack, the Puritan. Babel is not an image that appears frequently in Swift’s work, but the examples that do occur have large resonances and draw upon seventeenth-century political rhetoric and theological assumption in ways that must be reconstructed carefully. This paper is divided into four parts: the first deals with the deluge of print, the second with Babel, the third with ‘Private Spirit’, and the coda with the burning of books.

### *The Deluge of Print*

‘I hate a crowd where I have not an easy place to see and be seen. A great Library always maketh me melancholy, where the best Author is as much squeezed, and as obscure, as a Porter at a Coronation.’<sup>2</sup> These lines from one of Swift’s letters to Pope provide one explanation for the exiguity of Swift’s own library.<sup>3</sup> That Swift did indeed ‘hate a crowd’ is amply evidenced by the consistently hostile form in which multitudes are portrayed in his work, as the teeming insects of Lilliput, the terrible host of the Brobdingnag militia, the *Legion Club*, the automated multitudes of the *Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, and the heterogeneous mass of pamphlets in the Modern army (*Battel*, p. 238). In Swift’s work, mobs are gigantic and dangerous (*Tub*, Section VI, pp. 140–41); it is as impossible for man to put Leviathan on a leash as it is to set bounds upon the sea (Job 41. 1–4 and 38. 8–11).<sup>4</sup> Swift’s distrust of the mass has a number of ramifications.

The new volume of prolixity created by modern literary mass-production became a common target of Scriblerian satire. Swift considered that the proliferation of printers and their awesome output of material had become overwhelming, exceeding humanly manageable proportions.<sup>5</sup> Martinus Scriblerus described the literary

<sup>1</sup> Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, edited by A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith, second edition, with corrections (Oxford, 1973), Section XI, p. 194 (hereinafter referred to as *Tub*. *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* and *The Battel of the Books*, the other two works in this edition, are here abbreviated as *Mech. Op.* and *Battel* respectively).

<sup>2</sup> *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, edited by Harold Williams, 5 vols (Oxford, 1963–65), III, 330 (5 April 1729).

<sup>3</sup> Harold Williams, *Dean Swift’s Library, With a Facsimile of the Original Sale Catalogue and Some Account of Two Manuscript Lists of his Books* (Cambridge, 1932), p. 22. Swift left 657 volumes (about half the number in Fielding’s collection), though he may have owned more books than eventually appeared in the Sale Catalogue. Compare *Gulliver’s Travels*, II, 7 (*The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, edited by Herbert Davis and others, 16 vols (Oxford, 1939–74), XI (revised 1959)), p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> *Tub*, ‘Preface’, p. 40. See Robert H. Hopkins, ‘The Personation of Hobbism in Swift’s *Tale of a Tub* and *Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*’, *PQ*, 45 (1966), 372–78 (p. 372).

<sup>5</sup> One factor may have been the lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1695; see Michael Foot, *The Pen and the Sword* (London, 1966), pp. 78–80.

crisis as a deluge that had been sent ‘as a scourge for the sins of the learned’.<sup>6</sup> Reminding Swift of Solomon’s dictum, ‘There’s no end of making Books’, Pope wrote that he hoped their forthcoming miscellany would be able to distinguish itself from the mass by some salient quality, some ‘mark of the Elect’.<sup>7</sup> Swift despaired of keeping up with the innumerable pamphlets published, and claimed to have given up reading them (*Correspondence*, I, 178 (26 September 1710)). Polylogy was a matter that Swift took very seriously: ‘If Books and Laws continue to increase as they have done for fifty Years past; I am in some Concern for future Ages, how any Man will be learned, or any Man a Lawyer’ (*Works*, IV, 246). It is significant that Swift dated this associated proliferation of books and laws from the time of the Civil War.

In the fictional literary marketplace of *A Tale of a Tub*, rampant and promiscuous publication has become so natural a phenomenon that public works are in hand to canalize the flood of noxious material (‘Preface’, p. 41). Pat Rogers has shown that the physical proximity of Grub Street to Fleet Ditch provided insalubrious innuendos to contemporary satirists of every calibre.<sup>8</sup> This metaphor for literary production was not entirely Swift’s creation, but it was he that extended its rhetorical power when he exploited the purgative potential of lists in the ‘Description of a City Shower’ and later in *Gulliver’s Travels*. According to Locke’s famous definition, language is the ‘common Conduit, whereby the Improvements of Knowledge are conveyed from one Man, and one Generation to another’.<sup>9</sup> The Scriblerians elevated the cloacal metaphor from simple scabrousness to a serious diagnosis of literary pollution as a cultural malady. They did not scruple to assert that literature had been allowed to degenerate from a linguistic artery to a common sewer.

The sheer quantity of detritus conveyed in Grub Street’s disembodying stream challenged and finally defied the literary imagination. The freshness of that dismay is almost impossible to recapture now, after another three centuries of literary proliferation. In the world of Swift’s Grub-Street hack, all expression falls into tautology, since all possible utterance is already extant, simply as a result of the mechanical workings of permutation.<sup>10</sup> A conviction of the redundant nature of modern literature seems to lie behind many of Swift’s games with language: his analects of gruesome puns, his perverse taste for platitudes, and, of course, his collection of the flowers of *Polite Conversation*, a constant project of his over a period of thirty-six years.<sup>11</sup> ‘The Reader quickly finds it is all *Pork*, with a little variety of Sawce’ (*Tub*, ‘Preface’, p. 50). Controversy and repetition are the two inevitable modes of modern writing: epigoni are condemned to a choice of revisionism or plagiarism.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Pope, *Poetical Works*, edited by Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1966), p. 457.

<sup>7</sup> *Correspondence*, III, 201 (17 February 1726/7), quoting Ecclesiastes 11. 12. When Don Quixote’s friends set about burning his library, they refer to the books that are saved from the flames as ‘los escogidos’, rendered as ‘the elect’ in J. M. Cohen’s translation (Harmondsworth, 1950), p. 62.

<sup>8</sup> *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (London, 1972), pp. 145–66, a section entitled, ‘Artery of Dulness’.

<sup>9</sup> *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, III, 11. 1, edited by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), p. 509.

<sup>10</sup> On battology, see *Tub*, ‘Apology’, p. 4; Section VII, p. 147; Section I, p. 69; and the ‘repeating poets’ mentioned in Section IV, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> See George Mayhew, ‘Two Entries of 1702–3 for Swift’s *Polite Conversation*, 1738’, *N&Q*, 296 (1961), 49–50, and (on Crambo and other language games) ‘Jonathan Swift’s Games with Language’ (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1953).

Rampant literary pollution is taken to its logical conclusion in Borges's story, 'The Library of Babel', from which this paper borrows its title.<sup>12</sup> Borges's Library simply presents the enormity of literary pluralism that is to be found in all copyright libraries, massively enlarged upon principles maximally formal: it contains all possible combinations of the letters of the alphabet (the Laputan literature machine would require only slight retooling to adapt it to the manufacture of this library). Very few of the library's volumes contain even snatches of intelligibility, but, since it is 'total', its nauseous infinity of permutations includes all books that can be written in all languages (employing the latin alphabet). The rich range of options that the library's comprehensiveness appears to promise soon disappoints, however, because each individual avatar of potentiality is completely inaccessible amidst the innumerable legions of contingent versions. The entire structure is condemned to parochialism: every new contribution to literature is pre-empted by a tired cynicism that can only regard each example as a trivial variant. Each work within the literary array is unstable and relative; it exists only as a negligible fraction of an unencompassable whole.

### *Babel*

The chaos of literary pluralism that appears in *A Tale of a Tub* burlesques the religious and political history of the seventeenth century. The allegation that Jack had set up Babel as his deity draws an explicit parallel between the Modern world and the Generation of the Dispersion. Babel was a particularly topical image for the troubled seventeenth century because of its coupling of linguistic solidarity with social unity: the catastrophe that befell the post-fluvial generation comprised not only the confusion of tongues, but also the division of mankind into separate and inimical nations. A second Fall of Man occurred when the builders of Babel were set one against the other and were scattered across the face of the earth. Swift was drawing upon traditional interpretations of the Babel story in Genesis when he diagnosed the cause of the modern predicament to be the same as that of the original Confusion: tyranny.

Recent work upon seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century universal language schemes has revealed a widespread preoccupation with the Confusion among philosophers and scientists of this period.<sup>13</sup> Several linguistic systems were designed with the utopian object of rectifying the second universal curse either by creating a philosophical language that utilized 'real characters' rather than arbitrary signs, or by recovering the original 'Adamic' language spoken by all mankind before the Confusion. Swift was, predictably, highly sceptical of some of the schemes

<sup>12</sup> Translated by J. E. Irby, in *Labyrinths*, edited by D. A. Yates and J. E. Irby (Harmondsworth, 1976), pp. 78–86. C. J. Rawson has discussed some other Swiftian themes in this story (*Gulliver and the Gentle Reader* (London and Boston, 1973), pp. 77–78).

<sup>13</sup> See R. L. Colie, 'The Social Language of John Locke: A Study in the History of Ideas', *British Studies*, 4, no. 2 (May 1965), 29–51 (pp. 35–40); James Knowlson, *Universal Language Schemes in England and France, 1600–1800* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1975), pp. 9–11; Paul Cornélius, *Languages in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages* (Geneva, 1965), pp. 6–10; David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603–1655*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford, 1982), Chapter 2, 'Babel Revers'd: The Search for a Universal Language and the Glorification of Hebrew', pp. 43–89; Anne Cline Kelly, 'After Eden: Gulliver's (Linguistic) Travels', *ELH*, 45 (1978), 33–54; Mary M. Slaughter, *Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 114; Murray Cohen, *Sensible Words: Linguistic Practice in England, 1640–1785* (Baltimore and London, 1977), p. 122, p. 170 n. 52; *The Works of Francis Lodwick*, edited by Vivian Salmon (London, 1972), pp. 75–76, 81–82.

under consideration: his Balnibarbian sages, staggering under their back-packs of word-objects, are generally taken as direct satire of Bishop Wilkins's logical atomism.<sup>14</sup> However, Swift's consternation at the overpopulation of the surfaces, described above, is related to the quest for a purified language that these projectors conducted.

What was the sin of the Generation of the Confusion that merited so terrible a punishment? This highly apposite question was asked by Swift's antagonist, William Wotton, but he made little progress in answering it.<sup>15</sup> Thomas Baker was writing more centrally in the context of the theological tradition when he criticized Wilkins ('an extraordinary Person, but very projecting') for trying to do something made impossible by the Confusion:

The Division of Tongues was inflicted by God as a Curse upon humane Ambition, and may have been continu'd since for the same reason; and as no Remedy has been found, so it is most probable, it is not to be expected, nor are we to hope to unite that which God had divide [*sic*]: The Providence of God may have so order'd it for a check to Men's Pride, who are otherwise apt to be building *Babels*, were there no difficulties to obstruct and exercise them in their way.<sup>16</sup>

Swift was no exceptional theologian; his scholarship will not compare with that of Milton, whom he quotes. But he did have access to some of the richer details of the Babel myth.

The building of Babel was attributed to Nimrod, the son of Cush. This is not explicit in Genesis but is a very old oral tradition, embodied in the targummim and various Midrashim, transmitted by Josephus, the Church Fathers, and the medieval Jewish commentators, and received from all of these sources by the translators of the Bible and by Milton.<sup>17</sup> In Genesis, Nimrod is described as a man who 'began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord' (Genesis 10. 8). From earliest times, Nimrod's notoriety was proverbial. Nimrod is the first great tyrant in biblical history, who rose by cunning and force to be the sole ruler of the whole world.<sup>18</sup> Paradoxically, he is also a great anarchist and heresiarch; his name, erroneously taken to be Hebrew, was generally traced to the root מרד (*mered*), meaning rebellion.<sup>19</sup> The verse describing Nimrod as 'a hunter before the Lord' was taken by the commentators as evidence of his brazen defiance, and his 'hunting'

<sup>14</sup> On Swift and the 'language planners', see Kelly, 'After Eden', pp. 33, 43; A. C. Howell, 'Words and Things', in *Seventeenth-Century Prose: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Stanley E. Fish (New York, 1971), pp. 187–99 (pp. 196–97); and R. L. Colie, 'Social Language of John Locke', p. 39, n. 36; also see Lewis Walker's strangely diffident contribution to *N&Q*, 218 (1973), 413–14.

<sup>15</sup> W. Wotton, *Discourse Concerning the Confusion of Languages at Babel; Proving it to have been miraculous from the Essential Difference between them, contrary to the Opinion of Mons. Le Clerc, and others. With an Enquiry into the Primitive Language Before that Wonderful Event* (London, 1730).

<sup>16</sup> *Reflections upon Learning, Wherein is Shewn the Insufficiency Thereof, in its several Particulars, In order to evince the Usefulness and Necessity of Revelation* (London, 1700), p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> See S. L. Greenslade, 'English Versions of the Bible, 1525–1611', in *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, edited by S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 141–75 (p. 165), on the translators' knowledge of the Jewish commentators. The catalogue of Swift's library includes *Kimchi Liber Radicum seu Lexicon Hebraicum* (Dean Swift's Library, appendix, p. 6, item 231). See Milton, *Poetical Works*, edited by J. Carey and A. Fowler (London, 1968), note on *Paradise Lost*, xii. 24–63, pp. 1028–29.

<sup>18</sup> See Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, translated by Henrietta Szold, 4 vols (Philadelphia, 1913), i, 177–78.

<sup>19</sup> See *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, edited by George A. Buttrick and others, 4 vols (New York and Nashville, 1962), iii, 551; *Paradise Lost*, xii. 36.

included the ensnaring of men's minds with words, persuading them to rebel against the Almighty.<sup>20</sup> Babel was built in order that men might make war on God; it was a massive symbol of apostasy and tyranny, intended to secure for the builders everlasting renown (*Paradise Lost*, xii. 47). To the prophets, Babylon represented proud pagan tyranny, and the symbolism was subsequently taken up in the New Testament (for example, Revelations 17. 5). Nineveh, another great city said to be founded by Nimrod, and called after his Assyrian counterpart, Ninus, had a slightly better fate: being amoral it was considered redeemable (Jonah 4. 11).

Swift's references to Nimrod are sufficiently frequent to support the claim that he serves as a term in Swift's rhetorical vocabulary, as an archetype of tyrannical monarchy.<sup>21</sup> Nimrod as the first universal tyrant occupies a prominent position in Swift's extended aphorism, 'Further Thoughts on Religion'; this passage alludes to many of the traditions surrounding Nimrod. The aphorism outlines 'the Scripture-system of man's creation', and is concerned particularly with the intended scope of man's sovereignty over the beasts and his fellow men, citing Milton as a source for the view that there was an irrevocable change in man's authority over animals at the Fall, and over his fellow men after the flood:

The Scripture mentioneth no particular acts of royalty in Adam over his posterity, who were cotemporary with him, or of any monarch until after the flood; whereof the first was Nimrod, the mighty hunter, who, as Milton expresseth it, made men, and not beasts his prey. For men were easier caught by promises, and subdued by the folly or treachery of their own species. . . . [Beasts never degenerate] in their native soil, except they happen to be enslaved or destroyed by human fraud: But men degenerate every day, merely by the folly, the perverseness, the avarice, the tyranny, the pride, the treachery, or inhumanity of their own kind. (*Works*, ix, 264).

Swift's emphatic negative to the possibility of Adam exercising sovereign powers indicates that he was arguing against a widely-held dogma. This doctrine was patriarchalism. Swift's 'Further Thoughts on Religion' explicitly contradicts Filmer's patriarchal scheme of government, following Locke's famous refutation in the *First Treatise of Government* remarkably closely. Adam's sovereignty was a keystone of Filmer's theory, which was built upon an analogy between the respect a child owes his father and the submission that a subject owes his king. Neither was Filmer arguing a private or idiosyncratic case: he has been called 'that extremely rare phenomenon — the codifier of conscious and unconscious prejudice'.<sup>22</sup>

Nimrod posed a special problem for the patriarchalists, since he was not of the elder line, and therefore had not legitimately inherited his authority from his grandfather Noah. A concise summary of this seventeenth-century debate is provided by the example of the word 'patriarchal' that is attributed to Locke in Johnson's dictionary: 'Nimrod enjoyed this *patriarchal* power; but he against right enlarged his empire, by seizing violently on the rights of other lords.' Johnson's inaccurate quotation gives no indication that these words are, in fact, Filmer's

<sup>20</sup> See Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Yitzhaki, 1040–1105, whose classic commentary is printed in most Hebrew Bibles), *Pentateuch with Rashi's Commentary*, translated by M. Rosenbaum and A. Silbermann, 5 vols (London, 1929), 1, 42; *Paradise Lost*, xii. 30–35.

<sup>21</sup> A casual reference, comparing Queen Anne racing in her chaise to Nimrod the hunter is in the *Journal to Stella*, edited by Harold Williams, 2 vols (Oxford, 1948), 1, 324.

<sup>22</sup> See Myrddin Jones, 'Further Thoughts on Religion: Swift's Relationship to Filmer and Locke', *RES*, n.s. 9 (1958), 284–86; *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, edited by P. Laslett (Oxford, 1949), p. 41.

(*Patriarcha*, p. 59). Locke quoted Filmer's own statement against him in order to rally the arch-monarchist upon his anomalous severity towards Nimrod, the first king.<sup>23</sup> Locke perceived that Nimrod was a cardinal flaw in Filmer's lucid and dangerous absolutist case. Since Nimrod had usurped power, he was a very dubious precedent for the patriarchalists to cite; he could not be bypassed, however, in an argument that attempted to trace the succession of political authority in a continuous patriarchal line back to Adam. Usurpation and absolutism were central accusations levelled against the Stuart apologists, and Nimrod, as the archetype of insolent tyranny, was widely invoked in the rhetoric of the anti-monarchists. This debate and the use of these terms was by no means confined to Locke and Filmer: Harrington periodically alludes to Nimrod in order to embarrass his monarchist opponents, while Butler applies the same damning epithet to the revolutionary Puritans.<sup>24</sup> It is in this context that Milton's seeming digression upon Nimrod is to be understood (*Paradise Lost*, xii. 24–63). It is noteworthy that this passage never mentions Nimrod by name; it was assumed that the periphrasis in lines 33–36,

A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled  
Before the Lord, as in despite of Heav'n . . .  
And from rebellion shall derive his name,

would be readily recognized. Nimrod was a conventional topos in the argument against absolutism, which Swift adapted to his own purposes.

Swift drew upon Nimrod's notoriety in the course of his campaign against Wood's Half-Pence, when he protested that 'Ireland is the first Imperial Kingdom, since Nimrod, which ever wanted Power, to *Coin* their own *Money*' (*Works*, xii, 57). Ostensibly this is a neutral apologue for the first sovereign power, but actually it supplies the tacit warning to England against despotic maltreatment of Ireland which forms the dangerous undercurrent of all of the *Drapier's Letters*. In his sermon upon 'Doing Good', preached upon the same topic, Swift compared Ireland to Nineveh, as an illustration of God's special providence protecting the public as a whole, and as a reminder of the enormity of offences against the public (*Works*, ix, 238). He warned that England's usurpation of Ireland's rights would inevitably bring chaos upon that kingdom.

Swift's first political tract, the *Contests and Dissentions in Athens and Rome*, attributed both the dangerous folly of partisan politics and the ruthlessness of despots to the ambition of proud men to submit the entire world to their power.

So endless and exorbitant are the Desires of Men, whether considered in their Persons or their States, that they will grasp at all, and can form no Scheme of perfect Happiness with less. Ever since Men have been united into Governments, the Hopes and Endeavours after universal Monarchy have been bandied among them, from the Reign of *Ninus*, to this of the *most Christian King*: In which Pursuits, Commonwealths have had their Share, as well as Monarchs. (*Works*, I, 202)

Throughout Swift's work voracious absolutist ambitions lurk behind the decorous euphemisms of kingship: 'Arbitrary Power is the natural Object of Temptation to a

<sup>23</sup> *Two Treatises of Government*, edited by P. Laslett, second edition (Cambridge, 1970), first treatise, paragraph 148 (p. 268).

<sup>24</sup> *The Political Works of James Harrington*, edited with an introduction by J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 712, 459 (see 'Introduction', pp. 24, 29–32); Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, edited by J. Wilders (Oxford, 1967), third part, Canto III, l. 282 (p. 241).

Prince'.<sup>25</sup> Only the King of Brobdingnag is magnanimous enough to refuse the means of national subjection that is offered to him.

This ambition for universal domination is examined along with related schemes under the common head of madness in *A Tale of a Tub*. 'The Establishment of New Empires by Conquest; The Advance and Progress of New Schemes in Philosophy; and the contriving, as well as the propagating of New Religions' (p. 162) are investigated in pseudo-medical style, although the theory of vapours employed merely masks a traditional moral psychology that ultimately attributes these corruptions to pride.<sup>26</sup> The madman is actually wicked and wilful because he discards the constraints that all other men have accepted as their common lot; he will not accept the strictures of being merely mortal and but one among many (Section IX, pp. 162, 166–67, 171).

Tyranny is not exclusively the province of ambitious individuals; it can be exercised by a large group of men, if their differences are submerged by the coercive power of a reigning fashion or a party line. 'Tyranny and Usurpation in a State, are by no Means confined to any Number' (*Works*, I, 197–98). Were it not for the unscrupulous exploitation of a spirit of servile imitation in men, Swift believed that the private and inevitably biased opinions of the individuals that compose an assembly would always cancel one another out (*Works*, I, 232). Party leaders and mechanical operators effectively subvert the rational potential of public institutions, however, by creating factions that mouth their opinions in perfect unison. Thus the tyranny of a single man and the tyranny of many amount to precisely the same thing, as Swift often insisted; the replacement of the one by the other is just one of the small avenging ironies that history has inflicted upon Nimrod's successors (*Works*, I, 200, 202; IX, 226; I, 250).

It would be misleading to confine this discussion of Swift's use of Babel as an image of proud, tyrannous, and capricious government to the Puritans' period of ascendancy. In *Verses on the Death of Dr Swift* he applied the same image to the Whig rule that followed Queen Anne's death, and in 'Traulus 2' to corruption in the Irish House of Commons.<sup>27</sup> But these instances of the tyranny of the many are mere imitations of the dissension first created in England by the Puritans. 'Clearly to shew what a Babel they had built, after twelve years trial, and twenty several sorts of government; the nation, grown weary of their tyranny, was forced to call in the son of him whom those reformers had sacrificed.' The Puritans' republican imperialism had left the nation bitterly divided into antagonistic factions (*Works*, IX, 223, 226, 176).

### *Private Spirit*

Private languages are condemned by Swift with a consistency and warmth that would be largely unaccountable without reference to his consciousness of the combined linguistic and political calamity that had befallen mankind at Babel. Swift scrupulously recorded case histories of small groups who 'speak a Language of their own' (*Poems*, II, 450, (l. 189)): his philological records of Whitefriars argot and the

<sup>25</sup> *Works*, IV, 244; see *Tub*, Section IV, p. 115 (note on the Pope); *Works*, VI, 15 and II, 58; *Correspondence*, IV, 336–37 (12 May 1735); *Gulliver's Travels*, I, 5 (p. 51) and III, 3 (p. 171).

<sup>26</sup> Swift partly draws upon received wisdom in his psychology; see M. V. DePorte, *Nightmares and Hobby-Horses: Swift, Sterne and Augustan Ideas of Madness* (San Marino, California, 1974), pp. 31–48.

<sup>27</sup> *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, edited by Harold Williams, second edition, 3 vols (Oxford, 1958), II, 568 (ll. 379–90 and note); 'Traulus 2', *Poems*, III, 800 (l. 46).



Hibernian dialect, the mute language of gestures whereby ladies cheat at cards, modern courtship's 'artificial Form of Canting and Whining by rote' known as 'Ogling', and the spiritual mechanic's 'Art of Canting' were not merely collected as harmless curiosities (*Tub*, 'Apology', pp. 13, 19; *Works*, iv, 277–79; *Poems*, ii, 452 (ll. 252–61); *Mech. Op.*, pp. 288, 278–79). Private languages were regarded by Swift as sinister corruptions of public discourse, cynically exploited by those with a vested interest in fomenting divisions in the state (*Works*, ix, 177). He saw jargon and cant as attempts to debase the linguistic currency and to undermine the historical process whereby a nation invests words with meanings.

Swift was by no means unique in deploring the infusion of jargon into the language. Attacks upon 'terms of art' were commonplace in critical writing, popular journalism, and comedy. Objections to the low cant of thieves, beggars, and gypsies were sometimes tinged with amused interest, while the pedantic technical jargon of science generally aroused wholehearted contempt. More particularly, repudiation of the 'learned Gibberish' of the schools was central to the clarification and simplification of philosophical discourse (for example, Locke's *Essay*, iii. 10. 6–10 (pp. 493–95); Hobbes's *Leviathan*, i. 5 (pp. 115–16)).<sup>28</sup> Much of Swift's aggression against the professions is directed at their tendency to form 'terms of art' into private languages. Swift bore a special grudge against lawyers as hired controversialists, fully equipped with 'a peculiar Cant and Jargon of their own, that no other Mortal can understand, and wherein all their Laws are written, which they take special Care to multiply; whereby they have wholly confounded the very Essence of Truth and Falshood, of Right and Wrong' (*Gulliver's Travels*, iv. 5 (p. 250)). The same indictment appears in the 'Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately enter'd into Holy Orders':

I know not how it comes to pass, that Professors in most Arts and Sciences are generally the worst qualified to explain their Meanings to those who are not of their Tribe: A common Farmer shall make you understand in three Words, *that his Foot is out of Joint, or his Collar-bone broken*; wherein a Surgeon, after a hundred Terms of Art, if you are not a Scholar, shall leave you to seek. It is frequently the same Case in Law, Physick, and even many of the meaner Arts. (*Works*, ix, 66)

Swift warns the young clergyman that obscure terms of divinity available to him might tempt him to speak from his pulpit in just such a private language, with all the complacent knowingness and exclusivity that linguistic privacy offers.

Wagstaff, the fictitious editor of *Polite Conversation*, has no scruples on this account. After all, the function of his manual is to rake together as many mode-words and catch-phrases as possible, by which the members of the clique of 'polite' society are to identify themselves. Paradoxically, the same Wagstaff who displays puerile Modernist delight at the latest abortive vogue is also the mouthpiece for a historical account of linguistic decline which is substantially Swift's own. Wagstaff regretfully confesses in his introduction that most of his flowers of eloquence are gathered from previous generations. He judges the decline of language to be due to the introduction of cant during the reign of Charles II, which has meant that the 'Terms of Art' of courtiers and town wits are subject to continual change (*Works*, iv, 105–106). This account can be matched point for point with a version recorded in all soberness in Swift's *Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue*, which adds

<sup>28</sup> *Leviathan*, edited by C. B. Macpherson (Harmondsworth, 1968).

that the Rebellion laid the foundation for linguistic abuse, upon which the decadent Restoration built the brittle superstructure of fashionable politeness (*Works*, iv, 10).

Jargon is pathologically private in two ways: it is the exclusive code of a minority, and it is notoriously ephemeral. Gulliver apologizes that his nautical language might appear dated, and puts it down to the tendency among sea-Yahoos, like the land ones, 'to become new fangled in their words'; matters have reached so low an ebb that Yahoos coming from London to visit Gulliver in Redriff are unable to communicate with him, or he with them (*Gulliver's Travels*, 'Letter to Cousin Sympson', p. 7). The handicap of the Struldbruggs, living like foreigners in their own country because of the continual change in the language of their mortal neighbours, was to Swift a spectacle as terrifying and pathetic as their forgetting the beginning of the sentence by the time they reached the end.

Swift's condemnation of jargon differs from the conventional attacks upon scholasticism in its emphasis upon the divisive quality of this linguistic abuse. His conviction that the fragmentation of the language was a political issue is consistent with his use of the Babel analogy. Swift believed that private languages were the product of clandestine minorities within the nation whose political ambitions were extra-constitutional. Some of these groups were simply avaricious parasites whose speculations enriched the closed circle of their families and friends, others were infiltrating the country on behalf of foreign powers (the papists), but the most dangerous of all were the dissenters, bent upon the anarchic work that their fathers had left unfinished. The 'art of canting' is invaluable to the dissenting preacher, for mobilizing the gullible masses behind causes they do not understand (*Works*, ix, 173), or for popularizing an opportune new-speak meaning of the word 'moderation' (*Works*, iii, 39; ii, 13; ix, 175–76). The deception involved in attaching private meanings to sections of the language is not essentially different from Peter's trick of foisting bread crusts upon his brothers as excellent mutton and claret (*Tub*, Section iv, pp. 117–18). Swift maintained that the synthetic languages that had been created to obscure truth and travesty logic were actually meaningless (*Mech. Op.*, p. 288; *Works*, ix, 242; iii, 15). But however insubstantial the illusion its origin was always solid and consistent: the advantage of a faction.

Swift, like Hobbes, regarded private cells within the state as 'Wens, Biles, and Apostemes' upon the body politic.<sup>29</sup> Swift's most common terms for these covins are 'Faction' and 'Party', but similar attitudes lie behind his use of 'Tribe', 'Sect', 'Schism', 'Conventicle', 'Knot', 'Gang', 'Club', and 'Cabal'. The polemical programme of *The Examiner*, *The Conduct of the Allies*, and *The Public Spirit of the Whigs* consists of a rigorous investigation of the 'private motives' (*Works*, vi, 15) of the last ministry, which, Swift maintained, had devoted itself to 'the Ruin of the Public Interest, and the Advancement of a Private' (*Works*, vi, 59). It is no accident that Reldresal, ostensibly one of the foremost public servants in corrupt Lilliput, is styled the 'Principal Secretary for private Affairs' (*Gulliver's Travels*, i. 3 (p. 39), reiterated i. 4 (p. 48) and i. 7 (p. 70)). Taken to its logical conclusion, atomization of the public into interest-groups leads to a situation where each individual is a law unto himself, and accepts no authority as superior to his own. Solipsism is diagnosed by Hobbes as the virulent madness of the Modern, who arrogates ultimate truth to himself, an 'opinion of Inspiration, called commonly, Private Spirit' (*Leviathan*, i. 8 (p. 141)).

<sup>29</sup> *Leviathan*, Part II, Chapter 22 (p. 288).

The phrase refers specifically to the enthusiasts' claim to personal revelation, or 'inner light', but it has wider connotations.

'Private Spirit' is a condition shared by many of the corruptions that Swift attacked in his political writing and his satires. In the fantastic world of Swift's satirical hyperbole, each private-spirited fraternity has its own ethos and its peculiar code of dress and belief. Modes of behaviour have become so proprietary and refined that not only different nations but neighbouring parishes and even adjacent streets can be possessed of inimical mores. Just as 'Wit has its Walks and Purlieus, out of which it may not stray the breadth of an Hair, upon peril of being lost' (*Tub*, 'Preface', p. 43), so too the national religion and language are confined within claustrophobic boundaries, having been so far encroached on by enclosure that they are regarded as little more than local customs (*Works*, III, 49).

The only way to prevent discourse from degenerating into a confusion of private languages is to cultivate conventions, to call things by the same names as other people call them by. Otherwise, as Locke realized, 'Men's Language will be like that of *Babel*, and every Man's Words, being intelligible only to himself, would no longer serve to conversation, and the ordinary Affairs of Life' (*Essay*, III. 6. 28 (p. 456)). According to Locke, private languages are prior to, and indeed the basis of, all language. According to this model, public language is the result of a purely fortuitous intersection between many private languages.<sup>30</sup> Obviously, the more private languages there are, the longer the odds against such a serendipitous coincidence, and the greater the chance of the public forum degenerating into a concourse of monads.

Similarly, private collectives can be unified to coincide with the public interest only through the active fostering of consensus values. In its largest sense, convention ensures not just mutual intelligibility but also a communal identity and a cultural heritage. Lord Munodi, the only sane man in Lagado, shows this respect for convention in resisting the innovations of the projectors, and contenting himself with the 'old Forms' (*Gulliver's Travels*, III. 4 (p. 177)), those commonplaces of life that are rejected only by madmen (*Tub*, Section IX, p. 171). Convention is central to Swift's conservative political arguments, the value he set upon history, his hints directed towards the improvement of manners and conversation, and his scheme to 'ascertain' English, to guard against the stifling accretion of sophisticated innovations.

Language, literary form, ethics, and law are all repositories of human endeavour where convention has an important role in unifying and stabilizing plural options. In some of these areas convention is not even questioned: for example, it would be ludicrous for someone to accuse another of plagiarizing his moral principles, because universalism is an essential feature of a moral code. Similarly, a legal system must, by its very nature, resist privatization; in the Deuteronomic idiom, a judge must not respect persons.<sup>31</sup> A fundamental objection that Swift and other orthodox thinkers held against enthusiasts, projectors, dissenters, and all Moderns who appeal to the private authority of the individual mind was that such a principle is

<sup>30</sup> See Stephen K. Land, *From Signs to Propositions: The Concept of Form in Eighteenth-Century Semantic Theory* (London, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> See R. S. Downie, 'Can There Be a Private Morality?', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, new series, 68 (1968), 167–86. On the strength of God's promise that He is no respecter of persons, Swift rejects the notion of an exclusive salvation for the elect (*Works*, IX, 142). Swift's satiric impartiality is built upon this model; see 'Verses on the Death of Dr Swift', *Poems*, II, 565 (l. 326).

inimical to the rule of law. Swift would have endorsed Johnson's condemnation of the Methodists' pretensions to inspired (and unwritten) principles of action, which he would have regarded as a disastrous revival of Puritan private judgement.<sup>32</sup>

The Modern, as Swift portrays him, stakes everything to attain singularity. The Modern values himself as an original, fears most the accusation of plagiarism, can really distinguish himself from the great mass only by perverse difference, and therefore veers dangerously towards an automatic defiance of common forms, and indeed common sense.<sup>33</sup> Scepticism, paradox, and dissent he takes as marks of integrity, as Anthony Collins the freethinker is made to blab quite openly when his obscurantist jargon is translated into plain English: "Tis certain that all Men of Sense depart from the Opinions commonly received; and are consequently more or less Men of Sense, according as they depart more or less from the Opinions commonly received' (*Works*, iv, 47). Like Swift, Johnson attributed 'sceptical innovation' to pride. One of Johnson's most famous denunciations of sceptics portrays them as Swiftian projectors devoted to absurd perversity: 'Hume, and other sceptical innovators, are vain men, and will gratify themselves at any expense. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity: so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull.'<sup>34</sup>

Innovation was one of the cardinal sins of the wilful Puritans, according to Swift (*Works*, ix, 231). He looked upon the Whigs as direct heirs to the fanatics' petulant and simplistic ideology of dissent. 'Whatever be the Designs of innovating Men, they usually end in a Tyranny' (*Works*, iii, 147, 146). Pat Rogers has commented on this aphorism that 'rejection of authority . . . subsumes the innovating spirit. Swift describes how this makes for disorder; it promotes a set-up which is claustal, individualistic, fissile by turns, where revolution breeds counter-revolution in perpetual anarchy'.<sup>35</sup> Swift derived some grim satisfaction from the self-cancellation of successive innovations (*Works*, ix, 33). The *Tale's* hack is a typical casualty of the Modern confusion, his 'Understanding and Conscience, thread-bare and ragged with perpetual turning' (*Tub*, Section I, p. 70). It is due to this 'Revolution Principle' that the Tub is 'given to Rotation' and the 'School of Tops' is so important a faculty in a modernist Academy (*Works*, iii, 147; *Tub*, 'Preface', p. 40 and p. 42, notes). This frenetic cycle of ephemera bears the hallmark of the capricious builders of Babel (*Works*, ix, 226).

### *Burning Books*

Swift's satiric enterprise is not always built from fair and balanced judgements, neither does he always propose redemptive positives corresponding to the evils that he attacks. His accommodations and compromises are few: far from displaying a reluctance to simplify, as has been argued by those who see him as a trimmer, Swift

<sup>32</sup> James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, edited by George Birkbeck Hill, revised by L. F. Powell, 6 vols (Oxford, 1934), II, 126. On private judgement, see P. Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of 'A Tale of a Tub'*, (Chicago, 1961), pp. 38–39, 129–30.

<sup>33</sup> See Pope, *The Art of Sinking in Poetry*, edited by Edna Leake Steeves (New York, 1952), p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> Boswell, *Life*, I, 109; see also his comments on Hume, p. 444.

<sup>35</sup> 'Swift and the Idea of Authority', in *The World of Jonathan Swift*, edited by Brian Vickers (Oxford, 1968), pp. 25–37 (pp. 28–29).

often shows his profound satisfaction at the straitness of heaven's gate.<sup>36</sup> The sheer abandon of the satiric punishments meted out to some of his victims serves to reinforce the arrogant imperiousness of his condemnations. Familiar examples of the fictitious violence wrought by Swift's righteous indignation are his anatomization of a beau, his reduction of the protesting Wood to a howling dog dissected alive, his portrayal of oppressive landlords as cannibals supping upon Irish babies, and his representation of man as a hideous Yahoo. A hitherto-unrecognized member of this draconian collection is the vast imaginary pyre that Swift built from the Library of Babel.

In order to deal with the many redundant novelties of the Modern world, a number of editorial techniques are proposed in Swift's work, some of them rather wholesale in their approach. The pedantic 'Index Expurgatorius' of outlawed neologisms which he suggested the *Tatler* should publish clearly proved inadequate, and Swift moved on to stronger remedies (*Works*, II, 176, 49). These ranged from splenetic plans for hemispheric lobotomies for party politicians (*Gulliver's Travels*, III, 6 (p. 189)) to mandatory capital sentences for innovators and commentators (*Works*, I, 233–34; also *Works*, XII, 11 and *Gulliver's Travels*, II, 7 (p. 136)). Satire as radical as this tends towards the obliteration of its object.<sup>37</sup> It is therefore disturbing that the Houyhnhnms have no literature at all, only an oral tradition of panegyric poetry (*Gulliver's Travels*, IV, 9 (pp. 273–74)). 'Letters should not be known' is a stipulation of a number of imaginary commonwealths.<sup>38</sup> The Houyhnhnms' oral rather than written culture belongs to a vigorous anti-literary tradition which is ultimately Platonic in origin. It has been demonstrated that Swift's Houyhnhnms manifest Platonic attitudes towards government, family, education, even truth-telling, and that they embody specifically Platonic models of the virtues of reason and simplicity. Writing is superfluous for them since they possess that wisdom which Socrates declared could never be reduced to the invariant and unresponsive form of writing.<sup>39</sup> Should we then take literature itself to be one of Swift's satiric targets? At the very least, the Houyhnhnms' lack of a literature implies that such a concession to human frailty would be uncalled-for in a rational world.

Collins advocated the freest possible proliferation of literature, using arguments that appeared to Swift to lead to the abyss of agnostic relativism. According to Swift's 'translation' of the *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, Collins argues that since there are many holy scriptures in the world, only one of which can be right, each person must read them all (without any intrusive guidance) and choose freely between them, 'for there are Twenty to One against us, that we may be in the wrong'. Collins

<sup>36</sup> See Kathleen Williams, *Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise* (Lawrence and London, 1959), Chapter I, pp. 1–12.

<sup>37</sup> See C. J. Rawson, 'Cannibalism and Fiction: Reflections on Narrative Form and "Extreme" Situations', *Genre*, 10 (1977), 667–711 (pp. 669, 671–72); D. Donoghue, *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 30–31; W. B. Carnochan, 'On Satire, Negation, and the Uses of Irony', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 5 (1971–72), 122–44 (p. 136).

<sup>38</sup> *The Tempest*, edited by Frank Kermode, sixth edition (London, 1975), II, I, 146 (p. 50), and see the 'Introduction', pp. xxxiv–xxxviii. The source of Gonzalo's primitivist commonwealth is Montaigne's 'Des Cannibales', which explicitly refers to the Platonic ideal in the course of its account of the absence of letters, respect of kindred, falsehood, etc. among the Amerindians. Robert C. Elliot discusses the tendency of utopian fictions to omit or abolish literature in *The Shape of Utopia* (Chicago and London, 1970), pp. 121–28.

<sup>39</sup> J. F. Reichert, 'Plato, Swift, and the Houyhnhnms', *PQ*, 47 (1968), 179–92; Plato, *Phaedrus*, translated by R. Hackforth (Cambridge, 1972), 275 A, D–E (pp. 157–59).

apparently also holds that if ten thousand free thinkers thought differently from the received doctrine, and from each other, they would all have a right and a duty to publish their thoughts '(provided they were all sure of being in the right)' (*Works*, iv, 32, 36). Therefore, though twenty to one against the preservation of the security of Church and State are already dangerously long odds, this figure proves to be rather a conservative estimate. To Collins's scandalous suggestion that all of these works should be read, Swift's effective reply was that they should rather be burned.

Jack's new deity, Babel, is almost certain to attract such a 'vast number of Worshippers' according to Swift's logic, because of the perennial tendency of the masses 'in their Corrupt Notions of Divine Worship . . . to multiply their Gods' (*Tub*, Section xi, p. 194; *Works*, i, 219).<sup>40</sup> This is why the *Tale* insists upon a limit to the number of books published: 'Health is but one Thing, and has been always the same, whereas Diseases are by thousands, besides new and daily Additions; So, all the Virtues that have been ever in Mankind, are to be counted upon a few Fingers, but his Follies and Vices are innumerable, and Time adds hourly to the Heap' (*Tub*, 'Preface', p. 50). If the truth is single and error manifold, then number is a shibboleth of corruption.

Ablation on a massive scale is Swift's reaction to the tyranny of the many. A process of elimination is required to thin out Babel's library of false theologies and obsolescent modernisms. One provisional method, which is put through its experimental trials in *A Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels*, is the attempt to distil great vats of literature to an essence, in pill form.<sup>41</sup> But eating books is insufficiently radical, and Swift is no man to stop at half measures. A far more comprehensive cull is necessary to reduce the Library of Babel to the proportions of, say, the library of Brobdingnag, which amounts to little more than a thousand volumes. This exiguousness is the result not of poverty but of purity, and a similar brevity and discretion characterizes their univocal laws, expressed in a few clear words (*Gulliver's Travels*, ii. 7 (p. 136)).

The implication is that apart from a small core of original, true, and unambiguous works the Library of Babel is composed entirely of private speculations and disputatious trash. The Houyhnhnms, blessed as they are with an immediate apprehension of right reason, are saved all the shelf space which in Europe is devoted to controversial volumes:

Controversies, Wranglings, Disputes, and Positiveness in false or dubious Propositions, are Evils unknown among the *Houyhnhnms*. In the like Manner when I used to explain to him our several Systems of *Natural Philosophy*, he would laugh that a Creature pretending to *Reason*, should value itself upon the Knowledge of other Peoples Conjectures, and in Things, where that Knowledge, if it were certain, could be of no Use. Wherein he agreed entirely with the Sentiments of *Socrates*, as *Plato* delivers them; which I mention as the highest Honour I can do that Prince of Philosophers. I have often since reflected what Destruction such a Doctrine would make in the Libraries of *Europe*; and how many Paths to Fame would be then shut up in the Learned World. (*Gulliver's Travels*, iv. 8 (p. 267))

This casual obliteration of the libraries of Europe raises to the level of universal devastation the minor incinerations of the *Tale*, where books, 'sunk into waste Paper

<sup>40</sup> 'Corruptions are more Naturall to Mankind than Perfections' (*An Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry*, edited by Irvin Ehrenpreis, Indiana University Publications, Humanities Series, 36 (New York, 1969), p. 95); 'Falsehood being naturally more plentiful than Truth' (*Works*, iii, 75); see Hobbes, *Leviathan*, iii. 36 (p. 467): 'so much greater [is the] number ordinarily of false Prophets, then of true'.

<sup>41</sup> *Tub*, Section v, p. 126; *Gulliver's Travels*, iii. 5 (p. 186). On eating books, see Ezekiel 2.8–3.3, Revelation 10.10–11, and *Correspondence*, iii, 108 (15 October 1725).

and Oblivion', 'undergo the Tryal of Purgatory, in order to ascend the Sky'. Some books remain for ever on the bookseller's shelf, 'never to be thumb'd or greas'd by Students', others are 'neither sought nor found'. Some end up in 'a *Jakes*, or an *Oven* . . . the Windows of a *Bawdy-house*, or . . . a sordid *Lanthorn*'; the vast majority are offered as sacrifices to Moloch (*Tub*, 'Apology', p. 9; Section VII, p. 148 (compare *Dunciad*, I, 227, 144); Section VII, p. 148; 'Apology', p. 10; Dedication, pp. 36, 33). Gulliver wrote that he had retired from the world of the Yahoos, and was waiting to receive word of their reform and the success of his panacean volume. The beacon which he appointed to announce to him that the millennium had come was, not surprisingly, 'Smithfield blazing with Pyramids of Law-Books' ('Letter to Cousin Sympson', p. 6). The works of the Moderns are no more than alms for oblivion (for example, *Tub*, Section I, p. 62; Section IV, p. 108; *Mech. Op.*, p. 279 (compare *Dunciad*, I, 155–62, 247–60)). Swift recorded the various depredations that time practises upon them with dangerous relish.<sup>42</sup>

One must, of course, conclude that Swift's incendiary animus against literature is largely a rhetorical fiction. That it has tactical value is clear; but perhaps it is not entirely under control. The burning of books is a typical velleity of crabbed and vengeful reactionaries; in Swift's case, however, this desire is not acknowledged to be shamefully malicious but is, on the contrary, demonstrative and raucous. The notion that most books should rather be burnt than read is, consciously, so rancorous as to place it safely outside the realm of serious suggestion. As a remedy for bad literature, arson is a wild and comic overkill: Swift's satire pretends to adopt standards of inconceivable barbarism, as if it would indeed 'cure a Scratch on the Finger by cutting off the Arm' (*Works*, x, 16). At the same time, it can be claimed that the burning of books shows monolithic rigorousness, a pious willingness to cut off the hand and pluck out the eye that have offended. Swift's stomach was certainly strong enough to cope with vivisection of this sort, but he might have been disturbed by the air of zeal surrounding the proceedings. How these motivations are nested, and to what depth, which are fundamental, and which are merely camouflage, are questions which have no single, simple answer.

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<sup>42</sup> For Swift himself, literary creation appears to have been a process of writing, burning rejected versions, and rewriting (*Correspondence*, I, 4 (11 February 1691/2); for other examples of Swift un sentimentally disposing of his own manuscripts, letters, and sermons in this punitive fashion, see *Correspondence*, I, 30 (13 January 1698/9). Swift spent many hours playing with a burning glass, a hobby that Rogers rightly regards as not entirely innocent; see *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, edited by George Sherburn, 5 vols (Oxford, 1956), I, 234, quoted by Pat Rogers, 'Gulliver's Glasses', in *The Art of Jonathan Swift*, edited by C. T. Probyn (London, 1978), pp. 179–88 (p. 182).